

Queensland Baptists COVID-19 Update 30 March 2020

Post last night's announcement from Prime Minister Scott Morrison, we continue to the challenging task of navigating additional restrictions that will further impact how we do church moving forward.

To date, under the Non-Essential Business Closure Direction from the QLD Chief Health Officer, QB Baptist churches as places of worship have been significantly restricted in how we can now operate, with exclusions only pertaining only to [weddings and funerals](#). The restrictions for weddings and funerals have not changed, despite new and tighter restrictions in relation to public spaces and other areas of gathering. The previous restriction of a maximum of 10 persons has now been reduced to 2 persons (*unless it is your household, family, or those who normally live at your residence*) – this means that you plus one other person is considered to be permissible gathering.

Again, we seek to guide churches of the QB Movement to continue to be thinking about getting ahead of the trajectory of restrictions, with the expectation that we anticipate more might be announced in coming days/weeks.

To this point, we are asking churches to consider the issues around live streaming services, in particular doing this from church buildings/auditoriums. To give some context to this, we saw just this past weekend, the stance taken by the QLD Police, mandating and enforcing the cessation of a live stream that involved 9 persons at a church property. Although this example was within the “10 persons” rule, it was occurring in a church building, which we understand the QLD Police ruled as a non-essential business operating outside of the allowable exclusions (weddings and funerals).

To work in with these restrictions, we are advising that churches move toward recording online material and only engaging employees of the church to assist with recording while also abiding by the new 2 persons rule, and the ongoing requirement for 4m² per person. We also encourage churches to consider only using designated church office space for activities including streaming/recording so that it is in line with workplace rules. This will avoid potential misperception that churches are operating despite the restrictions (by using auditoriums/halls etc.).

In foreshadowing further restrictions, churches could start to consider the option of pre-recording sermons from private residences to comply with the following Government direction:

You must stay at home except for the following reasons:

- *Shopping for what you need, food and other essential supplies that enable you to remain at home and to do that shopping as infrequently as possible.*
- *For medical care or compassionate needs.*
- *To exercise in compliance with the public gathering rules.*
- *For work and education if you cannot work or learn remotely.*

We acknowledge the degree of inconsistencies/ambiguities that frustrate decision making for us all at this time, but we also encourage a commitment to the essence of

the restrictions – and that is to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in an attempt to preserve precious lives.

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid. John 14:27

Blessings.

Stewart Pieper
Director of Services

QB Staff:

I would also mention that as of today the QB office is in lock down and will not be physically accessible to those who are not office staff. Some QB Staff are working from home while others in particular support roles may be on leave. Most Staff can still be contacted by email or telephone. Be assured that we are working hard to continue to serve the movement in these challenging times.