

## Queensland Baptists COVID-19 Update 18 February 2021

We are pleased to update you on yesterday's release of the [Restriction on Businesses, Activities and Undertakings \(No.13\)](#) , effective from 4pm 17 February 2021.

The below identifies areas pertaining to Places of Worship.

### COVID Safe Framework

Places of Worship as restricted businesses under the Direction, must continue to operate under a COVID Safe Framework. For our churches, the applicable Framework is the approved [Industry Plan for Places of Worship](#). We continue to await an updated revision of this, with the current version having come into effect in October of last year. Earlier this week we again sought advice on the expected timeframe of its release and will provide further updates as information comes to hand. Please note that, where the Industry Plan refers to a requirement that is different to a requirement in this Direction, the requirement in this Direction prevails to the extent of any inconsistency.

NB: where a church elects not to operate under the approved Industry Plan, occupant density is a maximum of 50 people.

### Occupant Density

Places of Worship are to operate with no more than one person per 2 square metres for areas open to or used by attendees whether indoors or outdoors (capped at 50 where electing not to operate under the approved Industry Plan).

Physical distancing rules still apply. So wherever possible, people should remain 1.5 metres away from others.

Previously, we had advice from the Department of Multicultural Affairs that churches could operate to 100% capacity where they followed the requirements of *ticketed allocated seating*. However, In today's release we have seen some tightening up on the application of this provision. In the Q & A section it states that *this is only available to businesses where ticketed events are part of their normal operation. For example, stadiums, theatres, jazz clubs or cinemas where venues generally have fixed seating that faces in one direction. These venues can operate at up to 100% capacity as any potential COVID-19 transmission risk is minimised by the layout of the venue and the nature of the events.*

We have prioritised clarification of this and will advise once a response is received.

### Events

There have been some changes to events that impact our churches and QB ministries.

**Requirements for multi-day events providing on-site accommodation with shared facilities:**

- must operate in accordance with *occupant density*, and
- must comply with a *COVID Safe Event Plan* approved by:

- local public health units for events up to 10,000 people per day. The event organiser must submit the ***COVID Safe Event Plan*** for approval a minimum of 10 business days prior to the event taking place; or
- the Chief Health Officer for events over 10,000 people per day. The event organiser must submit the ***COVID Safe Event Plan*** for approval a minimum of 20 business days prior to the event taking place.

*Note – multi-day events that involve on-site accommodation with shared facilities require an approved **COVID Safe Event Plan** regardless of the number of people attending the event.*

This has implications for churches hosting such things as camps and retreats that are multi-day events involving on-site accommodation with shared facilities.

A dedicated portal exists for the submission of COVID Safe Event Plan approval, and we will be providing information on this process, and a template for churches to use for COVID Safe Events.

### **Weddings**

Weddings can have up to 200 people in attendance. NB: the number of people permitted to attend a wedding reception is based on the requirements for the business premises or place where the reception is held.

Dancing is permitted at weddings:

- on the basis that no more than one person per 2 square metres dances in the dance area
- if ensuring reasonable measures to facilitate the distribution of people across a dance area, including, but not limited to:
  - providing appropriate signage to encourage physical distancing between distinct groups in dance areas; and
  - ensuring staff encourage patrons to observe physical distancing in dance areas; and
  - using tables or other fixtures to encourage the distribution of people in a dance area in settings where it is appropriate and safe to do so.

### **Funerals**

Funerals are limited to a maximum of 200 people.

### **Contact Information**

Places of Worship must continue to collect:

- the name, phone number, email address, and the date and time period of attendees; and
- provided to a public health officer within a stated time, if requested by a public health officer; and
- securely stored, not used for any other purpose; and
- deleted after not less than 30 days and not more than 56 days.

### **Food Service**

In the interest of preventing unnecessary contact and potential transmission of COVID-19, self-service of food is still not allowed. A such, food must be served by a waiter or self-serve individually packaged food.