



24 July, 2020

Dear Fathers and Deacons,

Changing of COVID-19 Restrictions in NSW

Effective 24 July 2020

Late last night the New South Wales government released the latest amendments to the **Public Health (COVID-19 Restrictions on Gathering and Movement) Order (No 4) Amendment Order (No 2) 2020**, effective from 24 July 2020. In summary the changes relevant are:

- the number of people allowed inside a place of public worship is the lesser of 'one person per 4 square metre' rule or 100 persons.
- the number of people allowed at a funeral is the lesser of 'one person per 4 square metre' rule or 100 persons.
- The number of people allowed at a wedding to have a capacity of the lesser of 'one person per 4 square metre' rule or 150 persons.
- places of public worship must complete and adhere to the most recent approved COVID Safety Plan AND register as a COVID Safe business via the NSW Government website - <https://www.nsw.gov.au/register-your-business-as-covid-safe>.

In addition to these amendments in the Public Health Order, the **COVID Safety Plan for Places of Public Worship** has also been updated. In summary the relevant changes are:

- Music is permissible if conducted safely. Musicians should be distanced 1.5 meters. Woodwind instruments should be discouraged. Singers should maintain at least 3 meters of physical distancing.
- Mingling and gathering after services should be suspended or adjusted.
- Continued need to record names and contact details of those present at services along with the date and time they attended.

In addition to these changes, Department of Health has today increased the level of precaution in all NSW Hospitals and associated facilities. This will once again have an impact on Ministers of Holy Communion to the Sick. In recent weeks a number of aged care facilities have begun to re-open to volunteers. However, given the recent spike of coronavirus infections in NSW, many have reintroduced significant restrictions on entry. It is important to work with each facility with which you are associated. However, generally and specifically with home visitations the following principles should be observed.

- Ordinarily higher risk persons should not be asked to return to the ministry of Communion to the Sick at this stage. These include:
 - people 70 years and older
 - people 65 years and older with chronic medical conditions. Conditions included in the definition of 'chronic medical conditions' can be accessed on the [Department of Health](#) website.

- people with compromised immune systems - see [Department of Health](#) website for further information
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people 50 years and older with one or more chronic medical conditions
- people who have travelled overseas in the past 14 days;
- people who have had contact with a COVID-19 case;
- people who have respiratory symptoms, unexplained fever and/or loss of taste or smell
- people who have visited one of the areas currently affected by the coronavirus transmission – see [Latest COVID-19 case locations in NSW](#)
- people who have travelled from Victoria in the past 14 days
- All ministers should have written evidence (e.g. certificate from GP) that they have had their flu vaccination this year.
- Face Masks should be used

We are currently seeking advice in regard to any specific changes in restrictions that would affect the way in which you are ministering in schools. As soon as this advice is available, we will circulate it to you.

Over the last week, it has become apparent that these restrictions and their fluctuations in details will be our new 'COVID-normal' for some time ahead. We encourage you to adhere to the underlying principles of these health orders, which are in place to protect life. When reviewing parish activities, consider the risks involved and how you are mitigating these risks, particularly those associated with mingling, physical contact and singing.

With my deep appreciation to you all,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David R'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large 'R' at the end.

Very Rev David Ranson
Vicar General