

01 June 2020

To all Clergy, Secretaries, Diocesan Councillors

COVID-19 Update No. 5

Dear Friends in Christ,

South Australia has been doing remarkably well in the fight to stop the spread of COVID-19 and I am sure you have been following the SA Government's Roadmap for Recovery and the easing of restrictions closely. As of the 1st June SA will be in Step 2 and this will affect the Diocese directly. The information contained in this letter highlights what we need to continue to do as a Church community to follow the Government's easing of restrictions and to keep each other safe.

COVID-Safe Plan

It is now a condition that all businesses that were required to close as a result of COVID-19, and this includes our places of worship, must create a COVID-Safe Plan through the SA Government website. Some of our church buildings have already worked through the necessary plans to open as part of the Step 1 easing of restrictions, but they must now complete the COVID-Safe Plan by the 1st June. Church buildings that have been waiting until Step 2 must also complete a COVID-Safe Plan before they can reopen. A guidance sheet is attached with this letter but more information and how to begin the Plan can be found through this link;
<https://www.covid-19.sa.gov.au/recovery/create-a-covid-safe-plan>

Once you have completed the Plan through the website it needs to be printed off and make it available at the relevant premises so that it can be produced on request by an authorised officer if required. If a Plan is not completed, if it is not available at the premises, or if it does not comply with current Directions, fines of up to \$5,000 can be issued. It is also important to note that while there are some universal requirements, your Plan will need to be specific to each premises. In other words, each church building will need its own COVID-Safe Plan.

Places of Worship

Step 1 of SA's easing of restrictions meant that our church buildings were allowed to open with the officiant and those required to run the service plus no more than 10 congregants. Step 2 will be implemented from the 1st June and will allow for no more than 20 congregants. All services need to continue to follow the other requirements as spelt out by me in Ad Clerum 10. It is critical that the internal congregant seating area dimensions (this includes the nave and the sanctuary and any choir area) of your buildings has been determined so that you can calculate the maximum number of people allowed while maintaining the 4 square metres of space per person rule. This density rule covers everyone within the space and so those present must be within your density number, not necessarily to the 20 congregants. As per Ad Clerum 10, there should be no Passing of the Peace and Communion should be given in one kind only (the wafer). There is still to be no social gatherings (ie morning tea) around the services.



Op-Shops

In Ad Clerum 10 and 10a I gave instructions regarding the re-opening of Op-Shops. These measures should still be in place although now there may be 20 people present if the density rule allows. As Op-Shops generally operate out of a Hall or similar, it will be necessary for any that have re-opened to complete their own separate COVID-Safe Plan with the Government as above.

Weddings

From Step 1, weddings were allowed to have a maximum of 10 attendees, which included the couple but excluded the celebrant, the photographer and/or other necessary staff. From 1st June and the commencement of Step 2, weddings will be allowed a maximum of 20 attendees, which include the couple but exclude the celebrant, the photographer and/or other necessary staff. Social distancing and the density rules still apply, and a record of attendees should be kept in case the need for contact tracing arises.

Funerals

From Step 1, funerals were allowed a maximum of 20 mourners if a funeral was held indoors and a maximum of 30 mourners if a funeral was held outdoors. In Step 2, funerals will simply be allowed a maximum of 50 mourners. This will be subject to the density rule and social distancing should be maintained. A record of attendees should be kept in case the need for contact tracing arises.

Hiring of Halls etc.

The hiring out of Parish/Pastoral District halls and other spaces can recommence but the nature of the activity will need to be taken into consideration as there are still restrictions on certain activities and/or the number of people that are allowed to participate with them. Parishes/Pastoral Districts should be sure that hirers are aware of the relevant COVID-Safe Plan for the area, including the cleaning requirements for before and after an activity, and the recording of contact details for attendees if necessary.

Information Posters

The Insurers, AIRS, have provided posters that can be printed and displayed in your buildings to convey the appropriate messages as required. Additional posters can also be downloaded from the SA Government website at the bottom of the COVID-Safe Plan page (in the Downloads drop down menu).

I have been quietly delighted with all your efforts, with the reopening, but especially with what you have all achieved while these measures have been in force. Please do not let the good will we have generated be undone by not complying with the new measures. I understand the angst this moving of the goal posts has resulted in, but there is nothing I can do except require you to comply. I will be unsympathetic to anyone who gets caught out not adhering to these new measures. If you think they don't apply to you, they do. If you have any difficulties or questions, please contact the COVID-19 hotline on 1800 253 787 first and then the Registry Office if necessary.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Keith Dalby', with a large flourish at the end.

The Right Reverend Keith Dalby
Bishop of The Murray