



*From the Bishop*

27 July 2020

To all Clergy, Secretaries, Diocesan Councillors

### **COVID-19 Update No. 9**

Dear Friends in Christ,

Last week the SA Government announced that some restrictions would be reinstated to help manage the public health risk posed by the outbreak of COVID-19 in Victoria. From 12:01am Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> July, there will be increased border restrictions between our state and Victoria, and there will be limitations placed back on certain activities. I outline the points that are relevant to us as a worshipping community below.

I will also take this opportunity to give an update on the JobKeeper wage subsidy scheme. The Diocese has experienced a financial downturn because of the COVID-19 pandemic which has made us eligible for this scheme. The Federal Government has announced that they will be extending the scheme until March 2021 and will be targeting their support to businesses and not-for-profits that continue to be significantly impacted by the Coronavirus. One aspect of this extension is that the payment rate will be cut to \$1,200 a fortnight for full-time workers from 28<sup>th</sup> September. The rate will be cut further to \$1,000 a fortnight for full-time workers from 4<sup>th</sup> January 2021.

Ongoing eligibility for JobKeeper will be assessed by the ATO by reference to the decline in turnover test for each of the June 2020, September 2020 and December 2020 quarters compared to the previous year. In order for the Diocese to demonstrate that they have met the relevant continuing decline in turnover, Parishes/Pastoral Districts must continue to report by the 7<sup>th</sup> of each monthly to the Registry during the extension period.

I would like to thank everyone who is continuing to contribute financially to the work of the church and acknowledge that many of our fundraising activities have been placed on hold because of the restrictions in place for the last few months. On the 1<sup>st</sup> April I wrote about Giving during the COVID-19 Crisis and highlighted that if Parishes and Pastoral Districts are to continue then our giving is going to have to change, both in how we give, and the amount we give. Providing bank details so that parishioners can give directly through either EFT (Electronic Funds Transfer) or Direct Debit will likely be the best option for some time yet. I encourage you to continue providing these details and reminding parishioners of this option.

Below are the points to continue to have in mind as we navigate this ever-changing situation.

#### Weddings/Funerals/Private Gatherings in homes

From 12:01am Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> July there will be a cap of 100 people for weddings and funerals. It should also be noted that there will be a cap of 50 people for gatherings in private homes. We will still need to consider the density rule in conjunction with these new caps.



### Density Rule

The density requirements for indoor spaces are currently set at one person per two square metres. There is no set maximum of people that are allowed to be in a space (asides from weddings and funerals above), it will be completely defined by this density rule and the size of your worship space. We are still being strongly encouraged to practice physical distancing of 1.5 metres wherever and whenever possible.

### COVID-Safe Plan

Religious Ceremonies are classed as a “Defined public activity” and so we still need to have a COVID-Safe Plan completed and it should be available on your premises. Those that have already completed a COVID-Safe plan will not need to complete another one, the Government will email with an updated version of your existing plan as changes come in to force. If you do not yet have a COVID-Safe plan then you must complete one before face-to-face services can recommence. The link to create a COVID-Safe plan and more information is available on the Government’s website; <https://www.covid-19.sa.gov.au/recovery/create-a-covid-safe-plan>

### Contact Tracing Records

It is still necessary to keep a record of all the people who attend your services or activities. For convenience I again attach the form the Government has produced to assist with this recording, but very simply we need to note the date, the person’s name, the time, and a means of contact (ie. a phone number) should contact tracing be necessary. These records should be kept in a secure location and then destroyed after 30 days – not simply put in the bin.

### Singing and Hymn Books

Other states and countries have put a ban on singing during worship. The SA Government has said that it is fine for us to continue singing, as long as we maintain our social distance. This does bring about a complication if you are using Hymn books though. Handling a book by one person is fine but they can’t be passed from person to person, so they can’t be handed out at the door. This also applies to bibles and prayer books or service sheets. Once used, they mustn’t be touched by anyone else for a week. That means if there is more than one service on a Sunday, the books that have already been used cannot be used in subsequent ones.

### The Collection

Taking a collection during a service is fine but the plate should not be passed from person to person. If possible, the plate should be available for people to use on their way into or out of the service – not on the way up for Communion. People counting money should use gloves and ensure that they wash their hands. If people have been able to give electronically over the last few months, they should be encouraged to continue to do so.

### Passing of the Peace

To continue maintaining our social distance there should still be NO passing of the peace during the service. The phrase, “the Lord be with you” should simply be responded to with “and also with you.” Similarly, any greeters/welcomers should not be shaking hands when people arrive, and neither should the Priest at the conclusion of the service.

### Holy Communion

Communion continues to only be permitted in one kind – the wafer. There is no indication when the regulations concerning the common cup at Communion will differ but we will keep an eye out for any changes.

Morning Tea

I am still happy for morning teas to be held after services. It is important that people do not share utensils though so this should be considered.

Cleaning after services and other gatherings

This should be continued as recommended by the authorities and outlined in your COVID-Safe plans.

Please remain vigilant and continue to do your part within our communities. Wash your hands or use hand sanitiser frequently, sneeze or cough into your elbow, maintain a physical distance from people outside of your household, and if you are feeling unwell then please stay at home. By following these steps we will be able to uphold all the good work we have been doing over the last few months.

With continued prayers,

A handwritten signature in black ink, featuring a cross symbol to the left of the name 'Keith Dalby'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

The Right Reverend Keith Dalby  
Bishop of The Murray