

Queensland Baptists COVID-19 Update 3 June 2020

With having moved to Stage 2 of the [Roadmap to Easing Restrictions in QLD](#) earlier than expected, we have been working to identify additional resources for churches to assist navigating the changing requirements. We acknowledge that with the autonomy of our churches, the process of “returning” will look different for each context. Whether churches are commencing services, planning to restart ministries onsite at the church property, and/or returning to use the church property as the workplace for church employees/volunteers, this is all to be within the maximum of 20 people per church property AND with WH&S measures in place to risk-manage the impact of COVID – 19. There is much to be aware of in this space which we draw your attention to further below.

We hope to provide more clarity on the distinction between the WH&S obligations that must be fulfilled for churches to operate, and the potential opt-in pathway for an Industry COVID SAFE Plan. The former being mandatory in order to operate under the Stage 2 restrictions, and the latter being a potential option for churches founded on the implementation of best practice guidelines that will be defined in an “industry” level approved COVID SAFE Plan which affords specific relaxations to the current restrictions.

Industry COVID SAFE Plan

An Industry COVID SAFE Plan can be developed by an industry through a representative group or a group of businesses within that industry.

To ensure consistency of safety standards and compliance, Queensland Health will only approve one Industry COVID SAFE Plan per industry. Where there are multiple associations within an industry these groups should develop a plan together or select one plan to submit for approval.

Places of Worship are not listed as an eligible industry for an Industry COVID SAFE Plan; however Queensland Baptists are working with Heads of Churches to progress the development and submission of such a Plan for Christian churches and Places of Worship across QLD. We anticipate a draft Industry COVID SAFE Plan will be finalised and submitted by the end of this week, and we will provide further advice to this as it is progressed.

We anticipate such a Plan would provide an overarching framework for Places of Worship, which each denomination would then use to formulate a template that fulfills the Plan and contextualises it to each particular denomination. We further anticipate individual churches would then contextualise the template to their circumstances, all the while upholding the overarching requirements of the approved Industry COVID SAFE Plan.

As it is an “opt in” system, the current process (once industry specific Industry COVID SAFE Plans start to become approved) is as follows:

- Check the [QLD Gov't COVID Safe Business](#) website for an approved Industry COVID SAFE Plan relevant to your business (in the instance for Places of Worship – NB: terminology may change); and
- Complete the statement of compliance included in the approved Industry COVID SAFE Plan and display it in a public place in your premises before you start trading with the relaxations afforded.

We will advise when we reach this stage of the process.

In the interim, we encourage churches in their ongoing commitment to working within the restrictions, particularly ensuring their COVID Safe Business WH&S Plans are comprehensive and in full effect. We recognise these obligations are a baseline, and that any approved Industry COVID SAFE Plan will articulate *best practice guidelines* (above and beyond the WH&S) that would need to be met for any relaxations to be afforded.

Industry COVID Business WH&S Plan

To reiterate, at all stages, all businesses should have an up to date WH&S Plan in place, including strategies to manage COVID-19. This is an existing internal plan which does not need to be submitted for approval and should be made available when requested.

Next Steps

What is QB doing?

QB are working with Heads of Churches on an Industry COVID SAFE Plan.

What you need to be doing now?

Have your churches up to date WH&S Plan in place, including strategies to manage COVID-19.

What you will need to do?

Once advised by QB that an approved Industry COVID SAFE Plan is available and a template has been developed for our churches, opt in, and contextualise it to your churches' circumstances.

Useful Tools

The following are some tools to assist establishing church specific WH&S Plans.

- Safe Work Australia's
 - [Cleaning Checklist](#)
 - [Keeping Workers Safe Checklist](#)
 - [Physical Distancing Checklist](#)
 - [What to do if a Worker is suspected of having COVID 19](#)
- [Safe Work Australia's Guideline](#) on routine cleaning, AND cleaning and disinfection following a case or suspected case of the COVID-19 in a non-healthcare workplace
- Useful [Posters](#)
- More [useful Posters](#)

Further Information

- Workplace Health and Safety QLD's [COVID 19 Overview & Guide](#)
- Safe Work Australia's [Information on COVID 19 and WH&S](#)
- Fact Sheet for [Collecting and Storing Attendee Information](#)
- [General Advice for Food Businesses](#) that may apply to some contexts

Previously Provided Tools

- Baptist Insurance Services [COVID Safe Business WH&S Plan](#)
- Workplace Health and Safety QLD template for a [COVID WH&S Plan](#)
- A general guide for planning a WH&S Plan [QB COVID - 19 WH&S Checklist](#)