

## Queensland Baptists COVID-19 Update 16 November 2020

We are pleased to share with you the latest round of relaxations for the [Stage 5 COVID - 19 Roadmap](#) which come into effect from 4pm tomorrow 17 November 2020.

In summary, the key changes include:

- **Gatherings:** Increased gatherings in homes and public spaces from 40 to 50 people across Queensland. This applies to those who wish to use their home residence as a place of worship. Those wanting to use their home residence as a place of worship and wish to exceed the maximum number of people allowed under the latest Movement and Gathering Direction (which will be 50 people) will have to abide by all aspects of the Industry Plan for Places of Worship.
- **Increased indoor attendance:** Increase from one person per 4 square metres to one person per 2 square metres.
- **Wedding Ceremonies:** Up to 200 people can attend a wedding and all guests can dance (both indoors and outdoors).
- **Funerals:** Up to 200 people can attend a funeral.
- **Outdoor events:** Increased outdoor events from 1,000 to 1,500 with a COVID Safe Event Checklist. Larger events require a COVID Safe Plan.
- **Outdoor dancing:** Outdoor dancing allowed.

We have previously not seen Places of Worship included in references to the rules for concert venues/auditoriums/theatres. While the [Restrictions on Businesses, Activities and Undertakings \(No.9\)](#) doesn't expressly include Places of Worship in Schedule 1 of the Direction, the Department of Local Government, Racing and Multicultural Affairs (who coordinate changes to the Industry Plan for Place of Worship), have provided clarification on the changes for indoor events as follows:

***Seated, ticketed venues (i.e.: for those places of worship with the ability to have individual allocated ticketed seats, such as auditoriums) can operate at 100% capacity with patrons to wear masks on entry and exit.***

There is much to consider here for churches who do have the capacity to operate with individually allocated ticketed seating. We expect more to be clarified in the Industry Plan for Places of Worship once it is updated to reflect these changes.

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### Do we need to use the Industry Plan for Places of Worship?

Yes. Churches are defined as restricted businesses for the purpose of the declared health emergency and are required to implement the Industry Plan in order to operate.

#### Do we need to make sure there is 2m<sup>2</sup> per person and physical distancing of 1.5m?

Yes. The 2m<sup>2</sup> per person rule does not determine the distance between people. It is important to be mindful of arranging chairs/tables and traffic flows to ensure spacing of at least 1.5 metres apart.

### Does the 2m2 per person rule apply if we have individually allocated ticketed seating?

Where individually allocated ticketed seating is provided, more than 1 person per 2m2 is permissible if attendees wear a mask when not in their allocated seat. This could include entering and exiting the venue, leaving your seat to go to the bathroom etc.

### Does the 2m2 per person rule apply to our worship teams?

We see the Roadmap articulates some more detail than the Direction does in relation to this. This is seen in the wording around indoor events where it states that "*performers can reduce distance from audience from 4m to 2m, except choirs which remain at 4m from the audience*". We also see in FAQ for this new Direction that "*there must be no more than one person per 2m2 in the space you are performing (including the choir and the audience)*". On this basis we recommend churches maintain a 4m distance between worship teams and the congregation AND ensure 2m2 per person for the worship teams.

NB: distance between choirs/worship teams and the congregation is not something we have seen previously articulated.

### Are there any restrictions for Weddings?

Yes. A maximum of up to 200 people can attend wedding ceremonies that are conducted under a COVID Safe Plan regardless of the size of the venue (physical distancing requirements still apply). A wedding at a church would still need to fall under the requirements of the Industry Plan for Places of Worship.

Wedding ceremonies performed at a person's residence or a public place can have a maximum of 50 people attend, if there is no COVID Safe Plan, Checklist or Event Checklist in place.

### Are there any restrictions for Funerals?

Funerals conducted in a professional venue may be attended by a maximum of 200 people irrespective of the size of the venue.

Private ceremonies performed in private residences or public areas and spaces can have a maximum of 50 people attend including the service director. Up to 200 people may attend if there is a COVID Safe Industry Plan, Checklist or Event Checklist in place.