



COVID-19 Update

Tuesday 27 October 2020

Dear friends in Christ,

The Queensland Government has published the updated [COVID Industry Plan for Places of Worship](#), as well as a [fact sheet](#). While this plan does not contain anything “new”, it provides a timely reminder of some key tips that we should remember with regards to COVID-19.

We must always remember to:

- Maintain physical distancing of 1.5 metres
- Maintain good hand hygiene (washing hands or using alcohol-based sanitiser)
- Maintain good respiratory hygiene (coughing or sneezing into elbow)
- Maintain tracking, tracing, rapid response (keeping contact details for 56 days for each service and ensuring it is readily available if requested)
- Frequently clean and disinfect our spaces.

Christmas

As the Christmas season nears, congregations should be considering what adjustments they need to make to their normal events in order to make them COVID safe. It is recommended that all events have a separate COVID event plan in place. Also, if you anticipate up to 500 people per day attending an indoor event or 1,000 per day for an outdoor event, a [COVID Safe Checklist](#) must be completed, in addition to the safety management plan for the event. If you anticipate more than these numbers, additional requirements are to be met. Refer to the Synod COVID-19 [Safety Management Plan for church events](#) for guidance.

Warden briefings

The COVID Warden briefings continue each Wednesday at 11am. They are very well attended and lots of information is shared. If you require a link to this voluntary meeting, please email COVID19@ucaqld.com.au. If you have not notified us of the name and contact details of your COVID Warden, please email them to COVID19@ucaqld.com.au.

JobKeeper

In respect of the Queensland Synod being an eligible employer or religious institution for the purposes of JobKeeper eligibility from October to December 2020, our previous position is that it was unlikely that the turnover test for eligibility would be achieved. Taking into account the published legislation regarding the JobKeeper extension and the finalisation of our September BAS return (which is used for the turnover test for the JobKeeper scheme eligibility), our position has changed.

We are now of the view that we remain eligible for the JobKeeper scheme for the October to December 2020 extension period. If the ATO review our September BAS return and have a contrary view to our eligibility for the JobKeeper scheme, we will advise you immediately.

Our analysis of the likely BAS return for December indicates that we are unlikely to be eligible for the second JobKeeper extension (January to March 2021). Once we have completed the BAS return around mid-January, we will communicate our final position on eligibility. We apologise in advance that the communication will be late, but the ATO requires actual data regarding turnover and this can only be completed after 31 December 2020.

Please remember that we receive the ATO JobKeeper payment in arrears. We expect a JobKeeper payment from the ATO in early November in relation to the payments made to employees and ministry agents during October. We will continue to defer direct debits and process adjustments associated with receipt of the JobKeeper payment until January, when we receive the January JobKeeper payment in relation to payments made to employees and ministry agents during December.

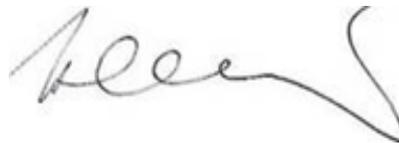
Furthermore, The Synod Office Payroll team have seen an increase in the number of phone calls from congregations in relation to the monthly Stipend direct debit. The reduction in the direct debit is associated with the JobKeeper payment we received in October in relation to the payments we made to employees and ministry agents during September. Further information regarding this is available in the [JobKeeper FAQ document](#).

Our next COVID-19 update is planned for Tuesday 3 November 2020. Your questions or feedback about this update or COVID-19 are welcome—please email COVID19@ucaqlld.com.au.

My sincere thanks for your ongoing work and support as we navigate our way through this time.



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