**Increased restrictions across Victoria – pertaining to Religion and Ceremony and Compassionate and Caregiving grounds**

* The restrictions are compulsory. The Deputy Chief Health Officer of Victoria has issued a lawful direction as part of the current State of Disaster.
* Restrictions are changing to slow the spread of coronavirus in Victoria.
* Stage 4 restrictions are already in place in metropolitan Melbourne. In addition, a curfew applies from 8pm-5am in metropolitan Melbourne from last Sunday 2nd August
* Stage 3 restrictions will be in place from 11:59pm on Wednesday 5 August for Regional Victoria, including Mitchell Shire.
* Everyone must wear a mask when they leave home, unless an exception applies. This is now enforceable across the whole state.

**For both Melbourne Metro and for Regional Victoria**

* You cannot attend a religious service – we encourage you to use online services instead to engage people in worship.
* You should not attend a wedding or funeral if you are feeling unwell. See further information for your location below
* All in-person prayer groups must stop meeting in person. You can hold a prayer group online or use video conferencing.
* Places of religion and worship must close for both religious ceremonies and private worship. but those who are necessary to stream a service can attend for these purposes. This is limited to up to five necessary people. The Pastor does NOT have to wear a mask while preaching and leading worship.
* You must maintain your physical distance of 1.5 metres from others.

**In the Metropolitan Melbourne Area**

* You can still hold a funeral if you live in metropolitan Melbourne however no more than 10 people are able to attend. Attending a funeral is a permitted reason to leave home and a permitted reason to leave metropolitan Melbourne
* If you live in metropolitan Melbourne weddings are not permitted, unless you have a reason on compassionate grounds.
* If compassionate reasons allow a marriage ceremony to proceed, then only 5 people are allowed to be at the wedding. This includes the couple, witnesses and celebrant officiating the wedding.
* You can leave home to care for a sick or elderly relative. If you are providing care for someone you should try to keep 1.5 metres between you when you can. Wear a face covering.
* You can leave home to accompany someone for essential medical treatment if you are a parent, guardian or necessary support person.
* If you do need to leave home, you should wash your hands before you leave and when you return home. Keep at least 1.5 metres between yourself and others. Always wear a face covering, unless you have a lawful exception.

**Outside of Metropolitan Melbourne**

* Weddings held outside of Metropolitan Melbourne can have a maximum of five people (the couple, two witnesses and the celebrant). Weddings held in a private residence outside of Metropolitan Melbourne will be limited to the number of people in the household plus the people required to conduct the ceremony.
* Funerals held outside of Metropolitan Melbourne are restricted to 10 mourners plus people required to conduct the funeral. You can travel to a funeral outside of your Shire.
* You may no longer have visitors to your home or visit other people in their homes.
* You cannot enter metropolitan Melbourne for exercise or recreation
* Facilities such as community services and public halls can still be used as a place for delivering essential services such as food banks or services for people experiencing homelessness. Always ensure appropriate physical distancing is maintained by keeping at least 1.5 metres between people at all times. If you are attending a facility to receive or deliver a service you must wear a face covering, unless you have a lawful reason for not doing so
* You are strongly encouraged to stay at home. You can go out any time of the day or night as long as it is one of the four valid reasons:
\* Shopping for food & necessary supplies
\* Medical care or compassionate reasons
\* Exercise
\* Work or education (if you can’t do so from home)

Information is provided on the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services website [Victoria’s restriction levels COVID – 19](https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/victorias-restriction-levels-covid-19)
 <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/victorias-restriction-levels-covid-19>

For further information about restrictions in Victoria you can call the coronavirus hotline on **1800 675 398** and select option 2.