



08 April 2020

Dear Church Family,

This is **issue #6 (six)** of regular Corporate communication. This communication supersedes previous issue #5 (five). While the majority of the body of this communication remains the same as in issue #5, updates have been highlighted in **yellow**.

Undoubtedly, the immediate change we are seeing and experiencing is in the way we are interacting with one another and running our daily business and ministries. An important note we would like to highlight is that in terms of ongoing support, services and ministry, our church is **not** closed. The organization continues to function and run as usual, albeit in a very different way to which we are all used to. Please be encouraged that we will still remain connected as a church family.

However, in light of Prime Minister, Scott Morrison's address on the 22 March, the physical locations of our churches are closed. The Government has implemented additional measures to try and combat the pandemic that we are facing in Australia at the moment. These additional measures will temporarily change the way that we go about our day to day business. We would like to reiterate that we support these measures for the sake of our Nation's / World's health. Please refer to Scott Morrison's statement on the new restrictions by clicking on the following link: [Scott Morrison Statement](#)

We understand that all church members in the community will experience isolation, so please make sure that you remain in contact with your family, friends and church members via phone and internet sources.

### How does this affect our churches?

1. Sabbath church services will be accessible online only. Please visit your local church website for details.
2. The Government guidelines issued, have given us a clearer understanding around the use of churches for weddings and funerals.

We would like to reiterate that the church, as a physical building, has been closed for the use of public gatherings.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison advised that churches may be used for Wedding and Funeral services with strict guidelines as they have been identified as major transmitting events.

- No more than 5 people including the celebrant and the four square meter rule applies as does social distancing
- Funerals can be conducted but with no more than 10 persons observing the rules around the four square metre rule and the social-distancing practices."

### Seventh-day Adventist Church (South Queensland Conference) Limited

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# Seventh-day Adventist Church™ *South Queensland*

SQC is committed to supporting its members during these difficult times. Considering that we are in the middle of a pandemic, we wish to also remain committed to playing our role in keeping the community safe.

We would therefore **encourage** that weddings and funerals to be conducted at outdoor venues, grave sites or in funeral homes with services live streamed where possible.

3. As per local Government directives no small private group gatherings should occur or private transport outside your own suburb. As a result, we will not be able to physically meet in the homes of our fellow church members. Instead, churches are encouraged to meet together for bible studies and worship services via zoom and skype meetings.
4. Non-essential church member contact is to remain via phone calls, emails, social media sites and via zoom or skype sessions.
  - a. Church members identified as requiring **essential** face-to-face contact with their pastor, must follow the guide below:
    - i. Pastor to confirm that a visit is necessary via phone call
    - ii. Pastor to confirm with church member that they are healthy and no fever
    - iii. Church member to confirm that they and all other family members in the house are healthy and have no fevers
    - iv. Pastor to make home visit but to remain 1.5m outside front door
    - v. Pastor to follow hand hygiene procedures after departure.

Prime Minister, Scott Morrison recently addressed the nation on the 03 April 2020. Specific clarification was given regarding religious services. (Please note that this does not alter the guidelines given above)

- Churches and other places of worship will be considered places of work so that services can be livestreamed to the community
- Services may be conducted and live streamed providing only essential staff are present, the venue/facility remains closed to the public and social distancing principles are adhered to
- Churches wishing to conduct religious services, including Easter services must use the minimum number of participants required to deliver and live stream the service

This clarification supports our actions as a Conference and the livestreaming that is already taking place in our churches. The Prime Minister outlined a small number of people who could facilitate the livestreaming. To ensure that we remain socially responsible, we request that a maximum of 4 people only participate in this activity.

## **Easter**

In his this latest address the Prime Minister also mentioned the upcoming Easter Holidays. Please we would urge each church member to be compliant with the direction given to only participate in essential travel.

As of today, Queensland's total confirmed cases of Coronavirus is 934.

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In response to the continuous rise in Coronavirus cases, Queensland borders were closed from midnight 25<sup>th</sup> March 2020. Anyone travelling into Queensland will be required to self-quarantine for 14 days, regardless if they are sick or not.

The South Queensland Conference supports decisions made by both Federal and Local Governments and encourages its church members and staff to follow the General Precautionary Standards, which include:

- washing your hands often and thoroughly with regular soap and water for at least 20 seconds
- using a tissue to cover your mouth or cough and sneeze into your elbow
- avoiding close contact with others, such as touching and shaking hands
- Discard used tissues in a bin or bag immediately and wash your hands immediately
- Don't touch your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands
- Frequently clean and disinfect regularly used surfaces and public areas, such as hand rails, door handles and benches
- Maintain social distance at all times with a distance of at least 1.5 meters between yourself and the next person (for public interactions)
- Stay home, self-quarantine and call your doctor if you feel unwell

Let's continue to pray for each other and the rest of the Nation as we move through this difficult time and play our parts in minimizing the risk of spreading COVID-19. Here in South Queensland we remain committed in ensuring that our church members are cared for and spiritually supported. Our staff are working tirelessly at keeping us connected as

a church family, ministering to all of our churches in regional areas as well as city, even if it does look different.

## **Schools update**

Our teachers and students are currently on the end of Term 1 school break. Segment Leaders will meet twice during the break in preparation for Term 2. Staff will return to work on Monday 20 April unless health advice determines otherwise.

Our schools utilised the student free days at the end of Term 1 to continue preparation for flexible and remote learning when schools resume at the start of Term 2. We are awaiting a firm decision on the nature of Term 2, but it is assumed that schools will remain open for children of essential workers.

The school company is continuing to put routines and other measures in place to reduce risks for staff and students who will still be attending school. Principals and Business Managers are continuing to work with staff who are in the 'at risk' category to accommodate working from home, working in isolation from contact with children, or other suitable plans for the start of the new term. Our school bus services have been suspended indefinitely.

Our Early Learning Centres will remain open to serve our communities until the directive to close is given. The availability of our early childhood education and care (ECEC)

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services is vital to ensuring that during this COVID-19 event, workers can continue to work, and children, including vulnerable children, can continue to receive high quality education and care. Our Service Leaders and Business Managers are regularly monitoring all Service operations to assess the need for adjustments to staffing, fees, rosters, and operational costs

We acknowledge and thank all of our segment leaders, teachers and support staff for their continued dedication and hard work through these challenging and unprecedented times.

## **Aged Care update**

Having already put in place a range of measures to significantly reduce the potential for COVID-19 to reach their sites, the Aged Care team continue to assess their response and consider alternatives to strengthen these protections

At present there have not been any confirmed cases of COVID-19 at our sites. However we remain proactive and focused on prevention. We recognise the impact that this is having on our residents and their family and friends. We are committed to lifting the current measures as soon as it is safe to do so. We now have operating and in place video conferencing which enables our residents to stay connected with loved ones.

We are also focused on what activities we can introduce at all of our locations to assist with the feeling of being 'locked away'. We are exploring several ideas in an effort to connect and assist our residents during this time.

Updates from Eric Anderson, the CEO, continue to be posted on the Adventist Retirement Plus website <https://www.arplus.org.au/news/>.

## **Conclusion**

SQC has been proactive in these uncertain and difficult times. We appreciate that some of these measures will cause inconvenience and disappointment where expected programs are cancelled. We thank all in advance for your co-operation and understanding as we seek to deal as appropriately as possible with this constantly changing major and serious health threat.

With these comprehensive responses put in place, the SQC will continue to monitor, change and adapt as the virus changes and escalates. The SQC understands that the current situation is fluid and requires extensive monitoring and will update and inform both staff and members as additional information comes to hand and/or additional measures are required in our response.

May we continue to pray together for God's continuing guidance and protection for our church and our community through these challenging times.

Thank you for noting this important notice **and its updates** and following the directions as set by the Crisis Management Team in supporting the recommendations of the AUC.

Yours sincerely  
SQC Crisis Management Team

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