



## COVID-19 Response Plan



Fever



Cough



Fatigue



Sore throat



Shortness  
of breath

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Context

The coronavirus (COVID-19), which surfaced in late 2019, has spread to over 200 countries or territories, killing over 800,000, and infecting around 23 million people as at 24 August 2020. In Australia, the number of confirmed cases stands at around 25,000, of which, around 19,000 have recovered, with a death toll in excess of 500 people. Within Victoria, the situation is particularly serious, with our state contributing around 95% of all Australian cases and currently into Stage 3 restrictions which impose limitations on a range of activities at a group and individual level which have a significant impact on OneHope's staff, volunteers, and congregation.

## 1.2. Purpose

The procedure outlines OneHope's response to the prevention, management of disease and actions for operational continuity.

## 1.3. Scope

This procedure applies to all ministries of OneHope Baptist Church. Specifically, it addresses three key areas of the church's operations:

- Staff (employees) and team leaders
- Church Community
- Third Parties (customers/suppliers/contractors)

## 1.4. Implementation

Implementation rests with the Executive Pastor as the leader of the COVID-19 Response Team, the members of which are:

- Steve Sim (Leader)
- Jono Broadbent
- Annette in't Hout
- Robbie Spicer
- Christine Duncan

# 2. Background

## 2.1. Level of risk

Identifying the level of risk includes:

- Monitoring expert advice (for example, from the Chief Health Officer, Department of Health and Human Services)
- Receiving advice from the Baptist Union of Victoria
- Monitoring the latest Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) travel advice and updates from Baptist Insurances Services relating to travel, particularly to overseas destinations (e.g. missions trips)
- Considering whether planned activities put other people at risk.

## 2.2. Transmission

The virus spreads from person-to-person with the most likely mode of transfer being through:

- Close contact with an infected person
- Contact with droplets from an infected person's cough or sneeze
- Touching objects or surfaces (like doorknobs or tables) that have cough or sneeze droplets from an infected person, and then touching your mouth or face

## 2.3. Fundamental assumptions

During the past month, the outbreak has been spreading rapidly throughout the Victorian community. Initially within the Melbourne metropolitan area, but in more recent days, the virus has been transmitted into regional areas, including Geelong, which currently has over 100 active cases.

The population groups at greater risk are the elderly and people with chronic diseases, and communities with high numbers of at-risk individuals such as nursing homes.

There are no vaccines that protect against COVID-19 at the moment. There is no specific treatment for COVID-19. Early diagnosis and general supportive care are important. Most of the time, symptoms will resolve on their own. People who have serious disease with complications can be cared for in hospital.

## 3. Prevention

The best-case scenario is the prevention from contracting the virus in the first place. The following information lists the steps that can be taken to reduce the likelihood of contracting this virus.

### 3.1. Duty of care

- General duty of care – all staff and team leaders have a fundamental obligation not to put any participant within the church community in harm's way. Reconsider your decisions that can increase the likelihood of someone from the church, or their family members, contracting this virus - for example, by close contact.
- The categories of people at most risk of serious infection are:
  - people with compromised immune systems (e.g. those with cancer, undergoing chemotherapy treatment)
  - elderly and very young children
  - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
  - people with diagnosed chronic medical conditions
  - people in group residential settings

### 3.2. Hygiene

- Avoid handshakes, hugs and kisses
- Place at least 1.5 metres between you and another person when interacting (social distancing)
- [Wash hands for at least 30 seconds with soap](#) or if soap and water are unavailable use [antibacterial alcohol-based hand sanitizer](#) if your hands are not visibly soiled.

- Try not to touch your eyes, nose and mouth
- Wear a face mask at all times when in a public setting
- If you sneeze cover your mouth with a tissue or your elbow
- Stand clear of someone displaying signs of COVID-19 (i.e. cough, sneeze, etc.)
- Continue healthy habits: exercise, drink water, get plenty of sleep

### 3.3. Cleaning

OneHope has introduced transmission-based precautions to lower the risk of infection exposure.

PPE should be worn and disposed of appropriately for the location being cleaned.

Disinfectants and cleaning materials should be appropriate for the location. Sanispray surface cleaner is the main disinfectant to be used in all general areas.

Disposable gloves **must** be worn whilst cleaning and hands cleaned upon completion. Face masks are available to all staff and cleaners on request. Please discuss PPE and cleaning materials with your manager if you are unsure what should be used.

#### Cleaning Procedure

##### Daily cleaning and disinfection required

- Door handles
  - Office
  - Front doors
  - Auditorium & Barrabool Room doors
- Bathrooms
  - Door handles including cubicle doors
  - Taps
  - Cistern flush buttons
  - Urinals
  - Toilet bowls and seats
  - Empty hand towel bins
  - Stock paper where required
  - Mop floor when required
- General office areas
  - Front office desks
  - Hot drinks station, including kettle handle, canisters and lids
  - Water dispenser taps
  - Phones
  - Computer equipment where required
  - Photocopier screen and buttons
  - Coffee table
  - Couch arms

- Staff Kitchen area
  - Tap handles
  - Benches
  - Tables
  - Wipe fridge door handle
- Kitchen areas – to be managed by Kitchen Manager

#### **Funeral/Function cleaning (prior and post)**

- Hard surfaces (all sign in tables)
- Bathrooms
- Kitchen areas
  - Café servery
  - All café and coffee tables
  - All other areas in the kitchen to be managed by Kitchen manager as per kitchen cleaning procedures.

**Hand sanitiser is available at the office reception**

## 4. Preparedness

Sufficient supplies or alternative products have been secured for hand sanitiser, alcohol-based or other cleaning products.

Working from home arrangements have been put in place and all staff are to self-isolate where this is possible without undue disruption to church operations. IT resourcing options for working from home arrangements may include the use of Microsoft Teams for file sharing, messaging, and teleconferencing.

## 5. Stage 3 Restrictions

The Victorian Government has imposed Stage 4 restrictions for the Melbourne metropolitan area and Stage 3 restrictions for Regional Victoria, including Geelong. In addition, the wearing of face masks when in a public setting has been mandated for all Victorians.

For Geelong, there are only four reasons for someone to leave home: shopping for food and supplies, care and caregiving, exercise, and study or work – if you can't do it from home. No visitors are allowed into homes other than for a person who is in an intimate relationship with someone within the home.

- Religious ceremonies and private worship: broadcast only
- Weddings: up to 5 people (couple, two witnesses and celebrant)
- Funerals: up to 10 people, plus those conducting the funeral
- Attending a wedding or funeral is a permitted reason to leave home

## 6. Response to suspected case

In the case where a staff member or ministry leader shows the symptoms of COVID-19, the following guidelines should be followed.

## 6.1. Symptoms

Patients may have fever, headache, cough, sore throat, runny nose, shortness of breath and other symptoms.

In more severe cases, infection can cause pneumonia with severe acute respiratory distress.

A public information hotline is provided by Nurse-on-Call – 1800 675 398.

## 6.2. Actions

If you develop symptoms, follow the actions below:

### Affected person:

- Immediately notify the Executive Pastor. Do not come into the office. Cease all public ministry.
- Maintain social distance (1.5 metres) from others and wear a surgical mask if available
- Contact Victoria Government, Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS), Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) hotline 1800 675 398 or [www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus](http://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus)
- Assist the Executive Pastor to conduct close contact tracing (a close contact is someone who has been face to face for at least 15 minutes or been in the same closed space for at least 2 hours, as someone who has tested positive for the COVID-19 when that person was infectious).
- The affected person must seek medical clearance before returning to any form of ministry, regardless of whether a 14-day isolation period was imposed. You need to obtain a medical certificate from a doctor and provide an electronic copy to the Executive Pastor before resuming any form of ministry that involves other people.

### Close contacts:

- People identified as being close contacts with the affected person will be requested to refrain from engaging with the church community until the results of the potentially affected person is available.
- In case of a positive result the people that have been in close contact with the affected person should exercise self-isolation of 14 days (refer to the isolation guidelines below - section 5.4). **If symptoms develop** that person should report contact the Victorian Government's, Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS), Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) hotline 1800 675 398 or [www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus](http://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus)
- In the case of staff who may become infected, the Executive Pastor will implement isolation and work-from-home protocols as needed. The situation will be reviewed, and staff updated periodically about further actions.

## 6.3. Self-isolation

All OneHope people are required to self-isolate in the following cases:

- If you are returning from anywhere overseas you must isolate yourself for 14 days upon returning home in accordance with government directives.
- If you have been in close contact with a proven case of COVID-19, you must isolate yourself for 14 days from the date of last contact with the confirmed case.

- In the case of OneHope Staff, the employee must seek medical clearance before returning to work, regardless of whether a 14-day isolation period was imposed. You need to obtain a medical certificate from a medical doctor and provide an electronic copy to the Executive Pastor before presenting at the OneHope office.
- If you are required to self-isolate in accordance with this response plan, or in accordance with a direction from a medical doctor, health or government agency, OneHope asks that you work from home if you are otherwise well and not suffering adverse symptoms or health effects. Working from home will be considered as ordinary working time.
- To the extent that you suffer adverse symptoms or health affects during the self-isolation period, the days you are unwell will be deemed Personal (Sick) Leave

For details on self-isolation refer to the Australian government [Isolation Guidelines](#)

## 7. Communication

The OneHope COVID-19 Committee meet on a Monday morning of each week and will provide updates to the Elders, staff and broader church community on this Response Plan, including government advice regarding prevention, preparedness and operational continuity plans.

The Committee will update this COVID-19 Response Plan based on assessment of risk, operational conditions, and reported COVID-19 cases should they occur within the OneHope community. Such updates to the Plan will be made available through the OneHope website [www.onehope.org.au](http://www.onehope.org.au)

OneHope will provide this COVID-19 Response Plan and subsequent updates to contractors, suppliers and customers (refer Section 8).

Communications must be carefully controlled. The Executive Pastor will be the primary spokesperson on this matter. Ministry leaders will address operational matters relating to their particular ministry area.

## 8. Church Office

From 23 March 2020, the church office closed until further notice. Staff are working from home wherever possible. A skeleton staff is on hand to attend to issues as they arise. The church phone is diverted to a mobile service to take calls that would ordinarily be directed to the office. Contact can still be made via our general email address, [info@onehope.org.au](mailto:info@onehope.org.au), or by calling (03) 5249 0200.

## 9. Church life

### 9.1. Sunday Services

**Sunday Services have been suspended** pending further advice from government health officials. Large gatherings of people (e.g. Sunday Services) will not be conducted until further notice.

Pastoral staff will provide materials suitable for the spiritual life and vitality of the church via electronic media until such times as Sunday Services are restored. These materials will be published each week via the OneHope website and email updates provided weekly to contacts within our database as the situation unfolds.

### 9.2. Broadcasts

The Victorian Government has consistently updated its requirements in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Most notably, the Chief Health Officer released *Restricted Activities Directions (Non-Melbourne)* on 5 August 2020 which states 'If a ceremony is held at a place of worship. . . the only



persons permitted to attend the place of worship are those necessary for the ceremony and the broadcasting of that ceremony to occur, up to a maximum of five (5) people.' As such, OneHope will ensure that a maximum of five people are within the building at any given time to produce our streamed services. Those people will comply with is the 1.5m social distancing requirement. See also section 9.3.1 relating to the density quotient.

For clarity, OneHope defines 'Broadcasts' in line with those defined in the legislation cited above. That is, any church content that is produced (live or pre-recorded) by a ministry (not limited to Sunday Services) that is communicated via electronic means.

### 9.3. Screening

Before people are admitted into the OneHope facilities, including for the recording of Sunday online services, they are required to complete a questionnaire as a means of screening the health of those entering the building. Specifically, the following questions are asked:

1. Have you washed your hands or used hand sanitiser on entry?
2. Have you had any of the following respiratory symptoms anytime within the past 14 days?
  - Fever
  - Sore throat
  - Cough
  - Shortness of breath

If YES to any, you are not to enter the building

3. Have you been overseas anytime within the past 14 days?

If YES, you are not to enter the building

4. Have you been in locations with recognised COVID-19 cases within the past 14 days?

If NO, you may enter the building but please remember:

- Wash your hands or use hand sanitiser throughout your time in the building
- Wear a face mask at all times whilst in the building
- Do not shake hands with, touch or hug individuals during your time in the building
- Place at least 1.5 metres between you and another person when interacting (social distancing)
- If you sneeze or cough, cover your mouth with a tissue or your elbow
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth

### 9.4. Group Gatherings

#### 9.4.1. Meetings in church facilities

The current legislation affecting our ability to gather in groups is that issued by the Victorian Government's Chief Health Officer, 2 August 2020. This legislation allows for an operator of a place of worship to:

- (a) host an essential public support service (e.g. food bank)
- (b) host a support group (e.g. alcohol or drugs, parenting, etc.), or
- (c) conduct a private worship or small religious ceremony (including recorded church services)
- (d) host a wedding or a funeral

In all cases, appropriate social distancing will apply. In addition, the government has required that the total number of persons present in the indoor space at the same time must not exceed the number calculated by dividing the total area (measured in square metres) of the indoor space by four (4) – the *density quotient*.

As a result of this easing of restrictions, OneHope has discontinued all meetings within the building until further notice. Exceptions include one-on-one meeting with pastors and the recording of online services as per section 9.1 above.

Anyone entering the building must complete the screening checklists and the area used is thoroughly cleaned before and after use (refer section 3.3). The Executive Pastor will advise on the most appropriate space to use to remain within the density quotient.

Room bookings are essential to manage the number of people in the facilities. Please contact the church office to do so.

A 60-minute window will be applied between groups using a particular meeting space within the building to allow for cleaning in accordance with section 3.2.

#### 9.4.2. Weddings and funerals

The restrictions as stated by the Victorian Government on 2 August 2020 is the controlling legislation for the conduct of weddings and funerals.

The requirements for a wedding are that there be no more than five (5) people in attendance.

(a) it involves only:

- (i) the two persons being married; and
- (ii) the authorised celebrant; and
- (iii) two witnesses to the marriage

(b) in any case, if the wedding is held in a single undivided indoor space, the total number of persons present at the same time in the space must not exceed the density quotient.

The requirements for a funeral are that it involves no more than 10 persons (excluding persons reasonably necessary for the conduct of the funeral); and the total number of people present does not exceed the density quotient.

The church café and kitchen facilities are closed except for the purposes of supporting meal preparation and distribution during this time.

#### 9.5. Life Groups

The restrictions, as stated by the Victorian Government on 2 August 2020, banned all visitors into private homes. This means that Life Groups can no longer meet face-to-face. Some suggested ways of remaining in touch include:

- Meet online via some digital platform (e.g. Zoom)
- Meet 1 person outside the home for a walk and coffee
- Connect and text via social media groups
- Give someone a call

Life Group members caring for each other will enable church resources to be directed to those within our church family requiring additional care (the elderly, those house-bound etc). If you have any questions, please call Robbie Spicer (Young Adult Life Groups), Jono Broadbent (Moolap Life Groups) or your Life Group Team Leader if you are from the Barrabool Hills Campus. Together we are here to support and help you.

Pastoral staff will remain in close contact with Life Group leaders during the period ahead to provide support, care and resourcing.

## 9.6. Care Ministries

### 9.6.1. Prayer

We will continue to support the church community during the COVID-19 response period. Prayer needs will continue to be received via the church office or pastoral staff and be communicated to the prayer team as they arise. We will provide people the opportunity to receive prayer over the phone by the following means:

1. Person seeking prayer contacts the office
2. Staff will email a prayer with name and contact number to a member of Prayer Team
3. Prayer team member will make contact within 48 hours
4. Prayer team member will email the church office with brief details of prayer call

### 9.6.2. Meals Support

OneHope will provide meals in response to specific needs. We will also provide shopping support for those who are in quarantine or isolation and have no other support network. As we have always done; we're encouraging Life Groups and Ministry Teams to support each other.

If we do need to provide a meal for someone who is sick or in quarantine, then we will need to take extra precautions. We suggest placing the meal in a disposable container (which you can be collected from the church office) and, when it comes to deliver, leave the meal on the doorstep and call or text the person, informing them that the meal is waiting for them. Following these protocols will ensure there is no physical contact with the person receiving the meal.

The COVID-19 Response Team will continue to monitor the situation and provide updates as more becomes known.

If our church community does hear of a person who is at risk of not having food, or the ability to prepare it, please contact Annette in't Hout (for Barrabool Hills people) or Jono Broadbent (for Moolap people).

### 9.6.3. Visitation

In this time of social distancing, self-quarantining, and isolation we need to be mindful of those who are potentially feeling the effects of these measures. We also need to ensure the wellbeing of our volunteers. With this in mind, we have made a few decisions and changes to what we are doing.

The Lusson Communion service will not be happening until further notice in line with government directives. Those in Residential aged care facilities are some of the most vulnerable in this situation, so we need to do all we can to keep them safe and well.

## 9.7. Outreach

The following external outreach ministries have been discontinued until further notice:

- Belmont High School outreach
- Newcomb High School outreach
- Luson Aged Care Facility outreach
- Cup Cakes Ministry

## 10. Customers, Suppliers and Contractors

### 10.1. Facilities hire

OneHope's facilities are utilised by a range of external customers, most notably, Tuckers Funeral and Bereavement Services. We are liaising closely with such parties to understand their particular response to the COVID-19 pandemic and to inform them of OneHope's response.

Funerals held within OneHope facilities will be limited to family and close friends only. Attendance numbers will be managed carefully to ensure they are in compliance with government directives regarding group sizes

### 10.2. Suppliers and Contractors

We will continue to receive supplies as per normal arrangements but will remain in close contact with our key suppliers and respond accordingly. This Response Plan will be provided to our key contractors together with any updates as they occur.

## Appendix 1 – Health contacts

If you suspect you may have the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), please call the hotline on **1800 675 398**.

### Useful resources

Department of Health & Human Services, State Government of Victoria, Australia (health advice and support in state of Victoria)

<https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/victorian-public-coronavirus-disease-covid-19>

Department of health, Australian Government provides a number of other resources at this location:

<https://www.health.gov.au/resources/collections/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-resources>

Department of health, Australian Government (health advice)

<https://www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert>

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australian Government (travel advice)

<https://www.smartraveller.gov.au/news-and-updates/coronavirus-covid-19>

Coronavirus statistics tracking by Johns Hopkins University

<https://gisanddata.maps.arcgis.com/apps/opsdashboard/index.html#/bda7594740fd40299423467b48e9ecf6>