



COVID-19 Communique: 1 June 2020

Welcome to June!

Firstly, let's praise God that the future is looking brighter than it was 30 days ago, and much brighter than it appeared in March.

Unlike the implementation of restrictions in March, where all States and Territories arrived at the same point within a short time of each other, the rolling back of restrictions is taking very different speeds and approaches throughout the various States and Territories.

What is true though, is that the easing of restrictions is generally happening at a quicker pace than what most of us envisaged in the 'dark' days of late March. Back then, it was hard to imagine that any member would be welcoming groups in June, yet in both South Australia and Western Australia, I am aware of CVA members who are hosting (small) groups in early June, with other members also hosting some groups later this month.

What is evident is that each State or Territory jurisdiction is being very clear and firm that the 'relaxing of restrictions' is not one-size-fits-all and is their decision to make. Whilst they may be guided or influenced by the Commonwealth Government, they will not be dictated to; the conversation around the opening of State borders being just one example of this.

The CVA office is fielding many enquiries as to what can and cannot be done and we are working hard to provide clear answers, though this is proving exceptionally difficult.

The following is a list of our most frequently asked questions. I must emphasise that the answers provided are what we believe to be correct at the time of writing; however, some may already be outdated. It is a strange world we are living in.

FAQS

1. When can I reopen?

Well that depends...

The main barriers to reopening have been:

1. The restriction on regional travel and staying overnight;
2. The health advice being presented to governments regarding the risks of groups going away together and the associated risk of a cluster of infections being created.

In all jurisdictions, regional travel restrictions are being relaxed in June. As these restrictions are rolled back throughout the country, the ability to host groups is also being made available.

The advice from the Health Departments is also being more positive for our sector, with increased group sizes and social interaction being allowed.

2. When can schools come back to camp, and do I need a COVID Safe Plan?

That depends, and YES.

Overall, there are two segments regarding schools. Non-government schools can generally return to camps as soon as the travel and health restrictions are lifted in that State or Territory. State schools will need the ban on excursions (including camps), issued by the relevant Department of Education, to be lifted before they can return.

- In **South Australia**, the Department of Education has indicated that school camps can recommence now, with certain restrictions in place. We are working on gaining further clarity on these restrictions.

COVID Safe Plans in SA need to be created using the SA government online template 'Create a COVID-Safe Plan', a link for which can be found towards the bottom of their 'Recovery from COVID-19' page.

See: <https://www.covid-19.sa.gov.au/recovery>.

This page also contains recovery roadmap details and other information.

- **Western Australia** has templates for the development of COVID Safe Plans for certain business sectors available, with a COVID Safe Certificate to be displayed in those businesses covered under that plan. All businesses need a COVID Safe plan before they can reopen. This template is available here <https://www.smallbusiness.wa.gov.au/blog/covid-safety-plans-business>

The timeline for government schools returning to camp is unclear.

- The **Victorian** Department of Education website indicates that beyond Stage Two “Regular school activities, such as sports, camps and excursions will resume consistent with the lifting of travel restrictions”.
- See:
https://education.vic.gov.au/school/Pages/stagedreturn_advicetoschools.aspx#link2

Guidance is currently being sought as to what that means in practise.

The Victorian government released guidelines for the hospitality industry on 26 May. Whilst designed for cafes and clubs they are of use for our sector. They are available here: <https://tinyurl.com/vic-gov-hospitality-covid>

- The **Queensland** Government is requiring an ‘Industry-wide COVID Safe Plan’ to be submitted by the peak bodies, which will be endorsed by the Deputy Health Officer. From there an operator will need to develop their own plan in line with this Industry Plan. This Industry Plan is likely to be submitted in early June. CVA is involved in this development.

We are yet to see indications from the Department of Education regarding when school camps can be held, though non-government schools are likely to be able to attend camps during Term 3.

The Qld government’s announcement regarding the allowing of recreational travel from 1 June included such phrases as “there is no limit to the number of customers for accommodation providers” and confirmation that shared bathrooms can be used in campgrounds and hostels. However, within this order there is a specify ban on school camps at caravan and camping parks and campgrounds.

See: <https://tinyurl.com/qld-gov-public-health>

Again, we are hopeful that the Industry COVID Safe Plan will allow school camps in our facilities.

- **New South Wales** requires individual COVID-19 plans that cover the key areas as outlined in the CVA/ACA Risk Register.

Whilst there are no specific plans available for our sector, there are plans available for both Caravan Parks as well as Restaurants and Cafes. We would recommend that both plans be completed.

These can be found here:

<https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/industry-guidelines>

Again, there is no indication from the Department of Education regarding the timing of the lifting of bans on school excursions/camps.

- **Tasmania** has indicated that school camps should be able to return by mid-July. There is a COVID-19 workplace plan template issued by Work Safe Tasmania which, whilst not required to be submitted **must be completed by 15 June and available for review** by a Work Safe inspector upon request.

The template can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/worksafe-tas-template-covid>

3. When does the 4sqm rule apply?

Explaining the concept of the Trinity to a 10-year-old is easier than interpreting this rule.

In general, the concept is that there must be 4sqm of space per ADULT is the current general standard. School aged children are generally exempt from this rule, within the school setting.

However, we are seeing variations to this emerging -

- **Western Australia** has **changed the 4sqm rule to a 2sqm rule** for all businesses effect 6 June. As short-term accommodation must have a minimum of 2sqm per bed, (depending on what state you are in) this would allow all cabin beds to be used).

See: <https://tinyurl.com/wa-gov-covid-roadmap3>

NOTE: As we are seeing throughout this unwinding of restrictions not all States and Territories are adopting the same principles. Therefore, whilst this a most encouraging development and wonderful for our WA members we wait and see what the approach is in other jurisdictions.

- **NSW** has exemptions to this 4sqm rule for accommodation as part of the Public Health Order of 1 June. CVA is in the process of writing to the NSW Health Minister seeking clarification on how this applies to our members.
- The **South Australian** Premier made verbal comment that this requirement is impractical for certain tourist ventures (i.e. 4WD tours). There seems to be a changing this language towards “where practically possible”, though this is not official policy as yet.
- **Queensland** is also seemingly allowing variates from the 4sqm within industry plans, though this is yet to be fully clarified. Documents released relating to the current easing of restrictions seem to make provision for exemptions to this rule for accommodation providers.

4. What are the rules for cabin accommodation?

See first point in Q 3 above!

It would seem likely that the 4sqm rule will be required for all adults (defined as non-school aged) at this time, with the exception of WA, though again there is ambiguity regarding this within each jurisdiction. Again, we are working on gaining clarity, as there are seemingly exceptions to this for accommodation providers.

CVA is aiming to encourage all jurisdictions to treat camps as a campus of school and thus no more social distancing is required. It is possible that a requirement that each camper sleeps head to toe with the next one in bunk rooms. The current danger is that the rules governing Boarding Schools will be applied to camps which are extremely restrictive and unworkable.

The Center for Disease Control in the USA has recommendations around sleeping head to toe rather than a designated sqm per person.

5. Is using shared bathrooms allowed?

Again, this varies depending on jurisdiction, though this is likely to be the case. With caravan parks and camp groups being open, the availability of shared amenities is implicit in this, as is the case in places such as ski fields (and even shopping malls and schools).

Increased cleaning will be required as will be the availability of soap or hand sanitisers. **Queensland** by way of example explicitly allows for shared bathrooms.

6. How many can I have in my dining room or meeting room?

As cafes and restaurants around the country open up, we will see more clarity around this question.

Currently we see mixed messages, being either:

- 4 sqm required for each person; or
- 1.5m between each seated guest

Currently, it is likely that 4sqm in meeting rooms is required. Once again **WA** is the only state below that (being 2sqm) at the time of writing.

7. Do I need a COVID Safe Plan?

Yes definitely, a site based COVID Safe Plan will be required. I note a new recommendation from Safe Work Australia, that steps should be taken to reduce close contact between staff or clients.

Close contact is defined as 'more than 15 minutes face-to-face cumulative over the course of a week'.

See: <https://tinyurl.com/safework-aus-physical-dist>

I note that **State-based WHS rules take precedence** over the national body.

You will also need to ensure that each facility has the ability to isolate a person suspected of being COVID-19 positive, until they can leave the site.

8. How can I convince groups that they are safe in coming to my site?

Going on camp is entering a closed community. Therefore, it is likely that anyone coming on a camp is going to have contact with less people than if they were at their place of work, school or local shopping centre. Beyond that, camps provide a place of healing and restoration for a society fractured by social isolation.

9. Are my disinfection procedures adequate?

Follow best practise as outlined through Safe Work Australia. Additionally, some Departments of Education have cleaning guidelines for schools, and these should also be followed.

See the following links for guidance –

<https://tinyurl.com/safework-aus-cleaning-chklst>

<https://tinyurl.com/edu-vic-cleaningsupplies>

10. What about a Crisis Communication Plan?

CVA have had a template developed to use in case of crisis as a result of a claim of a COVID-19 case arising from a guest staying at your facility. This is not a publicly available document, but can be accessed through this link: <https://tinyurl.com/cva-covid-crisis-media-comms>

It can also be accessed from the 'Administration & Catering' section of the CVA Members Area of the CVA website.