



## Mission & Ministry

Dear partners in ministry

This week has brought unprecedented changes to our national life as our government responds to the global COVID-19 crisis. We are deeply aware that this will significantly impact the churches and the communities they serve.

We also join with Christian voices from around the globe that are calling us to pay attention to the opportunity that God is inviting us into as the people of God who carry His hope, and life and peace within us into the world.

The current world crisis is also an opportunity to re-frame ourselves. Mark Sayers from Red Church in Melbourne posted a very insightful perspective that our churches can adopt in the midst of a perceived season of isolation. Mark posted [this video](#) on Instagram earlier this week.

The Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) has [recommended limits](#) on organised gatherings. These include limiting non-essential:

- internal gatherings to fewer than 100 people
- outdoor gatherings to fewer than 500 people

The Department of Health have [issued advice](#) specific for organised gatherings, such as churches.

We know that many of our churches are already putting protocols in place for their community work and worship services that will enable people to serve and to gather in ways that enable connection within these boundaries.

And we are already hearing some encouraging stories of local churches have sharpened their capacity and desire to reach out to those impacted by what's happening.

Watch our [Facebook site](#) and [website](#) as we share those stories.

We do want to flag that in the days ahead there may be further restrictions on gathering numbers and we want to encourage you to be thinking ahead to what creative ideas you might need to implement to enable your congregation to care for each other and support those in the community.

### **Congregational Gatherings**

We are not issuing proscriptive guidelines for congregations, but you might want to consider ways that you can stay connected yet reduce personal physical contact as per the Department of Health [guidelines](#).

You might want to reconsider your seating arrangements, greeting times, or catering arrangements which enable you to remain gathered but mindful of healthy practices for this time.

You also might want to consider meeting online or in smaller communities. We have included some basic information below on how you may host an online gathering.

### **Community Contact**

There are many in our community who will need practical and pastoral support in the coming days. This crisis is an invitation for us to be more attentive to how we can be the presence of Jesus especially among those who are vulnerable and at risk both physically and in term of navigating anxiety and uncertainty.

The current government restrictions are an opportunity for us to be intentional in being the embodied presence of Jesus in our church and community and we anticipate the unexpected ways Jesus may lead us to be that hope to others – even through this simple act of a phone call, texts and inviting people to gather in smaller groups for encouragement and connection.

Our Mission & Ministry team are available to support you as you meet these challenges and transition through these changes. The first point of contact will be our administration team on (02) 8573 6002 or [admin@freshhope.org.au](mailto:admin@freshhope.org.au) – and then enquiries will be directed to other team members as required. (Please be aware that over weekends, these will not be monitored).

Finally, let's not forget to pray. Pray for those who are affected by Covid-19, pray for our nation and the nations of the world, and pray for your community.

We will update you further, if necessary, in due time.

God bless,

John Crowther

Director | Mission & Ministry

Fresh Hope