

Dear proprietor and industry partners

## **Change to Public Health Directions to support businesses**

The ACT Chief Health Officer Dr Kerryn Coleman today announced a move to Step 3.2 of Canberra's Recovery Plan to come into effect at **9am next Friday, 9 October 2020**, subject to the COVID-19 situation remaining stable.

These changes reflect the ACT's continued positive response to COVID-19 and improvement in neighbouring jurisdictions when it comes to COVID-19.

The changes will see an easing of restrictions across a number of business and industry sectors, including hospitality venues in the ACT.

The key changes announced today include:

### **Hospitality sector including Restaurants, Clubs, Cafes and other licensed venues**

- Medium-sized venues (with a total **usable** floor space of between 101 and 200 square metres) can have a maximum total of 50 people across the premises (excluding staff).
- Larger-sized businesses (with a total **usable** floor space of over 200 square metres) can have maximum of 200 people per usable space, or one person per four square metres, whichever is lesser.

Please note: the Chief Health Officer is considering a move to a ratio of one person per two square metres for outdoor dining spaces, maintaining a cap of 200 people or one person per two square metres, whichever is lesser. Considerations are still underway on this change, and the Chief Health Officer hopes to provide further advice on this before 9 October 2020. Relevant businesses might like to start forward planning at this time about how it may work for them.

### **Important:**

- Venues seeking to utilise these changes and increase their occupancy must update their mandatory signage and COVID-19 Safety Plans to reflect this.
- Usable floor space means the floor space you have calculated for your COVID-19 occupancy (ie. excludes areas such as storerooms and toilets).
- In determining new customer numbers, businesses must not breach any pre-existing liquor or fire occupancy loading and regulatory conditions that are in place.

### **Changes to gathering sizes**

- All indoor and outdoor gathering can increase to a maximum of 200 people, or one person per four square metres, whichever is lesser.

- This applies in all sectors and settings including gyms, personal services, places of worship, weddings, funerals, real estate and auction houses.
- If people wish to hold a gathering with more than 200 people, they must seek an exemption in accordance with the [COVID Safe Event Protocol](#).

### Cinemas

- Cinemas and movie theatres can sell up to 50% capacity of each theatre, up to 200 people.

The above changes to restrictions are underpinned by the following public health principles:

- Seated and ticketed events, where movement and face to face interactions are limited, can support an increased density.
- A continuing increase in uptake by business and undertakings of electronic recording of contact details to better assist in contact tracing.
- Businesses, venues, facilities, and events having well established COVID Safety Plans in place, which address how they manage physical distancing, crowd control, cleaning and hygiene requirements

### Electronic recording of contact details

Electronic recording of patron details is preferred. Businesses can use the free Check In CBR App. Details are [available here](#).

### Ongoing compliance activity

Compliance with the current Public Health Direction is critical in supporting community safety. Access Canberra, the Health Protection Service and ACT Policing continue to undertake proactive checks at businesses to support compliance and community safety against the current Public Health Direction.

Non-compliance with the public health directions can result in regulatory action and serious penalties may apply.

It is acknowledged that businesses utilising the maximum 25 or 50 patron maximum, may not be able to maintain 1.5 metres physical distancing between customers who are not known to each other. The expectation is:

- Businesses should organise their spaces to maximise physical distancing between groups of customers, and
- Apply the 1.5 metre rule where possible and continue with other measures to keep their staff and customers safe.

### Further guidance or information:

- Further information is available on the ACT Government's [COVID-19 website](#).
- The Access Canberra Business Liaison Team is available to answer questions or provide advice. Reach the team on (02) 6205 0900.
- The updated Public Health Direction will be available prior to the change commencing on the [COVID-19 website](#).

These changes do not take effect until 9am on 9 October 2020. Until this time, the existing Public Health Direction remains in effect.

Your ongoing cooperation and proactive compliance with the Public Health Direction is greatly appreciated as we work to support our community's safety and Canberra's recovery from COVID-19.

Yours sincerely



Vojkan Stefanovic  
A/g Executive Branch Manager  
Health Protection Service



Emily Springett  
Executive Branch Manager  
Access Canberra