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General Secretary  
**Rev Heather den Houting**

Intranet update – all internal staff  
16 March 2020

Good afternoon everyone,

Due to the continued spread of novel coronavirus (COVID-19) across Australia and Queensland, the Synod office has established a central coronavirus task group. This team is centrally managing the Queensland Synod's pandemic and outbreak preparedness activities across the Synod office, presbyteries and congregations, schools and colleges, childcare centres, enterprises and in close liaison with our agencies.

If you have a question that has not yet been adequately addressed by our internal communications on coronavirus to date, please raise the question with your line manager who can raise it with the coronavirus task group who are meeting daily.

Caring for our staff and the community in which we serve is of utmost importance to us therefore it is critically important that we all commit to adhering to Government policy and business protocols so that we play our part in containing the continued spread of the coronavirus.

### Key updates as at Monday 16 March 2020

- **Anyone** returning from **any overseas country** must now self-isolate at home for 14 days from your date of arrival in Australia. Failure to do so will be considered an offence under new laws being passed by the Federal Government and enforced by the states.
- Before returning to work after your home isolation period, you will be required to provide your manager with **written confirmation from a medical practitioner** which states you are negative for coronavirus.
- The Federal Government is currently advising Australians to defer all non-essential overseas travel until further notice. If you still choose to travel overseas, **we require you** to notify your manager of your travel plans and follow the travel advice of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), and **self-isolate at home for 14 days upon your return to Australia**. Current [DFAT travel advice](#) can be found online.
- You should stay 1.5m from any other person and please practice good hygiene measures (i.e. regularly wash your hands, use hand sanitiser, cover your mouth while coughing or sneezing and avoid touching your face and mouth).
- **All non-essential meetings must be cancelled**. Essential meetings mean those that are deemed business critical.
- If a meeting is business critical, keep meeting attendee numbers as **small as possible**, ideally no more than 10 people in the same room or space at one time. Do not hold meetings where a 1.5m space cannot be maintained between attendees.
- **Minimise business meetings at your site or office** that don't relate to critical business i.e. please discourage visitors on site, particularly those individuals who are most vulnerable in these circumstances. Please contact your manager for further guidance if required.
- To build our capacity to work remotely, we will be identifying functional teams to work remotely on a rotational basis. For those unfamiliar with working from home, [Standard Operating Procedures are available](#) – any additional requests, can be logged with the Help Desk.

- If and while working remotely, electronic authorisations will be acceptable under our Synod Delegations policy.
- **All work related international and interstate travel is immediately banned.** We will advise you when these business travel restrictions have been lifted.
- We have established a [coronavirus update website](#) for employees and volunteers. Please refer to this site regularly for the **most up-to-date advice and direction for employees.**
- If you are unwell but do not have symptoms consistent with coronavirus infection (cold and flu symptoms), please do not come to work, and seek guidance from your direct manager.
- Please continue to refer directly to the [Queensland Health](#) and the [Australian Department of Health](#) websites for the most up-to-date information and public health advice on coronavirus.