

## COVID 19 Management advice for Lions Clubs

This advice relates to any events arranged by Lions in the current environment, including club meetings, fundraising events and service activities, seminars, workshops and conferences.

### Government Directions

Lions must follow all government directions. Government regulations regarding COVID change regularly so it is important to seek current information. Lions should not rely on information provided in social media and internet sources as this can be unreliable. Even news sources can sometimes incorrectly report laws and regulations. The following government sources should be used.

Australia - <https://www.health.gov.au/campaigns/coronavirus-covid-19>

ACT - <https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/>

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

Northern Territory - <https://coronavirus.nt.gov.au>

Queensland - <https://www.covid19.qld.gov.au>

South Australia - <https://www.covid-19.sa.gov.au>

Tasmanian - <https://coronavirus.tas.gov.au>

Victoria - <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus>

Western Australia - <https://www.wa.gov.au/government/covid-19-coronavirus>

Club members should regularly review this information.

### Risk Management

The focus of Risk Management in the COVID 19 environment is to reduce the rate of spread of the illness so that health authorities can manage the cases.

The principle methods to reduce the spread of the virus are;

1. Personal care: - Hand-washing, hygiene around sneezing, self-isolation if symptomatic or at risk.  
<https://www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert/what-you-need-to-know-about-coronavirus-covid-19#protect-yourself-and-others>.
2. Social distancing
  - a. staying at home when you are unwell
  - b. avoiding large public gatherings if they're not essential
  - c. keeping a distance of 1.5 metres between you and other people whenever possible
  - d. minimising physical contact, especially with people at higher risk such as older people and people with existing health conditions.
3. Mask wearing – Mask wearing is an effective tool to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID 19. It is mandatory in many circumstances depending on your State regulations from time to time.
4. Vaccination: - Vaccination against COVID 19 is becoming widely available and members should consider vaccination in consultation with their doctors.

### Those individuals at higher risk

Medical evidence suggests that the virus symptoms vary broadly. Some individuals report mild, cold-like symptoms, while for others, the risks are more severe and even fatal. Those most at risk are the elderly, those with compromised immune systems and with underlying conditions including heart disease and diabetes.

*Irrespective of the individual response to the illness, it should be remembered that those with even mild symptoms can pass the illness to others.*

## **Event management**

Lions Clubs that control events or facilities should conduct regular risk assessments, documenting the results. This includes club meetings at 'dens' controlled by the club.

The risk assessment should consider:

- a. Numbers of participants
- b. Likelihood of 'at risk' participants attending.
- c. 'Social distance' – are participants likely to be in close proximity.
- d. Availability of hygiene facilities. (Handwashing, hand sanitisers etc.)
- e. Ability to control entry. (Is it possible to restrict entry to those who are observed as being unwell)
- f. Does it comply with government advice and regulations?

Please note that:

- Governments and/or venues may require COVID-19 Safety Plans to be registered for some events.
- Governments will likely require QR codes or other approved methods of checking in attendees at events, to assist with the contact tracing process should a positive case have visited the event/venue.
- Appropriate COVID-19 signage will also be required at events.

Guidance and templates for these are available on the relevant government website.

## **Precautionary principle**

Lions should carefully consider the 'downside' of cancelling events.

- Is the event essential?
- What are the true consequences of cancelling? Financial? Reputational?
- Is it better to cancel now rather than cancelling closer to the event and affecting more people?
- What are the alternatives?

It is not necessary to cancel every event or club meeting unless events are specifically prohibited by government.

Each event or meeting has its own constraints and clubs need to conduct their own risk assessment.

## Specific guidance

1. Club meetings
  - a. Consider whether the club can apply good hygiene and 'social distance' practices to reduce risks.
  - b. Consider advising 'at risk' members to miss the meeting rather than place themselves at risk.
  - c. Monitor and enforce restrictions that unwell members do not attend.\
  - d. Consider alternatives for essential business. Teleconferencing, ringing around members for telephone voting on important issues.
2. Barbeques and fundraising
  - a. Are the events essential?
  - b. Are your food-handling practices up to date?
  - c. Check with the venues. Some venues may pro-actively cancel fundraising BBQ's.
3. Competitions including Youth of the Year finals.
  - a. Can you run the event with restricted attendance of spectators? E.g.: Immediate family only.
  - b. Can you 'ramp-up' hygiene? e.g.: by providing hand-sanitiser.
  - c. Can you restrict Lions attendance to essential personnel?
  - d. Can you use technology such a 'Facebook-live' to stream the event to those who cannot attend?
4. Seminars and workshops
  - a. Are these events essential?
  - b. What is the venue policy on events?
  - c. Can the information be supplied in a different way?

## Policing of Mask and other rules

The rules governing COVID restrictions are different in each state, and some of the venues we use have their own policies. Clubs should take care to research the relevant rules and policies and ensure that our members follow them when serving in the community, noting that these rules may change at short notice.

Lions can assist members of the public to follow the relevant rules by role-modelling the correct behaviour, but Lions members are not, in most circumstance required to police those rules. This is particularly relevant with respect to mask-wearing.

In many states, there are permissible exemptions to mask wearing and there may not be a requirement that individuals provide evidence of that exemption, except to the authorities. Lions members should not refuse access to services and venues for those who claim exemptions to mask wearing, unless they have clear legal advice of the right to do so. It is ultimately up to regulatory authorities, including police, to do so.

## Vaccination status

As for Mask wearing, club members should not attempt to police 'vaccination status' on entry to events and activities unless they have a clear, legal responsibility to do so.

**Discussions by State and Territory governments about 'vaccine passports' means that the rules around the entry requirements to venues and activities based on vaccination status will change frequently.**



As states and territories open up, some venues and activities will only be available to those that are fully vaccinated or have an exemption. State and Territory governments will regulate specifically on this matter and determine whether evidence can be requested.

Vaccination status and Club meetings

Some of the venues used by Lions Clubs, such as licenced clubs, will be regulated by State government. If the venue, such as a Lions Den, is controlled by the club, in the absence of a specific government decision to require a declaration of vaccination status, Clubs should not question this status as it may contravene national privacy principles.

Clubs requiring specific advice regarding this issue should contact the National Office.

**Lion’s National events and decision-making**

The Multiple District and Districts maintain a watching brief on events that are planned, to mitigate the financial and personal risks associated with changing border controls.

It is prudent not to plan events and book travel and accommodation too far in advance of events. The Multiple District will issue clear instructions on when to book for events within its control, and advise of the likely costs associated with any late cancellations.

**Lion’s humanitarian support during this crisis**

It is unfortunate to cancel events that are important to your club and district, and that have involved significant effort of many Lions in the planning and execution.

Lions has an important role to play in this crisis just as it is continuing to do so with bushfire recovery and support during the drought.

If your hard-working Lions are released from activities due to event cancellation, please consider how your club may be able to help others affected during this emergency.

It is also very important that we continue to look into the welfare of our own members, to provide what support we can.

**Caring for each other**

Extended lockdowns and the uncertainty of the current environment can affect the mental and physical health of our members. Clubs should use tools like ZOOM, telephones and home visits when permitted to look after each other during the current pandemic.

Lions is active, compassionate and resilient in all disasters and this is not different. We should look forward to a return to better times in the near future.

Stay well Lions.

Table of Revisions		
Rev #	Date	Description of Change
Original	16/3/20	Document created
	30/8/21	Update
	24/9/21	Update re ‘Vaccination Status’