

PCANZ COVID-19 virus: update

This is an update following on from previous communication by both the Council of Assembly, the Compliance Director and the Assembly Executive Secretary. View previous guidance [here](#).

Date of issue: 7 September 2021

Life at Alert Level 4

Yesterday, the Government updated information on COVID alert levels outside Auckland. A reminder, Auckland remains at Level 4 and this will be reviewed by Cabinet on 13 September. Restrictions remain in place and full details are here: <https://covid19.govt.nz/alert-levels-and-updates/alert-level-4/>

Simply - at Alert Level 4, places of worship cannot open to the public for faith-based ceremonies or services.

Life at Alert Level 2

Outside of Auckland, the Government announced a change to Level 2 – effective from midnight 7 September. The current guidelines (as at 6 September 2021) can be found here:

<https://covid19.govt.nz/activities/worship-and-faith-based-gatherings/#worship-at-alert-level-2>

Level 2 changes - worship

I draw attention to key aspects of these guidelines; an indoor worship event can host a maximum of 50 people inside, and 100 people outside – excluding clergy. All places of worship must record attendees – either scan in using the NZ COVID tracer app or record details manually. Everyone attending needs to keep 2 metres apart and wear masks – so make sure the venue is big enough for people to spread out comfortably and keep 2 metres apart. Note, attendees are required to wear a face covering.

Enabling worship to take place safely in our church buildings is a way of ‘loving our neighbours as ourselves’ – caring for everyone, especially vulnerable people. If a church is to host a worship service, our expectation is that all government issued guidelines will be fully complied with.

For information – here is the link to generate a contact tracing code:

<https://qrform.tracing.covid19.govt.nz/>

If you are meeting - as in the past – advice is given that under these current restrictions we are strongly suggesting that Parish Councils consider deferring communion and serving refreshments. Further,

anything you cannot do with a mask is discouraged ie singing. And social distancing requirements means things like passing the peace is also discouraged.

I acknowledge, many will find these guidelines are not possible to comply with and so the strong advice is to continue to offer online services while these current restrictions are in place.

Cabinet will again review the settings of Alert Level 2 on Monday 13 September. Further advice following any changes may be shared after this date.

Level 2 changes – church activities

Further - all activities that are run by or from a church are affected by the Government COVID Levels. I strongly suggest Councils/Sessions provide advice/instruction to those under their care. See information on gatherings and going to church buildings [here](#).

Finally, as we continue to live in these changing and at times, uncertain times, let us be reminded of these words:

“Na, ma te Atua, nana nei te tumanako, e whakaki koutou ki te hari katoa, ki te rangimarie, i runga i te whakapono, kia hua ai to koutou tumanako, i runga i te kaha o te Wairua Tapu.”

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.” Romans 15:13

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Wayne Matheson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped 'W' and 'M'.

Rev Wayne Matheson
Assembly Executive Secretary