

Victorian Metropolitan Re-Opening – FAQ's UPDATED 10 NOVEMBER



Background:

From 11.59pm on 8 November 2020, caps on indoor and outdoor dining for metropolitan Melbourne will increase to align with regional Victoria, meaning hospitality venues will be able to seat:

- Indoor: group and space limit of 10 and seated service, cap of 40 patrons subject to density quotient (1 per 4sqm)
- Outdoor: Increasing to a patron cap of 70 patrons per venue outdoors subject to the outdoor density quotient (1 per 2 sqm)

The Victorian Government has also announced further lifting of restrictions from 11.59pm on 22 November, which states that food and drink facilities can open for seated service, subject to the following limits:

- Indoor: Total venue capacity of 100 patrons per venue indoors, subject to density of 1 per 4m² and a maximum group size of 20 persons.
- Outdoor: Up to 200 patrons per venue outdoors, subject to density of 1 per 2m²
- Total venue capacity of 300 people.

[The full list of restriction easing can be found here.](#)

Frequently Asked Questions:

Is the cap of 40 indoors for one space or separate enclosed spaces of 10 each?

There is no longer a 'separate space' rule in effect, instead "Spaces" can be separated by either temporary structures or at least 5 metres between collections of 10 seats or less, subject to the overall indoor cap of 40 and a density of 1 per 4m².

R&CA is actively seeking clarification regarding how spaces will be treated following 23 November.

How are density quotients calculated for inside and outside?

1 person per 4sqm for indoor spaces and 1 person per 2 sqm for outdoor spaces.

***Do Staff and Customers have to wear masks?**

Staff must always wear masks unless there is an existing exemption in place (e.g. back of house staff), customers should wear masks when entering or walking around the venue, but these can be removed when seated and should not be placed on the table when dining.

Is there a maximum booking size?

Yes, maximum booking size is 10 people regardless of outdoor/indoor. This will increase to 20 people from 23 November.

Are my staff included in my patron cap?

No, staff are not included. Infants under 12 months of age are also not included in calculating your patron cap.

***What constitutes an outdoor space?**

'Outdoors' means: a space with no roof; or an open-air space designated for the consumption of food and/or beverages, which may have a temporary or fixed cover (e.g. awning or roof) so long as such cover has at least two open sides for airflow.

An outdoor space may include any of the following spaces: balcony or veranda; courtyard; rooftop; marquee; street or footpath; Any similar outdoor areas

Do I have to take the temperature of my staff and patrons before entering the venue?

No, this is not mandatory, however venues may choose to temperature test staff, customers and suppliers (e.g. delivery drivers) at their discretion.

Is there a 2-hour mandatory time limit on sittings?

No, dining time limits are a business decision for each venue.

What details do I have to take from diners?

Venues must keep records of worker and customer details for contact tracing where a person attends a work premises for longer than 15 minutes, (this includes contractors and delivery workers).

Venue operators must collect the following information:

- first name;
- contact phone number;
- time and date in which they visited; and
- the areas of the premises that they attended.

Can I use pen and paper to record customer details?

Yes, but QR codes are strongly recommended. However, pens used to record details should be wiped with an alcohol wipe between users.

Do I need to space tables apart from each other?

Yes, each table must be spaced so that patrons on a neighboring table remain 1.5m apart when seated within each "space" of 10 people, and 5m between each group of 10 seats.

Can I still take bookings for more than 10 pax but sit them on separate tables indoors?

No, booking sizes cannot exceed 10 people per indoor space, infants under 12 months of age are not included in the limit. Note again that this will increase to 20 people from 23 November.

Are entertainment venues or function centres included in hospitality restrictions?

The Public Events Framework is still being considered by the Victorian Government and further information is expected to be released prior to the 23 November relaxation.

Entertainment venues and function centres are able to offer hospitality services in line with hospitality industry restrictions and guidelines. This includes caps on group bookings of:

- No more than 10 dining members of the public in a group booking (with an infant under one year of age not counting in this limit)
- More than 10 dining members of the public in a group, if all persons have the same ordinary place of residence
- No more than 10 dining members of the public at a table.

How can I hold a private function/wedding? Can I have up to 50 pax outdoors but split them into 5 x tables of 10?

No, private booking sizes cannot exceed 10 per booking (or 20 from 23 November) infants under 12 months of age are not included in the limit.

Please note that weddings and funerals are treated differently from 23 November, with up to 100 members of the public permitted to attend (adhering to the density quotient of 1 per 4m²). At a private residence, these ceremonies are limited to private gathering limits.

R&CA is continuing to work with the Victorian Government to further relax the rules relating to catered events.

Can I offer shared plates?

Yes, provided that no buffets are made available, but platters shared on a single table of up to 10 diners are permitted.

Can I serve alcohol without a meal?

Yes, provided your liquor license permits this.

Can diners order at the bar?

Yes, but all alcohol must be consumed whilst seated.

Can I include my toilets included in density rules for indoor spaces?

Toilets and other spaces that can be used as a thoroughfare to outdoor spaces (e.g. a foyer or reception area) cannot be used when calculating the density quotient.

How do I calculate my outdoor space if it is on the footpath?

All outdoor dining measurements are calculated the same (1 per 2sqm). An outdoor space may include any of the following spaces:

- A balcony or veranda
- A courtyard
- A rooftop
- A marquee
- A street or footpath
- Any similar outdoor areas

Do customers waiting for take away get counted against my density limits?

No, only dine-in customers are counted. However, if customers are waiting more than 15mins for takeaway food then they will need to have their contact details recorded for contact tracing purposes.

Can I apply the ruling for gatherings to my hospitality venue to increase my capacity?

No, this rule applies only for gatherings in public spaces where council allows multiple venue operators to take over laneways, main roads or green spaces to hold outdoor events.

It does not apply to private venues using their outdoor areas.

Can I have live music at my venue?

Yes, but you must adhere to the requirement of 5m distance from audience, and 2m between performers. Recommend live music performed outdoors where possible. Performance and rehearsal rules for professionals apply to all live music settings. Performers are excluded from venue cap.