

COVID-Safe Plan

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Current status: Minimise infection



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Policy Statement:

Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place (MMIGP) is dedicated to the health, safety and wellbeing of all team members, community members, contractors and visitors. Throughout the pandemic we have continued to take additional precautions as recommended which are updated and outlined in our COVID Safe Plan, aligned with current health advice.

MMIGP is committed to providing services and operations in a manner which is safe. We recognise the significant risk that many members of our community members are enduring due to ageing, ill-health and isolation. MMIGP takes every precaution to ensure that recovery from the pandemic is undertaken gradually, cautiously and safely, based on advice from health authorities.

MMIGP COVID-Safe Plan: Our COVID-safe plan is a list of health and safety actions to ensure the importance of our occupational health and safety obligations for our workplace, settings and environment.

MMIGP staff fully comply with our COVID-Safe plan, and it is important that our team understand it. Every staff member has direct access to our COVID-Safe plan to ensure that it is implemented and updated when circumstances change.

Procedure:

This procedure has been endorsed by the Coronavirus COVID-19 Pandemic Committee, which was established in 2020 (comprising the Board and CEO) and continues to be updated as authorities provide further advice regarding changes.

This procedure provides guidance to all Board members, staff and the community on the arrangements for our organisation and continues to be based on advice and recommendations from public health authorities.

Key factors for consideration:

1. the 'at risk' nature of our client group, who are living with ageing, ill-health and isolation
2. where recommended the number of people present in any area: outside, in a room, in a car – fewer people = less risk
3. duration of the activity – shorter term contact = less risk
4. available space in which the activity is conducted
5. contact between people, and ability to maintain physical distancing when required
6. if people are likely to touch surfaces or objects
7. if people are likely to expel body fluids by coughing, sneezing, spitting or vomiting.

This procedure is in two sections:

1. Arrangements at all times, in all programs
2. Arrangements for each program.

COVID-Safe Principles

The COVIDSafe Plan is designed to support practices in maintaining a COVID-safe workplace and complying with public health directives (where applicable) by having a recommended COVID Safety Plan in place. It covers:

1. Physical distancing when recommended
2. Face coverings – personal preference
3. Practise of good hygiene
4. Keeping of records (when necessary) and acting quickly if workers become unwell (when necessary)
5. Limiting interactions in enclosed spaces
6. Creating workforce bubbles when required

The sections outlined are for practices to adapt to their specific procedures. The actions are not exhaustive, and practices should add, remove or amend actions appropriate to each situation.

MMIGP will regularly review it's COVID-Safe plan to ensure it remains compliant with Victorian Government Public Health directions.

Policy Endorsement:
MMIGP CEO



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28 March 2023
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Date:

What to do if you have symptoms?

- Test at the first sign of symptoms
- Talk to your doctor without delay if positive
- Treat without delay as advised by your doctor

Section 1: ARRANGEMENTS AT ALL TIMES

Area of risk	Strategies and Actions
Infection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All staff, volunteers and clients have been notified to stay home if unwell • All staff, volunteers and clients have been notified to stay home if they are diagnosed with COVID-19 and monitor their symptoms • All staff members including volunteers are required to inform MMIGP of Covid-19 test result if positive • The CEO shall be informed at any time where a staff member, volunteer or client is displaying symptoms or concerned about exposure • MMIGP will assist the staff member, volunteer or client with symptoms by ensuring they are isolated, are supported to be tested and have transport home to remain in isolation as per the guidelines • Prepare for increased absenteeism for staff, volunteers and clients • Ensure business continuity plan is up-to-date <p>For more information: Key Health and Safety advice can be viewed at: https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/health-advice</p>
Hygiene	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educate staff on the effective method of washing hands or using hand sanitiser <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ wash hands regularly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and dry them completely, preferably with clean, single-use paper towels ○ alternatively use alcohol-based hand sanitiser with at least 60% ethanol (or 70% isopropanol) as the active ingredient unless the hands are visibly soiled ○ soap can be less harsh on skin and more effective than sanitiser so where this is possible promote washing hands over the use of hand sanitiser • Provide a hand washing station for staff • Educate staff on effective and necessary timing of washing of hands. This should always be done when: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Arriving at work or before leaving work to go home ○ After blowing your nose, coughing, sneezing ○ Before and after using the toilet ○ Before and after eating ○ At the start and end of each break

- Staff should practice good respiratory etiquette, by coughing into your elbow or a tissue, avoiding touching eyes, nose or mouth or mask. Regularly sanitise or wash hands
- Provide and use closed lid bins for waste collection
- Staff should support clients with good hygiene practices (importance to reinforce public health messaging)
- Provide and promote hand sanitisers for use on entering buildings
- Provide adequate supplies for good hygiene, including easy access to clean and functional handwashing facilities including soap, paper towels and alcohol-based hand sanitiser
- Display signage outlining hygiene requirements including information for hand washing and respiratory etiquette
- Ensure this information is easily accessible and available in a variety of formats and languages. This can be found at (<https://www.healthtranslations.vic.gov.au/> or <https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/translated-information-about-coronavirus-covid-19>)
- Implementation of frequent and routine cleaning schedule to ensure good, clean and disinfected areas, frequently touched surfaces and objects, such as doorknobs, bannisters, countertops, taps, keyboards, phones, desks and change room surfaces. Any shared or communal spaces will have a cleaning log to keep a record of frequency of cleaning (date, time and person responsible for cleaning)
- Contracted cleaning will continue weekly
- Enhance ventilation within enclosed spaces by opening windows, enhance airflow, adjust air conditioning to use fresh air where possible
- Wherever possible encourage work related activities outside and out of enclosed spaces
- Ensure the highest hygiene practices when handling food
- All new staff and volunteers are required to complete an online hygiene/infection control course at the commencement of employment, and updated annually
- All current staff are required to do an annual hygiene/infection control course covering Covid safe practices

Physical Distancing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In an enclosed space, including offices, meeting spaces and homes, it is recommended that people observe physical distancing as preferred • When using indoor areas, seek spaces with high ceilings, and good ventilation (e.g. open windows, air conditioning) • Staff and clients should continue to respect individual choices around physical distancing and respect individual personal space regarding physical contact
Workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all staff are aware and have clear knowledge of the procedures within the MMIGP COVID-safe plan • Encourage flexible working arrangements, as required • Ensure staff adhere to up-to-date public health advice regarding staying at home if unwell <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/how-stay-safe-and-well-covid-19> • Actively encourage unwell employees and volunteers to get tested if displaying symptoms of coronavirus, even if symptoms are mild and stay home • Continue to review staff activities and processes for service delivery • If staff arrive sick at work or become sick while at work, they should be encouraged to return home
Service Delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage staff to communicate and share key messages on hygiene and physical distancing verbally with service users who may not be able to access written information

Wearing of Masks and Installation of Barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although the wearing of face masks is no longer mandatory, they still provide a level of protection for both staff and clients and are available for voluntary use to all staff and clients if requested • All employees, staff and clients are supported to wear a mask if they choose • Educate and train employees, staff and clients on the correct way to wear masks – cover nose and chin • Provide closed lid bins for waste collection of disposable masks • Consider installing barriers at reception if this is noted with high volume of traffic with vulnerable clients
Record Keeping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep an attendance register of all staff, volunteers, clients and visitors who access premises (to support internal contact tracing) • Maintain up-to-date contact details for staff and volunteers
Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To achieve compliance managing expectations is a key factor • This has been identified as encouraging communication between staff, volunteers, clients and visitors • Training and review are required for staff and volunteers: physical distancing within workplace, hygiene, wearing of masks, cleaning procedures, schedules and logs and infection control training as recommended • Staff are required to undergo infection control training as outlined in '<i>Hygiene area of risk</i>'
Unexpected Events	<p>If you, a client or a colleague happen to sneeze, cough, vomit, or spit accidentally there could be a high risk of infection transmission.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not touch contaminated surfaces. Keep others away from the contaminated area. Ensure the area is cleaned and disinfected before it is used again • Use your common sense to manage unexpected events and breaches of these procedures. Think about how you can protect yourself and the client/colleague through use of hand hygiene, cleaning and disinfecting surfaces etc • Be firm and clear when instructing others; this is in the interest of everyone's health
COVID-Safe Plan Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COVID-Safe Plan will be updated regularly or when necessary, as per Government changes • COVID-Safe Plan will be shared to all staff • COVID-Safe plan will be kept at each of our sites in a clearly marked folder

Section 2: Key Information

Attachment 1: COVID-Safe State Protocols (as of March 2023)

1

Look after your health and check if you're eligible for treatment

Most people will experience mild symptoms and be able to recover safely at home. The most common symptoms of COVID-19 are runny nose, sore throat, cough, fever, chills, sweats, and/or shortness of breath.

- For mild symptoms - rest and recover at home.
- For worsening symptoms or if you are eligible for anti-viral treatment - contact a GP or GP Respiratory Clinic. You can also contact the [National Coronavirus Helpline](#) on 1800 020 080. If you can't see a GP, you can contact the [Victorian Virtual Emergency Department](#) for urgent care.
- For severe symptoms get immediate help and call Triple Zero (000).

Certain groups are eligible for COVID medicines through a GP. To check your eligibility, see [Antivirals and other medicines](#).

If you are eligible, it is important to speak to your GP as soon as possible, even if your symptoms are mild. The medicines are most effective if taken within 5 days of symptom onset and can prevent serious illness.

To manage your symptoms, remember:

- **Rest:** Sleep and take it easy
- **Pain relief:** Take paracetamol and ibuprofen as needed (pregnant people should not take ibuprofen)
- **Water:** Drink regularly throughout the day and have electrolyte drinks or icy poles for extra hydration
- **Fresh air:** When possible open windows or spend time in your back yard or balcony if you have them
- **Speak to your GP:** If your symptoms worsen, you may be eligible for medicines or antivirals.

Visit [Managing COVID at home](#) for tips and information about managing your symptoms.

2

Isolate and tell your contacts

You are most infectious 2 days before your symptoms start, and while you have symptoms. It is recommended that you should isolate for at least 5 days and until you don't have symptoms anymore.

This means you should not go to work, school or grocery shopping. Especially if you work with people at a higher risk of becoming very sick with COVID-19.

While isolating, you should:

- Call your workplace or school and let them know you have COVID-19. There may be financial support available for you to stay home while you recover.
- Tell people and places you may have been in contact with and share the [Checklist for COVID-19 Contacts](#).
- Organise the delivery of essentials like food, medications, and baby formula.
- Don't work or visit a high-risk setting like hospitals, aged care, and disability services where there are people who are at a higher risk of becoming very sick or needing hospitalisation. Targeted financial support is available for eligible healthcare workers who isolate.
- Isolate away from the other people in your household as much as possible to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19.
- If people come into your home, let them know that you have COVID-19 so that they can take steps to protect themselves.
- If you need to leave home in an emergency, remember to wear a face mask.

Section 2: Key Information

Attachment 1: COVID-Safe State Protocols (as of March 2023)

3

Report your result

If you have tested positive using a rapid antigen test (RAT) you should report your result to the [Department of Health online](#) or by calling 1800 675 398. Reporting your result can give you free access to medical care and COVID medicines through the [COVID Positive Pathways program](#).

You do not need to report your result if you tested positive from a PCR test as pathology labs automatically report those results.

4

Ending isolation and recovering

Ending isolation

Most people are still infectious after 5 days and you should stay home if you are still experiencing symptoms like a runny nose, sore throat, cough, shortness of breath, fever, chills, or sweats.

A negative RAT result is a helpful tool to determine whether you are still infectious. If you're unsure about ending your isolation, you should contact a GP or a [GP Respiratory Clinic](#).

Wear a face mask when you leave home for at least 7 days after testing positive as you may still be infectious.

Recovering

Many people feel the impacts of COVID-19 beyond their infectious period. As with any illness, it's important to return to your regular routine and activities slowly to allow your body the care and time to properly recover.

Long COVID is when symptoms continue for more than 3 months from when you were infected. Symptoms can vary and you should see your GP who can tell you how to best manage your condition. For more information, see [Long COVID](#).

You should wait 6 months before getting your next dose of the COVID-19 vaccine to ensure you get the maximum protection against the virus.

You may be able to contract COVID-19 again as early as 4 weeks after your recovery. You should get tested again after 4 weeks if you have new symptoms.

Attachment 2: Key Directions: COVID-Safe plans / Links to Coronavirus Information

Victorian Department of Health – Key Directions: COVID-Safe plans

Every Victorian business or organisation with on-site operations should keep a COVID-Safe Plan at each workplace. The plan should set out how the workplace will keep workers, customers and other attendees safe from COVID-19. It also helps to prepare for a case of COVID-19 in the workplace.

In order to be compliant with public health directions:

- All businesses in both metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria must complete a COVID-Safe Plan.
- This COVID-Safe Plan should be developed in consultation with workers and any relevant Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs).
- In addition to completing this COVID-Safe Plan, you are still required to meet your obligations under the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004.
- You must comply with a request to present or modify your COVID-Safe Plan, if directed to do so by a Work-Safe Inspector.

COVID-Safe Plans must be reviewed and updated routinely, and when restrictions or public health advice changes. You do not have to lodge your COVID Safe Plan with the Victorian Government.

Additional information: [Everything about Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)

Key Information to keep our workplace safe can be viewed at Victoria Worksafe:

<https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/coronavirus-covid-19>

Key Health and Safety advice can be viewed at:

<https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/health-advice>

Attachment 3: COVID-19 Information and Updates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities

COVID-19 information for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities can be viewed at:

<https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/coronavirus-information-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-communities>

The Above link contains key information relating to:

- Resources
- Factsheets on signs and symptoms of COVID-19
- Information on what to do if you test positive for COVID-19
- Health and safety tools for managing COVID-19 at home
- Physical distancing activities and tip factsheets
- Staying connected to Community, Country and Culture
- Find your local Aboriginal health service
- Resources for Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations
- Financial help and support
- Looking after your mental health
- Family violence support
- Information for people with disability
- Vaccine and medicines information including how to find your nearest COVID-19 testing location

Attachment 4: MMIGP COVID-Safe Checklist

MMIGP Program or Activity date and location:	
Actions	Completed / Comments
Screen ALL Program or Activity participants upon arrival	
1. COVID questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are you feeling well? • Have you taken a Covid test in the past 7 days? If yes to any of the above: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advise the person not to attend the program. • If they have already presented to the centre, offer the affected person a face mask. 	
2. Upon arrival ensure hand sanitiser is made available	
3. Keep any program or activity surfaces clear of clutter and disinfect regularly.	
4. Clean and disinfection of frequently touched surfaces prior to and after each program and activity	
5. Minimise participants (communal use) of materials (pens, cups etc) ensure materials are cleaned / disinfected after use	
6. Ensure program attendance is completed and maintained	
Completed by: Signature:	Date:

Attachment 5: MMIGP Procedure for a COVID Positive case

MMIGP Is responsible for providing and maintaining a working environment that is safe and without risks to the health of our employees and community members, visitors. We recognise the importance to ensure that all people are not exposed to risks to their health and safety when using our facilities or engaging in any program or activity we deliver.

MMIGP recognises the importance of identifying any exposure of COVID-19 or other hazard in our facilities – We respect the obligations when there is a confirmed case within our organisation. We ensure that we are fully transparent to our staff and the community if an exposure occurs and MMIGP is guided by the Victorian Government Workplace Guidance for managing suspected and confirmed COVID-19 cases. To mitigate risk, the following procedure enables MMIGP to manage and support a COVID Positive case to enable an effective risk assessment and identify any exposure and control any COVID-19 risks in our organisation.

Confirmed Case Checklist:

- Staff and community must let MMIGP know if they have tested positive for COVID-19
- If a staff member has tested positive for COVID-19 MMIGP supports, the worker to leave work immediately (go home and isolate for the recommended isolation timeframes issued by Victorian Government)
- If a staff member needs support to be transported home they must sit in the back seat, use hand sanitiser before and after leaving the vehicle, wear a face mask and the vehicle should be fully cleaned after transport has occurred to prevent any further infection. Where possible provide the worker with clear information on what to do if they have tested positive for COVID-19
- If a staff member is unable to leave work immediately, MMIGP will support them to isolate safely at work (preferably in a separate room) and recommend a face mask and adhere to physical distancing where possible
- The CEO will direct staff, community members and visitors to watch out for symptoms of COVID-19 and inform them to get tested and self-isolate if any symptoms develop
- MMIGP will ensure cleaning of the premises, workplace, in particular areas frequently used including high touch surfaces (such as door handles) <https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/business-and-work#how-to-clean-and-disinfect-after-a-covid-19-case-in-the-workplace>
- MMIGP will also provide links and information to relevant health and safety information including Victorian Government Pandemic Guidelines as needed