



## Grand Secretary's Bulletin

**SPECIAL EDITION**

**13 January 2021**

**No. 163**



Dear Brother Secretary,

**This Bulletin supersedes all previous advice in relation to the re-opening of Lodges.**

### **Re-Opening of Lodges**

I write to advise of the latest arrangements regarding the multi-stage re-opening of Masonic Centres and Lodges across Victoria. This follows this week's meeting of the Freemasons Future Recovery Team, which makes recommendations to the Masonic Governing Council.

Late last year, a publication - *Re-Opening Lodges: The Manual* - was published. The Manual was updated today (13 January), and all changes made are effective immediately. An updated version of The Manual can be accessed [HERE](#).

The *Manual* outlined a multi-stage approach to re-opening Lodges. We continue to adopt a cautious approach. It is not mandatory for Lodges to re-open. It is not mandatory for members to attend. Lodges may survey their members to ascertain preferences regarding re-opening dates. Lodges and members are free to make their own decisions regarding attendances and meeting dates.

There is an onus on Masonic Centre management teams, Lodges and all members to strictly observe the latest Government regulations.

A link to the State Government website is: [www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au](http://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au)

Please observe the Government's latest rules regarding mask wearing.

There has been a change of Freemasons Victoria re-opening dates which is now summarised as:

- January 1, 2021. Masonic Centres and Lodges can re-open for administrative and educational purposes only, subject to strict observance of Government regulations, and our own additional precautions. Balloting may take place (preferably in short form procedure), subject to meticulous cleaning of ballot material, before and after use.
- February 1, 2021. As per January 2021.
- March 1, 2021 (previously advised as February 1, 2021). Lodges resuming ritual and ceremonial, subject to distancing and other regulations. The FV Ritual and Ceremonial Committee is currently considering slight modifications that might be required to enable First and Second degree work to take

place. Third degree work will have to be re-introduced at a later date. It is hoped that visiting may resume from March 1, 2021.

All dates are subject to change.

### **Preparation of Masonic Centres**

Masonic Centre management teams are responsible for the efficient and safe re-opening of buildings. 'Deep cleaning' is not required; thorough cleaning and proper maintenance of buildings is always necessary.

Masonic Centre management teams will work in closely with District Co-Ordinators for best possible outcomes.

Masonic Centre management teams are expected to exhibit a sign at the entrance to the building which details the exact maximum number of people permitted on the premises. This is calculated by measuring the square metres of the Lodge Room.

Measure the width of your Lodge Room space. Multiply the length by the width to calculate the area in square metres. Deduct the area of the tessellated pavement/carpet.

Divide by 4 to calculate the maximum number of people permitted, if using the 4-square metre rule. Divide by 2 to calculate the maximum number of people permitted, if using the 2-square metre rule allowed if using QR Codes.

### **QR Codes**

Currently, there is a Government requirement that there be 4-square metre distancing between members meeting at Masonic Centres.

This can be reduced to 2-square metre distancing, if QR Codes are used at Lodge meetings. This will allow more people in the Lodge Room. Advice regarding QR Codes was issued in the *Grand Secretary's Bulletin* No 162, emailed to Lodge Secretaries on December 29.

The Grand Secretariat has prepared a video about QR codes. [WATCH HERE](#)

### **Seating Arrangements in Lodge Rooms**

Members must be at least 2 metres away from the next person, under the 2-metre rule. It may be suitable for Masonic Centre Management to mark where people may sit to ensure compliance.

In the East, for example, the Chaplain and Immediate Past Master, may have to sit in other positions, to ensure a 2-metre distance from the Master.

Please err on the side of caution.

It is the responsibility of each Lodge Master to see that proper physical distancing is achieved in the Lodge Room. He will be assisted by the Lodge Secretary and Director of Ceremonies in ensuring density rules are obeyed. In larger Lodges, where possible attendances may exceed the number of members allowed, it will be up to Lodge Masters to devise an equitable system.

### **Food Handling Arrangements**

Common sense is needed with the handling of food.

It is hoped that larger lodges will continue with engaging outside caterers to prepare and serve food. The serving of food by one or two people (possibly partners or stewards), wearing gloves, using tongs, is highly recommended.

For example, we want to avoid a number of different hands reaching into a plate of sandwiches. The same applies to barbecues, where food is to be served by clean tongs.

At all times, common sense should apply. We have serious health and safety responsibilities to all our members.

Your co-operation with a cautious approach is appreciated.

Fraternally,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Garry Runge'.

**RWBro. Garry Runge OAM JP**

Grand Secretary

Please note: all correspondence for the office of the Grand Secretary should be directed to [grandsec@freemasonsvic.net.au](mailto:grandsec@freemasonsvic.net.au)

**This is the last item of this Correspondence Bulletin.  
RWBro. Garry Runge OAM JP, Grand Secretary.**