

Hello,

On Wednesday morning this week, I met with the Transition team to review and finalise a recommendation for the Leadership team. The recommendation took into account a number of options we for re-opening the Garratt St Centre primarily, in the context of large gatherings. The recommendations were then taken to the Leadership Team which met in the afternoon.

Large gatherings

The Leadership team carefully examined and discussed the recommendations and alternatives, and decided that the first feasible date for us to open the Garratt St Centre to Sunday gatherings is **13 September 2020**. Of course, the date cannot be guaranteed as changes to restrictions, in response to the activity of the virus, may occur at any time.

The outbreak of cases in Victoria this week is a timely reminder that the virus has not gone away and it's sobering to realise that some of the clusters are due to friends and family gathering in homes and not practising distancing. I'm sure none of these people thought they could be making their loved ones sick. Yesterday 1000 military personnel were deployed to help with the emergency.

Many of you have friends and families in other states in Australia and in other countries around the world. You understand that the numbers of cases are real people like us who probably thought they were safe or, like us, anxiously thought they were not safe.

The health and well being (spiritual, physical, emotional and mental) of all was the most important consideration of the Leadership team, when the date was agreed.

Many changes are required to the configuration of various rooms at the Garratt St Centre, to the cleaning regime and to the way that we enter and exit the building so that we can comply with the screening, hygiene and 4 sqm per person rules. An efficient booking system will need to be developed so that people can book a seat to come to church.

The energy levels and capabilities of those who will have to do the work to make the changes happen are our most valuable resource at this point in time. We must spend this precious energy wisely and avoid wastage whenever we can. Many of the people in this group have worked tirelessly in ministry, maintenance and administrative roles to sustain the life of TBC in a cohesive and nurturing way since the beginning of the pandemic.

We cannot afford to drain their energy away from developing and implementing effective permanent solutions to devote it to short-term quick fixes that will have to be undone before the more permanent solution can be implemented.

We need time!

The worship experience that we could offer now, is to sit in a room with a number of others and watch the pre-recorded service – with no singing and no close interaction after the service to comply with the distancing rule. The experience would also include coming out into the cold Canberra winter and having to queue for the screening and registration processes before reaching the heated room where you would be seated.

Many of our church family fall into the category labelled *vulnerable* and the spread of colds and flu as well as COVID was taken into consideration.

About half of the auditorium is taken up by the recording studio setup that we use to record each week's service. Taking this down and reassembling each week would place a further burden on the audio/visual/worship team at the same time that we are asking them to be involved in the changes.

We want to keep pre-recording our Sunday services as the numbers gathered from our website show that more than twice the number in our congregation are viewing our services each week. It's also a way to guarantee that most of you have access to the services in the warmth and safety of your own homes – and you can sing! We have heard some reports of people visiting others and doing church together – with distancing.

Website figures show that many people are nurturing their spiritual growth by visiting our website and some have advised that they also visit the websites of other churches and teaching ministries. We encourage you to keep doing this. The link on our website to the *Jesus the Gamechanger* series takes you to the sermons and sessions for the 6 week series and I encourage you to watch these if you have not done so already.

Small gatherings

We want people to start connecting with the Garratt St Centre, with us and with each other.

We understand that many are eager to return to their pre-COVID activities, to mingle with their friends again after weeks of reduced contact from socialisation and other routines.

Groups like the craft group, the CAP Money Course and external groups who use the building, will be able to re-open after making certain changes to comply with restrictions and our own constraints – like the cleaning issues. More volunteers are required in addition to those who have responded thus far.

In the next week or two, we will be looking at creating some small gathering opportunities to operate in the Community Room on the Ground level. More details to come later.

Up until last Friday, we were not legally able to do anything on the property that was not a Religious Ceremony or for work. This means that things are moving fast again. Ministry leaders had started on their COVID Safety plans prior to this change. The requirements around COVID Safety Plans were also revised last Friday. The plans we have received so far, provide us with information we need to consolidate our whole of church approach.

The Op Shop and Jack's Gym

Last Friday's changes mean that both of these can re-open. Because these operations are defined as retail and as fitness training, additional conditions apply to their opening and operations. Preparations are well underway and I'll let you know their opening dates when these are finalised.

What are other churches doing?

Baptist ministers throughout NSW&ACT participate in on-line meetings on a fortnightly basis.

- Few have reported that they are opening in the very near future and these are usually small congregations who can gather at one service and in a space that is large enough for them to observe the distancing and 4 sq mtr per person rules.
- Many are not planning to gather on Sundays until the end of the year.

Visits to the websites of churches in our neighbourhood, of various denominations, show that most have some form of on-line service and are not yet opening. There are two exceptions. One church has moved their Sunday services to small group gatherings, and the other has an automated seat booking system already in place.

FACTS AND FIGURES - FOR THOSE WHO LIKE TO KNOW THE DETAILS:

Seating capacities dictated by the 4 sq m rule and other constraints

In the same way that restaurants, gyms, workplaces and hobby groups are requiring people to book before attending, we will need a booking system so that we will know how many spaces and seats will have to be cleaned before we open the doors to Sunday services.

- At the Garratt St Centre, we can accommodate:
 - 51 in the Auditorium
 - 21 in the Community Room
 - 20 in the Seminar Room
- We are not able to live stream to the ground level rooms – we intend to do this work before 13 September
- Only 1 person can be in the lift!
- We do not have a large enough number of volunteers to do the pre and post-service cleaning that is required – we must address this before 13 September
- We do not have an efficient and effective booking system – we will build this before 13 September

Update on Giving

Analysis of Giving from 1 October 2019 to 24 June 2020							
Date	Total Direct Deposits only	BFS direct transfer	Westpac direct transfer	iGive	iGive Credit Card	Morning Offerings	Total giving each month
31/10/2019	\$11,484.00	\$2,734.00	\$1,900.00	\$3,550.00	\$3,300.00	\$8,291.55	\$19,775.55
30/11/2019	\$16,698.00	\$2,968.00	\$3,030.00	\$9,120.00	\$1,580.00	\$8,716.00	\$25,414.00
31/12/2019	\$9,678.00	\$2,273.00	\$1,985.00	\$3,170.00	\$2,250.00	\$10,706.65	\$20,384.65
31/01/2020	\$8,876.00	\$2,321.00	\$1,825.00	\$3,080.00	\$1,650.00	\$8,004.00	\$16,880.00
29/02/2020	\$11,460.00	\$2,860.00	\$1,900.00	\$3,150.00	\$3,550.00	\$7,629.10	\$19,089.10
31/03/2020	\$11,113.00	\$4,078.00	\$2,695.00	\$3,090.00	\$1,250.00	\$7,462.40	\$18,575.40
30/04/2020	\$17,142.00	\$8,412.00	\$2,360.00	\$3,820.00	\$2,550.00	\$0.00	\$17,142.00
Cash Boost	\$10,000.00		\$10,000.00				\$10,000.00
31/05/2020	\$21,362.00	\$10,862.00	\$2,910.00	\$4,590.00	\$3,000.00	\$0.00	\$21,362.00
Jobkeeper	\$6,000.00	\$6,000.00					\$6,000.00
1-24/6/20	\$15,057.00	\$7,477.00	\$1,420.00	\$2,210.00	\$3,200.00	\$750.00	\$15,807.00
Total	\$138,120.00	\$49,985.00	\$30,025.00	\$35,780.00	\$22,330.00	\$51,559.70	\$190,429.70

Please contact me, one of the Leadership or Connect teams or a trusted Christian to share any feelings of anxiety or other concerns you may have.

Blessings,

Ian Reid (Revd)
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for the Leadership Team
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