

2020



## Royal Melbourne Philharmonic Choir & Orchestra

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# Guidelines to Manage the 2020 Coronavirus Epidemic

COVID-19 is a highly infectious respiratory virus characterised by fever, dry cough and respiratory difficulties.

It has now been declared a "Pandemic" by both the Australian Government and the World Health Organization, and to date has infected more than 130,000 people worldwide in at least 116 countries. There have been more than 5,000 deaths so far.

Ensuring the wellbeing of RMP members, audiences, musicians, and staff is our priority.

As a not-for-profit organisation with over 165 years of proud performance activity in Melbourne, and Australia's oldest performing arts organisation, we are also committed to ensuring the longevity and sustainability of the RMP and will continue to support members, staff and musicians through this uncertain period.

This information has been prepared as of 14 March, 2020 for all members. Please read this document and monitor media and RMP communications for further information or updates.

As the situation has been unfolding quickly, information may change in coming days, weeks or months, so please continue to monitor media and the regularly updated advice and information from the Federal Department of Health via the Government website:

<https://www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert>

**MARCH 14, 2020**

## The reason for these guidelines is three-fold.

1. To protect yourself, your friends and family
2. To inform and protect your fellow musicians
3. To help minimize the rate of spread of the virus in the community.

## Virus facts

- + The fatality rate of the disease is between 2.3 and 6%.
- + Most fatalities are in the elderly (8% in the 70 to 80 year age group) and (14% in the over 80 age group). Others who are at risk of dying from Covid-19 are people with serious cardiovascular disorders, diabetes and chronic respiratory diseases and chronic inflammatory disorders (such as rheumatoid arthritis, ankylosing spondylitis, psoriatic arthritis) and those who are immune-compromised (eg people who have undergone chemotherapy for cancers).
- + The State Health Departments and Federal Government of Australia are attempting to slow the rate of spread of COVID-19 so that those who are deemed severely ill (14%) or critically ill (5% of cases) can be treated in local hospitals. These patients require treatment for respiratory failure, multiple organ failure and septic shock. If the rate of spread cannot be sufficiently slowed, then the hospital system cannot cope and not all who are sick can be adequately treated and may die. This is where we can all make a difference.

## Covid-19 Virus transmission:

1. Personal contact
2. Droplets from coughing and sneezing
3. Air born particles. Harder to prevent, and you need specialised small particle air filters such as those used in hospitals.

## The World Health Organization. (WHO) advises the following:

1. Avoid close personal contact with anyone who has an acute respiratory infection
2. Wash your hands properly (for at least 30 seconds) and frequently with soap and water, or if this is not available with hand sanitizer or antiseptic wash.
3. Cover your mouth with a tissue when you sneeze or cough and dispose of the tissue.

## World Health Organization advice for avoiding spread of coronavirus disease (COVID-19)

### Hygiene advice

- Clean hands frequently with soap and water, or alcohol-based hand sanitizer (preferably with a 60% or higher alcohol content).
- Wash hands after coughing or sneezing; when caring for the sick; before, during and after food preparation; before eating; after using the toilet; when hands are visibly dirty; and after handling animals or waste.
- Maintain at least 2 meters (6 feet) distance from anyone who is coughing or sneezing.
- Avoid touching your hands, face, and particularly your nose and mouth. Do not spit in public.
- Cover your mouth & nose with a tissue or bent elbow when coughing or sneezing. Discard tissue immediately and clean hands.

### Medical advice:

1. If you feel unwell (fever, cough, difficulty breathing) seek medical care early and call local health authorities in advance.
2. Stay up to date on COVID-19 developments issued by health authorities and follow their guidance.

### 1. Mask usage

- Healthy individuals only need to wear a mask if taking care of a sick person.
- Wear a mask if you are coughing or sneezing.
- Masks are effective when used in combination with frequent hand cleaning.
- Do not touch the mask while wearing it. Clean hands if you touch the mask.
- Learn how to properly put on, remove and dispose of masks. Clean hands after disposing of mask.
- Do not reuse single-use masks.

### 2. Cleaning

Covid-19 can survive outside of a host body for from 3 hours to 5 days depending on the ambient temperature, humidity, size of the virus containing droplet and the nature of the surface (the virus prefers smooth surfaces to porous ones). Cleaning surfaces in your office or home with appropriate substances can kill the virus in only 6 to 10 minutes contact time.

To minimise the spread of any germs you should regularly wash surfaces that are frequently touched such as door handles, light switches, kitchen and bathroom areas and tabletops. Clean with household detergent or disinfectant.

These include :

- (i) 62 to 71 % ethanol (methylated spirits)
- (ii) 0.5 percent peroxide
- (iii) 0.1% sodium hypochlorite bleaches such as "White King" diluted to 1 part sodium hypochlorite to 5 parts of water.

### 3. Handwashing

- Wash with warm water and soap.
- Remove all watches and bracelets
- Expose forearms to the elbows
- Wash thoroughly between fingers and finger bases and tips. Scrub hands and forearms for at least 40 to 60 seconds.
- If your family, housemates or friends are ill with cold or flu symptoms they should self- isolate at home for 14 days and speak with you on the phone, via Zoom, Skype or FaceTime and you should do the same.

### Important Contacts

1. Health Information Line: Phone 1800 020 090. (Australia)
2. [www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au)
3. [www.health.gov.au/state-territory-contacts](http://www.health.gov.au/state-territory-contacts)

### Testing for Covid-19

At this time due to drains on resources, nasal mucosal swabs may only be available for

1. Those who have returned from high risk countries overseas (China, Sth Korea, Italy, Iran, Europe and USA) and
2. Those who have come into contact with someone who has tested positive for Covid-19

## RMP Special Rehearsal measures at Drill Hall :

- Hand sanitiser will be placed at the entrance to the Drill Hall and all members are expected to apply before entering.
- Likewise, it is expected that everyone leaving the hall to use the toilets, or move cars etc will be expected to reapply.
- Chairs will be placed several feet apart from each other to maintain safe distance between members.
- Members will be asked to refrain from using the kitchen during rehearsals until further notice.
- Disposable or Personal water bottles can be used but not shared.
- Rehearsals will be shortened and breaks will not take place for the foreseeable future. This is to minimise risk of exposure and reduce personal interaction.
- Antiseptic wipes will be used on tables, in the office, on equipment , and signs will be posted to remind members to wipe down any shared surfaces.
- We have placed signs in the toilets about correct hand-washing technique, as well as several "Have you washed your hands?" reminders at toilet exits and hall entry points.
- All members are asked to avoid shaking hands (entirely), to reduce the risk of spreading infection.
- All members are asked to maintain 1.5m distance from other people wherever possible during rehearsals.

### RMP Attendance policy

During this period of special measures, we understand that some of our members (particularly older members who may be at more risk to the virus) may choose not to attend any rehearsals or public events. We understand this and realise the extenuating circumstances which are prevailing at this time and wish you well during any absence(s).

For those who are still happy to continue with weekly activities, we ask that you take all the precautionary measures outlined in this document and agree to co-operate with our efforts to limit the risk of the virus spreading.

**It is most important that anyone displaying any symptoms of an influenza-like illness, which is a fever and symptoms of an acute respiratory infection such as shortness of breath, cough, and / or sore throat:**

- do not attend rehearsals, performances or work
- ring the COVID-19, 24-hour hotline 1800 675 398, or a GP or emergency department, to arrange for testing and appropriate care.

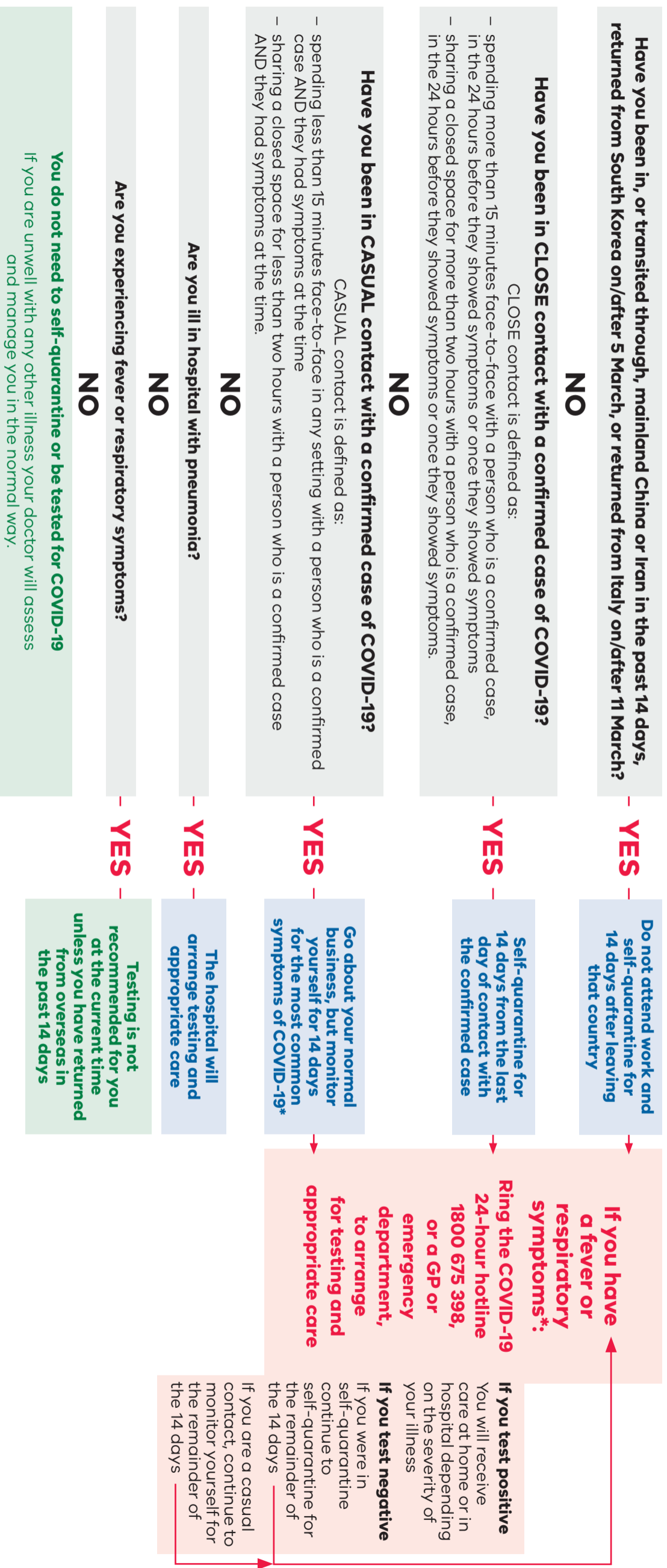
If you have recently travelled to any other country (within the last 14 days), you should not attend rehearsals.

Please monitor your health for 14 days after leaving that country. If you develop a fever or cough, seek medical advice urgently from the above hotline and isolate yourself.

Please take care of yourself, family, friends and fellow choristers, and also help our dedicated GP's and hospital-based doctors and other health care workers by slowing the rate of spread to the weak and vulnerable of this potentially deadly virus in our community.



# Self-assessment for risk of coronavirus (COVID-19)



## Additional information for healthcare workers and residential care workers

In addition to the above steps, the following information applies to healthcare workers and residential care workers who have direct contact with patients or residents.

- **if you have an influenza-like illness**, which is a fever above 37.5 and symptoms of an acute respiratory infection (shortness of breath, cough, coryza and/or sore throat):
  - **do not go to work**
  - **ring the COVID-19, 24-hour hotline 1800 675 398**, or a GP or emergency department, to arrange for testing and appropriate care.
- If you test negative you can return to work when well, at the direction of your treating doctor.

A healthcare worker who has worn appropriate personal protective equipment while treating a patient does not become a close contact as a result of that care. They may be a casual contact as a result of that care so should monitor themselves for 14 days.

\*The most common symptoms of COVID-19 are fever, cough, shortness of breath, muscle pain and fatigue.