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This paper proposes some practical guidelines and interpretations related to the new “indoor gathering” requirements so that the AHA can provide greater clarity to its members on protecting their staff and patrons

**Statement by Prime Minister**

The Prime Minister announced today that the National Cabinet had mandated today that in regard to indoor gatherings of fewer than 100 people:

* “Non-essential indoor gatherings of greater than 100 people will no longer be permitted (including staff)”, and that
* In areas where gatherings of 100 people (including staff) or fewer occur, “venues should continue to apply social distancing and hygiene practices – this includes being able to maintain 1.5 metres between patrons”
* This may require significant change to the operation of some venues, such as reducing the maximum capacity or increasing the space available.
* “Hand hygiene products and suitable waste receptacles need to be available, with frequent cleaning and waste disposal.”
* The states and territories will give further consideration to practical guidance and rules relating to the above.

**AHA suggested guidelines**

The AHA understands that its members would be subject to the above. The AHA seeks further clarification as to the interpretation and practical application of this new mandate. So as to assist, proposed definitions and case studies are set out below.

**Core principles**

It is understood that as we move through the cycle of restrictions, the guidelines need to have core principles that stay in place, irrespective of the number (e.g. 100 indoor) moving up or down. For example, if the number for indoor gatherings is reduced to five (5), we need to ensure that accommodation hotels can check in and check out guests, whilst at all times encouraging social distancing.

**Social distancing**

The AHA is advising its members to advise their patrons that social distancing of 1.5 metres is recommended where practical. Each venue is different and will require their own practical solutions. Such solutions might include one or some of the following:

* Signs in prominent locations advising “Please assist with Social Distancing of 1.5m where practical”, e.g. placed on service counters, in front of televisions
* Limiting density in smaller bars to ensure social distancing can be met where practical
* Limit the entertainment of bands/DJs, which would normally encourage closer contact

**Multi Venue Hotels**

Background

Many hotels comprise a range of different rooms and spaces, e.g. public bar, gaming room restaurant, Sports bar, function rooms. The AHA proposes that the following guideline be issued:

Proposed definition

“An indoor gathering refers to a gathering within a single enclosed area (i.e. an area or room that is or are substantially enclosed by a roof or walls, regardless of whether the roof or walls are permanent, temporary or closed)”

Example

The ABC Hotel has three rooms:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Room** | **Licensed capacity** | **New capacity (inc staff)** |
| Public bar | 200 | 100 |
| Function Room | 120 | 100 |
| Restaurant  | 80 | 80 |
| **TOTAL**  | **400** | **280** |

**Beer gardens and roof top bars**

Proposed definition

AHA proposes that beer gardens and roof top bars are treated within the current definition for Mass Gatherings of 500 people or more. AHA proposes beer gardens and roof top bars are defined as “those areas within a licensed premises that do not have a roof over the substantial part of the premises”.

Example

E.g. the XYZ Hotel has a beer garden with a licensed capacity of 200 people. There is no roof except over the bar service areas and there are is only one external wall with fencing around the perimeter. The XYZ Hotel would be able to retain having 200 people in attendance, on the basis that appropriate social distancing can be achieved where practical.

**Gaming Room**

Background

Gaming rooms are areas where poker machines or gaming machines are located. AHA members have a vast differences in size, design and location. Also, there are is a range of regulatory requirements amongst jurisdictions.

Definition

Hotels must ensure 1.5 metres social distancing between gaming patrons across the venue. Due to the various size and location of gaming machines, the prime consideration is the enabling of social distancing. So as to achieve social distancing, Hotels should look to limit the density of patrons in these rooms through physical means such as:

* Signage to encourage social distancing
* If necessary, limiting seating and ensuring only seated players are in the area
* Moving (where allowed) gaming machines within the venue
* Utilising only some parts of the gaming room or machines within the venue.

**“Moving through” spaces**

Background

The Prime Minister also discussed “move through” areas. Hotels take many shapes and forms, e.g. pubs, accommodation hotels, bars and taverns. Venues often have “ebb and flow” with patrons “moving through” various spaces, e.g.

* Accommodation hotel reception and concierge areas with people checking in/out
* Pubs with people moving through to bathrooms or on their way to other spaces

Definition

The requirement for venues to limit non-essential indoor gatherings of 100 people or less (including staff), recognises that patrons in the process of usual “move through” traffic within a venue, will not be counted towards the limit of an indoor gathering.

**Accommodation Hotels**

Background

Accommodation hotels provide an essential service for travellers, many of whom are in the process of providing essential services such as self-isolation for international and returning Australian citizens.

Definition

As it relates to food, beverage and accommodation services for their guests, accommodation hotels are to be considered an “essential activity”.