

# COVID-19 Public Events Framework

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## 1 Purpose

The COVID-19 Public Events Framework guides the phased resumption of public events in line with Victoria's roadmap to reopening. More specifically, it sets out:

- The rules for organising a public event during the Last Step and COVID Normal, including
  - Indoor / outdoor settings
  - Limits on the number of people attending the event
  - Density requirements
  - COVID safety requirements
- The process for submission and review of COVIDSafe Event Plans and Checklists, including by the Ministerial Taskforce
- The primary assessment criteria that will be applied by the public health experts assessing COVIDSafe Event Plans.

Approvals to conduct public events is subject to change, in accordance with public health requirements and is guided by the epidemiological conditions in Victoria and other states, and the broader easing of restrictions outlined in Victoria's roadmap to reopening.

This framework should be read in conjunction with the Victorian Guidelines for Planning Safe Public Events (2018). Event organisers are still required to engage with and obtain the necessary approvals from other federal, state and local government bodies.

## 2 Context

As we progress along Victoria's roadmap for reopening to COVID Normal, the improvements seen in epidemiological conditions will enable Victorians to progressively gather in larger numbers and attend organised events. However, it is important to remember that public gatherings are a high-risk activity and therefore need to be very carefully planned.

By their nature, public events involve gatherings within a defined space, are often high density, with a broad range of activities, such as service of food and beverages and entertainment. The proximity of interactions and movement of people represents a high risk related to transmission of COVID-19. It is critical that these risks are managed by event organisers seeking to conduct events.

Please note, the COVID-19 Public Events Framework and other public events guidelines are designed to supplement, not replace, other Victorian laws and regulations, such as Occupational Health & Safety requirements or the Chief Health Officer Directions, which all events must comply with. Furthermore, they should be tailored to meet the unique contexts of an event, to ensure that every event participant, from volunteers through to attendees, are protected from the risk of transmission and can safely enjoy all that Victorian events have to offer.

### 3 Definition of a public event

The definition of a public event is contained within the Chief Health Officer's Directions (the Directions). The Directions contain a number of restrictions that relate to public and private gatherings at different types of venues, including venues that may ordinarily hold events as part of their business as usual operations. The features of the public events definition are:

**'A public event is an organised public gathering for a common purpose which is conducted on a one-off or periodic basis, open to members of the public, publicly announced or advertised, and may be subject to specific licence, approvals or permits.'**

**Note:** *The event organiser must continue to apply for and comply with all required licences, approvals and permits.*

**Examples:** *An exhibition, sporting event, festival, fair, parade, performance, trade show*

#### **Out of scope**

A public event is not:

- an ad hoc public gathering in a public place;
- a private or public gathering of members of the public in a facility, venue, indoor space or outdoor space for ordinary, day-to-day operations, use, activities or services;
- a private gathering, such as a wedding, funeral or end of life activity; or
- a routine religious gathering or ceremony.

The Stay Safe Directions (Victoria) and Restricted Activity Directions (Victoria) continue to apply these gatherings.

## 4 Attendee limits and density requirements

The phased resumption of public events, including attendee limits and density requirements for various venue types, is aligned with Victoria's roadmap for reopening. It reflects the epidemiological conditions in Victoria and other states, along with national and international advice for mass gatherings.

As Victoria progresses through the steps in the roadmap for reopening, the Public Events Framework allows for larger gatherings of people at public events. The first few phases allow for seated events and progressively move to standing and roaming events in the later stages. Each outdoor and indoor setting has its own caps, with the total attendees per event limited in each phase while holding controls in the indoor settings.

The full details are outlined in Attachment 1 of this document.

### **Major events**

Major events that are of significant value to Victoria from cultural, economic or government investment perspective, may be assessed for an exemption from the attendee limits and density requirements set out in the Public Events Framework.

These major events must be of significant interstate and international interest, deliver substantial wider economic benefits to Victoria and profile Victoria extensively on an international platform.

These major events will need to follow the Tier 1 event approval process, however they will undergo more rigorous public health planning and assessment, before being considered by the Public Health Advisory Panel, the Chief Health Officer and Ministerial Taskforce.

The final decision if the event can proceed will be made by the Chief Health Officer. Additional risk controls may need to be implemented before the event can proceed with a higher attendee limit.

Major event organisers should contact the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (DJPR) to commence early engagement and planning.

## 5 Seeking approval to operate a public event

Public events must comply with the requirements of the Public Events Framework, including the attendee limits and density requirements. Depending on the scale and risk involved in running the public event, the event organiser must seek approval from the Victorian Government to run the event.

The Victorian Government has established a review process to ensure public event organisers consider the appropriate infection prevention controls and public health advice as part of planning and delivery of the event.

### 5.1 Tiered approach for assessing public events

Public events will be assessed according to their scale, complexity and associated risk factors. A three-tiered system will be used to ensure the appropriate level of public health oversight is applied to public events.

The tiered approach is outlined on the following page.

### 5.2 Submission process

Each event organiser must complete and submit a COVIDSafe Event Plan if they are operating a Tier 1 or Tier 2 event, or upload a COVIDSafe Event Checklist for Tier 3 events. The Victorian Government's Coronavirus website includes [a form to upload COVIDSafe Event Plans and Checklists](#).

Please note, this approval process is designed to supplement, not replace, other Victorian laws and regulations, such as Occupational Health & Safety requirements or the Chief Health Officer Directions, which all events must comply with.

### 5.3 Timelines for public event assessment

A COVIDSafe Event Plan or COVIDSafe Event Checklist manages a high-risk activity, and the Victorian Government must be certain that the event can proceed safely.

- A COVIDSafe Event Plan for tier 1 events must be submitted for review and approval at least 8-10 weeks prior to the event commencement.
- A COVIDSafe Event Plan for Tier 2 events must be submitted for review and approval at least 4-6 weeks prior to the event commencement.
- A COVIDSafe Event Checklist must be uploaded at least 1 week prior to the event commencement.

Early engagement between event organisers and government officials will help support adequate and appropriate COVIDSafe planning.

It is the event organiser's obligation to meet expectations of the public events assessment. Where the event organiser doesn't provide sufficient information and timely follow up of requests their event may not be approved.

## Application for a COVID Safe Event

1. Event organisers use **self-assessment** tool to determine the appropriate categorisation of their event by considering patron caps and risk factors.

### Event risk factors:

1. Is the event primarily held indoors?
2. Does the event promote attendees to stand and roam around the venue?
3. Is alcohol served at the event?
4. Is there extensive singing, chanting, cheering or exhaling during the event?
5. Is there close physical interaction between attendees and/or participants where they may not be able to maintain 1.5 metres distance for short periods of time?
6. Is the event held over multiple successive days with different attendees each day?
7. Will the event include participants or attendees from interstate?

### Tier 1

**Highly complex and involves more than 5000 attendees**

E.g. – Australian Open, Penny Arcade Expo, Royal Melbourne Show, live entertainment at Rod Laver Arena

### Tier 2

**Moderately complex and involves between 500 – 5000 attendees**

E.g. – VFL matches, outdoor festivals, business product launches, musical productions

If a Tier 2 event has six or more of the risk factors it will be recategorised as a Tier 1 event

### Tier 3

**Low complexity and involves 500 attendees or less**

E.g. – Community sporting events, drag racing, local council cinema event

If a Tier 3 event has four or more of the event risk factors it will be recategorised as a Tier 2 event

Event organiser develops a **COVIDSafe Event Plan**. The plan is subject to Panel, CHO and Ministerial Taskforce consideration.

Event organiser develops and uploads a **COVIDSafe Event Checklist**

## 6 Tier 1 & Tier 2 – approval process

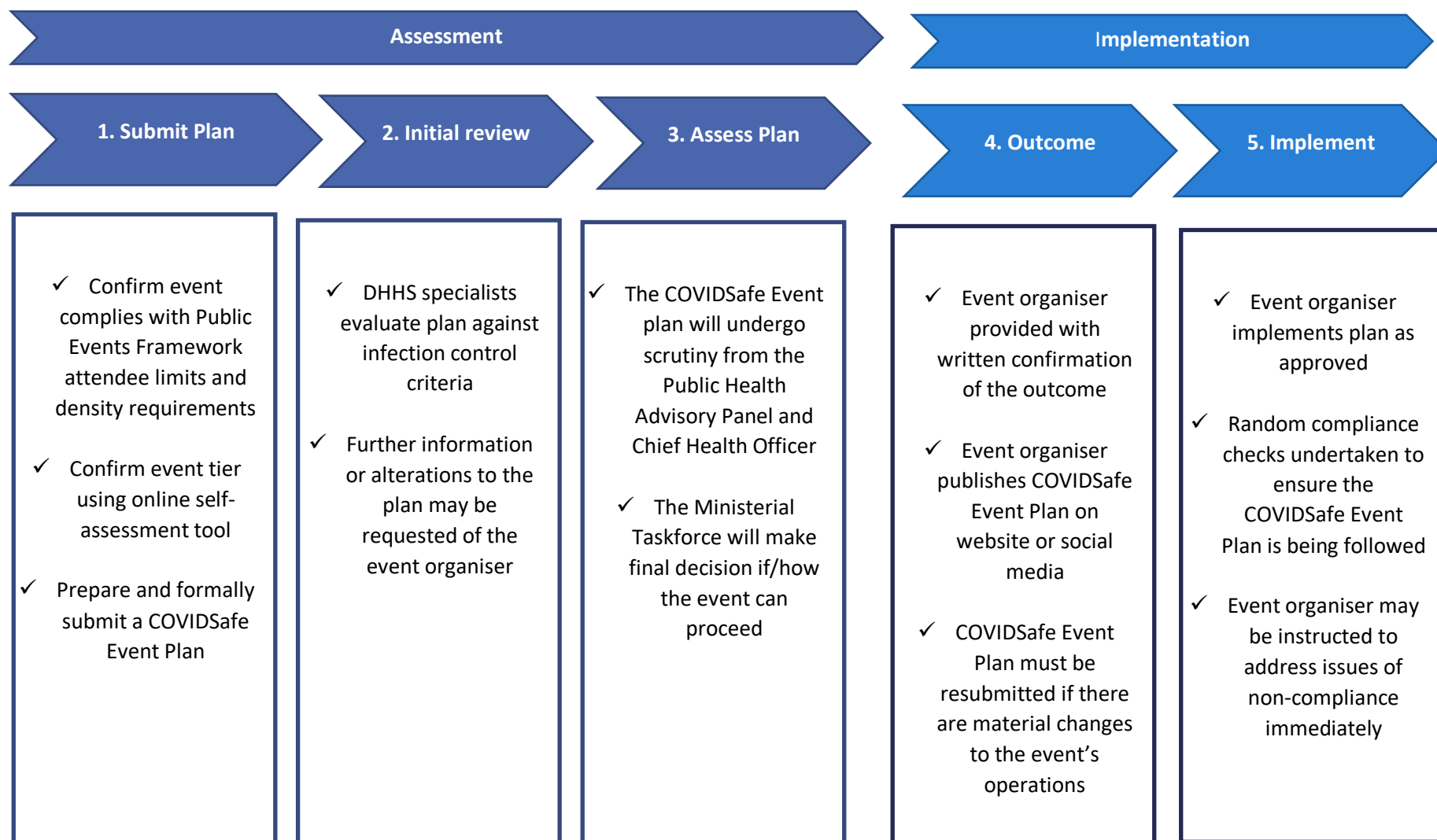
### 6.1 What is a COVIDSafe Event Plan?

A COVIDSafe Event Plan is a tailored and comprehensive plan that must be specific to the activity or venue. The plan sets out how the public event will be managed to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19 amongst attendees and staff.

Further guidance on the key areas to address in a COVIDSafe Event Plan and the template is available on the Victorian Government's Coronavirus website.

Further guidance on the evaluation and approval process for a COVIDSafe Event Plan is summarised on the following page.

## 6.2 COVIDSafe Event Plan – evaluation process



### **Public Health Advisory Panel**

The Public Health Advisory Panel is a cross departmental committee with DHHS and DJPR, including expertise in public health, infectious diseases and infection control.

The panel will meet regularly and is accountable for:

- Reviewing COVIDSafe Event Plans to determine if the appropriate public health risk controls are planned for the event
- Providing a recommendation to the Chief Health Officer outlining if the event's public health risk controls are sufficient and the rationale for the recommendation
- Providing advice on exemptions to the Restricted Activity Directions to the Chief Health Officer
- Provide advice to the Chief Health Officer on updates to the Public Events Framework and related guidance materials.

### **Major Events Ministerial Taskforce**

The Major Events Ministerial Taskforce plays a central role in supporting the COVIDSafe resumption of large-scale sports, cultural, business and community events.

The Major Events Ministerial Taskforce, comprising the Treasurer, the Coordinating Minister for Jobs, Precincts and Regions – COVID19, and the Coordinating Minister for Health and Human Services – COVID19, the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, will note the Chief Health Officer's advice and factor in other considerations before providing approval.

The Chief Health Officer retains veto powers for all public events to ensure the appropriate alignment with the broader COVID-19 public health strategy and directions.

### 6.3 Evaluation criteria – COVIDSafe Event Plan

A COVIDSafe Event Plan must address five key areas that aim to reduce the risk of transmission in a public place/event.

These key areas will be assessed within each COVIDSafe Event Plan, along with the current epidemiological conditions and other related factors.

A more detailed explanation of the five key criteria and sub-categories to be considered is available on the Victorian Government's Coronavirus website.

#### **1. Oversight and administration**

- Events must have an appropriate governance structure that incorporates communication of intent to all event authorities, detail of key people involved and key processes to plan and deliver COVIDSafe events.
- All staff and attendees must receive clear communication on expectations prior to the event. This should include physical distancing requirements, hygiene requirements, key health messages and event safety policies in clear and simple language.
- Strategies for record keeping must be implemented by event organisers. Where possible, multiple record keeping methods should be considered and implemented as a fail-safe if someone is diagnosed COVID positive. Adequate record keeping for up to 28 days must be maintained for all event attendees.

#### **2. Spectator Management**

- Physical distancing strategies must be considered when planning the event, and provisions must be made to ensure physical distancing is always maintained throughout the event.
- All staff and attendees must be screened for symptoms of COVID-19 before and during the event.
- For events that require first aid, medical and/or in-event health services, plans that incorporate the management of suspected COVID-19 cases must be created and integrated into the overall First Aid plan.
- Event plans should consider how co-mingling and congregation areas can be prevented, particularly in areas where alcohol is consumed.

#### **3. Cleaning and hygiene**

- A regular and thorough cleaning schedule must be implemented place before, during and after the event with high traffic areas such as toilets and frequently touched objects such as door handles, counters and railings regularly disinfected.
- Adequate provisions must be made for hand washing and hand sanitation, and facilities must be readily available and maintained throughout the event.

#### **4. Staff, vendors and contractors**

- All events staff, vendors contractors and subcontractors must be trained in the appropriate COVID-19 protocols and procures and have suitable access to personal protective equipment and training. This includes food staff, catering staff, cleaning staff, security staff and volunteers.

## **5. Operational Spaces**

- All operational spaces such as public transport hubs, ticket offices, training facilities, toilets, retail spaces, seating places, stages, front of house areas and back of house areas are considered and included in the COVIDSafe Event plan, and comply with measures for physical distancing, hand hygiene, general cleanliness and other COVIDSafe requirements.

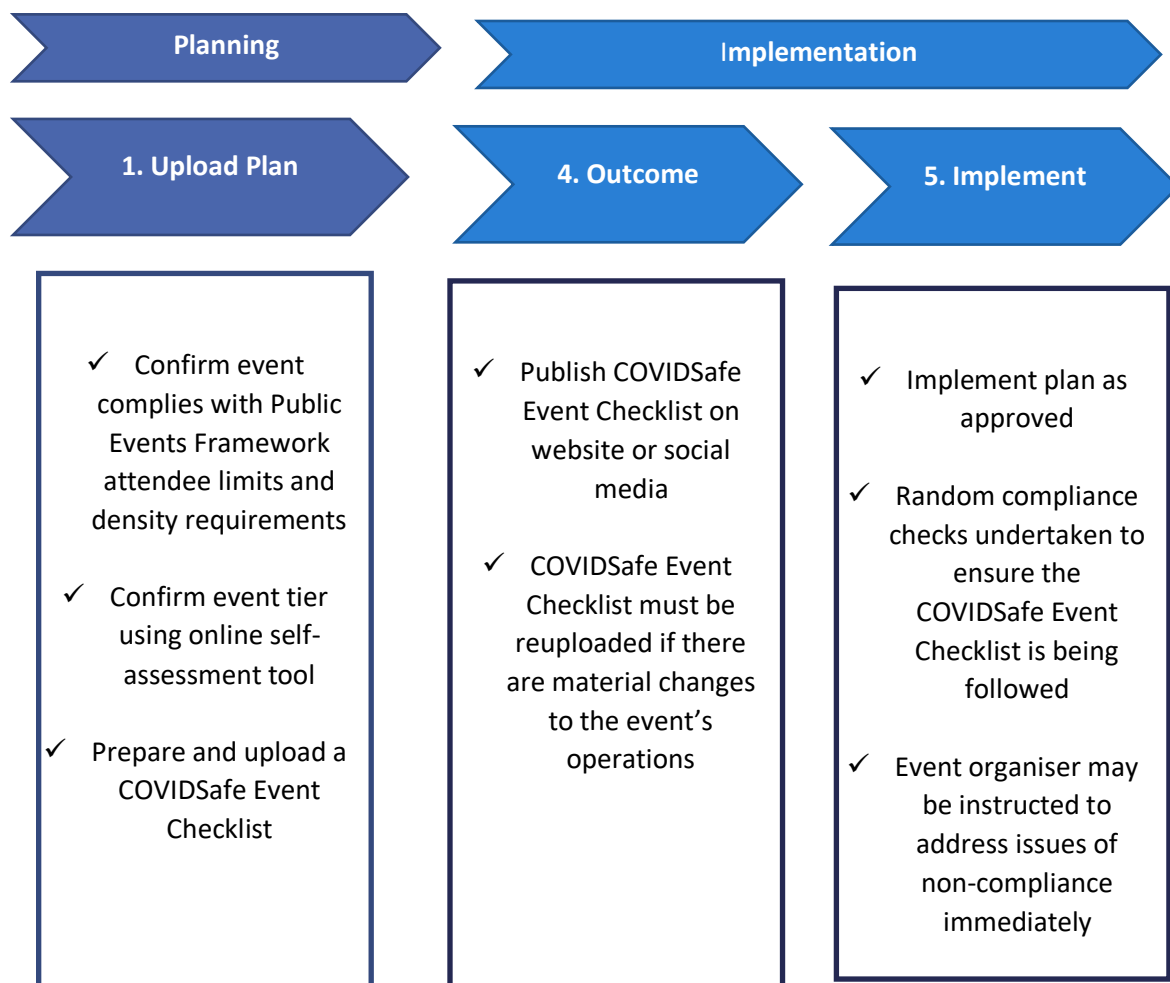
## 7 Tier 3 – approval process

### 7.1 What is a COVIDSafe Event Checklist?

The COVIDSafe Event Checklist outlines the public health requirements for holding a COVIDSafe event in Victoria. It enables event organisers to consider and implement controls to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission.

A copy of the COVIDSafe Events Checklist is available on the Victorian Government's Coronavirus website.

### 7.2 COVIDSafe Event Checklist – evaluation process



## 8 Legal terms

### **Liability and indemnity**

You control and accept sole responsibility, risk and liability for all aspects of your public event. You must conduct your own investigations, assessments and interpretations and seek independent professional advice on all aspects of your public event.

The State of Victoria does not control and accepts no liability for your public event nor for any loss, damage, injury or death in connection with your public event, including (without limitation), any change to requirements for your public event or the cancellation or postponement of your public event.

You will indemnify the State of Victoria against any liability to or claims by a third party for any loss, damage, injury or death in connection with your public event, including (without limitation), the cancellation or postponement of your public event.

### **Consultation, review, assessment and approval process**

To the extent permitted by law, the State of Victoria excludes liability for any loss, damage, injury or death caused by use of or reliance on any consultation, review, assessment or approval process in connection with your public event.

The State of Victoria may amend or withdraw from the consultation, review, assessment or approval process at any time without notice.

The State of Victoria may amend or withdraw any consultation, review, assessment or approval at any time without notice.

You will not be relieved from compliance with any of your obligations at law as a result of:

- any consultation, review, assessment, or approval (or failure to consult, review, assess, or approve) or any other act or omission by the State of Victoria in connection with your public event (including, without limitation, any failure by the State of Victoria to detect any errors, inaccuracies, mistakes, non-compliances or omissions in connection with your public event)
- your implementation of and compliance with the Plan for your public event.

### **Purpose/use of document**

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## 9 Attachment 1 – public events attendee limits and density requirements

Venue type	Last Step	Public event phase 1	Public event phase 2	Public event phase 3
Criteria for moving forward in phases	Last Step from 11.59pm on 22 November	Gradual easing of restrictions on a 14 day basis subject to public health advice	Gradual easing of restrictions on a 14 day basis subject to public health advice	Gradual easing of restrictions on a 14 day basis subject to public health advice
Venue requirements	<p><u>Outdoor venues</u></p> <p>25% of the venue's seating capacity, up to a maximum of 500 people seated.</p> <p><u>Indoor venues</u></p> <p>25% of the venue's seating capacity, up to a maximum of 250 people seated.</p> <p>Density quotient of one person per four square metres applies to non-fixed seated areas – e.g. grassed areas.</p> <p>Allocated seated events only. Free-standing events not permitted.</p>	<p>50% of the venue's seating capacity, up to a maximum of 5,000 people seated.</p> <p>Density quotient of one person per four square metres applies to non-fixed seated areas – e.g. grassed areas.</p> <p>Allocated seated events only. Free-standing events not permitted.</p>	<p>50% of the venue's seating capacity, up to a maximum of 25,000 people seated.</p> <p>Density quotient of one person per four square metres applies to non-fixed seated areas – e.g. grassed areas.</p> <p>Allocated seated events only. Free-standing events not permitted.</p>	<p>Gradual return of up to 100% of the venue's seated capacity.</p> <p>Gradual return of free-standing events.</p>
Requirements from public event organisers	<p>COVIDSafe Event Plan submitted for review and approval for Tier 1 and Tier 2 events</p> <p>COVIDSafe Event Checklist uploaded and published online for Tier 3 events</p>			

**Note – limits on attendee numbers at public events apply to each day of the event, include children older than 12 months, but do not include the staff required to run the event**

