

# COVID-19 restrictions

## How they have affected us, our work and how we are overcoming these difficulties



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The current global pandemic has affected the lives of just about everyone, albeit with varying degrees of severity. While the necessary restrictions implemented by governments appear to be effective in containing the virus, isolation is not without its consequences. Fortunately, unlike in 1918, during the height of the Spanish Flu, we are able to harness technology to assist in ameliorating some of the difficulties faced during this time.

We are both currently Juris Doctor students at Monash University. From our experience, attending university in person is conducive to an immersive and engaging education. However, for schools and universities around the country, this preferred style of teaching has become unfeasible during the Covid-19 crisis. Teaching institutions have responded to the restrictions by utilising technology and offering their services online. At our university,

lectures have been either pre-recorded or live streamed. Additionally, universities have provided workshops and services which can be accessed remotely by students. While we feel that learning online is not a perfect substitute for bricks and mortar, we are fortunate that universities have been able to continue our education throughout the crisis.

Secondly, the current restrictions have presented workers with a range of challenges. We are currently undertaking internships with WiseLaw, a cyber security law firm based in Melbourne. Those who've worked exclusively from home over the past few months may appreciate the psychological challenges that come with working remotely, away from colleagues and teams. In an effort to curtail potential feelings of loneliness or mental isolation, WiseLaw has implemented virtual awareness meetings to allow staff to keep in touch. We are encouraged to

share successes and concerns as well as our recent contributions. It still feels like we can connect with one another. Additionally, our operations team curates a weekly newsletter to keep everyone informed about what's happening throughout the organisation. While we would rather be attending work in person, these mechanisms assist in cultivating togetherness and support.

One of the great challenges that comes with physical distancing is that of preserving mental health. For the past few months we have been unable to enjoy some hobbies such as hiking or, crucially, talking to friends in person. While these sacrifices are necessary for obvious reasons, the psychological impacts of isolation are real and significant. However, technology has offered a useful solution for catching up with friends over video conferencing platforms and indulging in virtual tea parties. Despite the occasional network disconnection, technology has allowed my friends and I to remain connected during this time.

Suffice it to say, the COVID-19 global health crisis has instilled the sobering realisation that our sense of normalcy is not guaranteed. While technology is providing an adequate stop-gap during the restrictions, we are reminded to not take our freedoms for granted. We anticipate that, when we (hopefully) move beyond this crisis, we will appreciate our lecturers, our colleagues and our friends just a little bit more. ■

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