



The Hon. Dr Geoff Lee MP

Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education

Acting Minister for Sport, Multiculturalism, Seniors and Veterans

Ref: M20/516

Archbishop Mar Meelis Zaia
Metropolitan of the Archdiocese of Australia, NZ & Lebanon
Assyrian Church of the East
rameny@assyrianchurch.org.au

Dear Archbishop Zaia,

Your Eminence

I would like to thank you and your community for the key role you have played in flattening the COVID-19 curve in New South Wales.

The NSW Government acknowledges the sacrifices you have made in keeping places of worship closed for a period, even on days of religious significance. You have found innovative ways to adapt religious, pastoral and charity services to keep parishioners safe from COVID-19, while still supporting the spiritual, social, emotional and physical wellbeing of communities during these challenging times.

We cannot afford to be complacent. The recent outbreaks of COVID-19 in Victoria show the need to remain vigilant to the risks of another spike in cases. Where we go next will depend on all of us.

With the easing of restrictions from 1 July, including for places of worship, it is incumbent upon all of us to continue following the public health advice, practice social distancing, maintain hygiene regimes, and ensure COVID-19 Safety Plans are in place.

Detailed health advice for places of worship including a checklist and COVID-19 Safety Plan can be found on the NSW Government website at www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/industry-guidelines/places-of-worship and multilingual resources can be found at <https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/resources-other-languages>

The NSW Government remains very concerned about the risk of a COVID-19 spreading again. None of us want to see further restrictions or the closure of places of worship across the State. That is why we must all work together.

I trust you share this concern and will help the Government with this important matter by encouraging all members of your community to follow the health advice and by modifying your practices and rituals to comply with the public health orders.

Please do not hesitate to contact Nomiky Panayiotakis from my office at nomiky.panayiotakis@minster.nsw.gov.au or Thida Yang from my Agency, Multicultural NSW thida.yang@multicultural.nsw.gov.au for any assistance.

Yours sincerely,

Geoff Lee

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