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

Dear Archbishop Zaia,

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.


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@minister.nsw.gov.au or Thida Yang from my Agency, Multicultural NSW thida.yang@multicultural.nsw.gov.au for any assistance.

Yours sincerely,

The Hon. Dr Geoff Lee MP  
Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education  
Acting Minister for Sport, Multiculturalism, Seniors and Veterans