



MUSLIMS AUSTRALIA

AUSTRALIAN FEDERATION OF ISLAMIC COUNCILS INC.

The Peak body for Australian Muslims representing State & Territory Islamic Councils and Societies

ABN | 37 002 757 155
www.muslimsaustralia.com.au

Community Guidance Notice COVID-19 Impacts

AFIC, and its State & Territory Councils, have been closely monitoring the current health crisis and the impacts of the COVID-19 global pandemic. The situation is extremely fluid and is changing, not just daily, but even on an hourly basis. We urge all members of the community and the management of our member organisations, Mosques and community centres to keep up to date with the official notices from the Government and the Health authorities. In that regard we note the announcement this morning of additional measures being introduced by the Government in response to this situation. This includes:

- A restriction on any non-essential indoor gatherings of 100 people or more
- Restrictions on the visiting of the elderly in residential care
- A clear warning against any international travel
- The maintenance of social distancing measures including individuals keeping 1.5m distance between themselves in public
- A clear warning for people not to hoard supplies

We note that there have been a series of consultations within the community this week in relation to the situation with Mosques, Prayer Halls and the holding of Friday and congregational prayers. In considering all those matters, as well as Fatwas from international councils as well, AFIC advises that the following measures should be implemented immediately:

1. Friday prayers should NOT be held in any Mosque, Prayer Hall or other indoor facility.
2. All Mosques and Prayer Halls should immediately review the likely attendance of worshippers for congregational prayers and where more than 100 would normally attend to immediately cease those prayers.
3. All other activities held at Mosques, Prayers Halls and Islamic centres that have the potential to bring groups of people together should be reviewed immediately and alternative arrangements introduced. This may include:
 - a. Moving classes or lessons online
 - b. Limiting the number of people present in any one session so that the total number of attendees at any point of time does not exceed 100
 - c. Ensuring the physical separation of attendees by at least 1.5m
 - d. The provision of hand sanitisers for all attendees and the introduction of hygiene measures to ensure that health recommendations are being followed.
 - e. The cancellation of such events completely where the risks to attendees cannot be managed or the health regulations cannot be maintained.

We note that the Government has indicated that it is currently considering additional measures for internal gatherings of less than 100 people and it is extremely likely that further restrictions will be announced in the coming days.

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We urge all Mosques, Prayer Halls and Community Centres to immediately develop contingency plans to deal with the likely introduction of further restrictions. AFIC can assist any organisation that requires support in this area.

The obligations at this time are not just on our Mosques, Prayer Halls and Community Centres but all Muslims. As such we advise all members of the community of the following recommendations:

- If you have no religious obligation to attend congregational prayers then please do not attend the Mosque or Prayer Hall
- The elderly, sick, people with immune-deficiency ailments, or other underlying health risks should not attend public gatherings, including prayers, of any sort.
- Where ever possible perform your ablutions at home rather than at your place of worship.
- Use hand sanitiser before entering your place of worship and after leaving your place of worship.
- Congregational prayers can be held in your home with your immediate family. In the current circumstances this is preferable to attending a public congregational prayer.
- Limit all your public interactions to the essential matters only – food, medical supplies etc
- Do NOT stockpile or hoard supplies. There is an ample supply of all basic necessities.
- Look out for the elderly and others in our community who may not have the means or ability to cater for all of their own needs.
- Follow the specific rules/guidelines set by your local Mosque or Prayer Hall

These are extraordinary times and we need to ensure that we are doing all in our power to minimise the risk and potential harm to others in the community. We pray to Allah(swt) that this tribulation is eased and we do everything we can in the interim with patience, fortitude and certainty in Wisdom and Mercy of Allah(swt)

End.

18 March 2020

Australian Federation of Islamic Councils incl.

Islamic Council of the ACT
Islamic Council of Christmas Island
Islamic Council of Northern Territory
Islamic Council of Queensland
Islamic Council of South Australia
Islamic Council of Tasmania
Islamic Council of Victoria
Islamic Council of Western Australia
United Muslims NSW

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