



25th of March, 2020

Statement in response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak

The Faith Communities Council of Victoria has issued the following in response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak:

The outbreak of the coronavirus (COVID-19) has created unprecedented challenges for Victoria's faith communities.

Public religious gatherings have been cancelled, places of worship have been forced to close, and social distancing laws have made it difficult to assist the most vulnerable in our community.

Overcoming a virus pandemic requires a whole-of-community response, and that means faith communities must play their role to help reduce the risk of infection and slow the spread of coronavirus in our community.

We applaud all faith and community leaders who are currently complying with Government directives (<https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus>)

It is highly likely this current health crisis will continue for some time which means faith and community leaders must embrace new ways (ie live streaming, social media, remote conferencing, e-newsletters) to serve their congregations.

In times of stress, our faiths call us to be generous and caring towards one another. We call all people of faith to be sensitive of others in their neighborhoods ensuring no one is left isolated or misses out on their essential needs.

Even though public gatherings at places of worship cannot take place, faith leaders are 'still open for business'. We encourage all people who require spiritual guidance, counselling or simply a chat to stay connected with their faith leaders.

Promoting a Harmonious Multifaith Victoria

Level 6, 608 St Kilda Road, Melbourne VIC 3004

P: +61 3 9650 4511 **F:** + 61 3 9650 8383 **E:** officer@faithvictoria.org.au **W:** www.faithvictoria.org.au



As people of faith, let's pray for wisdom, calmness and healing.

Let's pray for those who have passed away and their families. May they be consoled and comforted in their grief.

Let's pray for the sick, the high-risk elderly, and those living with compromised immunity. May they feel protected and safe and may others ensure they are not lonely.

Let's pray for the health care workers. These people are on the front lines. Their dedication in the face of personal risk is exemplary. May they feel appreciated in their line of duty.

Let's pray for the scientists looking for treatments and vaccines. May their painstaking work be rewarded with life-saving results.

Let's pray for all those who are, and will be, in financial hardship. May we all learn to live with less, to try to gain more satisfaction with fewer material goods and to assist each other in sharing our resources.

Let's pray for those feeling isolated and remind ourselves that a phone call can be a lifeline.

And let's pray for each other and protect and care for ourselves and one another.

Faith Communities Council of Victoria is comprised of the following peak bodies: Baha'i Community of Victoria, Brahma Kumaris Australia, Buddhist Council of Victoria, Hindu Community Council of Victoria, Islamic Council of Victoria, Jain Council of Victoria, Jewish Community Council of Victoria, Sikh Interfaith Council of Victoria and Victorian Council of Churches.

Promoting a Harmonious Multifaith Victoria

Level 6, 608 St Kilda Road, Melbourne VIC 3004

P: +61 3 9650 4511 **F:** + 61 3 9650 8383 **E:** officer@faithvictoria.org.au **W:** www.faithvictoria.org.au