



Government of South Australia
SA Health

Ref: A1966579

Office of the Chief Executive

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Religious Leaders

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Dear Sir/Madam

RE: COVID-19

I write to you on behalf of SA Health about the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our churches, mosques, synagogues and temples have an essential role in the lives of many South Australians.

This work extends beyond the spiritual life of members, to the personal and community support and assistance such organisations provide.

At this time, the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC), have advised the Commonwealth and the States Government of measures that need to be taken to prevent the spread of COVID-19 infections.

These measures are constantly updated on the Commonwealth Department of Health website: www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert

Your organisation can support SA Health by encouraging your attendees to practice good hygiene, including ensuring access to handwashing and alcohol based sanitisers.

You can also facilitate social distancing, for example, by ensuring that people stay at home if unwell, and enabling people to keep a distance of 1.5 metres from other people where possible. The current advice also recommends that physical contact is minimised, especially with people at higher risk such as older people and people with existing health conditions. Handshaking, and hugging are to be avoided.

I appreciate that taking these measures will effect religious services. For example, for religions that share a communion cup, these guidelines would require that a shared cup not be used.

I would note however that there are a number of steps that religious organisations can take to continue their vital work for their members and the community. This could include, based on the current recommendations, convening gatherings in such a way so that social distancing can occur, and for people who are self-isolating or under quarantine, making contact with people using video conferencing and other technology.

Thank you for your support in protecting our community's physical and mental health and wellbeing. Should you have any questions, please contact my office.

More information and resources are available on our website:

www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/COVID2019

Yours sincerely



DR CHRISTOPHER MCGOWAN
Chief Executive

17 / 03 / 2020