

This community update contains useful information for our Muslim community and is presented in the form of a Q&As (question and answers) that are commonly being asked. Inshallah it serves as a useful guide for our community.

The Government has confirmed we are moving to Alert Level 3 at 11.59pm, Monday 27 April.

### **What does Alert Level 3 mean for education?**

Early Learning / Education Centres and schools can open for children up to and including year 10. All young people in years 11-13 will continue to learn at home. For more information on Level 3, visit

<https://covid19.govt.nz/alert-system/alert-level-3/>

### **What are the main changes for business in relation to alert level 3?**

Retail and hospitality businesses can only open for delivery and contactless pre-ordered pick up - customers cannot enter stores. Supermarkets, dairies and petrol stations can continue to allow customers into their stores, with the same restrictions and measures in place as Alert Level 4. Businesses cannot offer services which involve face-to-face contact or sustained close contact (e.g. hairdressing, massage, house cleaning, or door-to-door salespeople).

### **What is the current Government directive relating Ramadan?**

[www.covid19.govt.nz](http://www.covid19.govt.nz) site has the following instructions. Mosques and other faith-based venues must remain closed during Alert Levels 3 and 4, although mosque workers may go into the mosque to work, for example, to conduct an online service.

You and your bubble can come together to mark religious events such as Ramadan. At Alert Level 3, you can expand your bubble to include close family and caregivers, or to support isolated people. However, you must keep your bubble small and exclusive at all times.

You are encouraged to hold iftar (breaking the fast at sunset) and isha (the last prayers of the day) within your bubble. If Eid (the end of Ramadan) occurs during Alert Level 3, you must remain in your household bubble.

### **Will NZMA mosques be open during Ramadan once we move to Alert Level 3?**

No. NZMA is following Ministry of Health guidelines and with restrictions on mass gatherings, mosques will not be fully open until we are at Alert Level 1. NZMA will review what the specific government requirements are at Level 2 when they are finalised and will make a decision on Level 2 at that time. The current Level 2 requirements are that indoor congregations do not exceed 100, and outdoor does not exceed 500 but these will be reviewed before the country moves to Level 2.

### **How do I pay my Zakaat and Fitrana if the mosques are closed?**

Fitrana and Zakaat can be deposited into the NZMA account, BNZ 02-0176-0213886-05. For further information please contact NZMA Treasurer, Br Aruf Khan on 0212169309.

### **Can Taraweeh prayers take place within your bubble?**

Taraweeh Salaah is Sunnah Mu`akkadah. Under the current lockdown circumstances and until the Masajid re-open, we should perform the Taraweeh at home either individually or in congregation within our bubbles. The same rules apply to Juma`ah.

### **How will Covid-19 affect Eid celebrations?**

Eid Salaah is Waajib in congregation, but as per above if we remain at level 3 or 4 then Eid Salaah cannot be performed in congregation. If we are at Level 2, Eid Salaah may be permissible outdoors only and we will need to await guidance from government closer to the announcement of Level 2 in relation to rules for indoor gathering. NZMA will make an announcement that will be consistent with government guidelines.

NZMA is also currently looking at alternative venues with larger outdoor capacity and also the possibility of multiple Eid Salaah sessions for smaller congregations.

### **What is the latest information on Muslim funerals (Janazah)?**

Based on the new COVID-19 rules, NZMA cannot provide its own burial service while we are in alert levels 3 and 4. We can only use registered funeral director. The new rules mean that only persons who were in the same bubble as the deceased can attend the funeral. A list of these names need to be provided to council before the janazah (as early as possible to avoid issues at the cemetery). Upto 10 people living within the same bubble can be allowed at the cemetery. Full details are available at:

<https://nzma.kiwi.nz/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Auckland-Guidelines-re-Muslim-Burial-L4-Lockdown.pdf>

In addition the latest Government directives on Muslim funerals during Alert Level 3 is that funerals can be officiated by your Imam. Funeral directors will work closely with Muslim communities to support ghusl (ritual washing) and janaza (prayer over the body) being carried out safely. More information on this Government website:

<https://covid19.govt.nz/latest-updates/ramadan-during-alert-levels-3-and-4/>

### **Who can handle the body at the cemetery?**

It is extremely important that we follow the rules set by the Ministry of Health and Auckland Council at the funerals. It is important that we all adhere to the following key rules:

- Any family member helping during ghusul MUST follow instructions of the funeral parlour and NZMA Janazah team (contact Br Sheraj Ali 027 484 4232)
- Any family member involved in janazah and burial MUST follow instructions from NZMA Janazah Team and Auckland Council Staff at cemetery
- Only those family members can be involved ghusul, janazah and burial who are part of the same bubble as the deceased person.
- Only NZMA approved Imam will be allowed to lead Janazah service

### **What is the cost of a janazah under these new rules?**

Each janazah will incur standard janazah costs plus the cost of service provided by the funeral parlour which is approximately \$2,000 for non covid-19 related janazah.

**Who can I contact within NZMA if I need any help?**

NZMA operates five branches in Auckland: Avondale Islamic Centre; Ponsonby Masjid, Ranui Mosque, Kelson Mosque, and Birkenhead Islamic Centre. If you need to contact any of the NZMA executive committee, their contact details are:

- President: Br Ikhlāq Kashkari 021 741 277, [president@nzma.kiwi.nz](mailto:president@nzma.kiwi.nz)
- Vice P.: Br Mohammed Fazal 027 245 5040, [ranui@nzma.kiwi.nz](mailto:ranui@nzma.kiwi.nz)
- Secretary: Br Shayaz Khan 027 223 7515, [secretary@nzma.kiwi.nz](mailto:secretary@nzma.kiwi.nz)

For counselling or advice, you can contact the following people directly: Shaikh Shafee on 021 154 3712; MI Muhammed Shaakir, Imam of Avondale Islamic Centre, on 021 0850 0786; or sister Waseema Ahmed on 021 0424 113.

**Where can I get more information about seniors and the help elderly people can get?**

This site has useful information and links for our seniors:

<http://superseniors.msd.govt.nz/webadmin/html/email/superseniors-covid.html>

**Where can I get information on immigration matters relating to COVID-19?**

The Government has made a number of decisions recently including the automatic extension of around 85,000 temporary visa holders whose permits were due to expire between 2 April and 9 July; deferral of expressions of interest selections and deferral of skilled migrant category and parent category selections. More information available here:

<https://www.immigration.govt.nz/about-us/covid-19/>

**Is there support available for recent migrants and refugees into NZ?**

This link provides useful information on this issue:

<https://www.immigration.govt.nz/about-us/covid-19/migrant-information>