

15 February 2021

Funeral Directors Association reacts to the new lockdown levels

The Funeral Directors Association has today reacted to the announcement of the Level 3 and Level 2 lockdowns. “The sudden announcement has had an immediate impact upon grieving families” said Gary Taylor President of the Funeral Directors Association.

“Telling a family that they have to delay the meaningful farewell of their loved one less than 24 hours beforehand is one of the hardest things we have to do” he said. “Most of this week is already booked with funerals after the short week last week and so a substantial number of families are being hit by this”, Taylor said.

During the last Level 4 lockdown thousands of families were unable to farewell their loved ones. David Moger, Chief Executive of the Funeral Directors Association commented “Its early days but at this point we estimate some 80 funerals have been postponed in Auckland today which is devastating for those families and there is still Tuesday and Wednesday to go”.

Funeral Director Association members began contacting their client families as soon as the announcement was made, explaining what is happening and providing options. “So far it seems the most popular option is to delay the funeral until later this week or into next week as we don’t know what will happen when the lockdown deadline expires on Wednesday night” Moger said. “Our members have been here before and are doing all they can to support families through this very difficult time”

Funeral Directors Association members have a clear set of standards and code of ethics in place to provide the assurance of a meaningful farewell.

In addition, all members have extensive resources dedicated to managing funerals and tangihanga in the Covid19 environment. “With our standards, monitoring processes and the additional Covid19 resources we have put in place, the New Zealand public can have confidence in a safe response” Moger said.

“If anyone loses a loved one particularly over the next 72 hours, they can contact any one of our members who will work with them in a Covid19 safe way.”

The Funeral Directors Association website www.funeraldirectors.co.nz has details of all members and Covid19 guidance for Funerals and Tangihanga for the New Zealand public.

“We are also asking Dr Bloomfield to fast-track our request for essential health worker status. This has been an ongoing discussion with the Ministry of Health, and we would like to see it resolved now.” Taylor said.

Essential health worker status will enable funeral directors to be able to support grieving families and care for the deceased more effectively and safely than just essential worker status. “We believe that we have made a strong case that care of the deceased and their grieving loved ones is part of the health system and as such we need that change in status.

We have written to Dr Bloomfield this morning to ask for his help in making this happen urgently” he said.

ENDS

For further information contact:

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The Funeral Directors Association of New Zealand represents funeral directing companies that undertake the majority of funerals in New Zealand. They are a group of caring professionals who are committed to ensuring that the families they serve receive high-quality funeral service. For more information, visit our website: www.funeraldirectors.co.nz