

**15 September 2021**

## **Funeral Directors Association calls for further Government change of heart**

The Funeral Directors Association this morning announced that it has called on the Government for a further change of heart for funerals and tangihanga as the lockdowns are extended for another week.

The Association has also proposed a change in approach to support the vaccination roll out.

“Yesterday we sent a proposal to the Prime Minister and Dr Bloomfield seeking a change to allow funerals under Alert Level 4 and an increase in the number allowed to attend inside at Alert Level 2,” said Gary Taylor, President of the Funeral Directors Association “and we have also proposed a new innovation to encourage support for the vaccination roll out.”

The Association has proposed that funerals be allowed at Alert Level 4 with revised health and safety protocols and limited numbers and for the number inside at a funeral in the controlled environment of the funeral home to be increased to 100.

“We know that the medium to long term mental wellbeing of grieving families can be severely impacted by the lack of a meaningful farewell” Taylor said, “and with the extension to the lockdowns, we believe that by adopting our proposal the Government can show them the kindness they need and manage the risk of transmission at the same time.”

The proposal from the Association includes detailed requirements to maintain separation, limit the spread of virus and encourage vaccinations among those attending.

“We see an opportunity to make funerals and tangihanga safe at Alert Level 4 and encourage vaccine uptake by requiring the limited number of mourners to have at least the first dose of vaccine.” said David Moger, Chief Executive of the Funeral Directors Association “This thinking will enable families to grieve safely under Alert Level 4 and at the same time provide a real motivation for the vaccine programme.” He said.

The Funeral Directors Association has also proposed that priority vaccination be available to all mourners across the country.

“We know how important a meaningful farewell is to families as part of their grieving,” Moger said “and so it is the ideal time to enable them to attend one and promote the importance of vaccinations. This new option is something we believe the Government should support immediately.”

The Funeral Directors Association believes that grieving families are paying a high price as part of the team of 5 million and the proposals made provide some relief from that whilst maintaining the requirement to limit any potential transmission.

“Our proposals provide substantial benefits for the mental wellbeing of grieving families, manage the capacity constraints of the sector in Auckland, enhance the vaccine programme and manage the risk of transmission.” said Taylor. “The Government listened to us when we proposed a change in viewings at Alert Level 4 and we have asked them to listen again.” He added.

The detailed written proposal was submitted to the Prime Minister and Dr Bloomfield on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> September and the Funeral Directors Association is waiting to hear back.

ENDS

**For further information contact:**

Gary Taylor, Funeral Directors Association President on 027 222 3795

David Moger, Funeral Directors Association CEO on 021 622 523



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](http://www.funeraldirectors.co.nz)