

Chris Minns
Premier of New South Wales



Steve Kamper
Minister for Small Business
Minister for Lands and Property
Minister for Multiculturalism
Minister for Sport

Media Statement

Statement from the NSW Faith Affairs Council and Faith Leaders

Tuesday, 16 April 2024

Today we convened a meeting of faith leaders representing religious communities across Western Sydney.

All of the following communities endorsed and supported the statement below that calls for calm, to follow police instructions, and for peace.

Places of worship are places of peace and prayer. The people who gather there should never feel threatened or unsafe, no matter what religion they follow. As faith leaders representing the diverse religious communities of New South Wales, we stand united against all forms of hate and violence.

Our prayers are with the victims and we call on our communities to extend our message of care and compassion to all.

We have trust in our police and first responders and full confidence in their work. Police should never be attacked for keeping our communities safe. The scenes we witnessed after the attack are unacceptable to anyone, and especially to people of faith.

For people of faith, religion is never a justification for violence.

It has been a very difficult week but we are a strong community in New South Wales.

We call on everyone to act with kindness and respect for each other.

Now is the time to show that we are a caring and united community.

Statement agreed to by all members of the NSW Faith Affairs Council:

- Right Reverend Dr Michael Stead, Anglican Church, Diocese of Sydney
- Mr Gawaine Powell Davies, Chair, Buddhist Council of NSW
- Imam Shadi Alsuleiman, President, Australian National Imams Council
- Dr Ali Al Samail, Resident Scholar (Sheikh), Australian Ahl Al Bait Islamic Centre
- Mr Surinder Kumar Jain, Vice President, Hindu Council of Australia

- Ms Monica Doumit, Director of Public Affairs and Engagement, Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney
- David Ossip, President, NSW Jewish Board of Deputies
- Rev. Dr Steve Bartlett, Director of Ministries, Baptist Churches of NSW & ACT
- Rev. Dr Manas Ghosh, Minister in the Uniting Church Uniting Church in Australia Synod of NSW & ACT
- Rev. Dr Kamal Weerakoon, Minister, Presbyterian Church of Australia
- Mr Darshan Singh Gill, Patron, Australian Sikh Association (ASA) (Gurdwara Sahib Glenwood)
- Very Rev. Fr Christophoros Krikelis, Chancellor, Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia
- Rev. Ralph Estherby, National Director/CEO for Chaplaincy Australia, Australian Christian Churches
- Mr Darren Bark, Co-Chair, Better Balanced Futures (Faith NSW)
- Mr Murray Norman, CEO, Better Balanced Futures (Faith NSW)
- Reverend Heather Joyce Topp, Senior Chaplain and Interfaith Minister, Buddhist Council of NSW
- Reverend William Crews AM, Superintendent Minister, Ashfield Parish Mission
- Ms Katherine Xavier, Interfaith Commission Member, Catholic Diocese of Parramatta
- Ms Monica Chahoud, Melkite Charitable Foundation President, Melkite Catholic Eparchy of Australia, New Zealand and all Oceania

The statement was also supported by:

- Archbishop Mar Meelis Zaia, Assyrian Church of the East
- Archbishop Amel Shamon Nona, Catholic Chaldeans in Australia
- Bishop Antoine-Charbel Tarabay, Maronite Bishop of Australia, New Zealand and Oceania
- Dr Rateb Jneid, President of the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils
- Mr Hafez Alameddine, President of the Lebanese Muslim Association