

14 September 2021

COMMUNITY STATEMENT

ANIC's Position on the "Freedom Plan" For the Reopening of Mosques

The NSW government has announced plans to ease restrictions when the state has reached 70% double dose vaccinations with more restrictions eased at 80% double dose, strictly for the vaccinated population.

The Australian National Imams Council (ANIC) has been working in collaboration with other faith groups and experts to discuss the easing of restrictions for public places of worship including our Mosques and Islamic centres.

Whilst places of worship have been treated with parity with other industries such as hospitality and entertainment, the group is discussing issues presented in the "freedom plan".

Our main concerns are the following:

- *Non-vaxxed children under the age of 16 attending programs in places of worship without a vaccinated household member.*
- *Density of people in attendance at a funeral or wedding in a public place of worship in comparison to other venues where a funeral or wedding may occur.*
- *Mosques and Public places of worship to accommodate both the vaccinated and the non-vaccinated population in line with a health and safety plan.*

Whilst we see the importance of people in a congregation to be fully vaccinated, we don't support the idea of mosques and Islamic centres having to police the vaccination status of all people who attend their venues.

Public places of worship and mosques are places of sanctuary to all attendees and it's inappropriate to discriminate against anyone who seeks spiritual refuge in these sacred places.

We are working alongside other faith groups and an expert to draft a proposal as requested by the NSW Health Department. This proposal will outline how to safely allow everyone to return to places of worship without discrimination.

A draft proposal will be finalised soon and discussed with the NSW Health Department.

The Australian National Imams Council (ANIC) will continue to advocate and address the community's concerns and interests at all levels.