

DATE:

The Honourable Ben Carroll
Member for Niddrie
ben.carroll@parliament.vic.gov.au

Re: Unfair treatment of People of Faith in the COVID-19 Roadmap

Dear Mr Carroll,

With respect, I ask that you hear the concerns of people of faith like myself, and request the government to urgently address the unfair treatment of faith communities in the state COVID-19 Roadmap.

The announcement on Sunday 18 October of some easing of restrictions in metropolitan and regional Victoria failed to recognise the spiritual needs and wellbeing supports of religious faith. Not only that, but the proposals for Step Three of the Roadmap ahead still force religious people, including the disabled, the elderly, and families with young children, to worship outside.

As venues like restaurants and pubs open up, it makes no sense that people of faith are forced to stand outside in small numbers, locked out of their most sacred place.

Places of worship, be they churches, temples, mosques or synagogues, provide an essential service, even if that can't be reduced to a dollar value by the government.

Faith leaders have enforced COVID-safe plans and all other measures ever since the Pandemic began and should now be able to gather with their people in numbers equivalent to other sectors such as hospitality.

All I seek is equality and fairness.

Yours sincerely,

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The Honourable Bill Shorten
Member for Maribyrnong
bill.shorten.mp@aph.gov.au

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