



## **Public Statement from the Diocesan Bishops of the Anglican Church in New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory**

18 March 20

In light of the Prime Minister's announcement this morning, banning enclosed gatherings in excess of 100 people and in order to express Christ's concern for all people, especially the elderly and vulnerable, we have decided that the Anglican Church in New South Wales and the ACT should suspend all public church gatherings until further notice. The Dioceses of Sydney, Newcastle and Canberra & Goulburn will suspend services from Sunday, 22 March, and the Dioceses of Armidale, Bathurst, Grafton and Riverina will suspend services from Sunday, 29 March 2020.

We are encouraging all our churches to consider providing their services online or by other communication methods. Where this is not possible our Dioceses will ensure that online services and other resources are made widely available. We shall make every effort to care for our church communities and the wider public, especially those who are isolated and vulnerable. Across NSW and the ACT our welfare agencies will also continue their vital work of showing Christ's love in ministering to all people, especially older Australians.

We call on all Christians to pray for health workers and those seeking to develop a vaccine, and to pray that the spread of this disease may slow.

God's love for all people has not diminished, nor his sovereignty over his world. Therefore, we urge all people to trust in God's goodness and mercy in this crisis, and we encourage Christians everywhere to show Christ's love to those affected.

The Rt Rev. Mark Calder (Bishop of Bathurst)

The Most Rev. Dr Glenn Davies (Archbishop of Sydney)

The Rt Rev. Dr Murray Harvey (Bishop of Grafton)

The Rt Rev. Donald Kirk (Bishop of Riverina)

The Rt Rev. Rick Lewers (Bishop of Armidale)

The Rt Rev. Dr Mark Short (Bishop of Canberra & Goulburn)

The Rt Rev. Dr Peter Stuart (Bishop of Newcastle)