



A response to the tragedy in New Zealand, an open Letter.

21st March 2019

Members of the Wyndham Interfaith Network (WIN) are deeply saddened by the recent tragedy in Christchurch New Zealand and express condolences and our deepest sympathy to those who lost family members, friends and fellow members of the Christchurch Muslim community, as well as to those who survived but will bear the scars of their physical and emotional wounds for life.

We condemn acts of violence aimed at people of faith and stand with the Muslim Community of Australia, New Zealand and globally.

An atrocity perpetrated in the name of promoting the supremacy of one nationality, religion or race over another is by all accounts a pernicious lie. Instead we find in all of the world's sacred scriptures that we share a universal kinship in that we are all children of God and that life is precious.

We note the importance of language to express sensitivity, concern and shared pain. Examples of grace and under pressure have been shown by many faith and political leaders in New Zealand. We urge leaders in Australia to see these as examples to emulate.

We note the importance of actions to demystify unfamiliar practices. We encourage opportunities for all people to meet and learn from other belief or traditions. The annual Islamic Council of Victoria's mosque open day is one example of an action that builds understanding. Other faiths also open their doors and actively engage to assist learning. We also note the importance of embedding practices to 'discover the other' within the school curriculum. This occurs in municipalities like the City of Greater Dandenong in partnership with the local interfaith network. It has allowed thousands of children to build their understanding of the presence of different faiths in the life of the community and the positive relations between them.

Efforts to build strength in community at times of challenge is needed. Similarly, actions on shared concerns are part of a dynamic civil society. The Wyndham Interfaith Network is a platform for communities of different culture and religion to come together under the banner of humanity.

We invite **all**, in our local community, to join us in this endeavour for understanding and peace in place of negativity or indifference.

For more information on the Wyndham interfaith network please see <https://www.wyndhamcec.org.au/community-strengthening/wyndham-interfaith-network-win> <https://www.facebook.com/Wyndham-Interfaith-Network-WIN-514058445614595/>

Yours Sincerely

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