



Press Release from the Funeral Directors Association of NZ

11 May 2020

Funeral Directors Association condemns the Level 2 announcement on funerals and tangi as cruel and without compassion

The Funeral Directors Association has today condemned the Level 2 announcement of no more than 10 people attending a funeral or tangi under Level 2 as both cruel and without compassion.

Commenting on the Government announcement, Funeral Directors Association President Gary Taylor said “This is a cruel and heartless blow to the thousands of New Zealand families who have lost loved ones and is unjustifiable.”

During the Level 4 lockdown no funerals or tangi could be held. Under Level 3, a maximum of 10 were allowed to attend a funeral or tangi. Under Level 2 the Government has decided to keep that number at 10. “We know that thousands of families have been unable to have a meaningful funeral as part of their grieving process which has today been extended for another 2 weeks,” said Taylor, “and we know how much these families are suffering.”

Taylor and David Moger, Funeral Directors Association CEO, spoke to the Epidemic Response Committee last week where Moger shared the account of an 18 year old who had taken his own life under Level 4. The last view his parents had of him was in the mud of their backyard and not the peaceful state of being able to view later and say a meaningful goodbye. “That was cruel and harsh” Taylor said, “and today’s announcement is another cruel and heartless kick in the guts for all those families who have been waiting until Level 2 to hold a meaningful farewell.”

“Funeral Directors Association members can be trusted to manage the funeral environment safely and there is no justification for the decision the Government has taken.” Taylor said “We know how much anguish and sorrow this cruel and harsh decision will cause to tens of

thousands of New Zealanders because we see it every day and have done so ever since the Alert Level system was initiated.”

The Funeral Directors Association was led to believe that Level 2 would allow for funerals of up to 100 and had already worked with its members with advice and guidance on how to manage them safely. “The families we serve deserve better than this. How can it be in any way kind to allow multiple groups of up to 10 in a restaurant for a social meal but no more than 10 in total to farewell a deceased Mum, Dad, Auntie, Grandparent or a young child?” Taylor said, “We call upon the Government to reverse this decision and show the kindness and compassion that New Zealanders expect.”

ENDS

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The Funeral Directors Association of New Zealand represents funeral directing companies that undertake the majority of funerals in New Zealand. They are a group of caring professionals who are committed to ensuring that the families they serve receive high-quality funeral service. For more information, visit our website: www.fdanz.org.nz