
Wednesday, 29 September 2021

Dear Sisters and Brothers

Vaccination Status and Public Worship from 11 October

By now you will have heard the government's announcement that from 11 October unvaccinated people will not be allowed to participate in public worship.

While this will be for a short period, from 11 October until such time as NSW reaches the vaccination rate of 80% (of the 16+ Population) - probably about two or three weeks, it will mean that we will sadly need to exclude the unvaccinated from our churches during this time.

I ask that you communicate this clearly and widely amongst your people as soon as possible so that they are well advised in advance, that unless they are fully vaccinated, compliance with Public Health Orders means that they will not be allowed to participate.

Please be sure to make it clear that this is to comply with Public Health Orders and is not a policy of the Diocese or of the Anglican Church of Australia. However, we have complied with every public health order so far and this will be a continuation of our commitment to fully comply with this forthcoming Public Health Order.

I hope that those who, either through choice or through the difficulty of obtaining a vaccine, will be able to join your ministry unit through online worship during this short time.

Worship leaders such as LLMs and clergy and any others on rosters in the worship space such as musicians, churchwardens, readers, sidespersons and so on, will also need to have been vaccinated by 11 October if they are to participate in public worship. Please ensure that your rostering from 11 October reflects this.

The question of how we are to ascertain people's vaccination status is a difficult one and we are awaiting further clarification of this from NSW Health. It is possible that the check-in App will not have this added capacity by 11 October. The NSW Bishops have expressed the view to the government, via the Metropolitan, that it would not be appropriate to expect volunteers at the church door to be responsible for the checking of vaccination certificates.

I will write again soon once more details are available.

Yours in Christ



Dr Murray Harvey
Bishop of Grafton