



Jaclyn Symes MP

Attorney-General  
Minister for Emergency Services

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Dear Mr McDonald

Thank you for informing me of the petition tabled in the Legislative Council on 19 June 2024 regarding the importance of prayer in the Legislative Council.

The petition presented to the House effectively requests a response from the Legislative Council and I note that the application of standing orders is a matter for the House. However, I recognise that the standing orders also require a response from a Minister, therefore I provide the following response.

The Victorian Government recognises the value and meaning of prayer for many across our multifaith communities. In May 2024, with the support of the Victorian Multicultural Commission, we proudly hosted several of Victoria's faith leaders to come together for a Multifaith Service at Parliament House. The Service provided an important opportunity to share prayers for unity, cohesion, and peace.

Our government also acknowledges that Victoria is an increasingly diverse state, with many in our communities identifying as having no religion. The Victorian Government is committed to ensuring Victorians can practice, share and celebrate their unique cultures and faiths. Through the 2024-25 State Budget, we have committed over \$100 million in initiatives to support our multicultural and multifaith communities, including \$6 million for security upgrades at faith-based schools, and \$4 million to deliver anti-discrimination measures.

Alongside these investments we are continuing to implement recommendations from the Parliamentary Inquiry into Anti-Vilification Protections and develop Victoria's first statewide Anti-Racism Strategy. Both initiatives will continue to ensure Victoria's faith communities feel safe, supported and respected.

Thank you once again for taking the time to present this petition.

Yours sincerely

**Jaclyn Symes MP**  
**Attorney-General**  
**Minister for Emergency Services**

31/7/2024