



Graham J. Wrigley

GRAND MASTER



17 March 2020

Dear Brethren.

Last week the Executive Director, at the request of the President, sent a Circular to all Lodge Secretaries providing information on how to respond to the Corona Virus, COVID -19. Since then, things have moved on rapidly, with the World Health Organisation declaring a pandemic and our government announcing that all people arriving to New Zealand will have to go into self-isolation for 14 days.

The Government is now taking steps to cancel mass gatherings of 500 or more people whilst also indicating that there will be further announcements of further actions over coming days, aimed at slowing down the spread of the virus.

In the light of these developments we have considered the potential impact that this will have on us as Freemasons over the next few months. The health and welfare of our brethren is our paramount consideration, and this will guide all our decision making. Many of our members are in a higher risk group and it is therefore prudent to recognise this and take appropriate precautions to avoid, as far as possible, it from spreading within our membership.

Taking all of this into account I have taken the difficult decision to cancel all meetings and events until 31 May, with immediate effect. Although this will be disappointing for many, it is important to act decisively now and to review the situation as things become clearer and we can better assess the risks involved.

To support this decision, as Grand Master, I am providing a blanket dispensation until 31 May 2020 to all Lodges allowing:

1. The continuation of the current Master of a Lodge beyond the term of his office arising out of the Installation date being moved or postponed.
2. Lodges to not formally hold meetings during this period.
3. Lodges to conduct any essential business, electronically (payment of accounts and correspondence etc.) including voting and reading of applications for membership, providing that all transactions are adequately minuted, circulated and approved.

In doing so, Lodge Masters are requested to ensure that the District Grand Master is fully informed at all time of any action taken by each Lodge.

It is important that all lodges continue to remain in contact with their members and provide support to those that may need it. I am particularly mindful that those of our members who are at higher risk from the virus may be quite anxious or may face hardship in one form or other over the coming weeks. I have asked the Deputy Grand Master as Chair of The Freemason Charity Committee and the Grand Almoner to look at

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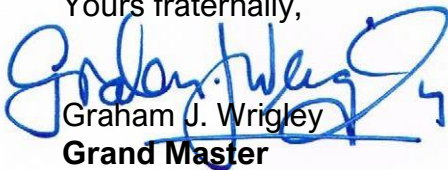
how we can assist our Almoners in their work and to provide help where it is needed. A further communication on this will be sent out in the next few days.

The Board will review its position prior to 31 May and will continue to monitor the situation on a weekly basis. Regular updates will be provided by the Executive Director, and I ask that these be widely circulated throughout our membership. The national and divisional websites will also be regularly updated.

I have also asked the Divisional Grand Masters to liaise closely with the District Grand Masters to ensure that during this difficult time you maintain the active fellowship of the craft, through remaining involved with your lodges, albeit in less traditional but more innovative ways. This current crisis will come to an end and we need to be actively preparing our lodges to be able return to business as usual.

These are difficult and unprecedented times and I thank you for your understanding. I look forward to being able to announce the reinstatement of our meetings and events as soon as it is prudent to do so.

Yours fraternally,



Graham J. Wrigley
Grand Master