



**National Spiritual Assembly  
of the Bahá'ís of New Zealand**

Te Rūnanga Wairua Tapu o nga Bahá'í o Aotearoa

15 March 2021  
15 'Alá' 177

All Bahá'í communities

Dear Friends

The National Spiritual Assembly is greatly looking forward to welcoming delegates to the Bahá'í National Convention 178 B.E. where they will gather to “fulfil the functions of an enlightened, consultative and co-operative body that will enrich the experience, enhance the prestige, support the authority, and assist the deliberations of the National Spiritual Assembly” and will have the great privilege and delicate task “to elect such national representatives as would by their record of service ennoble and enrich the annals of the Cause”.

In response to the current pandemic situation the National Spiritual Assembly has considered how to hold National Convention safely and in a manner that accommodates uncertainty about possible changes in alert levels. The decision it has reached is that this year's Convention will be a “closed” one. That is, it is to be attended by only the delegates, National Spiritual Assembly members, Auxiliary Board members, and one or two others who have been specifically invited by the National Spiritual Assembly because of the institutional role they have in the national arena. In a highly unusual step for New Zealand, the Convention will not be open to observers.

This is to enable precautions such as physical distancing measures in the venue setup, as well as to ensure that the event can be held within pandemic Level 2 gathering restrictions if necessary.

The decision is consistent with authoritative guidance which states: “... the principal purpose of a National Convention is to give an opportunity to the delegates to consult on the affairs of the Faith and to elect the members of the National Spiritual Assembly.”

Regarding online participation, for example holding a partly or fully online event, the Universal House of Justice has issued advice that an online environment is not suitable for conducting National Convention consultations. It is important to safeguard the sanctity, confidentiality and other essential elements of National Convention. There is currently no provision for other forms of participation in the consultation and no exceptions can be made to this for anyone — including for Counsellors — within the context of the current guidance. For this reason, the Continental Board of Counsellors for Australasia has confirmed (in the attached letter) that, if restrictions in international travel do not allow Counsellor Scrine to attend in person, Auxiliary Board member Leyla Neilsen will be called upon for this duty.

While the National Assembly recognises that some friends may be disappointed at not being able to attend the National Convention, it feels certain that all will recognise the need for these additional precautionary measures.



Also attached for your information is the list of delegates for the 2021 National Convention.

Loving Bahá'í greetings,  
National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of New Zealand

Suzanne Mahon  
Secretary

Enc. Letter from the Continental Board of Counsellors for Australasia; List of delegates for 2021 National Convention