



MINUTES

MEETING OF KNOX INTER-FAITH NETWORK

Held Monday 7 August 2006 at Knox Civic Centre

PRESENT:

Representatives of Faith Communities Present:

Islamic Society of Melbourne, Eastern Region (ISOMER)
 Temple Society, Bayswater
 Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints
 Sikh Faith
 St Simons Rowville, Catholic Church
 Knox Presbyterian Church, Wantirna
 Uniting Church, Ferntree Gully
 Our Lady of Lourdes Bayswater, Catholic Church
 Knox Council, Scott Ward and Mayor
 Knox Reconciliation Group

Cr David Cooper

APOLOGIES:

Truth and Liberation Concern
 Uniting Church, Ferntree Gully
 St Joseph's Catholic Church
 Knox Council, Access and Inclusion Officer

Lisette Pine

OPENING and APOLOGIES:

The meeting was opened at 7:30pm by Riad who welcomed everyone, and particularly Mayor David Cooper.

AGENDA:

The agenda was accepted as proposed, noting the late items sent by email.

3. Presentation and Qs&As – Major festivals celebrated by religions

Peter presented the perspective from the Catholic community, with some added inputs on other Christian denominations by Rowland, Rolf and Pat. Notes were distributed.

Aly presented the perspective from the Muslim community, noting the two major festivals at the end of Ramadan and the end of the *haj* (pilgrimage). Ramadan starts this year 24 Sept.

Harpal presented the Sikh perspective. Notes were distributed.

Brett presented the perspective of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, noting that, as followers of Christian principles, Sacrament (Eucharist), Christmas and Easter are significant but not necessarily celebrated with the same formal celebrations and processions. The emphasis is more on personal adherence and observations. There are also major global conferences in April (remembering formation of Church on 6 April, 1830) and October.

The Network members present thanked all the presenters by acclamation.

5. Previous Minutes and Business Arising

RESOLUTION: Moved for adoption: Brett. Seconded: Gwenda.
 The minutes as presented were accepted unanimously.

1. Presentation on Counter-Terrorism – Feedback and follow-up
Positive feedback was given by all about the session.
Peter & Riad reported on media coverage of the event in various local newspapers.
Gwenda noted interest from Channel 31 Visions program in covering the Network.
ACTION: The Members present approved Gwenda contacting Channel 31 to initiate possible activity. **COMPLETED – Pending response from Channel 31**
2. Knox Council Emergency Plan
Only one community responded – a Sudanese member of the Knox Presbyterian community. This name will be passed on to Knox Council, and further activity will be considered as per Agenda Item 7.1.
3. Reminder of Web-site Information
Peter reminded people to view the web-site and especially upcoming events at www.knoxinterfaith.org.au
ACTION: Peter to remove details of attendees and money information from the minutes on the web-site.
ACTION: Network Members that do not have contact details yet listed on the web-site are encouraged to provide details (even if they don't have their own web-site) to Peter Evans at secretary.kin@knoxinterfaith.org.au for inclusion on the web-site – use the existing contact information as a model.
4. Event Reports
3rd JCMMA Conference, July: Riad reported. One key point was the agreement reached that each of the three major Abrahamic faiths has parts of their holy text which, if taken out of context, can be seen as inciting or condoning violence. Attendees at the conference rejected any such interpretation. Riad also distributed a brochure prepared by JCMMA that compares the three major faiths.
Australian Intercultural Society Ladies Interfaith Dinner, 23 July: Gwenda reported. The night was a great success – 250 ladies applied to go, with 400 eventually turning up.
National Family History Week: Brett reported on a series of successful events and invited people to take advantage of the services offered by his faith community.
AIS Talk – Challenges Facing American Muslim Relations with the Wider Community: Peter/Gwenda reported on an excellent talk by Imam Hendi. Key messages that they took away included his message that, "There is no way to peace: peace is the way." The Network Members were also favourably disposed towards concepts arising from the Prophet, summarised as values to which all faith communities should aspire as they live out their faith in the world: "The politics of justice, the economics of equity and the covenant of community."
5. Treasurer's Report
The statement as at 31 July 2006 showed a balance of \$XXX in the Network account. \$XXX was paid on the evening from ISOMER for 5 years of membership. Some communities are overdue and should pay as soon as they can.

6. Future Items of Interest

1. AIS: V. International Abraham Conference
Location: *Leonda by the Yarra – 2 Wallen Rd, Hawthorn*
Time/Date: 10:00am – 3:00pm, Sunday 13th August
Cost: \$20 General Admission, \$15 Concession/Children, \$56 Family of 4
Register/Pay @: https://www.intercultural.org.au/conference_rsvp.html

Draft for discussion

7. Any matter of Common Interest.

1. Strengthening the Partnership: Knox Inter-faith Network and Knox Council
Peter reported on a meeting with Lisette Pine of Knox Council. There is interest from Council in working with the platform that the Network offers to create more active or broader participation in the Knox Council area. This should be considered as a lead up to the AGM in December with the intent of exploring what this might mean.

ACTION: Rowland proposed a further meeting with Lisette to document specific ideas for consideration by the Network. People who agreed to meet with Lisette were Brett, Rowland, Riad and Harpal.

Mayor Cooper spoke about current activities under the Knox Council auspices and about the ongoing challenge to ensure people in Knox are all connected and feel connected, rather than feeling disconnected and isolated. He views that the Network can assist with making an event happen to assist with connecting into communities to help bridge this.

ACTION: Mayor Cooper to distribute information about known activities. Gwenda noted also that a major success this year was the active involvement of Mayor Cooper, and Network Members present agreed.

2. Knox Council Community Development Fund Application
(Categories of funding are up to \$2,000, and from \$2,000 to \$20,000. Applications close 1 September 2006.)
One idea was to prepare and distribute a brochure to either Knox householders or faith communities about the Knox Inter-faith Network and its members. Distributing a single page brochure about Knox Inter-faith Network to all 55,000 mailing addresses in Knox would require about \$4000 for postage through Australia Post, plus costs of printing, envelopes, folding, etc.. Alternatively copies could be sent to all faith communities in Knox.
Brett can source quotes for printing and artwork.
Rowland can provide assistance with some aspects.
RESOLUTION: A subcommittee led by Rowland and involving Brett and Riad be established and empowered to investigate whether the Knox Inter-faith Network would submit an application for the Community Development Fund and, if so, to prepare the application. Moved: Harpal. Seconded: David. Carried unanimously.
3. Federal Government Living in Harmony Community Projects Funding (Funding ranges from \$5,000 to \$50,000. Expressions of interest close 25 August 2006)
RESOLUTION: The same subcommittee as investigating the Community Development Funding Application investigate an application for 2007 funding under Living in Harmony, potentially for a mass mail-out of a brochure within the Knox Council Area. Moved: Gwenda. Seconded: Aly. Carried unanimously.
RESOLUTION: The Knox Inter-faith Network explores jointly with Knox Council the possibility of applying in 2008 for funding under Living in Harmony to run a multi-cultural / inter-faith event. Moved: Peter. Seconded: Aly. Carried unanimously.
4. Knox Inter-faith Network response to events in the Middle East Network Members considered excellent draft responses from Riad and Rowland and had an animated discussion about a possible Network response.
RESOLUTION: That Riad update his proposed response as discussed at the meeting to include an expansion of the term Abrahamic faiths, inclusion of a reference to the Imam Hendi comments on peace as the way, changing the thousands of years to many centuries and a link of his comments to mention of the Knox Inter-faith Network principle. The response to be sent to Peter who will forward it to Chris Mallon at the Knox Leader. Moved: Phil. Seconded: Peter. For: 6 votes. Abstention: 2 votes (including Brett).

Draft for discussion

8. Next visits and meetings

1. 2 October 2006 – Role of Women in Faith Communities – Brett, Riad, Tina/Pat and Rowland to organise representation from their respective faith communities.
2. 4 December 2006 – AGM and Follow-up from June – To be discussed at October
3. Visitations: Possible event around Ramadan. ISOMER members to consult with their community and confirm by email if any event is possible as soon as possible.

The meeting ended at 10:20 p.m.

Draft for discussion