

MINUTES



MEETING OF KNOX INTER-FAITH NETWORK

Held Monday 5 February 2007 at Knox Civic Centre

PRESENT:

Representatives of Faith Communities Present:

Cr David Cooper Lisette Pine	Sikh Faith Temple Society, Bayswater Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints St Simons Rowville, Catholic Church Our Lady of Lourdes Bayswater, Catholic Church Uniting Church, Ferntree Gully St Stephen's Bayswater, Anglican Boronia Church of Christ Knox Council, Scott Ward (attended part of meeting) Knox Council, Access and Inclusion Officer
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Guests:

Chair, Interfaith Network of the City of Greater Dandenong

APOLOGIES:

Cr Monique Davey	Islamic Society of Melbourne, Eastern Region (ISOMER) Knox Council, Chandler Ward (who has new responsibilities) Knox Presbyterian Church, Wantirna St Josephs Boronia, Catholic Church
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OPENING and APOLOGIES:

The meeting was opened at 7:35pm by Harpal who welcomed everyone and people introduced themselves.

AGENDA:

The agenda was accepted as proposed.

4. Minutes from Previous Meeting

Gwenda moved and Harpal seconded adoption of the minutes.

Cr Cooper questioned whether the Archbishop mentioned in Item 2.vii was the Catholic Archbishop, and this was confirmed.

2. Event Reports

- i. *Public Forum: Explore the Politics of Empire and the Culture of Change.* (13 December 2006, La Trobe University Centre for Dialogue)

Peter reported on the forum. Key points were:

Dr Chandra Muzaffar commented that religion has a role to play in creating a culture of dialogue and change due to the values offered by religions, but no single religion can do this on its own. Professor Ashis Nandy postulated that

Draft to be agreed

coexistence and tolerance can really work, but we must overcome our innate desire to have others live by our own rules only. This is of particular relevance to the current debate between the West and its largely Judaeo-Christian heritage and many countries with Muslim heritage. Professor Joe Camilleri concluded that those in society with an interest in dialogue cannot just blame the prime minister, the government or the military. We must focus on educating and engaging our family, friends and community in dialogue, even if they don't agree with us.

- ii. *Christmas Activities, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints*
Brett reported on a successful event attended by about 700 people.
- iii. Harpal reported on the ceremony he attended to receive his award from the Government of Victoria. He also reported on the Sikh community's participation at the Australia Day. Members congratulated him on both.
- iv. *Knox Carols by Candlelight*.
Lisette reported on a very successful event, with about 15,000 attending. A key item of note was the presence of AUSLAN signers on stage.

3. *Treasurer's Report*

Current balance is \$XXX. Rolf noted that annual subscriptions are now due for all except ISOMER, which has prepaid for a further four years.

5. Future Items of Interest from Members of the Network

Events as noted in the agenda and on the Network web-site at www.knoxinterfaith.org.au

Gwenda provided a pre-report on the JCMA Women' Conference, which she is attending.

Deirdre reported that everything is organised for the Anglican Event on 18 February at the Arboretum in FTG. The organisers are expecting 300-500 people to attend. Network members who are not of the Anglican faith are most welcome to attend, and should bring chair/cushion, hat, etc..

Peter mentioned COMMON (**Centre Of Melbourne Multi-faith and Others Network**). This grew from people of diverse beliefs and faiths who came together to foster friendship across ideological and religious divides. It aims to contribute to building a society where there is respect and understanding between all those of belief or faith, be it religious or secular. He encouraged people to make reference to their calendar of events across Melbourne.

The link is: <http://www.commonmelbourne.com/newsletter.htm>

Tina and Pat described the pancake night to be held at 6:30pm on Tuesday 20 February (Shrove Tuesday) at the Uniting Church, 6 The Avenue, Ferntree Gully. Members are invited to attend as it helps raise funds for the community work of the Uniting Church.

6. 2007 Plans

A discussion led to the following plans, some parts of which are still to be confirmed:

- Specific events for 2007
 - 2 April – Lisette suggested value in having an external facilitator work with the Network to evaluate our achievements and progress to date, revisit our objectives, help us amend them if and as necessary and chart a way forward with renewed vigour. This was agreed to by all present. Members also agreed to postpone work on the brochure for which we have Council funding until this event is run and the outcomes assessed.
 - ACTION 1:** Lisette to confirm the availability of a facilitator for this date.
 - ACTION 2:** Brett to notify Council that we will not be spending the funds on the brochure until after this session; Lisette to also notify Deb Roberts at Council.

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- Possible event with ASIO on Federal Counter-terrorism. Peter reported on a phone discussion with someone at ASIO – they are considering the proposal and will get back to Peter. If the event is run it would need to be co-ordinated with ASIO, but the preferred date for the Network would be 6 August.
- Session on the teaching of different faith communities on whether they respect other religions, i.e., the tolerance of other faiths/religions and the right for people to have freedom of worship. Members agreed this was of sufficient interest to have two separate meetings with different speakers at each. One session (pencilled in for June) would have Harpal, Brett, the Uniting Church and Peter speaking. A second session (pencilled in for August or October, depending on the possible ASIO event) would have Deirdre, Rowland and Riad talk (noting that neither Rowland nor Riad were at the meeting.)
- Members present agreed that we would not seek major involvement in the 2007 Knox Festival, but would start planning now for the 2008 Knox Festival. Murray commented on the value of having helium-filled balloons available to advertise the Network and its stall on the day.
- Members present agreed in principle that it would be good to have a City of Knox Interfaith Choir put together for the 2007 Carols by Candlelight event in Knox. This will take some effort to initiate and run.
ACTION 3: All Network members are asked to canvass support for this idea and to seek volunteers to take on leadership roles, especially creative roles.
- Possible events for 2008:
 - Murray provided an excellent suggestion based on a successful series at the City of Greater Dandenong: each faith group would spend one meeting (30 minutes for presentation and 15 minutes for questions) presenting on the ceremonies related to birth, marriage and death. Members accepted this as a good basis for a 2008 program.
- General activities / events / programs:
 - Lisette raised National Harmony Day, which will be on 21 March in 2007. She noted that multi-faith celebrations are run by various groups under this Federal Government program. (Refer to www.harmony.gov.au) Members debated doing something for this day in 2007, but felt it more appropriate to plan for involvement in 2008.
 - Lisette also raised that 2007 is the 40th Anniversary of the Referendum Vote for Aboriginal rights and that various events are planned around National Sorry Day (26 May) and a dinner (September). Members were encouraged to participate as appropriate for their communities and the Network may consider involvement as part of the April planning event.

7. Media and publicity

- Members discussed the approach by Adrienne Agg of the Knox Journal. Cr Cooper noted that he had found her good to deal with and that there might be scope to set up a regular column through her. This might be best for the week of Council meetings (which are the 4th Tuesday of a month) as local news is sparser that week. The Knox Journal also accepts photos from photographers who are not their own.
ACTION 4: Brett to contact Adrienne to explore ideas for newspaper coverage.
- Peter has been unable to make contact yet with Judy Megassy (Channel 31 Visions program). Peter and Gwenda will continue to try and get communication going.

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- If the planning meeting is confirmed for April, the Network will issue a press release around the time of National Harmony Day to seek coverage.
ACTION 5: Brett and Peter to prepare a press release as appropriate.
- Murray noted that good hooks for getting media coverage include activities with police, children, service groups or notable visitors.
- Cr Cooper reminded Peter to send him the current contact list he has for possible Network members so it can be checked against the Council's list.
ACTION 6: Peter to send the contact list to Cr Cooper and Lisette Pine.
ACTION 7: Lisette to check if the Council list can be released to the Network.

8. Any Matter of Common Interest

1. Gwenda made comments on the use of the word "tolerance", based on recent information that has become available to her – and is now comfortable with its use.
2. Meeting dates and rooms for 2007 were confirmed again as:
 - Monday, 2 April – Room 2
 - Monday, 4 June – Room 1
 - Monday, 6 August – Room 1
 - Wednesday, 17 October – Room 3**
(Note this variation: it is to avoid Ramadan for our Muslim Network Members)
 - Monday, 3 December – Room 1

The meeting ended at 9:15 p.m.

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