



MINUTES

MEETING OF KNOX INTER-FAITH NETWORK

Held Monday 6 April 2009 at Knox Civic Centre

**PRESENT:**

Representatives of Faith Communities present:

(Chairperson)	Janssen Spirituality Centre, Boronia
(Vice-Chairperson)	Egyptian Coptic Church
(Treasurer)	Temple Society Australia
(Secretary)	St Simons Catholic Church, Rowville
	St Thomas More's Catholic Church, Belgrave
Lisette Pine	Knox Council, Access and Inclusion Officer
	Temple Society Australia
	Boronia Church of Christ
	Islamic Society of Melbourne, Eastern Region (ISOMER)
	ISOMER
	ISOMER
	Knox Presbyterian Church, Wantirna

**GUESTS:**

Cr John Mortimore	Knox City Council, Chandler Ward
Cr Joe Cossari	Knox City Council, Collier Ward

**APOLOGIES:**

Nil

**WELCOME AND OPENING PRAYER:**

Gwenda opened the meeting at 7:30pm, and acknowledged the traditional owners of the land on which the meeting was being held. Maher provided the opening prayer. Members introduced themselves to the new Councillors.

**1. MINUTES/ACTIONS FROM LAST NETWORK MEETING**

- 1.1 Minutes of meeting of 2 February 2009: Moved for acceptance by Rod, seconded by Sr Moya – passed.
- 1.2 Temple Society Youthfest  
Mark reported on attempts by the Temple Society to garner support, only some of which have been successful. This means the event could not be run in 2009, so the Temple Society has withdrawn its request for funding for this year. The Temple Society anticipates it may seek to run an event in about March/April 2010 timeframe.
- 1.3 Multicultural Advisory Committee  
Cr Mortimore provided favourable comments on the meeting. Gwenda attended the meeting and Maher attended as an observer; both provided favourable comments on the meeting.

#### 1.4 Eastern Region Councils on Interfaith Networks

Lisette reported on the last meeting. The Councils are exploring whether to run an event to bring all the Networks together, but are seeking feedback from their respective networks before confirming any arrangements. Options include a networking event (morning or evening) at the Karralyka centre, or a function in spring 2009 to contribute to the healing process arising from the 7 February 2009 bushfires.

Ideas raised in discussion included the following:

- A forum to get to know people.
- A forum to share experiences and activities of Networks to date.
- A guest speaker on a topic agreed across the Networks. This could relate either to a general topic (e.g., violence, media relations) or a specific talk on the experience of setting up and/or running Inter-faith/Multi-faith Networks.

The general sense of the meeting suggested the feedback provided should be as follows. The first meeting should be structured as:

- A welcome statement by a representative of the Councils.
- An opening prayer by one Network representative.
- A 10-minute presentation by one person from each Network on history, purpose, achievements and activities to date, and challenges faced.
- This hour to be followed by a 1-hour Networking event for people to get to know each other, and as part of this to discuss options for cooperation, shared activities, addressing challenges, etc..

Later events could be organised on a specific topic.

**Motion** to accept this proposed feedback for the Eastern Region Councils – moved Rowland, seconded Riad – passed.

Meeting arrangements preferred were for an evening meeting (in line with when Knox Inter-faith Network meets) and preferably later in the week than the normal Monday meeting – Thursday being proposed as a preference by some.

Rowland also requested that Lisette raise the possibility of a shared insurance policy across the various Networks, to help manage costs.

#### 1.5 Parliament of the World's Religions – 3-9 December 2009

Gwenda reported on the preparation meeting. There have been many proposals for sessions to be run. Information to be sent to Peter at:

[secretary.kin@knoxinterfaith.org.au](mailto:secretary.kin@knoxinterfaith.org.au) for Peter to distribute to other members.

#### 1.6 Knox Inter-faith Network Office-bearers

Gwenda noted she is unable to continue in the role of acting Chairperson during 2009 and chose to resign as Publicity Officer. Members revisited the conversation at the AGM in 2008. Peter stated he is able to chair meetings but cannot be in the Knox area during business hours, and so someone else is needed to provide such contact.

**Motion** that (under the current Constitution) Peter be confirmed as Chairperson in addition to being Secretary, and Riad be appointed as Publicity Officer.  
- moved Rod, seconded Rowland - passed.

**Motion** that (under the current Constitution) Maher be confirmed as Vice-Chairperson  
- moved Rowland, seconded Riad - passed.

### 1.7 Incorporation ... or not?

Mark reminded Members of the discussion at the previous meeting. He alerted Members of impending legislative changes. His assessment is that the first round of changes would be most unlikely to affect the Knox Inter-faith Network. The second round of changes proposes that the role of the Public Officer be merged with that of the Secretary, unless formal separation is done per procedures outlined. Rowland spoke to the positives and negatives of incorporation, including ability to gain government grants, issues related to insurance, personal liability, etc.

Regarding insurance:

- Public liability for Knox Inter-faith Network meetings on Council premises is covered by Council Insurance.
- Event-specific insurance would be funded as part of the event.

**Motion** that the Knox Inter-faith Network move towards Incorporation, and that the sub-committee proceed to prepare papers for submission for formal approval at the next meeting. Further, that no specific insurance be sought at this stage.  
- moved Rod, seconded Rowland - passed.

### 1.8 Treasurer's report

Rolf advised the current Network account balance is \$XXX.XX, based on the most recent bank balance of \$XXX.XX, plus two \$20 memberships paid at the meeting, less payment to Peter of \$XXX for renewal of the Network web-site hosting. Rolf asked that any outstanding memberships for 2009 be paid as soon as possible.

### 1.9 Event Reports

#### 1.9.1 *Inter-faith Summit for Peace and Harmony in Australia and the Asia-Pacific Region*

Gwenda attended this event in Brisbane in February and tabled a written report, key points of which are summarised below. The main organisers were the Multifaith Centre of Griffith University and the Pure Land Learning College Association, a Buddhist College. It was supported by more than 50 faith educational, academic and civil society organisations. There were about 320 participants from all countries and faiths in the region. The aim was to collect concrete statements from diverse faith leaders which clarify the core values and principles of their faiths that uphold peace and harmony, and to collect exemplary practices of their faith institutions promoting peaceful and harmonious relationships. These will be published for wide distribution. The emphasis was on developing a culture of peace and education for peace. Gwenda also distributed 200 of the Knox Inter-faith Network Brochures.

#### 1.9.2 *Presentation by Seyed Mohammad Khatami, former President of Iran*

Riad was not able to attend the presentation on 26 March, but reported on a separate private session in which he was involved. This focused strongly on a concept of justice.

#### 1.9.3 *JCMA Women's Conference*

Sr Moya reported positively on this event. It involved many interactions and much sharing of stories.

### 1.10 Future items of interest

#### 1.10.1 *JCMA Conference – 1<sup>st</sup> Week of July at the Pallotti College in Millgrove*

#### 1.10.2 *Shoah Holocaust Memorial Service, Thursday 23 April, 7:30pm at St Francis' Church, Lonsdale Street, Melbourne*

## 2. PLANS FOR 2009

### 2.1 Schools' program in Knox area

Riad spoke to his paper on this, distributed in 2008 (and redistributed with these minutes). The program needs a coordinator, which needs funding (e.g., from the VMC), which in turn needs incorporation. Members noted the positive experience from other similar activities, such as the JCMA Secondary Program (which targets Year 10) and the JCMA Primary Program (which targets upper primary). For the program to be successful it will need resources for teachers.

Work was referred back to the subcommittee (Riad, Lisette and Pat), with Maher and Cr. John Mortimore also volunteering to assist.

### 2.2 Membership drive

Various ideas were discussed about increasing membership:

- Email to all people on the distribution list, inviting them to attend, with a reminder to be sent three weeks before the next meeting and again one week before the next meeting. (**Action** Peter)
- Sending a specific invitation to members of the Hindu, Sikh and Bahai communities. (**Action** Peter)
- Mailing the brochures to faith communities with an invitation to participate.
- Personal approach from all Members to any people known to have been interested in the past or likely to be interested in the future. (**Action** All)

### 2.3 Meetings

The Network would like the next meeting to have a presentation on Aboriginal spirituality. Cr. John Mortimore is attending an event at the Mullum Mullum gathering place within the next week and will try to request a speaker.

## 3. NEXT MEETING

Monday 1 June 2009.

The meeting was closed at 9:50 pm