



MINUTES

MEETING OF KNOX INTER-FAITH NETWORK

Held Monday 6 February 2006 at Knox Civic Centre

PRESENT:

Representatives of Faith Communities Present:

Knox Presbyterian Church, Wantirna
 St Simons Rowville, Catholic Church
 Temple Society, Bayswater
 Uniting Church, Ferntree Gully
 Our Lady of Lourdes Boronia, Catholic Church
 Sikh Faith
 Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints
 Islamic Society of Melbourne, Eastern Region (ISOMER)
 Truth and Liberation Concern

Cr Monique Davey
 Cr David Cooper

Knox Council, Chandler Ward
 Knox Council, Scott Ward and Mayor

APOLOGIES:

St Joseph's Catholic Church
 St John the Baptist, Ferntree Gully Catholic Church
 Islamic Society of Melbourne, Eastern Region (ISOMER)
 Boronia Church of Christ

OPENING:

Meeting was opened at 7:30pm by Rowland who welcomed everyone, and particularly Mayor David Cooper and Councillor Monique Davey.

AGENDA:

The agenda was accepted as proposed.

4. Presentation and Qs&As – Truth and Liberation Concern

Lance gave an overview of the Truth and Liberation Concern.

Key points (as captured by the Secretary – with apologies for any errors or omissions):

- The community was founded relatively recently – in the 1970's, and is a standalone community. It has original relationships with the so-called 'God Squad' motor cycle club. It now has 6-7 elders and currently 2 full-time pastors.
- The community seeks to be open to all people and is oriented and run in a manner similar to a family feel.
- There is not a strong emphasis on formal ritual.
- The community is grounded in the broad Christian tradition. There is a strong emphasis on identifying with the implications of living a Christian life in daily experience in the current world and of reaching out and seeking to share the love of Jesus Christ, including with those who are struggling at the margins of society.
- The image of God is of one that seeks a relationship with humanity, and that God seeks to be a partner in the journey of people.
- A service is held every Sunday morning at 10am. It involves meeting, praying and sharing experiences and their form of communion. Attendance is generally

between 200 and 300. Membership includes people with origins in roots in other Christian communities. The community demographics are relatively consistent with that of the outer east of Melbourne.

- The community does practice full immersion baptism for adults. This is normally done now in the Yarra River at Warrandyte, normally by one of the Pastors or Elders, but sometimes by one of the members of the family. The Eucharist, baptism and marriage are considered important.
- Music and expression through art are important parts of the expression of the faith.
- There is a small offshoot of the community at Yackandandah.

Rowland thanked the members of the TLC for their open and relaxed presentation.

6. Previous Minutes and Business Arising

RESOLUTION: The minutes as presented were accepted unanimously, noting the correct spelling of Sahndra Nelson's first name.

1. Confirmation of 2006 Office-bearers
Carried over as Riad not present. At the suggestion of Peter and with support of Rolf, Rowland agreed to continue in the role of interim Chairperson until next meeting, with the approval of the members present.
2. Actions Arising
Gwenda provided an update on her contact with the Knox City Council on the emergency plan. She spoke with Steve Pascoe, who suggested we contact the Victorian Council of Churches (which is represented in the DHS plan) and seek to work with them as people on the ground in the community, as people capable of listening to people in trauma. Steve is willing to meet with representatives of the Network within the next few days. Brett agreed to meet with Steve and Gwenda to identify what next steps might be and which communities might be members.
3. Contacting Knox Police
Peter noted that he has sent a letter to the Knox Police this evening and will inform the Network of any response.
4. Event Reports

Music Evening, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints: Brett went and reported that it was a good evening. There will be similar events this year and Brett will provide notice.

Visit to Sikh Gurdwara: Peter reported on the visit and thanked the Sikh Community.
5. Web-site Implementation
Peter reported on implementation to date and reported the domain name as: knoxinterfaith.org.au Peter asked for any further contact information to be provided as soon as possible. He will arrange for a handover from Vivek Sharma as soon as possible. He will also arrange for this link to be available on the Knox Council site.
6. Treasurer's Report
The balance is \$XXX in the Network account.
Rowland noted that the Knox Presbyterian account has made final payment for the web-site implementation, on behalf of the Network.
Rolf also noted that the annual membership fee of \$20 is now due and payable.

7. Future Items of Interest

- 1) None raised.

8. Any matter of Common Interest.

- 1) Noted for information and review.
- 2) Peter and Harpal provided examples of current statements about the situation that has arisen in Europe as a consequence of the publication of certain cartoons portraying Mohammed in newspapers in a manner considered offensive to Muslims. Aly explained that the cartoons arose as a result of a competition to choose a drawing for use with a book critical of the Islamic faith. It is also considered inappropriate by Muslims in general to have pictures of the Prophet.

Animated debate ensued about the drivers and implications of the cartoons and the response.

SUGGESTIONS FOR ACTION:

- Arrange for a group photo of the diverse members of the Network.
- Run a multi-cultural event / day.
- Issue a press release.
- Focus on educating children to ensure they do not grow up with ill-informed stereotypes. (This could be combined with a multi-cultural event.)
- Attend a citizenship ceremony (normally by invitation). The next ceremony is 6:30pm, Friday 24 March.

RESOLUTION: The Network affirmed that while it supports a broad principle of freedom of speech it notes that this must be used with sensitivity in a manner complementary with values of tolerance and understanding. Further, the Network agrees this principle should be followed so people seek to avoid deliberately using words or depictions that are likely to cause offense to another religion.

Moved: Peter, *Seconded:* Aly. Carried unanimously.

RECOMMENDATION: The Network supports any possible activity by Council to seek some suitable publicity including a photo of Network members, and supports Mayor David Cooper taking this up with Council staff. The Network agreed that the words of the Resolution may need adaptation for external use by Council as per the principles in the Constitution.

9. Next visits and meetings

- 1) Offer by TLC for a visit in March – suggested as Wednesday, 8 March at 7:30pm. Address is 265 Canterbury Rd, Bayswater North. Contact Lance: 0402 024 144.
- 2) Proposal for April 2006 meeting as a back-up to the possible talk on anti-terrorism: – How does one get or gain forgiveness?
Presenters (aim of 7 minutes): Aly, Harpal, Brett, Pat

The meeting ended at 9:58 p.m.

Draft for discussion