



Centre *for* Dialogue



NORTHERN INTERFAITH INTERCULTURAL PROJECT

**BUILDING AN
INTERFAITH AND INTERCULTURAL
NETWORK FOR MELBOURNE'S
NORTHERN SUBURBS**

INITIAL REPORT

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Building an Interfaith and Intercultural Network for Melbourne's Northern Suburbs

INITIAL REPORT

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The project to establish an Interfaith Intercultural Network for the Northern region of Melbourne is led by the Centre for Dialogue in partnership with five municipalities:

Banyule, Darebin, Hume, Moreland and Whittlesea

and eight partner organisations:

Australian Multicultural Foundation, Buddhist Council of Victoria, Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria, Islamic Council of Victoria, Jewish Council of Victoria, Spectrum Migrant Resource Centre, Uniting Church of Synod of Victoria and Tasmania - Commission for Mission, Victorian Council of Churches

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The overall aim of the project is to develop a model for a dynamic and sustainable interfaith and intercultural network for the northern region of Melbourne. It is based on active collaboration between La Trobe University's Centre for Dialogue, five municipalities (Moreland, Darebin, Banyule, Hume and Whittlesea) and eight partner organisations (Australian Multicultural Foundation, Uniting Church, Jewish Community Council of Victoria, Islamic Council of Victoria, Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria, Buddhist Council of Victoria and Spectrum Migrant Resource Centre).

The project's aim is to translate the general principles of dialogue into encounters, educational experiences and practical activities that target the particular needs and circumstances of local communities in the northern region of Melbourne. It addresses the question whether dialogue and cooperation across different faiths and cultures can be nurtured (and if so, how) in places where people live, study, practise their religion, socialise, shop, and go about the business of everyday life, especially in their local communities.

The project comprises of four main phases:

1. Research and Community Consultation (2007 - 2008)
2. Design of Network (2008)
3. Implementation of Network (2009 - 2010)
4. Evaluation and Future Planning (2010).

The first two phases have been completed. We are now in the early stages of Phase Three.

PHASE ONE

This phase involved four main types of activity:

Research into Australian Interfaith Activities and International Best Practice

The Centre for Dialogue, both before and since the beginning of this project, has conducted research into a range of existing initiatives both in Australia and internationally, especially since September 11. The purpose of this research has been to identify successful initiatives, the factors that account for success, and the role of key actors, in particular the role of local government in facilitating and sustaining such initiatives.

Community Consultation

A community consultation was held on Tuesday 15 April 2008 at Coburg Civic Centre. More than 90 people from faith and ethnic communities, inter-faith groups, municipal councils, local government associations, key community and service organisations came together to define current and potential future concerns of their communities and to identify ways of better using energy, resources, knowledge and experience.

Questionnaire

The questionnaire was developed around the concerns and issues raised at the community consultation and in close conference with the five city councils. The survey sampled 0.5% of the combined population of the five councils. The questionnaire was released on 23 June 2008 and was in the field for a period of three weeks. The Centre for Dialogue received 452 responses – a response rate of 14.5%.

Focus Groups

The focus groups were conducted between July and September 2008. Over 700 invitations were sent throughout the region with 87 people participating in eight focus groups across the five municipalities. A separate focus group was held at the Centre for Dialogue specifically for service providers.

PHASE TWO: DESIGN OF THE NETWORK

On the basis of the research and consultations described above, the Centre for Dialogue, in close collaboration with the five participating Local Councils, has prepared a series of findings and proposals to assist the establishment of Interfaith and Intercultural Network for the Northern Suburbs of Melbourne. What follows is a brief summary of key findings and some of the more important ideas and recommendations about the way forward.

Key Findings

1. The qualitative and quantitative research established strong and widespread support for greater dialogue and cooperation across faiths and cultures in the northern region of Melbourne and for the establishment of the proposed Network.
2. Many drew attention to the importance of cultural difference, while others pointed to the need for greater clarification about the relationship between culture and religion. What would be the approach of a Network that was interfaith and intercultural?
3. Strong support was received for projects and initiatives in the areas listed in the questionnaire including education and training, support for refugees and recent arrivals, domestic violence, housing and environment.
4. Some variations existed between municipalities, age groups, and different religious, philosophical, cultural and socio-economic backgrounds regarding the nature and purpose of a regional interfaith/intercultural network.
5. The municipality of Hume rated lower on certain indicators relevant to the project. There could, however, be any number of explanations, including the relatively small number of respondents involved.
6. Those that were not religiously disposed were less enthusiastic about a Network that focused primarily on faith issues or interfaith cooperation.
7. The 34 year-old and younger age group was noticeably under-represented in the questionnaire as well as in the focus groups and community consultations.
8. There was a general recognition that lack of knowledge and understanding of religious and cultural difference could inhibit cooperation, and may in fact provoke fear, mistrust, suspicion and even outright hostility.

9. Activities that elicited strong support as potential areas for interfaith and intercultural cooperation were: education and training, celebration of cultural diversity (food, music, sport, and art), victims of domestic violence, media literacy, housing, employment and the environment.
10. While the proposed interfaith/intercultural network received strong support from newly emerging migrant and faith communities, responses from the more established religious and migrant communities were more subdued.
11. While reconciliation was one of the issues highlighted in the community consultation, response from the indigenous community was minimal.
12. Cultural differences, language constraints, human and financial resources, and transport difficulties were all cited as potential difficulties which the Regional Network would need to address.
13. The success of the Regional Network would be maximised through: a) active involvement and strengthening of existing local interfaith and intercultural initiatives; b) strong practical and financial support from the five Councils; c) a process of on-going consultation with the respected leaders of the various communities; d) activities which would have wide interest and appeal.

Proposals and Recommendations

Establishment of the Network

An Interfaith-Intercultural Network for the Northern region of Melbourne should be formally established with the support of the Banyule, Darebin, Hume, Moreland and the Whittlesea City Councils. Religious, community and other organisations within these five municipalities, as well as residents, who support the aims and principles of the Network, should be invited to sponsor the Network, participate in its activities and assist in its development.

The following ideas are presented as a basis for discussing the direction, priorities and structure of the network.

Principles of the Network

A key principle in developing the network should be a strong commitment to nurturing the philosophy, method and practice of dialogue. In dialogue, members of the Network should respect each other; celebrate the contribution of different faiths and cultures; understand the importance of listening as well as speaking; affirm the important ethical (and spiritual) values they hold in common; accept that there are differences and appreciate that diversity is a source of mutual enrichment; recognise that relations between different faiths, cultures and communities have at times given rise to mistrust, suspicion, and hostility; seek to empathise with, and acknowledge the pain and suffering of others; work towards healing and reconciliation.

Objectives of the Network

The overriding aim of the Network should be to promote dialogue and cooperation between different faiths and cultures in the northern region of Melbourne. This can be achieved by creating more opportunities for people of different faiths and cultures to interact with each other, and better understand each other's beliefs, customs, languages, ways of thinking, lifestyles, hopes, aspirations, achievements, fears, concerns and needs.

What will the Network do?

The Network should support, and where appropriate initiate, functions and activities that celebrate the richness and wisdom of the different faiths and cultures of the region. After carefully reviewing what is currently being done in each of the municipalities, the Network should:

- a) Consider ways of supporting constructive initiatives and activities in the area of interfaith/intercultural relations in each of the five municipalities;
- b) Help to coordinate efforts and resources in the field of interfaith/intercultural relations across the five municipalities;
- c) Mount a number of community education and training programs;
- d) Identify key areas of community need in which the dialogue of faiths and cultures can make a useful and practical contribution – possible priority areas worth considering include:
 - Reducing domestic violence – this would involve working with and extending already existing projects and initiatives in the Region;
 - Fostering greater environmental consciousness and practice;
 - Promoting cultural literacy programs in both government and religious schools;
 - Taking into account intercultural and interfaith sensitivities in service delivery programs;
 - Addressing issues of housing and employment, especially as they affect communities in need;
 - Supporting newly arrived communities and refugees, keeping in mind their specific cultural and faith traditions and needs.

Structure of the Network

As a first step, it is proposed that the Centre for Dialogue, in close consultation with all project partners and all relevant local stakeholders, be asked to facilitate the formation of a 20-member Council or Committee of the Interim Network, which will operate from July to December 2009. It is proposed that four members be drawn from each of the five municipalities. The aim would be to achieve the widest possible representation in terms of religion, ethnicity, gender, age group, skills and expertise.

The consultation process that will follow the release of this Report will be important in identifying people who have an interest in being part of the Network, and in playing a key role by serving on the Interim Council or Committee.

The primary task of the Interim Council will be to consult widely and to develop and execute an implementation plan for the establishment of the Regional Interfaith and Intercultural Network.

The Interim Council will need to give serious attention to:

- a) How organisations and individuals will be able to join the Network (what will be the criteria and rules of membership?);
- b) What office-bearer positions, if any, will need to be established if the Network is to operate transparently and efficiently;
- c) What consultations, forums and decision-making meetings will be most appropriate for the initial period (July 2009 – March 2010) and beyond;
- d) What should be the main elements of an educational and training program (to be mounted with the assistance of the Centre for Dialogue);
- e) The resource needs of the Network;
- g) Identifying key priorities of the Network's program over the first 18 months.

A possible organisational model for both the Interim Network and what is to follow is provided under Appendix A of the full report. This should be treated as no more than a series of suggestions which might help to guide the discussion.

Resourcing of the Network

In the initial stages the growth of the Network is likely to depend on the support that can be provided by the Centre for Dialogue and the partner organisations, especially the Local Councils. However, from the outset, the Network will need to consider additional sources of funding and support. One of the main tasks of the Interim Network will be to set in train the preparation of a business plan for the long-term financial viability of the Network.

The support that Councils can provide can be considered under three main headings:

- *Cash support:* to assist with various activities and projects over the first 18 months, each of the five Councils has indicated that it is prepared to make a contribution of \$5,000 (i.e. a total of \$25,000). However, no assumption should be made that this level of funding will continue beyond this initial period;
- *Staff support:* each of the Councils should indicate what level of staff time will be made available, especially in the first 18 months to assist with the establishment of the Network – this will greatly assist both short and medium term planning;
- *Administrative support:* each of the Councils should indicate what facilities might be available at different times to the Network, especially in its first 18 months (e.g. office space, use of phone, access to computer, photocopying and printing facilities, access to municipal websites, postage, use of venues and light catering).

All the other partner organisations should carefully consider what additional support they can make available under the three above headings.

If it is to succeed, the Network will need to gain the support and commitment of a number of people who will offer their time, skills and organisational support on a voluntary basis. This will apply to membership of the Network and participation in working groups as well as in specific projects and activities. This human resource should be considered the single most important asset of the Network, and vital to its long-term viability.

As the Network grows, consideration should be given to the appointment of at least a part-time Project Officer and Coordinator – over time this could become a full-time position. For this purpose various sources of funding will need to be explored.

1. PROJECT OVERVIEW

1.1 BACKGROUND

Australia prides itself on being a peaceful and welcoming multicultural and multi-faith society. There is much to support this view, not least the relatively successful immigration program of the post-War period. Yet, there is at the same time clear evidence pointing to unhealthy levels of racism, intolerance and xenophobia in our community. One need only mention the hysteria periodically directed towards Asian migrants, the Hanson phenomenon, the recent treatment of refugees and asylum-seekers particularly from Central Asia and Africa, and the abnormally high incidence of racially motivated threats against Muslim individuals, schools and Mosques since September 11. These tendencies need to be reversed if we are to construct a society that values justice, respects human rights, and celebrates its cultural and religious diversity.

Dialogue is designed to bring together people of different religious persuasions and cultural traditions, and promote mutual trust and more effective forms of co-operation. *Dialogue, as envisaged here, is both interreligious and intercultural.*

Religion and culture are separate but closely connected domains. Inter-faith dialogue in Australia brings together different cultural backgrounds, in the obvious sense that Christians have in the main have 'Western' roots, whereas Muslims are likely to be predominantly non-Western. Yet, in Australia both Islam and Christianity encompass diverse national and cultural traditions. The same is true of the Buddhist, Hindu and other faiths. To bring people of different faiths together, particularly in the multicultural setting of Melbourne's northern suburbs, is to encourage a conversation in which both religious and cultural difference feature prominently. Dialogue, which brings this rich cultural mosaic to the fore, can instil in its participants a greater familiarity with Australia's multicultural ethos, an enhanced capacity to negotiate both cultural and religious difference, and a keener sense of social belonging.

The foundations now exist for a more ambitious collaborative dialogue program in Victoria, and in Melbourne more specifically. To succeed, however, it needs to be buttressed by a solid research and educational framework. To this end, La Trobe University's Centre for Dialogue, actively supported by the Victorian government, and having consulted extensively in Victoria and nationally with a wide range of municipal, religious, cultural and community organisations, proposes the creation of a regional interfaith/intercultural network for Melbourne's northern region to encourage dialogue and enhance social cohesion

1.2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

This project aims to explore the application of interfaith and intercultural dialogue to the needs and circumstances of Melbourne's northern suburbs, a region of considerable ethnic and religious diversity.

The project's specific aims are to:

- Survey the many initiatives that have taken place in Australia in recent years in the area of interfaith/intercultural dialogue, and identify the strengths and weaknesses of these initiatives;
- Undertake a concise review of international discourse and practice in interfaith/intercultural dialogue (in selected Western countries with substantial religious minorities), with a view to highlighting objectives, strategies and outcomes that may have relevance for Australia;
- Develop a conceptual framework that sketches the necessary steps to be taken if dialogue is to promote multicultural values on the one hand, and greater social harmony and cohesion, and more effective forms of citizenship and governance on the other;
- Design a pilot scheme in the northern region of Melbourne with the strong support of the Victorian Government and the active involvement of five adjoining municipalities (Darebin, Hume, Moreland, Whittlesea, Banyule) and eight other partner organisations (Australian Multicultural Foundation, Uniting Church, Jewish Community Council of Victoria, Islamic Council of Victoria, Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria and the Buddhist Council of Victoria). The possible participation of other municipalities and community organisations may be considered during the life of this three-year project;
- Monitor and evaluate the pilot scheme, provide partner organisations with the necessary advice, and formulate findings and recommendations for the future development of the method, practice and pedagogy of dialogue in the northern region of Melbourne (and in due course in other parts of Australia and internationally).

The project's aim is to translate the general principles of dialogue into encounters, educational experiences and practical activities that target the specific needs and operational environments of local communities in a specific region of Melbourne. Bearing in mind the multi-faith and multicultural character of the region in question, the project identifies the processes and mechanisms whereby these dialogue principles can be institutionalised and socially legitimatised over time. It addresses the question whether dialogue can be nurtured (and if so, how) in the places where people live, study, practise their religion, socialise, shop, and go about the business of everyday life, not least in their local communities.

1.3 STAGES OF PROJECT

The project envisages four distinct but closely interrelated phases:

- a) Review and analysis;
- b) Design of pilot scheme;
- c) Monitoring of pilot scheme;
- d) Evaluation and recommendations.

These four phases derive from the objectives outlined above and establish a coherent framework within which to base the empirical research and applied components of the

project, and fully involve partner organisations in ways designed to satisfy their respective interests and expectations.

Phase One: Review and Analysis (year one, months 1-10)

This phase comprises two components:

- a) A survey of local interfaith and intercultural initiatives to determine and assess best practice in Australia (especially Victoria) and internationally;
- b) A quantitative and qualitative survey of public attitudes (based on questionnaires and focus groups).

Phase Two: Design of Pilot Scheme (year one, months 9-12)

On the basis of the findings in *Phase One*, the second phase will design a pilot scheme for the establishment of a regional interfaith/intercultural network, which builds upon existing dialogue but takes it beyond the 'getting to know you' stage. The design phase, which will involve the active input of all stakeholders, will address the following key questions: structure, composition, duration, range of activities, educational infrastructure.

Phase Three: Monitoring of Pilot Scheme (whole of year two and year three, months 1-6)

The monitoring phase will include advice to Councils, other Partner Organisations and participating local groups, careful observation and documentation of all aspects of the implementation program, as well as a preliminary assessment of progress after the first nine months.

Phase Four: Evaluation (year three, months 6-12)

This will comprise:

- a) Preparation of key findings, which assess the effectiveness and viability of the network, and its various activities;
- b) General and specific recommendations aimed at various stakeholders and interested bodies for the long-term development of the network;
- c) Proposals for the possible application of the model to other regional settings in Victoria (and Australia);
- d) Preparation of report for widespread distribution in the northern region of Melbourne, nationally and internationally.

1.4 OVERVIEW OF PHASE ONE

The Centre for Dialogue has over a number of years conducted research into a range of interfaith and intercultural initiatives under way both in Australia and internationally, especially since September 11. The purpose of this research has been to identify successful initiatives, the factors that account for such success and the role of key actors in promoting effective dialogue and cooperation across different faiths and cultures.

As part of this project, the Centre of Dialogue has built on this research and constructed a program of further inquiry, specifically targeted to community needs, perspectives and interests in the Northern region of Melbourne.

This program of research has consisted of several elements:

- A survey of initiatives that have taken place in Australia in recent years in the area of interfaith/intercultural dialogue, with a view to identifying their strengths and weaknesses;
- A review of international discourse and practice in interfaith/intercultural dialogue (in selected Western countries with substantial Muslim minorities), with a view to highlighting objectives, strategies and outcomes that may have relevance for Australia;
- A well-planned, geographically based public consultation that offered important insights into community concerns and interests – information gained from the consultation provided the structure for the questionnaire;
- A questionnaire posted to a representative sample of residents, to ascertain:
 - a) The current state of community knowledge and understanding of the role of religion and culture in society;
 - b) Perceptions of actual or potential tensions; and,
 - c) The likely enthusiasm, resources and skills that interested respondents could bring to the dialogue;
- Discussion in a series of focus groups aimed at developing an in-depth analysis of two key issues:
 - a) The likely level of community involvement and support for proposed dialogue activities;
 - b) Areas of need and social concern which could form the basis for fruitful collaboration.

Survey of Interfaith Activities in Australia and Internationally

Much of this survey was conducted before the beginning of this project. The Centre for Dialogue has over the last five years focussed on important intellectual and practical developments in interfaith and intercultural dialogue both in Australia and internationally. The research conducted specifically for this project has concentrated on locally based interfaith initiatives, the role of government, especially local government, in supporting such initiatives, and the relevant experience of other Western countries. Because of language, cultural and political similarities, developments in the United Kingdom appear to offer particularly useful lessons for Australia.

Community Consultation

A community consultation was held on Tuesday 15 April 2008 at Coburg Civic Centre. More than 90 people from the Cities of Banyule, Darebin, Hume, Moreland and Whittlesea from, across faith and ethnic communities, inter-faith groups, municipal councils, local government associations, key community and service organisations came together to define current and potential future concerns of their communities and to identify good ways of using energy, resources, knowledge and experience. The consultation highlighted issues of social justice, problems confronting newly-arrived migrants, rifts within and between faiths, the challenges and importance of reconciliation and the need to break down barriers between communities of faith and the secular community.

The consultation also stressed the opportunity for greater community advocacy, purposeful policy development and the promotion of community harmony through the establishment of a regional network which would remain rooted in the community through transparent leadership.

Beyond identifying potential responses and solutions through interfaith education and dialogue, participants also stressed the need to deal with wider issues such as domestic abuse and environmental challenges, and a strong desire for any northern region network that eventually evolves to remain rooted in and accountable to the local community.

Questionnaire

The questionnaire was developed around the concerns and issues raised at the community consultation and in close conference with the five city councils. The survey sampled 0.5% of the combined population of the five councils. Each council administered 500 surveys to a random sample of the population while a further 625 surveys were administered through the Centre for Dialogue, which targeted places of worship, community and ethnic organisations, service providers and professional associations.

The questionnaire was released on 23 June 2008 and was in the field for a period of three weeks. The Centre for Dialogue received 452 responses – a response rate of 14.5%. A further 17 responses were received once the data analysis had begun.

Focus Groups

The focus groups targeted key constituencies including religious and ethnic organisations, service providers, and professional associations. It was anticipated that that two focus groups of 15-20 people would be held in each municipality. Two further groups were proposed: one specifically focusing on service providers and one on young people.

The purpose of the focus groups was to investigate the potential and enthusiasm for:

- Possible collaborative activity (across religious and cultural boundaries) on issues of common concern (e.g. education, health, employment, recreational and sporting amenities, transport, and assistance for new arrivals to the country);
- Prospects for dialogue on a range of complex social issues, including human rights/civil liberties, women's rights, rights of migrant communities, environmental concerns, the appropriate relationship between religion and state, and Australia's external relations.

The focus groups were conducted between July and September 2008.

2. REGIONAL BACKGROUND

2.1 REGIONAL IDENTITY

Located to the north of Melbourne, the Northern region of Melbourne (NRM) covers seven Local Government Areas – Banyule, Darebin, Hume, Moreland, Nillumbik, Whittlesea and Yarra. With a combined population of close to one million, 78 nationalities – 36% of whom speak a language other than English – and in excess of 50,000 businesses, NRM is one of the most multicultural and cosmopolitan industrial regions in the world.

Until recently, urban and rural regionalism in Australia was an elusive concept. However, with the impact of globalisation, regionalism is becoming a significant socio-economic and demographic tier of governance. Several agencies are now focusing on developing regional strategies, policies and networks that take an integrated approach to the region's needs, problems, assets and opportunities. With the support of Local Councils regional partnerships are being formed - such as NORTH Link/NIETL – across industry, education, service providers, government and civil society.

The establishment of an Interfaith / Intercultural Network in the Northern region of Melbourne is part of this wider trend. Starting with five of the municipalities listed above, it seeks to take advantage of the remarkable religious and cultural diversity of the region to promote a more socially cohesive community, which can more effectively respond to the complex needs and challenges of contemporary life in urban Australia.

2.2 DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN OF THE REGION

Summary of Population Diversity	Persons	% of pop.
Population	651,131	100.0
Australian Born	415,772	63.9
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islanders	3,996	0.6
Overseas Born - English Speaking Countries	27483	4.2
Overseas Born - Non English Speaking Countries	163,969	25.2
Languages other than English	230,110	35.3
Religious Affiliation	483,513	74.3

Age groups	Persons	% of pop.
0-4 years	43,296	6.6
5-14 years	83,280	12.8
15-24 years	90,599	13.9
25-54 years	287,993	44.2
55-64 years	61,575	9.5
65 years and over	84,382	13.0
Median age of persons	35	

Top 10 Religions	Male	Female	Total	% of pop.
Catholic	108,384	118,089	226,065	34.7
Eastern Orthodox	31,660	32,119	63,779	9.8
Anglican	26,263	31,407	57,670	8.9
Islam	22,406	21,318	43,724	6.7
Uniting Church	8,226	10,860	19,086	2.9
Buddhism	8,360	9,376	17,736	2.7
Presbyterian and Reformed	7,064	7,961	14,897	2.3
Hinduism	3,987	2,848	6,826	1.0
Christian, nfd	2,744	3,171	5,915	0.9
Baptist	2,591	3,064	5,655	0.9

Top 10 Overseas-Born Birthplace	Male	Female	Total	% of pop.
Italy	14,981	15,683	30,664	4.7
Greece	7,905	8,447	16,352	2.5
England	6,480	6,210	12,654	1.9
Lebanon	4,703	4,805	9,508	1.5
Turkey	4,176	4,166	8,342	1.3
India	5,070	3,238	8,308	1.3
China (Excl. SARs and Taiwan)	3,822	4,132	7,954	1.2
Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	3,895	3,852	7,801	1.2
Vietnam	3,517	3,755	7,272	1.1
New Zealand	3,426	3,468	6,894	1.1

Top 10 Languages other than English Spoken at Home	Male	Female	Total	% of pop.
Italian	23,966	26,719	50,826	7.81
Greek	15,684	16,346	32,030	4.9
Arabic	13,876	13,632	27,508	4.2
Turkish	8,258	8,318	16,576	2.5
Macedonian	6,960	5,575	11,227	1.7
Vietnamese	4,446	4,614	9,060	1.4
Mandarin	3,829	4,157	7,986	1.2
Cantonese	2,596	2,861	5,457	0.8
Croatian	1,414	1,537	2,951	0.5
Spanish	1,375	1,504	2,879	0.4

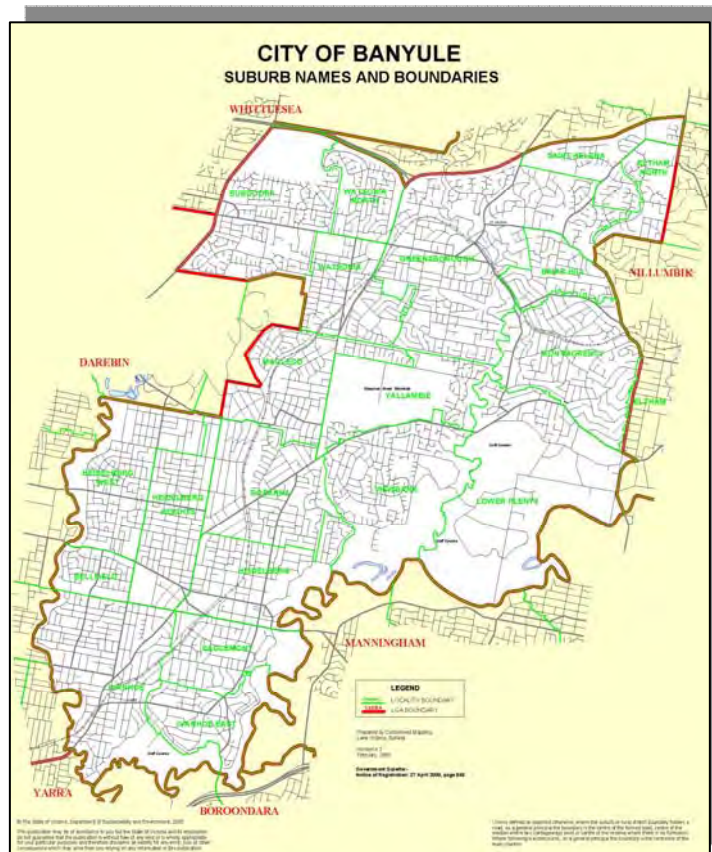
Top 10 Ancestry Groups First Response	Aust. Born	OS Born	Birth Place not stated	Total	% of pop.
English	109,109	18,483	3,145	130,737	20.1
Italian	52,404	30,465	2,291	85,160	13.1
Greek	18,743	15,483	1,084	35,310	5.4
Irish	27,855	6,564	849	35,268	5.4
Chinese	8,469	9,552	406	17,965	2.8
Lebanese	8,582	6,961	575	16,118	2.5
Scottish	12,246	3,012	306	15,564	2.4
Macedonia	6,571	8,433	488	15,391	2.4
Turkish	7,026	7,823	459	15,317	2.4
Indian	1,398	8,477	167	9,089	1.4

Please note: All Statistics in this Chapter are taken from the Australian Bureau of Statistics Census of Population and Housing, Enumerated – 2001 and 2006.

2.3 CITY OF BANYULE

The City of Banyule is located in Melbourne's north-eastern suburbs; approximately 7 to 21 kilometres from Melbourne's Central Business District (CBD). The municipality is comprised mainly of residential areas and parklands, and encompasses a total land area of approximately 63 square kilometres.

Banyule was originally inhabited by the Wurundjeri Willam people. Following European settlement in 1837, it began to grow as a farming area. This growth promoted the formation of the 'Heidelberg Road Trust' in 1841, the first form of local government in Victoria. The farming communities of the area evolved into urban communities in the 1900s. It was during this time that the area developed its links to artistic and architectural movements. Heidelberg is seen by many as the birth place of the Australian Art movement of the 1940s and 50s.



Heidelberg/Banyule experienced remarkable growth during the 1940s and 1950s with the post- World War II European migration. This period saw the establishment of the Housing Commission estates and the athletes' village for the 1956 Olympic Games. This influx of residents prompted the expansion of health facilities, schools, local business and culture. The City of Banyule was officially established in 1994 with the amalgamation of the former City of Heidelberg and the Shires of Eltham and Diamond Valley.

Source: City of Banyule Community Profile

<http://www.banyule.vic.gov.au/Page.aspx?ID=52>

City of Banyule website

<http://www.banyule.vic.gov.au/Page.aspx?ID=25>

Demographic Profile

The City of Banyule is the least ethnically and religiously diverse municipality involved in the Northern Interfaith/Intercultural Project. The demographic breakdown from the ABS 2006 Census of Population and Housing reveals that in Banyule less people were born overseas (19.9%) and are of a non-English speaking background (14.1%) in comparison to the Melbourne Statistical Division (29% and 21.3% respectively).

It is also noted that a larger proportion of the population of the City of Banyule arrived in Australia before 1991 (65.7%) than the Melbourne Statistical Division (60%) and a smaller proportion arrive after 1991 (13.4% and 17.7% respectively). A comparison of the 2001 and 2006 ABS Census data reveals that trends in the overseas born population of the City of Banyule is reflective of trends in the wider Melbourne Statistical Division (MSD) with a decrease in the European-born population and an increase in Asian-born communities, especially from China, India and Sri Lanka.

The 2006 ABS census data reveals that 44.5% of the population of Banyule only speak English (MSD – 37%), 45.3% of the overseas born population of Banyule speak another language and speak English well/very well (MSD – 48.1%) and 9.1% of the overseas born population speak another language and don't speak English not very well (MSD-13.9%). The dominance of English in the Banyule can also be seen in the language that is spoken at home with 79.4% of the population speaking only English at home and 17.1% speaking languages other than English, compared to 68% and 26.5% for the Melbourne metropolitan area.

Trends in religious affiliation in Banyule strongly resembles those in Melbourne with 68.3% of people identifying with a religion and 21.2% nominating no religion at all (68.2% and 20% for MSD respectively). Christian denominations (except for Orthodox) all experienced falls between 2001 and 2006 with non-Christian religions rising from 3.5% to 4.2% of the population. This, however, is well below 9.3% for the MSD. Islam (1.6%), Buddhism (1.4%) and Hinduism (0.7%) were the biggest non-Christian faiths, whilst the proportion of people ascribing to Sikhism rose by 101.9% between 2001 and 2006. This reflects the increase in Indian and Sri Lankan migrants who have settled in the area.

The City of Banyule is also on average older, better educated, and more prosperous than the other municipalities in the region. 33.5% of the Banyule population is over 50 years old with 11.1% of the population being over 70 years old (compared to 29.2% and 9.1% for MSD). Residents in the City of Banyule are also more likely to have formal

qualifications with 45.3% of the population holding formal qualifications* compared to the 41.3% of the MSD. Financially, 20.9% of the population of Banyule earn \$1000 a week or more, with 39.7% earning less than \$400 per week. This is compared to 18.7% of the MSD who earn more than \$1000 a week. The age and financial security of Banyule residents could account for the high rate of volunteerism, with 18% of the population engaging in volunteer work compared to 15.5% of the MSD.

Key Interfaith/Intercultural Initiative

The City of Banyule has initiated a number of programs to encourage diversity and harmony within the municipality. Although there is currently no local interfaith council, it is hoped that one will be established with the aid of this project.

There is an increase in multicultural activity in the City of Banyule which reflects the changing demographics of the area. These programs include:

Youth and Family Services:

- Olympic Village Crime Prevention Project - Somali and other young people from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities;
- WHELL Project - support and playgroups for Somali families;
- Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues – in partnership with Council (use of Council sports grounds), it supports young Somali boys playing soccer;
- Living in Harmony Day activities;
- Northern Refugee Brokerage Program - Banyule, Darebin, Whittlesea Local Councils and Spectrum MRC Project;
- Banyule Early Years Inclusion Program - focuses on access to child care and other services for CALD children and families;
- West Heidelberg Neighbourhood Renewal Project - Council partner in project engagement and activities with local CALD communities.

Strategic and Eco Development:

- Mall Project - economic development and capacity building support to Somali and other CALD traders;
- Mall Project - CALD communities participation in wider Structure Plan development Customer Service;
- Council Out and About Customer Service Program - presentations to CALD communities.

Health and Aged Services:

- Chinese Older Adults Social Support Group - Spectrum MRC and Council Leisure and Recreation;
- Italian, Greek and Dutch Senior Citizens groups - venues, support and funding
- Olympic Leisure Centre - project increasing access to people from CALD communities to Centre and activities (e.g. gym program, swimming programs);
- Partnership with AFL and VFL - West Heidelberg football program - partnership with schools and Council.

* Formal qualification refers to a Bachelor degree or higher, Advanced Diploma, Diploma, or Vocational Qualifications – ABS 2006 Census of Population and Housing.

2.4 CITY OF DAREBIN

The City of Darebin is located in Melbourne's inner and mid-north, approximately 7 kilometres from the CBD. It covers a total land area of approximately 53 square kilometres, and is comprised mainly of residential areas, parklands and commercial/industrial developments.

The original inhabitants of Darebin are the Wurundjeri people. European settlement began in 1839 with government land sales in the areas now known as Northcote and Preston. Rural development began in the 1840s with agriculture and farming comprising the principle industry until the 1870s.

Throughout the later part of the 19th Century, the area developed into an industrial centre with slaughterhouses, piggeries, curing-houses and claypits replacing the rural industry.

With the arrival of public transport in the late 1880s and early 1890s, the townships of Northcote and Preston began a rapid expansion. The boroughs of Northcote and Preston were declared in 1890 and 1922 respectively. The development of capital works projects by the government during the Great Depression saw massive population growth in both areas. Such growth continued with post-War European migration. The surrounding areas of Thornbury, Alphington and Fairfield began to develop into urban areas during this period.

The Cities of Northcote and Preston had a close working partnership during the post-War expansion, exemplified by the construction of the Preston and Northcote Community Hospital in 1958. In 1994, the two cities were merged to create the City of Darebin. Darebin experienced further growth in recent years following the souring residential housing and rental market in the inner city suburbs of Fitzroy and Fitzroy North. This has resulted in Darebin developing into an artistic and commercial hub, accommodating many cafes, galleries and retail establishments.

Source: *The Northcote Historical Group*

<http://home.vicnet.net.au/~nhcs/>

The Darebin Historical Encyclopaedia

<http://dbe.darebinlibraries.vic.gov.au/encyclopedia.asp?id=778>



Demographic Profile

The City of Darebin is one of the most ethnically diverse LGAs in Melbourne with 32% of the population born overseas and 28% of the population born in non-English speaking countries, compared to 29% and 21.3% for the MSD respectively.

Italian (6.2%), Greek (4.4%) and Chinese (2.4%) communities make the majority of Darebin's overseas born population, though a comparison of the ABS 2001 and 2006 Census data reveals an increase in residents born in India (174.9% increase), Japan (48.6% increase) and Somalia (15.9%). The majority of Darebin's overseas born population arrived before 1991 (62.7%), reflecting the increase in post-war migration from Europe.

The high proportion of persons from non-English speaking backgrounds has resulted in a higher than average percentage of the population who speak another language at home. The 2006 ABS data reveals that 39% of the population of Darebin speaks a language other than English at home, compared to 26.7% for the MSD. Of the overseas born population, 22.2% spoke only English, 55.2% spoke another language and English well/very well (MSD – 48.1) and 22.5% spoke another language and English not very well/not at all (MSD – 21.3%). The key languages are Italian (10%), Greek (8.5%) and Arabic (3.2%), though the use of these languages at home has declined since 2001. A comparison of the ABS 2001 and 2006 Census data shows a 107.8% increase in the use of Hindi, 138.4% increase use of Bengali and 69.7% increase in the use of Japanese. This reflects the recent influx of Indian, Japanese and Bangladeshi migrants in the City of Darebin.

Religious affiliation in Darebin (69.8%) is only slightly higher than the MSD (68.2%), dropping from 75.9% in 2001. This is in line with declining numbers of religious affiliation across Australia (74.7% in 2001 and 70.1% in 2006). While the Catholic Church is still the prevalent religion in Darebin at 32% of the population, the proportion of the population that nominate Christian denominations has fallen from 65% in 2001 to 59.2% in 2006. The proportion of the population who claim to have no religion has risen from 15.7% in 2001 to 19.2% in 2006, comparable to the MSD level of 20% (2006). Non-Christian religious affiliation makes up 10.6% of the Darebin population with Islam (3.8%), Buddhism (3.2%) and Hinduism (1.5%) being the dominant faiths. Yet, even Islam has recorded a 13.3% decrease in the City of Darebin over the past five years. A comparison of the ABS 2001 and 2006 Census data shows that Hinduism and Sikhism have recorded 108.5% and 260% increases, reflecting the growing Indian population in the area.

The City of Darebin has an aging population with 30.2% of the population over 50 years old and 12% over the age of 70, compared to 29.2% and 9.1% for the MSD respectively. Darebin has a higher proportion of residents aged between 25-34 years old than the MSD (17.3% and 14.9% respectively), reflecting its inner suburban locale.

The proportion of Darebin residents who hold formal qualifications is slightly lower than the MSD at 38.8% compared to 41.3% for the MSD. The number of residents in Darebin with no qualifications is slightly higher than the MSD (47.2% and 45.8% respectively) though the proportion of the Darebin residents with no qualifications has dropped from 56.2% in 2001. Financially, only 14.9% of the population of Darebin earn over \$1000 compared to 18.7% of the MSD. 44.8% of the population of Darebin earn less than \$400 per week, higher than the MSD (40.3%). The age and financial insecurity

of the Darebin residents could account for a lower rate of volunteerism with 12.7% of the population of Darebin engaging in volunteer work, compared to 15.6% for the MSD.

Key Interfaith/Intercultural Initiatives

The newly elected Council at the City of Darebin has established social inclusion and diversity as one of its three key priorities for this term of office. Darebin City Council has developed a range of policies and programs for its cultural and linguistically diverse communities, in part to support the most disadvantaged members of the Darebin community.

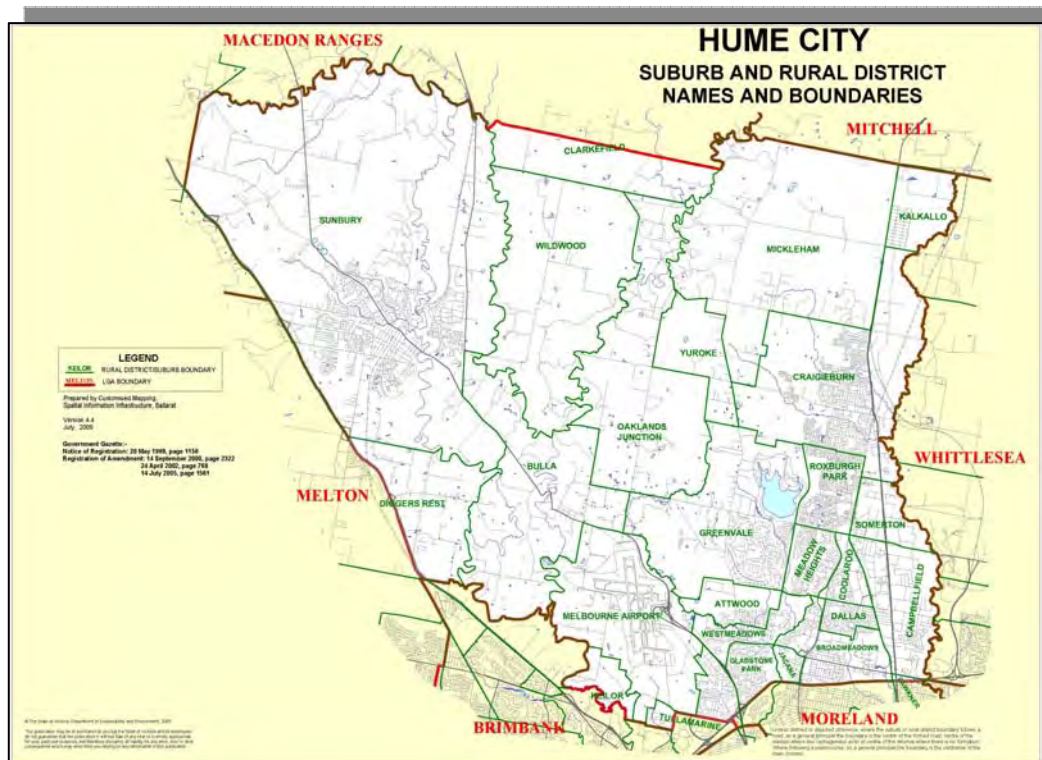
Council's commitment to develop, promote and celebrate its cultural diversity is demonstrated through establishing and strengthening partnerships, encouraging participation in government and non-government networks and actively engaging with its communities to implement accessible services and programs to meet the needs of a vibrant and culturally diverse community.

Some of these networks and partnerships include the Victorian Local Government Multicultural Issues Network, the Standing Committee of Local Government and Cultural Diversity, the North Eastern Regional Settlement Issues Network, the Darebin Ethnic Communities Council, the Darebin Interfaith Council, the Darebin Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Council and the North-West regional Managers Forum.

Current interfaith and intercultural initiatives include:

- A Memorandum of Understanding and Action Plan with the Darebin Ethnic Communities Council;
- Support to the Darebin Interfaith Council as an advisory group to council on interfaith related matters and interfaith cooperation;
- Organisation of four interfaith summits a year for faith leaders and community members to discuss current issues of common concern such as human rights, family violence and climate change;
- A Peace Poles project to erect a number of peace poles at All Nations Park to promote peace and harmony;
- Development of the Phase 2 VicHealth funded, Preventing Violence Against Women project;
- Interfaith support to the White Ribbon campaign and nomination of faith leaders as White Ribbon Ambassadors;
- Development of relationships between the Darebin Interfaith Council, the Darebin Ethnic Communities Council and the Darebin Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Council;
- Delivery of an integrated diversity training that includes presentations on community profiles, cross-cultural communication and cultural competency;
- Active participation in the organisation of festivals and events to promote interfaith and intercultural diversity;
- Mentoring other Councils in the development of interfaith groups and initiatives in their municipalities;
- A social inclusion and diversity framework that facilitates and assists all areas of council to be responsive to the needs of council's interfaith and intercultural communities.

2.5 CITY OF HUME



The City of Hume is located on the north-western fringe of Melbourne; approximately 20 kilometres from Melbourne's CBD. Spanning an area of 504 square kilometres, it is geographically the largest of the five municipalities participating in the Northern region Interfaith Network. The municipality is comprised of residential, industry and rural areas with land set aside for its continued growth.

The original inhabitants of the City of Hume were the Wurundjeri people, whose lands extended over a vast amount of what is now Melbourne, and the Woiworing tribe. Settlement in the area began in 1935 with the acquisition of land by John Batman. The area grew with the gold rush of the mid 1800s, which encouraged the development schools and public transport. As growth continued, the need for local government was recognised with the establishment of the Shire of Broadmeadows in 1871.

As with the majority of Melbourne, Hume experienced population expansion during the post-war period. In 1995, the restructuring of Melbourne's City Council and Shires saw the creation of the City of Hume, incorporating the City of Broadmeadows and the Shire of Bulla. The City of Hume has continued to attract newly emerging communities, especially from Iraq and Turkey.

Source: *City of Hume Global Learning Village website*
http://www.humelibraries.vic.gov.au/Page/page.asp?Page_Id=168&b=0

Demographic Profile

The City of Hume has the fifth largest overseas born population of Victoria's Local Government Areas (LGA), with 43,206 residents (29.2%) of its population born overseas. One quarter (24.9%) of the Hume population was born in non-English

speaking countries, compared to 21.3% for the MSD. While the majority of Hume's overseas born arrived in Australia before 1991, Hume has seen rapid growth in migrants from Iraq, India, Sri Lanka, the Philippines, Vietnam and Malaysia since 1991. A comparison of the ABS 2001 and 2006 census data reveals that the Iraqi born population of Hume has risen by 105.6%, the Indian born population by 41% and Iranian born population by 31.9%. Prior to 1991, the largest overseas born groups came from Italy, England, Greece and Malta. The largest overseas born group is Turkish with 3.9% of the population.

The high proportion of persons from a non-English speaking backgrounds has resulted in a higher than average proportion of the population who speak a language other than English at home. The 2006 ABS data reveals that 36.2% of the population of Hume speaks a language other than English at home, compared to 26.7% for the MSD. Of the overseas born population, 25.7% spoke only English, 55.1% spoke another language and English well/very well (MSD – 48.1) and 17.9% spoke another language and English not very well/not at all (MSD – 21.3%).

Religious affiliation in Hume is almost 10% higher than the MSD (68.2%) with 78.1% of Hume residents identifying with a religion and only 12.6% of residents stating they had no religion (MSD – 20%). Catholics make up 36.9% of Hume's population, though the number of residents that claimed a Christian faith fell between 2006 and 2001. Hume has a larger proportion of the population that follow non-Christian faiths (16.3%) compared to the MSD (9.3%). Islam (13.3%), Buddhism (1.9%) and Hinduism (0.6%) were the biggest non-Christian faiths, though the proportion of people ascribing to Sikhism rose by 149% between 2001 and 2006. The proportion of people ascribing to Assyrian Apostolic faiths rose 56.5%. This reflects the increase in Iraq, Iranian, Indian and Sri Lankan migrants who have settled in the area.

The City of Hume has the youngest demography of the municipalities participating in the Northern region Interfaith/Intercultural Network Project. 23.1% of the Hume population is over 50 years old with 5.2% of the population over 70 years old (compared to 29.2% and 9.1% for MSD). 29.4% of the municipality is under 18 years old (MSD – 22.8%). Residents in the City of Hume are also less likely to have formal qualifications with 32.7% of the population holding formal qualifications compared to the 41.3% of the MSD or 45.3% of the City of Banyule. Financially, 12.3% of the population of Hume earn \$1000 a week or more, with 45.2% earning less than \$400 per week. This is compared to 40.3% of the MSD who earn less than \$400 a week. The age and financial insecurity of Hume residents could account for the lower rate of volunteerism, with 10.1% of the population engaging in volunteer work compared to 15.5% of the MSD.

Key Interfaith/Intercultural Initiatives

Hume City Council serves one of Australia's most diverse communities and is home to many cultures, languages and faiths. The Council, in partnership with members of the community, is very active in implementing projects and programs that promote and strengthen community participation and inclusion.

Some of the activities undertaken by the Council include:

- *Social Justice Charter and Report* demonstrates Council's commitment to building a just and inclusive City for all residents. Two projects are highlighted to illustrate this:

- *Different Histories, Shared Experiences* provided women from different faiths and cultural backgrounds with opportunities to share their stories and their common experiences with one another (details provided below).
- *Multicultural Planting Festival* is an annual event which promotes the participation of more than 600 volunteers from 28 different cultural community groups in revegetation activities and cultural celebrations.
- Since 2001, Council has supported the *Hume Interfaith Leaders Network and the Multicultural Issues Forum*, providing community leaders with an opportunity to discuss contemporary issues and to provide a united response on a range of matters.
- *Collection of Council Prayers* reflects the City's rich spiritual diversity and commitment to social inclusion and mutual respect for all.
- *Valuing Young People's Voices* provided young people an opportunity to express their views and 'have a say' about issues that affect their lives. Over 160 young people from Hume City's Indigenous, Arabic, Turkish and Vietnamese communities participated in the project.

Different Histories, Shared Experiences

Different Histories, Shared Experiences was an initiative of the Tackling Poverty Together Report. It reflected Council's commitment to promoting recognition and respect for difference within Hume City's communities. It was funded by a \$37,387 Living in Harmony Grant from the Commonwealth Department of Immigration, Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs.

The project engaged Hume City's culturally and linguistically diverse groups and highlighted the contributions made to the community by women from different backgrounds. A range of activities was held for women, who came together to discuss, share and learn from one another.

Group activities that proved very popular included a community planting day and other environmental activities. The participants' reflections were published and exhibited in 2006 to inspire other women in the community and to promote inclusiveness through sharing and celebrating difference.

2.6 CITY OF MORELAND

The City of Moreland is situated in Melbourne's inner and mid-north, between 4 and 10 kilometres from the CBD. It covers an area of 51 square kilometres, making it one of the geographically smallest municipalities participating in the Northern region Interfaith/Intercultural project. But with 135,205 residents, the City of Moreland has the greatest population density of the five municipalities with 26.4 people per hectare (compared to the City of Banyule with 18.2 people per hectare).

The original inhabitants of Moreland were the Wurundjeri willam people, part of the Woiwurung tribe. European settlements were first established in 1837.

The suburb of Brunswick was laid out in Robert Hoddle's original plans for Melbourne in the 1830s. By the 1840s, a rural community had begun to grow but the area expanded dramatically in the 1850s as it was the main stop on the way to the goldmines of Ballarat and Bendigo. The discovery of natural clay deposits in the 1860s saw its further expansion as it developed into a quarry township. The town of Brunswick was declared in 1888. The area developed into a manufacturing hub with various industries such as textiles, brickworks and rope factories.

The neighbouring townships of Coburg and Pascoe Vale followed similar developments, moving from rural townships to industrial towns through the mid 1800s. Forty-one quarries were active in Coburg alone in 1875. The rapid growth saw the formation of the Shire of Coburg in 1875. The suburbs of Fawkner and Glenroy developed from rural communities to full-fledged towns in the 1920s (electricity only reached these areas in 1925) and expanded greatly with post-war European migration.

In 1994, the Victorian Government amalgamated the Cities of Brunswick and Coburg to become the City of Moreland. The area has been redeveloping its inner areas in an effort to generate urban renewal, which has seen the population of Moreland increase by 2.9% between 2001 and 2006.

Source: City of Moreland Community Profile

http://www.moreland.vic.gov.au/external.html?svPrvPC=PC_94913,svExtUrl=http://www.id.com.au/profile/Default.aspx?id=220,external=Y

City of Moreland website

<http://www.moreland.vic.gov.au/about-moreland/history-of-moreland.html>

Demographic Profile

The City of Moreland has the largest number of overseas born residents of the municipalities participating in the project with 43,789 residents born outside Australia. According to the ABS 2006 Census, 32.3% of Moreland's population were born overseas and 28.1% of the population originating from non-English speaking countries. This is compared with 29.2% and 21.3% respectively for the MSD. The majority of Moreland's overseas born population arrived before 1991 with 64.4% of the overseas born population arriving in Australia during this time.

The largest overseas born nationalities in Moreland are Italian (7.4%), Greek (3%) and



Lebanese (2.1%). These proportions of the population are much higher than the MSD (2.1%, 1.5% and 0.4% respectively) making the City of Moreland a cultural hub for these communities. A comparison of the ABS 2001 and 2006 Census data reveals that the cultural make-up of Moreland is rapidly changing with sharp increase in the proportion of the population born in India (123% increase), Pakistan (140.8% increase) and Bangladesh (111.3%).

The high proportion of persons from a non-English speaking background has resulted in a higher than average proportion of the population who speak a language other than English at home. 54.6% of Moreland's population speak only English and 39.6% speak a non-English language, compared to 68% and 26.5% respectively for the MSD. Italian is the most dominant language with 11.9% of the population speaking Italian at home (MSD – 3.3%) and 6.3% of the population speaking Greek at home (MSD – 3.2%). A comparison of the ABS 2001 and 2006 data has seen a sharp rise in the proportion of people who speak Arabic (2001 – 1.5%, 2006 – 6.3%) and Urdu at home (2001 – 0.2%, 2006 – 0.6%), which is well above the 2006 MSD figures of 1.5% respectively. Only 22.6% of Moreland's population speak English only (MSD – 37%). As the majority of the Moreland overseas born population arrived before 1991, the population has a higher than average rate of those who speak another language and English well/very well – 54.6% compared to 48.1% for the MSD. The proportion of the population who spoke another language not very well/not at all is also higher than the MSD, with 21.8% of Moreland's resident falling into the category compared to 13.9% for the MSD.

Religious affiliation in Moreland is significantly higher than the MSD with 72.3% of the population nominating a religion and 17.1% of the population stating that they have no religion (MSD – 68.2% and 20% respectively). While the Catholic faith is the largest religion in Moreland, the proportion of people who describe themselves as Catholic has fallen from 40.2% in 2001 to 37.2% in 2006. This follows the trend of declining numbers of those who describe themselves as Christian, falling from 66.4% in 2001 to 60.6% in 2006 (MSD: 2001 – 62.8%, 2006 – 58.9%).

The largest non-Christian faiths are Islam (7.9%), Buddhism (2%) and Hinduism (1.2%). The proportion of residents of Moreland who are Islamic is much greater than the MSD (2.9%). A comparison of the ABS 2001 and 2006 Census data shows that proportion of people ascribing to Hinduism and Sikhism has rapidly increased (98% and 108.7% respectively), reflecting the influx of Indian residents into the area.

The age of Moreland's population reflects its inner suburban location. The City of Moreland has a significantly higher proportion of 25-34 year olds (18.3% compared to 14.9% for the MSD) and 70-84 year olds (10.7% compared to 7.8% for the MSD). Only 19.4% of Moreland's population are under 18 years of age compared to 22.9% of the MSD. Financially, 15.7% of the City of Moreland earns an income over \$1000 per week with the majority of the population (44.4%) earning less than \$400 per week (18.7% and 40.3% for the MSD respectively). Residents in the City of Moreland are also less likely to hold formal qualifications (36.9% compared to 41.3% of the MSD) with a higher proportion of people having no qualifications (47.5% compared to 45.9% for the MSD).

It should be noted that the proportion of the population that has formal qualifications has risen slightly since 2001 when 32.9% of the population held qualifications and 55.7% had no qualifications. The City of Moreland has a lower rate of volunteerism than the

MSD with 12.9% of the population engaging in volunteer work compared to 15.5% of the MSD.

Key Interfaith/Intercultural Initiatives

In response to its culturally and religiously diverse community, Moreland Council has established various communication and advisory mechanisms.

The Moreland Multicultural Advisory Committee, Moreland Multicultural Settlement Services Network and Moreland Interfaith Gathering are key groups involved in intercultural and interfaith initiatives.

Council actively engages communities from all backgrounds and encourages participation in:

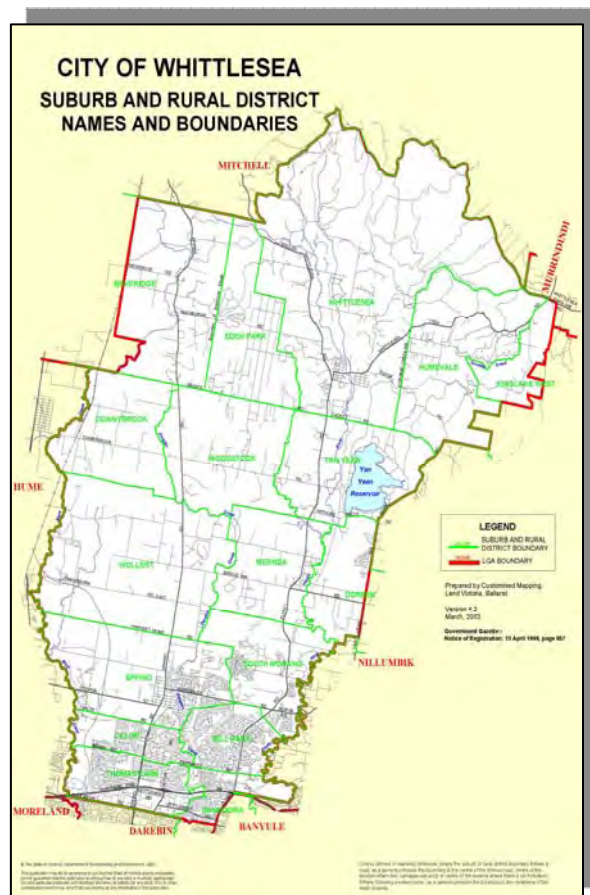
- Community festivals;
- Local democracy projects;
- Local area community building projects;
- City of Moreland Welcome Kits;
- Refugee Week events;
- Social policy development;
- Environmentally sustainable projects.

Moreland Council endeavours to take a council-wide approach to intercultural and interfaith activities in order to embed these in its regular work practice.

2.7 CITY OF WHITTLESEA

The City of Whittlesea is located in Melbourne's north about 20 kilometres from the CBD. The municipality covers an area of approximately 487 square kilometres. It is made up of both urban and rural areas with the majority of its urban areas situated in the South. The southern section of Whittlesea also houses considerable industrial and commercial enterprises. The northern section of Whittlesea comprises of farmlands, forests, conservation areas and historic township communities.

The original inhabitants of Whittlesea were the Wurundjeri willam people, part of the Woiwuring tribe. European settlement began in 1837. Over 70 sacred Wurundjeri sites still exist in the City of Whittlesea. As townships began to settle in the late 1800's, various shires began to form. The Shire of Darebin was formed in 1870, encompassing the



areas between Northcote and Whittlesea which later became the Shire of Epping.

The neighbouring Shire of Whittlesea was declared in 1862. As with many Victorian Shires, the borders often changed and merged. The early 1900s saw parts of Epping and Merriang Shires absorbed into the Shire of Whittlesea. The suburbs of Lalor and Thomastown were added to the Shire of Whittlesea during the rapid expansion of Melbourne in the post-war period.

Whittlesea experienced rapid growth in the late part of the 20th Century with the population increasing fourfold between 1969 and 2006. In 1988, the Shire of Whittlesea was proclaimed the City of Whittlesea. It is predicted that Whittlesea will continue to be one of Melbourne's fastest growing areas.

Source: City of Whittlesea Community Profile

<http://www.whittlesea.vic.gov.au/content/content.asp?cid=369&tid=369&cnid=2548>

City of Whittlesea webpage

<http://www.whittlesea.vic.gov.au/content/content.asp?cid=369&tid=369&tpid=369&sid=&spid=&cnid=949>

Demographic Profile

The City of Whittlesea has the highest proportion of overseas born residents of the five municipalities participating in the Northern region Interfaith Intercultural project with 32.8% of its population born outside Australia (MSD – 29.2%). Those who are from a non-English speaking country make up 29.6% of the total population, well above the MSD average of 21.3%. The largest overseas born communities come from Italy (5.2%), the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (4.5%) and Greece (3.4%).

While the majority of Whittlesea's overseas born population arrived before 1991 (67.9% compared to MSD 60%), a comparison of the ABS 2001 and 2006 data reveals that the Indian population has risen by 81.4%, and the Iraqi population by 85.5%.

The largest number of people born in non-English speaking countries has resulted in a high proportion of the population who speak languages other than English. Only 18.8% of the Whittlesea population speak only English, compared to 37% of the MSD. While the ABS 2006 Census data indicates that 21.3% of the City of Whittlesea speak another language and don't speak English very well or not at all (MSD – 13.9%), 58.5% of the population speak another language and English well/very well, which is above the MSD average of 48.1%. While 52.8% of the population speak only English at home (MSD – 68%), 43.1% speak a language other than English at home with the dominant languages being Italian (8.7%), Macedonian (8.4%), Greek (5.7%) and Arabic (4.2%). A comparison of the ABS 2001 and 2006 Census data shows a rise in the population who speak Mandarin, Punjabi, Tamil, Sinhalese, Urdu and Assyrian due to the recent influx of Indian, Iraqi and Sri Lankan born residents.

Religious affiliation in the City of Whittlesea is significantly higher than the MSD with 79.8% of the population nominating a religion and only 11.5% of the population nominating no religion compared to 68.2% and 20% respectively for the MSD. Catholics make up 35.2% of the Whittlesea population, though the proportion of people ascribing to a Christian denomination fell from 72.9% of the population in 2001 to 68.9% in 2006. The City of Whittlesea has a large Christian Orthodox population,

making up 18.1% of the population. This reflects the high Greek and Macedonian population within the municipality. The largest non-Christian faiths are Islam (5.4%), Buddhism (3.2%) and Hinduism (1.3%). The period between 2001 and 2006 has seen the rapid growth in people who ascribe to Hinduism (48.5% increase) and Sikhism (74.2%), reflecting the increase of Indian born residents who have moved to the area.

The City of Whittlesea demographically is one of the younger municipalities participating in the project. 25.8% of the Whittlesea population is over 50 years old while 6.3% of the population is over 70 years old (compared to 29.2% and 9.1% respectively for the MSD). 26.2% of the population is under 18 years old (MSD – 22.8%).

Residents of the City of Whittlesea are also less likely to hold formal qualifications. 31% of the population have formal qualifications compared to 41.3% for the MSD. Financially, 11.4% of the population earn over \$1000 a week or more, with 45.7% earning less than \$400 per week (compared to 18.7% and 40.3% for the MSD respectively). Demographically, the City of Whittlesea is the least financial secure of the five municipalities participating in the project. Financial insecurity coupled with the relative young age of the population could explain the low rate of volunteerism in the City of Whittlesea with 8.9% of the population of Whittlesea participating in volunteer work compared to 15.5% for the MSD.

Key Interfaith/Intercultural Initiatives

Whittlesea Interfaith Network (WIN) was established in collaboration with the City of Whittlesea and the Whittlesea Multicultural Communities Council. Prior to its establishment, faith leaders were consulted regarding the new growth corridors of the City particularly in relation to planning new places of worship. In 2004 faith-based leaders were also included in a community forum where the commonalities of religion were explored which included an Indigenous component. The forum 'The Lanterns are Different, but the Light is the Same' established the need for an Interfaith Network in the municipality.

Since 2007 meetings have been convened by the City of Whittlesea for local faith based leaders to meet and engage in dialogue on other faith perspectives. The group became incorporated in August 2007 and successfully received funding to establish an interfaith exhibition in 2009 that will celebrate and highlight all the faiths of the municipality.

WIN Statement of Purpose:

- To promote harmony, understanding and space for interfaith sharing in the Whittlesea municipality;
- Acknowledge and promote faith as a community value;
- Provide the opportunity for interfaith dialogue;
- Facilitate interfaith activities.

3. REPORT OF PHASE ONE

As already mentioned, Phase One constitutes the review and analysis section of the project. Following the initial survey of interfaith activities in Australia and internationally, the second component constituted a qualitative/quantitative survey of public attitudes. This in turn consisted of three stages: a formal community consultation held on 15 April 2008 (the findings of which can be found in Appendix 2); a questionnaire that sampled 0.5% of the combined population of the Northern region (constituting the five municipalities) during June-July 2008; and a series of focus groups in each of the five municipalities conducted throughout July-September 2008.

3.1 SURVEY OF INTERFAITH ACTIVITIES

Dialogue is designed to bring together people of different religious persuasions and cultural traditions, in order to promote mutual trust and more effective forms of co-operation. In this respect *dialogue is both interreligious and intercultural*. Dialogue can be of many kinds, each useful in its own way. Dialogue involving religious leaders can deepen the theological self-understanding of each faith community and clarify the role of religion in contemporary Australia. But in bringing together people of 'faith', dialogue can range over a wider set of issues – touching on aspects of culture and everyday life – and it can be inclusive, bringing into the conversation, not just religious leaders and theologians, but anyone with an interest in religious and cultural diversity. This latter form of dialogue offers, by virtue of its inclusiveness and wider agenda, a valuable antidote to prejudice and fear of the 'other', and nurtures in its participants a strong sense of personal worth and belonging.

To assist us in bringing people of different faiths together, particularly in the multicultural setting of Melbourne's northern suburbs, we have surveyed the many initiatives that have taken place in Australia and in selected other countries in recent years with a view of highlighting objectives, strategies and outcomes that may be relevant to building an interfaith/intercultural network in Melbourne's Northern suburbs. This is not meant to be an exhaustive survey of what is an extraordinarily diverse and complex landscape, but a snapshot of the expanding range of interfaith and intercultural activities in a number of Western countries, especially in the post-September 11 environment.

The Australian Experience

Interfaith dialogue initiatives in Australia have grown markedly over the last decade. Governments and community programs have established a number of interfaith projects which aim to increase interfaith education and activities in the wider community – in what is known as 'community dialogue'. Given this increase in activity, the Centre for Dialogue has undertaken a preliminary survey to provide an understanding of the process and its outcomes. What follows is a brief overview of the survey's findings, with the emphasis on:

- The impact of September 11, hence the important role of Islam and Muslim communities in the dialogue process;

- The unique role of local government, especially in Victoria; and
- The challenges facing the continued development of interfaith dialogue and cooperation in an Australian setting.

While a number of organisations and local networks were involved in interfaith activities prior to the attacks of September 2001 and the Bali bombings of October 2002, these dramatic events led to a marked proliferation of such activities. Historically most of the major faiths in Australia have made positive contributions to Australia's multicultural society, and have generally supported interfaith dialogue, although at times more in rhetoric than in practice. There has, of course, been a number of small unofficial initiatives over a long period of time, including the World Conference of Religions for Peace (WCRP) Australia, the Australian Council of Christians and Jews, and the Columban Centre for Christian-Muslim Relations in Sydney. In the late 1980s and early 1990s they were joined by locally based interfaith initiatives, notably the interfaith networks in Dandenong and Moreland in Victoria and the Interfaith Forum of ACT in Canberra.

Though traumatic, the terrorist attacks in New York and elsewhere in the post-September 11 era paved the way for many positive developments in interfaith relations. These have prompted increased interaction between Muslim Australians and the wider community, closer connections between multicultural and interfaith movements, and the involvement of governments in interfaith dialogue. While community sentiment towards people of Arab and Muslim backgrounds had been hardening since 2000, the crisis precipitated by September 11 served as a major catalyst for remedial action to tackle negative attitudes, though admittedly with varying degrees of success. A study by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission in 2003 listed over 101 projects directed towards these communities; many of which were interfaith in nature. Organisations such as the Islamic Council of Victoria play an increasingly important role. Several government initiatives, notably the Department of Immigration and Citizenship's Living-in-Harmony (LiH) program provided an important source of funding for interfaith projects around the country. In 2005 and again in 2006, interfaith dialogue and religious diversity were the top funding priorities for LiH grants. At the same time, many local councils initiated projects with a view to establishing interfaith networks, and enhancing community harmony and social cohesion. The largest concentration of such networks is in Victoria.

In 1999, the National Multicultural Advisory Council published a significant report entitled *Australian Multiculturalism for a New Century: Towards Inclusiveness* (<http://www.immi.gov.au/media/publications/multicultural/nmac/report.pdf>). It outlined four key principles that should guide societal relationships: (1) civic duty; (2) cultural respect; (3) social equity; and (4) productive diversity. In 2002, the Commonwealth Government, through the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs, commissioned the Australian Multicultural Foundation in association with the World Conference on Religion and Peace (Australian chapter), and RMIT and Monash Universities, to conduct a series of consultations with religious, government and community organisations. The project's aim was to place the role and activities of religion and faith communities within the context of the country's social and moral capital, and to relate them to citizenship in a multicultural democracy. In other words respect for cultural difference was understood to be a key pillar of constructive interfaith relations. The research for this project was conducted by Professor Desmond Cahill

(RMIT University), Professor Gary Bouma (Monash University) and Mr Hass Dellal (Australian Multicultural Foundation), all of whom have played an important part in the development of the Centre for Dialogue.

Their *Report, Religion, Cultural Diversity and Safeguarding Australia*, published in 2004 (http://amf.net.au/library/file/Religion_Cultural_Diversity_Main_Report.pdf), noted that in Sydney the move to create interfaith organisations was slower than Melbourne and that 'the inter-religious climate ... has been more problematic'. The idea that New South Wales lags behind Victoria is not universally accepted. While many would share the view that 'Melbourne is the interfaith capital of the Southern Hemisphere', some have argued that 'interfaith in Sydney is at least on par with Victoria'. Though a simple tally of the number of interfaith initiatives cannot provide a complete picture, it is useful to compare and contrast the experience of different states. In most states, the 'usual suspects' are active in interfaith work – most commonly religious organisations that conduct interfaith activities on behalf of their constituents and participate in the formation of peak bodies for example the Australian National Dialogue of Christians, Muslims and Jews and the Australian Partnership of Ethnic and Religious Organisations (APERIO). Participating organisations include the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies, Sikh councils in each state, the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils (AFIC) and many others.

Then there are organisations, independent of any of the official religious bodies, whose primary purpose is to promote interfaith contact and cooperation, for example the Multifaith Centre at Griffith University (QLD) and the Multifaith Association of South Australia. These organisations sponsor and organise a wide range of research, educational and advocacy activities. Both Sydney and Melbourne have a strong presence in this area, although the evidence suggests that activity in Victoria is generally more sustained and better interlinked. However, one area in which Victoria has clearly made considerably more headway is in the development of locally based interfaith networks. Since the inception of the Dandenong Interfaith Network in 1989, at least 11 other locally based networks have emerged around Victoria, nine of them in Melbourne. These are groups dedicated to interfaith activity, based in various localities, enjoying varying degrees of local government support ranging from assistance in kind to the provision of staff time. While many local councils in Australia have supported interfaith projects and they have often received LiH funding for the purpose, such projects have often been short-lived. Interfaith projects in Alice Springs, Palmerston City (NT), Canterbury (NSW) and Salisbury (SA) lasted only a short period before ceasing operations. Victoria appears to be the only state that has produced sustainable projects. The sustained involvement of local government appears to have been a decisive factor.

A study of projects in receipt of LiH funding raises important issues regarding the capacity of such funding to encourage sustainable projects, that is projects that continue to operate beyond the period of funding.[†] The cessation or reduction of activity is a common feature of many funded projects. A good number of interfaith projects were completed without producing any visible ongoing activity. LiH projects that have resulted in follow-up activity include the creation of the Darebin Interfaith Council which led directly from the LiH project 'Cramer Street Neighbourhood' in 2002. Similarly the B'nai B'rith Anti-Defamation Commission together with the Australian

[†] A list of these projects is listed on the website of the Department of Immigration and Citizenship website (<http://www.harmony.gov.au/funding/community-grants/previous/prior.htm>).

Intercultural Society, have used the success of their first project in 2004 to seek additional funding in 2005 and to propose further projects. The success of the 'Goodness and Kindness' (2002) project in NSW was followed by the JCMA schools project in Victoria with both developing a continuing program of school based initiatives.

As for local government initiatives, the same trend is in evidence, with only a few resulting in sustained activity. In the case of Canterbury and Wollongong in NSW, and in Salisbury in South Australia, little appears to have happened since the completion of the project. Interestingly, few of the Victorian networks have used LiH funding, yet many have continued to grow.

Success can create its own problems. While the number of initiatives has grown markedly since September 11, there has not been a corresponding growth in communication between networks and organisations. In many cases it is simply ignorance of another's existence. The result is often inadequate sharing of knowledge and experience, and at times a squandering of scarce energy and resources, with many groups starting from scratch. To illustrate, at least four separately constructed schools projects have been initiated, each involving visits to schools. Many of the interfaith networks that currently exist, even when they operate in adjoining municipalities, know relatively little of each other's aims, activities, resources or outcomes.

The picture, then, that emerges from this brief survey can best be described as mixed. On the one hand, it is a reflection of the success of interfaith activity in Victoria that Melbourne was able to mount a successful bid for the 2009 World Parliament of Religions. No doubt this major international gathering will stimulate interest in interfaith relations and collaboration. Similarly, there is no denying that interfaith activity has grown considerably over the last few years. On the other hand, serious questions remain about the spread and sustainability of these projects, even in Victoria. It has yet to be demonstrated that the interfaith dialogue movement will translate into a sustainable endeavour involving spiritual reflection, research, education and practical collaboration in the localities where people live.

Here there are many issues to consider, but one conclusion is worth stressing. More effective coordination between networks and organisations would go a long way towards a more efficient use of information, skills and resources and more successful maintenance of morale and energy, as well as higher public visibility. The problem of communication, coordination and cooperation was clearly noted in the 2004 Report. Regrettably, its recommendations do not appear to have been followed through by the Council for Multicultural Australia. One of the key aims of the regional Interfaith and Intercultural Network in the Northern region of Melbourne should be to take this lesson to heart, and begin to develop the necessary linkages and cooperative activities that can help to sustain energies over the long haul.

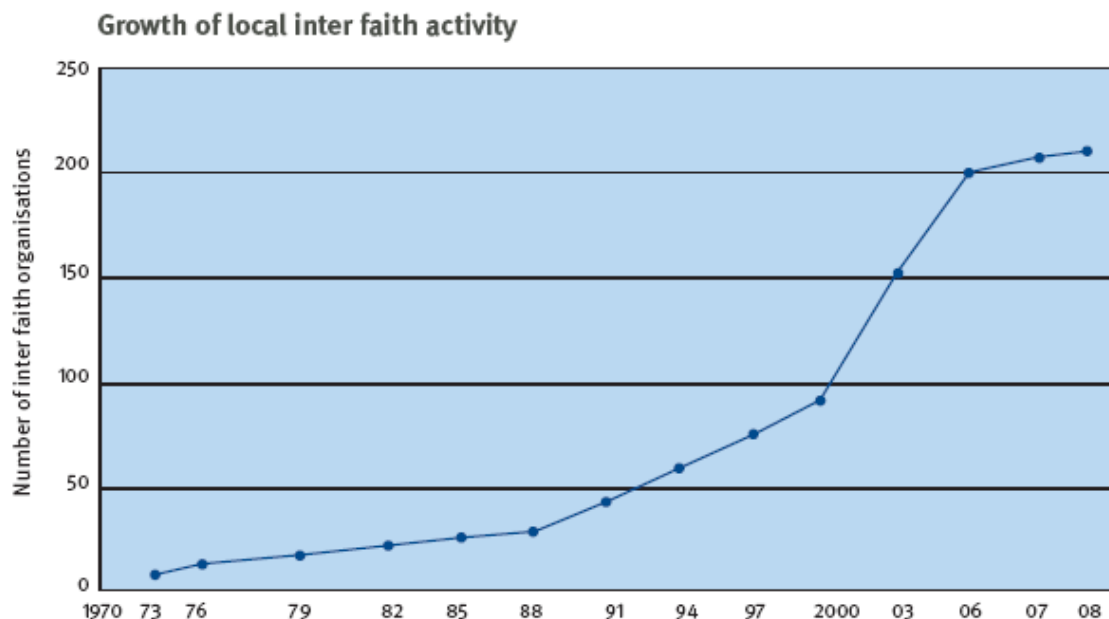
The International Experience

Internationally, dialogue across cultural and religious boundaries has a long history. Several high points are worth noting: the rich encounters that occurred from the 7th Century AD onwards between Sufi mysticism and Buddhism in metaphysical doctrine, spiritual training, and social-ethical action; the creative inter-civilisational interaction that developed in medieval Islamic Spain, in Southern Italy (especially under the Fatimids and Kalbids in the 10th Century); and at various times and places as far apart as, Istanbul, Cairo, Jerusalem, Baghdad, Samarkand and Delhi.

However, it was not until 1893 that interfaith dialogue was formally institutionalised with the establishment of the Parliament of the World's Religions in Chicago. A century would elapse before the Parliament would be reconvened in Chicago. It was followed by congresses in Cape Town in 1999 and Barcelona in 2004. Melbourne, with the financial support of the Victorian and Commonwealth governments, is hosting the next Parliament in December 2009.

As might be expected, interfaith activity has gained in intensity in the post-Cold War and post-September 11 environment – a period of growing identity-based conflicts, with ethnicity and religion (in particular the West's relations with Islam) serving as focal points of polarisation. Not surprisingly, this same period has seen the rise of such notions as the 'clash of civilisations' and the upsurge of terrorist activity bearing supposedly religious credentials. As a consequence, theorists and practitioners alike have had to pay greater attention to religiously-based group identification and to the transnational character of the phenomenon.

In response to these trends, the last ten years have seen a flurry of dialogue activities varying widely in character, location and duration. In November 1998, the UN General Assembly proclaimed 2001 the *Year of Dialogue among Civilizations*. In 2001, it adopted the *Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilisations* (UN A/56/523, 2001). In October 2003, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association recommended the establishment of inter-faith councils in Commonwealth countries. The EU held a *Conference on Interfaith Dialogue* in Rome in 2003. Inter-regional events have included four Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM), Interfaith Dialogues in Bali, Nicosia, Nanjing and Amsterdam (2005-2008), and the *Alliance of Civilisations* launched in 2005 by Spain and Turkey, later endorsed by the UN. Interfaith dialogue has also been applied to the management of ethno-religious conflicts. Interfaith dialogue, as both applied and normative research, has informed the study of conflicts involving the Middle East, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Armenia-Turkey.



Source: Interfaith Network for the United Kingdom *Annual Report 2007-2008*, p. 18 (<http://www.interfaith.org.uk/publications/annrev2008.pdf>)

Increasingly, globalisation, immigration, and changing demographics, coupled with an upsurge of tensions in relations between Islam and the Western world, have projected religiously based-identities back into public focus, both locally and nationally. As a consequence, agencies of government at the local, provincial and national levels have become increasingly engaged with dialogue activities. Many national governments have sought to develop laws, regulations and practices that enable diverse multifaith and multi-ethnic communities to 'live together' harmoniously and productively.

The experience, however, has varied markedly from continent to continent. For the purpose of this survey, our focus has been very much on Western societies, primarily in North America and Western Europe. The European experience itself has varied greatly from country to country. It is, however, worth noting that both national governments and European institutions have drawn attention to the important role of local government. Here it is worth noting that the 2006 Congress of Local and Regional Authorities sponsored by the Council of Europe, involving academics and practitioners, surveyed interfaith relations in Spain, Germany, France, the United Kingdom and Russia. It came up with 12 broad guidelines on interfaith dialogue for local government (for the full listing see: <http://www.coe.int/t/congress/files/themes/interfaith> - a summary of the principles will be found in Appendix 3).

These 12 principles clearly emphasise the importance of interreligious dialogue as an avenue for 'cultural knowledge and understanding', the significant contribution that local government can make to the dialogue process, and the need for dialogue to focus not so much on theological differences as on cooperative action dealing with the practical needs of local communities.

Turning specifically to the English-speaking world, it would appear that as a broad generalisation the involvement of both national and local government in interfaith activity is more highly developed in the UK than in North America.

The Canadian experience points to interfaith initiatives that cover a wide region, often an entire province. Important examples are the *Interfaith Council of Halifax*, *Manitoba Interfaith Council* and *Multi-Faith Saskatchewan*. From the perspective of this study, one particular initiative, *Interfaith Ottawa*, is worth noting. Its aim has been to create a forum where the various faith communities of Ottawa can work together with local authorities to increase acceptance throughout the City and speak out on issues of hate and intolerance. The Memorandum of Understanding signed in 2003 between the City and various faith communities highlights the principal goals of this initiative (see Appendix 4). It represents an attempt to structure and formalise the supportive role of local government for interfaith activity across an entire city.

In the United States, while September 11 has given rise to renewed activity on many fronts, it is the case that the initiative has come largely from religious organisations. Many of these are national in scope, and a large number involve bilateral or trilateral dialogue and cooperation among the three Abrahamic faiths (mainly Christian-Muslim or Christian-Muslim-Jewish).

Nevertheless a number of regional initiatives, many of which have quite a long history (that precedes September 11) have become much more active in recent years. Worthy of mention are the MultiFaith Council of Northwest Ohio, the Interfaith Association of

Central Ohio, the Interfaith Council of Greater Richmond (with a 75-year history), Inter-Faith Ministries in Wichita, Kansas (with a 123-year history), the Interfaith Network State of Washington (formed in 1989), the Interfaith Ministries for Greater Houston (formed in 1955) and the Saint Paul Interfaith Network (SPIN) in Minnesota.

Several US initiatives are worth noting because their experience might have relevance to the Australian context:

- *The South Coast Interfaith Council*, founded in 1953, is an association of over 140 member congregations and related programs in the South Bay-Harbor-Long Beach area of Los Angeles and West Orange counties, encompassing some 35 municipalities and approximately 1.8 million people.
- *The Kansas City Interfaith Council*, formed in 1989, has sought to raise awareness of the rich diversity of faiths in Kansas City. Recent projects have included a groundbreaking two-day *Gifts of Pluralism Conference* and the first 9/11 Anniversary Observance which featured a brass ensemble from the Kansas City Symphony and an elaborate water pouring ceremony. Significant support has come from the Rockefeller Foundation. An important feature of its recent development was an all-day strategic planning meeting (January 2005). The Council elected officers, looked at structure, and developed committees to address planning, funding, programming, and other issues. In 2008, the Council appointed its first executive director.
- *The InterFaith Conference of Metropolitan Washington (IFC)*, created in 1978, brings together eleven historic faith communities to promote dialogue, understanding and a sense of community among persons of diverse faiths and to work cooperatively for social and economic justice in metropolitan Washington.
- *InterFaith Works* formerly known as The InterReligious Council (IRC) of Central New York was founded in 1976. InterFaith Works promotes compassion, cooperation and partnership among the diverse faith traditions. It provides advocacy and human care through six social service programs which serve people in need, including refugees, the elderly, the disabled, and the institutionalised.
- *Interfaith Grand River* was formed in the immediate aftermath of the September 11 attack on New York. Its aim is to defend and promote religious diversity and tolerance in the Waterloo region and the surrounding area, by raising awareness of and religious but also linguistic, geographical, cultural and personal differences. These are seen as the key to constructive interdependence in the life of the community. Recent practical activities are listed in Appendix 5.

The significance of these initiatives is essentially threefold:

- a) They point to the value and viability of region-wide coverage and organisation of interfaith activity, which can complement and support many more localised groups and projects;
- b) They show useful attempts at developing sustainable structures and processes, with varying degrees of formalisation;
- c) They indicate the importance of education and practical action at the service of community needs.

But it is undoubtedly the UK experience which is of particular interest to those in Australia attempting to establish sustainable interfaith activity and to explore ways in which government at various levels can assist in the process.

In the UK, locally based interfaith activity has grown at a remarkable pace since the early 1970s. Developments in the aftermath of September 11 have merely accentuated a trend that was already well under way. Not surprisingly, it is in the UK that the recording and evaluation of interfaith activity is by far the most advanced. Both the extent of the activity and the care taken to record and evaluate it are indicative of the active involvement and support from the different levels of government.

Local interfaith activity in the UK is amply documented (see *The Local Inter Faith Guide: Faith Community Cooperation in Action*, 2005; *Inter Faith organisation in the UK: A Directory*, 2006; *Local Inter Faith Activity in the UK: A Survey*, 2003; *Inter Faith Co-Operation, Local Government and the Regions: Councils of Faith as a Resource for the 21st Century*, 2000). The Inter Faith Network for the United Kingdom found that the growth in locally based activity since 2001 was due largely to the active involvement of municipalities, especially those which – in addition to their historically large Christian and Jewish communities – have substantial Muslim, Sikh, and Hindu constituencies.

Research carried out by the UK Interfaith Network for its forthcoming 2009 Annual Review shows that around the UK over 275 local interfaith organisations are now working to encourage, develop respect and understanding about, and between, people of different faith traditions. Of these, 215 are interfaith groups, councils or forums operating on a multi-faith basis, and working with people from all or most of the major faiths in their areas.

New initiatives are continuing to come into existence in towns such as Hastings and Oxford, metropolitan boroughs such as the London Borough of Lambeth, districts of cities such as Pollokshields in Glasgow, as well as larger areas such as Leicestershire and West Cumbria. Around 60 of these local interfaith bodies operate on a bilateral or trilateral basis, such as the nearly 50 branches of the Council of Christians and Jews and the groups of the Three Faiths Forum. Other dialogues, involving those focusing on Buddhist-Christian, Sikh-Christian, Hindu-Christian or Jewish-Muslim relations/dialogue operate on a similar basis.

To assist our understanding of regionally-based interfaith structures we have selected a few that are of particular relevance to this project (*see* boxes below).

Among other things, these initiatives can, each in its own way, emphasise the value of region-wide organisations that can support, complement and nourish smaller locally based groups and projects. In addition to the Scottish Inter Faith Council, mention should be made of the Northern Ireland Inter Faith Forum and the Inter Faith Council for Wales. Each regional body carries out its own program of work. As we have seen, an important part of the mission of the Scottish Inter Faith Council is to provide direct support to, and linking with, local interfaith bodies in Scotland. The recent period has been critical for the development of regional forums in the UK. Stimulating this trend has been the decision of the UK government to develop a national interfaith strategy as part of the wider objective of developing a harmonious and cohesive multicultural society.

Yorkshire and the Humber Faith Forum (YHFF)

The Yorkshire and Humber Faith Forum, based in Leeds, UK, was established in 2005. A Council of 21 members representing the nine global faiths of the region meet quarterly to provide expertise and guidance, while a smaller Executive Group meets more regularly to discuss the day-to-day operation of the Forum. The mission of the YHFF is to create a forum through which people representing the religious diversity of the region can affect decisions made at a regional level including issues relating to jobs, housing, and transport. Specifically, the YHFF is committed to:

- Advancing the contribution of faith communities in the Yorkshire and Humber region;
- Encouraging faith communities to work together in matters of policy, strategy and action;
- Challenging all forms of discrimination and injustice against persons and/or groups on religious grounds.

The Forum is open to all people, organisations, and faith committees. It operates through emails, newsletters, public consultations and activities. The YHFF has organised a number of events which highlight the importance of interfaith understanding in the wider community.

Lessons

Several features are worth noting:

- The initiative covers a large region;
- The community, through its 'representatives', is seen as owning the interfaith network –the emphasis being on *engagement rather than enlistment*;
- Careful preparation is seen as a major factor in getting different faith groups involved, with timelines set well in advance;
- The concept of 'faith group representation' was considered problematic as it failed to account for diversity within and between faith communities. As a result this terminology was replaced with the broader concepts of liaison persons and faith members (as opposed to faith representatives);
- Interfaith forums should not aim to provide an unequivocal or singular faith voice, but rather represent a forum that allows the concerns, contributions and priorities of the diverse faith communities to inform the overwhelmingly secular agenda of public agencies;
- A two-tier governing structure, with a smaller management group and an open public conference, was found to be the most appropriate. The management group has included approximately twelve faith members and several members of regional bodies, representing a good balance in terms of faith, gender, age, and demography.

For more information see their website: <http://www.yorkshireandhumberfaiths.org.uk/>

Scottish Interfaith Council (SIFC)

The Scottish Interfaith Council was officially launched in 1999. A board, which includes representatives of the major faith traditions, local interfaith groups, educationalists, a youth representative, treasurer, accountant and a HR consultant, meets three times per year to provide direction and guidance to the SIFC. The Council's mission is to raise awareness about the different faith communities of Scotland and improve interaction between faith members through dialogue, understanding and co-operation. In doing so the Council aims to establish a solid foundation from which Scottish interfaith initiatives can expand. The SIFC is committed to:

- Promoting mutual understanding and good relationships between people of different religious faiths in Scotland;
- Offering a neutral forum based on equality where representatives of faith communities can meet and engage in dialogue about matters of religious and civic importance;
- Advancing public knowledge and understanding of the teachings, traditions and practices of the different faith communities in Scotland;
- Facilitating dialogue between faith communities and the Scottish Executive, the Scottish Parliament and other statutory and voluntary bodies and assist them in engaging in civic processes.

The SIFC is particularly interested in issues relating to education, chaplaincy, health, equality, parliament, the police service, local inter faith groups, women and young people.

The SIFC operates through youth conferences, training events, seminars, newsletters, publications and other public events. The Council has also facilitated a number of dialogue and networking workshops between members of all faith communities, and various government and civic institutions.

Lessons:

Several features are worth noting:

- The initiative again covers a very large region;
- Solid communication exists between the governing body and members of the public. An important mechanism is the wide distribution of newsletters outlining the important decisions made by the governing body;
- A key role of the Council is to foster the establishment of local interfaith initiatives. In this respect SIFC has helped establish over thirteen locally based initiatives in addition to supporting interfaith groups in universities, prisons and hospitals. Such outcomes help foster strong support for the regional network and encourage the more immediate involvement of faith members;
- Another key role of the Council is to provide opportunities for faith members to interact with local councillors to discuss issues of interest to faith communities.

For more information see their website: <http://www.scottishinterfaithcouncil.org/>

Faithnet Southwest

Faithnet Southwest, based in Bristol and Swindon, UK, was established in 2005 by four partner organisations: the Exeter Diocesan Council for Church and Society, the South West Churches Regional Forum, the South West Council of Faiths and the Churches Council for Industry and Social Responsibility. The mission of Faithnet is to 'support faith in action in the South West by enabling the voices of faith to be heard throughout the region'. The key aims that underpin the work of Faithnet are:

- Encouraging faith groups to work together and in partnership with others to support the local community;
- Enabling statutory and community organisations to work with faith groups;
- Promoting understanding of faith groups and their contribution to society;
- Helping set up forums where faith groups can work together so that their voices are heard in local and regional policy and decision-making.

Faithnet champions the contribution of faiths to civil society and community life through policy development, research, consultation, and promotion of best practice. The network provides up-to-date communication to faith members through an E-bulletin, the Faithnet website and distribution of the newsletter *Faithnews*. A blogging section and online forum allows for the ongoing exchange of ideas.

Lessons:

Several features are worth noting:

- The initiative covers a large region;
- Networking and community regeneration, rather than exchanging ideas about personal spirituality, are the key focus of involvement. In this respect, Faithnet represents a forum through which faith groups network, exchange ideas on issues of interest, such as the role of faith in addressing HIV/AIDS, and how faith members can cooperate to effect government decisions;
- Social events involving music, food, and dancing, provide a catalyst for greater cooperation and understanding within and between faiths;
- Online technology is used to facilitate ongoing dialogue between faith members.

For more information see their website: <http://www.faithnetsouthwest.org.uk/joomla/index.php>

These regional bodies have played an invaluable role. Complementing and strengthening the work of local interfaith bodies, regional forums are seen as 'adding value' *not* undercutting local interfaith work. In 2008, one of the specific aims of the research carried out by the Interfaith Network was to look at ways in which work at regional and national levels could more effectively support local interfaith initiatives. The Interfaith Network has now set detailed work on the relationship between interfaith activity at national, regional and local level in England as a high priority.

3.2 RESULTS FROM QUESTIONNAIRE

Since the Community Consultation has been dealt with in some detail, we now turn our attention to the results and findings from the questionnaire and focus groups.

The data emanating from the questionnaire provides a tangible insight into the community's attitudes towards interfaith and intercultural issues. The results referred to in this section are available in Appendix 6. A copy of the questionnaire itself can be found in Appendix 7.

Community Involvement

The first section of the questionnaire showed the following level of community involvement in existing faith, ethnic and community organisations:

- 55% of respondents are involved in a faith or community organisation – 64% of whom are actively involved (*see* Appendix 7, table 1.2).
- 39% are currently involved in interfaith or multicultural groups, while 40% belong to a community organisation (Appendix 7, tables 1.3 & 1.4).
- Of those who belong to a faith or community organisation, 90% were 45 years or older and 57% were female.
- The participation in each of the five municipalities was roughly even, with Banyule the highest at 25% and Hume the lowest with 18% (Appendix 7, table 1.6).

It is clear that in the northern region of Melbourne the level of involvement in various types of religious, ethnic or community organisations is high, but with a significant bias in favour of older age groups.

Perceptions of Relations between Faiths and Cultures

Under this section of the questionnaire, the key results were as follows:

- About 70% of respondents have regular interaction with people from different backgrounds.
- 60% of respondents described themselves as being 'very well' or 'quite well' informed about relations between faiths and cultures in the local context (Appendix 7, table 2.2). This figure decreases slightly to around 50% when describing their knowledge of relations between cultures and groups at the national and international levels (Appendix 7, tables 2.3 & 2.4).
- There are variations across the municipalities. In Hume those 'quite well informed' about local relations constituted only 11% of the total. All the others were a little above or a little below 20%. Moreland and Darebin respondents considered themselves better informed than their counterparts in the other municipalities, but with variations across age groups. Darebin residents under-45 years gave themselves a higher score in terms of local knowledge than the same age groups in other municipalities. However, the 45 to 64 age group in Darebin had the same score as in Hume, and a lower score than in the other three municipalities. In

Moreland, the over-55 age group consistently appears the best informed (Appendix 7, table 2.5).

- The same breakdown emerges for knowledge of national and international relations between faiths and cultures (Appendix 7, tables 2.6 and 2.7). Whittlesea and Hume respondents reported significantly less knowledge of relations across all age groups.
- Question seven of the survey asked respondents to select from a list the words which best describe relations between people of different ethnic or religious backgrounds in their neighbourhood. The responses suggest a positive perception overall of these relationships with 'tolerance', 'friendship', 'cooperation' and 'harmony' the most popular terms in order of importance (Appendix 7, table 2.8).
- Question eight asked respondents if there was racial or religious prejudice in their neighbourhood. Only 24% answered yes to this question (Appendix 7, table 2.9). When this question is cross-referenced with age and municipality, Moreland and Darebin respondents reported the highest levels of perceived prejudice (Appendix 7, table 2.10). Both municipalities also share the highest level of overseas born residents, around 32% each.[‡] However, Moreland respondents reported higher levels of perceived prejudice (14% more) than those in Darebin despite having similar levels of diversity.
- Across age groups a different trend is evident. Younger Darebin respondents reported higher levels of prejudice than older members of the same community. Also 50% of all the over-65 age group who answered yes to the existence of prejudice were in Banyule, the least diverse of all the municipalities.
- In answer to the question whether they had personally experienced prejudice, responses varied slightly, with Darebin registering the highest score (25%) and Whittlesea the lowest (17%). Those reporting experience of prejudice constituted only 31% of those who answered the question (Appendix 7, table 2.11).

The responses suggest a correlation between diversity and perceived existence of prejudice: the more diverse the community, the greater the perception of prejudice. This could have two different explanations.

Religious, cultural or racial difference may provoke prejudice. Alternatively, diverse communities may have higher expectations of respect and harmony, and may therefore be comparatively more sensitive to any deviation from this norm.

This section of the questionnaire detected a number of areas where the proposed Network might need to devote particular energy – taking into account variations across municipalities and age groups.

How Relations between Different Religious or Ethnic Groups Can be Improved

Asked how relations between the various religious and ethnic groups can be improved in their neighbourhood, the third section of the questionnaire revealed that:

[‡] Population Diversity in Local Councils in Victoria: 2006 Census.

- 64% of respondents believed that something can be done to improve relations (tables 3.1 & 3.2) with a high response rate from Moreland (27%), Darebin (23%) and Banyule (21%), and a lower rate from Hume (15%) and Whittlesea (13%).
- Asked which activities would help improve such relations (Appendix 7, tables 3.4 to 3.7), 82% of respondents considered social events involving music, sport and food as the most popular, and public forums as the least popular (51%), although in this latter case only 17% were opposed to the suggestion. Workshops and other educational activities attracted favourable responses from 62%, and visits to places of worship of different faiths 59%.
- When it came to joint activities in response to community needs (Appendix 7, table 3.8), those attracting most support in order of preference were: neighbourhood safety (71%), youth activities (70%), and refugees and recent arrivals 65%. Even the least favoured activities (childcare and housing) were supported by half the respondents.
- Strong community support (75%) was expressed for the proposed Interfaith and Intercultural Network (Appendix 7, table 3.12). Less than 4% were opposed to the proposal. Only 18% of total respondents were undecided, and most of whom lived either in Banyule or Moreland (Appendix 7, table 3.13).
- Support for the proposal to establish a Network as strong across all age groups, averaging between 70% and 80%, with a relatively small segment (18%) expressing scepticism. This was particularly prevalent amongst the older age-groups (Appendix 7, table 3.14).
- Of the relatively small group who were undecided or opposed to the proposal (just over one in five), the vast majority were in the 45 and over age group (table 3.14). Those who featured most prominently in this group marked that they had 'no religion' (Appendix 7, table 3.15)
- Averaging well over 70%, support for the Network is strong across the various religions, including 63% from the 'no religion' group (table 3.15). Similarly, support was strong across all ethnic groups with those opposed not exceeding 7% for any category (Appendix 7, table 3.17).
- Across municipalities (table 3.18) the highest level of support for the initiative derives from Darebin (81%), followed by Whittlesea (77%), Moreland (73%) and Banyule (72%), with Hume registering the lowest at 64%.
- In response to whether people would like to be involved in this initiative, 57% said they would like to be involved often (9.2%) or sometimes (48.1%). Those who did not wish to be at all involved made up 22.7% of respondents (Appendix 7, table 3.19). This represents a much higher level of engagement than is usual for most community related activities in Victoria.
- A higher proportion than the average expressed likelihood of involvement in the case of certain religious groups: Uniting Church (67%), Muslims (100%), and Buddhists (77%). Those below the average included: Catholics (51%) and Anglicans (50%). Significantly, those who labelled themselves 'no religion' expressed a relatively strong willingness to be involved (52%).

Support for the Network is surprisingly strong across the entire region, and across most religious and age categories, with some discrepancies.

According to the above data, it appears that responses from Hume and Whittlesea municipalities have consistently been the lowest. Whilst these comparative responses may be the result of rapid demographic changes and socio-economic disparities, it would be useful to analyse these results in greater detail.

Equally, the above section of the questionnaire suggests that the proposed Network may need to reach out to some of the more established Christian churches (Catholic, Anglican and Eastern Orthodox). The 'no religion' group shows a surprisingly high level of interest in the proposal.

Demographic Profile of Respondents

The final section of the questionnaire collated information on the background of the participants. Significant information to emerge from these questions included the following:

- Only 3% of respondents were under 24 years of age, and 13% belonged to the 25-34 year old group. By contrast 67% were in the above 44 age group.
- The gender ratio was 59% female and 41% male.
- 31% of respondents were not born in Australia, coming from some 50 different countries.
- The most significant affiliations given by respondents in terms of 'religion' were: Catholic (31%), other religious group (15%), no religion (13%), other Christian groups (7%), Muslim (6%), Atheist (6%), Agnostic (5%), Anglican (4%), Orthodox (4%), and Uniting Church (3%).
- In terms of ancestry, respondents classed themselves as: Australian (41%), English (21%), Italian (11%), Irish (8%), Scottish (5%), Greek (5%), Chinese (4%), and Lebanese (3%). In addition to the smaller numbers classifying themselves as Indian, Macedonian, Somali, Maltese, Polish and Vietnamese, 26% of respondents classified themselves as 'other', reflecting the extraordinary ethnic and cultural diversity of the region.
- In terms of household arrangements, it is worth noting that 20% of respondents lived alone and that sole parents comprised 6% of the total.
- Reflecting the over-representation of the older age group among respondents, 24% were retired or pensioned, and only 41% were engaged in full-time employment.
- Given the socio-economic background of different parts of the region, respondents were remarkably well qualified: 21% had completed secondary school, and 52% had either a university degree or postgraduate qualification.
- The residential background of respondents indicated that the largest number lived in Banyule (110) and the smallest number in Whittlesea (64) and Hume (63). Moreland had 100 respondents, and Darebin 92.

The lack of youth participation in the questionnaire reaffirms the need to find effective ways of engaging young people when developing the Network.

The various suggestions made by respondents as to the kinds of projects and activities that the Network might undertake are listed in Appendix 8. These and other suggestions made in focus groups and elsewhere have been considered in the preparation of the recommendations that are outlined in the next section.

3.3 FEEDBACK FROM FOCUS GROUPS

The focus groups were conducted between July and September 2008. Each of the five municipalities prepared an invitation list of faith and community leaders, service providers, educators and government representatives. A separate focus group was held at the Centre for Dialogue specifically for service providers. Over 700 invitations were sent throughout the region with 87 people participating in the eight focus groups that were held.

The focus groups that attracted the most interest and highest attendance were those held in the Cities of Darebin and Whittlesea. It should be noted that both Darebin and Whittlesea have thriving interfaith and ethnic community networks that could be readily utilised. The Darebin and Whittlesea focus groups were also the only groups attended by Councillors.

The focus group series failed to attract participation from some of the important parts of the community. Representation from the more settled migrant communities, including Greek, Italian and Chinese, was low as was attendance from those under the age of 25. Attendance from faith leaders was relatively low, with most faith representation coming from community leaders and service providers who also happened to have their own individual faiths. In an effort to gain a youth perspective, a focus group was scheduled for early 2009 with the Ethnic Youth Council at Spectrum Migrant Resource Centre.

The focus groups attracted high attendance from newly emerging migrant communities especially from Africa, the Middle East and Eastern Europe. As expected the Christian and Muslim communities were the most widely represented, but smaller faith communities also made enthusiastic contributions, for example the Baha'i, Buddhist, Assyrian and Chaldean faiths. The focus groups also attracted high attendance from the police, migrant resource centres, community health workers and charity groups.

The focus groups were held in an informal manner in order to encourage candid and open dialogue. The focus groups were asked to consider:

- a) The likely level of community involvement in and support for proposed dialogue activities;
- b) Areas of need and social concern that could form the basis for fruitful collaboration;
- c) Possible joint activities on issues of common interest and need;
- d) Ways in which a regional interfaith/intercultural network might function and how it might interact with the community as a whole.

Participants were also asked to share their experiences of living in such diverse communities and their knowledge on current interfaith activity.

Possibilities for Engagement

The focus groups highlighted several areas that were of key concern to both faith and ethnic communities, and the wider community as a whole. Many suggestions were made regarding how a regional Network might address these issues. These included:

- Lack of information regarding faith and ethnic communities was seen to re-enforce stereotypes and encourage prejudice. It was suggested by many participants that a regional interfaith/intercultural network should encourage greater knowledge of faith and ethnic communities. Various educational and training initiatives were suggested, including forums, workshops, information booklets, interactive website, visits to places of worship, host family schemes, and other ways of celebrating the diversity of faiths and cultures.
- Housing and employment issues were highlighted as a major concern for the community as a whole but especially migrant communities. It was suggested that a regional interfaith/intercultural network could address these issues by holding career expos, work experience opportunities, introducing a mentoring program, creating a 'household item' bank for struggling families, and aiding people with interview and resume training. A number of participants from newly emerging communities felt that a regional interfaith/intercultural network would be more approachable for migrants than many community or government organisations.
- Tension between the 'traditional' and the 'modern' was particularly stressed as an issue facing both faith and ethnic communities, particularly relationships between parents and youth. A regional interfaith/intercultural network could address this by providing information and training for parents from traditional cultures, and conversation groups for young people who face these intergenerational problems.
- Attention was drawn to the lack of information regarding services for drug, alcohol and gambling problems, and domestic violence situations, particularly for those with English as a second language. A regional interfaith/intercultural network could address this problem by providing a regional multicultural resource directory that features multi-lingual services in these areas. A regional interfaith/intercultural network could also pursue ways of addressing these problems through faith communities. The *Preventing Violence against Women through Faith Communities* project launched through the City of Darebin was presented as one good example of how this might be done. This project has just been upscaled to a northern region program and offered as a blueprint and a partner in addressing these issues.
- The misrepresentation of faith and migrant communities in the media was noted as creating disharmony in the community. It was suggested that a regional interfaith/intercultural network could run forums with the media so faith and ethnic communities could voice their concerns. It was also suggested that the Network could provide media training for faith and community leaders.
- Lack of voice in public policy and issues of social justice was considered to be an area in which a regional interfaith/intercultural network could play a substantial advocacy role in relation to local, state and federal government.

- Many participants felt that service providers lacked knowledge regarding faith and cultural practices. It was suggested that a regional interfaith/intercultural network could assist in training and provide information for service providers.
- The majority of overseas born participants felt that the wider community often did not understand that many migrants come from countries torn apart by violent conflict and desperate poverty. A regional interfaith/intercultural network could help overcome this by providing education evenings regarding the state of affairs in these countries. The Network could also aid those coming into the community from such places by introducing support groups and providing access to professional help.
- Finally, it was strongly felt that activities that bring people together in an informal and relaxed atmosphere provide good opportunities for genuine dialogue. Cultural celebrations, music, food festivals and sporting events were seen as positive ways of encouraging community harmony. A regional interfaith/intercultural network could facilitate such activities by connecting people with similar aims and talents, aiding people in accessing funding for such events and provide promotional assistance.

Issues to Keep in Mind in Developing the Network

While the majority of focus group participants were enthusiastic about the prospect of a northern region interfaith/intercultural network, several issues were raised regarding its function, structure and purpose. These included:

- Some participants were concerned that the regional interfaith/intercultural network should not deprive funds and resources away from existing local initiatives, but should rather serve to pool and enhance funds and resources. Some argued that the Network would be beneficial to the extent that it could provide a service that could not be achieved at the local level.
- Some of those who were already involved with local interfaith/intercultural activities were concerned with issues of time management, and wondered whether they would need to choose between local and regional engagement. On the other hand, when participants were asked explicitly whether they felt that energies existed within their networks to undertake the proposed regional initiative, the response was clearly positive.
- The question of representation in a regional network was raised by some. It was noted that proportional representation for the entire region may create problems. Dominant faiths and cultures in the region may be strongly represented at the expense of smaller and less well organised faiths and communities.
- Language constraints and transport issues were highlighted as substantial difficulties that a regional interfaith/intercultural network would need to address.
- Some participants referred to the competing 'top-down/bottom-up' approaches. It was recognised that a regional interfaith/intercultural network would need strong support and participation from faith and community leaders. However, many of the current initiatives in interfaith/intercultural dialogue included people that were not in leadership positions. The question was raised about how to ensure participation at both leadership and grassroots level.

- Some participants believed that many faith and community leaders were extremely busy with obligations to their respective communities and might therefore not have the time for 'yet another' project. They were of the opinion that it was therefore necessary to find ways of widening the circle of participation.
- A significant number of participants stressed the value of an intercultural approach rather than a purely interfaith one. Reasons given included:
 - Many tensions in the community are actually *within* faiths and are culturally based;
 - Often tensions *between* faiths also have a cultural dimension;
 - An intercultural approach was more likely to be inclusive of the wider community;
 - A number of participants perceived interfaith problems as being caused by a lack of cultural knowledge and experience on the part of both migrant communities and the wider community;
 - An intercultural approach would be particularly useful in engaging those of secular disposition, the indigenous community, and the wider community generally;
 - A number of service providers stated that community structures did not have the capacity to deal with interfaith issues. Some explained that they would find it rather difficult to deal with interfaith issues, since it was not within their brief to do so.

3.4 KEY FINDINGS

1. Although most major faiths have a long history of positive contribution to Australia's multicultural society, it was September 11 which propelled interfaith activity to the forefront of public policy. This resulted in government supported programs and projects. While many interfaith initiatives have got off the ground, a good number have proved short-lived and have dwindled once funding ceased. Victoria appears to be the only state in Australia that has produced at least a few sustainable interfaith groups. This is due in part to the continued involvement and support of local government. This finding is consistent with our survey of the UK experience, where national and local government have played a crucial role in the development of locally and regionally based interfaith dialogue.
2. The other important factor relates to the engagement of local communities and the degree to which interfaith dialogue and cooperation responds to their practical needs and concerns. Action programs that deliver on these needs and concerns are more likely to provide the necessary foundation for building mutual trust and cooperation across different faiths and cultures.
3. Despite the recent growth in locally based interfaith initiatives in Australia, there has been no effective linking and little communication between them. This has made it more difficult for many of them to achieve sustainability. International experience suggests that regional groupings, forums and networks can generate the energy, resources and know-how needed to sustain activity over the longer term. These regional bodies can facilitate reflection, research and education, the sharing

of knowledge and pooling of resources, and other practical forms of collaboration. This is evident in UK and US experience where regional bodies have played an invaluable role, complementing and strengthening the work of local interfaith bodies.

4. The community consultations, questionnaire and focus groups established strong and widespread support for greater dialogue and cooperation across faiths and cultures in the northern region of Melbourne. This positive response was common across the five municipalities and across religious, ethnic and gender groups. The proposed Network was seen as an important new contribution to existing dialogue and cooperation.
5. However, for a number of participants the purpose and rationale of the proposed Network were not immediately obvious: Why regional? Why interfaith and intercultural? These questions were raised in the consultations and focus groups where explanations were provided. This dialogue was not possible in the questionnaire. Once the underlying concept was explained, the potential of the initiative was much better appreciated, leading to numerous practical suggestions and very helpful advice.
6. All of the activities listed in the questionnaire, including educational activities, support for refugees and recent arrivals, and youth activities received strong support from respondents. By and large these responses echoed the sentiments expressed in the community consultations and the focus groups. The questionnaire also showed that there was strong support for examining the issues of domestic violence, housing and the environment.
7. Though the level of interest in interfaith and intercultural dialogue was strong, the extent of support for the establishment of a regional network was high, and support for a wide range of initiatives was substantial, there were some variations between municipalities, age groups, religious, philosophical, cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. What this suggests is that the proposed network will need to be sensitive to such differences, and should be as inclusive as possible to cater to the different needs, levels of knowledge and understanding, and life experiences of community members.
5. At first sight, the municipality of Hume appears to rate lower on certain interfaith indicators, for example knowledge of interfaith relations or level of support for interfaith and intercultural dialogue. This may be explained by socio-economic background and the likelihood that people are preoccupied with the business of everyday life, and therefore reluctant to devote much energy to interfaith or intercultural relations. There could be any number of other explanations, including the relatively small number of respondents. The issue does appear to warrant further attention.
6. Generally those who were not religiously disposed were less enthusiastic about a network that would focus either largely or exclusively on faith issues or interfaith cooperation. Significantly, however, this category of people constituted the survey's second largest group of respondents. Many of them were interested in the broader purposes of the Network, which had to do with social cohesion, mutual respect and community based cooperative activity. The question arose: Can the proposed Network be made relevant to their needs and concerns?
7. Another target group that demands particular attention is the younger age group (34 years and under). They were noticeably under-represented in the questionnaire

as well as in the focus groups and community consultations. This should not necessarily be interpreted as lack of interest on the part of young people, but as an indication that future programs and activities should be tailored to their needs, priorities and lifestyles.

8. There was a general recognition that lack of knowledge and understanding of religious and cultural difference can inhibit cooperation, and may provoke fear, mistrust, suspicion and even outright hostility. On the other hand, greater knowledge and understanding of religious and cultural difference, and especially familiarity with different religious practices and culturally based customs, can enhance mutual respect, empathy and social cohesion.
9. Activities for practical cooperation in the context of interfaith and intercultural relations that elicited strong support were in the following areas:
 - Education and training;
 - Celebration of cultural diversity (food, music, sport and art);
 - Media literacy when it comes to issues of religious and cultural difference, and ways of promoting genuine dialogue;
 - Housing and employment;

Also issues to be explored included Domestic Violence and the Environment.

10. While a Northern Region Interfaith/Intercultural Network received strong support from newly emerging migrant communities and growing faith communities, for example Islam, Buddhism and spiritualism, the responses of the more established religious and migrant communities were not as strong. This suggests that work needs to be done to involve groups and communities that feel comfortable, and are therefore less disposed to reaching out to different cultures and religions. This said, many who belong to the mainstream Christian churches expressed considerable enthusiasm for interfaith and intercultural cooperation.
11. While reconciliation was a prominent issue at the community consultation, the response from the indigenous community was minimal. This should not be read as lack of interest, but as an expression of different ways of communicating.
12. The issue of communication – in particular the obstacles to effective communication – across different religious and cultural backgrounds is crucial. Cultural differences, language constraints, human and financial resources, and transport difficulties were all cited as potential obstacles which any regional network would need to address.
13. The success of the Network would be maximised through: a) strong practical and financial support by the five Councils; b) a process of on-going consultation with the respected leaders of the various communities; c) activities which have wide interest and appeal; d) the active involvement and strengthening of existing local interfaith and intercultural initiatives.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS AND PROPOSALS

The recommendations and proposals that follow have been prepared by the Centre for Dialogue at La Trobe University in consultation with its partner organisations, and in particular with representatives of the partner Local Councils: Banyule City Council, Darebin City Council, Hume City Council, Moreland City Council and Whittlesea City Council.

These recommendations and proposals are based primarily on the views and information gathered during Phase One of the project, especially the community consultations, focus group discussions and the results of the questionnaire. This material is presented in summary form in two sections of the Report:

- ‘Key Findings’ (p. 48).
- ‘Considerations to Keep in Mind’ (p. 52)

In addition, the recommendations and proposals have drawn on the:

- Knowledge and expertise of the Centre for Dialogue and its staff gained over many years of research and community engagement in both Australia and internationally;
- Broad outlines of the agreement with the Australian Research Council (which is the principal funding body for this project);
- Detailed feedback to earlier drafts from the five participating Local Councils, based on their experience and knowledge of this sector.

4.1 ESTABLISHMENT OF THE NETWORK

1. The key recommendation is that an Interfaith-Intercultural Network for the Northern Region of Melbourne (hereafter referred to as the ‘Network’) be established in cooperation and on-going consultation with existing interfaith and intercultural initiatives in the Region and with the support of the Centre for Dialogue and all the partner organisations, in particular the five Local Councils.

2. In the first instance, it is proposed that the Network should include the area covered by the five municipalities listed above. There would be an advantage if the catchment area could be widened to include one or more additional municipalities (in particular Nillumbik and Yarra). The possibility of their inclusion in the Network should be explored.

3. Another key recommendation is that over the next six months the Centre for Dialogue and all project partner organisations:

- Carefully consider how interfaith relations in the northern region addresses the issues raised by the consultations, survey and focus group discussions;

- Help to establish an Interim Network (if at all possible by July 2009), whose task it will be to plan and prepare an implementation plan for the establishment of the Regional Interfaith and Intercultural Network by March 2010;
- Support the Interim Network in its task of formulating and executing its implementation plan, and develop the capacity of its members to undertake this task;
- Facilitate the monitoring, evaluation and reporting on the progress and operation of the Interim Network, in order to lay solid and sustainable foundations for the establishment of the Network.

4. The Network, particularly during its formative stages, should go out of its way to be as inclusive as possible. All religious, community and other organisations in the Northern region as well as residents in the participating municipalities that have an interest in dialogue and cooperation between people of different religious, ethnic and cultural background should be invited to join the Interim Network, participate in its activities and help shape its future development. Individuals and organisations that do not identify with any particular religion, but subscribe to the aims and principles of the Network should be made to feel welcome and encouraged to participate in the activities of the Network.

4.2 CONSIDERATIONS TO KEEP IN MIND

5. A major initiative of this kind takes time and patience. To promote understanding, mutual respect and cooperation between communities that are as religiously, ethnically and culturally diverse as the northern region of Melbourne will require good will, dedication and energy.

6. In establishing the proposed Network it is important to take note of the achievements of the past, to build and strengthen the good initiatives that already exist, and at the same time to think creatively about the future, and, where appropriate, to experiment and innovate.

7. The Network will need to give serious thought to the complex relationship between faith and culture. The issue was raised repeatedly in focus group discussions. Tensions between different groups often relate to cultural as much as to religious issues. In practice the two are closely connected in people's perceptions and attitudes. What is often lacking is knowledge of different cultures as much as of different faiths.

Specifically, it would be useful to keep the following considerations in mind:

- a) People of religious conviction do not live in a vacuum – their faith is expressed and influenced by the cultural environment in which they (and their parents) have been brought up. This includes customs, attitudes to family and other personal and social relationships, food, dress, music, art, education, experience of law and politics. In fact, what we see historically is a complex two-way relationship between religion and culture.
- b) How people of different religious backgrounds relate to each other must therefore also take account of cultural background. There is a great deal to gain by linking religious and cultural diversity. We are dealing with people who have religious beliefs and commitments, but who also have culturally shaped views, attitudes, fears, hopes and aspirations.

- c) Connecting religion and culture is important in the northern region because of the high levels of both religious and cultural diversity. Bringing people of different faith together almost always means bringing together people from different cultures. Faith traditions themselves almost always include people from different cultural backgrounds – Christian, Muslim and Buddhist communities, for example, embrace many different ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

In negotiating religious difference, it is important also to negotiate cultural difference both within and between the faith traditions.

8. Most people – and the overwhelming majority of people who took part in this first phase of the project – support the idea of dialogue. It is certainly the case that all the major faith traditions have highly developed standards of *rightness* in human conduct. This shared ethical view of life provides the basis for dialogue. Properly conducted, such dialogue can involve not only people of religious faith, but also others who may not be religious in the conventional sense of the word, but who have a deep sense of the sacredness of life and a commitment to human values and personal fulfilment.

9. Dialogue is often difficult to practice. There is much that can and should be done to develop greater understanding of the principles, method and practice of dialogue. The literature on dialogue emphasises a number of key rules of thumb, which it is worth repeating in point form. Those who participate in dialogue:

- a) Respect each other;
- b) Celebrate the contribution of different faiths and cultures;
- c) Engage in a common search for truth;
- d) Understand the importance of listening as well as speaking;
- e) Affirm the important ethical (and spiritual) values they share in common;
- f) Accept that there are differences, but see diversity as a source of mutual enrichment;
- g) Recognise that relations between different faiths, cultures and communities have at times given rise to mistrust, suspicion, and hostility;
- h) Understand that empathising with and acknowledging the pain and suffering of others offers possibilities for healing and reconciliation.

10. As the Interim Network develops its implementation plan, it may wish to consider developing a charter or statement of principles that captures something of the spirit of dialogue outlined above. Dialogue, it is worth stressing, is not an opportunity to score points in religious or political argument, or to convert or proselytise. Nor is it a forum for exclusive religious claims. It is an opportunity to:

- a) Foster deeper mutual understanding;
- b) Cooperate in practical ways to promote the common good and serve the needs of the community;
- c) Think creatively and constructively about our common future, keeping in mind the interests of this and future generations.

4.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE NETWORK

11. In keeping with the findings set out on p. 48, the Network's principal objective should be to promote dialogue, that is, greater understanding, mutual respect, and cooperation between different faiths and cultures in the Northern region of Melbourne.

12. The Network's principal contribution should therefore be seen as creating more opportunities for people of different faiths and cultures to interact with, and better understand, each other. This will mean greater appreciation of each other's beliefs, customs, languages, ways of thinking, lifestyles, hopes and aspirations, achievements, fears, concerns and needs.

13. Over time the Network should be able to develop a substantial and multifaceted program of activities that celebrates the richness and wisdom of the different faiths and cultures of the Region.

14. In developing its implementation program, the Interim Network should give careful consideration to two key objectives mentioned by respondents to the questionnaires and participants in the consultations and focus groups. These objectives can be boiled down to two types of role: a supporting role and an initiating role.

15. The Network could play a supporting role by:

- Helping constructive initiatives and activities in the area of interfaith / intercultural relations already taking place in each of the participating municipalities – such support might involve publicising activities, offering advice and resources, and making available contacts both within and outside the region;
- Providing a clearing house for the exchange of information about existing events and activities and resources;
- Creating forums where important issues and new ideas can be discussed.

16. The Network could have an initiating role by:

- Facilitating, in consultation with relevant parties, the development of new locally based initiatives and activities where these do not already exist;
- Developing region wide initiatives in important areas of community need – such initiatives will be particularly appropriate where they:
 - Are likely to be beyond the organisational capacity and resources of local networks or organisations (e.g. a major educational or training program);
 - Likely to have a high level of public visibility (e.g. a major public meeting or media campaign);
 - Can be staged in several locations (e.g. a touring performance or exhibition).

17. Of these region-wide activities, particular attention should be given to developing an education and leadership training program with a view to:

- a) Deepening knowledge and understanding of different faiths and cultures;
- b) Developing dialogue and conflict resolution skills;
- c) Enhancing organisational, media, public speaking, writing and other competencies.

18. In the longer term, region-wide initiatives might include:

- a) Undertaking feasibility studies for appropriate responses to important areas of need;
- b) Developing a region-wide advocacy role in support of ideas, proposals and submissions to local, state and federal government bodies;
- c) Responding to difficult situations that may arise from time to time by developing a region-wide public profile that engages with local, religious, ethnic and mainstream print and electronic media – the key consideration here is to develop more effective ways of projecting the philosophy and practice of dialogue and cooperation particularly in times of tension.

4.4 ACTIVITIES OF THE NETWORK

19. In line with the objectives outlined above, the Network should over time organise projects and activities that celebrate the richness and wisdom of different faiths and cultures.

20. One of the Interim Network's first steps should be to consult widely and investigate the current types and levels of interaction between different faiths and cultures across the Northern region. A periodically updated inventory might be created which details what is actually happening in the following areas:

- a) Familiarisation visits to different places of worship and meditation;
- b) Inter-religious prayer services and festivals;
- c) Intercultural functions, involving the performing and visual arts, reading and discussion groups, and sporting events;
- d) Ways of equipping and using public places (e.g. libraries, halls, parks and gardens) that give due regard to religious and cultural diversity.

21. The Network should encourage and assist existing groups to initiate or improve their own programs. In performing a supporting role, the Network would bring to the discussion creative ways of linking faith and culture. Where no organisations currently exist, which run such activities, thought should be given to assisting groups to get established.

22. Phase One of this project was not particularly successful in engaging with young people. In developing its implementation plan, the Interim Network might consider ways of interacting with young people, and the possibility of supporting projects or activities of particular interest to them.

23. The Network should over time mount a carefully prepared region-wide program of community education and training, involving practical workshops, seminars, forums, and public lectures. Such a program should be prepared in close consultation with relevant stakeholders, including existing interfaith and intercultural organisations within the Region.

In mounting such a program, consideration should be given to developing an interactive website, and producing resource materials, including audio-visual materials, for use by religious, ethnic and community groups, as well as by interfaith and intercultural organisations.

The review of international interfaith initiatives clearly suggests the value of mounting 'cultural literacy' and dialogue and conflict resolution skills.

24. Over the longer term, the Network would probably find it helpful to perform a clearing house and coordinating role. Possibilities might include:

- a) Establishing a regional directory of interfaith and intercultural events and resources which it will actively disseminate;
- b) Rotating the location of Network meetings to different parts of the Region as a way not only of gaining a higher profile, but with a view to becoming more familiar with the needs and capacities of different communities within the Region;
- c) Inviting interested member organisations to make submissions and proposals for consideration at region-wide meetings, forums and consultations;
- d) Developing an interactive website.

25. One of the most enthusiastic responses to emerge both from the survey and the focus groups was support for developing one or more practical projects in key areas of community need. In selecting and developing such projects the Network will need to consult widely with relevant stakeholders in the Northern region. Based on the consultations that have already taken place and answers to the questionnaire, possible priority areas of community worth considering include:

- a) Reducing family violence – this would involve working with and extending already existing projects and initiatives in the Region;
- b) Fostering greater environmental consciousness and practice;
 - This would include working with organisations already active in the region, as well as with new initiatives (e.g. Greenfaith Australia) that are attempting to bring an interfaith perspective to environmental issues, in particular climate change;
 - The particular contribution the Network might make to develop a region-wide program that facilitates the ‘greening’ of religious institutions and their facilities (including places of worship and schools) and the incorporation of the perspectives of faith and culture in the development of environmental policies and practices of local communities;
- c) Promoting ‘cultural literacy’ programs in both government and religious schools;
- d) Taking into account intercultural and interfaith sensitivities in service delivery programs;
- e) Addressing issues of housing and employment, especially as they affect communities in need;
- e) Supporting newly arrived communities and refugees, keeping in mind their specific cultural and faith traditions and needs.

4.5 RESOURCING THE NETWORK

26. In the initial stages the growth of the Network is likely to depend on the support that can be provided by the Centre for Dialogue and the partner organisations in the project, especially the Local Councils. However, from the outset, the Network will need to consider additional sources of funding and support. One of the main tasks of the Interim Network will be to set in train the preparation of a business plan for the long-term financial viability of the Network.

27. Particularly important will be the assistance that can be provided by the Diversity Officers and administrative staff of the various Local Councils. Each Council is invited to indicate the level of support that will be available, especially in the first 18 months (July 2009-December 2010).

28. The support that Councils can provide can be considered under three main headings:

- *Cash support:* to assist with various activities and projects over the first 18 months, each of the five Councils has indicated that it is prepared to make a contribution of \$5,000 (i.e. a total of \$25,000). However, no assumption should be made that this level of funding will continue beyond this initial period;
- *Staff support:* each of the Councils should indicate what level of staff time will be made available, especially in the first 18 months to assist with the establishment of the Network – this will greatly assist both short and medium term planning;
- *Administrative support:* each of the Councils should indicate what facilities might be available at different times to the Network, especially in its first 18 months (e.g. office space, use of phone, access to computer, photocopying and printing facilities, access to municipal websites, postage, use of venues and light catering).

29. All the other partner organisations should carefully consider what additional support they can make available under the three above headings. They should also give careful consideration to other practical forms of assistance, in particular:

- Strong encouragement to their respective constituencies to be actively involved in the establishment of the Network, its projects and activities;
- Assistance in identifying and securing additional sources of funding;
- Contribution of staff time and expertise to the development of particular projects, including educational and training program;
- Help with promotion of Network activities, including access to websites, magazines and media outlets.

30. The Network, if it is to succeed, will need to gain the support and commitment of a number of people who will offer their time, skills and organisational support on a voluntary basis. This will apply to membership of the Network and participation in working groups as well as in specific projects and activities. This human resource should be considered the single most important asset of the Network, and vital to its long-term viability.

31. Without in any way detracting from the crucial role of voluntary work, the Network, if it is to achieve its full potential, may need at some point to be supported by at least a part-time Project Officer and Coordinator – over time this could become a full-time position. For this purpose various sources of funding will need to be explored.

Such a position would help to:

- a) Service the organisation of the Network and its various working groups;
- b) Provide the necessary administrative support for particular functions and projects;
- c) Be an on-going point of contact between the Network and other organisations, including Local Councils;
- d) Assist with the preparation and circulation of minutes, agendas and other relevant documents;

- e) Assist in maintaining accurate records of activities and events.
32. In planning for the financial viability of the Network, the Interim Network (and its successor body) should consider a number of possible sources of income:
- Membership fees (individuals and organisations);
 - Contributions by interested local businesses;
 - Grant schemes, including those operated by VicHealth, Victorian Multicultural Commission, DIAC Diverse Australia Program;
 - Fees for services provided by the Network.
33. The La Trobe University Centre for Dialogue will remain an active participant in the project until December 2010. It is prepared to be actively involved in facilitating the establishment of the Interim Network. The Centre is committed to closely monitoring progress in the development of the Network, to providing periodic evaluation and reports, and to helping to mount appropriate educational and training services.
- Beyond 2010, the Centre will remain a keenly interested observer, prepared to assist and advise on request within the limits of its resources and expertise.

4.6 STRUCTURE OF THE NETWORK

34. The structure of the Network will evolve over time. Those who become engaged in the Interim Network will have the task of shaping that structure. The proposals that follow relate only to the immediate period ahead (the first six full months of operation July 2009 – March 2010). These proposals are offered simply as a way of stimulating discussion. The key objectives of any organisational framework should be to maximise: inclusiveness, participation, transparency, accountability and efficient use of resources.
35. The Interim Network will need to consider how interested people (individuals and organisations) will be able to join or become members of the Network. Basic rules of membership will need to be developed.
36. Given the origins of the project, it would seem advisable that the Network should work in close partnership with the Local Councils in the region. To this end:
- a) Each Council should receive periodic reports on the activities of the Network and consider practical ways of supporting the Network;
 - b) The Multicultural or Diversity Officer of each of the Councils should attend important Network meetings.
37. As a first step, it is proposed that the Centre for Dialogue, in close consultation with all project partners and all relevant local stakeholders, be asked to facilitate the formation of a 20-member Council or Committee of the Interim Network, which will operate from July to December 2009. It is proposed that four members be drawn from each of the five municipalities. The aim would be to achieve the widest possible representation in terms of religion, ethnicity, gender, age group, skills and expertise.
38. The consultation process that will follow the release of this Report will be important in identifying people who have an interest in being part of the Network, and in playing a key role by serving on the Interim Council or Committee.
39. The primary task of the Interim Council will be to consult widely and to develop and execute an implementation plan for the establishment of the Network.

40. The Interim Council will need to give serious attention to:

- a) How organisations and individuals will be able to join the Network (what will be the criteria and rules of membership?);
- b) What office-bearer positions, if any, will need to be established if the Network is to operate transparently and efficiently;
- c) What consultations, forums and decision-making meetings will be most appropriate for the initial period (July 2009 – March 2010) and beyond;
- d) What should be the main elements of an educational and training program (to be mounted with the assistance of the Centre for Dialogue);
- e) The resource needs of the Network;
- f) On-going processes of consultation;
- g) Identifying key priorities of the Network's program over the first 18 months.

41. A possible organisational model for both the Interim Network and what is to follow is provided under Appendix 1. This should not be treated as anything more than a series of suggestions which might help to guide the discussion.

**APPENDIX 1: A POSSIBLE MODEL FOR ORGANISING THE NETWORK
IN ITS FIRST 18 MONTHS**

1. At its first meeting, the Interim Council might wish to discuss the value of forming an Executive Committee which might be responsible for the day to day implementation of Council decisions. The Executive could consist of the three office bearers and two additional members of Council.
2. If an Executive Committee is formed, it should report fully to the Interim Council, and be accountable to it in all matters. The Interim Council should maintain oversight over the financial affairs of the Network, and be responsible for setting major policy directions.
3. The Interim Council should determine its own agenda and the frequency of its meetings, but aim to meet at least monthly.
4. In considering the future development of the Network, the Interim Council might consider the following suggestions:
 - a) Four categories of membership:
 - Existing interfaith and intercultural organisations;
 - Large organisations (50 or more members);
 - Small organisations (less than 50 members);
 - Individual members.

Thought will need to be given as to what entitlements each type of membership should attract.
 - b) Consideration should be given to the introduction of membership fees. One possible model might be: large organisations: \$50; small organisations: \$20; individuals: \$10 (\$5 concession);
5. To become members of the Network, organisations and individuals would subscribe to the principles and objectives of the Network. Where any member of the Network (individual or organisation) is thought to act in ways that are contrary to the Network's principles or objectives, the Council of the Network should have the power to consider the case.

Where it judges the breach to be serious, the Council could bring this to the attention of the offending member and request that the Network's principles and objectives be respected. Wherever possible, difficult situations should be resolved through dialogue.
6. When drafting proposals for the future structure of the Network, the Interim Council might keep in mind the following considerations:
 - a) Arrangements should be made for a new Council to come into being as of March 2010 – one option would be for members of the new Council to be elected at a General Meeting to be held in early 2010;
 - b) Election to Council could be for a period of two years – to allow greater inclusion, renewal and new ideas – membership of the council could be limited to two consecutive terms;

- c) The election of office bearers could take place at the General Meeting. Alternatively, office bearers could be elected at the first meeting of the New Council from among its own members;
 - d) Future Annual General Meetings should:
 - Receive an annual report from the Council (including a financial report) on all activities in the preceding year;
 - Play a role (whether by election or other means) in shaping the membership of the new Council;
 - Offer advice to the incoming Council about priorities and initiatives for the coming year.
7. Annual General Meetings could normally coincide with a major celebration, forum or other suitable activity open to residents of the Northern region and to the wider public.
8. Consideration should be given to the election of office-bearers. Three office-bearers might be worth considering:
- a) A President, Chairperson or Convener, who would:
 - Serve as the spokesperson of the Network;
 - Normally chair meetings of the Council and General Meetings;
 - Represent the Network at special events and functions;
 - Keep in contact with faith leaders and religious and ethnic organisations in the Region.
 - b) A Secretary who would:
 - Act as administrative secretary of the Council;
 - Maintain regular communication with the sponsoring City Councils;
 - Be responsible for the taking of minutes at Meetings of Council and other formal meetings of the Network;
 - Oversee the maintenance of an up-to-date contact list for the Network;
 - Receive and deal with correspondence.
 - c) A Treasurer who would:
 - Keep proper books of accounts for all income and expenditure;
 - Open any bank accounts as appropriate for the running of the financial affairs of the Network;
 - Regularly report on the financial position of the Network at council meetings and at the Annual General Meeting;
 - Be responsible for the acquittal of all grants received.
9. The Interim Council might wish to investigate the possibility of 'incorporation', but any decision would first need to weigh up the benefits and disadvantages of incorporation.

APPENDIX 2: **TIMELINE FOR PHASE ONE**

15 April 2008	Community Consultation
22 June	Release of Northern Interfaith/Intercultural Network Project Questionnaire
08 July	City of Darebin Focus Group One
10 July	City of Darebin Focus Group Two
24 July	City of Whittlesea Focus Group One
July 29	City of Hume Focus Group One
1 August	City of Banyule Focus Group One
4 August	City of Whittlesea Focus Group Two
9 September	City of Moreland Focus Group One
16 September	Service Provider Focus Group
24 September	City of Hume Focus Group Two

APPENDIX 3: **COUNCIL OF EUROPE'S LOCAL
INTERFAITH GUIDELINES**

The 12 Guidelines for interfaith dialogue at local level

Issued by Council of Europe Congress of Local and Regional Authorities (2006)

Knowledge and understanding of the local religious situation (1 - 2 - 3)

- 1) Local authorities are invited to note the growing role that religion is now playing in **the construction of individual and collective identities**, and its impact on socialisation and the formation of social representations. . .
- 2) These authorities must have a good **knowledge** of the relative size of local religious groups and how they are organised. They must be seen to be aware that through their teaching and training and the services they offer, the activities of local religious organisations are of real benefit to the public...
- 3) Religious organisations should be considered not as homogeneous entities but as organisations that are themselves the subject of sometimes **conflicting views**. Local authorities' decision as to which interlocutors will be open to dialogue while at the same in a position to influence their own community is therefore critical, for both the present and future.

Promoting understanding between participants in the dialogue (4 - 5)

- 4) Local authorities must contribute to the process of **discovering other cultures**, by observing cultural similarities **and** differences, understanding those whose outlook is different and at variance with local custom and practice and disseminating and sharing this information. **They can do so by encouraging the teaching of the full range of religious knowledge, with a view to developing cultural knowledge and not religious practices...**
- 5) Local authorities must identify **opportune moments** for developing mutual knowledge and person to person contacts and for reducing feelings of mistrust, and even fear. The aim should be a steady progression from ignorance to knowledge, from knowledge to understanding and from understanding to confidence. . .

Establishing partnership (6 - 7 - 8 - 9 - 10 - 11)

- 6) Local authorities are in the **front line** and their active presence on the ground, their familiarity with all those concerned and their capacity for innovation gives them a leading and fully **legitimate** role in relation to religious activities. Their discussions and activities must be guided by a concern for openness, innovation and experimentation.
- 7) Local authorities' role in promoting dialogue and establishing partnerships will be more effective and valid in the long term if certain **conditions are met from the outset**: respect for legality; promotion of equality between women and men; religious neutrality and non-discrimination; transparency in all their activities.
- 8) Local authorities should not become directly involved in the conduct of interfaith dialogue. . . Local authorities' role is essentially that of facilitators, mediators or, if necessary, regulators, on the basis of clearly defined and negotiated objectives.

- 9) By emphasising the notions of recognition and confidence, local authorities can ensure that religions are seen not as a problem but as a **resource**, through the adoption of a positive attitude to the democratic management of pluralism. . .
- 10) Activities such as building or managing places of worship should be designed to promote balance and harmony and should encourage greater openness and not ghettoisation. This means that an **interfaith approach** must gradually take precedence over a multifaith one. . .
- 11) Local authorities' concern with religious diversity and interfaith dialogue needs to be reflected in concrete terms in local social, sports, education, town planning and cultural policies and in their relations with local associations. . .

Evaluation (12)

- 12) In consultation with local religious groups, local authorities should determine in advance, what **criteria and indicators** they should use to assess the effectiveness of their intercultural and interfaith dialogue. These might include the development of their own expertise and the establishment of networks for exchanges between faiths or of training and information centres. They should also enter into contact with representatives of other local authorities to compare and contrast their different arrangements. . .

APPENDIX 4: **INTERFAITH OTTAWA –
MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**

Interfaith Ottawa

Memorandum of Understanding

Concerning the Partnership between the City of Ottawa and the Ottawa Multifaith Community

Declared for the 21st day of March, 2003, the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

We, the Corporation of the City of Ottawa and the practising faith community in the City of Ottawa, whose primary objective is to promote active dialogue and greater understanding amongst the various communities in the Nation's Capital, hereby enter into a partnership, known as Interfaith Ottawa, with the following objectives:

- To promote harmony, respect and acceptance among all people in Ottawa;
- To recognize, articulate and enhance the existing good in the community;
- To provide a unified voice against acts of intolerance or hatred; and
- To work toward the abolition of prejudice.

Interfaith Ottawa shall meet regularly to share issues of concern and to monitor progress; and,

- To develop means to achieve its objectives;
- To develop an integrated plan to promote unity of action amongst faith communities for the strengthening of the City;
- To develop outreach initiatives; and
- To develop links with youth through school systems to enhance the awareness and appreciation of different religious and cultures practises.

A Steering Committee comprising of members nominated by Interfaith Ottawa will meet as required. The City will provide assistance to ensure attainment of the stated objectives.

APPENDIX 5: **NEW YORK'S INTERFAITH COOPERATION**

Interfaith Cooperation at Work in New York State

Interfaith Grand River (IGR), established after September 11, operates in Waterloo region (Finger Lakes area of New York State) and the surrounding area.

The list below is a sample of its activities in the past years. A more in-depth history is currently being written.

IGR has:

- provided the members with a setting in which they could meet with members of other spiritual and religious traditions in order to enhance mutual understanding,
- met with representatives of the mainstream media in order to learn how to better relay concerns involving spiritual issues,
- provided the members of IGR with exposure to media-experts in order to better understand media issues,
- provided religious and spiritual background material to professional journalists,
- responded publicly to expressions of religious hatred in the mainstream media,
- facilitated interfaith visitation between diverse spiritual and faith communities,
- provided an interfaith panel to present a spiritual perspective at a national conference on violence in the school-system,
- met with representatives of Grand River Hospital to discuss chaplaincy issues,
- provided input to Grand River Hospital regarding the design of the spiritual space being planned as part of the new expansion of the downtown facilities,
- provided support for the Interfaith Conferences held annually at the University of Waterloo,
- organised a September 11th. Peace Walk from downtown Waterloo to Kitchener in order to publicize the need for peace and non-violence,
- provided an interfaith panel for a meeting, hosted by the Spiritual Heritage Education Network, on the issue of religious intolerance,
- provided participants for the interfaith dialogue initiative of the Kitchener-Waterloo Council of Churches,
- provided members to the Interfaith Support Committee of the Aids Committee of Cambridge, Kitchener, Waterloo and Area (ACCKWA).

APPENDIX 6: **FINDINGS OF COMMUNITY CONSULTATION**

QUESTION ONE: WHAT ARE THE INTERFAITH/INTERCULTURAL ACTIVITIES IN WHICH YOU ARE INVOLVED IN YOUR COMMUNITY? WHAT IS THE LEVEL OF INTERACTION BETWEEN FAITHS IN YOUR MUNICIPALITY?

- Local Interfaith Networks that are already in place: Darebin, Whittlesea, and Moreland – other networks exist in Manningham, Casey and Greater Dandenong.
- Noticeable shift from inter-church to interfaith, building on inter-church networks that were already in place.
- Local and school-based intercultural weeks.
- Professional intercultural dinners.
- Many participants mentioned that, in a lot of cases, the focus of activities was not on culture or faith. Interfaith/intercultural cooperation would often come together around a certain activity. All groups pointed to music, food and sport as activities that encouraged interfaith/intercultural cooperation.
- Refugee Health Centres were seen as a great example of interfaith/intercultural cooperation.
- School programs that discuss different faiths and beliefs were also highlighted as primary examples of encouraging cooperation.
- Community groups such as the Association for Disabilities in Ethnic Communities, Australian Intercultural Society, Multicultural Youth Forum, Multicultural Advisory Committee, and Multicultural Women’s Council.
- Informal groups such as women’s groups, classes (e.g. – cooking classes, reading groups) and prayer groups were seen as a vehicle for interfaith/intercultural understanding.
- Youth activities and education programs aimed at young people were highlighted as particularly important.

QUESTION TWO: IN YOUR OPINION, WHAT ATTRIBUTES MAKE THESE ACTIVITIES SUCCESSFUL OR UNSUCCESSFUL?

SUCCESSFUL

- Natural surroundings were seen as the most important attribute – events that focused on social activities which highlighted what people had in common were seen as being highly successful. The importance of food, music and sport was again highlighted here.
- Common interests and concerns.
- Events that enabled people to relate on a cultural level first before a faith level were generally successful.
- Consensus amongst leadership.
- Acceptance, open-mindedness and sensitivity play a role on making these events successful.
- Events that offered benefits (food, education, entertainment).
- Events that brought people inside different places of worship.
- Events that celebrated the positive aspects of cultural diversity.

UNSUCCESSFUL

- Distrust between faiths and cultures.
- Lack of respect for the 'other'.
- Lack of education at a leadership level.
- Language and dialect constraints.
- Rifts in communities caused by international conflicts and the continuation of conflict in Australia.
- Historical rivalries passed through generations – inherited cultural biases.
- Lack of promotion and resources.
- Battling bureaucracy.
- Lack of sensitivity on behalf of organisers – good intentions did not always translate well due to a lack of knowledge.
- Media representation of events, cultures and faiths.
- Lack of understanding of cultural differences within faith communities.
- Government funding seems to divide community rather than promote harmony – encourages competition.
- Dominance of one particular group leaving the voice of smaller groups out.

QUESTION THREE: IN YOUR OPINION, WHAT ARE THE INTERFAITH/INTERCULTURAL NEEDS OF YOUR COMMUNITY? WHAT ARE THE IMPORTANT NEEDS WITHIN THE WIDER COMMUNITY THAT INTERFAITH/INTERCULTURAL COOPERATION CAN ASSIST?

- Education about oneself and the 'other'.
- Breaking down of the 'ghetto' mentality in regard to refugees and migrants.
- Breaking down the 'anti-faith' mentality within the wider community.
- Community empowerment.
- More opportunities to learn about different faiths – more cross-cultural understanding, reducing misunderstandings.
- More opportunity for cooperation between faith communities and non-faith communities such as neighbourhood safety.
- Social justice – particularly for young people and fighting poverty.
- Support for migrants and refugees in adjusting to Australian culture.
- Facilitating communication and dialogue for all cultural and minority groups.
- Need to aid in the issue of reconciliation.
- Emergency support (those from the Moreland Interfaith Network spoke of the benefit of having the network established before the terrorist attack on September 11).
- Welfare Services particularly in relation to homelessness, drug and alcohol issues, domestic violence issues.
- Greater communication between Councils.
- Education about what services are available within the community, especially concerning migrants and refugees.
- Reducing isolation – bring back those who are disengaged from the community.
- The provision of a way for those in the community who want to participate in interfaith activities to be able to contact others with similar interest.
- The need to develop a new community and cultural consciousness.
- Dissolving inter-cultural conflicts that have been inherited from the past or from overseas.
- Empowering faith and cultural communities to be independent.
- More visibility and positive representation.
- Coming together over issues that affect everyone such as the environment.

QUESTION FOUR: IS THERE A NEED FOR A REGIONAL INTERFAITH NETWORK? IF AN INTERFAITH/INTERCULTURAL NETWORK WAS ESTABLISHED IN THE NORTH OF MELBOURNE, WHAT ARE THREE THINGS THAT YOU WOULD LIKE THIS NETWORK TO BE ABLE TO DO?

- Most groups felt that there was a need for a regional interfaith network and were enthusiastic about the idea. One group showed a bit of scepticism arguing that there is a need for a regional network only if it can be useful for purposes that local networks can't. Discussion was also raised about the differences in the roles and responsibilities between local networks and a regional network.
- Sense of shared experiences and issues.
- The development of common understanding and aspirational thinking.
- Translation issues.
- The opportunity for different municipalities to learn from each other.
- Needs to be a focus on intercultural first, which in turn will lead to interfaith dialogue.
- Building of relationships and partnerships between religious and cultural groups.
- Policy development: in particular issues of domestic violence, drug and alcohol issues, family planning issues, housing, neighbourhood safety, the environment.
- The development of research communities.
- An advocacy and advice service.
- Network needs to be naturally evolving.
- Reflection on common values.
- Networking with educational institutions.
- Wider network of expertise and resources.
- A collective political lobby and stronger political voice.
- Needs to be sensitive to local differences.
- Needs to remain a grassroots organisation, with an emphasis on bottom-up rather than top-down.
- Staff training.
- An opportunity to represent minority voices and new arrival voices.
- Resource/Welcome Centre to be run out of all councils – to work with migrants and refugees as well as those who are new to the area.
- Migrant Centres that not only educate about Australian culture but also teach about the different faiths and cultures in the local area.

QUESTION FIVE: WHAT PROBLEMS EXIST THAT WOULD HINDER THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SUCH A NETWORK? WHAT ISSUES DO YOU THINK SHOULD BE A FEATURE OF THE UPCOMING QUESTIONNAIRE AND FOCUS GROUPS?

- Divisions within faith and cultural communities as well as divisions within the wider community.
- Lack of commitment and sincerity from faith leadership.
- Lack of knowledge between faiths and communities.
- Rivalry inside and between faith and cultural communities.
- Administration and organisational difficulties.
- Dissolving feelings of mistrust and fear of conversion.
- Resource issues: time, energy, and money. How much time, energy and money is involved and where will it come from? How do you keep people committed to the project?
- Lack of accountability.
- Letting go of parochial concerns.

- Issues of representation.
- Battling factions that may develop.
- Bureaucracy/red tape.
- Language and dialect constraints.
- Leadership concerns: Who would speak on behalf of the network?
- Issues of accountability – how will it not lose context?
- Avoiding the dominance of particular groups.
- How do you build ownership of the network throughout the wider community?
- How do you incorporate the isolated and disengaged in the community?
- Keeping all groups involved and active in the project – keeping a grassroots feel to the project.
- Ease/difficulty of membership.
- Council involvement vitally important – attempts at communication and cooperation made by the councils are taken with more weight than by just community leaders alone.

Ideas for the Questionnaire and Focus Groups

- How can the indigenous community be brought into an interfaith/intercultural network?
- How would you like to get to know your neighbours?
- The need for a question that invites people to be part of the ongoing discussion of interfaith/intercultural activity.
- The need to distinguish between secular faith communities and traditional faith communities.
- What is your attitude regarding faith? What is your level of knowledge regarding..... faith?
- What are your experiences of interfaith/intercultural harmony? What are your experiences of interfaith/intercultural disharmony?
- Who do you think should represent your community in a regional interfaith/intercultural network?
- How would you like to learn about other faiths? e.g. would you be prepared to go on a bus-tour of different places of worship?
- Would you like to see the development of more open spaces for interfaith/intercultural education, communication and cooperation?

OTHER COMMENTS AND THEMES

- The importance of involving the indigenous community was highlighted by every group.
- The danger of confusing interfaith and intercultural. Many participants highlighted that a focus on intercultural first as a lead-in to interfaith would be a good way to go. This method would highlight the fact that there are different cultures within faiths and that, for many people, this can be more important. Perhaps this is an issue to examine further in the questionnaire.
- Many stressed the fact that there is not just disharmony between faiths but disharmony within faiths. Several groups commented that an interfaith network may help to mediate some of these problems, it would need to be recognised that it may not be possible to have one representative from each faith.
- The importance of schools, music and sport in providing a natural environment for interfaith/intercultural dialogue.

APPENDIX 7: **COMPARATIVE QUANTITATIVE DATA
FROM QUESTIONNAIRE**

Tables

1.1

**Q1a Do you belong to a faith or
religious organisation?**

Yes	251	55.5%
No	201	44.5%
Total	452	100.0%

1.2

**Q1b Are you actively involved in
the organisation?**

Yes	167	61.4%
No	105	38.6%
Total	272	100.0%

1.3

**Q3 Are you involved in any
interfaith or multicultural activity?**

Yes	107	39.2%
No	166	60.8%
Total	273	100.0%

1.4

**Q4 Do you belong to any other
community organisation?**

Yes	108	40.1%
No	161	59.9%
Total	269	100.0%

1.5

Respondents who belong to religious, ethnic and other community organisations

				Do you belong to any other community organisation?					
				Yes		No		Total	
Do you belong to a faith or religious organisation?	Yes	Do you belong to an ethnic community organisation?	Yes	37	8.2%	27	6.0%	64	14.6%
			No	66	14.6%	113	24.9%	179	40.2%
	No	Do you belong to an ethnic community organisation?	Yes	2	.4%	2	.4%	4	1.3%
			No	1	.2%	18	4.0%	19	4.2%
Total		Do you belong to an ethnic community organisation?	Yes	39	8.6%	29	6.4%	68	15.9%
			No	67	14.8%	131	28.9%	198	44.4%

1.6

Respondents who belong to a faith or religious organisation

Age	under 18 years	1	0%
	18-24 years	5	2%
	25-34 years	21	9%
	35-44 years	36	15%
	45-54 years	74	30%
	55-64 years	55	22%
	65 years or more	55	22%
	Total	247	100%
Gender	Female	139	56.7%
	Male	106	43.3%
	Total	245	100.0%
Municipality	Banyule	59	24.6%
	Moreland	54	22.5%
	Whittlesea	41	17.1%
	Darebin	44	18.3%
	Hume	42	17.5%
	Total	240	100.0%

2.1

Q5 How often do you meet or talk with people of different religious or cultural backgrounds?

Every day	190	42.6%
Once or twice a week	128	28.7%
Once or twice a month	45	10.1%
Rarely	61	13.7%
Never	22	4.9%
Total	446	100.0%

2.2

Q6 How well informed are you about relations between different faiths and cultures?

Locally	Very well	67	15.1%
	Quite well	202	45.5%
	Not well	139	31.3%
	Not at all	36	8.1%
Total	444	100.0%	

2.3

Q6 How well informed are you about relations between different faiths and cultures?

Nationally	Very well	41	9.8%
	Quite well	198	47.1%
	Not well	146	34.8%
	Not at all	35	8.3%
Total	420	100.0%	

2.4

Q6 How well informed are you about relations between different faiths and cultures?

Internationally	Very well	39	9.4%
	Quite well	174	41.9%
	Not well	162	39.0%
	Not at all	40	9.6%
Total	415	100.0%	

2.5

How well informed do you think you are about relations between different faiths and cultures locally?

		Banyule		Moreland		Whittlesea		Darebin		Hume		Total	
25-34 years	Very well	1	14%	2	29%	0	0%	3	43%	1	14%	7	100%
	Quite well	5	17%	7	23%	5	17%	9	30%	2	7%	28	100%
35-44 years	Very well	2	17%	1	8%	3	25%	4	33%	2	17%	12	100%
	Quite well	5	12%	11	28%	5	12%	11	28%	6	15%	38	100%
45-54 years	Very well	3	16%	5	26%	5	26%	3	16%	3	16%	19	100%
	Quite well	13	27%	9	19%	12	25%	6	12%	6	12%	46	100%
55-64 years	Very well	0	0%	1	17%	3	50%	1	17%	1	17%	6	100%
	Quite well	12	29%	12	29%	8	19%	4	10%	5	12%	41	100%
65 years or more	Very well	3	25%	5	42%	0	0%	4	33%	0	0%	12	100%
	Quite well	12	36%	6	18%	4	12%	9	27%	2	6%	33	100%
Total	Very well	9	16%	14	28%	11	19%	15	26%	7	12%	56	100%
	Quite well	47	24%	45	23%	34	18%	39	21%	21	11%	186	100%

2.6

How well informed do you think you are about relations between different faiths and cultures nationally?

		Banyule		Moreland		Whittlesea		Darebin		Hume		Total	
25-34 years	Very well	1	20%	1	20%	0	0%	2	40%	1	20%	5	100%
	Quite well	6	19%	9	29%	3	10%	10	32%	2	6%	30	100%
35-44 years	Very well	1	9%	2	18%	3	27%	3	27%	2	18%	11	100%
	Quite well	2	6%	10	32%	4	13%	10	32%	4	13%	30	100%
45-54 years	Very well	3	30%	2	20%	2	20%	1	10%	2	20%	10	100%
	Quite well	15	29%	13	25%	10	20%	7	14%	5	10%	50	100%
55-64 years	Very well	0	0%	2	50%	0	0%	0	0%	2	50%	4	100%
	Quite well	12	31%	8	21%	8	21%	6	15%	4	10%	38	100%
65 years or more	Very well	3	38%	3	38%	0	0%	2	25%	0	0%	8	100%
	Quite well	13	45%	8	28%	3	10%	4	14%	1	3%	29	100%
Total	Very well	8	21%	10	28%	5	13%	8	21%	7	18%	38	100%
	Quite well	48	26%	48	27%	28	15%	37	21%	16	9%	177	100%

2.7

How well informed do you think you are about relations between different faiths and cultures internationally?

		Banyule		Moreland		Whittlesea		Darebin		Hume		Total	
25-34 years	Very well	1	14%	2	29%	0	0%	3	43%	1	14%	7	100%
	Quite well	5	19%	8	30%	3	11%	8	30%	2	7%	26	100%
35-44 years	Very well	0	0%	3	33%	2	22%	2	22%	2	22%	9	100%
	Quite well	2	7%	8	30%	4	15%	9	33%	4	15%	27	100%
45-54 years	Very well	3	27%	2	18%	2	18%	1	9%	3	27%	11	100%
	Quite well	11	28%	9	22%	6	15%	8	20%	5	12%	39	100%
55-64 years	Very well	0	0%	2	67%	0	0%	0	0%	1	33%	3	100%
	Quite well	12	31%	9	23%	7	18%	5	13%	5	13%	38	100%
65 years or more	Very well	3	43%	2	29%	0	0%	2	29%	0	0%	7	100%
	Quite well	10	43%	6	26%	1	4%	5	22%	1	4%	23	100%
Total	Very well	7	19%	11	30%	4	11%	8	22%	7	19%	37	100%
	Quite well	40	25%	40	26%	21	13%	35	23%	17	11%	153	100%

2.8

Q7 Which of the following words best describe relations between people of differing ethnic or religious backgrounds in your neighbourhood?

Tolerance	220	48.6%
Friendship	178	39.3%
Cooperation	175	38.6%
Harmony	162	35.8%
Suspicion	72	15.9%
Mistrust	48	10.6%
Tension	44	9.7%
Conflict	24	5.3%
Other	7	1.5%

2.9

Q8 Is there religious or racial prejudice in your neighbourhood?

Yes	105	23.6%
No	147	33.1%
Don't know	192	43.2%
Total	444	100.0%

2.10

Is there racial prejudice in your neighbourhood?

		Banyule		Moreland		Whittlesea		Darebin		Hume		Total	
25-34 years	Yes	0	0%	4	33%	1	8%	7	58%	0	0%	12	100%
	No	2	14%	4	29%	2	14%	3	21%	3	21%	14	100%
35-44 years	Yes	2	11%	9	47%	0	0%	5	26%	3	16%	19	100%
	No	3	14%	4	18%	8	36%	4	18%	3	14%	22	100%
45-54 years	Yes	3	12%	7	29%	8	33%	2	8%	4	17%	24	100%
	No	14	38%	6	16%	5	14%	6	16%	6	16%	37	100%
55-64 years	Yes	2	10%	7	33%	4	19%	2	10%	6	29%	21	100%
	No	8	27%	6	20%	9	30%	4	13%	3	10%	30	100%
65 years+	Yes	8	50%	4	25%	1	6%	2	12%	1	6%	16	100%
	No	13	37%	8	23%	1	3%	11	31%	2	6%	35	100%
Total	Yes	15	16%	31	34%	14	15%	18	20%	14	15%	92	100%
	No	40	29%	28	20%	25	18%	28	20%	17	12%	138	100%

2.11

Have you personally experienced religious or racial prejudice?

		Banyule		Moreland		Whittlesea		Darebin		Hume		Total	
25-34 years	Yes	3	13%	7	30%	3	13%	9	39%	1	4%	23	100%
	No	4	15%	8	30%	3	11%	8	30%	4	15%	27	100%
35-44 years	Yes	4	14%	6	21%	5	18%	8	29%	5	18%	28	100%
	No	7	16%	10	23%	6	14%	13	30%	8	18%	44	100%
45-54 years	Yes	8	23%	8	23%	8	23%	5	14%	6	17%	35	100%
	No	30	40%	14	19%	13	17%	9	12%	9	12%	75	100%
55-64 years	Yes	3	14%	4	19%	4	19%	3	14%	7	33%	21	100%

	No	18	32%	12	21%	11	19%	8	14%	8	14%	57	100%
65 years+	Yes	5	31%	3	19%	1	6%	6	38%	1	6%	16	100%
	No	27	39%	20	29%	3	4%	13	19%	7	10%	70	100%
Total	Yes	23	19%	28	23%	21	17%	31	25%	20	16%	123	100%
	No	86	32%	64	23%	36	13%	51	19%	36	13%	273	100%

3.1

Q10 Can something be done to improve relations between people of different ethnic or religious backgrounds in your neighbourhood?

Yes	281	63.7%
No	31	7.0%
Don't know	129	29.3%
Total	441	100.0%

3.2

Can something be done to improve relations between people of different ethnic backgrounds in your neighbourhood?

		Banyule		Moreland		Whittlesea		Darebin		Hume		Total	
25-34 years	Yes	4	12%	9	28%	4	12%	12	38%	3	9%	32	100%
35-44 years	Yes	8	15%	13	25%	5	10%	18	35%	8	15%	52	100%
45-54 years	Yes	19	28%	19	28%	10	15%	9	13%	11	16%	68	100%
55-64 years	Yes	10	18%	14	25%	11	20%	9	16%	11	20%	55	100%
65 years+	Yes	14	29%	15	31%	3	6%	12	24%	5	10%	49	100%
Total	Yes	55	21%	70	27%	33	13%	60	23%	38	15%	256	100%

3.3

Can something be done to improve the relations between people of differing ethnic or religious backgrounds in your neighbourhood?

	Yes		No		Don't know		Total	
Catholic	89	64.5%	10	7.2%	39	28.3%	138	100.0%
No Religion	33	58.9%	5	8.9%	18	32.1%	56	100.0%
Other Christian	21	60.0%	2	5.7%	12	34.3%	35	100.0%

(Eastern) Orthodox	22	71.0%	5	16.1%	4	12.9%	31	100.0%
Anglican	13	44.8%	3	10.3%	13	44.8%	29	100.0%
Atheist	19	73.1%	1	3.8%	6	23.1%	26	100.0%
Islam	21	87.5%	0	.0%	3	12.5%	24	100.0%
Agnostic	9	45.0%	2	10.0%	9	45.0%	20	100.0%
Uniting Church	7	53.8%	0	.0%	6	46.2%	13	100.0%
Buddhism	9	69.2%	0	.0%	4	30.8%	13	100.0%
Oriental orthodox / Christian	6	54.5%	0	.0%	5	45.5%	11	100.0%
Spiritualist	5	50.0%	1	10.0%	4	40.0%	10	100.0%
Baptist	1	33.3%	0	.0%	2	66.7%	3	100.0%
Hinduism	3	100.0%	0	.0%	0	.0%	3	100.0%
Salvation Army	1	50.0%	0	.0%	1	50.0%	2	100.0%
Judaism	1	50.0%	0	.0%	1	50.0%	2	100.0%
Pentecostal	1	100.0%	0	.0%	0	.0%	1	100.0%
Presbyterian and Reformed	1	100.0%	0	.0%	0	.0%	1	100.0%
Lutheran	1	100.0%	0	.0%	0	.0%	1	100.0%
Jehovah's Witnesses	1	100.0%	0	.0%	0	.0%	1	100.0%
Churches of Christ	1	100.0%	0	.0%	0	.0%	1	100.0%
Aboriginal Traditional Religions	1	100.0%	0	.0%	0	.0%	1	100.0%
Total	266	63.0%	29	6.9%	127	30.1%	422	100.0%

3.4

Q11 Would the following help?

Public forums	Yes	212	51.1%
	No	72	17.3%
	Don't know	131	31.6%
	Total	415	100.0%

3.5

Q11 Would the following help?

Workshops or other educational facilities	Yes	258	61.9%
	No	45	10.8%
	Don't know	114	27.3%
	Total	417	100.0%

3.6

Q11 Would the following help?

Visit to places of worship of different faiths	Yes	246	59.0%
	No	60	14.4%
	Don't know	111	26.6%
	Total	417	100.0%

3.7

Q11 Would the following help?

Social events involving music, sport, food, cultural activities, etc	Yes	359	81.8%
	No	25	5.7%
	Don't know	55	12.5%
	Total	439	100.0%

3.8

Order of preference for joint activities

Neighbourhood safety	322	71%
Youth activities	317	70%
Refugees and recent arrivals	294	65%
Environment	276	61%
Health	260	57%
Employment	252	56%
Violence within the family	233	51%
Aboriginal/Indigenous issues	230	51%
Housing	228	50%
Childcare	221	49%
Interpreter services	220	49%

3.9

In favour of joint activities to deal with community needs in following area : neighbourhood safety

	Female		Male	
25-34 years	30	69.8%	13	30.2%
35-44 years	37	60.7%	24	39.3%
45-54 years	47	58.0%	34	42.0%
55-64 years	41	63.1%	24	36.9%
65 years+	29	51.8%	27	48.2%
Total	184	60.1%	122	39.9%

3.10

Q15 What is your gender?

Female	258	58.4%
Male	184	41.6%
Total	442	100.0%

3.11

In favour of joint activities to deal with community needs in following area : Violence within the family

	Female		Male	
25-34 years	28	73.7%	10	26.3%
35-44 years	25	59.5%	17	40.5%
45-54 years	37	64.9%	20	35.1%
55-64 years	32	68.1%	15	31.9%
65 years or more	16	45.7%	19	54.3%
Total	138	63.0%	81	37.0%

3.12

Q13 Are you in favour of this initiative?		
Yes	332	74.8%
Maybe	79	17.8%
No	16	3.6%
Don't know	17	3.8%
Total	444	100.0%

3.13

Breakdown of the 18% who responded 'maybe' in favour of initiative

	Maybe	
Banyule	24	31%
Moreland	20	26%
Whittlesea	8	10%
Darebin	12	15%
Hume	14	18%
Total	78	100%
25-34 years	9	12%
35-44 years	13	17%
45-54 years	23	29%
55-64 years	16	21%
65 years or more	17	22%
Total	78	100%
Work full time	35	46%
Unemployed	1	1%
Work part-time or casual	21	28%
Retired or pensioned	16	21%
Carer or home duties	3	4%
Total	76	100%

3.14

Q13: Are you in favour of this initiative?											
	Yes		Maybe		No		Don't know		Total		
under 18 years	1	33%	1	33%	0	0%	1	33%	3	100%	
18-24 years	8	80%	0	0%	1	10%	1	10%	10	100%	
25-34 years	44	79%	9	16%	3	5%	0	0%	56	100%	
35-44 years	59	76%	13	17%	4	5%	2	3%	78	100%	
45-54 years	82	71%	23	20%	2	2%	9	8%	116	100%	
55-64 years	71	80%	16	18%	0	0%	2	2%	89	100%	
65 years or more	66	73%	17	19%	6	7%	2	2%	91	100%	
Total	331	75%	79	18%	16	4%	17	4%	443	100%	

3.15

Q13: Are you in favour of this initiative									
	Yes		Maybe		No		Don't know		
Catholic	105	75%	24	17%	4	3%	7	5%	
No Religion	36	63%	15	26%	3	5%	3	5%	
Other Christian	28	78%	3	8%	4	11%	1	3%	
(Eastern) Orthodox	22	73%	6	20%	1	3%	1	3%	
Anglican	22	73%	7	23%	1	3%	0	0%	
Atheist	21	81%	4	15%	0	0%	1	4%	
Islam	18	82%	2	9%	1	5%	1	5%	
Agnostic	15	71%	4	19%	1	5%	1	5%	
Uniting Church	12	86%	2	14%	0	0%	0	0%	
Buddhism	9	69%	2	15%	0	0%	2	15%	
Oriental orthodox / Christian	8	80%	2	20%	0	0%	0	0%	
Spiritualist	8	80%	2	20%	0	0%	0	0%	
Baptist	3	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	
Hinduism	2	67%	1	33%	0	0%	0	0%	
Salvation Army	2	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	
Judaism	2	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	
Pentecostal	1	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	

Presbyterian and Reformed	0	0%	1	100%	0	0%	0	0%
Lutheran	0	0%	1	100%	0	0%	0	0%
Jehovah's Witnesses	1	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Churches of Christ	1	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Aboriginal Traditional Religions	1	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%

3.16

Q19 What is your religion?

Catholic	140	32.6%
No Religion	57	13.3%
Other Christian	36	8.4%
(Eastern) Orthodox	31	7.2%
Anglican	30	7.0%
Atheist	26	6.0%
Islam	24	5.6%
Agnostic	21	4.9%
Uniting Church	15	3.5%
Buddhism	13	3.0%
Oriental orthodox / Christian	11	2.6%
Spiritualist	10	2.3%
Baptist	3	.7%
Hinduism	3	.7%
Salvation Army	2	.5%
Judaism	2	.5%
Pentecostal	1	.2%
Presbyterian and Reformed	1	.2%
Lutheran	1	.2%
Jehovah's Witnesses	1	.2%
Churches of Christ	1	.2%
Aboriginal Traditional Religions	1	.2%
Latter Day Saints	0	.0%
Brethren	0	.0%

Q19 What is your religion?

Catholic	140	32.6%
No Religion	57	13.3%
Other Christian	36	8.4%
(Eastern) Orthodox	31	7.2%
Anglican	30	7.0%
Atheist	26	6.0%
Islam	24	5.6%
Agnostic	21	4.9%
Uniting Church	15	3.5%
Buddhism	13	3.0%
Oriental orthodox / Christian	11	2.6%
Spiritualist	10	2.3%
Baptist	3	.7%
Hinduism	3	.7%
Salvation Army	2	.5%
Judaism	2	.5%
Pentecostal	1	.2%
Presbyterian and Reformed	1	.2%
Lutheran	1	.2%
Jehovah's Witnesses	1	.2%
Churches of Christ	1	.2%
Aboriginal Traditional Religions	1	.2%
Latter Day Saints	0	.0%
Brethren	0	.0%
Total	430	100.0%

3.17

Q13: Are you in favour of this initiative?

	Yes		Maybe		No		Don't know		Total	
Australian	136	78%	30	17%	5	3%	4	2%	175	100%
English	67	74%	17	19%	6	7%	1	1%	91	100%
Italian	36	73%	7	14%	2	4%	4	8%	49	100%

Irish	27	82%	3	9%	2	6%	1	3%	33	100%
Scottish	21	91%	1	4%	1	4%	0	0%	23	100%
Greek	16	73%	6	27%	0	0%	0	0%	22	100%
Chinese	11	69%	4	25%	0	0%	1	6%	16	100%
Lebanese	8	67%	4	33%	0	0%	0	0%	12	100%
Maltese	6	60%	3	30%	0	0%	1	10%	10	100%
Indian	7	88%	1	12%	0	0%	0	0%	8	100%
Polish	2	40%	3	60%	0	0%	0	0%	5	100%
Vietnamese	2	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	2	100%
Other	76	69%	21	19%	5	5%	8	7%	110	100%

3.18

Are you in favour of this initiative?

	Banyule		Moreland		Whittlesea		Darebin		Hume		Total	
Yes	81	72%	72	73%	49	77%	74	81%	39	64%	315	74%
Maybe	24	21%	20	20%	8	12%	12	13%	14	23%	78	18%
No	2	2%	3	3%	4	6%	2	2%	5	8%	16	4%
Don't know	5	4%	3	3%	3	5%	3	3%	3	5%	17	4%
Total	112	100%	98	100%	64	100%	91	100%	61	100%	426	100%

3.19

Q14 Would you like to be involved in these activities?

Often	41	9.2%
Sometimes	214	48.1%
Not at all	101	22.7%
Don't know	89	20.0%
Total	445	100.0%

3.20

Q14: Would you like to be involved in these activities?										
	Often		Sometimes		Not at all		Don't know		Total	
Catholic	8	6%	63	45%	35	25%	34	24%	140	100%
No Religion	2	4%	27	48%	17	30%	10	18%	56	100%
Other Christian	3	8%	18	50%	8	22%	7	19%	36	100%
(Eastern) Orthodox	2	7%	16	53%	7	23%	5	17%	30	100%
Anglican	0	0%	15	50%	9	30%	6	20%	30	100%
Atheist	4	15%	9	35%	7	27%	6	23%	26	100%
Islam	7	32%	15	68%	0	0%	0	0%	22	100%
Agnostic	2	10%	6	29%	7	33%	6	29%	21	100%
Uniting Church	1	7%	9	60%	3	20%	2	13%	15	100%
Buddhism	2	15%	8	62%	0	0%	3	23%	13	100%
Oriental orthodox / Christian	1	9%	6	55%	1	9%	3	27%	11	100%
Spiritualist	2	20%	5	50%	1	10%	2	20%	10	100%
Baptist	0	0%	0	0%	3	100%	0	0%	3	100%
Hinduism	1	33%	1	33%	0	0%	1	33%	3	100%
Salvation Army	0	0%	2	100%	0	0%	0	0%	2	100%
Judaism	0	0%	2	100%	0	0%	0	0%	2	100%
Pentecostal	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	100%	1	100%
Presbyterian and Reformed	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	100%	1	100%
Lutheran	0	0%	1	100%	0	0%	0	0%	1	100%
Jehovah's Witnesses	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	100%	1	100%
Churches of Christ	1	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	100%
Aboriginal Traditional Religions	0	0%	1	100%	0	0%	0	0%	1	100%
Total	36	8%	204	48%	98	23%	88	21%	426	100%

3.21

Q14: Would you like to be involved in these activities?												
	Banyule		Moreland		Whittlesea		Darebin		Hume		Total	
Often	6	5%	8	8%	7	11%	13	14%	6	10%	40	9%
Sometimes	52	46%	51	52%	32	50%	42	46%	24	39%	201	47%
Not at all	26	23%	23	23%	19	30%	12	13%	21	34%	101	24%
Don't know	28	25%	16	16%	6	9%	24	26%	11	18%	85	20%
Total	112	100%	98	100%	64	100%	91	100%	62	100%	427	100%

4.1

Q16 What is your age?

under 18 years	3	.7%
18-24 years	10	2.2%
25-34 years	56	12.5%
35-44 years	78	17.4%
45-54 years	119	26.6%
55-64 years	90	20.1%
65 years or more	91	20.4%
Total	447	100.0%

APPENDIX 8: **QUALITATIVE DATA FROM QUESTIONNAIRE**

Specific recommendations for network projects

- Council should organise a faith forum to bring people together and discuss each religion's views. This will help to promote the peace and harmony among the other cultures or religion.
- I suggest if you can organise sometimes meeting in church, or mosque or temple or other to combine people from different faiths or organisations to study or explain similarities and differences between all religions.
- Please try to publish a booklet in the Kurdish language because we have a large Kurdish community and feel free to send me any information as presenter of a Kurdish radio show (88.6fm) and editor for Kurdish monthly newspaper.
- The media, being such a powerful force, must be incorporated into this initiative.
- Promote all branches of sport for both boys and girls.
- A Darebin Multicultural Festival to facilitate contact by enjoying each other's foods. (Activities focusing on food very common throughout)
- More community events are required, gardening projects in schools, cooking clubs for sharing food traditions.
- Promote access for newly arrived communities to Centrelink and Job Network.
- Program could be developed for youths to visit places of worship to educate them about religious communities.
- I do not have much information about this issue at a local level; the local council newsletter could be utilized to share this information.
- Social and cultural activities should precede religious activities of prayer together.
- I would like to see council meeting preceded or proceeded by workshops to educate and inform the community on different faiths and cultures.
- Education within the school system on all cultures and religions should be provided.
- Elderly people in the community are often misinformed about other cultures and religion. Perhaps elderly citizen clubs might be a good target for education.
- Education and policies to encourage gender equality and leadership for women are necessary.
- Promote semi-formal meetings that are non-intrusive, just people coming together. For example: picnics and music in the park.

Specific recommendations for focus of the Network

- As an atheist, dropping religious faiths sounds really good.
- Keep all faith out of common meetings.
- The Network is a great idea as long as there is a lay approach to the initiative and the different religions.
- Education of tolerance and harmony is needed, not more understanding and accommodation for individual faith groups.
- It would be good to know more about new arrivals. Interfaith meetings would be good to diminish religious suspicions.
- In my experience, exploring similarities and differences helps strengthen my own religious self-awareness and deepens mutual respect.

Observations on interfaith and intercultural activities

- We were invited to attend a women's only gathering at the mosque on Cramer St. Preston. Being the only non-Muslim attendees we felt a bit out of our depth, but it was a great insight. The experience certainly strengthened our bond as neighbours and friends.
- I recently attended a series of sessions in an adjoining municipality which brought Indigenous and Somali women together to share their cultures. I feel that these sessions promoted cultural understanding and were enjoyable, relaxed and informative.
- Because I do not practise religion I find it hard to relate to religious people and therefore different cultures which are religiously based.
- I would like the opportunity to meet others from different cultures.
- I really enjoy the multicultural atmosphere of Sydney Road. Including the different foods, languages and clothing. On the surface at least it appears a very tolerant and harmonious community.
- Activities/Organizations which allow different faiths and cultures to meet are necessary to break down myths, increase tolerance and harmony & lead to friendship.

APPENDIX 9: REPORTS FROM FOCUS GROUPS

**NORTHERN INTERFAITH/INTERCULTURAL NETWORK PROJECT
CITY OF DAREBIN - FOCUS GROUP ONE
TUESDAY 8 JULY, 2008
6PM-9PM**

FACILITATORS: PROF. JOE CAMILLERI
 CR. MENDO KUNDEVSKI
MINUTE SECRETARY: MS. SUZANNE PLAZZER
NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS: 15

This focus group contained an even spread of age, gender and cultural backgrounds, though representation from faith communities was dominated by the Islamic and Catholic faiths. Though the City of Darebin is dominated by Italian and Greek immigrants, no representative from the Italian community was present. The group also had a high education level with 11 participants having achieved a university qualification or higher.

THE NETWORK

The focus group felt strongly that authorities, both religious and secular, have a major role to play in promoting harmony within the community. It was suggested that, while major progress has been made over the past 10 years, religious tolerance is not taken seriously within the public policy structure. It was noted that cultural policy is sometimes motivated by political correctness rather than community harmony. This can often lead to political representatives siding with specific ethnic groups in order to gain more power by dividing the community rather than uniting it. It was felt that this process lead to unnecessary emphasis on what separates people rather than what unites them. The issue of misrepresentation of faith communities within the media was also raised as a major obstacle towards community harmony.

The group highlighted gambling, drugs, alcohol, domestic violence, indigenous issues and environmental issues as pressing issues that could be addressed by a regional interfaith/intercultural network. It also highlighted the need to return spiritual leaders to a place of authority and respect within the community – it was felt that the soul of the community was eroding due to problems related to materialism. Most felt that a regional network provided an opportunity for religious leaders to foster values within the community and foster a resurgence of spirituality.

Suggestions for activates for the network included open days at places of worship, an interfaith/multicultural information listing, information workshops regarding each faith in the region, walking/friendship groups, and events that bring people together such as festivals, sporting and musical events. It was also noted that the network could provide faith and ethnic communities with a tool for dealing with the media and could provide information regarding appropriating funding. It was noted that fear (fear of change, fear of challenges, fear of the unknown), language constraints and transport difficulties could undermine the establishment of the Network.

**NORTHERN INTERFAITH/INTERCULTURAL NETWORK PROJECT
CITY OF DAREBIN - FOCUS GROUP TWO
THURSDAY 10 JULY, 2008
6PM-9PM**

FACILITATORS: DR. MICHALIS S. MICHAEL
MR. DAVID DIAZ
MINUTE SECRETARY: MS. ROBERTA BUCCOMINO
NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS: 17

While this group consisted of an even spread of gender, the age representation was disproportionate with the majority of participants aged over 65 years old. Representation from faith communities was limited to predominately Christian denominations but included representatives from the Hindu faith and from the Orthodox Church. The majority of participants come from an Anglo European background. The average education level of this group was slightly lower than the other Darebin focus group – this reflects the older average age of the group rather than a different socio-economic group.

THE NETWORK

The second Darebin focus group, while demographically very different to the first group, made very similar observations of the state of interfaith/intercultural relations in the community. The group highlighted that the misrepresentation of particular faith and cultural communities in the media was a major hindrance in the promotion of community harmony and dialogue. It was also recognized that politics and power struggles within the community can drive agendas and impede social cohesion. It was noted that faith and cultural leaders need to take a greater lead in the promotion of issues. It was also felt that a lot of current interfaith dialogue was ‘superficial’ as it engages the faiths but not the people. This dichotomy draws attention to the need for both a ‘top-down’ and ‘bottom-up’ approach. The need for greater dialogue between faith communities and the secular community was also raised with the suggestion that the local business community has a major role to play.

The group had many suggestions regarding potential activities for the network and how social cohesion could be promoted better within the community.

The suggestions included:

- The Council runs a street party program; it would be great to develop this program where the places of worship are located with an emphasis on inclusion.
- Funding agencies can help by making funding conditional to different community members to integrate but it would be better to present this as an incentive rather than an obligation.
- Leaders should embrace a model for interrelationships through partnerships.
- Becoming aware of the hierarchical structure in communities.
- One idea could be to use Darebin News and other Council publications to showcase interfaith/intercultural events, programs or initiatives twice a year.

- The shortage of housing is a major issue. A solution would be to ask people to sponsor recent migrant families and invite members of families from the same community to live with them.
- Need for symbolism to focus attention of an important issue.
- The Darebin Ethnic Community Council's fusion project is an example of the types of activities that facilitate understanding and interaction between different communities. It involves performances from different communities so people can see what is similar and be able to relate to each other better. This would facilitate communication.
- Mix generations including young people at events and activities such as focus groups.
- If the major leaders are brought together it would impact on their communities.
- Stall at the Darebin Council with different materials.
- Involve different communities in art and music performances, fusional approach.
- Facilitate communication in community languages.
- Get the business community involved.
- Information session regarding current international and national events that affect interfaith/intercultural relations could help breed understanding.

**NORTHERN INTERFAITH/INTERCULTURAL NETWORK PROJECT
CITY OF WHITTLESEA - FOCUS GROUP ONE
THURSDAY 24 JULY, 2008
6PM-9PM**

FACILITATORS: MR. SALVADOR NUNEZ
MS. JANELLE CAIRNS
MINUTE SECRETARY: MS. MARIA CALLIPARI
NO. OF PARTICIPANTS: 10

The Whittlesea focus group was one of the most culturally and spiritually diverse groups with representation from most of the major religions and the newly emerging migrant communities in the area. While the majority of the participants were in the 45-54 age group, issues concerning people from all age groups were expressed. The representatives from each faith were not faith leaders as such, rather people with active faiths that were cultural community leaders. The group felt strongly that the focus of the network should be intercultural rather than interfaith. It was felt that this approach would be more beneficial for several reasons: it was thought that an intercultural focus would be more welcoming to the wider community, that many issues between faiths are actually intercultural in nature and that many perceived interfaith problems were caused by lack of knowledge on the part of both new migrant communities and the wider community.

With this in mind, the discussion focused on the issues that faced the northern region regarding the welcoming and settling of new migrants. It was felt strongly that lack of resources and information for migrants contributed to lasting depression amongst the newly emerging migrant communities and reinforced stereotypes such as 'the lazy immigrant'. Lack of understanding regarding the law, other faiths and cultures that exist in Australian society, and lack of practice with the language resulted in newly emerging migrant communities becoming insular, leading to isolation, stress and domestic turmoil.

Representatives from the Somali, Sudanese and Chaldean communities had experienced prejudice regarding employment, housing, financial matters and other services.

Concerns regarding unemployment, housing and financial stress were regarded as the most important issues facing the migrant communities as this often lead to family breakdown and a feeling of failure regarding the families that they has left behind whom they were also trying to support.

This group also felt that there was a lack of understanding on behalf of the wider communities regarding where migrant communities had come from and what they had been through. Many participants in this group had come from countries involved in serious conflicts (Sudan, Somalia, Iraq, Sri Lanka, and Iran) and came to Australia under traumatic circumstances. For many, the effects of civil war are impossible to describe. It was felt that the wider community when considering the 'behaviour' of migrants does not appreciate this fact.

Without the support of traditional community structures, many are left without the support system that they would have had at home. These factors, together with the cultural shock of a new country, had significant ramifications for those with children who were trying to negotiate how to instil traditional values in a consumerist society. Many were greatly concerned with the lack of respect for culture and elders that occurs within youth and felt that this lead to problems of drugs and alcohol, violence and crime.

THE NETWORK

This group were incredibly enthusiastic regarding the proposed network though, as already mentioned, they felt that its focus should be intercultural rather than interfaith. They believed that a network of this kind could deal with the issues of housing, unemployment, and family breakdown and could help facilitate grater harmony throughout the wider community.

By dispelling myths about migrants within the community and helping migrants negotiate resettling here, a northern region network could improve communication and promote solidarity. It was felt the dialogue between council, community leaders and service providers was essential to bring the network to fruition.

The group had several suggestions regarding potential activities for the network and how social cohesion could be better promoted within the community.

The suggestions included:

- Friendship groups, home visits, host families.
- English conversation groups so that language skills could be developed.
- Employment Registry, Careers expos in the municipality, job interview training and resume classes.
- Resource directory.
- Housing needs.
- Cultural Education for service providers.
- Trauma counselling and support groups for refugees. There is a high need for the provision of counselling for survivors of torture and trauma in the City of Whittlesea.
- Environment programs.

- Specific support groups for men. It was felt that women engaged in a lot of intercultural activity due to after school programs, mothers' groups, etc. It was felt that activities that encouraged men would be beneficial as many struggled with the inability to provide for their families.
- Cross Cultural cooking programs.
- Multicultural Choir.
- Blankets, furniture, and household appliance drive for refugees.
- Aid regarding financial matters.
- School and education supports.
- After school programs.
- More comprehensive welcome program for migrants. Information regarding other cultures in the area. For many migrants, the northern suburbs of Melbourne are the first place they meet people from other cultures.
- Community action: Walk for Community Harmony, etc
- Cultural days highlighting the positives of different cultures, not the negative.

**NORTHERN INTERFAITH/INTERCULTURAL NETWORK PROJECT
CITY OF HUME - FOCUS GROUP ONE
TUESDAY 29 JULY, 2008
6PM-9PM**

FACILITATORS: MR. LARRY MARSHALL
MS. JANELLE CAIRNS
MINUTE SECRETARY: MS. KRISTINE MUELLER

This focus group contained an even gender spread and included representatives from most age groups. However, none of the five largest religious groups from the area were represented. The lack of representation from the more dominant and settled religious groups and migrant communities is a trend that has been apparent across all the focus groups. The Hume focus group has been difficult to put together, largely due to the immense size of the municipality (people needed to travel great distances in order to participate in the focus group). It was also noted that tensions from overseas conflicts (many of the Turkish, Iranian and Iraqi immigrants have come to Australia due to religious persecution or civil war) have created suspicion within the community. Though groups such as the Alevi, Chaldean Christian and Assyrian Orthodox had made conscious efforts to participate in interfaith dialogue, the participants in the focus group suggested that religious persecution that took place in their homelands makes dialogue with the Muslim/Arab community difficult.

THE NETWORK

While the Hume Interfaith Council is no longer meeting on a regular basis, the participants shared that there is a great amount of interfaith and intercultural dialogue through Open Days at various places of worship. Open Days provided the wider community with the opportunity to experience music and food from other cultures while also providing the opportunity to learn about faiths that are not particularly well-known. It was also noted that same cultural groups, such as the Vietnamese, come from all different faiths and cultural gathering gave opportunities for interfaith dialogue.

Cultural groups gave people the opportunity to appreciate what they had in common rather than how they differed. The Daham Ni Ketanaya Buddhist temple also provided a great space for intercultural dialogue. As the biggest Buddhist temple of its type in Melbourne, it attracts members from diverse cultural backgrounds.

It was also noted that fitness programs and sporting events gave an opportunity for younger people to rise above the prejudices that had been passed on through their parents and engage in activity with cultures and faiths that they would not normally mix with.

Issues that were considered important to the community were: gambling support, drug and alcohol services, health services for migrant communities, support for both parents and young people who are trying to negotiate the balance between mainstream and traditional faith/culture values. It was also stressed that faith and community leaders needed to play a major role in opening dialogue with their communities, other communities, and the council.

Suggestions for activities for the interfaith/intercultural network included:

- A forum that brought communities leaders and faith leaders together.
- Events that involve food, music and sport.
- Host families.
- Intercultural celebration days.
- Visiting places of worship.
- A support network for young people and a support network for parents – these two networks could engage with each other.
- Encouragement for participation must be top-down – faith/cultural leaders must encourage people to participate.
- Summer Camp for young people.
- Language support for new arrivals.
- Assistance in applying for funding for faith/cultural events.

NORTHERN INTERFAITH/INTERCULTURAL NETWORK PROJECT
CITY OF BANYULE - FOCUS GROUP ONE
FRIDAY 01 AUGUST, 2008
10AM-1PM

FACILITATORS: PROF. JOE CAMILLERI
MINUTES SECRETARY: MS. DARNELLE ECKERSALL
NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS: 9

The Banyule focus group comprised predominately of women and all participants were from a Christian background, reflecting the demographic make-up of the area and the unfortunate coincidence of the focus group taking place on Friday which made Islamic participation unlikely. The group consisted professionals from the migrant support sector and health sector. Due to the professional make up of the group, the level of education was high amongst the group with all but one participant completing a tertiary qualification or higher. The cultural background of the group reflected the cultural monism of the area with the majority of participants coming form a European background, though the newly emerging African communities were represented.

THE NETWORK

Participants in the Banyule focus group recognized the cultural monism of the majority of Banyule but stressed the importance of interfaith and intercultural activity due to the newly emerging migrant communities that are settling in the area (Somali, Sudanese, Indian, and Sri Lankan). It was expressed that fear of conversion and lack of understanding often promoted religious tension in the predominately Christian municipality. It was suggested that an intercultural approach rather than an interfaith approach would possibly be more productive. An intercultural approach could also be more beneficial when trying to involve the indigenous community in interfaith/intercultural dialogue. They also felt that an intercultural approach would be a more effective approach in engaging the secular community. The group saw language limitations, transportation and lack of resources/time from both community groups and council as the major difficulties confronting the network.

The group had several suggestions regarding potential activities for the network and how social cohesion could be promoted better within the community.

The suggestions included:

- Intellectual and social content.
- Work in a tier approach – work from smaller groups and link outwards. People respond if they know someone.
- Get communities involved and present in some way.
- BBQs, street music, work well, better than conferences.
- Need to overcome cultural differences regarding hospitality. Reservations about accepting hospitality in a person's home where they are unknown could be perceived as 'free loading'. Need to understand how you can make a contribution when invited into others homes.
- Breaking the fast at Ramadan could offer opportunities to share with others about what Ramadan means.
- Within church there can be a diversity of views and attitudes – start there for sharing and acceptance.
- Families need information and other needs met, e.g. employment, what practical help can the network offer? Not enough employment, big issue. Work experience opportunities could be explored.
- Practice job interviews – building confidence, mentoring and career development could be useful.
- Discussion groups for intergenerational conflict experienced in relation to parenting.
- Tensions at school, e.g. Olympic Village Pre School 40% Somali – tensions between parents. Could we learn more from our children? What work is happening at schools? Is there interaction in the school and outside? Working within school environments breaks down stereotypes.
- Perception in dialogue that we must downplay our differences and accept our similarities yet perhaps we need to understand and deal with differences more effectively.
- Use community radio and ethnic radio and press.
- Use the 'weeks' to promote and educate, e.g. Refugee Week, NAIDOC, Community Harmony Week, and Mental Health Week.

- General support for more local/neighbourhood happenings. Transport assistance may be required. Evening events can be difficult.
- MET tickets could be given to assist as reimbursement.
- Small bus pick ups from train station can be useful to ferry people to a larger scale event.
- Run things at a variety of times.
- People may be prepared to travel distances if something appeals – advertise more broadly – look for opportunities.
- Importance of engaging community to help organise activities and make it sustainable. Needs to come from community – identify local groups that could organise projects. Use local leadership. Council to support.
- Look for grants to support the extension of activities.

NORTHERN INTERFAITH/INTERCULTURAL NETWORK PROJECT
CITY OF WHITTLESEA - FOCUS GROUP TWO
TUESDAY 04 AUGUST, 2008
10AM-1PM

FACILITATORS: PROF. JOE CAMILLERI
 MR. SALVADOR NUNEZ
MINUTE SECRETARY: MS. JANELLE CAIRNS
NO. OF PARTICIPANTS: 11

This group was one of the most diverse focus groups with even gender representation, diverse age group representation, and varied religious and cultural representation. The group also had a vast array of organizations in attendance including representatives from the police, migrant services, charity organizations, Whittlesea City Council and the YMCA. The group was made up of various education levels and language skills. Like the other Whittlesea focus group, this group was not attended by faith leaders but by community leaders with faiths of their own. It was felt that an intercultural approach would be a better entry point for the network as the concept of intercultural was more inclusive than interfaith, and because many tensions that existed in community were culturally based (the tensions that exist between Anglo Christian communities and African Christian was cited as an example).

This group felt that many of the problems that faced the community found their source in the continuing struggle between mainstream culture and traditional culture. This causes problems not only in faith communities but in migrant communities trying to come to terms with the breakdown of traditional family structures and the differences between Australian law and traditional law. It was felt that it was these gaps that make it hard for service providers, migrants and the wider community to connect and encourage isolation for many. It was also felt that this struggle between the traditional and the modern is an issue for all faiths and cultures. Of particular concern was the loss of authority of parents, faith leaders and community elders when dealing with young people. Not only was it felt to lead for problems for children; it was also seen as the source of a great deal of stress and depression amongst the adult community.

This group also highlighted an ongoing problem with the focus group process which has been the lack of participation from the more settled migrant communities. It was been very difficult to engage the Italian, Greek and Chinese communities in the research process. It is unclear why this is the case, though some suggested that 'we did it without help therefore so should you' existed in these communities regarding the newly emerging migrant communities. With the exception of Darebin, there has been no involvement from the Muslim community as a faith group. Any Muslim representation has been through service providers and cultural leaders who happened to be Islamic rather than Islamic leaders themselves.

THE NETWORK

This group was enthusiastic about a regional interfaith/intercultural network but were very conscious of the obstacles that lay ahead. It acknowledge the time, resources, language constraints, legal issues (i.e. public liability insurance), transport and childcare issues are major issues that would impede any kind of regional network. The group felt that a network like this could aid in re-establishing community elders and faith leaders as spiritual and epistemic authorities both within faith/cultural communities and the larger community.

Issues that were identified by this group that were important were:

- Housing: lack of affordable housing and the inability of many migrants to find rental accommodation meant that many migrants had to move to regional communities in order to find housing.
- It was recognized that domestic violence was a major problem within the wider community. Perhaps a regional network could provide access to emergency accommodation to those in situations they feel they cannot get out of.
- Training for migrants parents regarding the types of issues that are confronted by young people in Australian society.
- Establishing schools as communities in their own right. Schools could be a hub of intercultural activity both within and outside the classroom. Food, music and sport have a big role to play in this area.
- Afterschool care and childcare activities.
- Information for migrants regarding the practicalities of everyday life, information regarding the other faiths and cultural groups within the community.
- Women's cultural cooking days.
- Uniting efforts under one network, competition between groups for resources and funding could be eliminated.
- Study groups and homework groups for migrant kids. This could also provide support for the many international students that find they living in the northern suburbs.
- Cross-cultural training for service providers and teachers.
- Sharing a buildings and resources.
- Reclaiming community space.
- Cultural and faith leaders/elders could work in consultation with police, schools, Centelink, etc to solve intercultural issues. Council has a large role to play in this process. Faith and Cultural leaders should be consulted in policy decisions regarding gambling, drug and alcohol issues and domestic violence.

**NORTHERN INTERFAITH/INTERCULTURAL NETWORK PROJECT
CITY OF MORELAND - FOCUS GROUP ONE
TUESDAY 09 SEPTEMBER, 2008
12PM-3PM**

FACILITATORS: MS. JANELLE CAIRNS
MINUTE SECRETARY: MS. LYN MCFARLAND
NO. OF PARTICIPANTS: 6

The Moreland was focus group was held in conjunction with the regular Moreland Interfaith Gathering. While the Gathering has been running for many years and had been very effective in helping ease tensions within the area after 9/11, the Moreland Interfaith Gathering is currently experiencing a lull in activity. The majority of the group was from an Anglo Christian background, which does not reflect the demographic make up of the area at all. Though it appeared that interfaith/intercultural activity was at a low point, it was commented that mixing with those from different background was a daily occurrence for most people in Moreland. The group felt that tolerance and harmony had been successfully promoted in the past through exhibitions, interfaith prayer days, 'Welcome to Country' ceremonies, and multicultural events. The group strongly felt that many faiths and cultures are misrepresented in the media, which lead to the promotion of stereotypes.

THE NETWORK

This group felt that a northern region interfaith/intercultural network could only be of benefit if it could provide something that a local network could not. It was felt that a regional network could possibly take away resources from the local community. It noted that the network could have a role in public relations matters, especially regarding the media, and could help local cultural and faith communities secure funding to run their own programs and activities within the wider community. It was strongly felt that any regional network would need strong council support but would also need to be actioned from within faith and cultural groups in order to be effective.

Other suggestions for the network included:

- Bus tours to places of worship.
- Education programs both inside schools and in after-school care.
- Sporting activities such a swimming programs or soccer training.
- Information evenings with the police and other service providers regarding cultural traditions.
- Friendship groups that connected international students to faith and cultural communities.
- Conversational language groups so those from a non-English speaking background can practice.
- Resource directory and website. The website could aid organizations in securing funding of their own. It was noted that there is a feeling of 'welfare weariness' within the general community. By providing access to information regarding funding and other grants, faith and cultural communities can build themselves up of their own accord.
- The network could have an advocacy and spokesperson role. It was noted that such a network could have influence with State and Federal governments.

- The network needs to embrace the whole community, including the secular community.
- Environmental programs, such as Green Faith. A community garden.
- Could provide access to local media outlets in order to provide education and understanding. Community radio is seen as having remarkable potential.
- Drug and alcohol issues were particularly highlighted. It was noted that there was a rise in the number of those from non-English speaking backgrounds who accessed drug and alcohol services in Moreland. Culturally specific drug and alcohol support and information would be beneficial.
- The network should be flexible - it needs to recognize that people are very busy and can't make firm commitments a lot of the time. The network needs to have an informal nature.

**NORTHERN INTERFAITH/INTERCULTURAL NETWORK PROJECT
SERVICE PROVIDER FOCUS GROUP
TUESDAY 16 SEPTEMBER, 2008
10AM-1PM**

FACILITATORS: MS. JANELLE CAIRNS
MINUTE SECRETARY: MR. KIERAN KEADY
NO. OF PARTICIPANTS: 9

Participants in the service provider focus group covered many areas including migrant services, hospitals and healthcare service, volunteer organizations, municipal organizations, language schools and Consumer Affairs. They brought with them many examples of successful intercultural programs that had been functioning in their areas of interest. The group felt strongly that the focus of the network should be intercultural rather than interfaith. It felt that an intercultural network would be more inclusive and less prone to political manipulation. Several participants felt that their organizations would not work with an interfaith network and felt community structures did not have the capacity to deal with interfaith issues nor was it within their responsibilities. It was strongly agreed that an intercultural approach would be more beneficial to the wider community. The only benefit that an interfaith network could have would be in a pastoral care role, such as hospital visits, crisis management and counselling services.

THE NETWORK

While the group brought with them many examples of intercultural activity and efforts to promote better understanding within migrant communities and the wider community, most felt that many people suffered prejudice from workers (particularly healthcare workers).

It was felt that many services that were on offer were not accessed due to lack of understanding from both the migrant community and the professional community. It was suggested that a regional intercultural network could help identify why people weren't accessing services and what service providers could do to bridge this gap.

It was strongly felt that, while a regional intercultural network sounded beneficial in the abstract, it was hard to identify the practical objectives from the network. The group felt emphatically that they could not offer any firm suggestions regarding the structure or

content of the network without seeing a preliminary model. They felt that their role came in after a model with clear structures and objectives had been presented.

Other suggestions that originated from the discussion were:

- The network could provide a voice for lobbying State and Federal government.
- Information evenings regarding the Department of Justice and its many roles for new migrants. Evenings like this (which have been held in Springvale) were very successful and included all areas of the Department of Justice including the police and the magistrates' court. The evenings provided information on consumer rights and tenants' rights. It also made people feel active as were given the opportunity to raise their own concerns.
- Consumer Affairs recently released a DVD in 10 different languages regarding tenant rights and responsibilities and credit issues for the migrant communities in the south-eastern suburbs. A similar idea has been floated for the northern suburbs.
- A northern region cultural community resource directory.
- A calendar of important cultural and religious events and the practices that these events include.
- 'Train the Trainer,' type education of service provision workers.
- A network of this type does not have to have a strict agenda or be an entirely new entity. It was noted that intercultural programs work most effectively are those that run in conjunction with already existing programs and organizations.
- The network could offer an advocacy role for migrants who wish to take claims of prejudice to the appropriate ombudsmen or the Equal Opportunity Commission. It was felt that, in order to do this, the network should be free of all governmental constraints.

APPENDIX 10:

COPY OF QUESTIONNAIRE

Some basic questions on your involvement	<i>Office use only</i>
1a. Do you belong to a faith or religious organisation? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No (if No, please go to question 5)	<input type="checkbox"/>
1b. Are you actively involved in the organisation (do you attend meetings or events)? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/>
2a. Do you belong to an ethnic community organisation? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/>
2b. Are you actively involved in the organisation (do you attend meetings or events)? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Are you involved in any interfaith or multicultural activity? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Do you belong to any other community organisation? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/>

The answers to the following questions will provide some information on your views and experience

5. How often do you meet or talk with people of different religious or cultural backgrounds? (please tick one box only) <input type="checkbox"/> Every day <input type="checkbox"/> Once or twice a week <input type="checkbox"/> Once or twice a month <input type="checkbox"/> Rarely <input type="checkbox"/> Never	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. How well informed do you think you are about relations between different faiths and cultures? (please tick one box on each line)	
Very well Quite well Not well Not at all	
Locally <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nationally <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Internationally <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Which of the following words best describe relations between people of differing ethnic or religious backgrounds in your neighbourhood? (please tick as many boxes as you wish)	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Friendship <input type="checkbox"/> Cooperation <input type="checkbox"/> Harmony <input type="checkbox"/> Tolerance <input type="checkbox"/> Suspicion	
<input type="checkbox"/> Mistrust <input type="checkbox"/> Tension <input type="checkbox"/> Conflict <input type="checkbox"/> Other	
8. Is there religious or racial prejudice in your neighbourhood? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Have you personally experienced religious or racial prejudice? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know	<input type="checkbox"/>

The answers to the following questions will provide background information on the people completing this survey

15. What is your gender?	<input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Male	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. To which age group do you belong?	<input type="checkbox"/> under 18 years <input type="checkbox"/> 18 - 24 years <input type="checkbox"/> 25 - 34 years <input type="checkbox"/> 35 - 44 years <input type="checkbox"/> 45 - 54 years <input type="checkbox"/> 55 - 64 years <input type="checkbox"/> 65 years or more	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. Do you identify yourself as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. In which country were you born?	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
19. What is your religion? (<i>please write 'no religion' if appropriate. Please state atheist, agnostic, etc</i>)	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
20. What language is normally spoken in your home (<i>please indicate a maximum of three languages</i>)?	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
21. What is your ancestry (eg: Australian, Chinese, English, Italian, etc.) (<i>please indicate a maximum of two ancestries</i>)?	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
22. Which of the following best describes the current situation in your household? (<i>please tick one box only</i>)	<input type="checkbox"/> Couple with dependent children <input type="checkbox"/> Living alone <input type="checkbox"/> Couple without dependent children <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> Sole-parent with dependent children	<input type="checkbox"/>
23. Which of the following best describes your employment status? (<i>please tick one box only</i>)	<input type="checkbox"/> Work full-time <input type="checkbox"/> Unemployed <input type="checkbox"/> Work part-time or casual <input type="checkbox"/> Retired or pensioned <input type="checkbox"/> Carer or home duties	<input type="checkbox"/>

<p>24. What is the highest level of education that you have completed? (<i>please tick one box only</i>)</p> <table><tr><td><input type="checkbox"/> Primary school</td><td><input type="checkbox"/> University degree</td></tr><tr><td><input type="checkbox"/> Secondary school</td><td><input type="checkbox"/> Post-graduate qualification</td></tr><tr><td><input type="checkbox"/> Trade or apprenticeship or diploma</td><td><input type="checkbox"/> Other</td></tr></table> <p>_____</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Primary school	<input type="checkbox"/> University degree	<input type="checkbox"/> Secondary school	<input type="checkbox"/> Post-graduate qualification	<input type="checkbox"/> Trade or apprenticeship or diploma	<input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Primary school	<input type="checkbox"/> University degree						
<input type="checkbox"/> Secondary school	<input type="checkbox"/> Post-graduate qualification						
<input type="checkbox"/> Trade or apprenticeship or diploma	<input type="checkbox"/> Other						
<p>25. In which Council area (municipality) do you usually live? (<i>please tick one box only</i>)</p> <table><tr><td><input type="checkbox"/> Banyule</td><td><input type="checkbox"/> Moreland</td></tr><tr><td><input type="checkbox"/> Darebin</td><td><input type="checkbox"/> Whittlesea</td></tr><tr><td><input type="checkbox"/> Hume</td><td><input type="checkbox"/> Other</td></tr></table> <p>_____</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Banyule	<input type="checkbox"/> Moreland	<input type="checkbox"/> Darebin	<input type="checkbox"/> Whittlesea	<input type="checkbox"/> Hume	<input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Banyule	<input type="checkbox"/> Moreland						
<input type="checkbox"/> Darebin	<input type="checkbox"/> Whittlesea						
<input type="checkbox"/> Hume	<input type="checkbox"/> Other						
<p>26. How long have you lived in that municipality? _____ (years)</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>						
<p>27. (<i>Optional Response</i>) Is there anything that you would like to say regarding relations between different faiths and cultures in your neighbourhood?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>						

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey
Please return the completed survey in the supplied pre-paid envelope
(no postage stamp is required) by
Friday, 11 July, 2008.

If you have any queries regarding this survey or the organisations involved,
please contact:

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APPENDIX 11:

**BREAKDOWN OF SUBURBS
IN THE NORTHERN REGION**

CITY OF BANYULE

Bellfield	3081
Briar Hill	3088
Bundoora	3083
Eaglemont	3084
Eltham North	3095
Greensborough	3088
Heidelberg	3084
Heidelberg Heights	3081
Heidelberg West	3081
Ivanhoe	3079
Ivanhoe East	3079
Lower Plenty	3093
Macleod	3085
Montmorency	3094
Rosanna	3084
Saint Helena	3088
Viewbank	3084
Watsonia	3087
Watsonia North	3087
Yallambie	3085

CITY OF HUME

Attwood	3049
Broadmeadows	3047
Bulla	3428
Campbellfield	3061
Clarkefield	3430
Coolaroo	3048
Craigieburn	3064
Dallas	3047
Diggers Rest	3427
Gladstone Park	3043
Greenvale	3059
Jacana	3047
Kalkallo	3064
Keilor	3036
Meadows Heights	3048
Melbourne Airport	3045
Mickleham	3064
Oaklands Junction	3063
Roxburgh Park	3064
Somerton	3062
Sunbury	3429
Tullamarine	3043
Westmeadows	3049
Wildwood	3429

CITY OF DAREBIN

Alphington	3078
Bundoora	3083
Fairfield	3078
Kingsbury	3083
Macleod	3085
Northcote	3070
Preston	3072
Reservoir	3073
Thornbury	3071

CITY OF MORELAND

Brunswick	3056
Brunswick East	3057
Brunswick West	3055
Coburg	3058
Coburg North	3058
Fawkner	3060
Glenroy	3046
Gowanbrae	3043
Hadfield	3046
Merlynston	3058
Oak Park	3046
Pascoe Vale	3044
Pascoe Vale South	3044
Westbreen	3046

CITY OF WHITTLESEA

Beveridge	3753
Bundoora	3083
Donnybrook	3064
Doreen	3754
Eden Park	3757
Epping	3076
Humevale	3757
Kinglake West	3757
Lalor	3075
Mernda	3754
Mill Park	3082
South Morang	3752
Thomastown	3074
Whittlesea	3757
Wollert	3750
Woodstock	3751
Yan Yean	3755
Yuroke	3063

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