



#realunitingchurch

Proposal 1

Towards a cohesive society

That the Synod:

strongly encourage congregations to engage in constructive dialogue and fellowship with local communities of other faiths

The scope of a Proposal

This proposal comes from the Synod Interfaith Relationships Committee (SIRC). It is directed towards all congregations within the Queensland Synod of the Uniting Church who meet within a reasonable proximity of places where people of other faith communities gather. It is important that members of Synod understand that we are building relationships, creating friendships, not arguing points of belief. If anything, working in the interfaith space enables us to live out our own firmly held Christian convictions, with more clarity and greater love and respect for those who hold to other faith positions.

Rationale

Issues of social cohesion are becoming more and more important in what appears to be an increasingly fragmented world. Christians know our calling to be to “love our neighbour as ourselves” (Luke 10:27). We also know ourselves to be called to a ministry of reconciliation (2 Cor 5:18) and peace-building (Matthew 5:9).

The Queensland Synod of the Uniting Church is a founding member of the very recently launched Queensland Faith Communities Council, whose mission is to:

- (a) engage in dialogue that enhances our understanding of shared values and develops respect for our diversity; and*
- (b) publicly promote interfaith relations by working together, through education, guidance and example, to support the positive outcomes of religious freedom, social justice, inclusivity and diversity.*

Ways in which a congregation may choose to engage with others are boundless. They include informal gatherings for coffee, the negating of harmful stereotyping when encountered within its own ranks and within the wider community, working with a local Muslim group to put on an Iftar dinner during Ramadan and accepting invitations from others to their important faith celebrations.

Members of the Synod Interfaith Relationships Committee are available to discuss these matters and to provide useful information sheets on accepted protocol for such encounters.

There are a variety of interfaith groups within our State, who are building bridges of understanding across faiths, and members of the Uniting Church are very active in such groups. A number of groups are named below with SIRC member contact details for obtaining further information:

- North Brisbane Interfaith Group (Garth Read - garthread@ecn.net.au)
- Toowoomba Interfaith Group (John Agnew - agnewjj@yahoo.com.au)
- Multifaith Advisory and Action Group (Gold Coast) (Bryan Gilmour - blq1555@bigpond.net.au, and Lesley Bryant - lesley-b@bigpond.net.au)
- Believing Women for a Culture of Peace Lesley Bryant and Heather Griffin - hgriffin@internode.on.net
- Chai Community (Gold Coast Women’s Group) Lesley Bryant

Proposers

A proposal from one of Synod's reporting bodies (committee, board, presbytery, task group) should be submitted and signed by an authorised officer of the body

Name: Julie Mackay-Rankin

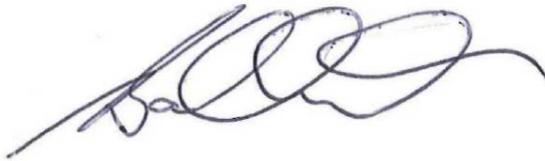
Email: Julie.mackay@uhealth.com.au phone: 0404 196 155



Signature: _____

Name: Neil Ballment

Email: Neil.Ballment@csiro.au phone: 0407 914 322



Signature: _____