

February 20, 2009

APRO Supports National Day of Mourning

The Australian Partnership of Religious Organisations (APRO) applauds the Australian Government's initiative to hold a National Day of Mourning this Sunday, 22 February, in response to the tragic Victorian bushfires.

APRO Chair Associate Professor Abd Malak has encouraged all faith and religious communities to take up the Prime Minister's invitation to participate in the day of mourning.

"We ask all faith and religious communities to mark the National Day of Mourning in their services and gatherings this weekend. The tragedy and loss that has been witnessed has affected all of us deeply," Associate Professor Malak said.

The National Council of Churches in Australia (NCCA) Interim General Secretary, Mr Paul Ryan said: "In the true spirit of community we have an opportunity to show our solidarity in supporting this day to honour those who have lost their lives, and as an expression of empathy towards those who have suffered and to the heroic workers of our emergency services."

Venerable Bhante Sujato of the Australian Sangha Association extended deepest sympathy on behalf of the Buddhist monks and nuns of Australia to all those who have been afflicted by the disastrous bushfires in Victoria.

"We are all humbled by the courage shown by the men and women who have fought to save lives and communities in the face of such an overwhelming force of nature. We urge the Buddhist communities of Australia to join the work of rebuilding, and to remember the suffering and the courage in their services on this National Day of Mourning," Venerable Bhante Sujato said.

By way of support people are asked to add their names and contribute a message or a poem to the Bushfire Message Book as an expression of sympathy and support. The Bushfire Message Book will be made up of thousands of pages from around Australia in remembrance of the tragedy, and of the support and sympathy shown by our many communities that make up our nation.

For information on the Bushfire Message Book visit:

www.pm.gov.au/bushfiremessagebook.cfm

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APRO AUSTRALIAN PARTNERSHIP
OF RELIGIOUS ORGANISATIONS
MEDIA RELEASE

APRO Member bodies:

- National Council of Churches in Australia
- Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia
- Australian Federation of Islamic Councils
- Executive Council of Australian Jewry
- Australian Baha'i Community
- Sikh Community
- Hindu Community
- Buddhist Community – Australian Sangha Association and Federation of Australian Buddhist Councils
- World Conference of Religion and Peace (Australia)
- Council for a Multicultural Australia
- Federation of African Communities' Councils
- Australian Multicultural Foundation
- National Council of Migrant Resource Centres and Migrant Support Associations

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