

MEDIA RELEASE

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For immediate release

Multifaith Community Forum takes Human Rights Focus

Human rights will be the focus of the Australian Partnership of Religious Organisation's (APRO) multifaith community forum: *Building Community Together*, to be held on Tuesday 16 June in Adelaide.

National and local key religious and faith representatives will join together to discuss issues surrounding religious and community harmony and to identify strategies in these areas.

APRO, Australia's peak body representing Australia's diverse religious groups, has organised the annual forum with the aim of strengthening relationships between the faith communities through dialogue, interaction and cooperation.

APRO Convenor, Associate Professor Abd Malak, said Australia's religious diversity remains under the spotlight.

"This year APRO was invited to consult with the Australian Human Rights Commission on a report into Freedom of Religion and Belief in Australia. The APRO forum will build on this by developing recommendations to building a more socially inclusive and harmonious community that protects and respects the rights of all Australians," Associate Professor Malak said.

Key national and state religious representatives attending include General Secretary of the National Council of Churches Australia, Reverend Tara Curlewis; President of the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils, Mr Ikebal Patel; Rabbi Shoshana Kaminsky, Beth Shalom Synagogue; Flinders University Buddhist Chaplain, Ven. Thay Thong Phap; President, Hindu Society of South Australia, Mr Siva Selva; and Ms Jessie Kaur Singh, Sikh Council of Australia.

The National Multi-Faith Community Forum will be an opportunity for participants from local diverse faiths to share information about their communities and will provide support for these smaller faith communities in promoting a better understanding of religions that exist in Australia.

Participants will be given the chance to talk about religious prejudice and vilification; media and cyberspace challenges and opportunities; education in a multifaith society and responding to climate change and protecting our environment.

"I hope this forum will not only create stronger inter-faith networks, but result in recommendations that will inform policies and programs across government agencies and faith communities on achieving social and religious harmony in Australia," Associate Professor Malak said.

The National Multi-Faith Community Forum will be held on Tuesday June 16, from 9am-4pm at the Migrant Resource Centre of SA, 59 King William Street, Adelaide.

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