



## *"Enrichment through a Socially Inclusive Society: Challenges and Solutions"*

The Australian community has undergone great changes in the last 25 years, including our emerging Muslim communities. However, this reality has not always been well understood or accepted. As a framework for living with cultural diversity, the idea of multiculturalism has lately come under increasing criticism, both in Australia and overseas.

Should Australia narrow its diversity and multiculturalism?

Or do we choose to enrich it towards a universal pluralism, building on the challenges presented to us by the multi-faith and multi-cultural nature of our societies?

This conference seeks to explore how to work towards a socially cohesive society in the context of contemporary realities and challenges.

Issues to be addressed are:

- Multiculturalism and Social Inclusion: Similarities and Differences
- Diversity in Australian Social Landscape
- Citizenship in a Pluralistic Society
- Islamic Law and social cohesion

## Organising Committee

This conference was organised by an organising committee with representatives from various universities and Affinity Intercultural Foundation;

**Associate Professor Adam Possamai**

School of Sociology  
University of Western Sydney

**Mr Ahmet Keskin**

Vice President & Co-Founder  
Affinity Intercultural Foundation

**Associate Professor Jake Lynch**

Director, Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies  
University of Sydney

**Professor Kevin Dunn**

School of Social Sciences  
University of Western Sydney

**Associate Professor Marion Maddox**

Director, Centre for Research on Social Inclusion,  
Macquarie University

**Mr Mehmet Saral (Chairperson)**

President & Co-Founder  
Affinity Intercultural Foundation

## Symposium Program

### Sunday 9 October 2011

#### Chairperson

**Prof Julia Howell**

Prof of Sociology of Religion, UWS

#### Welcome Address

**Hon Victor Dominello MP**

Minister for Citizenship and Communities, and  
Minister for Aboriginal Affairs

#### Speakers

**Professor Desmond Cahill**– RMIT University, VIC

*“From 9/11 to Breivik: Responding Nationally and  
Transnationally to the Challenge of Diversity and  
Social Cohesion”*

**Emeritus Prof Gary Bouma** – Monash University, VIC

**Mr Mehmet Ozalp** – Charles Sturt University, NSW

#### Vote of Thanks

**Mr Mehmet Saral** – Affinity Intercultural Foundation

## Conference Day 2 – Monday 10 October 2011

<b>Workshop 1 – Room BA-23.G.40</b>	
9:00-9:30	<b>Registration</b>
9:30-10:00	<b>Morning Tea</b>
10:00-12:30	<p><i>Education in Social Cohesion</i></p> <p><b>Plenary 1</b></p> <p><b>Assoc Prof Marion Maddox</b> - Macquarie University, NSW  <i>"Religious Schools: Creating Division or Fostering Inclusion?"</i></p> <p><b>Assoc Prof Klaas Woldring</b> - Southern Cross University, NSW  <i>"Education for Social Inclusion includes Participation in Decision-Making at the Highest Levels"</i></p> <p><b>Emeritus Prof Abe Ata</b> - Deakin University, VIC  <i>"An Investigation of Attitudes of School Age Non-Muslim Australians towards Muslims and Islam: A National Survey"</i></p> <p><i>Facilitator Prof Emeritus Gary Bouma</i></p>
12:30-13:30	<b>Lunch</b>
13:30-16:00	<p><i>Islamic Law &amp; Social Cohesion</i></p> <p><b>Plenary 2</b></p> <p><b>Ms Jamila Hussain</b> – University of Technology Sydney  <i>"Fear of Shariah: The Australian Experience"</i></p> <p><b>Prof Jim Richardson</b> - University of Nevada, USA  <i>"Managing Minority Religious and Ethnic Groups in Australia: Implications for Social Cohesion"</i></p> <p><b>Dr Salim Farrar</b> - University of Sydney  <i>"Building Social Cohesion in Secular Spaces: The Legal Regulation of Prayer"</i></p> <p><i>Facilitator Assoc Prof Adam Possamai</i></p>
16:00	<b>Close</b>

## Conference Day 2 – Monday 10 October 2011

<b>Workshop 2 – Room BA-23.G.41</b>	
9:00-9:30	<b>Registration</b>
9:30-10:00	<b>Morning Tea</b>
10:00-12:30	<p><i>How shall the Refugee Issue be handled from a Humanitarian Perspective</i></p> <p><b>Plenary 3</b></p> <p><b>Prof Andrew Jakubowicz</b> - University of Technology Sydney  <i>"Social Conflict and On Shore Processing: The Runaway Rumour and its Social Implications"</i></p> <p><i>Facilitator</i>  <b>Prof Kevin Dunn</b></p> <p><b>Frances Milne</b> - Coordinator, Balmain for Refugees  <i>"A Faster and Fairer Refugee and Humanitarian Determination System"</i></p>
12:30-13:30	<b>Lunch</b>
13:30-16:00	<p><i>Citizenship in a Pluralistic Society</i></p> <p><b>Plenary 4</b></p> <p><b>Prof Desmond Cahill</b> – RMIT University  <i>"Citizenship in and for a Socially Cohesive Society"</i></p> <p><b>Dr Helen Szoke</b> - Race Discrimination Commissioner, Australian Human Rights Commission  <i>"Preventing Racism to Build a Cohesive Society"</i></p> <p><b>Snr Constable Danny Mikati</b> - Team Leader, Bankstown LAC, NSW Police  <i>"Both Sides of the Fence"</i></p> <p><i>Facilitator</i>  <b>Ahmet Keskin</b></p>
16:00	<b>Close</b>

## Conference Day 3 – Tuesday 11th October 2011

<b>Workshop 1 - Room BA-23.G.40</b>	
9:00-9:30	<b>Registration</b>
9:30-10:00	<b>Morning Tea</b>
10:00-12:30	<p><i><b>Diversity in Australian Social Landscape</b></i></p> <p><b>Plenary 5</b></p> <p><b>Prof Kevin Dunn</b> – University of Western Sydney, NSW <i>"Ordinariness of Australian Muslims"</i></p> <p><b>Prof Christine Inglis</b> – University of Sydney, NSW <i>"Behind the Categories: Exploring Stereotypes and Diversity within Common Categories"</i></p> <p><b>Dr Chris Hartney</b> – University of Sydney, NSW <i>"Problems and Solutions to Good Neighbourliness"</i></p> <p><i>Facilitator Assoc Prof Marion Maddox</i></p>
12:30-13:30	<b>Lunch</b>
13:30-16:00	<p><i><b>Importance of Interfaith Dialogue in Creating Social Cohesion</b></i></p> <p><b>Plenary 6</b></p> <p><b>Prof Gary Bouma</b> – Monash University, VIC <i>"The Importance of Interfaith Dialogue in Creating Social Cohesion"</i></p> <p><b>Prof Suzanne Rutland</b> - University of Sydney, NSW <i>"The Importance of Interfaith Dialogue in Creating Social Cohesion"</i></p> <p><b>Mr Mehmet Ozalp</b> - Charles Sturt University, NSW <i>"Importance of Interfaith and Intercultural Dialogue for Social Cohesion in Western Societies"</i></p> <p><i>Facilitator Mehmet Saral</i></p>
16:00	<b>Close</b>

## Conference Day 3 – Tuesday 11th October 2011

<b>Workshop 2 - Room BA-23.G.41</b>	
9:00-9:30	<b>Registration</b>
9:30-10:00	<b>Morning Tea</b>
10:00-12:30	<p><i>How does Media affect Social Cohesion?</i></p> <p><b>Plenary 7</b></p> <p><b>Dr Douglas Golding</b> - University of Queensland, QLD <i>"How does Media affect Social Cohesion"</i></p> <p><b>Mrs Zuleyha Keskin</b> - Charles Sturt University, NSW <i>"Muslim Youth and Media"</i></p> <p><b>Ms Mehal Krayem</b> – University of Technology, NSW <i>"Arabs and Muslims on Australian Television"</i></p> <p><i>Facilitator Peter Manning</i></p>
12:30-13:30	<b>Lunch</b>
13:30-16:00	<p><i>Multiculturalism and Social Inclusion: Similarities and Differences</i></p> <p><b>Plenary 8</b></p> <p><b>Prof Jake Lynch</b> - University of Sydney, NSW <i>"Multiculturalism, Australia's Foreign Policy and the Media"</i></p> <p><b>Ms Andrea van Dommelen</b> - University of Sydney, NSW <i>"The Role of Social Identity in Intergroup Relations"</i></p> <p><b>Mr Susai Benjamin</b> - Lawyer <i>"Multiculturalism and Social Inclusion"</i></p> <p><i>Facilitator Prof Gail Whiteford</i></p>
16:00	<b>Close</b>

# Biographies and Abstracts

## Conference Day 2 – Monday 10 October 2011

### Plenary 1

### Education in Social Cohesion

#### **A/Prof Marion Maddox**

Director, Centre for Research on Social Inclusion. Macquarie University

**Bio:** Marion Maddox holds PhDs in theology (Flinders, 1992) and political philosophy (UNSW, 2000). She writes widely on religion and politics, including the acclaimed “God Under Howard: The Rise of the Religious Right in Australian Politics” (Sydney: Allen & Unwin 2005). She is currently Director of Macquarie University’s Centre for Research on Social Inclusion.

#### *“Religious Schools: Creating Division or Fostering Inclusion?”*

**Abstract:** With the Gonski review of school funding entering its final stage, the spotlight is once again focused on the question of public vs private schooling. In Australia, nearly all private schools are religious -- the vast majority Christian. Advocates argue that private, religious schools enable communities to pass on their traditions to the next generation and, for religious minorities, ensure their children can learn in a safe environment and from strong role models who understand their religion and culture. Critics of private schooling contend that, on the contrary, private schools prevent children of different faith backgrounds from growing up side-by-side, potentially jeopardising a vital resource for social harmony. They also maintain that the vastly different resources available to some private schools entrench existing inequalities, further threatening social cohesion. Amid the fierce lobbying which inevitably accompanies these debates, this paper seeks guiding principles based on the concept of education for social inclusion.



## **Dr. Klaas Woldring**

Dutch Australian Cultural Centre (DACC) President  
(Self Retired) Associate Professor, Southern Cross University

**Bio:** Klaas has provided 20 years academic service to Southern Cross University, Lismore. He also taught part-time at the University of Western Sydney from 1999-2000 and the Macquarie University in 2000. He also designed and taught short courses on “Republics and their Presidents” at the Workers Education Association and is now active in the Friends of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC), is Secretary of the Australian Employee Ownership Association (AEOA), President of the Dutch Australian Cultural Centre (DACC). Klaas has conducted research in Norway, Mondragon (Spain), Maastricht, Berlin, Malta and the Solomon Islands. He has taught Government, Management, International Human Resource Management (IHRM), and Workplace Democracy, and has published four book books: Beyond Independence - Development in Zambia (1984), Business Ethics in Australia and New Zealand (1996), AUSTRALIA – Republic or US Colony? (Lulu Press, 2005) and “How about OUR Republic?” (BookSurge Publishing, 2006). He also published some 40 academic articles on politics, management, employment relations, ethics and cultural diversity.

### **"Education for Social Inclusion includes Participation in Decision-Making at the Highest Levels"**

**Abstract:** There are probably formal courses for social inclusion now or there soon will be. There are or there were formal courses for multiculturalism, especially for teacher education students. In the mid 1980s I designed four such semester courses for the School of Teacher Education at NRCAE, later to become Southern Cross University. But education for social inclusion of minority or disadvantaged groups, be they ethnic, racial, religious, gender or employee groups, is a much broader concept. It means that such groups, or at least role model individuals representing such groups, are seen to be involved at the very highest level of decision-making in society. In Australia, often claimed to be a democratic and egalitarian society, there is still much room for improvement in this respect. This paper concentrates on the paucity of representation of various minority groups in our parliaments and how this can be remedied by changing the electoral system to proportional representation. Furthermore, that such a change would be beneficial for the entire adversarial political culture in Australia. The second part of the paper concentrates on the serious under-representation of ethnic communities on corporate boards. Research by NATSEM and the AMP confirms this situation. A very recent BRW issues draws attention to this as well and welcomes further research. The Anglo-Celtic male dominance on boards is

under scrutiny. Action to engage more women on boards is being taken but this is not the case with ethnic minorities. Why is this so, what action can be taken and why is this an important objective?

### **Dr. Emeritus Prof Abe Ata**

Research Quantum - Arts & Education, Deakin University

**Bio:** Dr Abe W. Ata graduated in psychology at the American University and was soon nominated as a delegate to the United Nations' World Youth Assembly in New York. He completed his doctorate at Melbourne University in 1980 and has since been teaching in several Australian, American, Jordanian, occupied West Bank and Danish universities. He has been an Honorary Fellow at the Australian Catholic University since 1999 and is currently an Emeritus Professor at Deakin University.

His cross cultural training background, multidisciplinary and sensitivity in conducting and interpreting a wide ranging research projects are demonstrated in his publications of 15 books. These include: Bereavement and Health in Australia: gender, cross-cultural, religious and psychological issues (1996); Christian and Muslim intermarriage in Australia (2005); and Us and Them: Christian-Muslim relations and social harmony in Australia (2009) – nominated for the Prime Minister's Literary Book Awards in 2010 . He has also written 102 journal articles of which 17 are published in the Encyclopedia of Australian People (2000), Encyclopedia of Melbourne (2005), and Encyclopedia of Religions (2009, Cambridge University Press). In 2011 Dr Ata was nominated as 'Australian of the Year'.

**Abstract:** This paper reports some results from a large scale study of attitudes towards Islam and Muslims amongst Australian secondary students. Wide-spread negative stereotypes and the relatively new presence of the Muslim community in Australia tend to suggest non-Muslim students may not be well informed, while the longstanding multicultural posture of educational policy suggests otherwise. Variation in response between boys and girls, religion or non-religious affiliated also revealed a high level of significance.

This research study examined what constituted negative attitudes towards Muslims that are predicted from the scale of our knowledge, fashionable or well worn. Drawing on the findings of this literature, the author set out to examine if a relationship exists between prejudice and fact driven knowledge of other groups like Muslims. In other words, are negative attitudes towards Muslims strongly correlated with false beliefs?

The findings show Australian students are generally ignorant about Muslims and Islam, and few believe that schools are filling the gaps in their knowledge. While non-Muslim students agree that acceptance of Muslims does not come easily in Australia, school does not emerge as a site for change. The results further show that there is a bi-directional relationship between prejudice and the degree of knowledge, or cultural perception of Muslims in the Australian society, however there was no evidence of causation or level of significance.

## Plenary 2

### Islamic Law and Social Cohesion

**Ms Jamila Hussain**  
Faculty of Law, UTS

**Bio:** Jamila Hussain is a senior lecturer in the Law faculty at the University of Technology Sydney. Having completed her B.A. LLB qualifications, she practiced for some time as a solicitor in Sydney, before converting to Islam and going to Malaysia to undertake a Masters in Comparative Law and Graduate Diploma in Shariah Law and Practice at the International Islamic University, Kuala Lumpur. She has a particular interest in multiculturalism and the integration of Muslims into the broader Australian society and has written a number of articles and book chapters on this subject, as well as a book, 'Islam: Its Law and Society' (2011 Federation Press) which is intended to explain Islamic law to western readers.

*"Fear of Shariah: The Australian experience"*

**Abstract:** Recent statements by politicians, journalists and commentators have been firmly of the view that Shariah has no place in Australia. Yet, how many really understand what Shariah is, the extent to which it is, or is not, compatible with the Australian legal system and whether there is any justification for the fear of Shariah which has gripped sections of the western world, and Australia in particular? This paper argues that fear of Shariah is based on ignorance and misunderstanding, largely manufactured out of images and reports in the tabloid media, of sensational or bizarre events in overseas countries. In the public view, Shariah is often confused with cultural practices and the loudly expressed opinions of a few radical persons, both Muslim and non-Muslim. There is also some discomfort with the idea of religion

playing any part in an apparently secular legal system. This paper argues that the extent of incompatibility is greatly exaggerated and that there is no reason that at least some aspects of Shariah cannot exist in harmony with Australian law. Furthermore, Muslim community leadership needs to do more to educate both Muslims and non-Muslims on the meaning and purpose of Shariah and how it can be integrated into modern Australia.

### **Prof Jim Richardson**

Sociology and Judicial Studies, University of Nevada, Reno, USA

**Bio:** James T. Richardson, J.D., Ph.D., is Professor of Sociology and Judicial Studies at the University of Nevada, Reno. He specializes in studies of new and minority religions, focusing recently on efforts to exert social control over and manage religious phenomena using judicial and legislative systems. He has published numerous articles in sociology of religion and social psychological journals and edited volumes, and his most recent books include, *Regulating Religion: Case Studies from Around the Globe* (Kluwer, 2004) and *Saints under Siege: The Texas State Raid against the Fundamentalist Latter Day Saints* (with Stuart Wright, New York university Press, 2011).

#### *“Managing Minority Religious and Ethnic Groups in Australia: Implications for Social Cohesion”*

**Abstract:** This paper examines Australia’s growing religious pluralism and change within religious communities, including in Muslim communities. The meaning of those developments for the concept of social cohesion is considered, as are the possible effects on social cohesion deriving from the lack of a federal Bill of Rights protecting minority individuals and groups in Australia. Also discussed are the aftereffects of the destruction of the World Trade Center in New York, with the attendant focusing of attention on Muslim communities in Australia and around the world. The passage of dozens of anti-terrorism laws in Australia, and the implications of those laws for limiting personal and group freedoms for religious minorities, especially Muslims, is examined in terms concerns about social cohesion. Finally, impacts on social cohesion being put forward in debates over whether to allow the development Shari’a in Australia are discussed.

## **Dr. Salim Farrar**

Sydney Law School, University of Sydney

**Bio:** Dr Salim Farrar (LLB, LL.M, Lond; PhD, Warwick; DipSLP, IIU Malaysia) is Senior Lecturer, and Associate Director of the Centre for Asian and Pacific Law at Sydney Law School. His teaching and research interests are in Islamic Law, Malaysian Law and Criminal Justice. Before moving to the Sydney Law School in 2009, he was Associate Professor at the International Islamic University, Malaysia, where he had taught since 2004. The majority of his publications and research to date explore the interplay between Islamic law, state laws and human rights, as well as the role of law in the development of Islamic banking and finance.

*“Building Social Cohesion in Secular Spaces: The Legal Regulation of Prayer”*

**Abstract:** This presentation looks at the pressures of being religious in a secular age and the promotion of secular norms for the sake of ‘social harmony’ through force of law. In particular, it examines current legal reforms in France banning Muslims from praying in the street on grounds of ‘social sensitivities’ and questions whether this represents a more insidious global trend on restrictions on freedom of religion.

## **Plenary 3**

### **How shall the Refugee Issue be handled from a Humanitarian Perspective?**

## **Prof Andrew Jakubowicz**

Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, UTS

**Bio:** Andrew Jakubowicz is Professor of Sociology at UTS and co-director of the Centre for Cosmopolitan Civil Societies. His research covers cultural diversity and media, the politics of multiculturalism, and the use of multimedia. He directs the website Making Multicultural Australia (<http://multiculturalaustralia.edu.au>) and chairs the NGO Institute for Cultural Diversity (<http://culturaldiversity.net.au>). He blogs on The Conversation (<http://theconversation.edu.au>) where recent posts include <http://theconversation.edu.au/andrew-bolt-racism-and-the-internet-3626>, <http://theconversation.edu.au/the-vexed-question-of-onshore-processing-and-possible-civil-unrest-3303>, and <http://theconversation.edu.au/anders-breivik-australian-anti>

multiculturalists-and-the-threat-to-social-cohesion-2542. He was historical adviser on the January 2011 SBS documentary series *Immigration Nation*, and is editorial adviser for the SBS documentary series “Once Upon a Time in Cabramatta” due for broadcast in January 2012. Recent publications include “Political Islam and Australian Multiculturalism”, “Living on the Outside: cultural diversity and the transformation of public space in Melbourne”, and “Chinese Walls: Australian Multiculturalism and the Necessity for Human Rights”.

*“Social Conflict and On Shore Processing: The Runaway Rumour and its Social Implications”*

**Abstract:** The creation of a new apparent “truth”, that increasing on-shore processing would necessarily produce great social unrest, such as has occurred in London or Paris, represents a very serious addition to the parameters within which Australians are discussing asylum seeker processing. While there has been little elaboration from the Government of what the logic of this process might be, it is worth treating it seriously and trying to understand what concerns could underpin the statement.

**Frances Milne**

Coordinator, Balmain for Refugees

**Bio:** Frances Milne has been a community advocate and researcher in social policy for almost four decades. Following the Tampa Crisis in 2001 she established Balmain for Refugees to assist failed asylum seekers who faced imprisonment, torture or death in their own countries to write letters of last resort to the Minister. Frances was also a founding member of Bridge for Asylum Seekers Foundation in 2003 which supports destitute asylum seekers with no other means of support. She was Chairperson, of Uniting Care NSW.ACT (1998 -2003)] the policy and community services arm of the NSW Synod of the Uniting Church of Australia. Prior to this Frances was the first Executive Officer of the Federation of Ethnic Communities’ Councils of Australia (1983-1989) and was a Ministerial appointment to the University of NSW Council (1980-1988).

*“A Faster and Fairer Refugee and Humanitarian Determination System”*

**Abstract:** There is only one refugee issue in Australia at the moment according to the politicians and the media. That issue is how can we stop the boats. Although couched in terms of the danger for asylum seekers coming in leaky boats, the politicisation and

demonization of offshore asylum seekers as “queue jumpers” or as security risks or, more recently, as displacing refugees in overseas camps, is shameful opportunism. Their imprisonment in detention centres around Australia for years further stigmatises them as dangerous and untrustworthy. The spin-off of this cruelty to offshore asylum seekers in particular is the fracturing of social cohesion where “boat people” have become the most hated and despised group in Australian society. The suspicion and hostility they now evoke threatens to destabilise the successful settlement of all refugees and new immigrants whose different pathways into Australia are not well understood. Unless Australia starts treating asylum seekers and refugees fairly and humanely, this shameful period in Australia’s history will be a permanent blight on what was once Australia’s proud record as a humanitarian country.

## Plenary 4

### Citizenship in a Pluralistic Society

**Professor Desmond Cahill**

Global Studies, Social Science & Planning, RMIT University

**Bio:** Des Cahill, Professor of Intercultural Studies at RMIT University in Melbourne, has been teaching about and researching immigrant, second language and cross-cultural issues for the past 35 years. Since 9/11 his focus has been on religion, globalization and interfaith issues. At his university, he established the B.A. (Multicultural Studies) in 1986 and its successor course, B.A. (International Studies) in 1999. In 2004, he published with colleagues for the immigration department, *Religion, Cultural Diversity and Safeguarding Australia* and in 2011 for the Australian Human Rights Commission, *Freedom of Religion and Belief in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Australia*. Since 2000, he has chaired Religions for Peace Australia and in 2008 was elected co-president and deputy moderator of Religions for Peace Asia. He led the City of Melbourne’s bid to stage the 2009 Parliament of the World’s Religions and was subsequently its honorary Melbourne Program Director. In 2010, he was awarded the Order of the Medal of Australia for “his services to intercultural education and to the interfaith movement”.

*“Citizenship in and for a Socially Cohesive Society”*

**Abstract:** After an introduction by Professor Cahill outlining the background to citizenship issues and citizenship education issues in Australia, this workshop will explore two questions: (1) what role does and can citizenship play for creating and maintaining a socially and religiously cohesive society? and (2) in the new subject on Civics and Citizenship in the new National Curriculum being co-ordinated by ACARA, what should be its aims and content regarding education for a global and multicultural citizenship?

**Dr Helen Szoke**

Race Discrimination Commissioner, Australian Human Rights Commission

**Bio:** Helen Szoke was appointed as Australia’s full time Race Discrimination Commissioner on 5th September 2011 for a five year term. Up until her appointment, Helen Szoke was the Commissioner with the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission and worked with the Commission from 2004 until August 2011. During this time, she has been Co-Chair of the Management Committee of Play by the Rules. A unique partnership between the Australian Human Rights Commission, Australian Sports Commission and various other agencies, Play by the Rules is a website which provides information and online learning for community sport and recreation on how to prevent and deal with discrimination, harassment and child abuse for the sport and recreation industry. Helen has previously held positions relating to management, community development, organizational development and regulation in the education and health sectors. Helen is currently a Board Member of Multicultural Arts Victoria and a member of the Advisory Committee for the Centre for International Mental Health, School of Population Health University of Melbourne. Some of the milestones that have marked Dr Szoke’s time as Commissioner in Victoria, are the introduction of the charter of human rights as well as the Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic). Helen is also a Patron of New Beginnings which is an NGO set up to deal with peaceful conflict resolution with a focus on people of African Descent – It is a new organisation which is a collaboration between Sudanese and non-Sudanese Australians working towards peaceful productive lives through meaningful, sustainable actions that break cycles of conflict. She is also Patron of the Australian Arabic Women’s Foundation Inc, which aims to empower, encourage and support women from Arabic backgrounds to become independent.



*"Preventing Racism to Build a Cohesive Society"*

**Abstract:** As Race Discrimination Commissioner my focus is on both racism but also looking at what the elements are that prevent racism happening and that build a cohesive society. This presentation will explore some of these initiatives with a view to looking at what we can all do to build a cohesive society.

**Snr Constable Danny Mikati**

Team Leader, Bankstown LAC, NSW Police

**Bio:** Danny Mikati is currently the Team Leader of the Domestic Violence Unit and Youth Liaison Officers at Bankstown Local Area Command. He holds the rank of Leading Senior Constable and has been a police officer for over 11 years. He is the first Arab Muslim officer to receive the Commissioners Medal of Courage. He has held the position of Chairman of the Bankstown Branch of the Police Association of NSW for the last 3 years and is currently the President of the PCYC Bankstown management committee. He has a bachelor's degree in Science (Medical Science Majors & Minors in Arab and Islamic Studies) from the University of Sydney. He coordinates and teaches police recruits on Cultural diversity, and is consulted on issues with the Arab and Islamic Community. He is Martial Arts instructor, holding a 5th Dan Master Black belt in Taekwondo and has been teaching local youth for over 15 years.

*"Both Sides of the Fence"*

**Abstract:** My topic is called "Both sides of the fence". It will basically be about my story through my early days entering the police force. It will outline the obstacles faced by an Australian Muslim of Lebanese background from Southwest Sydney entering the Police Force during Islamophobia. It will show that despite early institutionalised and external racism, we do have the capacity to improve and become more inclusive.

## Day 3 – Conference: Tuesday 11 October 2011

### Plenary 5

### Diversity in Australian Social Landscape

#### Prof Kevin Dunn

University of Western Sydney, NSW

**Bio:** Professor Kevin Dunn (BA (Wollongong); PhD (Newcastle); FNGS, is Professor of Human Geography and Urban Studies, School of Social Sciences, at The University of Western Sydney. His areas of research include the geographies of racism, immigration and settlement, Islam in Australia, and local government and multiculturalism. Recent books include *Landscapes: Ways of Imagining the World* and his recent articles are published in *Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy*, *Race and Class*, *Ethnicities*, *The Australian Geographer*, *Studia Islamika*, *Journal of Intercultural Studies* and the *Australian Journal of Social Issues*. He is a Fellow of the New South Wales Geographical Society and President.

#### *“The Ordinariness of Australian Muslims”*

**Abstract:** There seem to be two dominant branches of scholarship on experiences of Muslims within western countries. One branch examines Muslims' experiences of racism, and its negative consequences. A second branch assumes Muslim incompatibility with 'western values', focussing on radicalisation. This research samples at the deeper-end of disaffection, reproducing discourses of non-integration. The exceptions to this work are reviewed (But there is no empirical evidence for widespread radicalisation or alienation. Drawing on the 'everyday multiculturalism' literature emphasises the unproblematic nature of most cross-cultural encounters by Muslims. The attitudes and experiences of a wide array of Australian Muslims are analysed, explicitly moving beyond the marginalised or radicalised.

**Prof Christine Inglis**  
University of Sydney, NSW

**Bio:** Prof Christine Inglis the Director of the Multicultural and Migration Research Centre at the University of Sydney and Editor of International Sociology, has undertaken extensive research on issues of migration and ethnic relations in Australia and internationally. Among recent publications are Türkiye to Australia: Turkish Settlement in Victoria (2011), Inequality, Discrimination and Social Cohesion: Socio-economic Mobility and Incorporation of Australian-born Lebanese and Turkish Background Youth (2011) and Planning for Cultural Diversity (2008)

*“Behind the Categories: Exploring Stereotypes and Diversity within Common Categories”*

**Abstract:** Policy makers, with rare exceptions, frame their policies in terms of particular target groups:-‘youth’, ‘women’, ‘the poor’ are just some of the groups they identify. The interplay between policy categories and popular usage is complex and raises the issue of stereotypes. Policies involving ethnic diversity are no different even if the categories may shift as with the move from NESB (non-English speaking background) to CALD(Culturally and linguistically diverse) or the focus on specific ethnic groups. Especially when addressing the circumstances of particular groups there is a need to go behind the categories to consider the extent of diversity they embrace. Over the last decade in Australia and elsewhere one category which has become the focus of policy, generalisations and stereotypes is that of ‘Muslim’. Drawing on recent research, including an international comparative study which compares second generation Australian born youth from Lebanese and Turkish backgrounds with a cross-section of other young Australians, this presentation questions a number of common generalisations as well as highlighting differences between Australian and European experiences.

**Dr Chris Hartney**  
University of Sydney, NSW

**Bio:** Dr Christopher Hartney is a lecturer in the Department of Studies in Religion at the University of Sydney. His doctoral work focused on the Vietnamese new religious movement of Caodaism and its emerging community centres in Wiley Park and Canley Vale in Sydney. He has appeared on behalf of religious communities in numerous State and Local Government tribunals and published numerous papers on

the interface between communities, councils and their neighbours. Chris is co-editor of the Journal of Religious History and the Journal of Literature and Aesthetics.

*"Problems and Solutions to Good Neighbourliness"*

**Abstract:** For more than a decade I have been charting the difficulties faced when religions new to a neighbourhood try to establish a place of worship in the ostensibly tolerant and multicultural suburbs of Sydney and Melbourne. Parking, issues of aesthetics and charges of “un-Australian” behaviour are regularly leveled at such emerging communities. In this brief paper I try to discuss solutions that are available to communities and to neighbours to safeguard the right for diverse communities to exist and the right to all for accessibility to religious practice.

## Plenary 6

### Importance of Interfaith Dialogue in Creating Social Cohesion

**Emeritus Prof Gary Bouma**  
Monash University, VIC

**Bio:** Prof Gary D Bouma is Emeritus Professor of Sociology and UNESCO Chair in Intercultural and Interreligious Relations – Asia Pacific at Monash University and an Associate Priest in the Anglican Parish of St John’s East Malvern. From 2006-2010 he was Chair, Board of Directors for The Parliament of the World’s Religions 2009. His research in the sociology of religion examines the management of religious diversity in plural multicultural societies, post modernity as a context for doing theology, religion and terror, religion and public policy. He is the author of over 20 books. Recent books include: Australian Soul: Religion and Spirituality in the Twenty-First Century (Cambridge University Press); Democracy in Islam (Routledge); Religious Diversity in Southeast Asia and the Pacific Islands: National Case Studies (Springer); and Freedom of Religion and Belief in 21st Century Australia (Australian Human Rights Commission). His latest book is Being Faithful in Diversity: Religions and Social Policy in Multifaith Societies (Australasian Theological Forum).

*"The Importance of Interfaith Dialogue in Creating Social Cohesion"*

**Abstract:** A right degree of social cohesion is needed for a society to produce what it needs and to reproduce itself sustainably into the future. Too much and there is stagnation, too little and there is anarchy. Religious diversity has long been seen to be inimical to social cohesion. This view is based on some historical cases where religious diversity was problematic, but ignores both historical and present cases where it has not been. Interfaith dialogue is an essential part of those strategies of inclusion that are required to produce and maintain the awareness that we need each other and engender the respect essential to a harmonious multifaith society.

**Prof Suzanne Rutland**

Department of Hebrew, Biblical & Jewish Studies, University of Sydney, NSW

**Bio:** Prof Suzanne D. Rutland (MA (Hons) PhD, Dip Ed, OAM) is Professor in the Department of Hebrew, Biblical & Jewish Studies, University of Sydney. She has published widely on Australian Jewish history, as well as writing on the Holocaust, Israel and Jewish education. Her latest books are *The Jews in Australia* (Cambridge University Press, 2005) and co-author with Sarah Rood of *Nationality Stateless: Destination Australia* (Melbourne: Jewish Museum of Australia and JDC, 2008). She received a government grant from the Australian Prime Ministers Centre for research on Australia and the campaign for Soviet Jewry and is writing a book on this topic with Australian Jewish journalist, Sam Lipski. In 2008 she received the Medal of the Order of Australia for services to Higher Jewish Education and interfaith dialogue.

*"The Importance of Interfaith Dialogue in Creating Social Cohesion"*

**Abstract:** Interfaith dialogue and education can play a role in countering the ongoing problem of prejudice and incitement to hate that can lead to racial tension and violence, thereby undermining social cohesion in Australia. This is particularly important in regard to the three Abrahamic faiths. In particular, Jews and Muslims in Australia have experiences of discrimination and verbal and physical abuse, because of ignorance and beliefs in negative stereotypes. As Jonathan Sarna has demonstrated in the United States, there is a commonality in the attacks levied at both groups from sections of the Christian majority. Hence, dialogue and, above all, interfaith education programs involving all groups are very important in counteracting negative stereotypes and fostering positive relationships. A number of specific initiatives, including the

Together with Humanity Program, will be outlined as examples of such interfaith activities. These initiatives can reinforce Australia's multicultural tradition and ensure that we have continued religious and ethnic harmony in Australia.

**Mr Mehmet Ozalp**  
Charles Sturt University, NSW

**Bio:** Mehmet Ozalp is a writer, academic and community activist. He is the founder and Executive Director of ISRA Australia. Mehmet serves as the Muslim Chaplain at the University of Sydney and Macquarie University. Mehmet is a prolific speaker on Islam and Muslims in Australia. He has established and currently teaches courses on theology, Islamic history, culture and contemporary issues on Islam and Muslims. Mehmet is the author of two books: "101 Questions You Asked About Islam", "Islam in the Modern World". He is a PhD Candidate in Islamic Theology at the University Sydney and an adjunct lecturer at the Charles Sturt University.

***"Importance of Interfaith and Intercultural Dialogue for Social Cohesion in Western Societies"***

**Abstract:** While interfaith and intercultural dialogue has an important place for peace in the globalised world, they have more specific roles for fostering social cohesion within Western Societies. There are three concentric issues in Western societies that are barriers to social cohesion. First, there is no historical experience where large populations of people who are culturally and religiously markedly different having lived amongst the dominant populations in Western societies. Second, Western societies dominate the world culturally, economically and politically. We are finding it hard to understand why people around the world are antagonistic to this domination. Third, there are no channels of communication other than media and internet between Western societies and others who are culturally and religiously different. Both of these channels have not only limitations but can actually make matters worse. The advantage we have is that there are significant minorities living in our societies making it possible to address these issues and develop social policies that can be applied at a smaller scale through interfaith and intercultural dialogue initiatives, in the long run, helping us to enrich social cohesion in Western societies and hence in the world.

## Plenary 7

### How does Media affect Social Cohesion?

**Dr Douglas Golding**  
University of Queensland, QLD

**Bio:** Dr Douglas Golding has spent a long lifetime working in the media and as a Christian minister. He has worked on newspapers, in radio and TV, owned free weeklies in Canberra and in Newtown, and was the pioneer lecturer in journalism at Deakin University and later at the University of Technology in Sydney. He is now a post-doctoral scholar in the school of History, Philosophy, Religion and Classics in the University of Queensland, studying the reporting of religion in the Australian media, and working part-time as an adult education lecturer.

*"How does Media affect Social Cohesion?"*

**Abstract:** This paper argues that the media may affect social cohesion negatively, by reflecting and ultimately reinforcing their consumers' prejudices and expectations. Social cohesion is not the media's business: the media's business is to survive and prosper and deliver a satisfactory return to shareholders, through satisfying the wants of its consumers. Muslim Australians, and believers in other religions, may feel victimised and marginalised because news values are opposed to religious values and 'good news makes bad press'. The public interest in conflict may result in the media presenting a distorted view of religion and religious believers, as well as of politics and politicians.

**Mrs Zuleyha Keskin**  
Charles Sturt University, NSW

**Bio:** Zuleyha Keskin is a PhD student at the School of Theology at the Australian Catholic University, writing her thesis on "Attaining Inner Peace According to the Risale-i Nur". She completed her degree in Pharmacy and her Master of Arts in Islamic Studies at the University of Sydney, writing her thesis on "Interfaith Dialogue from a Muslim Perspective". Zuleyha is the Vice President of ISRA Australia and subject co-coordinator and lecturer in Islamic Studies at Charles Sturt University.

### *"Muslim Youth and Media"*

**Abstract:** Earlier in 2009, twenty five Muslim women leaders from various Muslim organisations, came together to discuss the challenges of the Muslim community. Although the findings were important for all areas, the findings relating to youth were of interest and concern at the same time, many feeling the baggage they felt they needed to carry for simply being a Muslim. The forum triggered a research amongst Muslim youth to find out what it meant to them to be a Muslim in Australia. The results showed a strong pattern of Muslim youth attributing the challenges they faced, to the media. I will present the findings of the research and discuss the implications of the findings on social cohesion.

**Ms Mehal Krayem**  
University of Technology, NSW

**Bio:** Mehal Krayem is presently a PhD candidate at the University of Technology, Sydney. She has contributed to publications such as 'Next Wave Cultures' edited by Anita Harris and is a regular blogger on [culturaldiversity.net.au](http://culturaldiversity.net.au) Mehal sits on the steering committee of the Australian Critical Race and Whiteness Studies Association as the postgraduate representative. She currently tutors at UTS, teaching social inquiry, media studies and public communication.

### *"Arabs and Muslims on Australian Television"*

**Abstract:** This paper will look at the popular portrayal of Arabs and Muslims on Australian television in recent years. It will discuss the effects of repeated negative portrayals on young Arabs and Muslims and the importance of altering or challenging these portrayals. It will then discuss 'East West 101' as an 'edgy' modern day crime drama whose intention is to disrupt these views. It will ask whether it has successfully done so and what the limits of such a show are.



## Plenary 8

### Multiculturalism and Social Inclusion: Similarities and Differences

#### Assoc Prof Jake Lynch

Director, Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, University of Sydney, NSW

**Bio:** Associate Professor Jake Lynch, PhD (City University, London) is Director of the Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies (CPACS) at the University of Sydney; an Executive Member of the Sydney Peace Foundation and Secretary General of the International Peace Research Association, having organized and hosted its Sydney conference in July 2010. Jake has spent the past 14 years researching, developing, teaching and training in peace journalism – and practising it, as an experienced international reporter in television and newspapers. He was an on-air presenter, anchoring over a thousand half-hour news bulletins for BBC World TV. Before that, he was the Sydney Correspondent for the London *Independent* newspaper, and a Political Correspondent for Sky News. Publications include several books and many book chapters and refereed articles on peace and peace journalism. He is also the author of several think-tank reports and innumerable articles in public media including the *Sydney Morning Herald*, the *Australian* and the *Canberra Times*. In 2009, he won a prestigious competitive grant, worth half a million dollars, from the Australian Research Council, to investigate prospects for devising a Global Standard for reporting conflict, in partnership with the International Federation of Journalists and the aid agency, Act for Peace.

#### *“Multiculturalism, Australia's Foreign Policy and the Media”*

**Abstract:** Multi-culturalism is a policy ghetto, and significant areas of Australian government policy are formulated with little or no apparent regard to the diversity of Australian society. Foreign policy is a case in point, with Canberra generally content to move in lockstep with Washington. On the Israel-Palestine conflict, for instance, this has led Australia into a position on the extreme pro-Israeli fringe of world political opinion, even though polls suggest most Australians would favour a more balanced approach. Media responses play a role in constructing and perpetuating categories of legitimate controversy and deviancy on this and other issues, and the narrowness of Australian media coverage exerts an effect of restricting and weakening the public

sphere in its capacity to engage with them. Jake Lynch has carried out experiments, testing audience responses to reports of conflict stories adjusted in light of the peace journalism model, which allows for a broadening of inputs and sources. More coverage like this, he argues, would benefit audiences, and help to create a context in which the formulation of, and dialogue over, Australia's foreign policy, could be transformed.

### **Ms Andrea van Dommelen**

School of Psychology, University of Sydney, NSW

**Bio:** Andrea van Dommelen is currently completing her PhD in Social Psychology at the University of Sydney. Her PhD title is “The role of social identity complexity, inclusiveness and structure in intergroup relations”. She completed her Masters Degree in Clinical Psychology, University of Brussels (VUB), Belgium with highest distinction in 2008. She completed her Bachelor's Degree in Clinical Psychology, University of Brussels (VUB), Belgium with distinction in 2005.

#### *“The Role of Social Identity in Intergroup Relations”*

**Abstract:** The idea that people can belong to and identify with multiple social groups and therefore endorse multiple social identities, has been widely acknowledged in social-psychological research (Tajfel, 1978; Roccas & Brewer, 2002; see Deaux, 1996 for a review). Multiple social identity management is of immediate relevance to today's increasingly complex and mobile societies, as more and more people form complex identities shaped by their belonging to certain national, religious, ethnic, occupational and other groups. In my PhD research I am studying how ethnic and religious minorities construct their social identities in the context of multiple divergent categories such as religion, nationality and ethnicity. Further, I examine how differences in social identity relate to contact with and attitudes toward people who belong to other groups. In this presentation, I will discuss the key findings of a study that I conducted with a community sample of Turkish-Australian Muslims, and outline recommendations for a more inclusive society from a social identity perspective.

## Mr Susai Benjamin

Lawyer

**Bio:** Susai Benjamin is one of many Indian-Australians living in Western Sydney. He has been a NSW public servant for over 20 years. He worked with the State Authorities Superannuation Boards, NSW Treasury, and Work Cover Authority. He now works with the Department of Finance and Services. He works in the area of State Taxes and Charges and conducts litigation. As a solicitor he has helped numerous people. He set up a new legal service in the heart of Western Sydney for the vulnerable people of area called – Toongabbie Legal Centre (TLC). TLC does not receive any core funding from either the State or the Federal Governments and is run by over 100 volunteers. The service formally started on 13 October 2007, will soon be opening its Outreach Legal Service in Blacktown. Susai is a Director of a not-for-profit company known as Australian Multicultural Forum Ltd promoting dialogue among people who care to identify key obstacles to harmonious living. Until recently Susai was a member of the Australian Multicultural Advisory Council (AMAC) constituted by the Australian Government. Susai has held or continued to hold many positions in several community and professional organisations: Board member and Treasurer of the Council Of Australasian Tribunals (COAT), Executive Member of the Australian Institute of Administrative Law (AIAL), Executive Committee member of the Ethnic Communities Council of NSW, Board member of Migrant resource centres in Blacktown and Parramatta, Part-time Member of the Government and Related Employees Appeal Tribunal (GREAT) and many other activities.

### *“Multiculturalism and Social Inclusion”*

**Abstract:** We will achieve social inclusion only when all people enjoy a strong sense of belonging and connection with the land on which they live. How will this be possible? This can be achieved only through a review all aspects of human living in Australia and through ensuring that fairness, accountability and transparency exist in each aspect and all social processes. One of the most critical aspects is the need to revisit the reason and motivation why Australian governments allow people to come and settle down here. Just as important is to examine the reasons why the Australian Government discourages some immigrants.

There needs to be discussions amongst immigrants about their experiences once they have arrived in Australia. It is likely that this discussion could inform the government and community of a number of concerns experienced by immigrants. From my own experience key-areas that are likely to rise as major concerns would be culture,

discrimination, employment, politics, and religion. Each of these areas is a large field in its own right and deserves discussions. I say this because of my experience over 15 years or so of active involvement in the community and the assistance I have been providing as an advocate for the many new arrivals. My more recent experience arising from my interaction with over 1000 or so clients visiting the Toongabbie Legal Centre have added to my conviction. It is not enough for the Australian government and those who are involved in its governance to issue visas and permanent residency to visitors and immigrants respectively they need to work with these communities ensuring their long term contributions to the Australian society.