



National Interfaith Workshop 14-15 November 2017

National Interfaith Workshop

What a privilege it was to share in the National Interfaith Workshop 'Strengthening Communities through Religious & Cultural Education'! Mary-Rose Guat skillfully and gently facilitated the workshop for about 25 participants from diverse ethnic and faith backgrounds. Using her 'circle-process', she ensured everyone had an opportunity to share deeply around the circle and also showed how valuable time of shared silence can be.

A sizeable group of participants from Singapore were able to share their experience of living in a culturally and religiously diverse society and we Australians found their experience and reflections really valuable and enlightening. Mary-Rose challenged us to consider questions like 'Peace begins with me ...' and 'What are the obstacles to peace and harmony within communities and how can we address these?' We heard each other's stories of interfaith engagement through Pure Land Learning Centre, Uniting Church in Queensland, Compassionate Gold Coast and also about the proposed Toowoomba International Clearinghouse Initiative. So I can see a rich future ahead too and as a Gold Coaster, I look forward to connecting more intentionally with Toowoomba in modeling cities of Peace, Harmony and Compassion!

Sincere thanks to Pure Land Learning College for their generous hosting, delicious food and homely accommodation, to Mary-Rose, Haniff and other presenters, and indeed all the participants, for a very significant workshop experience.

Ms Lesley Bryant, Gold Coast

Member of the Synod Interfaith Relations Committee of the Uniting Church



National Interfaith Conference – 16 and 17 November 2017

This brief summary captures my very personal impression of the National Interfaith Conference 2017 in Toowoomba. This two-day event did not find me as a novice of the Interfaith & Cultural Dialogue community, but certainly as a 'first-timer' to this particular annual interfaith event. The conference was expertly organised and executed by the Pure Land Learning College and the Toowoomba Interfaith Working Group. The little army of ever present and friendly volunteers made us all, delegates and guests alike, very welcome.

The conference program definitely did not disappoint. It offered timely topics, high quality presenters and well facilitated dialogue circles and plenary sessions. The highlight for me was Plenary V, which was specifically designed to engage young students from various state and private high schools in the multi-cultural and multifaith debate. Their testimonies made delegates vividly aware that in their school specific but also school external context young people are constantly challenged by multi-cultural and multifaith issues.

It was particularly encouraging to hear how well these young people master rather complex faiths, culture and ethnicity issues by moving boldly beyond ignorant stereotyping. Conference delegates were very surprised to learn how these young students achieved tangible outcomes in exceptionally mature ways, which could be seen as being well beyond their age. It is for these reasons that future interfaith conferences should provide a permanent and meaningful space where young people, being the future interfaith and cultural dialogue generation, can participate by working on issues relevant to them. Finally, I can confidently say that the National Interfaith Conference 2017 did indeed go well beyond my expectations.



Dr. Peter Hoppe
*Interfaith & Cultural Dialogue Facilitator,
The Abbey Church at St Michael's*



PURE LAND LEARNING COLLEGE ASSOCIATION INC.

MULTI-FAITH MULTICULTURAL CENTRE

EVERYONE MATTERS - TOOWOOMBA, A MODEL CITY OF PEACE & HARMONY



Keynote and Special Addresses

December 2017, Issue 71



From left: Bishop Cameron Venables, Mayor Paul Antonio, Dr John McVeigh MP, Venerable Wu Dao



'Scripture as a Source for Development of a Civil Society' by Venerable Master Chin Kung AM

Plenaries Sessions



- Plenary I: Living in a Culturally Diverse Society Without Compromising One's Faith
- Plenary II: Identifying and Promoting Universal Principles and Values
- Plenary III: Creating Safe Spaces for Meaningful Conversation within Multicultural Communities
- Plenary IV: Religion and Spirituality in the 21st Century
- Plenary V: Young People in the Interfaith Space

"Wishing all our friends Merry Christmas and Happy New Year, with more years of good health and happiness"

merry christmas

Check out more photos on [f mmc.Toowoomba](https://www.facebook.com/mmc.Toowoomba) - For upcoming activities and programs, please visit www.interfaith-harmony.org - call us at +617 4659 8054, or email us mfmcc.pllc@gmail.com