

The Australian National Dialogue of Christians, Muslims, and Jews

The ECAJ is a founding partner in this Dialogue on behalf of the Jewish community. Our dialogue partners are:

[The Australian Federation of Islamic Councils](#)

[The National Council of Churches in Australia](#)

The Dialogue was officially 'launched' in March 2003 after 12 months of formal preparation, which was preceded by informal contact and discussions between the NCCA, AFIC, & the ECAJ.

5 appointed persons from each faith community participate in the dialogue, which rotates between Jewish, Muslim and Christian venues in Sydney. The chairing of the meetings is also rotated.

The ECAJ delegation consists of Jeremy Jones (Chair), Rabbi Raymond Apple (recently replaced by Rabbi Jeremy Lawrence), Rabbi Jeffrey Kamins, Melanie Schwartz (youth representative) and Peta Jones Pellach. Yair Miller is first stand-in. The President of the ECAJ is automatically invited to all meetings, as are the NCCA and AFIC Presidents. Observers may be invited at the discretion of delegation chairs.

During 2003 the group examined key concepts in each religion which have led to misunderstanding and tension. The Muslim community discussed 'Jihad', the Jewish community 'Zionism', and the Christian community 'Trinity'. In 2004 the Dialogue continued to meet, discussing matters of common interest, including Peace, Prophecy and Prayer. In 2005 the topics were life-cycle matters, including the various religious holidays and Sabbath days. Discussions also focused on contentious and difficult issues such as 'Martyrdom'.

The Dialogue gave rise to the three faith [Journey of Promise](#) initiative in which young people of each faith shared in experiencing each other's religion and growing in their understanding.

Members of the Dialogue were prominent in Australia's delegations to Regional Dialogues on Interfaith Cooperation held in Indonesia (Dec 2004) and the Philippines (March 2006).

The dialogue in its very early stages, adopted the following purpose and objectives:

Objectives and Purposes:

Purpose

To provide opportunities for the national bodies of each faith to come together to build understanding and harmony in the Australian context.

Objectives

- To be a model of how different faiths can live harmoniously together in Australia
- To build understanding, good will and a sense of community between people of different faiths
- To explore and learn about each other and our faith traditions
- To share our knowledge and insights with others
- To work together to achieve common goals in Australia
- To support each other in times of difficulty

Proposed Strategies

- To inform our respective faith communities of the work and understandings that we reach
- To use our meetings to increase knowledge and awareness of the issues that face each of the faith communities
- To report back to our respective national bodies
- To address community issues together where possible
- To encourage common projects among the faith communities
- To use our meetings to inform the wider community of our commitment to each other
- To encourage interfaith dialogue at all levels

Possible Actions

- Regular meetings
- Media releases
- News stories for our own communities
- Public forums
- Creation of educational resources