

# Peace Building through Contemplation, Compassion, and our Common Humanity

Queen's Hall  
Parliament of Victoria  
Friday, 11 April 2025

VICTORIAN  
multicultural  
commission  
*strengthening our community*



MONASH  
University

MONASH  
CENTRE FOR  
CONSCIOUSNESS AND  
CONTEMPLATIVE STUDIES



## Acknowledgement of Country

The Victorian Multicultural Commission acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Peoples and Traditional Custodians of the lands, skies, and waters we now know as Victoria. We honour and pay our respects to First Peoples' Elders past and present, and we recognise the continuing strength of Victoria's First Peoples.



# Table of Contents

Foreword from Chairperson, Victorian Multicultural Commission	01
Peace Building through Contemplation, Compassion, and our Common Humanity	02
Order of Proceedings	05
Attendees	06
Acknowledgments	08

# Foreword from Chairperson, Victorian Multicultural Commission



A key function of the Multifaith Advisory Group (MAG) is to serve as an example of open, respectful, honest, and robust interreligious conversation and collaboration.

In doing this, the MAG is in an informed position to provide suggestions to assist both our government and communities. The shared goal is to strengthen community harmony and cohesion.

This forum, in partnership with the Monash Centre for Consciousness and Contemplative Studies, the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture, and Calm in the City, reflects this continuing effort.

We aim to support the objectives of the MAG and the broader interfaith communities - reflecting our common humanity through initiatives that are known to have impact.

It is through nurturing relational trust and understanding that we build and rebuild the shared values that have helped us stand together in solidarity, both in good and difficult times.

These initiatives are not one-offs. Collectively, we will continue to work together in ways that are positive and impactful.

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several fluid, connected strokes.

Vivienne Nguyen AM  
Chair, Multifaith Advisory Group  
Victorian Multicultural Commission

# Peace Building through Contemplation, Compassion, and our Common Humanity

The world faces critical challenges that threaten peace, social cohesion, and well-being. The need for peace-building is more urgent than ever. Despite obstacles, we are called to reflect on the need for a different way of resolving and connecting.

To overcome these challenges, cultivating peace-building through contemplation, compassion, and our common humanity is essential—guiding us toward healing and progress, both individually and collectively.

This forum will unite key leaders across Victoria to explore how we can cultivate inner peace, deepen compassion, and strengthen our common humanity, supporting both individual well-being and collective peace-building.

Opening remarks will be made by Her Excellency Professor the Honourable Margaret Gardner AC, Governor of Victoria. Esteemed speakers include Professor Craig Hassed (Monash Centre for Consciousness and Contemplative Studies), Sister Jayanti Kirpalani (Brahma Kumaris), and Bishop Philip Huggins (Anglican Church), who will share insights on meditation and contemplation and how these practices nurture the capacities needed to navigate challenges with both compassion and enabling new ways of thinking, being, and connecting.

Together, we will reflect on cultivating pure intent and explore how inner peace supports community peacebuilding. Through reflection and dialogue, each participant will shape an intention to deepen compassion and connection in Victoria.

# Guest Speakers

## Professor Craig Hassed

Director of Education

Monash Centre for Consciousness and Contemplative Studies



Professor Craig Hassed MBBS, FRACGP, OAM has worked with the Faculty of Medicine at Monash University since 1989 but also teaches in many faculties. He is the coordinator of mindfulness programs across Monash and is the Director of Education at the Monash Centre for Consciousness and Contemplative Studies (M3CS). Craig has authored 120 papers and published 14 books and 17 book chapters. He is regularly invited to speak and run courses in Australia and overseas in health, educational, government, and corporate contexts. He is a patron of Meditation Australia, a regular media commentator, and co-authored the world's two leading mindfulness massive open online courses. In 2019, Craig was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for services to Medicine.



## Sister Jayanti Kirpalani

Spiritual Teacher and Additional Administrative Head of The  
Brahma Kumaris

Sister Jayanti Kirpalani is a senior teacher of the Brahma Kumaris, the world's largest spiritual organisation for both men and women to be led by women. She is the Additional Administrative Head of the organisation, which operates in excess of 7,500 teaching centres in over 120 countries around the world. She is a much sought-after international public speaker, author of more than a dozen books, and a visionary leader guided by spiritual values and principles. She shares a vision of a future world where living is anchored in universal spiritual principles and a shared sense of humanity. Born in India and raised in London, Sister Jayanti divides her time between the Brahma Kumaris headquarters at Mt. Abu, Rajasthan, and a schedule of speaking engagements and spiritual mentoring around the world. Her prominent speaking themes include leadership, environment & climate change, women's empowerment, health & well-being, racial harmony, inter-religious friendships, & global peace. She is the United Nations representative in Geneva for the Brahma Kumaris, which is accredited with General Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council.

## MC/Facilitator - Bishop Philip Huggins

The Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture, Charles Sturt University



Bishop Philip Huggins was ordained in 1977 and, since then, has been a meditator in the Jesus Prayer tradition. Philip has been an Anglican Bishop since 1995. He is the immediate Past President of the National Council of Churches in Australia and is now the Director of the Centre for Ecumenical Studies at the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture, Charles Sturt University. Philip actively contributes to multifaith and multicultural issues both locally and internationally. Philip understands peace to be both a divine gift and our task as peace-builders.



## Plenary MC - Jon Faine AM

Vice-Chancellor's Fellow, University of Melbourne

Jon Faine AM started professional life as a commercial lawyer, then was principal solicitor at Fitzroy Legal Service 1984-87. He joined ABC Radio National as the Law Report presenter in 1989 and hosted various radio and TV programmes until leaving the ABC in 2019, including 23 years presenting the agenda-setting Morning Show on ABC Melbourne [formerly 3LO]. He has written several best-selling books and some that did not sell very well at all. He enjoys washing dishes - a different form of meditation.

# Order of Proceedings

Registration
Welcome Music in Queen's Hall: Galliano Sommavilla
MC Welcome: Bishop Philip Huggins
Opening Comments: Her Excellency Professor the Honourable Margaret Gardner AC, Governor of Victoria
Welcoming Comments: Parliamentary Secretary for Multicultural Affairs, Mr Iwan Walters
Introduction and Agenda: Bishop Philip Huggins
Presentation 1: Professor Craig Hassed
Meditation 1: Professor Craig Hassed
Presentation 2: Sister Jayanti Kirpalani
Meditation 2: Sister Jayanti Kirpalani
Plenary: Improving our Inner and Outer Peace: What more can we do? Facilitators: Bishop Philip Huggins & Jon Faine Music for Reflection: Galliano Sommavilla Panel: Bishop Huggins, Sister Jayanti, Professor Hassed
Concluding Comments: Victorian Multicultural Commission Chairperson, Vivienne Nguyen
Light lunch



# Attendees (in alphabetical order)

Abiola Akinbiyi, Ethnic Communities Councils of Victoria  
Adil Adamjee, Dawoodi Bohra Community  
Ahmet Keskin, Australian Intercultural Society  
Angela Boyd, 3rd Business Advisory & Coaching  
Annie Carrett, Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne  
Ari Tsoulakos, Multicultural Youth Network, Victorian Multicultural Commission  
Asghar Mahmood Syed, AMAFHH Federation  
Aydogan Kars, Monash University Centre for Consciousness and Contemplative Studies  
Batul Gulani, AMAFHH Federation  
Benjamin Bowler, Unity Earth Association Australia  
Bhakta Dasa, ISKCON  
Bob Derrenbacher, Trinity College  
Bradley Imalenowa, Multicultural Youth Network, Victorian Multicultural Commission  
Brigid Arthur, Brigidine Asylum Seekers Project  
Bwe Thay, Victorian Multicultural Commission  
Charlie Sutherland  
Charlie Hogg, The Brahma Kumaris  
Chris Parnell, Religions for Peace Australia  
Christine Westbury, The Brahma Kumaris  
David Webb, AMAFHH Federation  
David Huggins  
David Dong Won Kim, Uniting Church in Australia  
Deirdre Hassed  
Desmond Cahill, Religions for Peace Asia, RMIT University  
Diana Cousens, Buddhist Council of Victoria  
Dong Sun Ryu, Uniting Church in Australia  
Eddie Micallef, Ethnic Communities Councils of Victoria  
Emanuela Giroto, Village Well  
Erin Grainger, Lutheran Church of Australia VIC TAS District  
Estella Harte  
Evdoxia Gorgievski, Global Dialogue Foundation  
Fiona Whitecross, Royal Melbourne Hospital  
Gary Verma, Hindu Council of Australia  
Geoff Collinson, Aeyons  
Gilbert Rochecouste, Village Well  
Graeme Garrett, Anglican Church  
Helen Summers OAM, The Interfaith Centre of Melbourne  
Hyun Jun Cho, Uniting Church in Australia  
Ian Gawler  
Jacob Rumbiak, Foreign Affairs, West Papua Transitional Government  
Jan Morgan, Uniting Church in Australia  
Janice Kefford, Anglican Church  
Jasbir Singh Suropada, Sikh Interfaith Council of Victoria  
Jenan Taylor, The Melbourne Anglican  
Jess Huon, Casamento Photography  
Jesse Hermans, Heavenly Culture, World Peace, Restoration of Light  
Jessica Weijers, Monash University Centre for Consciousness and Contemplative Studies  
Ji Hwan Ryu, Yonsei University  
Ji Young Seo, Uniting Church Australia  
Jim Bowler, The University of Melbourne  
Joan Bowler, Unity Earth Association Australia  
Joan Wright Howie, Uniting Church in Australia

# Attendees (in alphabetical order)

Jock Sutherland  
John Woodall  
John Hendry, Parents Victoria & The Elder Factor  
Jon Breukel, The Great Stupa of Universal Compassion  
Joslyn Barendregt, Heavenly Culture, World Peace, Restoration of Light  
Julie Larsen, Documenta  
Justin Shortal  
Kanchana Rao  
Kashif Bouns, Victorian Multicultural Commission  
Khalil Hamid, Board of Imams Victoria  
Krushnadevsinh (Kano) Ravalji, Victorian Multicultural Commission  
Lewa Kamali, Australian Baha'i Community (VIC)  
Lisa Forde, Meditation Australia  
Louise Byrne, West Papua Women's Office - Docklands  
Marcus Tran, Heavenly Culture, World Peace, Restoration of Light  
Maya Ramakrishnan, Department of Premier and Cabinet  
Michael Shields, Monash University  
Muhammad Amin Shaheedi, AMAFHH Federation  
Murray Paterson, Meditation Australia  
Mustafa Poonawala, Dawoodi Bohra Community  
Naomi Levin, Jewish Community Council of Victoria  
Natalie Gunn, FCCV/Connecting Cultures  
Numan Seyit, Multicultural Youth Network, Victorian Multicultural Commission  
Paul Carr, Anglican Diocese of Melbourne  
Pauline McKinnon, Stillness Meditation Therapy Consultancy  
Penny Badwal, Office of the Archbishop - Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne  
Peter Hunt AM, Mind Medicine Australia  
Peter Pece Gorgievski, Global Dialogue Foundation  
Petrina Barson, The Centre for a Compassionate Society  
Philippa Rowland, Religions for Peace Australia  
Phuoc Tan Thich, Quang Minh Temple  
Puneet Dhingra, SBS Punjabi  
Ranjit Rao  
Ribka Ovide, West Papua Women's Office - Docklands  
Roland Ashby, Living Water  
Ruth Gawler  
Sam Misho, Hume City Council  
Sandy Boyce, Victorian Council of Churches; Faith Communities Council of Victoria  
Seng K Chew, ZEE CHENG KHOR Moral Uplifting Society  
Serene Si Ying Huang, Uniting Church in Australia  
Shantini Iyngkaran, Australian Baha'i Community (VIC)  
Sherelle Connaughton, Monash Centre for Consciousness and Contemplative Studies  
Sieneke Martin, Victorian Council of Churches  
Simon McKeon, Greater South East Melbourne  
Susan Ennis, Religions for Peace Australia  
Tania de Jong AM, Creativity Australia and Mind Medicine Australia  
Tut Yoa, All Nations Presbyterian church of Melbourne  
Victor Pertou, That Optimism Man  
Vivienne Nguyen, Victorian Multicultural Commission  
Wallis Pattison, The Interfaith Centre of Melbourne  
Wendy McComas  
Xuyen Pho, The Salvation Army

# Acknowledgements

The Victorian Multicultural Commission would like to acknowledge Her Excellency Professor the Honourable Margaret Gardner AC, Governor of Victoria, for opening the forum.

We thank the Parliamentary Secretary for Multicultural Affairs, Mr Iwan Walters, for his kind remarks.

We thank the following for their help to deliver the forum:

- Bishop Philip Huggins, The Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture
- Professor Kalvinder Shields, Calm in the City
- Professor Craig Hassed, Monash University Centre for Consciousness and Contemplative Studies
- Vivienne Nguyen AM, Victorian Multicultural Commission
- Sister Jayanti Kirpalani, The Brahma Kumaris
- Jon Faine AM, Vice-Chancellor's Fellow, The University of Melbourne
- Dan Heller, Brave Conversations Project, Monash University
- Martine Harte, Engaging Women
- George Savvides AM, SBS

We appreciate the following for their support:

- Galliano Somnavilla, musical artist
- Peter Casamento, Casamento Photography
- Video Production Team, Department of Premier and Cabinet
- Rachel Nguyen, Victorian Multicultural Commission
- Sophia Sourris, Victorian Multicultural Commission
- Nardia Brancatisano, Victorian Multicultural Commission
- Katherine Murtagh, Victorian Multicultural Commission
- Masoud Navvabi, Victorian Multicultural Commission

## Victorian Multicultural Commission

Level 6, 121 Exhibition St, Melbourne VIC 3000

[multiculturalcommission.vic.gov.au](http://multiculturalcommission.vic.gov.au)

[contact@vmc.vic.gov.au](mailto:contact@vmc.vic.gov.au)

### Follow us on socials



[@multiculturevic](https://www.instagram.com/multiculturevic)



[@victorian-multicultural-commission](https://www.linkedin.com/company/victorian-multicultural-commission)

