

To: World Parliament of Religions

From: Jan Lester

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INTERFAITH HARMONY DAY CELEBRATION

Presented by the Scientology Volunteer Ministers

Hosted by the Church of Scientology at the Scientology Community Centre

Partners

WIN (Womens Interfaith Network) Foundation

COMMON (Centre of Melbourne Multifaith and Others) Network

Ahmadiyya Muslim Community

KAREN Buddhist Association

Applied Human Rights

Victoria Maori Wardens

Warren Wills World

South Asia Community Link Group

Melton Indian Service Club

National Sikh Council of Victoria

Buddhist Council of Victoria

Yarra Interfaith Network

Australian Intercultural Society

Somali Community Inc.

African Australian Multicultural Employment and Youth Services

The Purpose of the event or activity:

To Celebrate Interfaith Harmony day

The event was attended by: Christians, Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, Jews, Sikhs, and Scientologists – representatives of religious, interfaith, multifaith, multicultural, cultural and community organisations.

INTERNATIONAL INTERFAITH HARMONY DAY EVENT

On 27TH February 2019, the Scientology Volunteer Ministers, Victoria Chapter, held their International Interfaith Harmony Day Celebration in the Scientology Community Centre Melbourne. A registration table manned by Volunteer Ministers was set up at reception.



Guests from the South Eastern Ladies Ahmadiyya Muslim Community sign in

Representatives from different faith traditions – Judaism, Muslim, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu and Scientology attended. Guests represented different interfaith, multifaith, cultural, multicultural and community organisations.

The event started at 10 am with community leaders meeting in the reception area. There they had the opportunity to meet new people and/or catch up with family/friends/colleagues.



Guests meet Volunteer Ministers and staff

Set ups were ready in the main hall.



Refreshments set up in the centre of the room



Refreshments



Maria Meilak, Scientology Community Programs Coordinator speaks with ladies from the South Eastern Ahmadiyya Muslim

Guests were ushered into the Auditorium where they helped themselves to morning tea and then were seated at a table. Networking was still possible before the event commenced.



From left a Buddhist, Carey Rohrlach, Victorian Buddhist Society; meets with Muslim, Mudjet, Australian Intercultural Society; Ahmet Keskin, Muslim (from Turkey) Executive Director, Australian Intercultural Society speaks with Abe Schwartz, Jew, Centre of Melbourne Multifaith and Others Network; Wendy Morrison, Victoria Maori Wardens speaks to Farah Warsame, Muslim, Somali Community In and Pam Mamouny OAD, Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-Day Saints

THE PROGRAM

The event started with a welcome by Scientology Community Programs Director, Jan Lester and 'Acknowledgement of Country' by Abe Schwartz, Jewish community leader and executive member of the Centre of Melbourne Multifaith and Others Network.

Mr Schwartz is leading the William Cooper Project with Indigenous leader, Uncle Boydie Turner. Mr Schwartz has much to do with indigenous communities and he very well explained the reasons behind 'Acknowledgement of Country'.



Abe Schwartz addresses the audience

International composer and producer and theatre educationalist, Warren Wills, sang and played piano. He had the audience join in with the song, 'Pack Up Your Troubles'. Mr Wills and D/DSA have worked on a number of community projects together including fund raising for Abe Schwartz and Uncle Boydie's William Cooper Project.



Warren Wills at piano has everyone singing together - 'Pack Up Your Troubles'

The first guest speaker was Mmaskepe Sejoe. D/DSA met Ms Sejoe at an event a couple of years back. Ms Sejoe uses the Youth for Human Rights materials in her Human Rights courses. She has also toured a CCHR exhibit and attended open houses.

Ms Sejoe has recently returned from a trip to South Sudan where she worked as a Human Rights volunteer. She told of her time in South Sudan.



Ms Sejoe tells of her time in South Sudan

Wendy Morrison was recently met at a Maori community festival by the NCRO. The NCRO invited Ms Sejoe to speak at this event. Ms Morrison is the Founder of the Victoria Maori Wardens. She is also an indigenous Australian. She spoke about belonging to more than one culture and how we all belong to the human family.



Wendy Morrison says we all belong to the human family

Renate Barton, Lead Scientology Volunteer Minister, Victoria Chapter, then followed with a Volunteer Minister presentation. It was very well received. She spoke about the work of the VMs at disaster areas in Victoria - the Victorian Bushfires - and Queensland - Hurricane and International disaster areas too.



Renate Barton speaks about the work of the VMs

At the end of the presentations guests were invited to speak about their own projects. Abe Schwartz spoke about the William Cooper Project. He also commended the community work of the Church of Scientology



Abe Schwartz commends the Church of Scientology for its community work

Mr Farah Warsame, President, Somali Community Inc. told the audience about his organisations soccer tournament between the African communities and Victoria police on March 3 2018. He said it is a fund raising activity and all are invited.

The Victoria Chapter Volunteer Ministers are going to help with the tournament and take chairs, tables and tents to lend to the organisers.



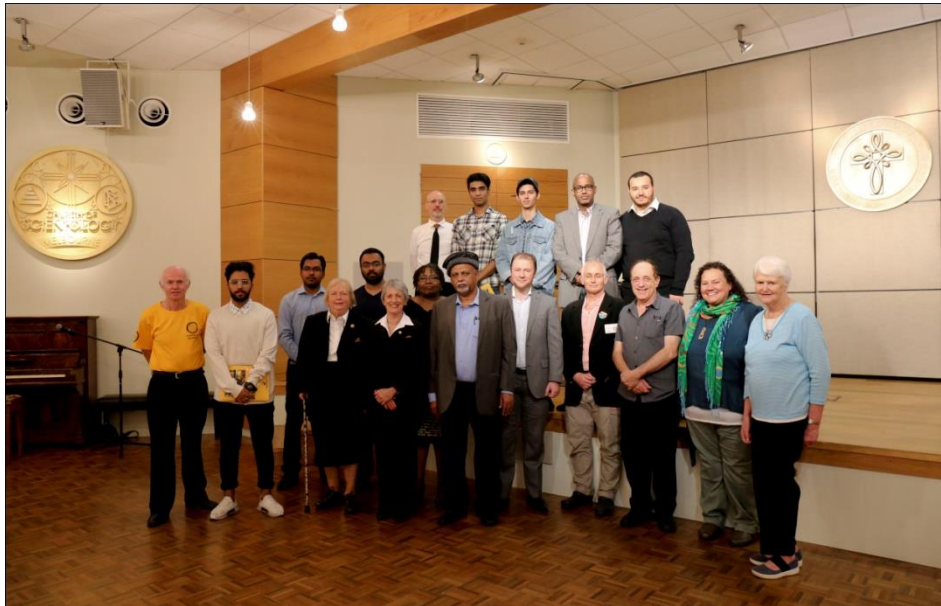
Mr Farah Warsame speaks to the audience about his football tournament

Mr Ahmet Keskin, Executive Director, Australian Intercultural Society – first visit to the church – spoke about the anti bullying program he and the Jewish Christian Association are running for the community.



Mr Ahmet Keskin speaks to the audience

At the end of the event photos were taken of the variuos attendees



One human family - Volunteer Minister, Ahmadiyya Muslim Community members, Human Rights activist, Africans, Turks, Maori Wardens, Buddhist, Jew, Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-Day Saints



Mmaskepe Sejo, guest speaker, Applied Human Rights and Jan Lester, Scientology Community Programs Director

Refreshments were served, networking continued and surveys and feedback were collected.



VM Steve Hayes surveys Mr Farah Warsame, President, Somali Community Inc.

SAMPLES OF FEEDBACK

“It was all very well organized. Enjoyed all the speeches, particularly the one on Humanity and the We are all Equal. God is One. I live this principal also in my life. It was nice meeting everybody. Everybody is so nice and polite.”

Lady from Melton Indian Service Club

“It was a good event. Enjoyed the talk on Humanity. We should all live together and should not be alienated but respect each other.”

Indijit, Leader, Melton Indian Service Club

“It was wonderful, will see you in the future. The Human Family was touching & awesome. We have the same connection. Very educational. Good to know what is going on in the world.”

Aishia from Ahmadiyya Islamic Ladies Club

“Impressed with the Brightness of the church. Hospitality was great. Music and speakers great. Liked the video. Was effective. Stats at the start were very good.”

Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-Day Saints, Dandenong Interfaith Network

“We need to have these kind of meetings. Good for interfaith. Communication and showing ideas.”

Farah Warsame, President, Somali Community Inc.

“Great speakers. Special interests good. Well organized. Good representation. Lots of faiths.”

Ahmadiyya Muslim Group, Ladies Club

“Everyone is the same and we should respect each other. 5/5 for the event. Would suggest different language movies (5-10min).”

Satinder Chawla

CONCLUSION

It was a beautiful event bringing together people of different faiths and cultures - working together to bring harmony and goodwill.

Jan Lester
Director, Community Programs
Scientology Community Centre