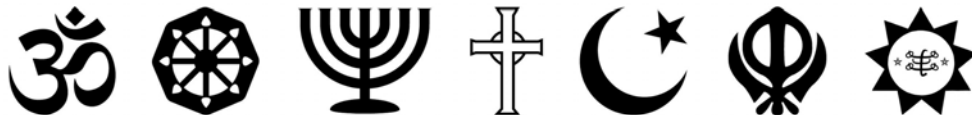


EVENT REPORT:

Launch of World Interfaith Harmony Week 2021 in Wellington, New Zealand



Wellington Interfaith Council



WORLD INTERFAITH



HARMONY WEEK

The background of interfaith in New Zealand



The Wellington Interfaith Council was the first interfaith council established in Aotearoa New Zealand.

In the last 20 years, we have seen a national network of approximately 20 active interfaith councils across all major regions in the country.



Current context in New Zealand

Over the years, interfaith has always played an important roles in supporting mutual understanding, interfaith dialogue and harmonious relations in Aotearoa New Zealand.

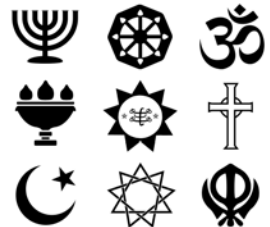
On 15 March 2019, a terrorist attack murdered 51 people and injured 49 others. This attack was New Zealand's largest terrorist attack in history, and took place within two religious facilities, namely the Deans Avenue and Linwood Avenue masjids in the city of Christchurch.



Our response to 15 March 2019

Interfaith councils across New Zealand were at forefront of organising gatherings and meetings to show solidarity to our fellow Muslim communities.

Since the March 2019 terrorist attacks, the Wellington Interfaith Council has engaged with government enquiries, reports, forums and and grass roots initiatives (namely, the Royal Commission of Inquiry) to address the issues of hate and discrimination.





Human chain event
around the Wellington
Masjid, run by the
WIFC days after the
2019 Christchurch
Attacks



2021 WIHW event: Launch event

During February 2021, the Wellington Interfaith Council (WIFC) observed World Interfaith Harmony Week (WIHW). Over the last two years, the WIFC has continued to hold a range of public event including, education programmes and dialogues to promote social cohesion in New Zealand.

This WIHW launch event was one of our first public events for 2021, and held one month out from the second anniversary of the Christchurch Attacks.

Faith groups gathered in front of our Parliament in Wellington, to promote the aims and theme of WIHW at this event.

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HARMONY WEEK



WIHW lunch service, by members of the WIFC

Launch event: What we set out to do

1 | Raise awareness of World Interfaith Harmony Week

Share the aims, theme and origins of the World Interfaith Harmony Week with our local community in Wellington city.

2 | Show faith groups working together for peace

Run an event in a high profile public location, and demonstrate diverse faith groups in Wellington working together for a common purpose.

3 | Educate people about interfaith, and celebrate diversity

Share insights on the practices and beliefs of different faiths; and introduce the public to the work of the Wellington Interfaith Council, it's membership and values.

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HARMONY WEEK



Queues of people turned out for
lunch service



Launch event: Key components

Held on the first day of World Interfaith Harmony Week, Monday 1 February, our launch marked the start of the week in New Zealand's capital city, Wellington.

Speakers. All faiths represented at the events shared a prayer or message based on the theme of WIFH. We also invited the Executive Director from the Office of Ethnic Communities (a government agency), to make an address at the event.

Network and dialogue. The unique central location contributed to a range of people able to join the event - corporate people, civil society, public servants, faith groups, students and youth.

Food distribution. Free public food distribution was provided for almost 200 people.

Display. Educational literature and holy texts of diverse religious faiths were displayed. The event provided an opportunity for people to dialogue and ask questions, and be better informed about different faiths and practices.

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HARMONY WEEK

Event
Insights

Launch of
World Interfaith
Harmony Week
in Wellington.

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HARMONY WEEK

MON, 1 FEB

Launch of World Interfaith Harmony Week
in Wellington

Wellington Cenotaph

Edit

More

Event by Wellington Interfaith Community

Wellington Cenotaph
Wellington, New Zealand 6011

Monday, 1 February 2021 from 12:00
UTC+13-13:00 UTC+13
about 1 month ago

Price: free · Duration: 1 hr

Public · Anyone on or off Facebook

PROMOTING PEACE & HARMONY

WORLD INTERFAITH HARMONY WEEK, 1 - 7 FEB 2021

Wellington Interfaith Council

Launch of
World Interfaith
Harmony Week
in Wellington.

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HARMONY WEEK

All are welcome to join us for an Interfaith prayer,
followed by light refreshments to begin the week.

Monday 01 February 2021 at 12noon
Venue: Wellington Cenotaph,
cnr Bowen Street & Lambton Quay.

Proudly presented by the Wellington Interfaith Council

interfaith

/ˈɪntəˌfeɪθ,ˌɪntəˈfeɪθ/
adjective

relating to or involving different
religions or members of
different religions.

"action to encourage interfaith dialogue"

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HARMONY WEEK

Social media event and digital graphics

Launch event: Logistics

During WIHW, New Zealand was in a COVID alert level 1, meaning we did not need to practice social distancing, or wear face masks during this week.

Location. Held at the Wellington Cenotaph, our event was metres from the nation's Parliament Buildings (the iconic Beehive is seen in the background of our photos), and less than 20 metres from the Wellington Railway Station. The location attracts high foot traffic at lunch time, and we were lucky to have great weather on this day.

Time. The event was held from 12noon, right on lunch time for most people who live, work and are based in the city.

We set up our event space earlier, and many people asked what we were doing, and the significance. Our new WIFC banner assisted with sharing who we were to the public.

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HARMONY WEEK



Interfaith prayers offered



**Anusha Guler, Executive Director
of the Office of Ethnic
Communities, representing the
New Zealand Government**



Lunch service



Service & holy scripts on display

Launch event: Key successes

1. **Representation of many faiths.** Our interfaith prayer included wishes from Christian, Hindu, Muslim, Pagan, Sikh, and an indigenous Māori prayer.
2. **Contribution speech from the government.** Well wishes from government representative was accepted and welcomed.
3. **New membership.** New members have since joined the council. Multiple quirks about WIHW, and people seeking to understand what we were doing.
4. **Awareness.** Broader understanding of what WIFH week is, and who the WIFC is.
5. **Serving lunch to over 200 people.** The unique location allowed us to share lunch with 200 people, with food provided in biodegradable takeaway containers.

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HARMONY WEEK



Social media

Facebook. @wellingtoninterfaith

Instagram. @wellingtoninterfaith

Email

wtgninterfaithcouncil@gmail.com

WIFC Executive members:
Manjit Grewal, Kumar Kumareswaran, Tiore Bates





Wellington Interfaith Council

Bringing Wellington's
faith & belief based
communities
together through
action, events
& dialogue.