



CITY OF PORT PHILLIP

Multifaith  
NETWORK



## Terms of Reference 2022

### Purpose

The City of Port Phillip's Multifaith Network facilitates discussion between Spiritual and Faith leaders and representatives. It works in collaboration with Council officers and the Council to promote interfaith dialogue and advise Council on all issues relating to interfaith and faith communities in the City of Port Phillip.

### Vision statement

To draw on the wisdom of spiritual values of our diverse traditions in fostering an inclusive, respectful and compassionate people of Port Phillip.

### Objectives

#### Inclusivity

- To acknowledge and celebrate the traditions of generosity, hospitality and service present in our diverse faith organisations
- To draw on these traditions in creating a local community which is respectful towards all

#### Spiritual health and wellbeing

- To acknowledge spirituality as a key component of health and wellbeing
- To acknowledge and address the 'spiritual poverty' that can exist in a broader culture of materialism and individualism

#### Social justice

- To activate the social justice principles that underpin all faiths in order to take action against disadvantage and marginalisation and actively pursue the elimination of discrimination
  - To inspire a passion for change and connect community members with opportunities for service
  - To generate understanding and empathy of social justice issues in order to inspire community action for social change
  - To harness 'integral ecology' (the connections between seemingly disparate human needs such as restoring nature, economic self-sufficiency and political stability) as a unifying concept for the Network's activities
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## Re-imagining religion

- Our starting point is an understanding that spirituality is an essential part of being human
- To address religious stereotypes and share what's valuable in faith traditions
- To express solidarity with all people who are journeying towards meaning

## Actions

The Multifaith Network will:

- Act as a resource and provide direction to the community and to Council
- Represent the views and needs of the Port Phillip multifaith community
- Advise Council officers about lobbying other levels of government and agencies where appropriate
- Advise Council about how it can most effectively promote the social, cultural, and health interests of the community through its faith and spiritual connections
- Ensure effective communication between Council and the community
- Dependent on resources, plan and organise events and projects which aim to foster social cohesion, raise awareness, and celebrate the diversity of faith groups in the municipality

## Policy Framework

The work of the Multifaith Network is informed by the Port Phillip Council Plan 2017 – 2027 and the Health and Wellbeing Implementation Strategy 2017 - 2027.

## Membership and nomination process

The following people are invited to the Network meetings:

- Representatives of faith and spiritual groups, organisations, and agencies
- Councillor appointed by the Council
- Council staff providing administrative support

There is no limit to how many individuals can attend the Network however new members will need to submit an Expression of Interest (EOI). The EOI is intended to gather information on their experience, interests and activities in faith.

Selection will be based on demonstration of the following attributes and skill sets:

- Active role within faith or spiritual group, organisation or agency
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- Connection to City of Port Phillip community
- Ability to commit time and resources to achieving the aims of the Network
- Personal and professional experience in working with community groups or members of faith communities

All new Network members will be assessed against these criteria; how their skills and experience meet the criteria, and the need to ensure a diverse range of interests, age, gender and local representation. Membership applications will be reviewed at bimonthly Network meetings.

### **Meetings**

- Network meetings will be chaired by the nominated Councillor or their representative
- The Network will usually meet bimonthly
- Decisions to be based on common agreement
- Agenda items and discussion will be solution driven. Members are required to follow the agenda and respect the need to cover all items in the limited time available
- Members to refrain from proselytising

### **Conduct principles**

The Councillors and staff of the Port Phillip Council are committed to working together with members of the Multifaith Network in the best interests of the Port Phillip community. In carrying out this role all parties will deliver their responsibilities to the best of their ability and judgment.

Network members are expected to:

- Actively participate in Network discussions and offer their opinions and views
- Treat all persons with respect and have due regard for the opinions, rights and responsibilities of others
- Act with integrity
- Attend each meeting where practical
- Abide by Council policies and procedures, Mayor and Councillor Protocols when delivering projects and events in partnership with the Council
- Avoid conflicts of interest and the releasing of confidential information

Network members' accountability is as follows:

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- Have an active role in communicating community views to the Network as appropriate
- Participate in discussions at bi-monthly meetings
- Have the endorsement from the Network and Council before making public statements announcements, or public speaking engagements on behalf of the Network. Any personal opinions expressed need to be acknowledged
- Multifaith Network members may not speak to the media on behalf of Council or the Network without prior endorsement from Council's Communication and Engagement Officers

### **Dispute resolution**

From time to time there may be disagreements between Network members. Council encourages members to resolve their differences in a courteous and respectful manner. The guiding principle of dispute resolution is that every person has the right to be heard. In the event that a dispute cannot be resolved, management and alternative dispute resolution provisions will be implemented by Council to resolve the dispute.

### **Resourcing**

The Diversity Officer or representative Council Officer (such as Coordinator Community Impact and Housing) will be responsible for the administration and resourcing of the Network. Their responsibilities include:

- Within a reasonable timeframe notify Network members of meeting time and location
- Distribute minutes and agendas
- Take minutes at each meeting
- Ensure actions are followed up and reported back to Network members
- Apply for grants to assist with resourcing Network activities

### **Review of Terms of Reference of the City of Port Phillip Multifaith Network**

This Terms of Reference document will be updated every second year as needed in conjunction with the annual planning and development session and reviewed in full at the end of the current Council term in 2024.

Endorsed by the Multifaith Network on 12 September 2022

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