

12 March, 2018

## **CONFERENCE SEEKS ANSWERS TO “IS RELIGION AND CULTURE A SOURCE OF STRENGTH IN TODAY’S SOCIETY?”**

### **Catholic representatives proud to be part of the conversation**

Toowoomba recently hosted the National Interfaith Peace Conference with representatives from across the country and the world in attendance to discuss whether religion and culture are sources of strength in today's society.

The conference was jointly organised by the Toowoomba Interfaith Working Group and Pure Land Learning College Association and held over two days, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> March, at Holy Name Primary School.

The Interfaith conferences have become an important connector and bridge builder in strengthening social cohesion and promoting greater social harmony in Toowoomba.

Australia is exceptionally rich in both religions and cultures. Everywhere you look, one can find a diverse community of different faiths and cultures sharing a common space - we may eat different food, yet we share the same table.

Key aims of the conference were promoting religious and social harmony, provide a better understanding of each faiths’ core values and cultural practices, as well as providing a crucial network for future collaboration in interfaith and multicultural dialogue.

The conference also included a youth panel discussion with representatives from local high schools and the University of Southern Queensland.

Speakers, panelists and facilitators from a broad selection of faiths and cultures were represented including Buddhism, Islam, Hindu, Judasim, Sikhism and Christianity. This included Catholic representatives Bishop Robert McGuckin (Bishop of Toowoomba), Nicole Rangiira (Ecumenical Pastoral Care) and Yentle Rangiira (St Ursula’s College, Toowoomba).

Bishop McGuckin presented the Keynote Address along with Venerable Master Chin Kung AM, Founder and President of Pure Land Learning College Association. Mrs Rangiira hosted a Q&A session at the end of the first day, with Yentle taking part in a youth focused panel discussion on day two.

Conference attendees ranged from locals to participants from the Gold Coast, Sunshine Coast and several government agencies as well as from Singapore, Malaysia and America.

*5 Photos supplied: Photo file names descriptive of content, all photos supplied by/credited to Pure Land Learning College Association Inc.*

**Media Contact for the Catholic Diocese of Toowoomba:**

Ingrid McTaggart

Ph: 07 4632 4277

Mobile: 0429 489 748

Email: [imctaggart@twb.catholic.org.au](mailto:imctaggart@twb.catholic.org.au)