

2009 Parliament Theme Announced

The 2009 Parliament theme, **'Make a World of Difference: Hearing each other, Healing the earth'**, is the outcome of many months of consultations with religious and spiritual communities, especially in Melbourne.

The theme reflects the need communities feel to act on concerns for the environment, peace, and overcoming poverty, and to take responsibility for cultivating awareness of our global interconnectedness. The theme also reflects the diversity of the world's faith

and spiritual traditions, and their openness to one another's experiences.

The 2009 Parliament will have a special focus on the struggles and spiritualities of indigenous peoples around the globe, particularly highlighting the Aboriginal communities of Australia.

We encourage you to register to attend the Parliament by December 31st 2008 to take advantage of our early bird registration fees.

Parliament Calls for Program Submissions

The 2009 Parliament 'Call for Programs' document is now available for download at www.parliamentofreligions.org. This document should be the starting point for all individuals and organizations interested in presenting at the 2009 Parliament. It introduces the theme, sub themes, daily schedule, and defines the criteria for program selection.

The newly established program management committees and specialised working parties are seeking program proposals in four main programming areas:

- Religious and spiritual observances.
- 'Intrareligious' programs expressing religious identity and issues internal to each religion.
- 'Interreligious' programs, likely to be dialogues between two or more religious traditions.
- 'Engagement' programs focusing on religious social action, including panel dialogues and other presentation formats.

Special attention will be given to programs that use creative methods of communication, that involve members of two or more religious or spiritual communities or groups, and that offer interactive approaches to engage participants. The deadline for program submissions is December 31st 2008. We will review proposals on an ongoing basis, with final decisions made in April 2009. We encourage early submissions!



Melbourne Board of Management Chair Professor Gary Bouma, Program Director Professor Des Cahill, Deputy Chair of the Board of Management Nina Bassat and Program Associate Petr Svoboda.

Youth Update

The 2009 Parliament will have a very strong emphasis on young people and their concerns. We have employed a Youth Community Organiser, Gemma McDonald, to ensure this happens. The Parliament is also pleased to announce the appointment of three Youth Patrons - Tristan Mungatopi, Rinchen Norbu, and Demetrio Zema. The trio have begun working with Gemma offering great ideas for the Youth Program and proving to have a wealth of knowledge about the interfaith scene.



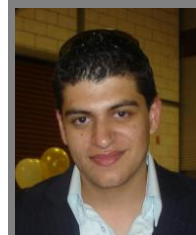
Gemma has completed Post-Graduate studies in Event Management and is currently serving on the National Bahá'í Youth Conference Board.



Tristan is an Aboriginal Australian from the Tiwi people who works as a Project Officer for the Justice Unit at the Aboriginal Catholic Ministry



Rinchen is a Tibetan Buddhist studying at RMIT and about to complete a double degree in Environmental Science and Environmental Social Science



Demetrio helps run the youth group at the St Peter Chanel Catholic Church in Deer Park. He studies Law and International Relations at La Trobe University.