

STUDIES OF RELIGION I – CORE SECTION.

Aboriginal Spirituality (Detailed Notes)

Key Terminology:

Assimilation Policy - Official government policy which aims to integrate minority groups into the dominant cultural group. This results in a loss of culture, tradition and languages

Balance Rites - Aboriginal rituals that aim to make a supernatural connection with ancestral beings from the Dreaming.

Crown Land - Public land owned by the Commonwealth of Australia and managed by Australian government

Dispossession - The forced removal of Aboriginal people from their native lands

Dreaming - Aboriginal spiritual beliefs about creation and existence. The Dreaming establishes the rules governing relationships between people, land and all things for Aboriginal people. It links together the past, present and future

Freehold Title - Absolute and permanent ownership of the land

Half-castes - An offensive term referring to a person of mixed decent or ethnicity

Land Rights - Property rights pertaining to land

Leasehold title - Crown land rented out to user by government

Meta-temporal - The trinity of time; past, present and future

Native Title - Form of land title which recognises Aboriginal people as rightful owners of their traditional land

Protection Policy - Official government policy starting in the late nineteenth century. Removed Aboriginal people from unsuitable environments and placed them under the protection of the State.

Sacred sites - Places of spiritual significance to Aboriginal people as they are connected with ancestor beings from the Dreaming, they are places where rituals such as initiation and balance rites are performed.

Stolen generation(s) - Aboriginal children who were removed from their homes between 1900 and 1972. This was an attempt to assimilate them into Australian society

Terra Nullius - Legal notion meaning "Land belonging to no one". Justification for the invasion and colonisation of Australia. Deemed legally invalid by the High Court's Mabo decision in 1992.

Totems - Totems represent a person as they existed in the Dreaming in the form of an animal, plant or natural phenomena. They are thus links between an individual or community and particular ancestor spirits in the land.

Syllabus Requirements

Student's Learn About:

- Aboriginal Spirituality as determined by the Dreaming

Student's Learn To:

- Discuss how Aboriginal Spirituality is determined by the dreaming

- Kinship
- Ceremonial life
- Obligations to the land and people

Aboriginal spirituality as determined by the Dreaming

- The fundamental tenet that underpins Aboriginal spirituality is a concept known as the Dreaming
- Dreaming is the unseen spirit world. It is not obscure and in the past. It is reality - Dreaming is expressed in ceremonies, dance, song and art. It is both personal and communal
- Everything in the land is linked to Dreaming. Humans and the spirits are connected to it
- The Dreaming is the fundamental concept underpinning the human, physical and sacred dimensions of Aboriginal belief; it has different meanings for Aboriginal people
- The Dreaming refers to Aboriginal spiritual beliefs about creation and existence
- According to Aboriginal belief, all life as it is today - human, animal and plant is part of one vast unchanging network of relationships which can be traced to the **ancestral spirit beings** of the Dreaming
- The Dreaming involves **all knowledge and understanding in Aboriginal societies**, and hence incorporates all beliefs and practices of Aboriginal communities.
- The Dreaming is **inextricably connected to the land**, as the land is the physical medium through which the Dreaming is communicated, since it is within the land that the ancestor spirits of the Dreaming continue to dwell
- The Dreaming is a **meta-temporal** concept, which means it is a concept that incorporates the past, present and future reality as a complete and present reality.
- The Dreaming contains wisdom, understanding and insight, necessary to live a meaningful life
- The influence of the **Dreaming is embedded in all aspects of Aboriginal life**. The different facets of Aboriginal life, from the ceremonial dimension of life, to the ritualistic obligations owed to the land and people, as well as the intricate kinship system are all intrinsically connected to, and are derived from the Dreaming.
- Thus, the Dreaming is the foundation of Aboriginal spirituality, providing a basis upon which kinship systems, traditions, rituals and ceremonies are built
- The Dreaming is ...
 - o Expressed in rituals, ceremonies, dance, song and art
 - o Seen in the obligations to care for the land of their ancestors
 - o The stories of the totems of the community and the individual
 - o Acted out in the obligations between different members of the community
 - o Reflected upon and shared through artwork
 - o The link to the ancestor spirits of the community
 - o The sacred spaces that are important to the aboriginal community
 - o Spoken in language of each aboriginal community

Kinship

- The system of relationships, traditionally accepted by a particular culture and the rights/obligations involved
- Kinship ties identify a complex **system of belonging and responsibilities within a clan**
- Kinship systems define where a person fits into the community binding people together in relationships of sharing and obligation.
- Determines education of children, system of moral and financial support, intermarriage issues.
- Based on family relations and totem relationships (which represents a connection to the ancestral beings)
- Kinship is expressed through **skin names**, which are critical for Aboriginal identity and determine personal relationships including marriage.
- Govern everyday life through determining individual responsibilities to the clan

Significance of Kinship Ties

- Responsibility of elders to pass on the knowledge of the Dreaming to younger generations

Relationship with the Dreaming:

- Kinship groups established by ancestor beings in dream-time, along with other laws
- It is the tangible expression of Dreaming in everyday life.
- The way the individual experiences the Dreaming (ceremonies, sacred sites etc.) is entirely determined by the connection of the kinship group.
- Roles, rights, responsibilities of kinship group are defined and explained through Dreaming stories.

Obligations to land and people

- The land acts as a dwelling place for ancestral spirits
- The land is the mother of the people, hence the identity of an Aboriginal person is inextricably connected to the land
- Ownership of the land means they have a responsibility to care for it & nurture it
- The land & all forms of life it contains are regarded as a sacred trust that must be preserved/ passed on in a timeless cycle of mutual dependence
- Land is important due to:

- o Economic uses - source of food & water & gathering materials to make objects
- o Ritualistic association - repository of the secret/sacred, the activities of the Dreaming beings

- Indigenous people don't own land; they are custodians
- Mutual dependence: both provider of food and water and place of the ancestor beings.

- “Land is the generation point of existence. It is the maintenance of existence, the spirit from which Aboriginal existence comes.” - Chairperson of Council of Aboriginal Reconciliation, Patrick Dodson
- Particular events in the Dreaming are connected to sacred sites (ritual estate)
- Aboriginal people have ritual responsibilities on these sacred sites
- For example, Balance Rites
- *Reflected in the Dreaming:*
 - Land holds sacred places for all people.
 - Land is context of dreaming, inhabited by the ancestor spirits whom the people maintain a strong link with.
 - Responsibility to land physically and tangibly derives from and preserves the Dreaming as living religion.

Ceremonial Life

- Aboriginal ceremonies are a communication of Aboriginal spirituality
- The complex and spiritual core of the Dreaming for each group is recognised and revered in ceremonial life, encompassing the expression of art, the passing down of stories, the performance of rituals and totemic representations
- Art is a very important **way of communicating** the Dreaming because it illustrates the actions of the ancestral spirit beings in the land
- Art is used to pass on sacred knowledge and provides maps of the land - sacred sites, waterholes, territorial boundaries etc.
- Stories from the Dreaming describe Aboriginal law and lifestyle
- Stories are a major way of teaching Aboriginal children about right and wrong behaviour in society
- Provide foundation for Aboriginal existence by explaining creation and sharing how dreaming shapes daily life
- Used as a form of oral history
- Rituals from the Dreaming relive activities of ancestral spirits
- Rituals heighten the presence of the ancestral spirits
- Rituals link the present world to the Dreaming
- Totems represent the individual as they existed in the Dreaming and carry ceremonial responsibilities
- **Totems are the embodiment of each individual in his or her primordial state** (Totems represent the person as they existed in the Dreaming)
- Totems create links with an individual or community with particular ancestor spirits in the land
- Totems carry ceremonial responsibilities
- *Balance rites:*
 - No immediate control over food supplies so most rituals celebrate wildlife and continuation of food supply.
 - Spirit of species inhabits certain sites: responsible groups must perform proper rights to ensure spirits emerge and give life.
 - *Death and burial rituals:*

- Death is only the last ceremony in the present life as spirits return to original Dreaming places as part of eternal transition of Dreaming life force.
- Burial grounds are feared
- Buried in own country
 - *Reflected in the Dreaming:*
- Ceremonial life acknowledges the Dreaming as a fundamental aspect of human life while practice sustains it as a vital part of spirituality.
- Ceremonies commonly pertain to sacred sites where, as revealed in the Dreaming, ancestor beings are said to inhabit.
- Burial rites acknowledge the intrinsic spiritual link of the individual with the life force of the Dreaming

Syllabus Requirements

Student's Learn About:

- Issues for Aboriginal spirituality in relation to to:
 - The effect of dispossession

Student's Learn To:

- Discuss the continuing effect of dispossession on Aboriginal spiritualities in relation to:
 - Separation from land
 - Separation from kinship groups
 - The Stolen Generations

The Effect of Dispossession - Separation from land

- The impact of dispossession has been enormously and overwhelmingly detrimental
- Loss of land = Loss of cultural heritage
- The loss of land amounts to a loss of identity and the burden of not being able to fulfill ritual responsibilities
- The loss of land has destroyed the system of totemic responsibilities
- Deprivation of land results in a loss of independence, culture, identity and spiritual world.
- *Separation from the land is especially problematic for Aboriginals due to:*

- o The land contains the Dreaming & therefore is needed to communicate it
- o Ritualistic Association with the land e.g. death & burial rituals are linked with the land
 - could not properly conduct these & other such rituals
- o Economic uses of land for Aboriginals
- o Inextricable connection with the land
- o Obligations to the land (responsibilities)
- o Loss of connection with ritual estate, country & sacred sites
- o Spiritual & personal identity of Aboriginal people lies within their relationship within

the land

- o Other aspects of Aboriginal culture a linked to the land, e.g. stories, song & dance

The Effect of Dispossession - Separation from Kinship Groups

- Forceful removal of children of mixed ancestry, who were placed in institutions, and removal of Aboriginal families from land, usu sent to missions à breaking down of kinship groups
- The separation of families has destroyed the kinship system and has led to a loss of identity
- Effects of dispossession in relations to kinship groups are:
 - Children grew up without learning about Aboriginal life and spirituality (Resulted in loss of: roles, religion, culture, ceremonies and rituals)
 - Social Problems (Depression and demoralisation because of loss in identity. People turned to alcoholism and violence)
 - Loss of language (Language groups being broken up, clans forbidden to speak native language)
 - Loss of belief, laws and rituals
 - Loss of family links, identity and culture

The Effect of Dispossession - The Stolen Generation

- Aboriginal children who were removed from their homes between the late 1800's & 1972 by the govt & church missionaries in an attempt to assimilate these children into European society (It was a govt policy between 1950s and 1972)
- Based on these two policies:
 - Protection: Removal of Aboriginal children from their families under the pretence that they were living in an 'uncivilised' environment.
 - Assimilation: The idea that Aboriginal people could be improved by being civilised and Christianised, in other words - forced integration. (Govt policy from 1930s to 1972)
 - Based on the ideology that if Aboriginal race can't be destroyed or separated, they should be absorbed into European society
- Attempts of separation took form in:
 - Putting children in missionaries or government run institutions
 - Adopting children into white families
 - Fostering children into white families
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- Effects of the Stolen Generation include:
 - Many Aboriginal children suffered maltreatment, sexual exploitation, inhumane working conditions and degrading forms of humiliation
 - Prohibition of traditional Aboriginal practices had a detrimental affect upon:
 - Land, Identity, Culture, Language, Spirituality, Totems, Kinship and Ceremonies
- The prohibition on traditional Aboriginal practices meant that land, language, totems, kinship and ceremonies were all detrimentally affected
- E.g. The loss of language has made it impossible to pass on beliefs in an authentic way

Syllabus Requirements

Student's Learn About:

- Issues for Aboriginal spirituality in relation to to:

-The Land Rights Movement

Student's Learn To:

- Outline the importance of the following for The Land Rights Movement:
 - Native Title
 - Mabo
 - Wik
- Analyse the importance of The Dreaming for The Land Rights Movement

The Land Rights Movement

- Land Rights: claims by ATSI people to repossession & compensation for White use of their land & sacred sites
- Land rights are of critical importance in relation to Aboriginal Spirituality because the Dreaming is inextricably connected with the land
 - o It was both a religious and political movement
- Importance of Land for Aboriginal people:
 - o It is central to their spiritual life e.g. it is the source of the Dreaming, it is the resting place of spirit ancestors
 - o It is central to their cultural life e.g. tribal boundaries are define by the land, ritual actions have source in the land
 - o It is the basis of their economic life e.g. source of food/ water (hunting)
 - o Control over land is a means of regaining control over their lives (i.e. allows for the economic and spiritual dimension of their lives)
 - o Ownership of land by Western methods is seen as compensation for their having lost it in the past

The Land Rights Movement - Mabo

- The case was brought to the Supreme court of Queensland, which ruled in favour of the Queensland government. Upon appeal to the High Court of Australia, this decision was reversed.
- Overturned the notion of 'Terra Nullius', deeming it legally invalid
- Mabo & Others v Queensland (No. 2) (1992) ruled in favour of an action brought by Eddie Mabo on behalf of the Murray Island people
- High Court held that: "Native Title' is defined according to the traditional laws & customs of people having relating with the Land. Native Title may be held by a community, group or individual depending on the content of trad laws & customs"
- It was more of a symbolic than realistic benefit - there were restrictions:
- only limited amounts of land which they could claim under this

- If land was owned under a freehold title, native title was invalid
- Had to prove that there was a continuous traditional link with the land since 1788- Very hard to prove this as British colonisation removed ATSI people from their land

The Land Rights Movement - Native Title

- The Mabo decision influenced the federal government to make a statute which would create a process governing future claims of Native Title. This statute is the Native Title Act 1993 (Cth)
- The Native Title Act created the Native Title Tribunal
- NATIVE TITLE: the recognition that Aboriginal people who occupy land on which their families have lived continuously for hundreds of years are the owners of that land
- Important step for Aboriginal self-determination

The Land Rights Movement - Wik

- The Wik Peoples vs. The State of Queensland & Ors (1996) established that pastoral leases did not automatically extinguish native title and that:
 - o They could co-exist
 - o When interests were in conflict, however, the rights of the leasehold title would prevail
- It was extremely significant as there was a great increase in potential for Native Title Claims
 - o Over 42% of Australia is held under pastoral leases
- It later led to the Howard government introducing the Native Title Amendment Act (1997) & the 10 point plan
 - o It was introduced with other Claims the Wik decision had left too much uncertainty & threatened investment from mining companies

Analyse the importance of The Dreaming for The Land Rights Movement

- Since the Dreaming is inextricably linked to the land, the land rights movement is essential in helping Aboriginal people re-establish spiritual links with the land they lost
- The land is the medium that the Dreaming is lived and communicated
- The Dreaming is important for understanding life, land & how the world works
- The importance of Land for the Dreaming is a key influence in the Land Rights Movement - this includes:
 - o Spirit beings living in the landscape
 - o Sacred objects are from the landscape
 - o Sacred sites
 - o Songs, languages, stories are conducted about features of the landscape
 - o Rituals are conducted on the land for various purposes

- Relationships within Aboriginal communities are determined through relationships to & with the land

Syllabus Requirements

“The focus of this study is religious expression in Australia’s multicultural and multifaith society since 1945. The study includes an appreciation of Aboriginal spiritualities and their contribution to an understanding of religious beliefs and religious expression in Australia today”

(THE ABOVE IS THE FIRST PART OF THE SYLLABUS. This is what was used for Section 3 last year. They might use it for Section 1 this year. Included notes below.)

Ways in which Aboriginal Spirituality has Influenced some Christian Denominations:

- Aboriginal Christian Church Movements exist in Australia, which hold rituals, liturgies, teachings and culture into one celebration eg. Christian liturgies in local language or Indigenous art forms featuring in Christian Churches.
- Several Aborigines have achieved high profile religious Christian positions à recognition of Aboriginal motifs, customs, stories and language has occurred. Eg. Arthur Malcolm - 1st Aboriginal Bishop.
- Aboriginal Integration of religious beliefs, life and the physical environment has greatly contributed to contemporary Australian spirituality eg. **George Rosendale’s ‘Rainbow Spirit Theology’**, Lutheran minister offers a way for people to be spiritually fulfilled by linking God to nature.
- Some believe Aboriginal Spirituality offers grounding for all Australians to their homeland and feeling a part of it.
- Christians involvement in the reconciliation movement - sea of hands, national sorry day etc.

The Contribution Made by Aboriginal Spirituality to the Understanding of the Nature of Religious Experience in Australia:

Aboriginal Spirituality has influenced mainstream Australian religions in the following ways:

1. Aboriginal Christian Church Movements exist, welding spiritualities, beliefs and teachings. - Christian rituals and liturgies are delivered in local languages, and Aboriginal art forms often feature in Churches.
2. Arthur Malcolm was consecrated at a ceremony in Townsville QLD - A normal recognition by the Christian Church in 1985. His services, and the services of other high-profile Aborigines contributed to the religious experience of many in Australia.

3. Deacon Gloria Shipp was ordained as Australia's first Aboriginal female Anglican priest, going on to mark links between Gospel and Dreaming stories.
4. Through the established recognition of Aboriginal motifs, customs and languages and their place in worship in Christianity by Gloria Shipp and Patrick Dodson (former Aboriginal Catholic priest), the understanding of the links and multiculturalism in all facets of the lives of Australian's is enhanced à increased tolerance.
5. The Aboriginals inextricable connection with the land and their mother offers a home-grown spirituality and a creation theology that helps shape Australia and its people.

The Current Church's View on Land Rights:

The Church supports land rights, as they see it as a way:

1. to develop and maintain the Aboriginal culture.
2. to solve the problems which Aboriginal people face today. Eg: poverty & racism.
3. to bring equality and justice to the Aboriginal people.
4. of Reconciliation

The *Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace* outlines three main issues in which it supports Aboriginal communities.

1. Aboriginal desire to be consulted about matters which affect them.
2. The Aboriginal struggle for security of title and full and adequate control over the land.
3. The Aboriginal wish to determine their own future.

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• Aboriginal Spirituality (Summary Notes)

• SOR I – Summary Notes for Section 1

- **Aboriginal spirituality, as determined by the Dreaming**
- (Includes: kinship, ceremonial life and obligations to the land)
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- The fundamental tenet that underpins Aboriginal spirituality is a concept known as the dreaming
- The dreaming is a meta-temporal concept that is inextricably connected to the land.
- The importance of the Dreaming is embedded into all aspects of Aboriginal life
 - Kinship
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 - Complex system of relationships, identifying the rights and responsibilities of individuals within a clan
 - It is expressed through skin names and defines how a person fits into the community, by governing daily activities of lay followers in regards to education and relationships
 - Thus, it is the tangible expression of Dreaming in everyday life
 - Obligations to the land
 -

- Land is the context of the Dreaming, and it is inhabited by ancestral beings
- Aboriginals are custodians of the land and have a lasting relationship of mutual dependence towards it as it is the provider of economic life
- Rituals are performed on sacred sites such as balance rights to communicate with the ancestral spirits of the Dreaming

- Ceremonial Life

- Ceremonies communicate the dreaming through art, stories, rituals and totemic representations
- Art passes sacred knowledge of ancestral spirits, while stories describe Aboriginal law and lifestyle, where as rituals acknowledge the meta-temporal feature of the Dreaming, i.e. balance rights.
- The totems link the individual or community with particular ancestor spirits in the land
- Thus ceremonial life acknowledges that the Dreaming is the fundamental aspect of human life

- **The effect of dispossession on Aboriginal spirituality**

- (Includes: Separation from land, Separation from kinship groups and The Stolen Generations)
- Aboriginal spirituality has been detrimentally affected since European inhabitation, due to the ongoing dispossession of Aboriginal peoples from their land and their offspring.

- Separation from land

- Aboriginal peoples have an inextricable connection with the land
- Removal from this land led to a loss of identity, as they were unable to perform rituals on sacred sites in order to communicate with ancestral beings in the Dreaming.
- It destroyed the system of totemic responsibilities, which was integral for family relations and economic uses
- Thus, a tremendous loss of cultural was due to separation from land

- Separation from kinship groups

- The forceful removal of Children from Aboriginal families
- Resulted in a loss of language, beliefs, rituals and culture, compromising heritage and identity for Aboriginals
- After effects include prolonged depression and demoralisation, people turned to alcohol and violence

- The Stolen Generations

- The removal of Aboriginal children from their homes to assimilate into European society, based on the government policies of Assimilation and Protection
- Many children claim to have suffered maltreatment, sexual exploitation and degrading forms of humiliations
- This still impacts all aspects of Aboriginal spirituality, especially culture and identity. E.g. Loss of Language has made it impossible to pass on beliefs in an authentic way

- **The Land Rights Movement**

- [Includes: Mabo (1992), The Native Title Act (1993) and The Wik Decision (1996)]

- Land rights are claims by ATSI people to repossess native title owned prior to European settlement
- It is of critical importance, as the focal point of Aboriginal spirituality, The Dreaming, is inextricably connected to the land
 - Mabo
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 - A class action against the Queensland government brought upon by the Murray Islander People
 - Resulted in the High Court overturning the legal notion, of “terra nullius”, ruling that it was legally invalid
 - The High court ruled in favour of Eddie Mabo and the Murray Islander peoples, reinstating their native title
 - Native Title Act
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 - The Mabo decision set a precedence which was formally acknowledged by the statute of the Native Title Act (1993) Cth.
 - Created Native title tribunal and established guidelines for pursuing a native title claim, for example a continuous traditional link with the land had to be proven
 - The Wik Decision
 -
 - Established that pastoral leases could co-exist with native title, but then interests were in conflict, leasehold title would prevail
 - Extremely significant as it increased the potential for native title claims
 - **Importance of Dreaming for the land rights movement**
 - Dreaming is inextricably linked to the land, therefore the movement is essential in helping Aboriginals re-establish the spiritual links they lost
 - Land is the medium that the Dreaming is lived and communicated
 - Ancestral beings inhabit the land in sacred sites
 - The Dreaming is communicated through songs, languages, ceremonies and rituals – all of which are of performed on the land.
 - Thus, as land is the context of the dreaming, the land rights movement is of critical importance
 - **The First Part of the syllabus**
 - Ways Aboriginal spirituality has influenced Christian denominations
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 - Arthur Malcolm, the first Aboriginal bishop, integrated Aboriginal culture into liturgies
 - The Lutheran minister, George Rosendale, through “Rainbow spirit theology”, links nature to God, in a contemporary way.
 - Contribution of Aboriginal spirituality to the understanding of religion in Australia
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 - Aboriginal spirituality is centred on nature and is inextricably connected with the land.

Dates of Major Policies in Australia - PAISM

Protection: (1869-1901)

Assimilation: (1901-1950)

Integration: (1964-1972)

Self-Determination: (1970-Present)

Multiculturalism: (1972-Present)

- **Aboriginal Spirituality (Sample Questions)**

- This section will have short answer questions (Structured like Question 11)

Practice Short Answer Questions:

Question 1: How is Aboriginal Spirituality determined by the Dreaming?

Question 2: What are the continuing effects of dispossession on Aboriginal Spiritualities?

Question 3: Analyse the importance of the Dreaming for the Land Rights movement

Question 4: Analyse the contribution of Aboriginal spiritualities on religious expression in Australia today

Question 5: To what extent has Aboriginal spirituality enhanced Australia's religious beliefs today?

Question 6: Assess the continuing relationships between Aboriginal communities and Religious traditions in Australia

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- **Religious expression in Australia - since 1945**
- **(Detailed Notes)**

- **Key Terminology:**

- **Creation centred spirituality** - The notion that the divine can be found through nature and within the self, rather than from God
- **Denominational switching** - The transfer of followers from one Christian denomination to another
- **Ecumenism** - Movement towards unity amongst Christian denominations
- **Grass roots movement** - What Ecumenism began as, driven largely by the experiences of individual believers who recognised what Christians have in common is more significant than the things that divide them
- **Interfaith dialogue** - Formal discussion aimed towards developing greater mutual understanding between different religious traditions
- **Magick** - Means "Supernatural forces" amongst Wicca devotees

- **New age religion** - Spiritual beliefs and practices aiming to foster individual fulfillment in the form of personal happiness, health and meaning in life
- **Pentecostalism** - A charismatic (strong emphasis on gifts of the Holy Spirit) and evangelical (fundamental approaches to Bible) strand of Christianity
- **Revolving door syndrome** - Phenomena whereby large numbers of Pentecostals remain with the church for a relatively short period of time
- **Sectarianism** - The opposite of Ecumenism, focuses on the differences of Christian denominations
- **Speaking in tongues** - Vocal prayer inspired by the Holy Spirit. Results in supernatural sounds, gifted by the Holy Spirit.
- **White Australia policy** - Government policy aimed to exclude non-European people from migrating to Australia
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Syllabus Requirements

Student's Learn About:

- The religious landscape from 1945 to the present in relation to:
 - Changing patterns of religious adherence

Student's Learn To:

- Outline changing patterns of religious adherence from 1945 to present using census data

Changing patterns of religious adherence post 1945

Christianity

- Institutionalisation of Christianity within Australia has made it the predominant religion in Australia
- In 1947, Australia was predominately Anglo-Celtic, 88% of the population stated that they were Christian
- Increased percentage of Catholics since 1945; has remained steady between 20-30%
 - o Increased after WWII from 20.9% (1947) to 27% (1971)
 - o Has fluctuated between 25.7% to 27.3% since 1971
 - o 2001 - 26.6%
 - o Have overtaken Anglicans as the largest denomination in Australia
 - o Have not been affected as much by denominational switching due to loyalty developed within denomination, especially with the education system
 - o Migration from Lebanon & other Middle eastern Countries has increases the number of Eastern Rite Catholics
- Decreased Percentage of Anglican adherents since 1947
 - o Fallen from 39.0% (1947) to 20.5% (2001)
 - o Attributed to:
 - Denominational Switching
 - monotonous rituals

- Aging population
- Immigration of non-Anglo Christians & non-Christians
- Opportunity to state “No Religion” on census from 1971
- Increased number and appeal of New Age Religions
- Turning away from religion altogether
- Good Concluding sentence for 5 marker: Therefore, large, traditional Christian churches such as The Church of England (Anglicans) have lost large members due to ageing population and low birth rates, switching and movement to ‘no religion’, encompassed by an ever changing plurality of religious systems in Australia.
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- Increased Pentecostal adherents (numerically & as a %) since 1961
 - o Increased from 0.16% (1961) to 1.04% (2001)
 - o Attributed to denominational switching as Anglicans switch to Pentecostalism, however other factors include:
 - Perceived as a more lively and relevant church, w/ exuberance, energy & entertainment value of the Pentecostal service
 - Emphasis on modern music
 - Appeals to individualistic people of society as it emphasises personal spiritual fulfilment
 - Nonetheless, strong sense of comm & spiritual support
 - Offers stability with heavy focus on faith & gifts of the holy spirit
- Increase Orthodox Christians since 1945
 - o Grew rapidly after WWI, rising from 9.2% (1947) to 3.0% (1981), due to migration from: Greece, Cyprus, Eastern Europe
 - o Have remained stable since, fluctuating between 2.7% to 3.8%
 - o 2001 - 2.8%

Religions Other than Christianity

- Increase in Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam, each from a very small base
 - o Each < 0.1% in 1947 - Buddhists (0.01%), Hindus (0.00%) & Muslims (0.04%)
 - o The ABS omitted statistics for these religions from 1954 till:
 - § Islam re-included in 1971
 - § Buddhism re-included in 1981
 - § Hinduism re-included in 1986
 - o Omitted due to:
 - § No data collected (not a box to tick)
 - § This is suspected to have been because of low percentile
 - o Were re-included as it became viable to incl them w/ the ending of the White Australia policy in 1972:
 - § Increasing numbers (which is attributed to this, not solely though)
 - § Social policy meant it was unacceptable not to have them as an option on the census
- Stable figures for Judaism

- o Have not changed from 1947 figures as a percentage (0.4%), and have been at 0.4% since 1976 (till 2001)
- o Peaked at 0.7% (1961) - attributed to immigration from Eastern Europe (holocaust)
- Increase in those ticking 'No religion,' and fluctuations in those not stating their religion (i.e. not answering the question)
 - o Those ticking No Religion has rad from 0.3% (1947) to 15.5% (2001)
 - o Those not stating their religion has fluctuated between 6.3% & 12.3%
 - § 2001 - 11.7%
 - o 1971 - an instruction was included on the census "if no religion, write none," which gave greater clarity
 - § Figures for No Religion ↑ from 0.4% (1961) to 6.7% (1971)
 - § No of people who did not adequately ans qn ↓ d from 10.7% (1961) to 6.3% (1971)
 - o Factors impacting on the fluctuation of these figures include:
 - § Changing definition of religion
 - § Instruction "if no religion, write none," added in 1971
 - § Idea of a nominal believer ('name only') vs. practicing believer
 - § Have only a select amount of religions listed
 - § Religious concerns e.g. for the afterlife

- Syllabus Requirements
- Student's Learn About:
 - The current religious landscape
 - Student's Learn To:
 - Account for the present religious landscape in Australia in relation to:
 - Christianity as the major religious tradition
 - Immigration
 - Denominational switching
 - Rise of New Age Religions
 - Secularism

Christianity as the Major Religious Tradition

- Due to the institutionalisation of Christianity in Australia, it has remained the the major religious tradition
- Immigration Restriction Act (1901) allowed European immigrants only, bringing majority of Christian adherents ensuring the demographic stay the same for at least 50 years
- With the relaxation of the White Australia policy in the 1950's and its abolition in 1973, Australia has seen increasing diversity of faiths, however most remain British and therefore Christian
- Christianity is the major religions traditions, with its many denominations
- Trends within Christianity incl (see assignments on PMOnline + above for more info):

- o Increased percentage of Catholics since 1945, but has remained between 20-30% (Mainly due to migration)
- o Decrease percentage of Anglican adherents since 1947 (Due to monotonous rituals, people were bored, resulted in denominational switching)
- o Increase Pentecostal adherents since 1961 (denominational switching, mainly from Anglican)
- o Increase Orthodox Christians since 1945 (Migration)
- The figures of the 2001 National Church Life Survey reveal there is a significant decrease in no of Christians regularly attending services, especially Anglican, Uniting & Presbyterian Churches
- There is low attendance in Catholic (15%), Anglican (5%) and Uniting (10%) Churches
- However, there is strong attendance in the evangelical Pentecostal churches (73%) & Churches of Christ (74%)

- **Significant Trends**

- Christianity decreased due to introduction of other mainstream religions due to migration
- Large, traditional Christian churches such as Anglican and Uniting have lost large members due to ageing population and low birth rate, switching and movement to 'no religion'
- Smaller, traditional Christian churches such as Pentecost and Baptist are steadily increasing
- Catholic remains steady due to immigration
- Eastern Orthodox members are rising due to immigration and it is these Churches which have a 'young' profile

Immigration

- The most significant reason for the increase in the diversity of the religious character in Australia is immigration
- **“What were the government policies in chronological order?”**
- Immigration has changed Australia into a multifaith society
- Changed Australia from being mono-cultural, mono-faith to multi-cultural, multi-faith
 - Post WWI immigration has created a diversity of religions other than Christianity
 - Has allowed for religious plurality
- Increases in immigration due to:
 - Post WWII
 - Lifting of White Australia Policy (1972)
- Post WWI migration à
 - o Increase in Catholics (Italy, Malta, Philippines, etc.)
 - o Increase in Orthodox Christians (Greece & Eastern Europe)
 - o Increase in Judaism (Germany & Eastern Europe - survivors of the holocaust)
- Immigration policy changed after WWII as the govt needed to expand the labour force for economic growth, hence the slogan 'populate or perish'
- Buddhists came in large numbers particularly after the Vietnam war, they have continued to come through immigration from Asia

- Increase in Islam due to conflict in the Middle East

Denominational Switching

- Denominational switching is a term associated with the phenomena of the transfer of followers from one Christian variants to another, however it is more common in Protestant denominations
- It is most prominent with people switching
 - o From Anglicanism
 - o To Pentecostalism and other Protestant, charismatic churches
- An array of factors has attributed to the prominence of denominational switching within Australia's contemporary religious landscape
- Personal spiritual fulfilment seen as important
- Increased individualism of society
- Shield believers from uncertainties of the modern world
- Offer a clear certainty of salvation
- Charismatic nature of worship
- Exuberance, energy & entertainment value of services
- Greater celebration of the gifts of the holy spirit
- Often small groups, providing more personal interaction
- Monotonous rituals of Protestant denominations got boring
- Pentecostal variants focus on the gifts of the Holy spirit, thus it is more evangelical, music etc. This appeals to younger generation
- Denominational loyalty is comparatively high among Catholics, due especially to the schooling system
- Pentecostals have high figures of church attendance
- Demographics of Pentecostalism show a large young population
- Pentecostals also have the highest rates of worshippers leaving - denominational switching, and a lack of denomination loyalty, has an emergence of a 'revolving door syndrome'
- Major Pentecostal influence in Australia has been the rise of Hillsong

Rise of New Age Religions

- NEW AGE RELIGIONS: alternative and/or pseudo-religious groups; characterised by interest in the body, experiences, objects, and rituals; that people are attracted to in this contemporary world.
- Very diverse in nature
- "New Age" is an umbrella term to cover a range of spiritual beliefs and practices aiming to foster individual fulfillment in the form of personal happiness, health and meaning in life.
- Differ from traditional religion as they lack any single unifying creed or doctrine
- New Age religions are more individualistic and search oriented
- Often seek wisdom from ancient or Eastern traditions (i.e. Yoga, Tai Chi)

New Age practices

- Meditation, astrology, divination, holistic health (acupuncture, massage), crystals, channelling the dead, feng shui

Reasons for growth in popularity

- Disillusionment with Government by many after Vietnam War led to further questioning of traditional authority structures such as the church
 - à Christianity was seen as failing to provide spiritual or ethical guidance
- Media began to release stories of Catholic church clergymen involved in sexual abuse
- Growing emphasis of autonomy and individualistic lifestyle throughout society with more obligation on fulfilling and satisfying the needs of self rather than the community
- People currently seeking spiritual insight as a reaction to the unsettled and turbulent nature of the times we live in
- New Age Religion itself says popularity is a result of the Age of Aquarius and the coming of the utopian world

Causes & Effects of the Rise in New Age Religions

Causes

- Changes in the traditional notion of community - Australians are no longer as close with localities, therefore less importance seen in community-based religions such as Christianity
- New Age religions are more liberal and individualistic
- Seeking ethical guidelines
- Seeking meaning in life
- Thinking traditional religions have too much doctrine, rules, etc
- Dissatisfaction with traditional religions
- Greater prominence of feminism and equal opportunity (while religions such as Christianity, Islam are still male dominated)
- Wanting religion to assist dealing with life & their problems e.g. stress - yoga
- Disillusionment with materialism & other problems in society
- Individualistic nature of society
- Popularisation of New Age Religions due to Internet, films & other means
- Search for personal spiritual fulfilment and enlightenment

Effects

- Greater religious plurality
- People who identify with a major RE trad often incorporate New Age concepts into their lives due to popularisation (e.g. yoga)
- Greater access to clearer ethical guidelines
- Females are able to play an increased role in many New Age Religions
- ~1 million Australians are part of the New Age Movement (according to National Church Life Survey 1996)
- Individuals able to/ feel freer to choose the religion that suits their lifestyle
- People better able to deal w/ modern world due to focuses of New Age Religions:
 - o Individualism
 - o Meeting peoples' needs
 - o Other methods of assisting people in living their lives e.g. stress relief from yoga/

- End of White Australia Policy (1972) created an influx of foreign ideas

meditation

Secularism

- The belief that religion should not interfere with or be integrated into the public affairs of a society
- Religion should not interfere with the political running of a state
- The belief that human ethics and the universe should be understood without reference to religion or the Supernatural

What is secularisation?

- Secularism promotes the idea that society would be better off by not being controlled by religion
- Secularisation is the process of a society becoming more secular, or in other words - less religious
- Secularisation can be seen in the diminishing relevance of religious values

Reasons for secularisation?

- **Secularism is a key feature of democracy and therefore champions the notion of freedom from religion**
- Increasing pluralism (diversity of beliefs and cultures) in Australia - this means that no single religious system is dominant
- Increase individualism - people do not look to traditional communities for meaning in their lives
- Increasing materialism - spirituality is ignored in favour of possessions, power, looks and fame etc.
- Increasing disillusionment with traditional religions - resulting in religions losing moral authority
- Scientific scepticism towards the Supernatural - a result from developments in science
- Disenfranchisement ; belief that religious organizations have failed or denied the rights of their member
- Humanism: belief in human effort rather than religion, where an ethical lifestyle need not be defined by religion
- **EXAMPLE OF THIS BEING IN A SENTENCE:**

The increasing pluralism and materialism of society alongside society's increasing individualism and dissatisfaction with traditional religions are the main reasons for secularisation. To "WOAH" the marker, include disillusionment, humanism, disenfranchisement and scientific scepticism

Trends

- The above is evident in census statistics
 - Figures for 'No Religion' have ↑ from 0.3% (1947) to 15.5% (2001)
 - Figures for those not stating their religion/ not answering question have fluctuated between a high of 12.3% and a low of 6.3%, currently at 11.7% (2001)

- Overall 'other figures' (no religion or not stated) have ↑ d from 11.2% (1947) to 27.2% (2001)

Figures for Christianity (overall) have decreased from 87.3% (1947) to 67.9% (2001)

- Parallel to this trend has been ↓ ing religious attendance
 - o 2002 Well being & Security Survey estimated that only 18.6% of Aus popn attends regular (once a moth) religious services
 - o 2001 National Church Life Survey estimated that of those identifying w/ Christianity, only ~17% attend weekly services
 - o The survey also shows dismal attendance records for largest 3:
 - § ~5% of Anglicans
 - § ~10% of Uniting
 - § ~15% of Catholics

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• Syllabus Requirements

• Student's Learn About:

- Religious dialogue in multi-faith Australia
 - Ecumenical movements within Christianity

• Student's Learn To:

- Describe the impact of Christian ecumenical movements in Australia
 - The National Council of churches
 - NSW Ecumenical council

What is Ecumenism?

- Ecumenism refers to the movement of towards religious unity amongst Christian denominations
- It's an acknowledgement of their unity in Christ, which out weights diversity in practice and beliefs

Nature of Ecumenical Initiatives

- There are various levels of ecumenical developments
- At the highest level, there are **joint commissions**: formal ecumenical bodies, which work to find official agreement on issues which have divided denominations. E.g. *Joint declaration on the doctrine of Justification* (1998)
- Next, there is **Social Justice Initiatives**, aka (**on a practical level**) - This is where in times of crisis Christian denominations cooperative in the best interests of social justice. Examples of this action based Ecumenical approach can be the 2004 Boxing Day Tsunami
- **At a local parish level** - grass roots initiatives (Look at key terminology list) have been undertaken to implement ecumenism throughout the community. Examples are inter-denominational prayer services
- Lastly, on an **educational level** there are initiatives such as the Sydney College of Divinity which is part of an ecumenical federation on theology

Examples of Ecumenical movements

The Uniting church

- Formed in Australia in 1977, 3rd largest Christian denomination
- **Merged by all Methodists, 95% of Congregationalists and 65% of Presbyterians**
- *The Basis of Union* is the foundational document
- Thus, the Uniting Church is notable for the fact that ecumenism is one of its primary aims
- The name “Uniting” was specifically chosen, instead of “United” to indicate this ongoing commitment to promote ecumenism among the churches of Australia

National Council of Churches in Australia

- The NCCA is an ecumenical body that aims to deepen the relationship of member churches, “in order to express more visibly the unity willed by Christ” and strengthen the cause of Christian unity in Australia by leading different denominations to work, pray and grow together
- Comprises of 15 member churches who dialogue and collaborate in a range of ways
- Example of an initiative set up by the NCCA is Christian World Service, which works to develop a better future for people suffering from injustice and poverty
- The NCCA also supports the annual Week of Prayer for Christian Unity and supports National ATSI Ecumenical Commission and also has an active youth network
- It works in collaboration with the state Ecumenical Councils around Australia, is an associate council of World Council of Churches, is a member of Christian Conference of Asia, & a partner of other national ecumenical bodies throughout the world

NSW Ecumenical Council

- The NSW Ecumenical Council was founded in 1982, consists of 16 churches throughout NSW and the ACT.
- It is affiliated to the National Council of Churches
- In the 1990s it expanded, to include Catholic dioceses
- Aims to promote Ecumenism through 4 major types of initiatives
 1. Allows churches to reflect upon theology in a united way
 2. Provide local initiatives which which promote ecumenism on a grass root level
 3. Attempts to unite different denominations by addressing social justice issues. Example is “House of Welcome” for assisting refugees
 4. Advocates ecumenism through educational initiatives

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- Syllabus Requirements

- **Student’s Learn About:**

- Religious dialogue in multi-faith Australia
 - Interfaith dialogue

- **Student's Learn To:**
- Evaluate the importance of interfaith dialogue in multi-faith Australia

Interfaith dialogue + Importance

- Interfaith dialogue seeks to realize religion's basic oneness and unity, and the universality of belief. Religion embraces all beliefs and races in brotherhood, and exalts love, respect, tolerance, forgiveness, mercy, human rights, peace and freedom.
- Interfaith Dialogue is formal discussion aimed towards developing greater mutual understanding between different religious traditions
- It is not an attempt to unify religions, but allows faiths to come to a better appreciation of the uniqueness of each other, respecting diversity of beliefs in the process
- Interfaith Dialogue is necessary as the *concept of a religiously homogeneous culture is now redundant.*
- The purpose of Interfaith Dialogue is to find common ground between religious traditions, use that common ground to improve and understand each other better, which in turn promotes a greater tolerance of each other. The result is aimed to achieve harmony, benevolence and peace between religious traditions
- In light of current cultural and political divisions, there is a need for religious leaders to express commonalities which bind the religious world views e.g. all world religions are fundamentally concerned w/ the dignity of the human person, the sanctity of human life, care for those in need, justice and peace
- *Learning about other religious faiths strengthens one's own faith, and the idea of having a faith and religion. Interfaith dialogue, is just that - it infers a continuum of learning, growth, belief and understanding of other religious traditions and people of paths of life. Interfaith dialogue can prevent Australian's from turning away from God through the **dialogue of life: good neighbourly relations with non-Christians which encourage the sharing of joys and troubles.** Another way is through the **dialogue of spirituality, which makes available the riches of the life of prayer to all participants***
- It is through the dialogue of life, that *everyday adherents of religions are driven to work with people from different religious traditions.* Friendships can be forged, relationships made, but most of all the *greatest experience is the knowledge acquired, the respect gained and the understanding of a religious tradition different to your own.* It is through this that we are encouraged to enjoy the joys and troubles of life. *It is here that one's religious faith strengthens and grows, by learning more about the beliefs of others.*
- The dialogue of spirituality, encompasses the *environment of worship to God, whether that God may be Yahweh, Allah, Krishna or the God of the Christians, the person who is in this environment recognizes a culture around them, as religion is the substance of culture, one is indulged in the realms of another religious tradition to their own.* It is here that *one's faith is compelled and grows stronger, as the respect for the surrounding environment in the praise of the another God creates a new understanding, a new perspective in light to which the religion is viewed.*

- *Inter-religious dialogue therefore mobilizes all those who are on their way towards God to reach God. Hence, it can be determined that Inter-religious dialogue is most definitely an opportunity to grow closer to God and experience the love of God through the eyes of brothers and sisters from all religious walks of life.*

Interfaith Dialogue in multi-faith Australia + Importance

- As Australia is an ever-growing multi faith society and globalisation is increasing this harmonious interaction between faiths is highly important. As Australia has a diverse range religious traditions, *it is necessary for the population to understand and have respect for each faith*
- Initiatives for this interfaith dialogue have become increasingly common. The Federation of Ethnic Communities of Councils of Australia work with churches, mosques to promote understanding and respect by setting up open days, conferences, and workshops to *heighten awareness of Australia being multi faith. This is important as it helps in effective communication, business and in everyday life for Australians.*
- Interfaith dialogue occurs across a range of different levels. In 1996 *Pope John Paul II held an interfaith prayer service* in the Domain in Sydney. In 2001 churches, synagogues and mosques in Sydney held reciprocal visits to pray for peace and express unity. Other examples of coming together include *interfaith prayer services commemorating 9/11, the Bali bombing and the Boxing Day Tsunami.*
- Natural disasters, for example the 2004 Boxing Day tsunami, mean people need to put aside their faith differences to come together for a common goal to help each other.
- Similarly, different religious traditions *work together on a range of social issues as a testament to many of the shared values underlying major religious traditions.*
- *Interfaith dialogue allows religions to proclaim the importance of faith & spirituality in an increasingly secularised Australian society. Interfaith initiatives provide assistance in times of crisis/ tragedy e.g. Boxing Day Tsunami, Bali Bombings, etc. - support such as interfaith memorial.*
- The increased *interfaith activities in multi-faith Australia can be seen in the continuous growth of interfaith initiatives in the aftermath of calamities such as 9/11 and the Boxing Day Tsunami and the organisation of events such as prayer ceremonies and concerts. It can be concluded, that Interfaith dialogue works with members to achieve common goals and widen possibilities of peace within Australia.*
- Australia is an *increasingly pluralistic society* in the sense that it is multi-cultural and multi-faith. Interfaith dialogue creates *respect and appreciation for religious diversity* which is essential for harmony and peace

Examples of Interfaith dialogue

NSW Council of Christians & Jews

- Started in 1989
- It holds a number of events furthering Christian-Jewish relations:

- Passover demonstration directed at non-Jewish audiences
- Seminars on current topics of relevance
- Holocaust education
- Holding an annual Christian commemorative service for the Holocaust held in the crypt of St Mary's Cathedral (Roman Catholic)

Colombian Centre for Christian-Muslim Relations

- Established in Sydney in 1997
- Objectives:
 - o Forster relationships with the Muslim community
 - o Address misconceptions, lack of understanding & stereotyping existing within Christian community (regarding Muslims)
- It attempts to achieve these objectives through:
 - o Organising dialogues & seminars - allow Christians & Muslims to converse, listen to speakers from either, and learn about beliefs & practices of each other
 - o Publishing a newsletter

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• Syllabus Requirements

• Student's Learn About:

- Religious dialogue in multi-faith Australia
 - The relationship between Aboriginal spiritualities and religious traditions in the process of Reconciliation
- Student's Learn To:
- Examine the relationship between Aboriginal spiritualities and religious traditions in the process of Reconciliation

The relationship between Aboriginal spiritualities and religious traditions in the process of Reconciliation

- Reconciliation is the process of healing cultural divisions between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians
 - It's a movement towards greater acceptance, and understanding
 - Crucial to achieving reconciliation is the rights Aboriginals now have
- Different religious traditions in Australia have had a growing appreciation of Aboriginal spiritualities and have become involved in supporting the movement for reconciliation. Including:
 - Christianity
 - Judaism
 - Islam
 - Buddhism

- **Religious Tradition of Christianity**

- “ A wide variety of Christian groups are part of the reconciliation movement in support of issues including:
 - o Land rights
 - o Native Title
 - o Formal Apology to the Stolen Generation
- “ Historically, Christian groups were one of the first advocates of indig rights
- “ Examples of Christian Support include:
 - o 1967 - Catholic Church & representatives of Australian Council of Churches were among the most prominent leaders of the campaign for the referendum to grant Aboriginal Australians citizenship
 - o 1975 - various church groups supported passing of first LR legislation by Whitlam govt
 - o 1992 - Mabo decision publicly welcomed by church group
 - o 1998 - in spite of political/ mining/ farming groups, churches adamantly opposed 10 pt plan, seen as a severe & unjust reduction
 - o ANTaR (Australians for Native Title & Reconciliation) is a church supported community based organisation, prominent in advocating Indigenous rights
 - § E.g. organised the Sea of Hands display, promoting reconciliation & justice
 - § The national president of ANTaR, Phil Gledenning, is also the director of the Christian Brother’s Edmund Rice Centre of Justice & Community Education, and is heavily involved with peace and reconciliation throughout Australia
- “ Church groups have also been involved in a range of issues to assist the ongoing process of reconciliation
 - o 1997 - following the HREOC’s publication ‘Bringing them Home: National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families (1997),’ church groups offered formal apologies regarding the role of missionaries in the abuse of Aboriginal people
 - o Also strongly urged govt to make a formal apology for their role in implementing protection and assimilation policies, and to implement the recommendations of HREOC in the report

- **Religious Tradition of Judaism**

- “ Jewish groups have also play a role in reconciliation
 - o Jewish groups hold a week of prayer every year for reconciliation
 - o 1998 - Australian & NZ Union for Progressive Judaism voiced their support for the Wik decision & opposed the 10 pt plan
 - o 2000 - Executive Council of Aus Jewry urged Aus govt to implement the recommendations of the HREOC in the report

- **Religious Traditions of Islam & Buddhism**

- “ Statements in support of indigenous rights & reconciliation have also been made by religious groups of other Religious Traditions:
 - o Australian Federation of Islamic Councils
 - o Buddhist Peace Fellowship
 -

- Reconciliation is the process of healing cultural divisions between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians. It's a movement towards greater acceptance and understanding. Different religious traditions in Australia have had a growing appreciation of Aboriginal spiritualities and have become involved in supporting the movement for reconciliation. Historically, Christian groups were the first advocates of indigenous rights. A recent example is ANTaR, a Christian church supported community based organisation, prominent in advocating Indigenous rights. Another example in the Christian faith has been when Pope John Paul II came to Australia, he urged Australians to reconcile with Indigenous peoples. The Jewish faith also support reconciliation by holding a week of prayer every year for the cause. The Union for Progressive Judaism supported the Wik decision and opposed the 10 point plan. Statements have been made by the Australian federation of Islamic Councils and the Buddhist Peace Fellowship who also support the movement for reconciliation. All these initiatives by religious traditions in Australia, which promoted the reconciliation movement, led to February 13th 2008, when Australian Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd apologised and said sorry to the Aboriginal peoples.