



MEDIA RELEASE

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PARLIAMENT OF THE WORLD'S RELIGIONS PROGRAM UPDATE

In just 90 days, on the evening of December 3, thousands of people from every religious and spiritual tradition will gather in Melbourne for the Opening Plenary of the **Parliament of the World's Religions**, the world's largest interfaith event.

The Parliament has announced a stellar list of major speakers and performers, representing the world's religions and belief systems, from Atheism to Zoroastrianism.

High profile **speakers at the Parliament**, to be held at the newly opened Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre from December 3 to 9, will include:

- His Holiness the Dalai Lama
- Ms Dalia Mogahed, Muslim member of President Obama's White House office of Faith-Based and Neighbourhood Partnerships
- The Hon Michael Kirby, former Australian High Court Judge
- Rabbi David Rosen, Chairman of the International Jewish Committee on Interreligious Consultations, Israel

The world class **performers** who will appear at the Sacred Music Concert to be held on the evening of Sunday 6th December, include:

- Zain Bhikha, Muslim singer-songwriter, South Africa
- Natesan Ramani, flautist, and singer Manjiri Kelkar, India
- David Jones and friends, featuring jazz musician James Morrison
- Heather Lee and Kim Cunio, leading performers of Jewish sacred music

One of the major themes to be addressed at the Parliament of the World's Religions will be Indigenous spirituality and reconciliation. Distinguished **Indigenous speakers** taking part in the Parliament include:

- Professor Joy Murphy Wandin, Senior Aboriginal Woman of the Wurundjeri people
- Chief Oren Lyons, Native American Faithkeeper of the Turtle Clan of the Onondaga Nation, USA
- Margaret Lokawua, Member, UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, Uganda
- Uncle Bob Randall, Indigenous elder, Uluru

Among the atheists taking part in the Parliament will be economist John Perkins from the Secular Party of Australia and Monash University philosopher Russell Blackford, editor of 50 Voices of Disbelief: Why We Are Atheists. Both will take part in a panel discussion on Religion, Secularism and Governance.

Melbourne's Zoroastrian community will welcome fellow Zoroastrians from across the world, including major speaker Dr Homi Dhalla, founder of the Zoroastrian Cultural Foundation in Mumbai, India. Zoroastrianism, the world's first recorded monotheistic religion, was founded in Iran around the 8th to 6th century BC.

The 2009 Parliament of the World's Religions will include more than 500 programs and one thousand speakers and performers over seven nights and six days.

For further details and registrations contact 1300 852 156, visit www.parliamentofreligions.org to view the program or join our Facebook group <http://www.facebook.com/n/?group.php&qid=9477733534>

The Parliament of the World's Religions will be held at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre between 3 and 9 December 2009. The event is supported by the State Government of Victoria, the Commonwealth Government of Australia and the City of Melbourne, as well as individual, religious and corporate donors.

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