



John Sidoti
Minister for Sport
Minister for Multiculturalism
Minister for Seniors
Minister for Veterans

MEDIA RELEASE

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NSW YOUTH BUILD INTERFAITH BRIDGES

Hundreds of young people will come together with religious leaders from across Sydney to create the first interfaith statement of unity in NSW - the 'Sydney Statement'.

Minister for Multiculturalism John Sidoti said the NSW Government was proud to commit \$100,000 to support the two-year program which will encourage young people to champion interfaith harmony.

"The recent callous attacks on innocent people in their places of worship shows that there are some individuals in our society who want to divide us," Mr Sidoti said.

"The 'Sydney Statement' will see young people work with local religious leaders over a number of facilitated sessions to develop the first of its kind Statement that will include key actions that can be promoted to their peers, religious leaders and faith communities. We are proud NSW is at the forefront of promoting intergenerational interfaith harmony."

The Columban Centre for Christian-Muslim Relations Director, Rev Dr Patrick McInerney, thanked the NSW Government for its support to promote the importance of interfaith dialogue.

"Many religious communities around the world are facing increasing discrimination and vilification," Rev Dr McInerney said.

"Our goal is to have religious leaders and communities across NSW endorse 'The Sydney Statement' and commit to it as an ongoing plan for interfaith action. Communities will be able to access digital and educational resources promoting interfaith understanding."

Youth Parliament of World's Religions (Youth PoWR) Coordinator, Ryan Epondulan, said the project is an opportunity to empower the next generation of interfaith leaders.

"Young people have an important role to play in standing up against hatred, violence and intolerance to maintain social cohesion in society," Mr Epondulan said.

The Sydney Statement is funded under the NSW Government's Community Partnership Action (COMPACT) Program. The Columban Centre for Christian-Muslim Relations will partner with Youth PoWR and Western Sydney University to deliver the project.

More than 20,000 young people across NSW have benefitted from COMPACT. For more information about COMPACT, visit <http://multicultural.nsw.gov.au/>

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