

The August 2006 Project Abraham Programme on the Central Coast of New South Wales took place in the context of the conflict between Israel and Lebanon as well as following shortly after the Cronulla riots.

The programme was a perfect contrast to what was happening internationally and locally, and stood as a living example of what was possible in terms of a community living in harmony.

The programme raised over \$700.00 to support an after school homework project for students from non English speaking backgrounds, many of whom were refugees. This aspect of the programme was a practical expression that welcomed the students into the community. In the fullness of time it was discovered that this small gift enabled the project to continue until further funding was secured.

Since the Central Coast Programme relationships between the Jewish, Muslim and Christian communities has continued to grow and deepen. Invitations have been extended across the different faith communities to Passover, a Bat Mitzvah, Christian ecumenical services, visits to the Mosque and the involvement of the Muslim community in Anzac Day commemorations.

The 2008 World Youth Day programme in Gosford will include a Project Abraham component with a conversation between Jewish, Christian and Muslim young people.

The traditional Christian service on Australia Day will for the first time in 2008 be an interfaith service. This will be a further expression of community unity following on from a recent expression of the Christian churches of support for the Muslim community in the face of remarks by another group that sought to exclude them from community activities.

Project Abraham has brought the diverse community of the Central Coast closer together and provided a unique opportunity to continue the building of a community that lives in harmony.

Fr Rod Bower