



Reference: 365/2/3 JLB
Enquiries: Greg Muller

INTERFAITH FORUM COMES TO MOUNT GAMBIER

Project Abraham - Reaching Out to Country presents a conversation between Christians, Muslims, & Jews on Sunday May 27th, 2007 at the City Hall, Cave Garden, Mount Gambier.

“Building a Bridge of Relationships - faith and community” is a community forum open to all community members to attend from 2pm, at no charge. The afternoon will include presentations from members of the Muslim, Christian and Jewish faiths, followed by afternoon tea and the opening of an exhibition of religious artefacts at Studio One.

Three religious leaders will talk about the many similarities between the three faiths represented on the day, and how with greater understanding and dialogue all community members can work towards Harmony.

Imam Khalid Yousuf was born in Ethiopia and attended primary school in Yemen. He began his training in the Qur'an at the age of 7. When he was in his teens, he and his family moved back to Ethiopia. He attended secondary school in Ethiopia and was instructed in Islamic studies by the scholar Sheikh Mohammed Abdi-Yunus. In 1990, he moved to Mogadishu, Somalia and took a course in Religious Studies at the Bakahrah Mosque. From 1990-93, Imam Yousuf attended the Al-Azhar Islamic Institution and University and other theological institutions in Egypt. In 1993, he moved to Australia and served as the Imam's assistant at the Adelaide Mosque. In 1996, he began serving as the Imam at the Adelaide Mosque. He also served as the Imam at the Marion Mosque in 1997. In 1998, the Islamic College of South Australia opened and Imam Yousuf was appointed instructor in Islamic Studies and Arabic and continues teaching there today. Currently, he is also still serving as Imam at the Adelaide Mosque.

Rabbi Shamir Caplan moved four years ago to Melbourne from the U.S., where he worked for Hillel at the University of Pennsylvania. At Mt Scopus Memorial College, Shamir teaches various subjects in the Jewish Studies faculty, including the new Talmud curriculum that he helped develop. He is also a member of Mt Scopus' informal education team, working on school-wide projects and with student leadership. He has spent the last two years as Chief Minister of East Melbourne Hebrew Congregation, the oldest synagogue in Melbourne, where you'll find him on the Sabbath and holidays with his wife Tania Grunfeld, and their two children, Avital and Lior. Shamir studied to become a rabbi at Yeshiva University, at both the New York and the Jerusalem campuses.

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City of Mount Gambier - NEWS RELEASE

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Pastor Gary Ware came to Mount Gambier to serve as pastor of the Presbyterian Church four years ago. Gary trained for ministry in Brisbane gaining a BA with majors in studies in religion and an advanced diploma of theology. He has been involved in Parish ministries in Brisbane and Melbourne before coming to the Mount. As the current president of the Mount Gambier Minister's Association, Gary was requested to participate in the Project Abraham Forum. Currently also serving as the Presbyterian Church of South Australia Moderator, Gary is their representative on the South Australian Heads of Churches. Gary is married to Margaret and they have five children, four of whom study locally, while the eldest pursues university study in Brisbane.

Project Abraham - Reaching Out to Country is proudly supported by the Australian Government's Living in Harmony program. The program promotes mutual respect, participation in the Australian way of life, Australian values and a sense of belonging for everyone. It recognises that, whatever our backgrounds and beliefs, we are united as Australians and are committed to a shared future characterised by peace, stability and opportunity. For more information on the Living in Harmony programme, visit www.harmony.gov.au"

Interested community members are asked to RSVP to the City of Mount Gambier by Thursday May 24th, 2007 on 87212 563.

Steve PERRYMAN
MAYOR

For further media enquiries please contact Mayor Steve Perryman, telephone 0428 212 507 or Community Services Manager, Gina Ploenges, telephone 0417 858 458.

Greg MULLER
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

15th May 2007
JLB



Australian Government

**Department of Immigration
and Citizenship**