

A history of faith-based micro, meso and macro dialogue between Muslims and non-Muslims in Australia prior to 9/11

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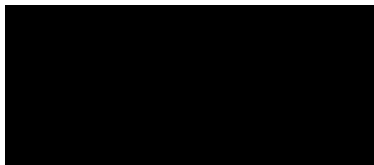


¹ The author at the Maree Mosque replica, 2018

Statement of Authorship

This thesis contains no material that has been extracted in whole or in part from a thesis that I have submitted towards the award of any other degree or diploma in any other tertiary institution.

No other person's work has been used without due acknowledgement in the main text of the thesis.



David Sneddon

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As most of this research was done on Guringai and Darkinjung Aboriginal people's land, the author would like to acknowledge all Indigenous elders and people, both past, present and future.

Man is essentially ignorant, and becomes learned through acquiring knowledge.¹

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¹ Ibn Khaldun: Muqaddima, VI, 6

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The author also wishes to acknowledge the support provided through an Australian Government Research Training Program Scholarship, without which it would never have happened.

² This year marks 25 years of marriage – that's long suffering.

Notes on dates and transliteration

Dates are written in the Common Era (CE) throughout this thesis unless noted otherwise.

The English transliteration and spelling and usage of Arabic words in this thesis follows the transliteration guidelines adopted by the International Journal of Middle East Studies (IJMES).³ All Arabic words are italicised for clarity. Diacritical marks have generally been omitted except for the symbol (ʾ) to represent the *hamza* as in Qurʾan.

Terminology relating to Australia's First Nations Peoples has been aligned with the Terminology Guide, published by the Australian Catholic University.⁴ Key terms such as 'Dreaming', and 'Country' will be capitalised following best practices.

Spelling has been left uncorrected in quoted sources, especially with regards to Arabic terms and Indigenous Australian terminology.

³ International Journal of Middle East Studies, "IJMES Word List," (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

⁴ Australian Catholic University, "Affirming Cultural Recognition at the Australian Catholic University. Terminology Guide," (Sydney, NSW: ACU, 2018).

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Abstract

Inter-religious dialogue is an essential means for different faiths and believers to develop friendship and understanding in an increasingly global and multifaith society. Additionally, it could provide for increased levels of social harmony in a seemingly divided yet ever-shrinking globalised world. Islam has a long history with Australia that pre-dates European colonisation; however, research into the nature and impact of interfaith dialogue between Muslims and non-Muslims is scarce.

To date, there is an extensive gap in the academic record as no comprehensive historical exploration on inter-religious dialogue prior to 9/11 between Muslims and non-Muslims has been undertaken in Australia. Accordingly, it is envisaged that this will be the most comprehensive research on the topic to date. Uniquely, through the application of the sociological population-level constructs of micro, meso and macro-level analysis this research has looked for evidence of cyclical patterns of inter-religious dialogue over Australia's long history and contact with Islam. A key question for this research is how, if at all, have different sociological levels of dialogue, as represented in the public and private record, contributed to meaningful social harmony? It is hoped that this historical enquiry will place some light on past paradigm shifts in interfaith relations and assist in the future of interfaith dialogue in a uniquely Australian context.

Using the public record, along with other related academic works, this research has analysed the available evidence to establish the sociological levels of interfaith dialogue that existed in Australia up to 2001. A brief overview of the history of global and local inter-religious dialogue has been provided that includes the approaches taken by the various religions as outlined in the sacred texts, the Torah, Gospels and Qur'an. It also looks to outline the changes that have occurred surrounding religion in Australia over time.

Initial research has demonstrated levels of micro and meso-level dialogue in the pre-colonial period between the Muslim Baijini, Macassans and Australia's Indigenous peoples. Following colonisation, this dialogue largely disappeared and was replaced by a period of mutual monologue, enforced by the dominant Christian hegemony, notwithstanding the contribution by members of the Islamic community to the exploration and construction of modern Australia. Despite the effects of the Immigration Restriction Act (1901), Muslims continued to migrate to Australia and integrate into the community, including those from British India and Albania. Many kept their religious beliefs and thrived in several Australian towns through the 20th Century. As the century progressed, so did the growth of the Australian *umma*, with migrants arriving from Turkey, Lebanon, Bosnia, Indonesia, the Middle East and North Africa. Through a critical historical analysis of the public and private records, this research has looked to illustrate the true nature of the sociological levels and effectiveness of dialogue from the first contact with Islam, sometime before the 17th Century until the beginning of the 21st Century.

Importantly, the key contribution of this research has also found that the levels of dialogue have been measurable and over time, cyclical in nature, when measured using the sociological constructs of micro, meso and macro. Additionally, this research has uncovered the importance of ecumenical dialogue as a precursor to any meaningful inter-religious dialogue, largely driven by the Catholic Church's Declaration *Nostra Aetate* in 1965. Other aspects of the findings include, the need for a critical mass, some form of organisation and favourable political conditions. Finally, shortcomings and suggestions for further avenues of research are discussed.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Note, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples should be aware that this dissertation may contain the names of people who have passed away.

When we consider the concept of interfaith and inter-religious dialogue, there is a tendency to gravitate towards the modern understanding of organised or institutionalised dialogue, the guidelines having been outlined in the late 20th century, often using Leonard Swidler's *Dialogue Decalogue* as a template.¹ What this viewpoint leaves out is the other type of inter-religious dialogue that has occurred over history. As believers of different religions come together in the dialogue of life, it involves necessary or micro-level dialogue. In countries where there is a lack of religious pluralism, you may have a more homogenous population; therefore, the need for this type of dialogue is negated.

Looking at Australia's religious history, it is frequently revealed through a sectarian lens, often Christian in colouring. However, over the last 65,000 years, Australia's Indigenous Peoples have had contact with the various island nations that surround them, predominantly those to the north. The only real question is the length of this contact. Given the nature of the beliefs of the proto-Indonesians was different to that of the Indigenous Peoples this would count as inter-religious dialogue, and represents an area of Australia's religious history that has gone largely untold. Following colonisation, it was envisaged that Australia would become a homogeneous nation, based on the doctrines of the Church of England. Whilst a lofty ideal, it simply did not come to fruition, especially given the numbers of Catholic and others sent as convicts to establish the colony of New South Wales.

Lately, Islam and Muslims have been the subject of many millions of words, and their long-standing history of contribution towards the creation of a modern Australia is being explored and re-evaluated. Despite this, no comprehensive research has examined the levels of inter-religious dialogue between Muslims and non-Muslims in Australia prior to September 11, 2001 (9/11). In part, this has been due to the dominant White Anglo-Saxon Protestant (WASP) worldview, often driven by a Christian viewpoint that inter-religious and interfaith dialogue only occurred between "Protestants, Catholics, and Jews, [who] must always be free to remain true to the claims of their respective faiths without risking

¹ Leonard Swidler, "The Dialogue Decalogue: Ground Rules for Interreligious Dialogue," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 20, no. 1 (1983).

censure or cultural ostracism."² This worldview led to limited inclusion or discussion of any other faith outside the Judaeo-Christian beliefs.

During the colonial era, issues with non-European migrants generally fell into the domain of overt racism; religion was not the problem; the problem was skin colour or racial profile. This view was officially sanctioned in 1901 at a Federal level with the passing of the Immigration Restriction Act (1901)³, designed to protect Australia from being overrun by '*coloured people*' and '*Asiatics*'. This thinly-veiled racist legislation became known as the White Australia Policy and went hand in hand with the government's policy of assimilation for all people, including First Nations Peoples as well as later migrants. When the act was finally dismantled between 1972 and 1975, it removed the official barriers but in no way completely removed racism or religious intolerance from the Australian cultural agenda.

Lately, that racism has been redirected towards religious intolerance by several groups within Australian society, including Muslims.⁴ Technically this is intolerance, not racism; as Islam is not a race, and this prejudice could be described as the '*new racism*.' This has been a particular issue with Islam and Islamophobia.⁵ What this research aims to establish is that this was not always the case and that inter-religious dialogue between Muslims and non-Muslims has in the past led to some positive and fruitful levels of social harmony, regardless of race or religion.

With over 250 language groups covering a range of creation stories, beliefs and practices in existence prior to colonisation, Australia has never really been homogenous. The Indigenous Peoples Dreaming⁶ was never one monolithic school of thought. Post-colonisation, there were always the minority 'others'; some as convicts, others passing through as sailors or traders. While it may not have been evident, discussions or dialogue between believers of different faiths have been occurring since time immemorial, and, as

² J.E.W., "Editorial. Interfaith Dialogue," *Journal of Church & State* (1962): 7.

³ All dates are based on Current Era (CE) unless stated otherwise.

⁴ Problematic – because religious intolerance is technically not racism.

⁵ See *Islamophobia in Australia 2014-2016*, ed. Dr Derya Iner (Sydney: Centre for Islamic Studies and Civilisation, Charles Sturt University, 2017).

⁶ The Dreaming is the complex and sacred living culture of Australia's Indigenous First Peoples. See chapter 3 for further discussion.

the religious landscape has changed in Australia, so has the nature of the inter-religious dialogue.

Essentially, this thesis is looking to uncover the full range of interfaith and inter-religious dialogue as far back as the records allow. In doing so, it looks to place dialogue within the historical narrative, demonstrating that it is not a new concept but a series of oral and written interactions that have occurred for as long as Australia has been populated and visited by our neighbours and others. It will also serve to complete the extensive gap that exists in the academic literature.

1.1 Research Questions and Objectives

This research's key objective is to look at the relatively undocumented accounts and history of inter-religious dialogue between Muslims and non-Muslims throughout Australian history. Accordingly, the following sub-questions will be utilised to gain a clearer picture of the natures of this dialogue.

1. Commencing prior to the 17th century, what levels of faith-based micro, meso and macro dialogue have existed since contact began between Muslims and non-Muslim Australians?

By researching the different sociological levels of inter-religious dialogue over time, this research aims to examine any patterns that may exist in inter-religious dialogue. These patterns may have a bearing on the dialogue between Australians and other religious groups as we continue to become an increasingly diverse country moving through the 21st century.

2. Has faith-based micro, meso and macro inter-religious dialogue between Muslims and non-Muslims contributed to social harmony in Australia pre 9/11?

Using the sociological levels or scales of micro, meso and macro as part of the analytical framework, this research is looking to place dialogue within these groupings to determine if dialogical levels within different population sizes have impacted the issue of social harmony. The results or outcomes of this inter-religious dialogue will be examined to

ascertain if Gordon Allport's contact theory has had any bearing on prejudices and inter-religious dialogue in Australia.⁷

3. How has this dialogue been represented in the public and private, as well as the religious and secular spheres?

Where concrete examples of dialogue exist in the public and private sphere, it is crucial to look at how it has been represented or portrayed and have any external influences such as stereotyping, Orientalism, or an imported worldview impacted the message or meaning.

4. Who have been the primary drivers of this dialogue, and for what reasons?

Once examples have been sourced, the issue of who has been the driving force behind the inter-religious dialogue comes to the fore. As with all communication, there is usually a reason for its existence and this forms a necessary part of this research.

1.2 Key Definitions

This research relies on some frequently used terminology. Accordingly, some definitions to refine the scope of the research should be initially established.

Dialogue: Generally accepted as a written or spoken conversation between two or more people or groups of people.⁸ Also defined as "discussion directed towards exploration of a subject or resolution of a problem."⁹

Ecumenical dialogue: Dialogue within the groups of the Christian Churches,¹⁰ "promoting or relating to unity among the world's Christian churches."¹¹ Whilst there were exceptions, until the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), this generally did not include the Roman Catholic Church.

⁷ Gordon W. Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1954).

⁸ From the Greek, δία (dia: through) and λόγος (logos: speech, reason).

⁹ "Dialogue," in *The Concise Oxford Dictionary*, (Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 1999).

¹⁰ Nikos A. Nissiotis, "Types and Problems of Ecumenical Dialogue," *Ecumenical Review* 18,1, no. January (1966): 39.

¹¹ 'Ecumenical' in *The Concise Oxford Dictionary*.

Interfaith dialogue: The dialogue related to and "between the different religions,"¹² usually limited to the Abrahamic faiths. The ten basic principles of contemporary interfaith dialogue were established by Leonard Swidler in 1983.¹³

Inter-religious dialogue: A broad and all-encompassing term that describes the dialogue between all religious groups.¹⁴ These include Hinduism, Buddhism, the Abrahamic faiths, and religions of ancient origin, such as Australian Indigenous Spirituality, also referred to as the Dreaming.

Both interfaith and inter-religious dialogue have some differing versions and interpretations, and it has been suggested that "despite their interchangeably, they are polysemous terms, that is, similar though not of the same meaning."¹⁵ Given the bulk of the post-colonial dialogue in Australia will be between members of the Abrahamic faiths, the term interfaith would generally be suitable. The exception will be that the term inter-religious should be utilised when dealing with Australia's Indigenous nations. For the sake of uniformity and clarity, this thesis will generally adopt the term 'inter-religious' as the all-encompassing term for faith-based dialogue between Muslims and non-Muslims in Australia.

Uniquely, this research will apply the sociological group sizes of micro, meso and macro to the issue of inter-religious dialogue. From a sociological perspective, the micro, meso and macro concepts refer to the population's size or scale being investigated.¹⁶ These are general levels of analysis that begin with:

Micro: The individual, usually referred to as the micro-level. This can include families or small groups and may represent "*necessary*" dialogue; the day to day individual interactions that occur in all communities, such as between neighbours; also defined as "small scale."¹⁷

¹² "Interfaith," in *ibid.*

¹³ Swidler, "The Dialogue Decalogue: Ground Rules for Interreligious Dialogue."

¹⁴ Archdiocese of Chicago, "Ecumenical, Interfaith, Interreligious Relations What Is the Difference?," accessed 25 Apr 2019, <http://legacy.archchicago.org/departments/ecumenical/Relations.htm>.

¹⁵ Christopher Evan Longhurst, "Interreligious Dialogue? Interfaith Relations? Or, Perhaps Some Other Term?," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 55, no. 1 (2020): 123.

¹⁶ Blalock, Hubert M, 1979, *Social Statistics*. pp.169-175

¹⁷ 'Micro' in *The Concise Oxford Dictionary*.

Meso: As interactions develop, they proceed through a middle or meso stage, often involving more extensive community relationships, such as common interest groups. Derived "from the Greek 'middle'."¹⁸

Macro: Once interactions have become developed, they can shift to the macro; a national or global level. An issue for the macro level is the question of "what constitutes a nation, or even a world – is this a Eurocentric Western view?" It is usually defined as "large scale, or overall."¹⁹

By aligning the dialogue that has occurred within, between and around these group sizes, we can see how the concept and application of inter-religious dialogue has shifted and changed over time as well as analysing the barriers and impacts.

1.3 Significance of the research

The study is vital in order to understand how micro, meso and macro faith-based dialogue has developed from the pre-colonisation period until 2001, through comprehensive research and analysis of the public and private records. This research aims to fill in significant academic gaps in the literature on inter-religious dialogue in Australia, primarily, through a comprehensive historical research study in what is now a multicultural and multifaith Australia. It is envisaged that it will be the most detailed historical work to date and demonstrate a clear paradigm shift about inter-religious engagement over Australia's long history.

1.4 Methodology

The research will commence with a thorough review and analysis of the research and literature surrounding the sociological and theological levels of faith-based micro, meso and macro-level inter-religious dialogue in Australia, as well as a brief discussion of the global dialogue, between Muslims and non-Muslims. This study will cover the period from first contact between Australians and Muslims before the 17th century until 2001. This cut-off date has been selected due to the significant paradigm shift following the events of 9/11 when interfaith and inter-religious dialogue became a necessity and a required part of the

¹⁸ 'Meso' in *ibid*.

¹⁹ 'Macro' in *ibid*.

lingua franca of the times. In turn, this led to a vast increase in research, academic output and discussion after 2001. Given this post-2001 period is better documented, the scope of the research will conclude prior to that point. Despite that, a range of literature from post 9/11 requires some evaluation to establish a complete picture surrounding inter-religious dialogue throughout Australian history.

The initial chapters will briefly look at the primary sources of Abrahamic religions or faiths in order to understand theological exegesis and interfaith relations as it applies to each group of believers, both individually and as a whole. Sacred texts will include; The Torah, as well as the *Nevi'im*, *Ketuvim*²⁰ and Talmudic literature, The New Testament²¹ (the Gospels of Jesus, The Acts of the Apostles, a selection of epistles, and the Book of Revelation), The Qur'an²² and the Prophetic traditions (*sunnah* of the Prophet).

This study will then be researched using the following resources;

- A review of the available historical and academic literature on micro, meso and macro-level inter-religious dialogue.
- The public record will be examined through; Trove²³ (National Archives of Australia), various State and National Libraries. Extended search strings with Boolean operators will be utilised in databases to ensure effective searching and allow for the wide range of variable spelling and terminology that has occurred.
- Where and if available, any private records or documents will be utilised through religious institutions and archives and any available individual private holdings.

The starting point for this research will be to look at how interfaith and inter-religious dialogue has been defined by scholars and the methods used to apply it as a sociological construct. Given the lack of literature with a local focus, the research will also examine both historical and current examples of dialogue at both a global and local level. As the term was coined in the late 20th Century, most of the academic literature looks at recent

²⁰ *Tanakh the Holy Scriptures a New Translation of the Holy Scriptures. According to the Traditional Hebrew Text*, (Philadelphia, USA: The Jewish Publication Society, 1985).

²¹ *The Revised Standard Version of the Bible: Catholic Edition*, (The Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America., 1965).

²² *The Study Qur'an*, ed. Seyyed Hossein Nasr (New York, NY: Harper One, 2015).

²³ Trove is the National Library of Australia's online database containing digital copies of much of Australia's extant historical documents. See <https://trove.nla.gov.au/>

events, particularly post 9/11 (2001); however, a range of works from previous eras will require analysis to establish some historical context and possibly patterns of dialogue, one of the main contributions of this research.

1.4.1 Content Analysis

As the primary research materials are written texts, much of it from the public domain, content analysis and literary criticism are relevant approaches. They will allow for a greater understanding of how the dialogue was reported and understood. Often the story can be impacted by what is not said, especially given the language issues that faced the early Muslim visitors and migrants. This approach will allow evaluation of what has been said and done, as well as looking at what is missing.

Accordingly, the content will be analysed along the following lines;

Content Analysis: Content will be analysed for authenticity, purpose, tone and message.

Focus will be placed on the impact of Western scholarship of Islam and "Orientalism"²⁴ on the resources, especially the texts from the 18th – 20th Century. The impact of Social Darwinism and eugenics on content will also be analysed, all the while attempting to maintain a balanced approach around the changing view of Islam during the period under study.

Literary Criticism: Language, aesthetic and compositional structure will be examined to explain meaning further. Newspaper articles may require decoding to establish the motive of the story. Likewise, biographic accounts need balancing with contemporary reports to establish an accurate picture.

1.4.2 Theoretical Approach

Given that Muslims have had a long contact period with Australia a theoretical approach that looks at contact and prejudice is applicable. Accordingly, Gordon Allport's 'Contact Theory'²⁵ will be used to establish the impact of intergroup contact on the framing of inter-religious dialogue. Allport hypothesises that contact between majority and minority groups

²⁴ See Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York, N.Y.: Random House, 1979).

²⁵ Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice*.

can reduce or eliminate prejudice under the appropriate circumstances or conditions.²⁶ These conditions include "issues of equal status, common goals, intergroup cooperation and support of the authorities, law, or custom."²⁷ The research will look at the relative conditions and examine how they have changed and if so, what drove the change.

Some studies have shown that Allport's theory may suffer from severe positivity bias,²⁸ and even Allport recognises that some instances of casual contact may have a negative influence, and in certain circumstances, may leave "matters worse than before."²⁹ Despite this apparent weakness in the theory, "solid meta-analytic evidence now gives us confidence that intergroup contact is typically beneficial, even when it does not fully meet the credentials for optimal contact."³⁰ The author's earlier research has posited that after more extended periods of contact, towns such as Marree, South Australia and Shepparton, Victoria, have demonstrated some positive examples of social cohesion, often in contrast to other towns in the vicinity.³¹ Indigenous Australians also looked back on the relationship with the Muslim Macassans with a certain longing for better times. It is hypothesised that Allport's theory applies to successful social harmony when matched with the correct inter-religious dialogue.

There are several complicated and confounding issues when looking at the dialogue and relationships between Muslims and Non-Muslims through Allport's theoretical lens. Allport outlines that:

*when groups of human beings meet they normally pass through four successive stages of relationship. At first there is sheer contact, leading soon to competition, which in turn gives way to accommodation, and finally to assimilation.*³²

²⁶ *ibid.*, 281.

²⁷ Abe Ata, "Social Distance from Muslims a National Survey," in *Us and Them : Muslim - Christian Relations and Cultural Harmony in Australia* (Brisbane, QLD: Australian Academic Press, 2009), 99.

²⁸ See Thomas F. Pettigrew, "Future Directions for Intergroup Contact Theory and Research," *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 32, no. 3 (2008).

²⁹ Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice*, 264.

³⁰ S. Paolini, J. Harwood, and M. Rubin, "Negative Intergroup Contact Makes Group Memberships Salient: Explaining Why Intergroup Conflict Endures," *Pers Soc Psychol Bull* 36, no. 12 (2010): 1734.

³¹ See Anthony Moran and Mark Mallman, "Understanding Social Cohesion in Shepparton and Mildura: Final Report," (Department of Social Inquiry, La Trobe University, Bundoora, 2015).

³² Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice*, 261.

As contact with Muslims occurred before 1788, Australia may be on its second iteration of the four-stage cycle, given the Macassans may have moved through one complete cycle before the coming of the Europeans. However, it is not as simple as extended contact equating to more positive relationships or greater social harmony between the ‘in’ (Australians) and ‘out’ (Muslims) groups.

*In an unpublished study of topical life histories written on the subject, “My experiences with and attitudes toward minority groups” it was found that contact was frequently mentioned as a factor. But while the autobiographers reported that contact lessened their prejudice on 37 occasions, they also report that it increased their prejudice on 34 occasions. Obviously, the effect of contact will depend upon the kind of association that occurs, and upon the kinds of persons who are involved.*³³

The status of the parties ‘or kinds of people’ involved often impacts contact theory. “Allport stressed [that] equal group status within the situation”³⁴ was a requirement for a reduction in levels of prejudice. How the status of Muslims has been viewed and changed over time will also need to be taken into account. This should help to address one of the research questions around the impact of extended contact on prejudice and social harmony.

Lately, research into the presence of Allport’s requirements for positive contact demonstrates that “Allport’s conditions are not essential for intergroup contact to achieve positive outcomes.”³⁵ Despite that, the conditions are desirable in order to accelerate a reduction in prejudice and greater levels of social harmony. The same research has shown that any “intergroup contact can promote reductions in intergroup prejudice.”³⁶ This is in line with some early research (1945) in this field where black and white merchant marine sailors working in close proximity to each other showed reduced levels of prejudice, irrespective of the conditions and pre-existing views.³⁷ It may be that in the Australian context, the circumstances of sailors being in constant close contact mirrors the circumstances in small country towns, where everyone is aware of everyone else and the

³³ *ibid.*, 262.

³⁴ Thomas F. Pettigrew, "Intergroup Contact Theory," *Annual Review Psychology* 49, no. 1 (1998): 66.

³⁵ Thomas F. Pettigrew and Linda R. Tropp, "A Meta-Analytic Test of Intergroup Contact Theory," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 90, no. 5 (2006): 766.

³⁶ *ibid.*, 768.

³⁷ Ira N Brophy, "The Luxury of Anti-Negro Prejudice," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 9, no. 4 (1945).

opportunity to disappear off the radar is unavailable. Accordingly, this seems to indicate that Allport's theoretical approach is valid in the case of this research.

A key aspect of this research surrounds the issue of social harmony or cohesion. Overall, the issue of social cohesion as an academic concept is a slippery one.³⁸ Merely providing a watertight definition can prove challenging. One extensive literature review describes it as; "... a desirable feature of a social entity (i.e., community or society), but also as a feature that is currently deteriorating."³⁹ Others such as:

*Bernard (1999) ...described social cohesion as a "quasiconcept, that is, one of those hybrid mental constructions that politics proposes to us more and more often in order to simultaneously detect possible consensus on a reading of reality, and to forge them". Furthermore, Bernhard argues, it is the vagueness of such a hybrid construction that makes it adaptable to various situations, but also what makes it difficult to pin down what is exactly meant by the construct. Indeed, more than 15 years later, there seems to be a consensus most notably about the lack of a clear definition and conceptualisation of social cohesion.*⁴⁰

In Australia, the issue of social cohesion:

*was to be achieved by limiting entry to Australia to those similar to the early settlers – namely white, Christian and British settlers. The Irish Catholic element was contained by assistance policies which limited their quite considerable numbers. Power remained largely in the hands of English and Scottish Protestants, though less exclusively than in Great Britain.*⁴¹

This will have an impact on relationships and social harmony at many levels and will need to be taken into account when looking at the research findings.

In summary, the public and private record will be analysed to thoroughly evaluate the history and effectiveness of interfaith and inter-religious dialogue. The research will look to establish and document differing levels of social harmony within the full range of social

³⁸ As opposed to Social Cohesion as policy.

³⁹ David Schiefer and Jolanda van der Noll, "The Essentials of Social Cohesion: A Literature Review," *Social Indicators Research* 132, no. 2 (2016): 580.

⁴⁰ *ibid.*

⁴¹ *Social Cohesion in Australia*, (ProQuest Ebook Central: Cambridge University Press, 2007), <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/acu/detail.action?docID=340680>. 12.

group classifications throughout Australian history and its long-standing yet often misunderstood Muslim presence.

1.5 Thesis Structure

This chapter has outlined the scope and range as well as the definitions and methodology. Crucially, it has identified a significant gap in the current research, which it is envisaged that this thesis will help to fill, through investigation using the research questions and objectives.

Chapter 2 provides a comprehensive literature review of the underlying issues and concepts involved in this thesis. Firstly it looks at the history of the concept and terminology of interfaith and inter-religious dialogue, including the usage of the terms over time. It then briefly covers how the three Abrahamic faiths view dialogue through a brief review of the various scriptures and the instructions that are provided for believers. Following this, a global overview of the literature surrounding the implementation of inter-religious dialogue over history is examined with a focus on Jewish-Christian-Muslim dialogue as well as the modern philosophical underpinnings. Finally, this chapter then looks at how inter-religious dialogue is represented in the Australian context, from pre-colonial times until 2001, in the academic literature.

Chapter 3 provides an outline of the two key areas of this research in order to place it into an Australian context. This includes an overview of the development of inter-religious dialogue at both a global and local level, covering some of the barriers that have occurred over time. It also outlines the development of the modern concept of inter-religious dialogue, with focus on more recent developments, including Leonard Swidler's 10 point model. Chapter 3 also provides a brief overview of the landscape of religion in Australia, from the 65,000 years of Indigenous Nations Dreaming through to the modern multifaith nation that Australia has become.

Chapter 4 examines the nature of the longstanding relationship and inter-religious dialogue that occurred between Indigenous Australians and their northern neighbours, the Baijini, the Macassans and others. Although the religion and origins of the Baijini are open to speculation, it is evident that the Macassans brought Islam to Australia long before Christianity arrived with the First Fleet. The inter-religious dialogue between the early

Muslim visitors and The Indigenous Nations of northern Australia has left a broad legacy ranging from language and technology transfer through to the cross-pollination and adoption of certain aspects of Islamic religious practices and beliefs.

Chapter 5 covers the period from colonisation in 1788 up until Federation in 1901, an era that saw a seismic shift in the nature of religion in Australia. This era saw Indigenous People displaced from Country as the new European settlers moved outwards from Port Jackson, they also took Christianity with them, converting and evangelising as they went. This also displaced the traditional beliefs of Indigenous Australians, the Dreaming. For the first 60 years, limited numbers of Muslims were present, however, from about the 1860s onwards, 'Afghans' were imported to look after the camels used to explore and open up inland Australia. These Muslims established Australia's first Mosques in the outback, as well as Perth, Adelaide and Brisbane, opening up new avenues for inter-religious dialogue in Australia.

Chapter 6 looks at the beginning of the federated nation of Australia in 1901 until the end of World War II in 1945. Central to this era was the instigation of the Immigration Restriction Act which limited migration and reduced the ability for many non-Christians to remain in Australia. Given Australia at that stage was largely Christian, inter-religious dialogue was limited to the Afghans and their descendants as well as the small number of Muslims who arrived from places like Albania. Crucial to inter-religious dialogue in this era were the Muslims who remained in Australia and attempted to make their voices heard, despite the obstacles that were presented by the government legislation.

Chapter 7 covers the period from the end of World War II until the events of 2001. This era saw a new wave of immigration to Australia, spearheaded by the Italians and Greeks, however also including the Turks, Lebanese and other Muslims from both the Middle East and Europe. They arrived just in time to resurrect the crumbling mosques and began a new period of inter-religious dialogue. The later part of this chapter also details the establishment of a range of organisations that began the movement of inter-religious dialogue from micro to meso and ultimately macro level, much of it ultimately instigated in response to the Catholic Church's Declaration *Nostra Aetate* in 1965.

Chapter 8 contains an overview of the findings and looks at the pathways to inter-religious dialogue over the course of Australian history. Crucially, it outlines how the research has filled the academic gap as well as how the application of the sociological population sizes of micro, meso and macro allow some form of quantitative measurement of inter-religious dialogue. The barriers to effective dialogue are outlined as well as an overview of the impact of political conditions of the various eras. Finally, some discussion on shortcomings as well as areas for future research and the implications for the further development of inter-religious dialogue are explored.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

This chapter will examine the available literature surrounding interfaith and inter-religious dialogue. Firstly the nature and history of the terminology will be defined. Secondly, inter-religious dialogue within Abrahamic sacred texts will be briefly examined, including its historical application and the underpinning philosophies. Finally, its place in Australia's religious landscape will be examined to place the issue into a local context.

The academic literature concerning the history of inter-religious dialogue in Australia before 2001 is sparse. To date, only two papers have been published with any significant focus on the subject of this research. My initial research,¹ and Dzavid Haveric's paper, "Muslim Minorities in Victoria: Building Communities and Interfaith Relations from the 1950s to the 1980s."² Both papers provided limited discussion at a broad historical level, demonstrating a significant gap in the academic literature. There is also a range of additional papers that provide snippets of information and these will be reviewed for context and an understanding of the issues, including the academic gaps.

In contrast, there is a wealth of literature from the last twenty years that focus on faith-based micro, meso and macro dialogue from a Jewish, Christian or Muslim perspective concerning dialogue post 9/11. For example, papers covering interfaith dialogue from a Catholic perspective outline their short history of dialogue without focusing on Islam. Other papers focus on issues of conversion³ or the development and introduction of non-Christian faiths.⁴ Schottmann's article 'Sustaining interfaith dialogue – A case study from Australia'⁵ represents a good example of current research, focussing on Jewish Christian Muslim Associations (JCMA) dialogue since the events of 9/11, with minimal discussion on any historical underpinnings. Given the JCMA was founded in 2003, this is hardly surprising. Despite this perceived lack of historical dialogue, it would appear that members of Australian religious organisations have had a presence at many of the seminal moments in

¹ David Sneddon, "The Early History of Micro and Meso Dialogue between Muslims and Non-Muslims in Australia," *Australian Journal of Islamic Studies* 3,3 (2018).

² Dzavid Haveric, "Muslim Minorities in Victoria: Building Communities and Interfaith Relations from the 1950's to the 1980's," *Australian Journal of Islamic Studies* 2,3 (2017).

³ Ebony King, "Pathways to Allah: Female Conversion to Islam in Australia," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 28, no. 4 (2017).

⁴ Gary D. Bouma, Rod Ling, and Douglas Pratt, "Regional Interfaith Dialogue," in *Religious Diversity in Southeast Asia and the Pacific: National Case Studies* (Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 2010).

⁵ Sven Alexander Schottmann, "Sustaining Interfaith Dialogue - a Case Study from Australia," *Global Change, Peace & Security* 25, no. 3 (2013).

interfaith relations, including the Worlds Parliament of Religions (1893) and the First Muslim-Christian Convocation in 1954.

My initial research has shown some evidence that towns and cities in Australia with a more extended history of settlement by Muslims appear to have greater levels of tolerance and understanding, driven by more substantial levels of historical dialogue.⁶ In turn, this has led to greater levels of social harmony within those regions. This history of extended contact supports seems to support elements of Allport's contact theory,⁷ in that close contact with different others through necessary daily communication can lead to a better understanding between all parties. Shepparton and Adelaide are prime examples, however other areas of settlements such as Marree, Broken Hill, Bourke, Broome, Perth and Brisbane also require closer attention in this research. Additionally, research is also required concerning the different faiths, including Judaism, Hinduism and other eastern dharmic faiths such as Buddhism and Taoism, all present in Australia since the 1850s. Given Muslims have had a longer presence in Australia, this chapter will focus on the literature concerning interactions between Muslims and non-Muslims. The key groups include Indigenous Australians, Protestants, Catholics and Jews. Accordingly, an exploration of the traditions, histories and corpus of sacred texts with their position on inter-religious dialogue will also be examined as well as the nature of dialogue in Australia's Indigenous Nations.

A key component of this research involves the National Library of Australia's online database, Trove. It contains digitised copies of Australia's "newspapers, Government Gazettes, maps, magazines and newsletters"⁸ from the earliest days of settlement. A variety of sources obtained from this research will be utilised in the following chapters. Given the flexibility of spelling foreign words and names in Australia's written history, a crucial area with regards to this resource is the ability to incorporate the different spellings into the search strings.

⁶ Sneddon, "The Early History of Micro and Meso Dialogue between Muslims and Non-Muslims in Australia."

⁷ Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice*.

⁸ "About," National Library of Australia, accessed 10 Mar 2021, <https://trove.nla.gov.au/about>.

2.1 The history of the terminology.

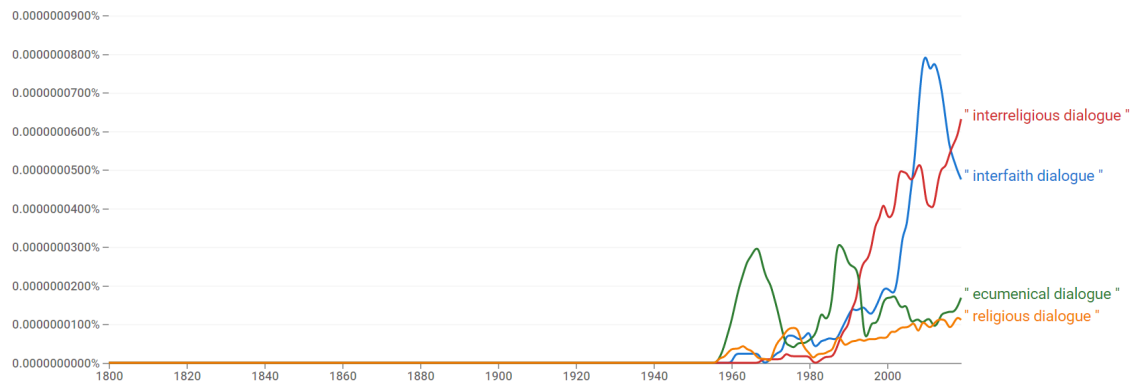


Figure 1 Google Ngram , 1900-2019⁹

The above chart gives some outline of the modern historical usage of the phrase ‘interfaith dialogue,’ and associated terms, showing minimal use prior to 1960. Post-1970 there is a period of fluctuation, however from the mid-1980s there is an overall upward trend of increasing usage, and an upturn post 9/11. When compared against the other search terms dealing with faith-based dialogue, all follow a similar upward trend; however, ecumenical dialogue has an earlier peak around the time of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965). This does not mean that there was no dialogue before this date. However, it does mean that any search strings utilising online databases such as Trove require careful thought, trial and error, and a combination of the above terms through the use of Boolean and other advanced methods.

The latest chart also shows a decline in the usage of the term interfaith from about 2005. It would appear that it is being replaced by inter-religious, possibly due to the broadening awareness of the significant number of non-Abrahamic religions worldwide. However, there may be other reasons and this shifting of terminology may be an area for additional investigation in the future.

⁹ Utilising the English (2019) Corpus. From Google Ngram Viewer, "Religious Dialogue, Interfaith Dialogue, Ecumenical Dialogue, Interreligious Dialogue," (Google Research, 2021).

2.2 Dialogue in Indigenous Australian Tradition

Indigenous Australians' social systems were amazingly diverse and complex. Over 250 language groups existed across *Terra Australis*, the Great Southern Land.¹⁰ Since the beginning of time, "trading routes crisscrossed the continent."¹¹ This spirit of trade-driven dialogue fostered widespread multilingualism amongst many of Australia's First Nations Peoples.¹² In turn, this led to the spread of information and ideas across the continent, best demonstrated by the transmission of the word *Yarraman*, (horse) into areas of Australia long before the arrival of an actual horse, an animal not known to exist in Australia until post-colonisation.¹³

Whilst there was no written corpus of sacred texts; beliefs, protocols, lore and law were passed on through a long-standing oral tradition and recorded in the rock paintings of various regions. Known to Westerners as the Dreaming, much of the life of First Australians was dictated by this complex and diverse belief system which provided protocols surrounding all aspects of inter-group relationships.¹⁴ Given the propensity of language groups and Indigenous Nations, contact rules depended on the relations with neighbouring groups.

This system, "had set rules that varied between each tribe for encounters with strangers, involving plenty of time and negotiations through clan spokesmen."¹⁵ Whilst there may have been some regional variation, in short, it required a visitor to wait on the territory border before being invited in; and if they were invited in they had to offer gifts to their hosts on arrival.¹⁶ However, "if a member of an unknown tribe made his appearance, unless he was accredited as a messenger, he would probably be at once speared."¹⁷ Many of the

¹⁰ Australian Bureau of Statistics, "Feature Article 3: Languages of Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples - a Unique Australian Heritage," *Year Book Australia 2009-10* (2010), <http://tiny.cc/dd9a8y>.

¹¹ Rob Amery and Colin Bourke, "Australian Languages: Our Heritage," in *Aboriginal Australia*, ed. Colin Bourke (St Lucia, QLD: University of Queensland Press, 2003), 137.

¹² See also V.M.R. Elwell, "Multilingualism and Lingua Francas among Australian Aborigines: A Case Study of Maningrida" (BA Honours thesis, ANU, 1977). and R.M.W. Dixon, *The Languages of Australia* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1980).

¹³ R.M.W. Dixon, W.S. Thomas, and M Thomas, *Australian Aboriginal Words in English. Their Origin and Meaning*. (Melbourne, VIC: Oxford University Press, 1990), 231.

¹⁴ See W.E.H. Stanner, "Introduction," in *On Aboriginal Religion* (Sydney: Sydney University Press, 2014).

¹⁵ Diana Millar, "Expanding Contacts: Aboriginal Nations of Australia," *Agora 1* (2012): 16.

¹⁶ *ibid.*, 16-17.

¹⁷ Gerald C. Wheeler, *The Tribe and Intertribal Relations in Australia* (London, U.K.: John Murray, 1910), 75.

early European explorers simply charged into Indigenous peoples territory, ignorant of the protocols that existed, possibly due to their worldview that Australia's first people were simply savages in need of civilisation.

An alternative method of initiating dialogue or safe transit through other groups regions involved the use of a message stick. Usually carried by a senior man, these acted similarly to a modern "passport or visa"¹⁸ allowing them to travel through another group's country. This method required the traveller to light a fire when they reached the territorial boundary to alert the local group, who would, in turn, send a representative to check the bona fides and allow safe passage through the country.¹⁹ Whilst never written down as a formal protocol, this method and others from around the country, formed a means of both enabling safe travel but also encouraged dialogue between the various Nations. At some point, the Macassans appear to have negotiated an arrangement to enter the traditional land of Australia's Indigenous peoples.²⁰ It may be possible that this was due to the requirements of Islam to honour ten years treaties as initially established by the Treaty of Hudaibiyah in 628. Regardless, Islam has a similar requirement for visitors, as established in the Qur'an.

O you who believe! Enter not houses other than you own, until you inquire and greet the dwellers thereof. That is better for you, that haply you may remember. (Q 24:27)

Whilst this verse is related to entering someone's house, it could be extended through analogical reasoning (*qiyas*) to deal with entering another person, tribe or clan's territory. Whether this was the case or not, what will be explored in chapter 3 is the long term nature of the dialogue between Indigenous Australians and the Macassans.

2.2 Inter-religious dialogue within the Abrahamic sacred texts

Within the Abrahamic faiths, a number of sacred texts were revealed over time. Whilst there are some differing viewpoints amongst the different faiths of precisely who received what and when they received it, the following sequence is generally reflected and followed

¹⁸ Reg Dodd and Malcolm McKinnon, *Talking Sideways. Stories and Conversations from Finnis Springs* (St Lucia, QLD: Queensland University Press, 2019), 167.

¹⁹ *ibid.*

²⁰ See Ian S. McIntosh, "A Treaty with the Macassans? Burrumarra and the Dholtji Ideal," *The Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology* 7, no. 2 (2006).

within Islam.²¹ Initially, the *suhuf* (sheets) of Abraham and Moses (87:19) were revealed, followed by the *Torah* and *Psalms*, the Gospel of Jesus (7:157) and God's final revelation (as viewed by Muslims), the *Qur'ān* as revealed to the Prophet Muhammad through the archangel Jibreel. Over time, these texts have attracted various degrees of exegetic discussion, interpretation, and clarification through other writings such as the *Talmud* and *Mishna* (Judaism) and the *sunnah* of the Prophet. All of these sacred texts and interpretive documents contain some level of instruction as to how believers should deal with and relate to a member of other faiths or beliefs.

Given that Islam, Judaism and Christianity, or *Ahl al-Kitāb* (the People of the Book)²² worship the same monotheistic God, discussions concerning non-believers should be focussed on those outside the established Abrahamic faith. Ideally, this commonality should have led to positive relationships and dialogue between the three faiths. Throughout history, this has not always been the case as geopolitics, despotic rulers with personal agendas and alternate, sometimes questionable interpretations of verses within all of the sacred texts have interfered over time to drive a wedge between believers of the major monotheistic faiths.

The nature of inter-religious dialogue within these three religions is complex and can at times be contradictory. For the sake of this research, some form of an overview is required to contextualise the issue. Accordingly, it will be brief in nature in order to provide some form of understanding as to how it has been viewed and applied throughout history.

2.2.1 Judaism: The Tanakh: Torah, Nevi'im, and Ketuvim.

Commencing with the *Torah*, essential instructions, *mitzvahs*²³ (or laws) relate to dealings with your neighbours or countrymen. "You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against your countrymen. Love your fellow as yourself: I am the LORD" (Lev 19:18). The issue here is the interpretation of the word countrymen; is that a fellow Jew or a stranger from the same region? A few verses later an instruction as to how to deal with foreigners' states:

²¹ The Qur'ān; 3:64-71, 4:171, 29:45-49, 4:131

²² G. Vajda, *Ahl Al-Kitāb*, (Brill, 2019), https://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/*-SIM_0383. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_0383.

²³ There are a total of 613 *mitzvahs* contained in the Torah, relating to all aspects of Jewish life.

*When a stranger resides with you in your land, you shall not wrong him.
The stranger who resides with you shall be to you as one of your citizens;
you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of
Egypt: I the LORD am your God. (Lev 19:33-34)*

During the first century's (BCE) development of Talmudic literature, one of the influential Jewish sages was the noted scholar, Rabbi Hillel the Elder (110-10 BCE). When asked to explain Judaism and the Torah (whilst standing on one foot) to a potential convert, he is alleged to have stated, "that which is despicable to you, do not do to your fellow, this is the whole Torah, and the rest is commentary, go and learn it."²⁴ This invokes a broader concept of the word neighbour, initially interpreted to mean, "your friend" (*havrah*) but accepted from Hillel onwards as "fellow man (*haver*)."²⁵ In light of this, the fundamental message is the negatively stated version of the golden rule; "do unto others, as you wish done to yourself."²⁶ The rabbinic sages²⁷ also trace the concept of brotherly love back to Genesis, which decrees that all men are the descendants of Adam, who was made in "...His image, in the image of God." (Gen 1:27)

Within Judaism, there is also the overarching concept of *Tikkun Olam*. It "implies that while the world is innately good, its Creator purposely left room for us to improve upon His work."²⁸ Again, this concept has shifted over time; however, it now forms part of the *Aleinu leshabei'ach*, an essential prayer contained in the *siddur* or prayer book of Judaism. It has been stated that the concept has been used for diverse and often contradictory purposes,²⁹ but its general contemporary purpose is that all humans can contribute to creating a better world, whether through acts of charity or kindness and can be directed to both the environment and peoples of all faiths.

²⁴ Babylonian Talmud, Shabbat 31a

²⁵ Philologos, "The Bible Says to Love Your Neighbor as Yourself. But What Does Neighbor Mean? The Answer Hasn't Always Been Clear.," Bee.Ideas, LLC, accessed 16 Mar 2019, <http://tiny.cc/uf9a8y>.

²⁶ For detailed discussion on this, see Jacob Neusner and Bruce D Chilton, *The Golden Rule: The Ethics of Reciprocity in World Religions* (Strathfield, NSW: St Columbans Mission Society, 2014).

²⁷ Rabbi Tanchuma, "Genesis Rabba 24," @sefariaproject, accessed 3 Apr 2019, <http://www.sefaria.org/texts>.

²⁸ Tzvi Freeman, "What Is Tikkun Olam? - What Does Tikkun Olam Mean, Who Came up with It, and How Do I Do It?," accessed 2 May 2019, <http://tiny.cc/mh9a8y>.

²⁹ Levi Cooper, "The Assimilation of Tikkun Olam," *Jewish Political Studies Review* 25:3 (2013): 13.

Despite the overarching theme of fraternity, the Torah also contains opposing viewpoints; failure to follow the directions of the priests of the tribe of Levi could end in death.

Should a man act presumptuously and disregard the priest charged with serving there the LORD your God, or the magistrate, that man shall die. Thus you will sweep out evil from Israel. (Deut 17:12)

Contextually, this would have been to establish the rule of law, as interpreted and enforced by the priestly class on behalf of God; however, it could easily be misappropriated when used in isolation.

When looking at the interpretation of sacred texts and issues of dialogue, often many positions can be justified. In the past, based on contextual circumstances, it may have been necessary to adapt, especially as a minority "out" group. As other religions emerged, and many Jewish communities were expelled into the Diaspora, the one thing keeping the sons and daughters of Israel unified was a common set of beliefs and one God.

2.2.2 Christianity: New Testament – The Gospel of Jesus

Jesus of Nazareth (4BCE-30/33CE), viewed as the Son of God in Christianity and revered as a prophet of Islam, set many examples showing the value of dialogue. The Gospel of John (4:1-54) outlines a meeting and subsequent dialogue between Jesus and a Samaritan woman. The woman is taken aback that a Jew would ask a Samaritan for a drink of water, "For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans" (John 4:9). The conversation, whilst possibly evangelical in nature is a crucial point showing Jesus as a role model for dialogue within the Christian tradition. Other similar interfaith dialogue occurs in both Mark with the Syro-Phoenician woman (Mark 7:25) and Matthew with the woman from Canaan (Matt 15:22-23).

Rome, during the life of the Apostle Paul (CE 2-67), had not converted *en masse* to Christianity and whilst there was a Christian community, they were a distinct minority. Paul wrote to them "Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; never be conceited." (Rom 12:16) and instructed them to "If possible, so far as it depends upon you, live peaceably with all." (Rom 12:18). This desire for Christians to live in peace and harmony with all others is also reflected in the Proverbs, "When a man's

ways please the Lord, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him" (Prov 16:7). Finally, Paul's letter to Timothy states;

First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all men, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, godly and respectful in every way. This is good, and it is acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all, the testimony to which was borne at the proper time. For this I was appointed a preacher and apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth. (1 Tim 2:1-7)

Whilst this can be viewed from an evangelical standpoint; that all men come to accept Christ, it does open with a general exhortation designed to enable Christians to lead a quiet and peaceable life. Contextually, it was probably written between 100 and 150 CE, a time when the church was "consolidating its position in the world,"³⁰ and still viewed as a minority religion in the region.

When viewed collectively, the texts of Christianity demonstrate a tolerant and accepting approach towards others, probably a necessity of time and place when they were a minority belief. As the religion grew, gaining momentum and mass, this overarching attitude of tolerance appears to have been forgotten or ignored, as was evident in 1099 when, during the conquest of Jerusalem, the Christian Crusaders "killed all the Saracens and Turks...whether male or female."³¹

However, within the Gospel, some verses are oppositional to encounters with non-believers, or those not following the teachings of Christ. One verse states:

Anyone who goes ahead and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God; he who abides in the doctrine has both the Father and the Son. If any one comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not

³⁰ J.C. Becker, *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible.*, ed. A.B. Buttrick, et al., 4 vols., vol. 4 (Nashville, TN: Parthenon Press, 1962), 651.

³¹ Karen Armstrong, *Holy War: The Crusades and Their Impact on Today's World.* (New York, NY: Random House, 2001), 178.

receive him into the house or give him any greeting; for he who greets him shares his wicked work." (2 John 1:9-11)

There is also the command for Christians:

Do not be miseducated with unbelievers. For what partnership have righteousness and iniquity? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? What accord has Christ with Be'lial? Or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, "I will live in them and move among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Therefore come out from them and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch nothing unclean; then I will welcome you, and I will be a father to you, and you shall be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty." (2 Cor 6:14–18)

Despite this, Jesus, as a role model described by the New Testament, appears to be the prototypical interfaith practitioner. This issue is confounded for Christians given that Muslims "accept Jesus as a great prophet and Messiah born of the Virgin Mary, but that [they] also vehemently denied his divinity, as well as the reality of his Crucifixion."³²

2.2.3 Islam: The Qur'an and Sunnah

Say, "O People of the Book! Come to a word common between us and you, that we will worship none but God, shall not associate aught with Him, and not take one another as lords apart from God." And if they turn away, then say, "Bear witness that we are submitters [to God]." (Q 3:64)

Whilst allowance was made for *Ahl al-Kitāb* in the Qur'an, Ismail Albayrak provides historical analysis, looking at several key verses and demonstrates that "the Qur'ān is characterised by a degree of lack of rigidity and an overall attitude of amity and even a degree of respect" towards Christians, Jews, Sabaeans and Zoroastrians.³³ Historical context for both the Meccan and Medinan period is essential, and clarification is required for what may be seen as contradictions regarding attitudes towards non-Muslims. Albayrak

³² Scott C. Alexander, "What's the Catholic View of Islam?," *U.S. Catholic* 67,1 (2002).

³³ Ismail Albayrak, "The People of the Book in the Qur'an," *Islamic Studies* 47:3 (2008): 301.

concludes his analysis with the above verse (*ayat*), explaining that this enjoins "Muslims to protect the basic rights of others, especially their religious freedoms."³⁴

Surah 29, *al-'Ankabūt*, outlines the approach to be taken by Muslims after Muhammad migrated to Medina due to persecution at the hands of the Meccans.

And dispute not with the People of the Book, save in the most virtuous manner, unless it be those of them that have done wrong. And say, "We believe in that which has been sent down unto us and was sent down unto you; our God and your God are one; and unto Him are we submitters." (Q 29:46)

The Qur'an also states:

Do not revile those whom they call upon apart from God, lest they should revile God out of enmity, without any knowledge. Thus have We made the deeds of every community seem fair unto them. Then unto their Lord shall be their return, and He will inform them of that which they used to do. (Q 6:108)

From these verses, it seems clear that, "Islam not only approves interfaith dialogue for its adherents but also earnestly urge the peoples of other religions to come forward for the sake of peace and tranquillity and engage in inter-religious dialogue."³⁵

Respect for *Ahl al-Kitāb* is also represented in the *sunna*. During the time of the Prophet Muhammad in Medina, it was reported that as a funeral procession passed:

The Prophet stood up and we too stood up. We said, 'O Allah's Messenger! This is the funeral procession of a Jew.' He said, "Isn't he a human being? Whenever you see a funeral procession, you should stand up."³⁶

Likewise, it was reported in *Sahih al-Muslim* that according to the Prophet, "When the People of the Book offer you salutations, you should say: The same to you."³⁷ His examples

³⁴ *ibid.*, 325.

³⁵ Md. Sanaullah, "Interfaith Dialogue in Islam: A Scriptural Scrutiny," *IOSR Journal Of Humanities And Social Science* 19:3 (2014): 88.

³⁶ *Sahih al-Bukhari* 1311, Book 23, Hadith 70

³⁷ *Sahih al-Muslim* 2163 a, Book 39, Hadith 7

indicate a high degree of respect for humanity regardless of faith, and that the different religions could co-exist in a pluralist society.

One clear driver of dialogue and indispensable piece of the puzzle is the issue of "knowing" a different other:

O mankind! We have created you male and female and made you into nations and tribes so that you may know one another. The noblest of you, in the sight of God, is the best in conduct. God is the Knower and the Aware. (Q 49:13)

The Qur'ān calls for dialogue at many levels; however, it also places impediments in the way at times. Some of these verses are due to contextual issues, such as the issues surrounding the Jewish community in Medina, who broke an established treaty with the Muslims.

O ye who believe! Take not Jews and the Christians as protectors. They are the protectors of one and another. And whosoever takes them as protectors, surely he is of them. Truly God guides not wrongdoing people. (Q 5:51).

Whilst many of the late Medinan verses are severe in their tone,³⁸ "the early exegetes understand this verse generally in the context of not trusting non-Muslims in religious matters."³⁹ As could be expected, "Qur'anic discourse about the People of the Book changes in accordance with the nature of their relationship with the Muslims"⁴⁰ and the "somewhat precarious social and political situation of the fledgling Islamic community during the time of the Prophet."⁴¹ Said Nursi also takes a position on the verse, "Just as not all of the characteristics of an individual Muslim necessarily reflect the teaching of Islam, so also, not all of the qualities of individual Jews or Christians reflect unbelief."⁴² Nursi's comment reflects many of the current issues surrounding Islam its dialogue with the West; the problem of, 'who speaks for who?'

³⁸ Albayrak, "The People of the Book in the Qur'an," 317.

³⁹ *ibid.*

⁴⁰ *ibid.*, 308.

⁴¹ *The Study Qur'an*, 303.

⁴² Albayrak, "The People of the Book in the Qur'an," 317-18.

Finally, when dialogue has failed, perhaps the Qur'ān provides the ultimate guidance:

It may be that God will forge affection between you and those of them with whom you are in enmity. God is Powerful, and God is Forgiving, Merciful. (Q 60:7)

2.2.4 Summary

The three Abrahamic faiths and their texts frequently make comment on dealings with believers of other faiths. None of them ever existed in isolation, and as each emerged, it started as a minority or as part of a collective of small tribal beliefs. Once established, any newcomer would be seen as a threat to the dominance of the belief system in its region. Many times, positive relationships fostered, at other times, hostilities prevailed. Fundamentally, theological differences between the three Abrahamic faiths play a part. The "Jews rejected Muhammad's claim to prophethood,"⁴³ and the Muslims view Jesus as a prophet, not the Son of God. The Christian concept of the Holy Trinity⁴⁴ causes an issue for some strict monotheists, and the Christians hold the belief that the Jews killed Christ.

Even within the faiths, there are schisms, such as the East/West break in Christianity (1054) and the Sunni/Shi'ite split in Islam. There are also issues of interpretation of the sacred texts. This difference of interpretation will also apply to matters concerning dialogue with some groups embracing the concept, others fearful of what it may bring.

Nevertheless, dialogue is not about conversion or winning an argument; it is about understanding or 'knowing' the ways of the others in our world. It is also important to have an understanding of your own religion and be prepared to learn, or know, about the different 'other.' How believers 'know' the others is a product of the many social constructions, however, can be also driven by the prevailing *zeitgeist*, or the spirit of the times. Additionally, when members of the Abrahamic faiths engage in inter-religious dialogue they often make conscious decisions about which sections of their respective sacred texts are used as a rationale. Those truly looking for positive dialogue will disregard sections that discuss unwelcoming criticism, animosity and hostility towards others. Conversely,

⁴³ John L. Esposito, *Islam: The Straight Path, Extended Edition*. (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press 1998), 17.

⁴⁴ The (Catholic) Christian concept of the God the Father, The Son and The Holy Spirit (or Ghost).

those opposed to inter-religious dialogue will invoke those verses that appear to support their view.

2.3 The History of inter-religious dialogue

When looking at the literature surrounding interfaith or interreligious dialogue, David Thomas and Barbara Roggema (eds.) have curated a multi-volume edition entitled *Christian-Muslim Relations, A Bibliographical History*. Volume 1 outlines a history of the first 300 years of interaction and details a vast range of texts covering all manner of relations.⁴⁵ The texts included were selected:

*...according to whether a work is written substantially about or against the other faith, or contains significant information or judgements that cast light on attitudes of one faith towards the other. Thus, apologetic and polemical works are, by their very nature, included, while large synthetic historical and geographical works, such as are known in this period, are often not, even though they may refer to the other in passing.*⁴⁶

Accordingly, this represents an attempt to place an unbiased view on primary sources concerning relations between the Christians and Muslims, as well as the Jews during the periods being investigated.

Scott Alexander also provides a brief outline of Muslim-Catholic relations demonstrating both confrontation and dialogue.⁴⁷ The movement of Islam from the Arabian Peninsula into North Africa, Spain, Syria and Iran between 632 and 750, is discussed outlining that “mass conversion to Islam in these regions was not ‘by the sword’...[but] involved, among other things, the fact that sharing the religion of the Muslim rulers had its advantages.”⁴⁸ Alexander also outlines the negative view held by “certain eighth-century Christian theologians [that] Islam was not just another religion among the many others that had come and gone. It had all the markings of Christian heresy.”⁴⁹ He also demonstrates that this view is still promulgated in the 21st century, with some Christian ministers declaring Islam as “evil and wicked...[and describing] the Prophet Muhammed as a ‘demon-possessed paedophile,’”⁵⁰ a clear barrier to inter-religious dialogue for some Christians in a post-9/11 world. Unfortunately, for polemical purposes, older theological interpretations and

⁴⁵ *Christian-Muslim Relations a Bibliographical History*, ed. David Thomas and Barbara Roggema, vol. 1 (600-900) (ProQuest Ebook Central: BRILL, 2009).

⁴⁶ *ibid.*, viii.

⁴⁷ Scott C. Alexander, "We Go Way Back: The History of Muslim-Catholic Relations Is One of Both Confrontation and Dialogue," *U.S. Catholic* 72, no. 2 (2007).

⁴⁸ *ibid.*, 18.

⁴⁹ *ibid.*, 19.

⁵⁰ *ibid.*, 20.

viewpoints are still invoked in order to avoid inter-religious dialogue or to continue to 'otherise' minority groups.

Jane Smith provides a history of contact between Islam and Christianity, demonstrating the problems arising from the dilemmas and "discrimination between the competing possibilities of Crusade, conversion, coexistence and commercial exchange."⁵¹ She discusses the theological concern surrounding the Christian view that Jesus was the 'Son of God', aligning it to the Islamic sin of *shirk*, or attributing a partner to the works of God. Smith discusses the concept of *dhimmi*, or "communities under the protection of Islam." These socio-political groupings included; Christians, (despite the contentious issue of the Trinity leading towards polytheism), "and Jews, also Magians, Samaritans, Sabians and later, Zoroastrians."⁵² It is worth noting that *dhimmi* was an all-inclusive clause covering all "non-Muslim(s) under protection of Muslim law,"⁵³ whilst *Ahl al-Kitāb* involved a more special status, initially given to the Jews and Christians, although this was later extended.⁵⁴ Whilst both groups are non-Muslims, the terms are not synonymous, with *Ahl al-Kitāb* best described as a subset of *dhimmi*.

Smith's discussion raises al-Andalusia, now modern-day Spain, as a possible historical "model of harmonious relations", given seven centuries of Muslim rule and that particularly "during the 9th and 10th centuries, Christians, Muslims and Jews can be said to have lived in relative peace and harmony."⁵⁵ Like many scholars,⁵⁶ Smith highlights the Crusades of 1095 as the point in history when the nature of interfaith dialogue and cooperation began its steady downhill path. The rise of Protestantism in the Renaissance period is discussed, especially the opposing viewpoint of Islam taken by Martin Luther and John Calvin, both of whom "portrayed Muhammad as equal to the devil, and called the Qur'ān foul and shameful."⁵⁷

⁵¹ Jane I Smith, "The Legacy of Engagement," in *Muslims, Christians, and the Challenge of Interfaith Dialogue* (USA: Oxford University Press, 2007), 23.

⁵² *ibid.*, 27.

⁵³ Dhimmi, (Oxford: Oxford Islamic Studies Online, 2019),

<http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t125/e536>.

⁵⁴ Vajda, *Ahl Al-Kitāb*.

⁵⁵ Smith, "The Legacy of Engagement," 28.

⁵⁶ See Armstrong, *Holy War: The Crusades and Their Impact on Today's World*.

⁵⁷ Smith, "The Legacy of Engagement," 33.

Moving into the Twentieth century, Armstrong argues that tensions surrounding meaningful interfaith dialogue stem "partly from American foreign policy decisions and partly due to circumstances internal to individual nation-states."⁵⁸ Finally, Smith takes the view that both sides of the Christian-Muslim discourse "must reflect on their own history of repeated acts of aggression" and "territorial incursions".⁵⁹ Smith's discussion on the opposition to Islam by the leaders of the Reformation is essential, given modern Australia was founded on this branch of Christianity. This current research may determine if elements of this opposition and derision towards Islam was present in the early days of the colony.

This was not a unique protestant view, the first Latin translation of the Qur'ān was completed in 1143 by "Robert Kettenensis at the behest of Peter the Venerable, abbot of Cluny"⁶⁰ and was entitled *Lex Mahumet pseudoprophete* (The law of the Pseudo Prophet).⁶¹ In turn, this led Abbott Peter to write "*Summa totius haeresis Saracenorum* (The Summary of the Entire Heresy of the Saracens) and the *Liber contra sectani sive haeresis Saracenorum* (The Refutation of the Sect or Heresy of the Saracens)", some of his influential works portraying, "Islam as a Christian Heresy approaching paganism."⁶² Historically, another perspective is provided by Charles Parker.⁶³ He outlines the protection offered to *ahl al-dhimma* (protected peoples), but centres it on the payment of a poll tax, or *jizya*, an essential means of "extracting revenue from their subjects."⁶⁴ While this practice was established during the nascent period of Islam, it continued until the Ottoman Caliphate. Parker also outlines that protection and tolerance did not mean equality. Restrictions were placed on *ahl al-dhimma* that included the prevention of:

Christians and Jews from marrying Muslim women and making any public religious display, such as exhibiting imagery, ringing bells, making processions, issuing proclamations, and undertaking new construction or repairs on synagogues or churches. Jews and Christians could not proselytize, teach the Qur'an, prevent family members from converting to Islam, imitate Muslims in appearance, bury their dead in Muslim

⁵⁸ *ibid.*, 38.

⁵⁹ *ibid.*, 40.

⁶⁰ Afnan Fatani, "Translation and the Qur'an," in *The Qur'an: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Oliver Leaman (London: Routledge, 2005), 667.

⁶¹ Muzaffar Iqbal, "The Quran and Its Disbelievers," *Islam & Science* 7,2 (2009): 92.

⁶² *ibid.*

⁶³ Charles H Parker, "Paying for the Privilege: The Management of Public Order and Religious Pluralism in Two Early Modern Societies," *Journal of World History* 17,3 (2006).

⁶⁴ *ibid.*, 277.

*cemeteries, build homes that overlooked those of Muslims, own slaves previously owned by Muslims, hold political office, ride horses or camels, testify against a Muslim in a criminal legal case, sell alcohol, pork, or carrion to Muslims. In addition, Jews and Christians were to identify themselves by wearing a girdle over external clothing, shaving the front of their head (males), and using distinctive headgear, saddles, and mounts.*⁶⁵

Whilst not accepted as universal principles, this range of restrictions meant that in some parts, whilst dialogue was in operation, it was dominated by the ruling parties. This did not always place non-Muslims on an equal footing with their Muslim neighbours. There are numerous exceptions or alternative narratives, including the great Jewish philosopher Maimonides (Moses ben Maimon, 1135-1204) who was the personal physician to Salah ad-Din, (1137-1193)⁶⁶ indicating it was not all subjugation. For the purpose of this current research, the question is, do these restrictions mirror similar limitations placed on early Muslim migrants to Australia by the dominant Christian hegemony?

Leonard Swidler also provides a brief history of inter-religious dialogue in Chapter 1 of *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Inter-Religious Dialogue*.⁶⁷ He discusses some historical underpinnings in the axial and post-axial ages, however, posits that "inter-religious encounters during the subsequent age of European exploration and colonization were marked primarily by proselytization on behalf of the Christian churches."⁶⁸ The focus of his historical account is primarily a Euro-centric perspective, and he states that it was not until "2007, six years after Al Qaeda's attack on America, Islam began to join global inter-religious dialogue in a massive way."⁶⁹ He cites the foundation of the "establishment of the King Abdullah Center for the Study of Contemporary Islam and the Dialogue of Civilizations within Imam University,⁷⁰ Riyadh, Saudi Arabia" as a significant turning point that makes it clear "that if you wish to be a serious Muslim in the contemporary world, you need to be involved in dialogue with the other civilizations of the world."⁷¹ This

⁶⁵ *ibid.*, 278.

⁶⁶ Julia Bess Frank, "Moses Maimonides: Rabbi of Medicine," *The Yale Journal of Biology and Medicine* 54 (1981): 82-83.

⁶⁷ Leonard Swidler, "The History of Inter-Religious Dialogue," in *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Inter-Religious Dialogue*, ed. Catherine Cornille (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2013).

⁶⁸ *ibid.*, 4.

⁶⁹ *ibid.*, 9.

⁷⁰ Imam Muhamad Ibn Saud Islamic University.

⁷¹ Swidler, "The History of Inter-Religious Dialogue," 9-10.

viewpoint is important; however, it seems to have gone unrecognized by some fundamentalist or literalist groups of all faiths in many of the areas of religious conflict around the world where pluralism has been previously accepted.

Gerard Hall outlines the origin of the Gospel's view of dialogue alongside some of Christianity's past failings in this regard.⁷² He also discusses the historical background and importance of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) and how it "represented a call to move from a ghetto-church to a church that engages in a more positive and open fashion with the world's peoples, cultures and religions."⁷³ Hall also states that "Australian Catholics are fortunate to have a church that is highly committed to interfaith dialogue."⁷⁴ This commitment was not immediate, as Gerard Kelly noted that:

*The Declaration on the Catholic Church's Relations with Non-Christian Religions probably did not have much impact in Australia at the time it was promulgated. However, things have changed, due in large part to the changing population in Australia.*⁷⁵

Additionally, we will see that some problems arise through a lack of understanding by the laity concerning the Catholic Churches mission in this regard.

Finally, the works of David Thomas on Christian -Muslim relations require some discussion. Amongst many other roles, he has been a contributor and editor on the multi-volume series *The History of Christian-Muslim Relations*. Many of the volumes provide comprehensive bibliographical sources; an invaluable tool for any researcher in the field. One volume is dedicated to the initial interactions (600-900) between the Abrahamic faiths⁷⁶ whilst others provide sources for dialogue over various eras and geographical locations. Whilst there is some coverage on South East Asia and the Pacific Region, limited coverage is given to Australia.⁷⁷ Additionally, his contribution to the journal *Islam and*

⁷² Gerard Hall, "Interfaith Dialogue: The Australian Catholic Scene," *The Australian Catholic Record* 88:3 (2011).

⁷³ *ibid.*, 50-51.

⁷⁴ *ibid.*, 56.

⁷⁵ Gerard Kelly, "The Impact of the Second Vatican Council," *The Australasian Catholic Record* 91,2 (2014): 147.

⁷⁶ *Christian-Muslim Relations a Bibliographical History*, 1 (600-900).

⁷⁷ Karel Steenbrink, "No (Longer) Fear, but Control and Care. Europeans and Muslims in South East Asia, 17th and 18th Centuries," ed. David Thomas and John A. Chesworth, *Christian-Muslim Relations. A Bibliographical History. Volume 12 Asia, Africa and the Americas (1700-1800)* (Brill, 2018), <https://brill-com.ezproxy2.acu.edu.au/view/title/38698>.

Christian–Muslim Relations provides research findings and writings on interfaith relations commencing with the first volume in 1995.

The works discussed above have been selected as they provide an overview of the global and historical aspects of inter-religious dialogue. They demonstrate both periods of inclusion and at times, exclusion. While some of them touch on South East Asia, it does demonstrate that there is a gap in the literature concerning inter-religious dialogue in Australia pre-9/11 in general, especially when approached from the perspective of the long history of Muslim presence in Australia.

2.4 The Philosophy of inter-religious dialogue

When looking at the issue of interfaith dialogue over the last 40 years, a critical foundational text for modern dialogue was provided by Leonard Swidler in 1983.⁷⁸ He outlines a clear definition of dialogue and is emphatic that dialogue and debate are not synonymous; in fact, they are almost polar opposites. Swidler opens with a clear cut statement about the nature of dialogue:

*Dialogue is a conversation on a common subject between two or more persons with differing views, the primary purpose of which is for each participant to learn from the other so that he or she can change and grow.*⁷⁹

Authentic and effective dialogue can only occur between equals, must be based on a high level of trust and only approached with an open mind by all parties. It is not an opportunity for evangelising or '*dawah*' (in the Islamic context). Dialogue should be about understanding the other party's position and to "explore new areas of reality, of meaning, and of truth, of which neither of us had even been aware before."⁸⁰ Swidler's definition is of paramount importance to any discussions of interfaith (or inter-religious) dialogue; however, the requirement for participants to be knowledgeable about their own faith can often cause issues.

⁷⁸ Swidler, "The Dialogue Decalogue: Ground Rules for Interreligious Dialogue," 1-4.

⁷⁹ *ibid.*, 1.

⁸⁰ *ibid.*, 4.

Swidler's 2010 paper introduces the concept of *trialogue*, the three-way Abrahamic faith discussions. This concept is supported by both the "the extraordinary, dialogical *A Common Word between Us and You*, issued in 2007 and signed by 138⁸¹ Muslim scholars"⁸² and "Saudi King Abdullah's commitment in 2008 to interreligious dialogue."⁸³ He points to the International Scholars Abrahamic Trialogue (ISAT), founded in 1978 as being analogous to the ground-breaking decision of the Second Vatican Council in 1965. Swidler outlines the history of this triologue from the late 1970's up until 2010. He points out a fundamental issue arising from the 1991 ISAT conference as:

*We are at an impasse. Each of our traditions, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, has at its core a central 'absolute,' which is non-negotiable and blocks the possibility of genuine dialogue: The Chosen People/Promised Land, The Christ, The Qur'ān.*⁸⁴

This impasse is problematic. Agreement on these type of issues is not necessary and should not be a focus for dialogue, the key is a mutual understanding. To agree to disagree needs to be part of effective dialogue, conversion or evangelising should not be part of the concept. The author's previous discussions with the Gosford (New South Wales) Anglican Minister, Father Rod Bower demonstrate this. A winner of the 2016 Doha International Award for Interfaith Dialogue,⁸⁵ he maintains a close friendship with Australia's current Grand Mufti, Dr Ibrahim Abu Mohamed. Father Bower has been a passionate supporter of the same-sex marriage issue; however, he stated to my Studies of Religion class, "Ibrahim and myself have agreed to disagree over this issue. We cannot let it get in the way of meaningful dialogue."⁸⁶ In this instance of dialogue, both parties are following the various guidelines for effective dialogue, looking to pass an understanding on to the other and are being carried out between individuals who understand their own religion.

⁸¹ Now signed by over 600 clerics and others from both Islam and Christianity. See Rick Love, "National and International Religious Freedom: An Essential Part of Christian Mission in the 21st Century," Fuller Studio, accessed 11 Mar 2021, <https://fullerstudio.fuller.edu/national-international-religious-freedom-essential-part-christian-mission-21st-century>.

⁸² Leonard Swidler, "Trialogue: Out of the Shadows into Blazing 'Desert' Sun!," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 45 (2010): 493.

⁸³ *ibid.*

⁸⁴ *ibid.*, 496.

⁸⁵ Anglican Parish of Gosford, "Gosford Anglican | Our Team," accessed 3 May 2019, <https://www.angos.com.au/our-team>.

⁸⁶ Personal communication, November, 2018.

Despite problems caused by the location for some conferences (Civil unrest in Macedonia, 2011), issues surrounding 9/11 and the untimely death of Swidler's wife (2009), the conferences continued. Ultimately, the ISAT conferences show a willingness for all three Abrahamic faiths to engage with each other in meaningful dialogue. It also shows the growth and active participation of Muslims towards meaningful dialogue, despite Western perceptions that Islam is uncompromising and not willing to engage. The concept of trialogue can be seen as limiting any dialogue to the three Abrahamic faiths. Whilst technically 'interfaith' is within the monotheistic Abrahamic faiths, in today's age it does need to be more all-encompassing, and possibly replaced with an overarching term such as inter-religious dialogue.

James Heft provides an alternate viewpoint to the series of dialogues that occurred at the beginning of the 20th Century.⁸⁷ He outlines a history of dialogue within the constraints of Swidler's modern interpretation, stating that "First, a positive Catholic dialogue with Islam is historically only very recent."⁸⁸ Heft also concludes that, "we [the Catholic faith] need to spend much more time than we have trying to understand each other's religious beliefs."⁸⁹ Given that over the last 100 years, half of the world's Christians identify as Catholics,⁹⁰ precluding any authorised dialogue until the 2nd Vatican Council and the Declaration, *Nostra Aetate* in 1965.⁹¹

Oddbjøen Leirvik looks at a different model based on the philosophies of dialogue provided by Martin Buber⁹² and Emmanuel Levinas.⁹³ Leirvik distinguishes two types of dialogue, "spiritual and necessary".⁹⁴ He describes the spiritual realm of dialogue as being "based on personal motivation and ... being guided by an expectation of being enriched by

⁸⁷ James L. Heft, "The Necessity of Inter-Faith Diplomacy: The Catholic Muslim Dialogue," in *The First Sheridan-Campbell Lecture Given at the Mediterranean Academy of Diplomatic Studies* (Malta: Institute for Advanced Catholic Studies at USC, 2011).

⁸⁸ *ibid.*, 5.

⁸⁹ *ibid.*

⁹⁰ Pew Research Center, "The Global Catholic Population," @PewReligion, accessed 26 Apr 2019, <https://www.pewforum.org/2013/02/13/the-global-catholic-population/>.

⁹¹ Pope Paul VI, "Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions — *Nostra Aetate*," accessed 26 May 2019, http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_nostra-aetate_en.html#.

⁹² Martin Buber, *I and Thou* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1987).

⁹³ Lawrence Burns, *Humanism of the Other. Emmanuel Levinas Translated from the French by Nidra Poller. Introduction by Richard A. Cohen* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2008).

⁹⁴ Oddbjøen Leirvik, "Philosophies of Interreligious Dialogue: Practice in Search of Theory.," *Approaching Religion* 1, no. May 2011 (2011): 16.

other spiritual traditions."⁹⁵ On the other hand, necessary dialogues, "are driven by a felt socio-political need to prevent or reduce religion-related conflict in society, by fostering peaceful interaction between representatives of different religious groups."⁹⁶ Whilst at one level he is looking at interreligious issues (Christianity and Buddhism), he also applies this philosophical model to interfaith concerns and the different types of dialogue required to foster societal understanding in modern civil society. By separating dialogue into two clear domains, Leirvik establishes and supports the current need for dialogue to create stability and peace between believers of differing faiths, fundamental in the modern world. His view also allows for distinction between willing and socially enforced dialogue, spiritual versus necessary.

2.5 Inter-religious dialogue as a global issue

Hassan Saab looks at Christian-Muslim communication in light of Algerian Independence.⁹⁷ He outlines a significant aspect of the historical relationship that:

From the seventh to the nineteenth century, Christians in Dar al-Islam⁹⁸ were the protégés of their rulers. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Muslims became the subjects of Christian colonial powers. Freedom and equality are now substituted for mastery and subjection.⁹⁹

This perspective applies to the Australian context as any Muslims arriving in Australia, post-colonialism, would have been subject to this viewpoint. Whilst Saab hoped that the newfound independence would mark a turning point, his optimistic view would be lost in the ongoing machinations surround Israel, Palestine and the Middle East. He also cites Lebanon as "a living test of the real value of Christian-Muslim communication."¹⁰⁰ His outlook was far from prophetic, as the Civil War (1975-1990) saw the two groups involved in a long-running sectarian war, with involvement from both Syria and Palestine.

⁹⁵ ibid.

⁹⁶ ibid.

⁹⁷ Hassan Saab, "Communication between Christianity and Islām," *Middle East Journal* 18,1 (1964).

⁹⁸ Literally, house or abode of Islam

⁹⁹ Saab, "Communication between Christianity and Islām," 41.

¹⁰⁰ ibid., 42.

An Islamic perspective is provided by Ataullah Siddiqui, who looks at Christian-Muslim dialogue in modernity.¹⁰¹ He discusses the rise of secularism, the impact of modernism and the need for scientific justification of the supernatural. This first chapter also outlines a different historical approach and when intermeshed with Swidler's account, provides a more comprehensive outline of previous activities. Likewise, Jacques Waardenburg, who provides a clear discussion on the historical relationships between Muslims and non-Muslims with the important context.¹⁰² His key analysis centres on Muhammad's relationship with the Jews in Medina¹⁰³ as well as an exploration of religious tolerance during the Mughal Era (1526-1847) in India.¹⁰⁴

Mahmoud Ayoub outlines a brief history of relationships between the Abrahamic faiths, outlining the circumstances surrounding the 'birth' of Islam.¹⁰⁵ He posits that early Christianity "helped to prepare the moral and spiritual grounds for [the beginning] of Islam".¹⁰⁶ Ayoub quotes the Qur'ān as a primary reference (Q 5:82) to motivate constructive dialogue between the two faiths as "Christians are the nearest people in amity to the Muslims" and that "Christian Monks and learned priests recognize the truth when they hear it".¹⁰⁷ Ayoub briefly discusses Trinitarianism as being problematic, leading to an Islamic view of some Christians as polytheists.¹⁰⁸ After introducing the key points of interfaith dialogue, based on excerpts of Swidler's ten-step model,¹⁰⁹ Ayoub also discusses an alternative, but complementary means of looking at the different types of dialogue. Firstly, "the dialogue of life,"¹¹⁰ everyday communications most likely in the micro and meso domain. Next is "the dialogue of beliefs, theological doctrines and philosophical ideas".¹¹¹

¹⁰¹ Ataullah Siddiqui, *Christian-Muslim Dialogue in the Twentieth Century* (London: Palgrave Macmillan Limited, 1997), 1-78.

¹⁰² Jacques Waardenburg, *Muslims and Others: Relations in Context* (ProQuest Ebook Central: De Gruyter, Inc, 2003).

¹⁰³ *ibid.*, 91-94.

¹⁰⁴ *ibid.*, 113-21.

¹⁰⁵ Mahmoud Ayoub, "Christian-Muslim Dialogue: Goals and Obstacles," *The Muslim World* 94 (2004): 313-19.

¹⁰⁶ *ibid.*, 313.

¹⁰⁷ *ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ *ibid.*, 315.

¹⁰⁹ Swidler, "The Dialogue Decalogue: Ground Rules for Interreligious Dialogue," 1-4.

¹¹⁰ Ayoub, "Christian-Muslim Dialogue: Goals and Obstacles," 317.

¹¹¹ *ibid.*

Finally, he discusses "the dialogue of faith" as a means to "deepen the faith of Muslim and Christians[s]...by sharing the personal faith of the other."¹¹²

In a similar vein, Yvonne and Wadi Haddad provide a broad-ranging discussion of interfaith dialogue, focussing on Christian-Muslim encounters.¹¹³ The selected essays cover the historical encounters through the differences in the sacred scriptures, past and present discussion of encounters from a range of geographical areas, and contemporary regional studies of both contact, theology and ideology. Whilst there is limited coverage surrounding Australia, there is some discussion on initial encounters between Christians and Muslims in the Malay and Indonesian area, especially the arrival of Islam and the initial encounters with Christian colonists, whose view was tainted by the "hostile attitudes against the 'Saracens' cultivated in Christian Europe."¹¹⁴

Andrew Orton looks at the principles of interfaith dialogue in light of the current issues in Europe.¹¹⁵ These issues reflect European proximity to the geopolitical machinations occurring in the Middle East and the various diasporas of refugees that have arisen due to the ongoing conflicts. In a similar vein, Baker and Watson explore dialogue in light of secularism and misunderstandings, often driven by the media, in the United Kingdom.¹¹⁶ Australia suffers similar issues¹¹⁷ and coupled with an increase in Australians reporting no religious affiliation,¹¹⁸ provides some means to address the issues faced by minority groups of Muslims. The authors introduce the concept of secular spiritual capital (SSC), a "set of individual and corporate/community values and actions produced by the dynamic interaction between spiritual and social capital within secular fields of activity, as a means to solve some of the issues surrounding dialogue especially concerning the "contested

¹¹² *ibid.*, 318.

¹¹³ *Christian-Muslim Encounters*, ed. Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad and Wadi Z Haddad (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 1995).

¹¹⁴ Olaf Schumann, "Christian-Muslim Encounter in Indonesia," in *Christian-Muslim Encounters*, ed. Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad and Wadi Z Haddad (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 1995), 287.

¹¹⁵ Andrew Orton, "Interfaith Dialogue: Seven Key Questions for Theory, Policy and Practice," *Religion, State and Society* 44, no. 4 (2016).

¹¹⁶ Chris Baker and Jonathan Miles-Watson, "Exploring Secular Spiritual Capital: An Engagement in Religious and Secular Dialogue for a Common Future?," *International Journal of Public Theology* 2 (2008).

¹¹⁷ OnePath Network, "Islam in the Media Report," (Sydney, Australia: OnePath Media, 2018).

¹¹⁸ Australian Bureau of Statistics, "2016 Census Data Summary: Religion in Australia," (Canberra, ACT2016).

public spaces between religion and secularity.”¹¹⁹ Whilst largely untested, SSC appears to offer another theory for application in what is becoming a crowded field by offering a ‘thicker’ public discourse through public policy and civil society areas.

Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq provides a modern Islamic viewpoint on the issue of interfaith dialogue.¹²⁰ He outlines the basic principles, in line with Swidler’s guidelines¹²¹ and discusses the definition of dialogue concerning the Qur’an and outlines a praxis of dialogue around four attitudes; “exclusivism, inclusivism, parallelism and pluralism.”¹²² Theological perspectives are presented, both historically and from a contemporary viewpoint¹²³ and like many scholars, he points to the issue of a distorted history of Islam as a critical issue.¹²⁴ He concludes that at present “Muslims are not effectively participating in interfaith dialogue due to misunderstandings and literalist interpretations of the text of the Qur’an and Hadith” however this can be overcome through a “framework of tolerance, respect, sincere preparedness and loyalty to the faith.”¹²⁵ This paper further reinforces the issues surrounding an understanding of one’s own religion as it applies in a current context, and is historically relevant, as it would appear that some early Muslim migrants to Australia attempted to have their voices heard, to little or no avail.

Edward Kessler looks at the issue of Jewish-Muslim dialogue in light of Jewish-Christian relations.¹²⁶ He traces modern dialogue between Jews and Muslims back to the formation in 1927 of the London Society for Jews and Muslims, however, describes the current situation as a “fragile phenomenon” and “relatively uncharted territory.”¹²⁷ He points out several features that confound this discourse, primarily the issue that not all Arabs are Muslims, which needs to be understood before meaningful dialogue can occur. The commonality of many customs, practices, stories and traditions, and the essential concept of *tawhid*, or strict monotheism is also outlined. These similarities should allow for some

¹¹⁹ Baker and Miles-Watson, "Exploring Secular Spiritual Capital: An Engagement in Religious and Secular Dialogue for a Common Future?," 446.

¹²⁰ Muhammed Zia-ul-Haq, "Muslims Participation in Interfaith Dialogue: Challenges and Prospects," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 49:4, no. Fall (2014): 613-36.

¹²¹ Swidler, "The Dialogue Decalogue: Ground Rules for Interreligious Dialogue."

¹²² Zia-ul-Haq, "Muslims Participation in Interfaith Dialogue: Challenges and Prospects," 617.

¹²³ See chapter 3 for further discussion about this.

¹²⁴ Zia-ul-Haq, "Muslims Participation in Interfaith Dialogue: Challenges and Prospects," 635.

¹²⁵ *ibid.*, 613.

¹²⁶ Edward Kessler, "Jewish-Muslim Dialogue in Light of Jewish-Christian Relations," *Theology* 114, no. 1 (2011).

¹²⁷ *ibid.*, 23.

meaningful dialogue; however, Kessler discusses the fact that these issues are overshadowed by geopolitical issues and “the impact of Middle East conflict.”¹²⁸ Whilst Australia is far removed from the Middle East, our multicultural milieu of Jews, Muslims, Christians, and others have brought elements of this issue with them, and it has had some effect on dialogue in this country, especially since the creation of the state of Israel in 1948.

Douglas Pratt’s 2005 text, *The Challenge of Islam, Encounters in Interfaith Dialogue* provides an excellent overview of the origin, scripture, communities and beliefs of Islam, as well as interfaith encounters at a global level.¹²⁹ Discussion on the historical interactions between Muslims, Christian and Jews are outlined and the issue of engagement between the beliefs, including the barriers encountered are introduced. For the purpose of this research, the issues of interpretation, revision and abrogation (*naskh*) are clearly articulated and discussion around the revelation of the Abrahamic sacred texts with the Qur’an representing an “abrogation of the previously distorted revelations [Torah, Gospels] ... [are presented as a] “problem in terms of relationships of Muslims to people of other faiths, in particular Islam’s relationship to other faiths.”¹³⁰ In other works, Pratt also provides a historical outline of the Antipodean *umma*,¹³¹ a chronology of the early Anglican interfaith movement¹³² and a discussion on Christian–Muslim dialogue, focusing on the 20th century and beyond, introducing the ideas that “the nature of the relationship between Muslims and Christians has arguably been marked by three fundamental dynamics: mutual antipathy, mutual affinity and mutual inquiry.”¹³³

Tayseir Mandour provides a discussion of four key issues surrounding interfaith dialogue. In the 21st century, issues connected with the 9/11 (and subsequent terrorist acts) have led to a rise of “interest in interfaith dialogue as an essential tool for bridging the ideological divide in modern societies, especially those with multiple identities and religious pluralism,

¹²⁸ *ibid.*, 27.

¹²⁹ Douglas Pratt, *The Challenge of Islam. Encounters in Interfaith Dialogue*. (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate Publishing, 2005).

¹³⁰ *ibid.*, 40.

¹³¹ Douglas Pratt, "Antipodean Ummah: Islam and Muslims in Australia and New Zealand," *Religion Compass* 5/12 (2011).

¹³² "From Edinburgh to Georgetown: Anglican Interfaith Bridge-Building," *Anglican theological review* 96, no. 1 (2014).

¹³³ "Theology after Dialogue: Christian–Muslim Engagement Today and Tomorrow," *Islam and Christian–Muslim Relations* 26, no. 1 (2014): 89.

deeply shaped by globalization.”¹³⁴ This reflects Leirvik’s ‘necessary’ dialogue. Mandour outlines Islam’s tolerance towards other religions, highlighting the treatment of the Christians by Umar Ibn al-Khattab’s actions in Jerusalem in 637. During this visit, he “guaranteed the safety of their lives, their churches, and their crosses, assuring none of them would be harmed on account of his or her religion.”¹³⁵ An outline of the methodology of dialogue is discussed, once again using the basis of Swidler’s model. Mandour then concludes his paper with a discussion on Egypt’s role as a key player in interfaith dialogue, due to its engagement at a local intellectual and a global level. He puts this down to Egypt’s participation and hosting of a range of activities, the agreement between Al-Azhar and the Vatican,¹³⁶ and its central location and proximity to the key centres of Abrahamic faith. Given the changes that have occurred following the Arab-spring events of 2010/11 and recent attacks against Coptic Christians,¹³⁷ the importance of Egypt’s role may not be currently relevant or applicable.

Akbar Ahmed also outlines a series of steps towards healthy interfaith dialogue, albeit in the post 9/11 era.¹³⁸ He aligns dialogue with understanding and friendship, three phases that are required in order for positive long-term outcomes. This aligns with Allport’s contact theory, in that as communities build bonds of friendship, outgroups or the different ‘others’ become an accepted part of the landscape, eliminating many of the prejudices and negative behaviours often aimed at them. Ahmed cites several personal examples that have brought him and his Muslim community closer together with members of the Christian, Jewish, Buddhist and Hindu communities, both in Washington DC and around the world. If his recollections are anything to go on, it is clear that dialogue requires some additional concepts to make a lasting impact. Whilst Ahmed’s paper is post 9/11, he articulates a vital

¹³⁴ Tayseir M. Mandour, "Islam and Religious Freedom: Role of Interfaith Dialogue in Promoting Global Peace," *Brigham Young University Law Review* 3 (2010): 886.

¹³⁵ *ibid.*, 885.

¹³⁶ On 4 Feb 2019, the Pope and Ahmad Al-Tayyeb, the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar published the co-authored *Document on Human Fraternity*. See Pope Francis and Ahmad Al-Tayyeb, "A Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together," (2019), http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/travels/2019/outside/documents/papa-francesco_20190204_documento-fratellanza-umana.pdf.

¹³⁷ Ray Hanania, "Arab Christians Need a Stronger Voice in Muslim World," *Arab News* (2019), <http://www.arabnews.com/node/1487511>.

¹³⁸ Akbar Ahmed, "Afterword: A Reflection on the Crucial Importance of Interfaith Dialogue," *The Review of Faith & International Affairs* 16, no. 3 (2018).

area of this research, Allport's Contact Theory, and highlights the need for friendship to arise from dialogue if the contact is to have any genuine impact.

The works reviewed above cover the issue of inter-religious dialogue from a global perspective, and although they do not directly relate to the inter-religious dialogue in Australia, they do help to provide some context in a range of different settings. They are also important as they relate to the key issues of this research, such as contact theory, different views and classifications of dialogue as well as the place of Islam in the west. This thesis aims to apply aspects from the above research into the Australian context surrounding inter-religious dialogue and Islam in Australia.

2.6 Inter-religious dialogue in Australia

Until the end of the 1990s, there is a dearth of literature concerning interfaith or inter-religious dialogue in Australia. Accordingly, some papers mentioned do provide a historical underpinning for any discussion in dialogue. From an Australian perspective, the right to freedom of religious practice is enshrined in Section 116 of the Australian Constitution since 1901.¹³⁹ Over the years, various initiatives have been enacted to facilitate discussion and dialogue between various groups. Before 9/11, this has included the *Living in Harmony Initiative* (1998), which acknowledged that "there is some intolerance and prejudice against people based on race, culture or religion and that disrupts community harmony and offends most people."¹⁴⁰ In 2018, the Australian Government released its statement on multiculturalism entitled *Multicultural Australia: United, Strong, Successful*. In this statement, it acknowledged that, "regardless of cultural background, birthplace or religion, everyone in Australia or coming to Australia has a responsibility to engage with and seek to understand each other, and reject any form of racism or violent extremism."¹⁴¹ Despite the government's official position over the years, racial and religious vilification is, unfortunately, part of the landscape, even when claims are made about the success of Australia's multiculturalism. In this day and age, it can often be

¹³⁹ Australian Government, "Commonwealth of Australia Constitution. Section 116," (Canberra 1901).

¹⁴⁰ "Living in Harmony: An Overview." Canberra: Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, 1998.

¹⁴¹ "Multicultural Australia: Australia's Multicultural Statement." edited by Department of Home Affairs. Canberra, 2018.

attributed to anonymous contributions to social media platforms; however, this did occur in our media in the past as well.

2.6.1 Pre-Colonisation

Given the oral nature of knowledge transfer within Australia's Indigenous Nations, primary sources from the era are almost non-existent. Much of what we do know has been inferred from rock paintings found in the region¹⁴² supported by stories, rituals and practices that have been passed down the generations.¹⁴³ These interactions between the Muslim Macassans and Australia's Indigenous nations before European colonisation have been documented by a range of Western scholars over the ensuing years. Some of the earliest recorded examples of this interaction include Flinders (1814),¹⁴⁴ King (1827)¹⁴⁵ and Campbell (1834).¹⁴⁶ This initial work led to several works outlining the nature of the relationship between the two groups by Norman Tindale¹⁴⁷ and Ronald & Catherine Berndt.¹⁴⁸ Over the last 50 years, the focus of this relationship garnered another generation of researchers including: Campbell McKnight,¹⁴⁹ Ian McIntosh¹⁵⁰ and Peta Stephenson.¹⁵¹ Research has covered the cross-pollination of language and vocabulary,¹⁵² rituals and ceremonies,¹⁵³ and the possibility of a treaty.¹⁵⁴ The research has been supported through

¹⁴² For examples see George Chaloupka, "Praus in Marege: Makassar Subjects in Aboriginal Rock Art of Arnhem Land, Northern Territory, Australia," *Anthropologie* 34, 1/2 (1996); David Andrew Roberts, "Nautical Themes in the Aboriginal Rock Paintings of Mount Borradaile, Western Arnhem Land," *The Great Circle* 26 (2004); Paul S. C. Taçon et al., "A Minimum Age for Early Depictions of Southeast Asian Praus in the Rock Art of Arnhem Land, Northern Territory," *Australian Archaeology* 71, no. 1 (2010).

¹⁴³ See also Peter Hiscock and Patrick Faulkner, "Dating the Dreaming? Creation of Myths and Rituals for Mounds Along the Northern Australian Coastline," *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 16, no. 02 (2006). Campbell Macknight, "Macassans and Aborigines," *Oceania* 42,4 (1972).

¹⁴⁴ Matthew Flinders, *A Voyage to Terra Australis*, vol. Book 2.9 (Adelaide, SA: eBooks@Adelaide, The University of Adelaide Library, 1814).

¹⁴⁵ Phillip King, "Narrative of a survey in the Intertropical and Western Coasts, performed between 1818 and 1822," (London, 1827) in Macknight, "Macassans and Aborigines," 287.

¹⁴⁶ J Campbell, "Geographical Memoir of Melville Island and Port Essington, on the Coburg Peninsula, Northern Australia; with Some Observations on the Settlements Which Have Been Established on the Northern Coast of New Holland," *The Journal of the Royal Geographical Society* 4 (1834).

¹⁴⁷ Norman Tindale, "Natives of Groote Island and of the West Coast of the Gulf of Carpentaria, Parts I and II.," *Records of the South Australian Museum* 3 (1925-28).

¹⁴⁸ Kate Brittlebank, "Asian Dreaming: An Exploration of Ronald and Catherine Berndt's Relationship with Asia," *Anthropological Forum* 18, no. 1 (2008).

¹⁴⁹ Macknight, "Macassans and Aborigines."

¹⁵⁰ McIntosh, "A Treaty with the Macassans? Burrumarra and the Dholtji Ideal."

¹⁵¹ Peta Stephenson, "Syncretic Spirituality: Islam in Indigenous Australia," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 24, no. 4 (2013).

¹⁵² See Nicholas Evans, "Macassan Loanwords in Top End Languages," *Australian Journal of Linguistics* 12, no. 1 (1992).

¹⁵³ See Ian S. McIntosh, "Allah and the Spirit of the Dead the Hidden Legacy of Pre-Colonial Indonesian/ Aboriginal Contact in North-East Arnhem Land," *Australian Folklore* 11 (1996).

¹⁵⁴ "A Treaty with the Macassans? Burrumarra and the Dholtji Ideal."

archaeological investigation of the Macassan trepangers¹⁵⁵ campsites,¹⁵⁶ as well as the use of new techniques to date rock-art depicting the voyagers.¹⁵⁷ This growing corpus of literature provides an insight into the nature of the dialogue between the two groups during the many years of pre-colonial contact.

Many of the above sources involved dialogue and interaction with Indigenous Australians. This previous research is critical as it provides examples and instances of dialogue, as well as the legacy it left behind. Accordingly, this research aims to investigate the work of previous historians and anthropologists, as well as the publically available Indigenous perspectives to determine what levels of dialogue have occurred.

2.6.2 Colonisation, 1788 – 1901

The literature concerning this period has until recently had a Eurocentric Christian approach. Given the small numbers of non-Christians migrating to Australia, this is not unusual. Despite the small numbers, Muslims have been part of Australia's religious tapestry since the early days. Dzavid Haveric provides a reasonably comprehensive history of Islamic settlement during this era,¹⁵⁸ as do others, including: Regina Ganter,¹⁵⁹ Mary Jones,¹⁶⁰ Phillip Jones,¹⁶¹ and Christine Stevens.¹⁶² Some of this work has been influenced by western ideals and misconceptions. As an example, Stevens discusses the discovery of a 'Holy Koran' found in the yard of the old mosque in Broken Hill and provides a picture of it in her seminal work on Afghan Muslim migrants, "Tin Mosques and Ghan Towns."¹⁶³ In 2009, whilst visiting the old mosque, author Samia Khatun discovered that it was not the Qur'an, but "a 500-page volume of Bengali Sufi Poetry."¹⁶⁴ For about 50 years, this text

¹⁵⁵ Trepang, aka sea cucumber or beche de mere. A delicacy in China and parts of Asia.

¹⁵⁶ M.J. Morewood and D.R. Hobbs, "The Asian Connection: Preliminary Report on Indonesian Trepang Sites on the Kimberley Coast, N.W. Australia," *Archaeol. Oceania* 32 (1997).

¹⁵⁷ Taçon et al., "A Minimum Age for Early Depictions of Southeast Asian Praus in the Rock Art of Arnhem Land, Northern Territory."

¹⁵⁸ Dzavid Haveric, *History of Islam and Muslims in Australia: Early Encounters, Settlements and Communities Prior to the 1940's* (Germany: Lambert Academic Publishing, 2019).

¹⁵⁹ Regina Ganter, "Muslim Australians: The Deep Histories of Contact," *Journal of Australian Studies* (2008).

¹⁶⁰ Mary Jones, "Muslim Impact on Early Australian Life," in *An Australian Pilgrimage: Muslims in Australia from the Seventeenth Century to the Present*, ed. Mary Jones (Melbourne: Victoria Press in association with the Museum of Victoria, 1993).

¹⁶¹ Phillip Jones, "'Afghans' and Aborigines in Central Australia," National Museum of Australia, accessed 12 Dec 2018.

¹⁶² Christine Stevens, *Tin Mosques and Ghantowns: A History of Afghan Cameldrivers in Australia* (South Melbourne, Vic.: Oxford University Press, 1989).

¹⁶³ *ibid.*, 100.

¹⁶⁴ Samia Khatun, *Australianama* (London, UK: Hurst Publishers, 2019), 2.

has been misrepresented, demonstrating one of the pitfalls for non-Muslim historians and researchers in Australia.

2.6.3 White Australia Policy, 1901 – 1973 and beyond

Federation saw the passing of the Immigration Restriction Act (1901) which had the effect of limiting non-European migration, in an attempt to further homogenate the new nation of Australia. Some European Muslims migrants passed the entry requirements and Sharon Ahmeti documents their journey,¹⁶⁵ as do James Barry and Ihsan Yilmaz.¹⁶⁶ These two texts mark the tip of the iceberg, as many of the migrants ended up in Shepparton, a rural town now with three mosques and a higher than average population of Muslims, many descendants of the initial waves.

From a local Islamic and historical perspective, Dzavid Haveric supplies a discussion on Melbourne's interfaith dialogue between the 1950s and the 1980s. He outlines the multi-ethnic nature of the small groups of Muslims and the lack of resources available to them in the early days, highlighting the geographical isolation and the pressure to “conform to Australia’s assimilation policies.”¹⁶⁷ Haveric shows how dialogue commenced at the personal realm (micro) with “informal contact and acquaintances” often occurring around Christian and Islamic holiday periods.¹⁶⁸ He also outlines the beginning of a more formal dialogue with Muslims, Christians and Jews commencing in the 1960s. The geographical diversity of the Muslim pioneers of this dialogue is evident. Its early proponents included; Dr Kazi (Pakistan), Ibrahim Dellal (Cyprus), Dr Habib (India), Sheikh Fehmi (Lebanon) and Nuim Khaiyath (Indonesia).¹⁶⁹ Many of these came together later to organise the construction of Melbourne’s first purpose-built mosque.¹⁷⁰ Haveric also discusses the possibility of contact as early as 820, based on the interpretation of a map by Muhammad

¹⁶⁵ Sharon Ahmeti, "Albanian Muslims in Secular, Multicultural Australia" (University of Aberdeen, 2017).

¹⁶⁶ James Barry and Ihsan Yilmaz, "Liminality and Racial Hazing of Muslim Migrants: Media Framing of Albanians in Shepparton, Australia, 1930–1955," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 42, no. 7 (2018).

¹⁶⁷ Haveric, "Muslim Minorities in Victoria: Building Communities and Interfaith Relations from the 1950's to the 1980's," 24.

¹⁶⁸ *ibid.*, 31.

¹⁶⁹ *ibid.*, 20-39.

¹⁷⁰ *ibid.*, 26.

ibn Musa al-Khwarizmi (780-850),¹⁷¹ a claim that would benefit from further evidence being uncovered.

Whilst Anna Halafof highlights the need for dialogue in the 21st century, she also provides some historical underpinning.¹⁷² Her paper points to work by the Anglican Archbishop Frank Woods, who invited “diverse faith leaders to meet for a meal and discussion at his home, Bishops court” during the 1960s.¹⁷³ This, and the many other engagements she outlines, demonstrate a commitment to dialogue by members of the Islamic community, despite others claims the Muslims have been late to the party. She describes the movement up until 9/11 as a “quiet revolution of mostly unrecognised efforts.”¹⁷⁴ Post 9/11, dialogue transformed from a “multifaith engagement from ‘merely an academic exercise, or a spiritual luxury’ into ‘a global imperative, and a global necessity.’”¹⁷⁵ Her conclusion drives home the need for continued dialogue in order “to counter Islamophobia and to advance peace-building principles within and beyond their faith traditions at the turn of the 21st Century.”¹⁷⁶

James Jupp provides a brief history of ecumenism and interfaith dialogue in *The Encyclopedia of Religion in Australia*. His focus is on organised dialogue, something he claims that “did not exist organisationally until the early 1970s.”¹⁷⁷ He also emphasises the creation of World Religions for Peace, Australia, an early pioneering group. This research aims to provide a greater depth of research than currently exists, expanding upon what has been established to date.

From an overall perspective, the literature reviewed above contains brief interludes and discussion on certain aspects of inter-religious dialogue involving Muslims in Australia. The early research on the Indigenous Australians comes from an anthropological and sociological perspective, and whilst the interactions are described, there is little in the way

¹⁷¹ Haveric, *History of Islam and Muslims in Australia: Early Encounters, Settlements and Communities Prior to the 1940's*, 13.

¹⁷² Anna Halafof, "Muslim Participation in Multifaith Initiatives in Victoria," *La Trobe Journal* 89 (2012).

¹⁷³ *ibid.*, 117.

¹⁷⁴ *ibid.*

¹⁷⁵ *ibid.*

¹⁷⁶ *ibid.*, 121.

¹⁷⁷ James Jupp, *The Encyclopedia of Religion in Australia* (Port Melbourne, Vic.: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 636.

of focus on the issue of inter-religious dialogue. From an overall perspective, any of the literature that touches on inter-religious dialogue is focussed on the organised or macro-level form, with little in the way about day to day or micro-level interactions.

2.6.4 Post 9/11, 2001

Although this research's scope ends in 2001, some discussion and exploration of the literature post this period would be prudent. The beginning of modern dialogue in Sydney is discussed in Avril Keely's paper.¹⁷⁸ Her paper articulates the issue of perception that Islam faces in Australia; “who speaks for whom in the Muslim community?”¹⁷⁹ Highlighting the diversity that exists, the various Islamic schools of thought are outlined as are the geopolitical backgrounds of the range of Australian Muslims. Two key dialogues are described in Western Sydney with “Christian clerics and a Muslim Community leader.”¹⁸⁰ Many positive outcomes came from these two small scale dialogues. For some non-Muslims, it was their first meeting, and one participant apologised for the negative feeling he had previously harboured towards Muslims.¹⁸¹ The media ran it as a good news story, and many participants spoke of “enormous degrees of satisfaction” that the dialogues generated.¹⁸² Opposition and resistance came from two key areas: “fundamentalist Christians who were unable or unwilling to distinguish an authentic interfaith dialogue from the ‘dialogue’ of robust evangelization, and from some members of Christian communities whose origins are in countries inhabited by a Muslim majority.”¹⁸³ Her penultimate sentence deserves quoting in full.

*Two faiths that worship one God and whose sacred books preach peace, justice and harmony among all His creatures cannot but dialogue and, through this dialogue, must grow in mutual understanding, respect and collaborative action for the good of all.*¹⁸⁴

¹⁷⁸ Avril Anne Keely, "Beginning Christian–Muslim Dialogue in Western Sydney: Context and Practice," *Islam and Christian–Muslim Relations* 17, no. 4 (2006).

¹⁷⁹ *ibid.*, 475.

¹⁸⁰ *ibid.*, 477.

¹⁸¹ *ibid.*, 478.

¹⁸² *ibid.*, 481.

¹⁸³ *ibid.*

¹⁸⁴ *ibid.*

Christine Ho's paper outlines the rise of interfaith dialogue activities in the period post 9/11 in Australia regarding the earlier mentioned *Living in Harmony* Government initiative.¹⁸⁵ She outlines a range of Government and NGO activities, along with the organisations that have been established after the calamity that befell the West with regards to 9/11, London Bombings and Paris attacks. Ho's paper covers the first period of the new millennium, with case studies, and the issue of funding levels provided to aid dialogue. Additionally, she outlines a need to depoliticise the field of interfaith dialogue in order to achieve authentic outcomes. There is some brief discussion on historical background, but most of the focus is on the response to the *Living in Harmony* initiative. Ho's paper demonstrates the latest paradigm shift in this area, the need for necessary dialogue owing to both the growth of multiculturalism as well as factors from outside the country.

Sven Schottman commences his article with the often-repeated phrase that, "present-day Australia is often described as a successful example of a modern multi-cultural state".¹⁸⁶ However, over time, Australia has embraced many new ethnic groups and the different elements of cultural and religious baggage they bring with them. Schottmann highlights that recent interfaith dialogue has arisen from the post 9/11 era as an "antidote to the politics of fear."¹⁸⁷ He also introduces the premise of this thesis that "the building of friendships and trust across faith lines is not a recent phenomenon in Australia, and Indigenous and non-indigenous spiritual traditions have been engaged in some form of dialogue from at least the seventeenth century onwards."¹⁸⁸ A key aspect of this research is trying to unravel precisely how and why this happened and determining the relationship between inter-religious dialogue and social harmony. Schottmann outlines the current groups who are involved in this dialogue, pointing out that a number of them existed before 2001, supporting the research presented by Hall¹⁸⁹ and Haveric.¹⁹⁰ One of the peak bodies, the Jewish Christian Muslim Association (JCMA), whilst attempting to lead the discussions, has limited membership (110 in 2012) and some of its activities through the location and

¹⁸⁵ Christina Ho, "A Christian, a Muslim and a Jew Walk into a Room...: Interfaith Dialogue and the Desecularisation of Australian Multiculturalism" (paper presented at the Everyday Multicultural Conference, Macquarie University, 2006).

¹⁸⁶ Schottmann, "Sustaining Interfaith Dialogue - a Case Study from Australia," 319.

¹⁸⁷ *ibid.*

¹⁸⁸ *ibid.*

¹⁸⁹ Hall, "Interfaith Dialogue: The Australian Catholic Scene."

¹⁹⁰ Haveric, "Muslim Minorities in Victoria: Building Communities and Interfaith Relations from the 1950's to the 1980's."

duration, preclude active participation by many members of the interested faiths.¹⁹¹ The paper also highlights a range of obstacles to successful dialogue that include: the limited scope of dialogue and acceptance of “certain methods of scriptural interpretations or historical approaches.”¹⁹² A positive aspect of the JCMA conferences is the overarching view that they all take a “neutral stance on situations where Jews, Christians and Muslims are in conflict overseas.”¹⁹³ Despite this, an attempt in 2009 to “arrive at a common position on the Middle East conflict...was criticised by members of all faiths.”¹⁹⁴ Whilst this paper is post 9/11, it does highlight some local issues that have stood in the way of meaningful dialogue over the last 50 years.

Philip Huggins, former Anglican Bishop of Melbourne's North West Region, reflects on “many years work in this area of religious harmony.”¹⁹⁵ As an active practitioner, he applies several principles in his approach to dialogue. First and foremost, “is that people of other religious traditions can always teach us something of value, including as regards our own tradition.”¹⁹⁶ He also emphasises plurality both within religions and also within the community, “but dialogue partners need to be clear with each other about what they believe and why.”¹⁹⁷ He contrasts a forced ideology that is seeking to determine future outcomes with the core value of the world’s religions, compassion.¹⁹⁸ Interestingly, Huggins points to a problem with email correspondence, one that could be extrapolated to all forms of electronic dialogue.

Sometimes people write unhelpfully provocative things and yet have no control over where they may end up. Read out of context by others they can lead to stereotyping and further alienation. If relationships are undeveloped or trust is low, this provocation, along with gossip, may amplify conflicts and make the pathway to reconciliation more complex. I am aware of people who are alienated from each other but who have

¹⁹¹ Schottmann, "Sustaining Interfaith Dialogue - a Case Study from Australia," 321.

¹⁹² *ibid.*, 323.

¹⁹³ *ibid.*, 321.

¹⁹⁴ *ibid.*, 323.

¹⁹⁵ Philip Huggins, "Making Peace Together, Faith and Reconciliation: Reflections of an Interfaith Dialogue Practitioner," *ibid.*: 313.

¹⁹⁶ *ibid.*

¹⁹⁷ *ibid.*

¹⁹⁸ *ibid.*, 315.

*barely even spoken to each other. It is things they have read or heard about each other which have done the damage.*¹⁹⁹

Whilst historically this is not a significant issue, as in the past, some thought was generally applied before pen was put to paper, and a letter required an envelope, a stamp and a trip to the mailbox, meaning the time between thought and action, today this is not the case. Emails and social media posts are composed and sent in seconds, often without a great deal of thought and sometimes in anger.

Also in the post 9/11 world, Rachel Busbridge and Monika Winarnita outline one particular inter-group dialogue project held in Melbourne between 2009 and 2013.²⁰⁰ Whilst not strictly interfaith, the participants came from four key geographical regions engaged in conflict and included representatives of all the major faiths, Abrahamic and others. Driven by the Australian governments *Living in Harmony* initiative,²⁰¹ the most notable finding was the lack of female participants. The authors explained, “the over-representation of men seemed to buttress their claims to community dominance, and in this regard, it is not surprising that the voices of male community leaders were privileged in the sense that they spoke more often but were also accorded more space to speak.”²⁰² This represents a long-standing issue with the dominance of the patriarchal voice, and research will show if this has always been the case or have there been examples of females trying to engage in meaningful dialogue in our past.

2.7 Summary

From a review of the literature available, some points become apparent. Firstly, the Abrahamic faiths all support the need for thoughtful and meaningful dialogue between religions and beliefs. At some point in history, this message appears to have become corrupted or hijacked for either personal, political or geographical gain. Elements of ‘otherness’ have also tainted the dialogue, as empires have expanded at the hands of dominant cultural groups, acquiring new lands and populations on the way. Some of these colonising groups have been sympathetic to local beliefs; others looked to enforce a state

¹⁹⁹ *ibid.*, 317.

²⁰⁰ Rachel Busbridge and Monika Winarnita, "Dialogue and Other 'Men's Business': Gender, Conflict and Multicultural Politics in the Diaspora," *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 36, no. 2 (2015).

²⁰¹ Australian Government.

²⁰² Busbridge and Winarnita, "Dialogue and Other 'Men's Business': Gender, Conflict and Multicultural Politics in the Diaspora," 53.

sanction religion, despite principal beliefs and texts advising otherwise. Acts of terror carried out in the name of a religion, from the Crusades to 9/11 have often heightened this division.

The literature review also demonstrates that there are a range of ways to look at dialogue. There are steps to dialogue, as provided by Swidler; however, it appears that on its own, this is not enough. Initial conversations must lead to some form of understanding and end with friendship if the dialogue is to be meaningful. Much of the literature concerns itself with the state of dialogue in the latter part of the 20th Century and Post 9/11, focusing on Europe and the U.S.A. In many instances, this is seen as the necessary dialogue required to heal the division between the Abrahamic faiths.

From the perspective of this research, there is some limited research existing surrounding inter-religious dialogue in Australia, much of it post 9/11. Some facets have been covered from limited perspectives, however as outlined in the introduction, no comprehensive historical study has been undertaken on the range of interfaith and inter-religious dialogue and its effects on Australian society. This also applies to Indigenous Australians and what should correctly be described as inter-religious dialogue. There is a growing section of literature looking at revising and updating the history of Indigenous Australians and “others” such as Afghans, Indians, Asians etc. Much of this research has filled in the anthropological, archaeological, and historical record. Despite this, the historical issue of faith-based or inter-religious dialogue in Australia has been left mostly unexplored, a key issue that differentiates this research from earlier work.

Chapter 3. Inter-religious dialogue – A brief history

This chapter has been included in order to provide a brief overview and context for the following research. Initially, it will explore the place of inter-religious dialogue through both ancient and modern history. This will be followed by a brief history of the place of religion in Australia over the 65,000 years that the continent has been populated. In both instances, this chapter will demonstrate that inter-religious dialogue has been a regular practice throughout history and not just a modern concept.

3.1.1 Inter-religious dialogue in history

From an Islamic perspective, God's final series of revelations to humankind, the Qur'ān, makes one point clear, "O Mankind! Truly We created you from a male and a female, and We made you peoples and tribes that you may come to know one another."(Q 49:13) Throughout the history of humanity, various differing clans, tribes, nations and other community groupings have come into contact with each other. Many of these contacts have led to conflict; others have led to ongoing dialogue and peaceful relations. Today, many view inter-religious dialogue as necessary to ensure that relations between 'groups' do not end in conflict. Nevertheless, the question for this section is how has that been accomplished throughout history? There is one view is that:

Except for some rare periods in history (e.g., the so-called time of Convivencia that took place among Jews, Christians and Muslims in southern Spain in the 14th and 15th centuries)¹, believers in these three religious traditions either, at best, kept their distance from one another, or were in conflict. There has been very little genuine dialogue between these three religions. And while in the Middle Ages the writings of some gifted scholars from the three Abrahamic religions (e.g., al Ghazali [d. 1111], Moses Maimonides [d. 1204] and Thomas Aquinas [d. 1274]) influenced one another in mutually illuminating ways, such cross-fertilisation was very rare. Instead, the sad reality has been that most of the time Jews, Muslims and Christians have remained ignorant about each other, or worse, especially in the case of Christians and Muslims, attacked each other.²

¹ Heft's dates are problematic as *La Convivencia* was outlined by Spanish historian Américo Castro in 1948 as being "between the late eleventh and the late fourteenth centuries." See Kenneth Baxter Wolf, "Convivencia in Medieval Spain: A Brief History of an Idea," *Religion compass* 3, no. 1 (2009).

² Heft, "The Necessity of Inter-Faith Diplomacy: The Catholic Muslim Dialogue," 3.

Heft's perspective on historical dialogue may represent a contemporary Catholic viewpoint, more aligned with the modern definition and requirements of inter-religious dialogue. Given there was a period of 114 years between the death of Al-Ghazali and the birth of Aquinas, his use of the phrase 'mutually illuminating' is problematic as it is impossible that Aquinas 'illuminated' al Ghazali. Despite this, there were examples of dialogue and cooperation that occurred during the axial³ and post-axial ages and during the current era, demonstrating differing degrees of peaceful pluralism. As these peaceful interactions often fall under the study of peace, a field of study that really only commenced post-1945, there may be a wealth of other examples of dialogue and pluralism that have gone unnoticed.

The axial age represents what many historians view as the beginning of some of the world's great civilisations. It is generally accepted that these civilisations grew out of four river valleys, the Yellow River in China, the Indus River in Western India, The Nile in North Africa and the Tigris and Euphrates in Mesopotamia. In turn, these civilisations developed the foundations of the world's great religions, Confucianism and Taoism (China), Brahmanism, Buddhism and Hinduism (India), Egyptian, Greek and Roman polytheism (Egypt and the Mediterranean) and finally Zoroastrianism and Judaism (the Middle East). Later in history, Christianity and Islam would also arise in the Levant. The vastly different belief systems encapsulated the full range of theistic systems: non-theism, henotheism, polytheism and monotheism. At some stage, the proto Silk Road trade routes developed, allowing ever-expanding levels of global contact. Contact, dialogue and cross-pollination of ideas between the world's religions would have been inevitable.

Whilst today many Westerners view the Middle East as uncompromising towards the co-existence of alternate religious beliefs, during the axial age this was not the case. During this era, Persia, or more accurately somewhere between "northern Afghanistan and the Aral Sea,"⁴ gave us the first monotheistic religion, Zoroastrianism.⁵ It is from here we get one of the first occurrences of the Golden Rule: "Whatever is disagreeable to yourself do not do unto others."⁶ Dating the origin of this phrase is problematic, as details surrounding the

³ Generally viewed as the 8th to the 3rd century BCE

⁴ Zayn R. Kassam, Yudit Kornberg Greenberg, and Jehan Bagli, *Islam, Judaism, and Zoroastrianism*, Encyclopedia of Indian Religions (2018), 809.

⁵ *ibid.*, 784.

⁶ Shayast-na-Shayast 13:29 in Neusner and Chilton, *The Golden Rule: The Ethics of Reciprocity in World Religions*, 69.

life of Zarathustra provide widely variable dates, although the latest research suggests, "sometime between the eighteenth and fourteenth centuries BCE, rather than in the sixth century BCE as recorded by medieval tradition."⁷ This first monotheistic religion spread through Persia and eventually into India, where it further adapted. Its followers, known as Parsis, still exist to this day.

Again, during the axial age, King Cyrus, the Great (600-530 BCE), founder of the Achaemenid Empire, presents an early example of religious tolerance, pluralism and interfaith dialogue. After the Babylonian conquest and sacking of the First Temple in Jerusalem in 586 BCE by Nebuchadnezzar II (634 - 562 BCE), the Jews were exiled to Babylon. Once Cyrus gained control of Persia, "he permitted foreigners who had been forcibly settled in Babylonia to return to their own lands, including the Jews of the Babylonian captivity, who were also permitted to rebuild their temple in Jerusalem."⁸ Cyrus is mentioned in the Tanakh, where "God says, "Am I the same who says of Cyrus, 'he is my Shepherd, He Shall Fulfill all My purposes, He shall say of Jerusalem, 'She shall be rebuilt'." (Isa 44:28-30) For some Jews, this heralds his messianic status. Cyrus seemed to realise that successful control of conquered lands meant leaving existing religions alone.

The Persians themselves called him their father (Herodotus, 3.89). The priests of Babylon recognised him as the appointed of Marduk and the Jews as a messiah sent by Yahweh. Even the Greeks considered him a great conqueror and a wise statesman (e.g., Plato, Laws 3.694A-D); Xenophon, in his Cyropaedia, portrayed him as an ideal ruler (Avery, pp. 529-31; Hirsch, pp. 84-86).⁹

In the years following Cyrus, this region would enable the Jews to create one of the two significant Talmudic traditions, the 1.8 million words that make up the Babylonian Talmud. For many centuries, Judaism co-existed peacefully between Babylon and Jerusalem, as summed up by the Talmudic *Amoraim*,¹⁰ Rabbi Huna (216-297), who stated, "These are the exiles of Babylonia, whose minds are calm, like sons, and who can therefore focus

⁷ Kassam, Greenberg, and Bagli, *Islam, Judaism, and Zoroastrianism*, 808-09.

⁸ Muhammad A. Dandamayev, "Cyrus II the Great," accessed 28 Mar 2019, <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/cyrus-ii>.

⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁰ Scholars in the Land of Israel and Babylonia who succeeded the *tannaim* and preceded (in Babylonia) the *savoraim* and *geonim*.

properly on Torah study and *mitzvot*.”¹¹ From the perspective of this research, Cyrus and his successors seem to have initiated a considerable period of social cohesion, framed by the inter-religious dialogue between himself and the exiled Jews, who contributed to the theological underpinnings of their religion, through the Babylonian Talmud. Although not confirmed, Cyrus was believed to follow Zoroastrianism, the dominant belief of the region; however, he allowed for this renaissance of Judaism, a minority belief in the area.¹² This era seems to demonstrate that when a leader has a holistic and humanist worldview, all subjects benefit from the inter-religious dialogue that occurs, leading to a greater depth of social cohesion.

Given there are some viewpoints stating that dialogue was rare, it is worth noting the early mission to Abyssinia initiated by the Prophet Muhammad in 613/615 as an example. When the Muslims in Mecca were suffering from persecution at the hands of the *mushriks* (polytheists), a number of the companions made the journey to the Kingdom of Aksum, modern-day Abyssinia.¹³

*When the apostle saw the affliction of his companions and that though he escaped it because of his standing with Allah and his uncle, Abu Talib, he could not protect them, he said to them, 'If you were to go to Abyssinia (it would be better for you), for the King will not tolerate injustice, and it is a friendly country, until such time as Allah shall relieve you from your distress.' Thereupon his companions went to Abyssinia, being afraid of apostasy and fleeing to God with their religion. This was the first hijra in Islam.*¹⁴

This early acceptance of the Muslims by the Christian ruler demonstrates that some form of pluralism existed during this time, not only in the Islamic community but also within aspects of early Christian communities. During the Prophet Muhammad's life and his eventual successors, the Rashidun Caliphate (632-661), the People of the Book gained a special protected status, that of the *dhimmi*. While they paid the poll tax, the *jizya*, they were immune from persecution and exempt from fighting; however, protection and

¹¹ "Menachot 110a," @sefariaproject, accessed 21 Mar 2019, <http://www.sefaria.org/Menachot.110a>.

¹² Pierre Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander: A History of the Persian Empire*. (University Park, PA: Eisenbraunds, 2002), 84.

¹³ Muḥammad ibn Ishāq, *The Life of Muhammad. A Translation of Ishaq's Sirat Rasul Allah*, trans. A. Guillaume (Oxford, UK: OUP, 1955), 146.

¹⁴ *ibid.*

tolerance did not necessarily mean equality.¹⁵ Upon Muhammad and his companions' migration (*hijrah*) to Yathrib (Medina) in 622, the *Mīthāq al-Madīnah* (Covenant of Medina) was established through dialogue with the various groups and tribal allegiances.¹⁶ This agreement allowed the “right of people to exercise freedom in choosing their religion regardless of their status, colour, or language,”¹⁷ an early precursor to the human rights charters established during the 20th century.¹⁸

In 711, Tariq ibn Ziyad (d.719) crossed the Straights of Gibraltar, and his successors brought much of the Iberian Peninsula under Muslim rule.¹⁹ The Islamic era continued until the conclusion of the *Reconquista*, the expulsion of the Muslims and Jews in 1492. An academic hypothesis, *La Convivencia*, has developed around the mutual tolerance afforded by the Muslim rulers to both the Jews and Christians in al-Andalus.²⁰ During this period, “Christians and Jews had continued to practise their respective religions as ‘people of the covenant (of protection)’ which allowed them to keep their property and organise their communities under their own religious hierarchies.”²¹ From time to time, as the Christian north fought back against Muslim rule, Christians were expelled from al-Andalus to Morocco; however, Jews were generally exempt.²²

Whilst it has been suggested that the rose-coloured view of *La Convivencia* is out of touch with reality, some examples of inter-religious dialogue and cooperation are evident.²³ One example is that of the Toledo School of translation. Although Toledo was one of the early cities to fall to the Reconquista in 1085, its Arabic libraries were saved and maximum effort seems to have been applied to translate a wealth of Islamic knowledge into Latin, the

¹⁵ Parker, "Paying for the Privilege: The Management of Public Order and Religious Pluralism in Two Early Modern Societies," 278.

¹⁶ ibn Ishāq, *The Life of Muhammad. A Translation of Ishaq's Sirat Rasul Allah*, 231.

¹⁷ Serdar Demirel, "The Prophet Muhammad's Models of Coexistence and the Constitution of Medina," *The Journal of Rotterdam Islamic and Social Sciences* 4,1 (2013): 6.

¹⁸ See the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam (1990)

¹⁹ W. Montgomery Watt and Pierre Cachia, "The Muslim Conquest," in *A History of Islamic Spain* (New Brunswick, N.J.: AldineTransaction, 2008), 1.

²⁰ Ernest Schonfield, "Heine and Convivencia: Coexistence in Muslim Spain," *Oxford German Studies* 47, no. 1 (2018): 37.

²¹ Maria Jesus Viguera Molins, "Al Andalus and the Maghrib (from the Fifth/Eleventh Century to the Fall of the Almoravids)," in *The New Cambridge History of Islam*, ed. Maribel Fierro (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 33.

²² *ibid.*, 34.

²³ For discussion on the debate and texts involved, see Anna Akasoy, "Convivencia and Its Discontents: Interfaith Life in Al-Andalus," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 42, no. 03 (2010).

academic ‘*lingua franca*’ of Europe at the time. Members of this group working in the 12th century included: Dominicus Gundislaus, a Christian scholar, Ibrahim b. Dawud, a Jewish scholar, and Johannes Hispanus. Along with a range of other scholars, they translated “al-Farabi’s *Liber de scientiis*, *De intelctu* and *Tanbih’ ala sabil al-sa’adah*, al-Kindi’s *De intelctu*, al-Ghazali’s *Maqasid al-falasifa*, Ibn Sina’s *Metaphysics*, *Physics* and *De Coelo et Mundo*, along with a large number of other Arabic philosophical texts into Latin.²⁴ Also included in this group of skilled translators are:

*Two Englishmen, Adelard of Bath (translator of Euclid, Abu Ma’shar and al-Khuwarizmi) and Robert of Chester, who produced the first Latin version of the Qur’an, and, independently of Plato of Tivoli, also translated al-Battani; a Slav, Herman the Dalmatian, who concerned himself with apologetic, astronomical and astrological works; and above all the Lombard, Gerard of Cremona (1114-87), whose mighty figure dominates the whole group, not only on account of the extent of his work, but also because of his lofty moral character.*²⁵

Regardless of viewpoint and accepting that some conversions, forced or otherwise, took place, along with purges, pogroms and polemic attacks directed towards various religious groups, there was a clear form of dialogue and exchange of information that occurred in Medieval Spain. This was driven by a European thirst for Islamic intellectual knowledge, as well as an understanding of education systems that had been established and developed by the Muslims, based on models established in the Maghreb and the Middle East in earlier times.

A key figure in medieval Christianity, St Francis of Assisi (1181-1226) “urged on by his zeal for the faith and by a fervent desire for martyrdom, crossed overseas with twelve of his most holy brothers, intending to direct their course straight to the Sultan,”²⁶ al-Malik al-Kamil (1177-1238). Although it has been stated that “Francis neither converted the Sultan nor achieved martyrdom,”²⁷ there is some discussion of a death bed conversion by

²⁴ F. Gabrieli et al., "The Transmission of Learning and Literary Influences to Western Europe.," in *The Cambridge History of Islam* (1977), 854-55.

²⁵ *ibid.*, 855.

²⁶ John Victor Tolan, *Saint Francis and the Sultan the Curious History of a Christian-Muslim Encounter* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2009), 162.

²⁷ Christopher MacEvitt, "Martyrdom and the Muslim World through Franciscan Eyes.," *The Catholic Historical Review* 97, no. 1 (2011): 6.

the fourth Ayyubid sultan of Egypt in 1238.²⁸ Regardless, “the Sultan liberally allowed St Francis and his companions to preach freely anywhere they wished. He gave them a particular sign: seeing it no one would harm them.”²⁹ This mutual acceptance demonstrated some level of understanding between the two faiths and established inter-religious dialogue between two groups who had been at loggerheads over the Levant since the time of the First Crusade in 1098.

The Ottoman Era (1299-1923) encapsulated much of the prior Christian Byzantium lands in Anatolia and South-Eastern Europe. Accordingly, vast numbers of Orthodox Christian and Jews fell under the control of the Ottoman rulers. How this was dealt with varied from ruler to ruler, however at its peak, the non-Islamic beliefs and their communities fell under the control of the millet system, “a system that recognised and regulated the existence of non-Muslim confessional groups.”³⁰ These non-Muslim communities had limited powers vested by the Sultan; however, they remained subservient to the overall Ottoman administration, in a similar manner the *dhimmi*s had during previous Islamic eras. At times, “the ruling elite initially included Christians. Jewish refugees from Spain were also key figures in Ottoman trade in the 15th and 16th centuries.”³¹

3.1.2 Inter-religious Dialogue in the Modern Era

According to Ataullah Siddiqui, “Inter-religious dialogue owes a great deal to the nineteenth century’s Christian missionaries.”³² A proposal by Baptist Missionary William Carey (1761-1834) in 1806 to hold “a meeting of all denominations of Christians at the Cape of Good Hope in about 1810”³³ never came to fruition in his lifetime. However, the seeds had been sown, and in 1846, “some 800 delegates, representing over 50 denominations, gathered in London and launched the Evangelical Alliance.”³⁴ Although the meeting was intended to be evangelical in nature, Islam became a subject for discussion. A key organiser, John R. Mott, raised the issue of a growing nationalist movement in

²⁸ Tolan, *Saint Francis and the Sultan the Curious History of a Christian-Muslim Encounter*, 163.

²⁹ MacEvitt, "Martyrdom and the Muslim World through Franciscan Eyes.," 162.

³⁰ Mercedes Garcí'a-Arenal, "Conversion to Islam: From the 'Age of Conversions' to the Millet System," in *The New Cambridge History of Islam*, ed. Maribel Fierro (Cambridge Histories Online: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 604.

³¹ Zackery M. Heern, "Minority Religions: 1250 to 1920: Middle East," in *Cultural Sociology of the Middle East, Asia, & Africa: An Encyclopedia* (2012), 161.

³² Siddiqui, *Christian-Muslim Dialogue in the Twentieth Century*, 23.

³³ *ibid.*

³⁴ *ibid.*

Muslim countries subject to colonial rule, linking this to “pro-Moslem movements.”³⁵ Ultimately, the conference came to a view about Islam, “that their religion is buried under masses of error,” and that Christians had an evangelical mission and “should take Muslims by the hand and show them how God could be known.”³⁶ As most attendees represented colonial powers of the day, this view aligned with a dominant Christian hegemony and aspects of a developing social Darwinism, where non-Christians (and non-whites) were of lower social standing and in dire need of civilising.

In 1893 to coincide with the World’s Fair in Chicago, Charles Bonney conceived the idea of a meeting of members of all the world’s religions.³⁷ Some of the impetus for this meeting came from a growing awareness of the Indic belief systems, including Hinduism and Buddhism, and a growing interest in Theosophy. The meeting was also facilitated by improvements to, and the increased availability of international communication and transport. For the opening ceremonies:

Jamal Effendi, a member of the Ottoman delegation, opened the grand occasion by facing east and performing the Islamic call to prayer. The Chicago Tribune noted that he raised his hands and “chanted prayers to Allah,” while Muslims in the audience responded by repeating each refrain to themselves and making what sounded to the reporter like “loud Amen[s] in old fashioned Methodist style.”³⁸

The principal Muslim representative was Mohammed Alexander Russell Webb, an Anglo-American who converted to Islam following his role as the United States ambassador to the Philippines. Despite the predominance of papers presented from the Christian perspective, an Islamic viewpoint was provided.

In a fifth-day paper Dr George Washburn stated in regard to the Koran, or Bible of Mohammedanism, that it be a new and perfect revelation of the will of God claimed to that such; was its comprehensive place and conclusive authority, that from the time of the Prophet’s death to this day no Moslem has appealed to the ancient traditions of Arabia, or to the Jewish or Christian scriptures as the ground of his faith and that every

³⁵ *ibid.*, 24.

³⁶ *ibid.*

³⁷ See Marcus Braybrooke, "Charles Bonney and the Idea for a World Parliament of Religions," *The Interfaith Observer*, no. June (2012).

³⁸ Umar F. Abd-Allah, "Chicago World's Fair and First Parliament of Religions," in *A Muslim in Victorian America* (Oxford, U.K.: Oxford Scholarship Online, 2006), 212.

*orthodox Moslem regards Islam as a separate, distinct, and absolutely exclusive religion, even while he knows that Mohammed admitted that both Jewish and Christian scriptures were the Word of God.*³⁹

Washburn's final comment seemed ahead of its time as many Muslims and non-Muslims have only recently come to this understanding. Additionally, despite some reports of a lack of official Muslim attendees:

*Delegations from Muslim lands, especially the Ottoman Empire, presented striking displays of their histories and cultures in Hyde Park along the Midway Plaisance: a handsome, roseate mosque with a gleaming white minaret, splendid models of Islamic cities and Oriental bazaars, simulations of centers of religious learning, and other highly regarded feats of architecture.*⁴⁰

Much of the discussion about the effects and legacy of this conference point to it as the first of the organised conferences focusing on inter-religious dialogue. Additionally, it "created awareness among some that there are "wells of truth outside Christianity."⁴¹ Australia was officially represented through the attendance of "Rev. Dr L.D. Bevan of Melbourne; Rev. James Rickard of Brighton and the Rt. Rev. Saumarez Smith, D.D., Bishop of Sydney."⁴² It was always envisaged as a regular gathering; however, after a 100-year hiatus, it eventually reconvened in 1999 in Cape Town, South Africa and has met regularly ever since.⁴³

In 1911, in response to insistent requests from religious leaders, Bediuzzaman Said Nursi⁴⁴ delivered a sermon to a packed house of 10,000 people in the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus. Among many things, his sermon provided a framework that called for

³⁹ *The Worlds Parliament of Religions. An Illustrated and Popular Story of the World's First Parliament of Religions.*, vol. 1 (Chicago: The Parliament Publishing Company, 1893), 207.

⁴⁰ Abd-Allah, "Chicago World's Fair and First Parliament of Religions," 212.

⁴¹ Marcus Braybrooke, "The Legacy of the 1893 Parliament of the World Religions," accessed 20 Mar 2020, <http://www.theinterfaithobserver.org/journal-articles/2013/3/15/the-legacy-of-the-1893-parliament-of-the-world-religions.html?rq=world%20parliament%20of%20religions>.

⁴² *The Worlds Parliament of Religions. An Illustrated and Popular Story of the World's First Parliament of Religions.*, 1, 47.

⁴³ Parliament of the World's Religions, "About the Parliament of the World's Religions," accessed 3 Apr 2019, <https://parliamentofreligions.org/parliament/about-parliament-worlds-religions-0>.

⁴⁴ *Bediuzzaman* is an honorific, meaning "The most unique and superior person of the time" or "Wonder of the Ages".

“fraternity within Islam and between Islam and other religions”⁴⁵ through meaningful inter-religious dialogue. He also preached concepts surrounding “freedom, constitutionalism, pragmatism, nationalism, adherence to God as the overall Creator, justice,... communal unity, consultation, reasoned education with respect to God, nonviolence, rejection of greed and wholehearted adoption of truth,”⁴⁶ many of the issues that modern inter-religious dialogue seeks to encapsulate. His sermon was all the more poignant at the time, given Western views that the Ottoman Caliphate was regarded as “the sick man of Europe”⁴⁷ and would be soon be split up. It would appear that Nursi’s call for genuine dialogue was either not heard or was ignored by the West and subsumed by a changing world order, driven in the region by the partitioning of the Ottoman Caliphate after World War I by Britain and France and “Turkey’s Western and secular turn under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk.”⁴⁸

Following World War II and the horrors of the Holocaust, inter-religious dialogue gained some necessary traction and momentum; however, the 1947/8 partitioning of Israel from Palestine and subsequent conflict required some immediate focus. In 1954, Lebanon hosted 80 leaders from Christianity and Islam in the first Muslim-Christian Convocation. The initial meeting was to establish “whether or not Islam and Christianity shared enough beliefs and interests to join hands in confronting the problems and realising the opportunities of our time.”⁴⁹ Given the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948 and the problems being experienced in this region, this was an apparent effort to establish some form of dialogue. The following year the Alexandria declaration was created, along with a constitution and by-laws, ultimately creating The World Fellowship of Muslims and Christians.⁵⁰ From an Australian perspective, the convocation was attended by Rev. Alan Walker, a Methodist Minister.⁵¹

⁴⁵ Kamil Fadel and Eren Tatari, "A Political Analysis of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi's Damascus Sermon," *Humanities and Social Sciences Review* 5,3 (2016): 1.

⁴⁶ *ibid.*

⁴⁷ Ironically, this quote is attributed to Tsar Nicholas I, whose Tsarist Russia was possibly in a worse shape than the Ottoman Empire. See Charles Arnold-Baker, *Sick Man of Europe*, (Routledge, 2001), https://search-credoreference-com.ezproxy2.acu.edu.au/content/entry/routcbh/sick_man_of_europe/0.

⁴⁸ Resat Kasaba, "Turkey from the Rise of Ataturk," in *The Islamic World in the Age of Western Dominance. The New Cambridge History of Islam*, ed. Francis Robinson (Cambridge Histories Online: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 301.

⁴⁹ Moses Jung, Swami Nikhilananda, and Herbert W. Schneider, *Relations among Religions Today: A Handbook of Policies and Principles* (Netherlands: E.J.Brill, 1963), 162.

⁵⁰ *ibid.*, 162-63.

⁵¹ "Church Meeting in East," *Daily Telegraph, Sydney*, 13 Apr 1954. 7.

A crucial turning point regarding ecumenical, interfaith and inter-religious dialogue involving the Catholic Church was the 2nd Vatican Council (1962 – 1965). The Declaration *Nostra Aetate*, “represented the call to move from a ghetto -church to a church that engages in a more positive and open fashion with the world’s peoples, cultures and religions.”⁵² While “Vatican II was convened by Pope John XXIII mainly as an ecumenical council,”⁵³ its eventual outcome impacted inter-religious dialogue with members of all faiths. Initiated to deal with the “Catholic theological standing towards Judaism, it was not until Arab Catholic, Maronite, and Coptic bishops argued that a statement that ignored Muslims was not politically viable that Muslims were included in the declaration.”⁵⁴

Ultimately, the Council had this to say about dialogue between Christians and Muslims:

*Since in the course of centuries not a few quarrels and hostilities have arisen between Christians and Moslems, this sacred synod urges all to forget the past and to work sincerely for mutual understanding and to preserve as well as to promote together for the benefit of all mankind, social justice and moral welfare, as well as peace and freedom. (NA 3)*⁵⁵

Fifty years on, the Australian Council of Bishops in Australia summarised that while:

*Radical transformation that has taken place in relationships between Catholics and Jews and between Catholic and believers of the other world religions in the space of a few decades, in contrast to the centuries of animosity that went before, is nothing less than a miracle—there is still much to be done.*⁵⁶

Whilst members of the Catholic faith were late to the discussions, the summary appears accurate, ‘there is much to be done.’

⁵² Hall, "Interfaith Dialogue: The Australian Catholic Scene," 299.

⁵³ Heft, "The Necessity of Inter-Faith Diplomacy: The Catholic Muslim Dialogue," 3.

⁵⁴ Salih Yucel, "Institutionalizing of Muslim-Christian Dialogue: *Nostra Aetate* and Fethullah Gülen’s Vision," in *The Art of Coexistence : Pioneering Role of Fethullah Gülen and the Hizmet Movement*, ed. Salih Yucel and Ismail Albayrak (Clifton, NJ: Tughra Books, 2014), 2.

⁵⁵ Pope Paul VI, "*Nostra Aetate*".

⁵⁶ Bishops Commission for Ecumenism and Inter-Religious relations, "*Nostra Aetate*. Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions. Anniversary Reflection," *Australian Catholic Bishops Conference 2015* (2015): 5.

In 1969 the World Council of Churches initiated formal dialogue at a conference in Switzerland and the:

22 participants recognised that ‘Christian-Muslim dialogue is occurring in many places but this gathering ‘represented an attempt to take up the conversation on an international level’. The participants agreed that followers of both religions are facing the ‘questions of the modern world’ and argued that dialogue must concern itself with what serves the true liberation of man.⁵⁷

Despite the Catholic Church’s Declaration *Nostra Aetate*, not all Christian churches embraced the concept of inter-religious dialogue. In 1970, evangelical Christian groups gathered in Frankfurt and issued the Frankfurt Declaration, which “stated that only the Bible is the proper frame of reference and criterion for Christianity’s relation to other religions. Salvation can be found only through the cross of Christ and is available only through participation in faith.”⁵⁸ This was followed up by the Lausanne Covenant in 1974 which confirmed, “The Uniqueness and Universality of Christ, [and] affirmed only one Saviour and only one gospel.”⁵⁹ Despite this narrow evangelical viewpoint, “Lausanne acknowledged the importance of dialogue; yet unlike more liberal approaches, Lausanne did not view dialogue as an end but as a means of building contacts.”⁶⁰ Despite the relaxing of the language at Lausanne, the overarching attitude of the Evangelists seemed to lean more towards the priority and proselytising nature of the Christian scriptures and less towards the acceptance of other viewpoints and meaningful inter-religious dialogue.

This antipathy also applied to sections of the Muslim community. The ongoing issue of polemic attacks on the Muslim community caused issues. In response to:

Pope Paul VI’s letter regarding Peace Day, Abu ‘Ala Mawdudi (1903-1979), founder of the Islamic revivalist party in Pakistan, Jamaat al Islami, asked that the Pope use all his influence to remove that which

⁵⁷ Siddiqui, *Christian-Muslim Dialogue in the Twentieth Century*, 30.

⁵⁸ Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, Timothy Larsen, and Daniel J. Treier, "Evangelical Theology and the Religions," in *The Cambridge Companion to Evangelical Theology* (2007), 200.

⁵⁹ *ibid.*, 201.

⁶⁰ *ibid.*

*poisons the relations between the two faith groups, such as the attacks on Prophet Muhammad and the Qur'an made by Christian scholars.*⁶¹

These long-entrenched and ongoing polemic attacks on Islam by many of the Christian Churches lives long in the memory of many Muslims, with Karen Armstrong linking issues of modern terrorism to the memories of the Crusades, rendering some inter-religious dialogue problematic in many areas.⁶²

The questions of the modern world, including the place of religion and inter-religious dialogue, have been an issue for discussion and declaration since the United Nations' establishment. Following the end of World War II, a *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* was released.⁶³ It enshrines the "right too freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance."⁶⁴ In response to this, the *Organisation of Islamic Cooperation* adopted the *Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam* in 1990.⁶⁵ A critical aspect of the Declaration was article 25, which stated that "Islamic Shari'ah is the only source of reference for the explanation or clarification of any of the articles of this Declaration."⁶⁶

Locally, in 1967 the Ecumenical Affairs Commission of the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne was established.⁶⁷ Whilst ecumenical in nature, in 1995 the issue of interfaith and inter-religious dialogue was eventually added to their remit. In 2000, a rebranding saw the current 'Ecumenical and Interfaith Commission' and union with Catholics involved in Interfaith Dialogue, making them the peak Catholic body in all forms of dialogue. The renewed focus on dialogue was further expanded as the world moved into a new era.

⁶¹ Yucel, "Institutionalizing of Muslim-Christian Dialogue: Nostra Aetate and Fethullah Gülen's Vision," 5.

⁶² Armstrong, *Holy War: The Crusades and Their Impact on Today's World*.

⁶³ United Nations, "Universal Declaration of Human Rights," accessed 2 Aug 2019, <https://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>.

⁶⁴ *ibid.*, Article 18.

⁶⁵ "Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam," Human Rights Library, accessed 11 May 2019, <http://hrlibrary.umn.edu/instreet/cairodeclaration.html>.

⁶⁶ *ibid.*

⁶⁷ Ecumenical & Interfaith Commission, "History," accessed 11 May 2019, <http://www.cam.org.au/eic/About-Us/History>.

3.1.3 Inter-religious dialogue post-2001.

Post the events of 9/11 in New York, the Bali (2002) and London (2005) bombings, a range of organisations have been created to instigate dialogue between religious groups, and this has fundamentally changed the face of inter-religious dialogue in the new millennium. In many cases, this is a reaction to necessary and required socio-political response to the continued acts of terrorism taking place with perceived religious overtones. Whilst this era is beyond the scope of this research, a brief outline is required so as to contextualise the issue from our viewpoint in the 21st Century.

The 2004 Amman declaration by H.M. King Abdullah II bin Al-Hussein in Amman, Jordan was driven by the need to respond to the acts of terrorism carried out in the name of Islam.⁶⁸ The statement sought to “declare what Islam is and what it is not, and what actions represent it and what actions do not.”⁶⁹ The next year, it was “unanimously adopted by the Islamic World’s political and temporal leaderships.”⁷⁰ Though there has been some discussion about its real purpose, it does provide pathways to productive inter-religious dialogue from within the Islamic worldview.⁷¹

In Australia, organisations such as Affinity, the Australian Intercultural Society and the Jewish Christian Muslim Association of Australia have been created to facilitate dialogue between faiths. Affinity was created in 2000:

*to meet the needs of the Muslim community in interacting with the greater society along with the needs of the general public to increase its awareness of the Muslim community, its religion and culture ... through intercultural and interfaith dialogue.*⁷²

Simultaneously, the Australian Intercultural Society (AIS) was established to drive understanding through “interfaith and intercultural dialogue” from a Muslim perspective.⁷³

⁶⁸ H.M. King Abdullah II bin Al-Hussein, "The Amman Message," accessed 10 May 2019, <http://ammanmessage.com/>.

⁶⁹ *ibid.*

⁷⁰ *ibid.*

⁷¹ Michaëlle Browers, "Official Islam and the Limits of Communicative Action: The Paradox of the Amman Message," *Third World Quarterly* 32, no. 5 (2011): 277.

⁷² Affinity Intercultural Foundation, "Our History," accessed 11 May 2019, <http://affinity.org.au/about-us/our-history/>.

⁷³ Australian Intercultural Society, "Our History," accessed 11 May 2019, <http://www.intercultural.org.au/history/>.

In response to the increased need for dialogue, the Jewish Christian Muslim Association of Australia (JCMA) was formed in 2003.⁷⁴ With a series of annual conferences centred around interfaith dialogue in order to allow “people of faith to deepen their understanding of Judaism, Christianity and Islam in Australia by meeting, engaging with and learning from Jews, Christians and Muslims.”⁷⁵

Space and scope prohibit a complete analysis of all the organisations involved in the various forms of religious dialogue in Australia since 2001. In 2021, all of the major beliefs⁷⁶ are represented, and organisations exist on all three sociological levels, from local (micro) suburb specific groups, through to community or state (meso) and national or global (macro). Much of this shift seems to be reactive, based on a need for authentic inter-religious dialogue initiated by the events of the first years of the current millennium.

3.1.4 Conclusion

Dialogue; discussions, conversations, negotiation, arguments and agreements have been part of the human experience since time immemorial. From the time our ancestors worked out how some structured grunting could be utilised for communication right through to the current methods involving data, screens and social media, much of humanity has been trying to strike a deal and come to an understanding.

Religion, beliefs and interpretations all impact inter-religious dialogue. In several belief systems, the supreme deity is acknowledged as the same non-corporeal identity, although some may disagree. Others have a pantheon of gods who can be anthropomorphically represented. This places their fundamental understanding of religion under pressure and raises the question of, ‘which system is correct?’ This central issue becomes a problem when dialogue partners seek to convert, as opposed to converse.

This brief exploration shows that: throughout history, periods of inter-religious dialogue have existed under a range of circumstances. Historically and now, minorities struggle to be heard unless they have some form of benefactor or protector. Individuals such as King

⁷⁴ Jewish Christian Muslim Association of Australia, "History," accessed 11 May 2019, <http://jcma.org.au/the-jcma-history/>.

⁷⁵ *ibid.*

⁷⁶ Whilst the major religions are involved, there are a number of schools of thought from within these beliefs who are not yet active participants.

Cyrus, Jesus of Nazareth and the Prophet Muhammad understood the need for social cohesion within a community and provided an avenue for inter-religious dialogue, pluralism and tolerance. The motivation behind this acceptance or allowance of some form of pluralism has varied due to circumstances. Other conditions, such as periods of extended contact, can also lead to periods of religious tolerance. However, as civilisations come and go in a natural cycle posited by ibn-Khaldūn (1332-1406) in the *Muqaddimah*, so too the dialogue and the varying sociological levels between religious groups shifts and changes.

Ultimately, the end result of fruitful inter-religious dialogue is some form of pluralism or at least acceptance of others. Usually, this is dependent on the dominant culture, which allows for and drives any dialogue. Benevolent despot or manic dictator – the outcome and levels of acceptance for any minority group will vary and can often be problematic. Modern Australia is none of these things; it was ostensibly founded on Western European democratic principles, albeit without slavery. However, it did include an outcast convict population. Until recently, this gave many Australians a Christian, and at times, European view of the world as we blissfully float around South East Asia and the Pacific, having thoroughly changed the nature of beliefs that previously existed in *Terra Australis*.

This research seeks to place the dialogue between Muslims and non-Muslims under an analytical lens to look for genuine attempts to form dialogue through Australian history, as has been demonstrated in other parts of the world over time. The following chapters also aim to establish whether the various sociological levels of dialogue had any impact on social harmony, again, as has been demonstrated throughout history across the globe.

3.2 The Brief History of Religions in Australia

In order to discuss dialogue between religious groups, it is necessarily prudent to outline the variety of beliefs and religions that exist in Australia. How and when they arrived is significant, as, in the early years of colonialism, Christianity was the dominant belief, and the Protestant denominations supplied the required cultural hegemony, displacing over 65,000 years of Indigenous beliefs. Over time, this has continued to shift and change as various migrations, and different diasporas arrive, bringing the full range of cultural ‘baggage’ with them. Alongside migration, a swing away from organised religion over the last 20 years has also impacted this landscape. Much of the dialogue of the latter period of Indigenous occupation, especially the years before British colonisation, will be explored in chapter 4, with chapters 5,6 and 7 covering the post-1788 era of colonisation.

The Dreaming, or Living Culture of Aboriginal (First Nations) people is complex, multi-layered and sacred. As a non-Indigenous researcher, I acknowledge and respect that much of the law and lore often needs to remain with the correct people. Accordingly, I have selected my research from the wealth of available papers and oral history recordings that exist within various research institutions or the public domain for both this section and subsequent chapters.

3.2.1 Pre-Colonialism

Before European contact, the Australian Indigenous peoples had discovered, survived and thrived for over 65,000 years of continuous habitation.⁷⁷ At the time of colonisation, there were approximately 250 unique language groups with up to 600 differing dialects.⁷⁸ Population estimates vary, however, “the Indigenous population in 1788 was generally estimated to be approximately 300,000 but some commentators have suggested that it was around 500,000 and even may have been as high as 750,000.”⁷⁹ By 1911, this had been reduced to roughly 31,000,⁸⁰ “primarily due to excessive deaths through violent

⁷⁷ Chris Clarkson et al., "Human Occupation of Northern Australia by 65,000 Years Ago," *Nature* 547 (2017).

⁷⁸ Australian Bureau of Statistics, "Feature Article 3: Languages of Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples - a Unique Australian Heritage".

⁷⁹ Graeme Hugo, "Population Distribution Migration and Climate Change in Australia: An Exploration," (Adelaide, SA: The University of Adelaide, 2012), 2.

⁸⁰ Commonwealth of Australia. "Census of the Commonwealth of Australia. Part Vi - Religions." edited by Commonwealth Statistician, 749-864. Canberra: Minister of State for Home Affairs, 1911.

confrontations with the settlers, disease, poor health and malnutrition.”⁸¹ Much of the colonial view concerning Indigenous Nations was informed by racial stereotypes whereby skin colour represented the degree of ‘civilisation’. Often the term ‘*noble savages*’ was applied to what could be one of the earth’s oldest extant civilisations, who developed a system of land management,⁸² a unique astronomy⁸³ and spiritual system⁸⁴ that Europeans failed to recognise. John Dunmore Lang, an early Presbyterian Minister (1799-1878) encapsulated the colonial view, stating that Indigenous peoples “had nothing whatever of the character of religion, or of religious observance, to distinguish them from the beasts of the field.”⁸⁵ Whilst not an established policy or practice, his view probably reflects that of an early adopter of what would become termed as Social Darwinism.

The vast range of different Indigenous groups across the country followed a belief system that Westerners have struggled to categorise, in line with their understandings of religions. It is best described as a worldview but cannot be categorised under one universal system. The best known English language descriptor for the range of Indigenous belief systems comes from anthropologist W.E. Stanner, (1905-1981) who gave us the term ‘*The Dreaming*’ in his work *On Aboriginal Religion*.⁸⁶ Stanner acknowledged the vast range and different practices across the spectrum of Indigenous Nations, and accordingly, he focussed on one particular region, where, amongst other things, he set out to:

*Correct what I believe to be three mistakes: that of theistic philosophical narrowness; the wrongful identification with totemism, magic and ritual; and the disrespect involved in giving religious facts less importance in inquiry than they actually have in Aboriginal life.*⁸⁷

⁸¹ Eleanor Bourke, "Australia's First Peoples: Identity and Population," in *Aboriginal Australia: An Introductory Reader in Aboriginal Studies*, ed. Colin Bourke, Eleanor Bourke, and Bill Edwards (St Lucia, QLD: UQP, 2003), 38.

⁸² Bruce Pascoe, *Dark Emu. Black Seeds: Agriculture or Accident?* (Broome, W.A.: Magabala Books, 2014).

⁸³ Ray P. Norris and Duane W. Hamacher, "Australian Aboriginal Astronomy - an Overview," in *Handbook of Archaeoastronomy and Ethnoastronomy* (2015).

⁸⁴ W.E.H. Stanner, *On Aboriginal Religion*; with Introductions by Francesca Merlan and L.R. Hiatt, (Sydney: Sydney University Press, 2014),

https://ses.library.usyd.edu.au/handle/2123/10764/browse?type=title&submit_browse=Title.

⁸⁵ Bill Edwards, "Living the Dreaming," in *Aboriginal Australia: An Introductory Reader in Aboriginal Studies*, ed. Colin Bourke, Eleanor Bourke, and W.H. Edwards (St Lucia, QLD: UQP, 2003), 77.

⁸⁶ Stanner, *On Aboriginal Religion*; with Introductions by Francesca Merlan and L.R. Hiatt.

⁸⁷ "Introduction," 62.

In a move away from the conventional thinking of the time, he worked to disassociate his western understanding of what religion was, while observing Indigenous rituals and practices.⁸⁸ In Stanner's experience, "the religious transactions are of course the hardest to study, which is why I began with them. They turned out to have an extremely interesting structure, distributed far more widely than I had thought possible."⁸⁹

In brief, Indigenous beliefs revolve around significant connections to the land and country, told through a long tradition of oral history and enacted through an interrelated series of rituals, rites and practices. Each group has separate totems, representing the Ancient Spirit beings from which the different groups of people are descended from and nature and culture are co-dependent and cannot exist without each other.⁹⁰ Western thought tried to apply the dichotomy of secular and sacred; Indigenous belief systems "contain no such distinction."⁹¹ Accordingly, the Dreaming contains the handbook or "model for life."⁹² For Indigenous peoples, it is and always was, a varying, yet universal code that impacts every aspect of their day to day life. In some ways, this is in line with the tenets of Islam and the fundamental beliefs of other Abrahamic faiths, an all-encompassing system for life. Another aspect of Indigenous beliefs surrounds who can be a participant in the various levels of ritual, practice and lore. This will be further discussed in chapter 3.

Post-colonisation, many languages have been lost due to the separation of Indigenous people from their homelands and kinship groups due to disease, frontier wars and the ongoing effects of the Stolen Generation. Given Indigenous culture is based on oral transmission, this has, in turn, led to a loss of language, and therefore law and lore, including spirituality, rituals and beliefs. Some of these elements have been effectively lost forever; others are being re-constructed through a new generation, ironically using materials in some cases gained by the civilising missions of the nineteenth centuries.

What is crucial for this research is that when we look at Aboriginal belief systems, we need to view them as Stanner attempted to do, without our Abrahamic or Eurocentric lens that often prescribes our understanding of religion, including its practices, beliefs and ethics.

⁸⁸ *ibid.*

⁸⁹ *ibid.*, 64.

⁹⁰ Edwards, "Living the Dreaming," 81.

⁹¹ *ibid.*, 83.

⁹² *ibid.*, 84.

Placed alongside the timeframe of Australian Indigenous beliefs, all other world religions are recent arrivals.

3.2.2 Religions in Australia 1788 – 1900

When the First Fleet arrived in Sydney in 1788, its passengers were mainly Christians, mostly Protestant, with some Catholics and a handful of Jews.⁹³ Governor Phillip's formal orders for the establishment of the new penal colony were explicit with regards to the place of religion, stating:

And it is further Our Royal Will & Pleasure that you do by all proper Methods enforce a due Observance of Religion & good order among all the Inhabitants of the new Settlement and that you do take such steps for the due Celebration of publick Woirship [sic] as circumstances will permit.⁹⁴

The first Christian service was held in line with a worldview provided courtesy of the Protestant Ascendancy, regardless of the conscripted attendee's actual belief or religion. The new colony's appointed spiritual leader, the Reverend Richard Johnston (1755-1827), delivered the first sermon on Sunday 3rd February 1788 on the shores of Sydney Cove.⁹⁵ Attendance was mandatory and "Catholics were forced to attend Protestant services, a compulsion that lingered in Van Diemen's Land until the 1840s."⁹⁶ It would take five years for the first primitive church to be constructed, a simple wattle and daub structure that would soon burn to the ground.⁹⁷ Over the next decades, the predominantly Protestant New South Wales colony became a dumping ground for convicted Irish Catholic agitators and others whose beliefs deemed them too politically, ideologically or religiously dangerous to remain in the British Isles. For an extended period, Catholicism had been linked to

⁹³ The First Fleets manifest and early muster rolls are bereft of information about the exact religious make-up of the initial settlement. Of the 1373 passengers, between 8 & 12 identified as Jewish, about 300 as Catholics with the rest presumed to be Protestant Christians.

⁹⁴ From Historical Records of New South Wales, Vol. 2, Part 2. Cited in Roger C Thompson, *Religion in Australia: A History*, 2nd ed. (Sth Melbourne, Australia: Oxford University Press, 2002), 1.

⁹⁵ C.M.H Clark, *A History of Australia Vol 1: From the Earliest Times to the Age of Macquarie*, 6 vols., vol. 1 (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1962), 87.

⁹⁶ Patrick O'Farrell, *The Catholic Church in Australia* (Melbourne: Geoffrey Chapman LTD, 1968), 5.

⁹⁷ David Hill, *1788: The Brutal Truth of the First Fleet* (Nth Sydney: Random House Australia, 2008), 167.

rebellion.⁹⁸ Ultimately, this would develop into Australia's first sectarian divisions, which would continue to simmer well into the 20th Century.

By 1828, the colony of NSW was home to 36,484 persons, of whom 25,248 (70%) identified as Anglican and 11,236 (30%) as Roman Catholics.⁹⁹ Statistically insignificant numbers of Jews were also present, as were small numbers of Muslims, Hindus and others; however, many of their stories are largely unknown. There are documented exceptions to this, including two Muslims, a shipwrecked sailor Saib Sultan,¹⁰⁰ and a convict by the name of Ahalt.¹⁰¹ Given the dominance of Christianity, and small numbers of believers of other faiths, any dialogue that occurred in this environment could at best be classified as ecumenism; however, it appears to have been rare due to sectarian divisions.

This pattern of white Christian hegemony, led by the Protestant groups, continued until the Gold Rushes that occurred during the 1850s in New South Wales and Victoria. The allure of an easy fortune led to an influx of migrants from around the world, notably including a large number of Chinese and other Asians. Sources indicate that the first large groups of Chinese may have arrived in 1848 as labourers.¹⁰² This predominantly male group brought a range of Asian and other Eastern beliefs, including Taoism, Confucianism, Buddhism and Chinese folk religions. The Chinese tended to organise along the lines of societies or associations, as opposed to religion, for reasons of "mutual protection and assistance."¹⁰³ As an Australian Buddhist recounted, this was because "it [*religion*] is the same in China."¹⁰⁴ The appearance of the "Chinese Taoists and Buddhists and their very different temples," led to efforts by the Protestant churches to run an evangelising drive, with less than satisfactory outcomes.¹⁰⁵ Much of the religious history of the first group of Chinese migrants has been untold until recently, mainly due to the short term nature of their stays and the societal prejudices as reflected by the later introduction of the Immigration

⁹⁸ O'Farrell, *The Catholic Church in Australia*, 5.

⁹⁹ Catholic Education Commission NSW and Macquarie University, "Repstats," (Sydney2019). Viewed 10 Feb 2019. repstats.mq.edu.au

¹⁰⁰ Haveric, *History of Islam and Muslims in Australia: Early Encounters, Settlements and Communities Prior to the 1940's*, 53.

¹⁰¹ *ibid.*, 52.

¹⁰² Paul Croucher, *Buddhism in Australia: 1848-1988* (Sydney, Australia: New South Wales University Press, 1989), 2.

¹⁰³ David Hill, *The Gold Rush* (Nth Sydney: Random House Australia, 2010), 196.

¹⁰⁴ Croucher, *Buddhism in Australia: 1848-1988*, 2-3.

¹⁰⁵ Hill, *The Gold Rush*, 200-01.

Restriction Act (1901).¹⁰⁶ Further groups of Buddhists arrived from Sri Lanka in the 1890s, establishing what is thought to be the first dedicated Buddhist Temple on Thursday Island.¹⁰⁷

In 1860 the first well-documented Muslims arrived in Australia to assist with the camels on the Burke and Wills expeditions. Two Muslims, one Hindu and a Parsi made the journey from Karachi along with 25 camels.¹⁰⁸ In the years following, due to demand for camels to open up the interior, others from the regions known today as Afghanistan, Pakistan and India made the journey. Others began businesses as travelling hawkers. They established small communities in Maree, Farina, Beltana and Adelaide (South Australia), Broken Hill and Bourke (New South Wales), Kalgoorlie, Geraldton, Broome, and Perth (Western Australia), Cloncurry, Mackay and Brisbane (Queensland). By 1900, several mosques had been established, and small communities or *umma* had been reported in the major cities of Melbourne¹⁰⁹ and Sydney.¹¹⁰

As Australia approached Federation and the new century, it had grown from a penal outpost with an (imported) population of 1373 to a burgeoning nation of 3.7 million. Simultaneously, its Indigenous population had been decimated, dropping from an estimated 300,000 – 700,000 Aboriginal peoples to 31,000 due to the frontier wars and the spread of previously unknown diseases such as smallpox.¹¹¹ Regardless of Australia's population growth during its first 112 years, as Federation approached, the dominant religion was Christianity with the majority following Anglican beliefs, all applying a dominant (European) white worldview of the future of Australian 'civilisation'.

¹⁰⁶ Croucher, *Buddhism in Australia: 1848-1988*, 3.

¹⁰⁷ *ibid.*, 5.

¹⁰⁸ David Gary Phoenix, "More Like a Picnic Party": Burke and Wills: An Analysis of the Victorian Exploring Expedition of 1860-1861" (James Cook University, 2017), 308.

¹⁰⁹ "The Mahomedan New Year," *Clarence and Richmond Examiner*, 1 May 1900. 3.

¹¹⁰ "Mosque for Sydney," *Telegraph*, 20 Jun 1895. 5.

¹¹¹ Bourke, "Australia's First Peoples: Identity and Population," 38.

3.2.3 Religions in Australia 1900 – 1945

By the time of Federation, the makeup of Australia's religious belief systems was overwhelmingly Christian, with small groups of Jews, Muslims and others.

| Religion in Australia, 1901 | | |
|------------------------------|-----------|--------|
| Belief | Number | % |
| Anglican | 1,162,740 | 33.93% |
| Roman Catholic | 811,730 | 23.69% |
| Other Christian | 1,149,090 | 33.54% |
| Hebrew | 17,430 | 0.51% |
| Mohamedans etc. ^a | 54,210 | 1.58% |
| Others | 231,290 | 6.75% |
| | 3,426,490 | |

a.) Includes Hindus, Sikhs and others.

Figure 2 Religion in Australia 1901¹¹²

The available data from 1901 (above) groups the non-Judeo-Christian traditions such as: Islam, Hinduism and Sikhism in the catchall classification of “*Mahamedans, &c*”, and shows a total number of 54,210. As data was not collected on the exact breakdown of this classification, the best estimate of the number of Muslims in Australia at the beginning of the twentieth century seem to indicate a range between 3,600 – 5,600 in total.¹¹³ Christian denominations were dominated by the Protestant Churches (\approx 66%) with the majority identifying as Anglican. The Catholic faith accounted for around 24%, and there was a small yet ever-present group of Jews. This dominant Protestant hegemony represented one of the initial aims of the British colonists and Governor Phillips official orders, the establishment of an outpost of the Church of England in the Antipodes.

In 1901 when Australia became a Federation, one of the first Acts of Parliament to be passed was the Immigration Restriction Act (1901), also known as the White Australia Policy.¹¹⁴ Ostensibly, the Act was to prohibit the immigration of non-Europeans, as well as idiots or the insane, convicted criminals and other undesirables by application of a broad

¹¹² "The Churches," *Sydney Morning Herald*, 1 Jan, 10, 10. Note: Individual beliefs add up to more than the estimated population.

¹¹³ This is based on around 1600 Malays (Hanifa Deen, "Excavating the Past: Australia's Muslims," *The Latrobe Journal*, no. 89 (2012): 69.) and between 2,000 and 4,000 "Afghans" (Bilal Cleland, "Uncommon Lives: Muslim Journeys," (2018), <http://www.naa.gov.au/collection/snapshots/uncommon-lives/muslim-journeys/stories.aspx#section1>.)

¹¹⁴ Commonwealth of Australia, "Immigration Restriction Act," in *17* (1901).

European language test.¹¹⁵ However, it was devoid of any overt restrictions on skin colour or religion, although could be used to exclude people based on these factors. Before Federation, each of the colonies had invoked similar racist policies for various reasons, and the coming of Federation meant that some form of all-encompassing national approach was required, hence the Commonwealth legislation.

The real purpose of this Act has been the subject of much debate and disagreement by historians. David Day takes the traditional line that it was a clearly racist policy, much like South Africa's apartheid system,¹¹⁶ as opposed to Keith Windschuttle's view that it was more about "civic patriotism" and economic issues, with little to do with overt racism.¹¹⁷ Regardless of the actual intent of the policy, it had long-reaching ramifications and effects on the non-Christian community and anyone of 'colour' living in Australia after 1901.

One side effect of the *Immigration Restriction Act (1901)* was the cessation of the long-standing relationships between the Macassan trepang fishermen and the Indigenous peoples of Arnhem Land. This trade had been in existence prior to colonisation, possibly as early as the 1720s, maybe earlier.¹¹⁸ Contact between the Muslim fishermen and the Yolngu and other Indigenous groups in Northern Australia led to some linguistic influence on local languages,¹¹⁹ and spiritual, cultural and familial connections.¹²⁰ Once the Act was enabled, this allowed the South Australian Government, who controlled the region at the time, to refuse access to what had been a long-term traditional fishing ground for the Macassans.¹²¹ This presented a major blow to both the Macassans as well as the Indigenous people. Highly prized trade goods were no longer available, and "family and social ties were also severed."¹²²

¹¹⁵ *ibid.*, 3a, 3c, 3e.

¹¹⁶ David Day, "The White Australia Policy," in *In between Empire and Nation: Australia's External Relations from Federation to the Second World War.*, ed. C Bridge and B Attard (Kew, Victoria: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2000).

¹¹⁷ Keith Windschuttle, "The White Australia Policy," *The Sydney Papers, Winter/Spring 133* (2005): 129-30.

¹¹⁸ Ganter, "Muslim Australians: The Deep Histories of Contact," 2-8.

¹¹⁹ Evans, "Macassan Loanwords in Top End Languages," 45.

¹²⁰ Ian S. McIntosh, "Islam and Australia's Aborigines," *The Journal of Religious History* 20,1 20, no. 1 (1996).

¹²¹ Stephenson, "Syncretic Spirituality: Islam in Indigenous Australia," 429.

¹²² *ibid.*

From the outset, the purpose of the Immigration Restriction Act (1901) was to stem or stop a perceived Asiatic migration problem that had been building in the colonies since the Gold Rush era. This meant that any growth for the Chinese religions was brought to an abrupt halt, along with those beliefs brought to Australia by any persons deemed to be ‘non-white’. A range of European Muslims, along with certain groups of the Eastern Christian Orthodoxy avoided the restrictions placed on Immigration. In the 1920s a group of Albanian Muslims arrived and established what is now a 100-year presence in Shepparton, Victoria.¹²³ Members of the Greek Orthodoxy from areas of the defunct Ottoman Empire arrived in the 1920s due to the “political and demographic situation created in Greece following the Asia Minor Catastrophe (1922).”¹²⁴ During this period, many of Australia’s minority religions experienced a diminishing in the numbers of followers, especially the Muslim community. Some migrants returned home for good; others were refused re-entry after visits home, some assimilated and lost their religion. For a variety of social reasons, many of the Muslim migrants never married, meaning a lack of opportunity for growth within the community. By the beginning of World War II, the Australian *umma* had almost disappeared in many regions, poignantly described by historian Mary Jones as ‘the years of decline.’¹²⁵

3.2.4 Religion in Australia 1945 – 2001

The 1947 census from the Commonwealth Statistician shows a breakdown of major beliefs as per the following table. Australia’s population was around 7.5 million with non-Christian faiths accounting for a meagre 36,562 ($\approx 0.5\%$), the bulk of this represented by Judaism. In contrast, Christian based faiths accounted for 6,672,936 (88.25%), the balance being no religion (0.35%) or no response ($\approx 11\%$).¹²⁶

¹²³ Ahmeti, "Albanian Muslims in Secular, Multicultural Australia," 46.

¹²⁴ Anastasios Tamis, *The Greeks in Australia* (ProQuest Ebook Central: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 33.

¹²⁵ Mary Jones, "The Years of Decline: Australian Muslims 1900-40," in *An Australian Pilgrimage: Muslims in Australia from the Seventeenth Century to the Present* (Melbourne: Victoria Press, 1993), 63.

¹²⁶ Commonwealth of Australia. "Census of the Commonwealth of Australia. Part XVI - Religion." edited by Commonwealth Statistician, 869-928. Canberra: Commonwealth Government Printer, 1947. Note: As with all census counts up to the 1967 Referendum, 'full blooded aboriginals are not counted'.

| Religion in Australia, 1947 | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------|----------|
| Belief | Total | % |
| Anglican | 2,957,032 | 39.11% |
| Roman Catholic | 1,587,458 | 21.00% |
| Other Christian | 2,128,446 | 28.15% |
| Buddhist ^{b.)} | 926 | 0.01% |
| Hebrew | 32,019 | 0.42% |
| Hindu | 244 | 0.00% |
| Mohammedan | 2,704 | 0.04% |
| Sikh | 38 | 0.00% |
| Other (Non Christian) | 631 | 0.01% |
| No Religion | 26,328 | 0.35% |
| No Response | 824,824 | 10.91% |
| | 7,560,650 | |

a. Total does not include indefinite responses.

b.) And other Chinese Religions

Figure 3 Religion in Australia, 1947¹²⁷

The official 1947 census data also shows Australia's predilection for mislabelling. From the beginning in Australia, Islam seems to have carried the Orientalist/Colonial label of Mohammedan (or one of its many variations), reflecting a misunderstanding of the relationship of the Prophet Mohammed to the religion, as "some Europeans believed that Moslems worshipped Mohammed as a god."¹²⁸ This label continued in use in Australia until sometime in the latter part of the 20th century when it was replaced with more correct terminology.

Following the horror of World War II and with immigration restrictions still in place, preference for the acceptance of displaced persons was given to (white) Europeans. Given the significant impact of the Holocaust on European Jewry, Australia sympathetically opened its doors. "Between 1938 and 1961 Australian Jewry had almost trebled in size from a tiny group of 23,000 in 1933 to 60,000 in 1961."¹²⁹ The end of hostilities also led to large numbers of displaced Southern Europeans migrating, bringing an increase in Catholicism and Orthodox Christianity into the community. The large influx of Greek migrants during this period meant that Melbourne, "was often referred to as the third-largest

¹²⁷ *ibid.*

¹²⁸ K.M. Setton, *Western Hostility to Islam and Prophecies of Turkish Doom* (Darby, PA: DIANE Publishing, 1992), 4.

¹²⁹ Suzanne D. Rutland, "Jewish Immigration after the Second World War. The Transformation of a Community," accessed 17 Mar 2019, <https://www.ijs.org.au/jewish-immigration-after-the-second-world-war/>.

Greek city worldwide after Athens and Thessaloniki.”¹³⁰ Additionally, Muslim migrants from “Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Poland, Hungary and Russia” arrived “under an agreement made in 1947 between the International Refugee Organisation and Australia.”¹³¹ Some of these arrived just in time to save the religious infrastructure that had previously existed, however, was crumbling due to a severely diminished and elderly *umma*.¹³²

In the 1950s, Australia embarked on a range of infrastructure building on a scale never before seen. The Snowy Hydro Project needed both skilled and unskilled workers and “during the 25 years of its construction, the scheme employed more than 100,000 men and women (the great majority were men) from 30 countries.”¹³³ The majority were single men of various faiths, many displaced persons from Europe seeking a new life.¹³⁴ Likewise, our factory lines needed a workforce, and Turkish, Lebanese and Arab migration helped to fill this gap. This increase in Muslim migrants also allowed for the establishment of a range of societies, including the Islamic Society of Victoria, founded in 1957.¹³⁵

Also in the 1950s, the Colombo Plan was enacted in order “to strengthen our ties with Asia” and also to deal with the (perceived) growing impact surrounding the spread of Communism.¹³⁶ This Commonwealth initiative allowed students from a range of Indo-Pacific countries to study in Australia. Indonesia and Pakistan were willing participants in this initiative, giving rise to large numbers of Muslim students studying in Australian Universities. One possibly unintentional outcome of this movement was that when “Colombo Plan students and private international students began to merge in the second half of the 1960s, this hastened the rapid dismantling of Australia’s White Australia policy.”¹³⁷

¹³⁰ "So, Hellenes' Slip May Be Showing," accessed 17 Mar 2019, <https://www.theage.com.au/national/so-hellenes-slip-may-be-showing-20040725-gdybj.html>.

¹³¹ Jones, "To Rebuild What Was Lost: The Post War Years and Beyond," 94.

¹³² "Only Two Worship in Mosque Now," *Adelaide Mail*, 27 May 1950. 10.

¹³³ Grahame Griffin, "Selling the Snowy: The Snowy Mountains Scheme and National Mythmaking," *Journal of Australian Studies* 27, no. 79 (2009): 41.

¹³⁴ C.M.H Clark, *Manning Clark's History of Australia. Abridged* (Melbourne: Penguin, 1995), 641-42.

¹³⁵ Jones, "To Rebuild What Was Lost: The Post War Years and Beyond," 99.

¹³⁶ David Lowe, "Colombo Plan. An Initiative That Brought Australia and Asia Closer.," *The Conversation* (2011), <https://theconversation.com/colombo-plan-an-initiative-that-brought-australia-and-asia-closer-3590>.

¹³⁷ *ibid.*

In 1973, the White Australia Policy was finally dismantled by the Whitlam Labour Government, after being “abandoned by both major parties.”¹³⁸ In theory, this meant that immigration selection criteria became “non-discriminatory as to race, colour, ethnicity, country of birth and gender; moreover, economic factors, including skill, were made less important than social factors such as family reunion.”¹³⁹ The new era in immigration policy opened the doors to a broader range of migrants from all over the globe, who in turn imported a range of existing and new religious beliefs as part of their cultural baggage.

Ongoing economic issues and conflict around the world had the most significant effect on multiculturalism and the diversity of religious beliefs. During the 1970s, Australia saw an increase in Yugoslavian migration due to economic issues and rising ethnic tensions in the area.¹⁴⁰ The end of the Vietnam War in 1975 introduced us to the term ‘*boat people*’ to the national vocabulary with an increase in Vietnamese migration,¹⁴¹ who in turn imported the beliefs of Caodaism and Buddhism as well as Catholicism.

The Muslim community continued to grow. Turkish migration further increased in response to labour shortages as, “Australia had hoped to recruit at least 30 per cent of skilled migrants from Turkey.”¹⁴² This did not go quite to plan, with many unskilled migrants who had little knowledge of English amongst the new arrivals. Following the Civil War in Lebanon (1975-1990), large numbers of Lebanese, both Christian and Muslim, migrated to Australia.¹⁴³ These new waves of migrants all suffered forms of racial persecution and liminal hazing¹⁴⁴ as had the previous wave of non-European or different others. The First Gulf War (1990) and subsequent periods of warfare and unrest in the Middle East led to increased migration from this region along with a heightening of prejudice towards Muslims.

¹³⁸ Eric Richards, "White Australia Dismantled: The 1970s," in *Destination Australia : Migration to Australia since 1901* (Sydney: University of NSW Press, 2008), 252.

¹³⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁴⁰ *ibid.*, 253.











¹⁴¹ Danny Ben-Moshe, Joanne Pyke, and Liudmila Kirpitchenko, "The Vietnamese Diaspora in Australia: Identity and Transnational Behaviour," *Diaspora Studies* 9, no. 2 (2016): 114.

¹⁴² Christine Inglis, Samim Akgonul, and Stephane De Tapia, "Turks Abroad: Settlers, Citizens, Transnationals - Introduction," *International Journal on Multicultural Societies* 11,2 (2009): 110.

¹⁴³ Mehmet Ozalp, *Islam: Between Tradition and Modernity. An Australian Perspective*. (Canberra: Barton Books, 2012), 141.

¹⁴⁴ Barry and Yilmaz, "Liminality and Racial Hazing of Muslim Migrants: Media Framing of Albanians in Shepparton, Australia, 1930–1955."

Religion in Australia, 2001

| Belief | Total | % | |
|--------------------------|-------------------|----------|---|
| Anglican | 3,881,200 | 20.68% |  |
| Roman Catholic | 5,001,600 | 26.65% |  |
| Other Christian | 3,881,500 | 20.68% |  |
| Islam | 281,600 | 1.50% |  |
| Buddhism | 357,800 | 1.91% |  |
| Hinduism | 95,500 | 0.51% |  |
| Judaism | 84,000 | 0.45% |  |
| Other (Non Christian) | 92,400 | 0.49% |  |
| No Religion ^a | 2,906,000 | 15.48% |  |
| Not stated / Inadequate | 2,187,700 | 11.66% |  |
| | 18,769,300 | | |

^a No Religion includes secular and other beliefs

^b As religion was an optional question, the total for Australia will not equal the sum of the items above it.

Figure 4 Religion in Australia, 2001¹⁴⁵

3.2.5 The Current Religious Landscape

Since 2001, Australia's religious landscape has continued to diversify. By 2017, Australia had a diverse multicultural society and a range of religious beliefs that reflected this diversity. Marked increases have occurred in the non-Christian faiths, with a significant increase in Sikhism and Hinduism as well as continued growth in Islam and Buddhism. For the first time since colonisation, the Catholic Church has become the largest cohort within the Christian beliefs. Additionally, the period from 2011 to 2016 has also shown a marked increase in non-religion, partly due to a decline in Protestant beliefs, but more generally showing a move away from organised religion. Despite this, our Australian worldview is framed by the effects of Christianity. In New South Wales, of our 11 gazetted public holidays, five reflect the Christian narrative surrounding the life of Jesus, none reflect the other belief systems.

¹⁴⁵ Australian Bureau of Statistics. "Year Book Australia, Religion." 5. Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, 2004.

| Religion in Australia, 2016 | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------|--------|
| Belief | Total | % |
| Anglican | 3,101,200 | 13.25% |
| Catholic | 5,291,800 | 22.61% |
| Other Christian | 3,808,600 | 16.27% |
| Buddhism | 563,700 | 2.41% |
| Judaism | 91,000 | 0.39% |
| Hindu | 440,300 | 1.88% |
| Islam | 604,200 | 2.58% |
| Sikh | 125,900 | 0.54% |
| Other (Non Christian) | 95,700 | 0.41% |
| No Religion ^a | 7,040,700 | 30.09% |
| 23,401,900 | | |

^a No Religion includes secular and other beliefs

^b As religion was an optional question, the total for Australia will not equal the sum of the items above it.

Figure 5 Religion in Australia, 2016 ¹⁴⁶

This multicultural and multifaith society has come at a price for several ethnic and religious groups. Islamophobia became a hot topic following the 9/11, Bali and London attacks. Locally, Islam was implicated in regional violence and the death of 88 Australians in the Bali bombings in 2002.¹⁴⁷ Lately, levels of religious intolerance have risen, with Anti-Semitism in Australia also becoming an issue for the Jewish community. In 2018 the Executive Council of Australian Jewry's report found that "366 anti-Semitic incidents were recorded, an increase of 59% over the previous twelve-month period."¹⁴⁸ The findings almost mirrored the Islamic experience, as detailed in the 2017 *Islamophobia in Australia 2014-2016* report.¹⁴⁹ It is not unique for migrant groups to face hostility or racism in Australia. The experience of many migrants has seen the Italians and Greeks vilified from the 1950s and 60s, the Vietnamese and other Asians from the 1970s and on and on.¹⁵⁰ These attacks have continued with the arrival of the latest group, civil war refugees from Sudan.

¹⁴⁶ "2016 Census Data Summary: Religion in Australia."

¹⁴⁷ Andrew Park, "Bali Bombings: Full List of Victims' Names," SBS Australia, accessed 10 Oct 2020, <https://www.sbs.com.au/news/bali-bombings-full-list-of-victims-names>.

¹⁴⁸ Julie Nathan, "Report on Antisemitism in Australia 2018," (Edgecliff, NSW: Executive Council of Australian Jewry, 2018), 6.

¹⁴⁹ *Islamophobia in Australia 2014-2016*.

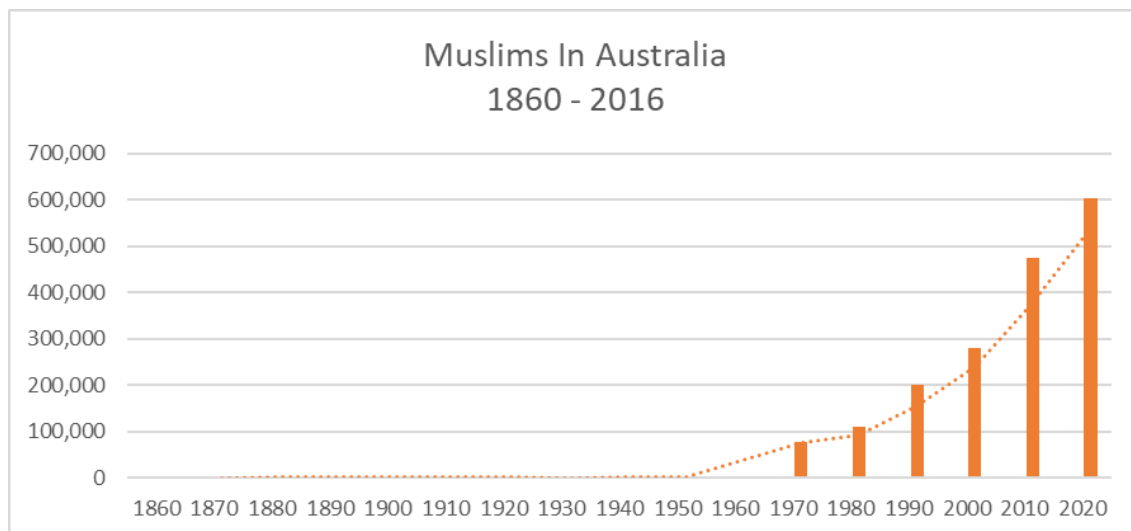
¹⁵⁰ Rachel Busbridge, "'It's Just Your Turn': Performing Identity and Muslim Australian Popular Culture," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 24, no. 4 (2013).

Currently, the religious landscape is engulfed in a range of issues. From the inception of nationhood in 1901, religious freedom has been available through the interpretation of section 116 of the Constitution, although it was brought to the forefront of debate in 2019. Many of the religious institutions, as well as other organisations, have been caught up in a range of controversial issues.¹⁵¹ For good and bad, some religions have remained unchanged in their practices and organisations; for some followers, this brings comfort through familiarity. Others are marginalised, often around issues of leadership and gender, therefore reducing their appeal to some sections of society. The 2016 Census saw most Christian denominations lose 'market share,' with a significant rise in non-religion. The exception to this trend was the newer Evangelical or Pentecostal congregations, whose growth was mostly due to denominational switching, a general move away from the established Christian churches.

3.2.6 Discussion

The statistics included in this chapter show that Islam has been present in Australia since very early in the colonial era. What becomes evident is that until the latter part of the twentieth century the numbers were so small and the Islamic community so culturally diverse and broadly spread across the country that they were able to be effectively ignored by the Christian majority, inhibiting any chance of meso or macro level dialogue. During most of this period, Australia and the West appear to have placed little importance on any dialogue with Islam. In part, this may have been due to the political, cultural and economic dominance of the West, especially in the wake of the two World Wars. It may also be a hangover from the inherent racism enabled by Australia's White Australia Policy, a worldview that predated the legislation and continues in certain aspects of society to this day.

¹⁵¹ Commonwealth of Australia, "Religious Institutions," in *Final Report of the Royal Commission in Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse* (Canberra: Attorney-General's Department, 2017), 11-12.



*Figure 6 Muslims in Australia, 1860 – 2016, by decades.*¹⁵²

The small numbers of Muslims also effectively abrogated the need for any institutionalised or meso/macro level inter-religious dialogue. Australia’s religious hegemony constituted two major branches of Christianity, Catholicism and Anglicanism, both with identifiable leaders who established the rules of dialogue.¹⁵³ Islam was most likely viewed as monolithic, a fact far from the truth, and without a dominant spokesperson to drive dialogue both here, and in other parts of the world. From the perspective of the Christian leadership, who do they instigate dialogue with?

What the statistics do not show is that Muslim pioneers in Australia tended to gravitate to specific regions, often because of the presence of other like-minded individuals who may have established some necessary infrastructure. Certain areas like Shepparton (Victoria), Maree (South Australia), Perth (Western Australia) and Adelaide (South Australia) contained higher than average numbers of Muslims and presented an opportunity for dialogue over and above what was available elsewhere. Many of these pioneers immediately established micro-level dialogue with these communities that developed into meso level interactions and allowed for the establishment of the necessary infrastructure such as mosques and dedicated zones in cemeteries that exist to this day.

¹⁵² Based on best available data from ABS and other sources.

¹⁵³ For much of the period covered by this research, these two denominations of Christianity were engaged in sectarian division, partly due to the use of Australia as an early ‘dumping ground’ for Irish Catholic Nationalists, however also due to the role of the Church of England as the ruling class in England.

While statistics show that the number of Muslims has continued to increase since the 1970s, the lack of institutionalised meso and macro-level dialogue was not initially a societal imperative. With the events of the first Gulf War in 1990 putting a spotlight on Middle Eastern Muslim countries and increased migration, both humanitarian and voluntary from this region, the need for dialogue gained some momentum. Ultimately, the events of 9/11 seemed to shift the focus and inter-religious dialogue at all sociological levels leading to a more urgent imperative. In Australia, the migration debate slowly shifted focus from anti-Asian to anti-Muslim, despite both groups having had a presence in Australia for many years.

3.2.7 Conclusion

Looking at the shifting religious beliefs in Australia, we have seen significant changes. The Dreaming existed for thousands of years until Christianity displaced it in the late 1700s. The implementation of a policy to apply racial profiling to immigration led to a downturn in non-European migration. However, while these restrictions were based on racial or ethnic background, non-Christian religions did manage to enter, settle and establish themselves as Australians. Since 1972, successive waves of migrants have brought a greater range of cultural and religious practices with them, slowly displacing elements of the dominant Christian hegemony. However, we can also see that small numbers of many of the world's great religions co-existed throughout Australian history. Over the long term, Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu and other migrants have had a presence in Australia since the beginning. Many Muslims have made significant contributions to society and engaged in meaningful dialogue on many levels which will be explored in the following chapters.

This chapter also establishes that institutionalised inter-religious dialogue is a relatively new concept at both the meso and macro level, both globally and in Australia. Despite the calls for interfaith cooperation, understanding and dialogue in many of the sacred texts and examples set by the various prophets and founders, the message for meaningful dialogue may have been side-tracked for geographical or political gains. When a country such as post-colonial Australia has such a dominant religious hegemony, above 90% Christian for most of the twentieth century, there is the risk that the voices of the minority beliefs fade into the background and can be viewed as background noise, constantly struggling for any response or attention.

Despite this, an understanding of the ever-present yet statistically insignificant number of Muslims, as well as Buddhism and Hinduism is essential to the analysis of dialogue. While few in number, some Muslims gained a significant local and in some case, state and national audience. It is the voices and dialogue from the full range of Muslim migrants, and their beliefs, and their reception in present-day Australian society that the next chapters explore further to paint a complete picture of interfaith relations and dialogue over time.

Chapter 4. Islam and the Dreaming

4.1 Introduction

The seas to the north of Arnhem Land are surrounded by a range of communities, many in close proximity, including the Gowanese, Macassar, Timor Leste, Papua New Guinea and the Islands of the Torres Straits, all of whom have some forms of commonality, often through the maritime nature of their communities and lifestyles. This commonality and close regional proximity meant that contact and interaction was probably inevitable at some time in history. The fact that contemporary Indigenous memories focus on the Macassans and Baijini highlight the importance of this contact and ensuing multi-level dialogue.

This chapter will expand upon previous research¹ into inter-religious dialogue and pre-colonial Indigenous Australia to show the actual depth of dialogue surrounding contact between the Muslim communities of Macassar, the Malaysian Archipelago and others with the Indigenous Australian Nations of Arnhem Land.² There are several theories as to how Islam arrived in the Indonesian Archipelago; however, between the 9th and 16th Century, most of the area, including the sailors, explorers and traders from the region had converted to Islam, often under the influence of Sufism.³

Over the last 40 years, there has developed a significant body of work around these pre-colonial contacts focusing on the trepang trade period that occurred in the Arnhem Land region of the Northern Territory. Much of the past research is in the academic domain; however, recent documentaries, books and cultural exchanges have provided some additional primary sources from descendants of both Indigenous Australians and the Macassans and Malays. A number of these studies have been anthropological in nature, and whilst discussing the nature and influence of the contact, the issue of inter-religious dialogue has not been the driving reason behind the research.

This chapter has two fundamental arguments concerning the nature and level of dialogue between Muslims and Indigenous Australians prior to the 20th Century. Firstly, there are

¹ Sneddon, "The Early History of Micro and Meso Dialogue between Muslims and Non-Muslims in Australia."

² Arnhem Land is large area of the Northern Territory, home to the Yolgnu and other Australian Indigenous Nations. See figure 6.

³ For a complete discussion see; Carool Kersten, *A History of Islam in Indonesia: Unity in Diversity* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017), 7-24.

previously established links that micro and meso level dialogue occurred in this era, as is evident by the linguistic traces, syncretic absorption of rituals and beliefs and the transference of technology. Secondly, whilst the primary objective of the interaction and dialogue was trade-focused, some of the Baijini and Macassans used this contact and trade as a vehicle for the purpose of *da'wah* (proselytising or invitation to Islam).⁴ Given the role of traders and Sufis in the Islamisation of the Indonesian Archipelago and the Malay Peninsula, this hypothesis may be plausible. However, the evidence seems to show this was not the primary aim of their contact and needs further research in order to be verified.

Previous research has shown the cross-pollination of language and customs between the two groups as well as the possibility of a treaty.⁵ Linguistic research has uncovered “somewhere between two and three hundred”⁶ loan-words in Arnhem Land's Indigenous languages, demonstrating at least some form of ongoing and effective socio-linguistic dialogue. Likewise, dialogue and contact led to the adoption, adaptation or syncretism of aspects of Islamic ceremonial practices into the rituals of some of the different Indigenous Nations that inhabited Arnhem Land in Australia's north.⁷ Some Indigenous peoples made the long sea voyage to Macassar, and their stories have recently been the subject of inter-cultural exhibits and festivals. Where possible, their stories will be further investigated to establish the nature and depth of the inter-cultural dialogue that has occurred over the last few centuries. These sociological levels or groupings begin with the individual, usually referred to as the micro level, including families or small groups. As interactions develop, they proceed through a middle or meso stage, often involving community relationships. Once interactions have become developed, they can shift to the macro, national or global level.

The nature of this chapter is to analyse the available research from the viewpoint of (inter-religious) dialogue, its sociological levels and the ongoing effects that dialogue has had on the indigenous peoples of Northern Australia. At times the relationship appears to have been peaceful, but at other times the relationship seems to have deteriorated, such as indicated by the reports provided by the Macassan Captain Pobasso to Matthew Flinders

⁴ "Dawah," Oxford University Press, accessed 19 Nov 2019, <http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/opr/t125/e511>.

⁵ McIntosh, "A Treaty with the Macassans? Burrumarra and the Dholtji Ideal."

⁶ Evans, "Macassan Loanwords in Top End Languages," 46.

⁷ Stephenson, "Syncretic Spirituality: Islam in Indigenous Australia."

on his circumnavigation of Australia in 1803.⁸ Attempts will be made to look outside of the main focus of much of the existing body of work surrounding the history with the Yolngu peoples, with research looking at the other geographical areas of contact and the range of outcomes in Northern Australia to ascertain the sociological levels of dialogue over time.

4.1.1 A note on sources

Conducting primary research within this field can be an issue. As it currently stands, ethical approval for research involving Indigenous Australians requires negotiations with the responsible elders from each of the traditional owners participating in the research. This is important in order to develop an understanding of how history and knowledge function in Indigenous societies. Given that Arnhem Land is home to over 30 different language groupings and traditional owners, the logistics of obtaining approvals within the traditional PhD time frame is almost impossible. Accordingly, much of the research utilises secondary sources, as well as an understanding that some of the information the research is looking to uncover is not available.

Indigenous Australians have a long oral history, leading to further complications when using Western methods of historiography. Much of the oral history seems to fall into two domains, described by McIntosh as “inside” and “outside.”⁹ In this case, he is talking about a duality of meaning; however, it also applies to who can be privy to certain elements of narratives. Some stories can be passed on to outsiders; however, others contain privileged information and are designed to be passed on only to those who have been initiated into the relevant group. Another part of the problem, the past one-way nature of previous research is outlined by Mary Jordan, who, after 14 months in Arnhem Land, described the problem by stating, “they [the traditional owners] had shared their culture with these outsiders [anthropologists]; but what had they taken from the *balandas*¹⁰ in return.”¹¹ It seems much

⁸ Flinders, *A Voyage to Terra Australis*, Book 2.9.

⁹ McIntosh, "Islam and Australia's Aborigines," 53.

¹⁰ Yolgnu for outsider or white people. Probably from Macassarese and derived from “Hollander” in reference to the Dutch colonisers.

¹¹ Mary Ellen Jordan, *Balanda. My Year in Arnhem Land* (Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 2005), 41.

of the past research may have been taken and disseminated with nothing of value given in return.

Other complications exist around issues of dating and the expectation of an accurate (Western) timeline as well as the authenticity and reliability of the oral stories. We are fortunate that many studies have been done in association with the Yolngu (and other) peoples of Arnhem Land and have established these connections between the Yolngu and Macassan peoples. As indicated above, this has included a range of linguistic, cultural and additionally archaeological evidence. Given the oral nature of Indigenous Australians, these studies are essential, as Western history has in the past placed little importance on oral cultures, relying on the written word as fact.

Another issue for historians is that early work on the subject has been tainted by a view that the Indigenous nations represented some form of homogenous culture with the same set of beliefs, practices and historical narratives. This will require some form of filtering to explain many nuanced viewpoints. Part of the analysis for this research will be carried out in the light of works from early anthropological researchers such as W. Lloyd Warner,¹² Norman Tindale,¹³ Berndt and Berndt¹⁴ and W.E.H. Stanner.¹⁵ Later works by Campbell Macknight,¹⁶ Ian McIntosh,¹⁷ Sally May and Paul Tacon¹⁸ and Regina Ganter¹⁹ also provide a wealth of information. Additionally, a range of oral histories such as those held by the Northern Territory Archives Services²⁰ and Western Australian State Library will also be researched. Other avenues of primary research include several interviews conducted with Indigenous Australians and Macassans for a range of projects including “Trepang:

¹² W. Lloyd Warner, *A Black Civilisation. A Study of an Australian Tribe* (Chicago, IL: Harper and Brothers, 1958).

¹³ Tindale, "Natives of Groote Island and of the West Coast of the Gulf of Carpentaria, Parts I and II."

¹⁴ Brittlebank, "Asian Dreaming: An Exploration of Ronald and Catherine Berndt's Relationship with Asia."

¹⁵ Stanner, "Sacramentalism Rite and Myth."

¹⁶ See Macknight, "Macassans and Aborigines." and "The View from Marege': Australian Knowledge of Makassar and the Impact of the Trepang Industry across Two Centuries," *Aboriginal History* 35 (2011).

¹⁷ McIntosh, "Islam and Australia's Aborigines."

¹⁸ Sally K. May, Jennifer F. McKinnon, and Jason T. Raupp, "Boats on Bark: An Analysis of Groote Eylandt Aboriginal Bark-Paintings Featuring Macassanpraus from the 1948 Arnhem Land Expedition, Northern Territory, Australia," *International Journal of Nautical Archaeology* 38, no. 2 (2009).

¹⁹ Ganter, "Muslim Australians: The Deep Histories of Contact."

²⁰ Arts Northern Territory Government - Department of and Museums, "N.T. Archives - Oral History Unit," accessed 20 Apr 2019, <https://bit.ly/2SN4w6c>.

China & the story of Macassan-Aboriginal” and some open-source interviews that form part of the “Trepang Project”, a 2001 “multi-dimensional project.”²¹

²¹ Alan Whykes, "Trepang - inside Indonesia," accessed 9 Oct 2019, <https://www.insideindonesia.org/trepang>.

4.2 Early Contacts and Dialogue

Islam has had a presence in Australia that precedes colonialism. The history of this contact has recently been the subject of volumes of research and suitably documented. Australia's Indigenous people have inhabited the continent for over 65,000 years, and contact between the northern groups and sailors from South East Asia and beyond would have probably existed over that period. There are reports of early contact in the 15th century with the Chinese Fleet of Admiral Zheng He in 1491; however, given the records of his explorations were destroyed, this is a difficult claim to prove.²² McCarthy's claims were not a recent finding. In 1953, C.P. Fitzgerald discussed the possibility of early Chinese contact based on the discovery of "a jade image of the god *Shou Lao* discovered in Darwin in 1879."²³

While Fitzgerald was cautious about linking the archaeological find to a confirmed period of contact, it raises the issue of Northern Australia's proximity to Asia and the fact that a range of sea-faring cultures from the north could not have ignored or missed the 'Great South Land' during their expeditions. The discovery during World War II of "five copper coins from the once prominent Swahili port of Kilwa in modern-day Tanzania"²⁴ in Arnhem Land, dated as being "between 700 and 900 years old,"²⁵ may also add some weight to earlier exploration, contact and dialogue, although timing and provenance have not been definitively established. Given similar coins have been found in Oman, this may also support the suggestions that have been made that Muslim sailors from Oman may have explored the northern coast of Australia "as early as the 8th century," based on an interpretation of maps compiled by al-Khwarizmi (d.850) in 820.²⁶ Others claim this contact occurred in the 10th century.²⁷ If this was the case, there may be an argument for an extra-long contact model involving an Islamic presence and dialogue in Australia for a far more extended period than previously thought. These claims will also need further research and evidence to ultimately establish the veracity and validity of any extra-long contact

²² M McCarthy, "Zheng He and the Great Southland," (The Zheng He down West Ocean, Chinese Overseas Discussion Forum: Western Australian Museum, 2005), 388-401.

²³ Peter M. Worsley, "Early Asian Contacts with Australia," *Past & Present* 7 (1955): 1.

²⁴ Ian S. McIntosh, "The Ancient African Coins," *Australian Science* May, no. (2014): 20.

²⁵ *ibid.*

²⁶ Haveric, *History of Islam and Muslims in Australia: Early Encounters, Settlements and Communities Prior to the 1940's*, 10.

²⁷ M. Ali Kettani, *Muslim Minorities in the World Today* (London: Mansell Publishing, 1986), 216.

model. Regardless, there is evidence of a people known as the Baijini,²⁸ who seem to have brought Islam to Australia, sometime in the past.

The rise of Western exploration and colonisation in the fifteenth century saw the Europeans arrive in the Antipodes. Following Portuguese colonisation in 1507, Oman became a launching pad for them to further explore the Indian Ocean and its neighbouring regions. Growth in maritime technology and increased trade with the Far East meant that a range of European nations were exploring further afield. In 1606 the Dutch navigator, Willem Janszoon made contact with the Great Southern Land, quickly followed the same year by Spanish explorer Luís Vaz de Torres²⁹ and then English Pirate / Adventurer, William Dampier in 1688.³⁰ Captain James Cook arrived in 1770³¹, and in 1788, the (penal) colony of New South Wales was founded, led by Captain Arthur Phillip.³²

4.2.1 The Wurramala or Whale Hunters

Recent research by noted scholar Ian McIntosh has indicated “the first intentional visitors to Arnhem Land were black Indonesian whale hunters known collectively as Wurramala.”³³

*Oral history recounts that these hunters regularly interacted with Yolngu in the Wet Season and, on rare occasions, Yolngu had even visited their homelands to the north of Australia. Yolngu names for these totemic hunters include Turijene (Dhurridjini), who are Sama Bajau or ‘sea gypsies’ from the island of Samalona in South Sulawesi, a people with strong ritual links to the Sultanates of Gowa and Tallo in Macassar’s pre-trepaning days.*³⁴

The religious affiliation of the visitors is not confirmed. They may have been worshippers of a localised religion, or practised some form of folk Islam; however, “the religions of the

²⁸ Also referred to as Baiini or Bayini

²⁹ David Hill, *The Great Race. The Race between the English and the French to Complete the Map of Australia* (North Sydney: William Heinemann Australia, 2012), 5.

³⁰ Diana Preston and Michael Preston, *A Pirate of Exquisite Mind. The Life of William Dampier, Explorer, Naturalist and Buccaneer* (Sydney: Random House Australia, 2004), 172-73.

³¹ Clark, *A History of Australia Vol 1: From the Earliest Times to the Age of Macquarie*, 1, 49.

³² *ibid.*, 85.

³³ Ian S McIntosh, "Arnhemlands Lost Past. Rediscovering Yolngu Oral History," no. 3 (2020), <https://www.pastmasters.net/arnhemlands-lost-past.html>.

³⁴ *ibid.*

Austronesians were characterized by a baffling diversity of spirits and practices.”³⁵ Accordingly, whilst it is important to recognize the contact, any discussion of inter-religious dialogue with this group will require further investigation, probably requiring the discovery of new evidence as support.

4.2.2 The Baijini

While much of our knowledge about early interactions concerning Islam revolves around the Macassans, there is some evidence of contact between another group of the “followers of Allah.”³⁶ This may have pre-dated, or possibly occurred concurrently with the later visits by the Macassans. Worsley states that, “the aborigines are quite categorical in their statements that the Macassarese were preceded another people they term the Baijini. When talking with McIntosh about the Baijini, Yolngu elder David Burrumarra (d 1994) stated:

*‘Don’t call him a Macassan’, Burrumarra would request, for such talk immediately conjured up an image of trepangers from the latter stages of the industry when relationships had deteriorated to the point where violence was regrettably commonplace and each lived separate lives along the same coast. ‘He was a Yolngu. A king. A godly figure.’ He was Yirritja and the living embodiment of the Dreaming Macassan.*³⁷

Burrumarra emphasises the Indigenous people’s view that the Baijini were different from the later Macassans.”³⁸ There are references to their “light-coloured skin”³⁹ and a range of “advanced technology” such as iron forging, handlooms, agriculture and construction techniques.⁴⁰ Oral histories from the region known as Dholtji (Cape Wilberforce) in North East Arnhem Land describe large communities engaged in iron making and agriculture, visits by men in armour and importantly for this research, discussion of “Allah, a sky-dwelling entity living high in the clouds over Cape Wilberforce and in the red clouds of the

³⁵ Anthony Reid, "Continuity and Change in the Austronesian Transition to Islam and Christianity," in *The Austronesians. Historical and Comparative Perspectives*, ed. Peter Bellwood, James J Fox, and Darrell Tryon (Canberra: ANU Press, 2006), 342.

³⁶ Ian S McIntosh, *Between Two Worlds: Essays in Honour of the Visionary Aboriginal Elder, David Burrumarra* (Indianapolis: Dog Ear Publishing, 2015), 101.

³⁷ McIntosh, "A Treaty with the Macassans? Burrumarra and the Dholtji Ideal," 162.

³⁸ Worsley, "Early Asian Contacts with Australia," 1-2.

³⁹ *ibid.*, 2.

⁴⁰ *ibid.*

sunset.”⁴¹ McIntosh states that “whilst there is some overlap in meaning between the Aboriginal Allah and the Allah of the Islamic world, the two are seen to be quite separate.”⁴²

*The dances associated with this being appear to be of Indonesian origin, as do the words of the songs, but Walitha 'walitha is an Aboriginal creational entity associated with particular territories on the Australian mainland, and has always been there, consultants say. Belief in Walitha 'walitha is not seen to be the same as belief in the religion of the Other. Walitha 'walitha and Wurramu represent bodies of belief shared by different peoples, but the perspective of Aborigines is for Aborigines alone.*⁴³

McIntosh also highlights the lack of consensus about the origins of the Baijini people. In his article exploring the artwork of the region and depictions of the Baijini, he states:

*... speculation on the identity of the Bayini is rife. Some writers say they were Macassan, Sama-Bajau or sea nomads (Berndt 1965: 5), while others suggest they were Gudjeratis from India (Halls 1965: 4), Chinese (Levathes 1994; Worsley 1955: 2), Dutch, or even Portuguese (Mountford 1956-64: 334). In one extreme case, they were considered to be voyagers from the moon and were brought to the attention of the science fiction writer Von Daniken (E. Saffi pers. comm. 1993). It is fair to say that this question represents one of the longer standing puzzles of northern Australian history and anthropology (Capell 1965: 68).*⁴⁴

Regardless of worldviews, what the research to date seems to show is that some form of pre-Macassan micro and meso dialogue occurred, and one could posit that if they were Muslims, it may have instigated the early syncretic absorption of elements of Islamic beliefs and practices into the local Dreaming. Whether this happened before the Macassan voyages or is solely the influence of the later Macassan trepang fishermen is an issue that may (or may not) be discovered with further studies.

⁴¹ Ian S. McIntosh, "Pre-Macassans at Dholtji? Exploring One of North-East Arnhem Land's Great Conundrums," ed. Peter Veth, *Strangers on the Shore : Early Coastal Contact in Australia* (Canberra: National Museum of Australia, 2008). 146.

⁴² "Allah and the Spirit of the Dead the Hidden Legacy of Pre-Colonial Indonesian/ Aboriginal Contact in North-East Arnhem Land," 137.

⁴³ *ibid.*

⁴⁴ Ian S. McIntosh, "Who Are the Bayini?," *The Beagle, Records of the Museums and Art Galleries of the Northern Territory* 12 (1995): 193.

This early contact may be further supported by the radio-carbon dating of rock paintings from north-western Arnhem Land. Campbell Macknight's 1976 research "returned radio-carbon dates with ages of approximately 500–800 BP⁴⁵, or AD 1170–1520,"⁴⁶ well before the currently assumed establishment of the trepang trade. These dates had been discounted due to issues with dating the site-specific materials collected, especially the burnt remains of mangrove wood charcoal.⁴⁷ Later evidence dating beeswax samples deposited over rock paintings depicting typically non-Indigenous subjects by Tacon et al. posited that the actual contact dates might be in the range of Macknight's original (and previously discounted) dates. One image returned a "99.7% probability that the beeswax over it was made between AD 1517 and 1664."⁴⁸

Given historical evidence is mostly limited to a range of oral histories, much of the pre-Macassan contact may be viewed as contestable, such is our modern insistence on documentation and evidence over oral history. However, for Indigenous peoples, this is not an issue. It is, and was, their means of accepted historiography and for them, forms a significant part of their heritage. McIntosh highlights the fact that stories collected by Warner (1920s),⁴⁹ Ronald and Catherine Berndt (1940s)⁵⁰ and Charles Mountford (1950s)⁵¹ correlate with those told to McIntosh by Indigenous elder, David Burrumarra, in 1994.⁵² He also points out that the pre-Macassans left no record of trepang fishing in the stories, something that differentiates them from the later arrivals.⁵³

Just who these people were is not definitely known; some versions tend to suggest that the 'Baijini were of European origin, but an analysis of relevant mythology, expressed in songs, strongly implies that they were traders from the west, possibly early Malaysians. Native informants

⁴⁵ Before Present

⁴⁶ Campbell Macknight, *The Voyage to Marege* (Melbourne, Vic: Melbourne University Press, 1976), 69.

⁴⁷ Scott Mitchell, "Culture Contact and Indigenous Economies on the Cobourg Peninsula, Northwestern Arnhem Land." (Northern Territory University, 1994), 54-56.

⁴⁸ Taçon et al., "A Minimum Age for Early Depictions of Southeast Asian Praus in the Rock Art of Arnhem Land, Northern Territory," 6.

⁴⁹ W. Lloyd Warner, "Malay Influence on the Aboriginal Cultures of North-Eastern Arnhem Land," *Oceania* 2,4 (1932).

⁵⁰ R.M. Berndt and C.H. Berndt, "Secular Figures of Northeastern Arnhem Land," *American Anthropologist* 51.2 (1949).

⁵¹ C.P. Mountford, *Records of the American– Australian Scientific Expedition to Arnhem Land: Volume One, Art, Myth, and Symbolism* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1956-1964).

⁵² McIntosh, "Pre-Macassans at Dholtji? Exploring One of North-East Arnhem Land's Great Conundrums," 147.

⁵³ *ibid.*

emphatically state that these 'Baijini were not Macassan, as they had lighter skin, "the golden copper color of the flying fox," being a comparison used constantly for them in the songs.⁵⁴

At this distance, and with scant clear records, an accurate picture is difficult to construct. The evidence at this stage does appear to point to a group of explorers, possibly over four waves,⁵⁵ having some sort of connection with the north of Australia before the Macassans. McIntosh also contends that:

... the actions of Macassans and possibly other voyagers to the Australian coast have become the basis of a sacred law relevant in contemporary Aboriginal dealings with non-Aborigines. From this perspective, I suggest that the search for a single group by the name Baijini, is misplaced. More important is it to ask, why do some people use this category, while others do not?⁵⁶

As discussed above, just who these people were, is still an issue of conjecture. "Some versions imply that they were possibly of European origin, but most of the relevant mythology suggests that they were early traders from the East Indies."⁵⁷ Regardless, they seem to have initiated positive micro and meso-level dialogue at a very early stage.

In contemporary times, this relationship has been represented by the late Yolngu musician Dr.G. Yunupingu in his song "Bayini", released in 2011.

The words in the song refer to many families sitting together on the beach looking to waves and sea, the horizon, contemplating. Long ago from over the horizon the Baijini came to Yolngu country.⁵⁸

Having been written hundreds of years after the interactions, Dr G's lyrics symbolise the strength of the dialogue that formed positive relationships, as well as the long memory of fruitful interaction involving the Indigenous peoples of Arnhem Land and the people we have come to call the Baijini. Although of minor historical significance, the lyrics and meaning in the song demonstrate a long memory of the dialogue and a yearning for, and

⁵⁴ Berndt and Berndt, "Secular Figures of Northeastern Arnhem Land," 219.

⁵⁵ McIntosh, "Who Are the Baijini?," 194.

⁵⁶ *ibid.*

⁵⁷ R.M. Berndt and C.H. Berndt, *Arnhem Land: Its History and Its People* (Melbourne, Vic.: Chesire, 1954), 34.

⁵⁸ Music News, "Gurrumul to Release 'Bayini' Featuring Sarah Blasko," accessed 1 Sep 2019.

respect towards the Baijini. Whether they came from Indonesia, were travellers from further afield or part of the spiritual Dreaming world, again this is an area of research that is yet to be confirmed from the contemporary historiographical perspective.

Indigenous protocols require that visitors wait at the boundary in order to gain access to the territory of others. Somehow, the pre-Macassans negotiated this barrier to establish dialogue. Again, regardless as to whether the Baijini were Macassans, Malays, Europeans or part of the various Middle Eastern Caliphates or Sultanates, this early pre-Macassan dialogue would have necessarily commenced at the micro-level, with small groups of sailors negotiating these protocols in order to rest, recuperate, trade or inhabit. If McIntosh's discussion with Burrumarra are correct, and these pre-Macassan visitors were, in fact, Muslims, or "followers of Allah,"⁵⁹ then this may represent one of the initial connections and early dialogue between Islam and Indigenous Australians.

If the oral tradition of "hundreds of houses stretching along the Cape [with] vibrant settlements where Yolngu and Balanda men practise iron-making"⁶⁰ has any historical support, the dialogue developed to a meso-level. Additionally, if the term Balanda is an accurate representation, then it may be that these people were in fact from the other side of the world. Whoever they were, over time, they apparently negotiated protocols to allow visitation rights to the various Indigenous Nations land and resources.

Taking the definition of macro-level dialogue as 'national', then it is possible that the early contact and interactions that occurred with various Indigenous people of Arnhem Land may represent the highest level of social interaction at the time, or possibly since. According to McIntosh, this pre-Macassan dialogue represented a 'high water mark' in terms of coexistence."⁶¹ This pre-Macassan period is best demonstrated by Burrumarra who told Ian Macintosh that the:

...message of the past was wrapped within a vision of partnership called 'membership and remembrance', by which he meant the peaceful

⁵⁹ McIntosh, *Between Two Worlds: Essays in Honour of the Visionary Aboriginal Elder, David Burrumarra*, 101.

⁶⁰ McIntosh, "Pre-Macassans at Dholtji? Exploring One of North-East Arnhem Land's Great Conundrums," 145.

⁶¹ "Unbirri's Pre-Macassan Legacy, or How the Yolngu Became Black," ed. Marshall Clark and Sally K May, *Macassan Heritage and History* (Canberra: ANU E-Press, 2013). 96.

coexistence of 'blacks' in a 'white' world and 'whites' in a 'black' world. When each party respected and honoured that which was most sacred to the other, and recognised that strength lay in unity, we have a mental image of what Dholtji represented in the Warramiri worldview.⁶²

This respect, coexistence and peaceful dialogue seemed to flow over to the following Macassan period during the initial stages, however by the time of Matthew Flinders' voyage in 1802; it appears that relationships may have sunk below previous peaceful levels, effectively dissolving the previous positive micro and meso levels of dialogue.

4.2.3 Dialogue with the Macassans, Malays and others

Regardless of the existence of any pre-Macassan Muslim contact, what has been established is that before the commencement of the colony of New South Wales in 1788, relationships and dialogue existed between Muslim Macassan fishermen⁶³ and the Yolngu peoples, one of the many Indigenous Nations of North-Eastern Arnhem land. Australia's Indigenous peoples have strict protocols surrounding access to country, often treating uninvited strangers as trespassers and liable to summary justice.⁶⁴ McIntosh raises the prospect that a treaty was in place and Macassans may have "perhaps only briefly, at the very beginning of the trade, at places like Dholtji ... live[d] according to the principles of Aboriginal law."⁶⁵ The actual starting date for this contact has been debated. However, the general consensus appears to indicate that a favourable trading relationship had been established sometime between the 1720s and the 1740s,⁶⁶ with the first European reports of the Australian trepang trade being recorded in 1754 in Batavia.^{67 68}

At no stage did the Macassan, or the other groups such as the Malays or Bugis ever make serious land grabs in Arnhem Land. The regional micro and meso-level dialogue seem to have been peaceful and mutually beneficial, as indicated by the long period of historical connections and interactions outlined below. It seems that it was only the coming of the

⁶² "A Treaty with the Macassans? Burrumarra and the Dholtji Ideal," 169.

⁶³ Macassar, a (Muslim) region in South Sulawesi, Indonesia.

⁶⁴ Lindy Allen, "Message Sticks and Indigenous Diplomacy," in *Conciliation on Colonial Frontiers: Conflict, Performance and Commemoration in Australia and the Pacific Rim*, ed. K Darien-Smith and P Edmonds (New York, NY: Taylor & Francis, 2015), 113-31.

⁶⁵ McIntosh, "A Treaty with the Macassans? Burrumarra and the Dholtji Ideal," 169.

⁶⁶ Ganter, "Muslim Australians: The Deep Histories of Contact," 483.

⁶⁷ Campbell Macknight, "Studying Trepangers," in *Macassan History and Heritage*, ed. Marshall Clark and Sally K. May (Canberra: ANU Press, 2013), 21.

⁶⁸ Batavia, capitol of the Dutch East Indies 1619-1942. Modern day Jakarta, Indonesia

European colonists that changed this outlook. There were localised outbreaks of violence, often as payback or retribution and may have been carried out in fulfilment of breaches of Indigenous law. None of the research available to date demonstrates a sustained level of negative interactions between the various groups, all of whom had inhabited this maritime region in South East Asia for an extended period. Indeed, the worst cases of violence and conflict seem to have been between certain groups on the Tiwi Islands and a range of other Indigenous peoples.⁶⁹ Macknight outlines a number of these localised events and attributes the causation of hostilities to both groups over a range of different reasons; some instigated by the Macassans, other outbreaks initiated by the Indigenous peoples.⁷⁰ One of the big problems in analysing the relationships and dialogue between the two groups is the “major difficulty in estimating the amount of conflict that took place is the tendency for dramatic stories to be remembered at the expense of more normal experience.”⁷¹



Figure 7 Original map of Gowanese or Makassan Empire⁷²

⁶⁹ Regina Ganter, "Reconnecting with South-East Asia," in *Indigenous Mobilities*, ed. Rachel Standfield (Canberra, ACT: ANU Press, 2018), 267.

⁷⁰ Macknight, "Macassans and Aborigines," 288-90.

⁷¹ *The Voyage to Marege*, 88.

⁷² Research Institute for the Environment and Livelihoods, "Re-Discovering 'Marege' – Our Unique Makassan Maritime Legacy," Charles Darwin University, accessed 1 Oct 2019, <https://riel.cdu.edu.au/blog/2012/01/re-discovering-%E2%80%98marege%E2%80%99-%E2%80%93-our-unique-makassan-maritime-legacy>.

The Macassans originated in what today is South Sulawesi during the Gowanese Era (c 1300 – 1945) and had fully embraced Islam by the early 17th century.⁷³ The map above seems to indicate that at some stage the Gowan Empire knew of, and claimed some form of relationship with Arnhem Land and its surrounding seas.

Archaeological evidence of the remains from both campsites and indigenous rock art has been analysed to establish a more accurate date and geographical range. The evidence is crucial in order to fully understand the range, nature and duration of the dialogue between the two groups. In 1954 Ronald and Catherine Berndt posited that the initial trading relationship began “in the early sixteenth century.”⁷⁴ However, Macknight’s 1976 work pointed to a later date, with the “most probable period ... [being] the last quarter of the 17th century.”⁷⁵ Macknight had to contend with some anomalous returns with the radio-carbon dating process of some of his archaeological samples indicating much earlier dates. Recent works have suggested that the interaction between the Macassans and Indigenous nations of Arnhem Land may have pre-dated the initial findings by Macknight,⁷⁶ with one representation of Macassan prau⁷⁷ pointing to a date of around 1577.⁷⁸ Macknight may be correct with his dates regarding the establishment of a full-scale fishing industry operating on Australia northern shores; however, Tacon et al. discussion on the dating of specific archaeological sites is compelling evidence of an even more extended period of contact, possibly including the aforementioned Baijini.

The geographical range of contact is also quite extensive. It would appear that archaeological evidence of Macassan contact exists from the South Wellesley Islands⁷⁹ (south-eastern section of the Gulf of Carpentaria) through to Cape Leveque in the Kimberly Region.⁸⁰ Whilst much of the research surrounds the Arnhem Land region, reports indicate that this trade occurred as far south as Broome, Western Australia, as indicated by the

⁷³ Christian Pelras, "Religion, Tradition and the Dynamics of Islamization in South-Sulawesi," *Archipel* 29, no. 1 (1985): 107.

⁷⁴ Berndt and Berndt, *Arnhem Land: Its History and Its People*, 15.

⁷⁵ Macknight, *The Voyage to Marege*, 97.

⁷⁶ "Macassans and Aborigines."

⁷⁷ Prau, Macassan sailing vessel. Also, prou, perahu. Malay perahu

⁷⁸ Taçon et al., "A Minimum Age for Early Depictions of Southeast Asian Praus in the Rock Art of Arnhem Land, Northern Territory," 6.

⁷⁹ Annette Oertle et al., "At the Margins: Archaeological Evidence for Macassan Activities in the South Wellesley Islands, Gulf of Carpentaria," *Australian Historical Archaeology* 32 (2014).

⁸⁰ I. M. Crawford, "The 'Indonesians'," in *We Won the Victory. Aborigines and Outsiders on the North-East Coast of the Kimberley* (Freemantle, WA: Freemantle Arts Centre Press, 2001), 74.

presence of the imported “tamarind tree (*Tamarindus indica*), which often marks the sites of their [Macassan] former camps.”⁸¹ This indicates a range encompassing around 3,000 km of Australia’s northern coastline, and the Indigenous Nations that existed there seem to have had some contact with the Macassans over at least the last 300 years, but possibly longer.

Other sources of evidence concerning the annual expeditions include the colonial records that show the tonnage of trepang shipped from Macassar to China. For trepang harvested and originating in Northern Australia, Manez and Ferse analysed 200 years of shipping records (1717-1917) to quantify the export market.⁸² Initially (1717-1734) only small quantities were shipped north, however, from 1766 the tonnage rapidly increases, peaking in 1874. If the focus of contact is limited to only the trading relationship, then the figure below supports Macknight’s interpretation of the dates of contact.

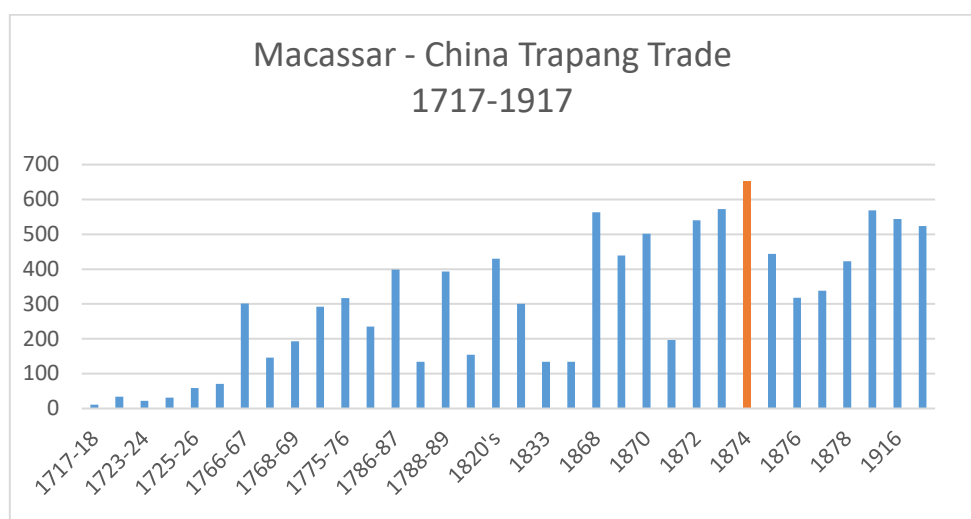


Figure 8 Trepang Trade Macassar to China, 1717-1917⁸³

Irrespective of the actual date, what has been established is that from at least the early 1700s the Macassans sailed down during north-west monsoon season in December each year, staying for about four months.⁸⁴ After establishing a camp, they collected and dried the

⁸¹ Sue O'Connor, *30,000 Years of Aboriginal Occupation: Kimberly, North West Australia* (Canberra: ANH Publications and The Centre for Archaeological Research The Australian National University, Canberra, Australia, 1999), 7.

⁸² K. Schwerdtner Manez and S. C. Ferse, "The History of Makassan Trepang Fishing and Trade," *PLoS One* 5, no. 6 (2010): 4.

⁸³ Based on data in *ibid.*, Table 1

⁸⁴ Marshall Alexander Clark, *Macassan History and Heritage. Journeys, Encounters and Influences*, ed. Marshall Clark and Sally May (Canberra: ANU Press, 2013), 2.

trepang, (aka sea-cucumber or *beche de-mere*) for trade with the Chinese, who in turn prized it for its aphrodisiac qualities, a sort of 18th-century Viagra™. Records of this trade include rock paintings from the area that indicate a prau, a type of vessel the Macassans would have used,⁸⁵ as well as clear written reports of the interaction observed by Dutch sailors in 1754⁸⁶ and Matthew Finders in 1803.⁸⁷

Their encounters with the Indigenous Australians appear to have built up over time. Based on the archaeological evidence it appears safe to assume that Macassan or Malay, and therefore probably Muslim contact, pre-dated Macknight's hypothesised trepang trading period. This is supported by some newer evidence on the dating of beeswax over rock-art, with one site returning results that indicated that "the median age of the beeswax superimposed over the yellow prau is 1577."⁸⁸ At another site "a painting of a prau was found to have a minimum age of AD 1664 and could be much older,"⁸⁹ again pre-dating the accepted trepang trading period. This early contact and dialogue may have been Muslim Macassan or Malay sailors and traders who managed to negotiate the required protocols of the locals. Initial 'outside' contact, and therefore dialogue may have been a lot earlier than has been currently theorised.

⁸⁵ Paul Tacon and Sally K. May, "Rock Art Evidence for Macassan-Aboriginal Contact in Northwestern Arnhem Land," in *Macassan History and Heritage*, ed. Marshall Clark and Sally K. May (Canberra, ACT: ANU Press, 2013), 127-40.

⁸⁶ Macknight, "Studying Trepangers," 20-21.

⁸⁷ Flinders, *A Voyage to Terra Australis*, Book 2.9.

⁸⁸ Taçon et al., "A Minimum Age for Early Depictions of Southeast Asian Praus in the Rock Art of Arnhem Land, Northern Territory," 5.

⁸⁹ *ibid.*, 6.

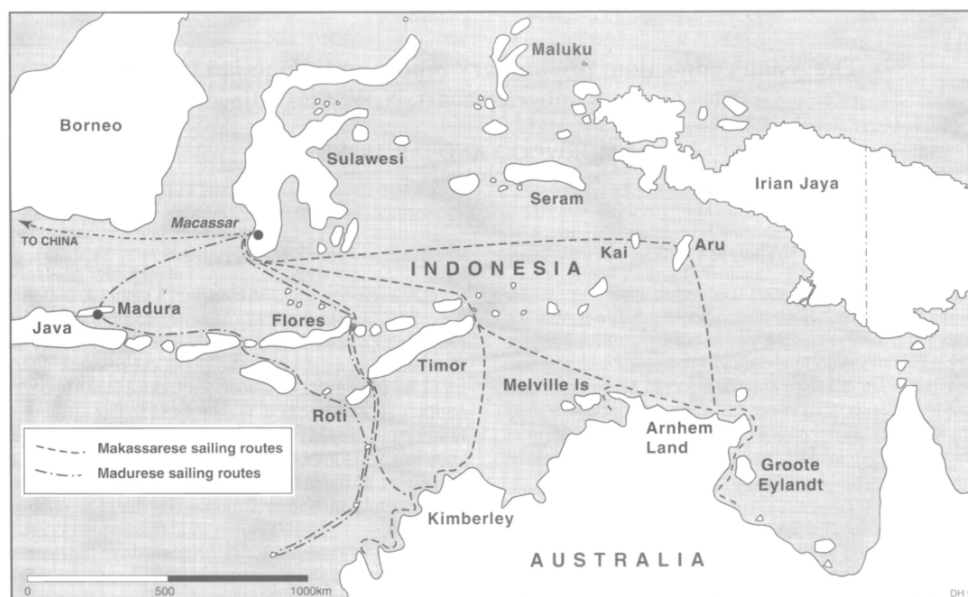


Figure 9 Trade Routes between Macassar and Northern Australia⁹⁰

Linguistic Evidence

Meaningful dialogue requires some form of a common language. During the periods of first contact between the Macassans and Indigenous Australians, this would have been the first issue to be overcome prior to peaceful negotiations. In 1846, trader and navigator George Windsor Earl (1813-1865) pointed to the fact “that nearly all the words the natives use when speaking to us are Macassarese” and that the Australians had “considerable proficiency in their language”.⁹¹ This degree of acceptance of the Macassans and their language was best demonstrated when Earl arrived on the Coburg Peninsula, stating:

On our first arrival, the natives from having been long accustomed to address strangers in this language, used it when conversing with us, and the consequence was, that some vocabularies were collected which consisted almost entirely of this patois under the supposition that it was the language of the Aborigines.⁹²

An early European missionary, Les Perriman, who was active on Groote Eylandt in the early 1920s noted that, “the native people can pick up the language of another tribe quickly,

⁹⁰ Morewood and Hobbs, "The Asian Connection: Preliminary Report on Indonesian Trempang Sites on the Kimberley Coast, N.W. Australia," 198.

⁹¹ James Urry and Michael Walsh, "The Lost Macassar Language of Northern Australia," *Aboriginal History* 5:2 (1981): 92.

⁹² G. Windsor Earl, "On the Aboriginal Tribes of the Northern Coast of Australia," *The Journal of the Royal Geographical Society of London* 16 (1846): 244.

having no written language of their own.”⁹³ Given the diversity of languages that abound, both across the region and the Australian continent, this linguistic agility would have been necessary for day to day interactions with the Indigenous Nations.

Looking at the current research, it appears that some 300 or so loanwords exist, linking the Macassans to the Indigenous Australians from the era prior to European settlement.⁹⁴ One of the clearest examples of loanwords is used for money, a concept that did not exist before first contact. The Yolngu⁹⁵ word for money is ‘*rrupiya*’,⁹⁶ a derivation of the Sanskrit word ‘*rupyah*’ meaning wrought silver.⁹⁷ Somehow this word travelled from India to Arnhem Land; theoretically over hundreds of years, probably via the Indonesian Archipelago.⁹⁸ Another word in common usage across Arnhem Land is ‘*balanda*’, possibly originating in Macassar from ‘*hollander*’, a term used for the European colonisers.⁹⁹

In 1846, G. Windsor Earl observed that:

A very considerable portion of the coast natives have, from frequent intercourse with the Macassar trepang fishers, acquired considerable proficiency in their language, which is a dialect of the Polynesian. They never, indeed, speak it correctly, from their inability to pronounce the letter S, which occurs rather frequently in the Macassar language. Thus berasa becomes “bereja,” trusaan; “turulan,” salat” jala,” &c. They, however, contrive to make themselves well understood, not only by the Macassars but by the people of tribes with whose peculiar dialect they may not be familiar.¹⁰⁰

Earl’s inclusion of the word ‘*salat*’ is interesting. This appears to indicate a loanword from Arabic, representing the second pillar of Islam, the five daily ritual prayers which practising Muslims must observe. Indigenous Australians would have heard and observed these prayers over a long time and been taught the practice by the Baijini or the Macassans.

⁹³ H.L. (Les) Perriman, interview by Kerin Coulehan, 1979, interview TS 102/1, N.T. Archives Services, 5.

⁹⁴ Evans, "Macassan Loanwords in Top End Languages," 46.

⁹⁵ Traditional language group from East Arnhem Land

⁹⁶ Beluah Lowe, *Yolngu English Dictionary* (Winnellie, NT: ARDS Inc, 2004), 163.

⁹⁷ Douglas Harper, "Rupee (N.) in Online Etymology Dictionary," accessed 10 Oct 2018, <https://www.etymonline.com/search?q=rupee>.

⁹⁸ Evans, "Macassan Loanwords in Top End Languages," 68.

⁹⁹ Macknight, "Macassans and Aborigines," 296.

¹⁰⁰ Earl, "On the Aboriginal Tribes of the Northern Coast of Australia," 244.

The use of loanwords is not exclusive to the Yolngu people; linguistic studies suggest Macassan contact with the entire range of Northern Australians.¹⁰¹ The main area of contact was between Melville Island in the west and the Vanderlin Islands to the south of Yolngu country, although archaeological evidence indicates an even greater range.¹⁰² This area of concentrated contact in Arnhem Land contained at least fifteen Indigenous language groups; including Tiwi, the Iwaidjan language group, Ndjebbana, Burarra and others.¹⁰³ Both *rrupiya* and *balanda* (and clear derivatives) were identified in many of the local languages across Arnhem Land, from Groote Island to the Tiwi Islands.¹⁰⁴



Figure 10 Language Groups of the Northern Territory¹⁰⁵

Most of the established loanwords across the region are concerned with the mundane; items of clothing, food and preparation, along with the business of the Macassans, including nautical terms relating to boats and building.¹⁰⁶ A number of the loan-words deal with concepts or objects that would have been unknown or different to those used by the Indigenous Australians. These include the words *axe (bingal)*, *rice (berita)* and *needle (djarung)* as well as the concept of a 'man in charge' or foreman (*bunggawa*).¹⁰⁷ Additionally, several terms with nautical themes and applications are also evident. Given the technology that the Macassans brought with them such as lateen sails, dugout canoes and rudders, coastal dwelling Australians would probably have been intrigued. Whilst there

¹⁰¹ Evans, "Macassan Loanwords in Top End Languages," 46.

¹⁰² Oertle et al., "At the Margins: Archaeological Evidence for Macassan Activities in the South Wellesley Islands, Gulf of Carpentaria."

¹⁰³ Evans, "Macassan Loanwords in Top End Languages," 48-53.

¹⁰⁴ *ibid.*, 70, 80.

¹⁰⁵ © AIATSIS

¹⁰⁶ Evans, "Macassan Loanwords in Top End Languages," 69.

¹⁰⁷ Macknight, "Macassans and Aborigines," 295-96.

are eight words under the category of ‘weapons’, the bulk of the contact vocabulary surrounds the dialogue of life, that needed for day to day communication, or the language of micro-level dialogue. As the contact and language spread, the dialogue seems to have become regional, or meso-level, with common vocabulary utilised to ease communication.

Additionally, Evans points to the number of apparent loan-words words of Austronesian origin existing in the local languages that are not Macassan or Malay. This may link to earlier or later periods of contact and, as Evans highlights, could be erroneous given some of the sources.¹⁰⁸ It would also appear that some Arabic language influence is present. In her work on the issue of language and contact, Sarah Thomason points to the issue that, “Muslims all over the world learn at least a little Classical Arabic for religious purposes, even if they never meet a native speaker of any modern dialect of Arabic.”¹⁰⁹ Regionally, it has been noted that the Macassans speak some “Arabic (the language of religion, as the vast majority of Makasar speakers are Muslims.”¹¹⁰ It is not clear if the loan-words came directly from an Arabic source, or as is more likely; the Arabic source provided the loan to Macassan or Malay, who in turn passed it on to the Indigenous Australians. Regardless, from a review of Evans study, a number of key loan-words appear to have some linguistic base in Arabic.

Arnhem Land Nations have a term for visiting a grave, ‘*jiriah*’, a loan-word from Malay.¹¹¹ This shows links to religious practices via Arabic, probably imported into Indonesia with the early Sufi pioneers. In the South Asian Islamic context, ‘*ziarah*’ refers to formal visits to a revered person (such as a distinguished *kyai*) or a sacred place (tomb or relics of *wali* or holy men) implying hope for *barakah* [blessing] (*ngalap berkah*)”.¹¹² Also included in the Indigenous lexicon is a derivation of the Arabic word for soap, *sabun* becoming *jabu*,¹¹³ with the initial *S* sound becoming a *J*, again reflecting the lack of the *S* sound in local dialects.¹¹⁴

¹⁰⁸ Evans, "Macassan Loanwords in Top End Languages," 86.

¹⁰⁹ Sarah G. Thomason, *Language Contact* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2001), 21.

¹¹⁰ Marija Tabain and Anthony Jukes, "Makasar," *Journal of the International Phonetic Association* 46, no. 1 (2016): 100.

¹¹¹ Evans, "Macassan Loanwords in Top End Languages," 69.

¹¹² A.G. Muhaimin, "The Veneration of Wali and Holy Men: Visits to the Shrines," in *The Islamic Traditions of Cirebon. Ibadat and Adat among Javanese Muslims* (Canberra: ANU Press, 2006), 176.

¹¹³ Evans, "Macassan Loanwords in Top End Languages," 30.

¹¹⁴ Earl, "On the Aboriginal Tribes of the Northern Coast of Australia," 77.

All of this suggests that many of the Indigenous Nations of Northern Australia have had a long association of positive dialogue, including the absorption of loanwords to facilitate communication with the Macassans and the possibility of other pre-Macassan contacts. This common language-driven dialogue led to a knowledge transfer that included technology, ritual and beliefs and narratives of Indigenous Australians making the journey to Macassar. Most of these loanwords relate to the mundane with limited examples that link to religious practices. Many of the loanwords were needed to deal with everyday Macassan items and concepts such as soap and books that had no equivalent in the local languages. Although some linguistic examples exist of religious links (see below), one could speculate that the Macassans had no interest in converting the Indigenous people, the locals picking the religious terminology up through observation of the Islamic practices that travelled with the Macassans and Malays. After all, the Macassans were in Arnhem Land on business, the job of collecting trepang for the Chinese markets took precedence over other activities, including *dawah* or proselytising on behalf of Islam.

Beliefs & Rituals

Indigenous Australian spirituality, also referred to as the Dreaming, is a vastly different concept from the Abrahamic faiths.¹¹⁵ At times it operates outside of the duality of heaven and hell, and similar to Islam, is more of a way of life or Living Culture and makes no distinction between the secular and the sacred.¹¹⁶ As Bill Edwards states:

*The Dreaming ancestors provided the model for life. They established a pattern for the daily round of economic, social, political, cultural and ritual activities.*¹¹⁷

Additionally, the Dreaming appears to have been syncretic as Muslim and Macassan influences have also been found in Indigenous rituals and ceremonies in Arnhem Land. This does not mean that they adopted Islam as their religion, more that they observed, mimicked and integrated what they saw and heard into their own rituals and practices. The best example of this ability to mimic what Indigenous Australians saw and heard was observed and commented on by Charles Dickens in 1859 who noted:

¹¹⁵ See Stanner, "Introduction." for more on this concept.

¹¹⁶ Edwards, "Living the Dreaming," 83.

¹¹⁷ *ibid.*, 84.

*Bungaree, like many of the aborigines of New South Wales, was an amazing mimic. The action, the voice, the bearing, the attitude, the walk, of any man, he could personate with astonishing minuteness. It mattered not whether it was the attorney-general stating a case to a jury, the chief justice sentencing a culprit to be hanged, a colonel drilling a regiment in the barrack-square, a Jew bargaining for old clothes, a drunken sailor resisting the efforts of the police to quiet him—King Bungaree could, in mere dumb show, act the scene in such a way as to give you a perfect idea of it.*¹¹⁸

Berndt and Berndt also commented that, “the Aborigines have always been keen observers; and Baijini customs and activity provided them with much material for discussion, which inspired the many stories extant today and served as a basis for the traditional Baijini song cycle.”¹¹⁹

This ability to mimic and copy what they observed seems to have been incorporated into at least one of the Arnhem Land Nations rituals, that of the Mast Ceremony. W. Lloyd Warner provided a detailed *description* of many of the rituals he observed between 1926 and 1929, including the Mast Ceremony, one of the final steps in the mortuary ceremonies in Arnhem Land.¹²⁰ Described as a new song cycle, called the ‘*Wurramu*,’¹²¹ it appears to reflect the raising of a mast, as would have been observed when the Macassans erected their masts to return home at the end of the trepang season.

During his time in Arnhem Land, Warner observed the ceremony alongside his informant and guide, Mahkarolla (d 1957) who provided a running commentary. As the community members arrive, a “chorus sings ‘*Oh-a-ha-la!!*’, while the mast is laid down. When it is picked up again, they sing; *O-o-o-o-a-ha-la! A-ha-la!! A-ha-la!!*”¹²² The phonetic similarity between sections of this phrase and the Arabic word for God, *Allah*, is apparent, as is the possibility that this represents a version of Islam’s initial statement of faith, the *shahadah*, ‘*lā ’ilāha ’illā llāh*, (there is no god but God) and was taught or demonstrated as a form of *dhikr* by the Sufi Macassans. Warner was also advised that the Macassan fisherman, “sang out when he raised a mast and when he did that all of us black men ran

¹¹⁸ Charles Dickens, "Bungaree, King of the Blacks. (from Dickens' All the Year Round.)," *Sydney Morning Herald*, 26 Aug 1859. 3.

¹¹⁹ Berndt and Berndt, *Arnhem Land: Its History and Its People*, 38.

¹²⁰ Warner, *A Black Civilisation. A Study of an Australian Tribe*, 430-33.

¹²¹ McIntosh, "Islam and Australia's Aborigines," 59.

¹²² Warner, *A Black Civilisation. A Study of an Australian Tribe*, 430.

from our camps to see him go away because all of us knew then that the Macassar was ready to go away.”¹²³ Warner’s informant also noted that, “this is all the same as that dead man because he is ready to go away.”¹²⁴ Following the initial incantation, “two men in unison say what the natives believe to be a Macassar prayer (*Djel-la-war*, Malay term); ‘*Sil-li-la-mo-ha-mo ha-mo-sil-li-li*’,¹²⁵ which may be “very like [the Arabic] ‘*salli ala Muhammed nil murselin*’ which [may] mean, “Invoke blessings on Muhammad who was sent.”¹²⁶ Warner’s informant also described the phrase as “just the same as amen.”¹²⁷

This is followed by the mantra ‘*si-li-nai-yu ma-u-lai*’, “asking something in the clouds or maybe it is in the moon,” however it may also be translated from Arabic as meaning, “blessing on us our Master (God).”¹²⁸ Then comes the phrase, ‘*Ra-bin-a-la la-ha-ma-ha-ma*’ which McIntosh associates with Islamic rites and “the passage of the soul of the deceased to a heavenly abode above, the abode of Allah.”¹²⁹ When sung at this stage of a funeral ceremony, it may be a replication of the recitation of the Qur’an over sick or dead, translated as, “Our Lord [a word is missing here, or it could have become shortened or abbreviated during conversation. It could be ‘*salli*’] ...upon Muhammed. Most likely it can mean ‘Our Lord have mercy on Muhammed.’”¹³⁰ After the body is placed in the grave “everyone including men, women, and children, throws a certain amount of earth into the open grave.”¹³¹ This practice is common in Islam, and other Abrahamic religions around the world in line with the concept that humankind was created from the earth, should be returned to it and will come forth at another time. (Q 20:55 and Gen 3:19). Other claims surrounding the adoption of Islamic practice may also include the “widespread Muslim practice of returning at the third, seventh, fortieth and one hundredth days after the burial,”¹³² although these claims are focussed on Austronesians in general and has not been recorded explicitly in Australia’s Indigenous societies.¹³³

¹²³ *ibid.*

¹²⁴ *ibid.*, 431.

¹²⁵ *ibid.*

¹²⁶ Translated by Associate Professor Salih Yucel, Lecturer in Islamic Studies at Australian Catholic University, and Charles Sturt University

¹²⁷ Warner, *A Black Civilisation. A Study of an Australian Tribe*, 431.

¹²⁸ Translated by Associate Professor Salih Yucel.

¹²⁹ McIntosh, "Islam and Australia's Aborigines," 53.

¹³⁰ Translated by Associate Professor Salih Yucel.

¹³¹ Warner, *A Black Civilisation. A Study of an Australian Tribe*, 432.

¹³² Haveric, *History of Islam and Muslims in Australia: Early Encounters, Settlements and Communities Prior to the 1940's*, 42.

¹³³ Reid, "Continuity and Change in the Austronesian Transition to Islam and Christianity," 341.

Given the current view, most clearly espoused by Zulkifli that, “most scholars studying the history of the spread of Islam in Indonesia agree that Sufis played a major role in the Islamisation of the Indonesian archipelago”¹³⁴ and that they “have the ability to compromise or blend Islam with religious practices / beliefs rather than change local beliefs.”¹³⁵ This could indicate that the repetition of the above phrase derives from the Sufi practice of *dhikr*, where a follower of Sufism chants repetitions of a short phrase, invoking the glory of God. In (Sufi) Islam:

*the dhikr is given to a spiritual seeker on the path by the spiritual master. It is believed that the power of the remembrance of God has the unique ability to purify the heart of its flaws and connect the heart of the Muslim to God.*¹³⁶

If this quasi-Arabic phrase does represent a form of *dhikr*, it demonstrates another example of syncretism between Islam and the Indigenous Dreaming of Arnhem Land and raises the possibility of *da'wah* as a secondary function of the traders. Additionally, this phrase and the inclusion of a heavenly abode in Indigenous Peoples rituals and stories seems to indicate a form of duality, showing the influence of the Muslim Macassans and importantly, the existence of a micro and meso level inter-religious dialogue between these two long-time trading partners. Berndt and Berndt believed that “Aboriginal religion may have been influenced considerably by association with these traders, who were nominally Mohammedan but retained a great many of their [Macassan] indigenous beliefs.”¹³⁷ Further, “McIntosh emphasises that Yolngu never embraced Islam as a faith; rather, they incorporated elements of what they observed from their Indonesian visitors into their own cosmology.”¹³⁸ This syncretic nature also led to McIntosh’s observations of “Yolngu women praying to the sunset and invoking the name Allah, as is the custom at this place for this clan.”¹³⁹ This issue can be problematic as Cook and Yucel pointed out, “Islamic

¹³⁴ Zulkifli, "Sufism in Java: The Role of the Pesantren in the Maintenance of Sufism in Java" (Australian National University, 1994), 10.

¹³⁵ Dwi Afrianti, "Sufism Scholars Network in the Middle East, India, and Indonesia," *International Journal of Nusantara Islam* 4, no. 1 (2016): 81.

¹³⁶ Earle Waugh, "Dhikr," ed. R. C. Martin, vol. 1, *Encyclopedia of Islam and the Muslim World* (New York, NY, IL: Macmillan Reference USA, . Gale eBooks 2004), <https://link-gale-com.ezproxy1.acu.edu.au/apps/doc/CX3403500122/GVRL?u=acuni&sid=GVRL&xid=07cfd440>.

¹³⁷ Berndt and Berndt, *Arnhem Land: Its History and Its People*, 45.

¹³⁸ Regina Ganter, "Remembering Muslim Histories of Australia," *La Trobe Journal* 89 (2012): 59.

¹³⁹ Abu Bakr Sirajuddin Cook and Salih Yucel, "Australia's Indigenous Peoples and Islam: Philosophical and Spiritual Convergences between Belief Structures," *Comparative Islamic Studies* 12, no. 1-2 (2019): 179.

prayer is prohibited during the rising and setting of the sun,”¹⁴⁰ and “further exploration is needed to establish to what extent this represents philosophical and spiritual influence and incorporation.”¹⁴¹ This may also be another representation of the Sufi *dhikr*, which can be performed at any time, including sunset or sunrise. It may also be a misinterpretation of the nuanced timing of the Muslim prayers, especially the *maghrib salat* (early evening) that occurs after sunset, and could be problematic as the length of twilight varies across the seasons. This may also be due to errors in the transmission of the practice, given the extended time period between constant contact in the 19th century and McIntosh’s observations in 2018.

Some previous discussion has also been given to an Islamic influence surrounding circumcision,¹⁴² a practice embraced by Abraham as part of his covenant with God and subsequently adopted by Jews and Muslims. The best evidence to date suggests that this was a long-standing pre-existing practice, owing more to environmental and preventative health measure as opposed to a religious rite.¹⁴³ Given the range and extent of this practice in Australia and beyond, this connection can be safely discounted.

Warner seems to encapsulate the overlapping nature of religion, dialogue and trade succinctly. He observed that:

...the Malay did not come to North Australia to establish outposts of his civilisation and promote agriculture, nor had he any desire to proselytise the aborigines to worship his gods; he came to trade for highly valued articles on which the natives placed little value, and when he had accomplished his purpose he was glad to go home to Macassar, Koepang, or Timor Laut.¹⁴⁴

Regardless, observations by the Indigenous peoples of the Muslims practices, in association with micro and meso-level dialogue seem to have led to the syncretic absorption of some

¹⁴⁰ *ibid.*

¹⁴¹ *ibid.*

¹⁴² Haveric, *History of Islam and Muslims in Australia: Early Encounters, Settlements and Communities Prior to the 1940's*, 44.

¹⁴³ John Morrison, "The Origins of the Practises of Circumcision and Subincision among the Australian Aborigines," *The Medical Journal of Australia* 1 (1967): 125.

¹⁴⁴ Warner, "Malay Influence on the Aboriginal Cultures of North-Eastern Arnhem Land," 480.

aspects of Islamic practices and rituals into local customs and may demonstrate a secondary purpose of the Macassans during their visits.

Technology Transfer

This inter-religious dialogue, including the exchange of language and ideas, also led to a technological transfer involving both groups. The Macassan brought a range of previously unseen goods and chattels and a range of new maritime technology.¹⁴⁵ Warner reported that in return for trepang and sandalwood, “the natives received in return dugout canoes, rice, molasses, tobacco, cloth for sarongs, belts, knives, tomahawks, gin, and pipes, as well as other articles of trade.”¹⁴⁶ Pottery was also included, as was the new technology of iron. Indigenous groups adapted and adopted only those that had relevance for them. Pottery seems to have had limited use, and accordingly was never developed locally. “The most important of the more durable commodities were tools: metal knives, axes and spear-heads, which partly displaced stone artefacts, and the dugout canoe, which partly displaced the bark canoe.”¹⁴⁷ The Indigenous people were ingenious at adapting new technology when looking for solutions. During their 1901–02 expedition in the region, Frank Gillen and Baldwin Spencer “encountered two men holding crocodile spears they had adapted by adding prongs made from iron nails and the blade of a butcher’s knife.”¹⁴⁸ In return, “The Malays also bought spears and spear-throwers from the blacks, but it is likely this was done in modern times because of their interest in them as mementoes rather than as weapons.”¹⁴⁹ The Macassans also required timber for the local treatment of the trepang and took some back to Macassar for use in construction.¹⁵⁰ Macknight states that, “it would be difficult to obtain much good timber in the face of aboriginal hostility....[which] presupposes a fairly high level of communication and trust.”¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁵ Thomason, *Language Contact*, 21.

¹⁴⁶ Warner, "Malay Influence on the Aboriginal Cultures of North-Eastern Arnhem Land," 480.

¹⁴⁷ Worsley, "Early Asian Contacts with Australia," 4.

¹⁴⁸ Frank. J Gillen, *Gillen's Diary. The Camp Jottings of F. J. Gillen on the Spencer and Gillen Expedition across Australia 1901–1902* (Adelaide: Libraries Board of South Australia., 1968), 297-98.

¹⁴⁹ Warner, "Malay Influence on the Aboriginal Cultures of North-Eastern Arnhem Land," 481.

¹⁵⁰ Marshall Clark and Sally K May, "Understanding the Macassans: A Regional Approach ", ed. Marshall Clark and Sally K May, *Macassan History and Heritage Journeys, Encounters and Influences* (Canberra, ACT: ANU EPress, 2013). 2.

¹⁵¹ Macknight, *The Voyage to Marege*, 45.

Travellers to Macassar

Stories abound of Indigenous peoples making the journey back to Macassar with the trepang fleet. Warner states that:

*Many of the black men went back to the Malay country with the returning fleets and stayed through the intervening season. There are a few cases on record of men who stayed permanently and married Malay women, but this was very rare.*¹⁵²

Perriman observed in 1921 “a native who could speak a little English, he called himself ‘Young-fellow’ and said that he had been taken by the Macassar people, when he was a boy, to their country.”¹⁵³ Likewise, Macknight found that in 1874 “there were said to be 17 Aborigines, mainly from Port Essington, living in Macassar.”¹⁵⁴ Concerning both local contact and travels to Macassar, he states, “this must have required a minimum level of trust on both sides,”¹⁵⁵ indicating significant levels of cooperation and dialogue. This seems to have occurred with Indigenous people across the entire range of contact, not just one specific group.¹⁵⁶ Macknight also stated that, “all Aborigines were returned to Australia before the end of the [trepang] industry in 1907,”¹⁵⁷ however, as Ganter recounts:

*Ibu Saribanong Nganne (born 1904), was interviewed in Macassar by Peter Spillett in 1985; she remembered two Aboriginal men who, until the 1930s, had lived in Dg Remba’s house to guard the empang (fishponds), clean the mushollah (prayer house) and look after the water pumping installation made from bamboo pipes. She also recalled the names of two (among 10 other) Aboriginal children her father had had with several Arnhem Land women. Ibu Saribanong implored Spillett to find her Aboriginal family for her, which he did; the following year she met Laklak Burarrwanga and her cousins from Arnhem Land.*¹⁵⁸

Nganne’s statement shows that some Indigenous Australians not only experienced the dialogue both as a majority in Australia but also as a minority while in Macassar. Some Australian First Nations peoples remained in Macassar, however, those who did return to

¹⁵² Warner, "Malay Influence on the Aboriginal Cultures of North-Eastern Arnhem Land," 481.

¹⁵³ Perriman, "Interview with Les Perriman," 5.

¹⁵⁴ Macknight, "Macassans and Aborigines," 286.

¹⁵⁵ *ibid.*

¹⁵⁶ Tindale, "Natives of Groote Island and of the West Coast of the Gulf of Carpentaria, Parts I and II.," 130.

¹⁵⁷ Macknight, "Macassans and Aborigines," 286.

¹⁵⁸ Ganter, "Reconnecting with South-East Asia," 11.

Australia would have been able to articulate the experience of being a minority ‘other’, possibly being able to see both sides of the dialogue issue.

This technology transfer was enabled through dialogue. Whilst the Indigenous people would have observed these goods, the manufacturing of them could only have occurred with a certain level of dialogue, explaining and demonstrating the step by step process involved in creating the final product. This would not have happened if the two groups were in opposition, indicating that there must have been some levels of peaceful cooperation and positive micro or meso-level dialogue at the time and willingness for the Macassans to pass the knowledge on.

The memory of this positive relationship lives strong in the memory of the Indigenous people of the region. In 2008 one senior elder “described the relationship in the following way:

.... he was really emotional and he said, he was basically saying that ... the difference between the contact between Macassans and whites was so startlingly different. He started crying. He was saying that when white men came they took everything. There was conflict. The Macassans didn't. They were our friends. And it was a very stark, you know, contrast that he was trying to make. (Interview 5)¹⁵⁹

The words of Indigenous Elder and Federal Senator, Professor Patrick Dodson (b 1948) bring clarity to the nature of the pre-colonial dialogue in Northern Australia. He highlights the social cohesion, multi-level dialogue, mutual respect and social cohesion that occurred in Northern Australia over 250 years ago between Macassan Muslims and the Indigenous people of Arnhem Land. At a 2009 Western Sydney University conference on Equity and Diversity, with particular focus on issues concerning Islam and Australia he stated:

Perhaps if the model of engagement established by the Muslims of Macassa and the Aboriginal people of Northern Australia had been adopted by the English when they decided to invade in 1788 then the

¹⁵⁹ Rebecca H. Bilous, "Making Connections: Hearing and Sharing Macassan-Yolŋu Stories," *Asia Pacific Viewpoint* 56, no. 3 (2015): 369.

*history between us all over the past 220 years may have been a very different story.*¹⁶⁰

4.2.4 Conversion to Islam

Although linguistic examples exist describing religious links between Islam and the Dreaming, it has been suggested that the Macassans had no interest in converting the Indigenous people.¹⁶¹ This is based on the view that the Macassans were in Arnhem Land on business; the job of collecting trepang for the Chinese markets took precedence over other activities, including *da'wah* or proselytising on behalf of Islam. Despite this view, it may be that *da'wah* was a secondary aim of the Macassans (and possibly the Baijini), with the Indigenous Australians either picking the religious terminology up organically through observation or being explicitly taught the Islamic practices of *salat* (prayer). Given some of the linguistic evidence above, they may have been explicitly taught the first pillar and foundational statement of Islam, the *shahadah* and its opening phrase, ‘there is no God but God’, a phrase or *dhikr* that has become embedded in the rituals and practices of the Yolngu. It is accepted that, “for those who were not born into Islam, stating this declaration out loud in front of witnesses is their first step in conversion to Islam.”¹⁶²

To be Muslim does not necessarily mean to practise everything. It would appear that many of the Macassans were Sufis, well known for their ability as “peaceful ‘bridge-builders’ with many different faith traditions and cultures,”¹⁶³ and a “very humanistic approach to religion and society.”¹⁶⁴ This humanist approach allowed for fluidity and adaptation of practice, as required by the local communities they came in contact with. As many Indigenous males were already circumcised and given pigs were not imported into Australia until after European contact,¹⁶⁵ (meaning the prohibition on eating pork was not an issue), some Indigenous people could have been seen as what Haveric calls “unfinished”

¹⁶⁰ Patrick Dodson, "Key Note Address" (paper presented at the Equity and Diversity Conference, Western Sydney University, 22-06-2009 15:14:58 2009), 1.

¹⁶¹ Ganter, "Remembering Muslim Histories of Australia," 59.

¹⁶² Vincent J. Cornell, *Voices of Islam* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2007), 8.

¹⁶³ Dzavid Haveric, *Muslims Making Australia Home. Immigration and Community Building*. (Melbourne, Vic: Melbourne University Press, 2019), 227.

¹⁶⁴ *ibid.*

¹⁶⁵ NSW Government, "Feral Pig Biology and Distribution," Department of Primary Industries, accessed 23 Nov 2019, <https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/biosecurity/vertebrate-pests/pest-animals-in-nsw/feral-pigs/feral-pig-biology>.

converts.¹⁶⁶ As this would have required the *shahada*, possibly in a localised form, as well *salat*, the daily prayers observed by McIntosh, there is again some evidence of *da'wah*.

These variations in practice that were encountered may be due to the depth of understanding that the Macassans had regarding Islam. Depending on the exact date the Islam arrived in Macassar and the time it took to become ingrained and replace previous beliefs allows for some speculation how much they actually understood and whether they were adopting correct practices, or merely mirroring what they thought was required. This may account for some of the variations, such as the consumption of arak, the alcohol of choice in South East Asia. In some instances, the Macassans may have been cultural Muslims, nominally selecting the practices and beliefs as they felt necessary, without the imperative imbued in those with a longer association and understanding.

In her work on Indigenous mobility, Lynette Russell outlines that, “Yolngu, Yanyuwa and many other groups talk of their kin over the seas and there are familial ties between Northern Australian Aboriginal people and the inhabitants of Sulawesi and other islands.”¹⁶⁷ This included several Indigenous women who married and returned with their husbands to Macassar.¹⁶⁸ As Muslims are required to marry within their faith, or “people of the book” (Q 5.5) this demonstrates some existence of conversion to Islam, either entirely or as Haveric notes, some form of “unfinished conversion.”¹⁶⁹ Again, this provides some evidence of *da'wah*.

Allport’s contact theory comes into play when looking at the interactions between the Macassans and Indigenous Australians. His work on prejudice places some emphasis on the language used between in-groups and out-groups.¹⁷⁰ A vital element of the interactions outlined above seems to demonstrate a lack of negativity in the terms used by the two groups. Even today, the terms Macassan and Baijini have positive connotations, and as demonstrated by both Burrumarra and Gurrumul, seem to indicate a longing for the positive

¹⁶⁶ Haveric, *History of Islam and Muslims in Australia: Early Encounters, Settlements and Communities Prior to the 1940's*, 39.

¹⁶⁷ Lynette Russell, "Looking out to Sea: Indigenous Mobility and Engagement in Australia's Coastal Industries," in *Indigenous Mobilities. Across and Beyond the Antipodes*, ed. Rachel Standfield (Canberra, ACT: ANU Press, 2018), 169.

¹⁶⁸ Haveric, *Muslims Making Australia Home. Immigration and Community Building.*, 188-89.

¹⁶⁹ *History of Islam and Muslims in Australia: Early Encounters, Settlements and Communities Prior to the 1940's*, 39.

¹⁷⁰ Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice*, 178-81.

relationships of times gone by. There seems to have been no racial prejudice, at least along the line posited by Marxian theory, best summarised by O.C. Cox who stated that:

*Race prejudice is a social attitude propagated among the public by an exploiting class for the purpose of stigmatising some group as inferior so that the exploitation of either the group itself or its resources may both be justified.*¹⁷¹

This may be due to the fact that neither party was interested in the overt or outwards exploitation of the other, a situation that would be soundly reversed once the Europeans arrived in Australia, who imparted racial stereotyping and negative language on their descriptions of Indigenous Australians.

Contact theory, again based on Allport's work hypothesises that:

*Prejudice (unless deeply rooted in the character structure of the individual) may be reduced by equal status contact between majority and minority groups in the pursuit of common goals. The effect is greatly enhanced if this contact is sanctioned by institutional supports (i.e., by law, custom or local atmosphere), and provided it is of a sort that leads to the perception of common interests and common humanity between members of the two groups.*¹⁷²

Exactly who formed the majority and minority groups in the Indigenous / Macassan dialogue can be open to speculation. As Macknight points out:

*...the relationship was very different from the stereotype image of a handful of visitors surrounded by a horde of natives, friendly or otherwise. Rather, in most encounters, the Macassans outnumbered the relatively small number of Aborigines in any one neighbourhood, particularly if several praus were working together.*¹⁷³

Regardless, at the peak of the trepanning era, the absorption of ideas, customs and language, along with a lack of recorded large-scale violence, seems to demonstrate the idea that both groups shared common interests and an acceptance of common humanity.

¹⁷¹ O. C. Cox. *Caste, Class and Race*. New York: Doubleday, 1948, 393 in *ibid.*, 209.

¹⁷² *ibid.*, 281.

¹⁷³ Macknight, "Macassans and Aborigines," 285.

As previously stated, at no stage did the Macassan, or the other groups such as the Malays or Bugis ever make serious land grabs in Arnhem Land. The regional micro and meso-level dialogue seem to have been peaceful and mutually beneficial, as indicated by the range of connections and interactions outlined above. It seems that it was only the coming of the European colonists that changed this outlook. This may be due to European record-keeping of early observations and Euro-centric colonial historiography. There were localised outbreaks of violence, often as payback or retribution and may have been carried out in fulfilment of Indigenous law. Macknight outlines a number of these localised events and attributes causation to both groups over a range of different reasons; some instigated by the Macassans, other outbreaks initiated by the Indigenous peoples.¹⁷⁴ One of the big problems in analysing the relationships and dialogue between the two groups is the “major difficulty in estimating the amount of conflict that took place is the tendency for dramatic stories to be remembered at the expense of more normal experience.”¹⁷⁵

This cooperation seems to have ended early during the colonial era, and conflict seems to have arisen between the Indigenous peoples of North Eastern Arnhem Land and the Macassans. When Flinders encountered the Macassan fleet in 1802, he was warned by the captain to avoid the natives as, “they sometimes had skirmishes with the native inhabitants of the coast; Pobasso himself had been formerly speared in the knee, and a man had been slightly wounded since their arrival in this road: they cautioned us much to beware of the natives.”¹⁷⁶ Whilst this is one of the first recorded interactions between a member of the European colonists and the Macassans, it is also one of the few accounts of trouble between the Indigenous people and the trepang fishermen. Although Pobasso was unaware of the settlement at Port Jackson (Sydney), it may be worth speculating that news of the European settlement and its devastating impact on the local Indigenous groups had reached Arnhem Land in the 21 years that had passed since 1788. Given the established nature of the Indigenous ‘bush telegraph’ and the long-standing established trade routes that crisscrossed the continent, this factor cannot be disregarded. Whilst this may be viewed as fanciful, “Walter E Roth, Aboriginal Protector in Queensland from 1898 to 1904, wrote of the *Molonga* ceremony which passed through many clan groups for thousands of kilometres from the Gulf of Carpentaria to the Spencer Gulf, in what is now South Australia” over a

¹⁷⁴ *ibid.*, 288-90.

¹⁷⁵ Macknight, *The Voyage to Marege*, 88.

¹⁷⁶ Flinders, *A Voyage to Terra Australis*, Book 2.9.

period of six years.¹⁷⁷ Whilst this travelling ceremony stopped at significant places for 4-6 days at a time, essential and urgent information could have reasonably been expected to travel with greater rapidity across the country.

Ultimately, this long-running inter-religious dialogue and continuous tradition between the Macassans and the Indigenous people was effectively abolished in 1906 when the Australian Government placed an embargo on the trade.¹⁷⁸ “While among the official arguments put forth for the ban was the need to protect the Aboriginal population from the baneful influence of the Macassans, who imported alcoholic spirits, it rather seems that anti-Asian sentiments played the main role and “the Makassans were prohibited because they were foreigners.”¹⁷⁹ Additionally, it was also a desire to “encourage and protect the local industry.”¹⁸⁰ In doing so, it effectively ended a way of life for the Macassan trepang fisherman, a long term trading partner for northern Australia’s Indigenous Nations. It also marked the end of any cross-cultural and inter-religious dialogue, specifically between Muslims and non-Muslims, at least for some time.

4.3 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the current evidence that indicates the existence of long periods of peaceful relationships, social harmony and ‘*proper*’ dialogue that occurred on a micro and meso level. Initially, the dialogue would have commenced at a micro or individual level as protocols were negotiated and then moved into meso-level dialogue. Over 250 years of interaction by the Macassan trepangers and their predecessors has left a range of positive evidence and long-lasting memories, through the range of extant oral Indigenous histories, as well as the records of early European anthropologists and researchers.

Many previous studies have been done in association with the Yolngu and other Indigenous Nations of Arnhem Land and have established these connections between the Indigenous Australians and Macassan peoples, as well as investigating the nature of the Bajjini or pre-Macassans visitors. As indicated above, this research analyses the evidence of dialogue that has embraced a range of linguistic, cultural, spiritual and archaeological domains, mostly

¹⁷⁷ Val Donovan, "From Coast to Coast: Aboriginal Storylines and Trading Routes," *Queensland Historical Journal* 21,2 (2010): 58.

¹⁷⁸ Ganter, "Muslim Australians: The Deep Histories of Contact," 484.

¹⁷⁹ Schwerdtner Manez and Ferse, "The History of Makassan Trepang Fishing and Trade," 5.

¹⁸⁰ Macknight, *The Voyage to Marege*, 120.

pointing towards positive relationships and heightened levels of social cohesion, as well as a form of *da'wah* between the Baijini, the Macassans and the Indigenous people of Arnhem Land.

All of the evidence appears to indicate the existence of some level of social harmony and '*proper*' dialogue on a micro, meso and macro level. It would have begun at a small scale or micro level and as trust was gained, moved into the domain of meso level dialogue once some form of a common language was established. In turn, as customs and language became further ingrained into both societies, this relationship would have developed into a larger scale or macro-level dialogue. Over two hundred years of interaction by the Macassan trepangers and their predecessors has left a range of positive evidence and long-lasting memories, through the range of extant oral Indigenous histories, as well as the records of early European anthropologists and researchers. None of the research available to date demonstrates a sustained level of negative interactions between the various groups, all of whom had inhabited this maritime region in South East Asia for an extended period. Indeed, the worst cases of violence and conflict seem to have been between certain groups on the Tiwi Islands and a range of other Indigenous peoples.¹⁸¹

As discussed, the seas to the north of Arnhem Land are surrounded by a range of communities, including the early Indonesians, Timor Leste, Papua New Guinea and the Islands of the Torres Straits all of whom have some forms of commonality. This commonality and close regional proximity meant that contact and interaction was probably inevitable at some time in history. The fact the Indigenous Peoples memories focus on the Macassans and Baijini highlight the importance of this contact and ensuing multi-level dialogue.

What is missing from the bulk of the current research is a viewpoint or narrative that the Muslim visitors obtained resources by force; ergo, they must have negotiated a truce or treaty, through dialogue, to enable them to camp for long periods on the coast, despite initial language barriers. The syncretic absorption of spiritual aspects demonstrates the ability of the Indigenous peoples to adapt and absorb new rituals as well as language into their long-standing traditions. Likewise, the use of Macassan, Malay and in a limited form, Arabic,

¹⁸¹ Ganter, "Reconnecting with South-East Asia," 267.

has transferred into the local vocabulary and demonstrates sustained levels of dialogue, some of it the form of religious practice and ritual. Whilst this chapter posits that the secondary purpose of the Macassans was that of *da'wah*, or spreading the reach of Islam into the north of Australia, especially when one considers the influential role of traders and Sufis in the prior spread of Islam in the Indonesian Archipelago, it is an area in need of further research.

Regardless of which of the “followers of Allah”¹⁸² came first, the positive impact of the micro and meso level dialogue between these early Muslim voyagers and Indigenous people of Arnhem Land stands as an example of the impact of positive relations, understanding and social cohesion that can develop between groups of differing faiths. Ultimately, this long term dialogue declined following the banning of the Macassan trepang fleets in 1906; however, the research indicates a legacy of positive dialogue that remains to this day.

¹⁸² McIntosh, *Between Two Worlds: Essays in Honour of the Visionary Aboriginal Elder, David Burrumarra*, 101.

Chapter 5. Colonisation to Federation (1788-1901)

5.1 Overview

This chapter will investigate the nature of post-colonial contact and inter-religious dialogue from colonisation in 1788 until Federation in 1901. Lately, Australia's history with Islam has been the subject of a range of texts covering this era, from scholarly discourse through to fictional narratives. As discussed in the previous chapter, contact with Muslim and Malay fisherman has a long, rich history, and this association continued throughout the period covered by this chapter. As this dialogue was starting to come to an end in the north, new avenues of Muslim and non-Muslim dialogue were tentatively beginning to open in the southern part of Australia.

From the establishment of the Colony of New South Wales, Muslim sailors and convicts maintained a small, yet barely notable presence. Many of them integrated into colonial communities, and without support for their religion, lost much of their rich cultural and religious history. From the 1860s, their presence became more noticeable with the migration of the 'Afghan' cameleers who aided in the European exploration and infrastructure building of the nineteenth century. In doing so, these pioneers created mosques, dedicated Muslim cemeteries and made a range of contributions to a variety of fields in the formative years of modern Australia. The nature of this chapter is to analyse the early Muslim presence and dialogue from the viewpoint of micro and meso-level inter-religious dialogue and the ongoing effects that this has had on Australia.

A range of scholarly research has been constructed around much of the interaction of this, including some key works by Hanifa Deen,¹ Peta Stephenson,² Phillip Jones,³ Dzavid Haveric⁴ and Pamela Rajkowski.⁵ In 2018, the Australian Journal of Islamic Studies published a special edition covering Australia's history with Islam, providing the author with his initial foray into this area of research.⁶ Other pioneers or early converts have

¹ Deen, "Excavating the Past: Australia's Muslims."

² Peta Stephenson, "Keeping It in the Family: Partnerships between Indigenous and Muslim Communities in Australia," *Aboriginal History* 33 (2009).

³ Jones, "'Afghans' and Aborigines in Central Australia".

⁴ Haveric, *History of Islam and Muslims in Australia: Early Encounters, Settlements and Communities Prior to the 1940's*.

⁵ Pamela Rajkowski, *In the Tracks of the Camelmen : Outback Australia's Most Exotic Pioneers / Pamela Rajkowski. - Version Details* (Henley Beach SA: Seaview Press, 2005).

⁶ Sneddon, "The Early History of Micro and Meso Dialogue between Muslims and Non-Muslims in Australia."

provided fodder for writers and researchers, such as the life of Winifred Steger, as told in *The Washerwoman's Dream*.⁷ Lately, a new generation of researchers have looked to unpack the myths and misunderstandings surround some of these pioneers, including Samia Khatun who established that the book erroneously labelled as a Qur'an in the Broken Hill Mosque Museum was in fact "a 500-page volume of Bengali Sufi Poetry,"⁸ something that seems to have gone unnoticed with the previous generation of English speaking researchers.

At times the Muslim pioneers' voices, as well as opposition to them, appeared in the press of the day and this will be researched using the National Library of Australia's online database aggregator, Trove. State, Regional and local libraries will be scoured for records and journals of early explorers and pioneers who interacted with this multifarious diaspora of Muslim migrants.

In summation, this chapter will build upon the author's initial work and develop original research that demonstrates the nature of the sociological levels of dialogue and social harmony (or disharmony) between Muslims and non-Muslims, commencing with the colonisation of Australia in 1788 up until nationhood and Federation in 1901. Accordingly, it will help to complete the gap in academic literature from this period. It will also look to establish the existence of day to day (micro) level dialogue, the impact of language barriers and the issue of physical segregation, which may have precluded any fruitful meso or macro level dialogue between groups.

5.2 The continued South-East Asian connections

As the previous chapter has outlined, there has been a prolonged presence of Islam and Muslims in Australia. Peaceful co-existence, positive micro and meso-level inter-religious dialogue appear to have been the norm in Australia's north. At the beginning of the colonial era, elements of this long-standing relationship began to break down, although the linguistic, technical and other legacies remained.

One of the first documented examples of inter-religious dialogue in the new colony was the contact between Matthew Flinders and the Macassan trepang fleet on Thursday, November 17, 1803, at what was known as the English Company Islands. In his circumnavigation of

⁷ Hilarie Lindsay, "The Story Behind the Washerwoman's Dream," *Southerly* 67,1/2 (2007).

⁸ Khatun, *Australianama*, 2.

Australia, Flinders came across “a canoe full of men; and in a sort of roadsted, at the south end of the same island, there were six vessels covered over like hulks, as if laid up for the bad season.”⁹ Initially, he was unsure as to who they were and why these boats were in the area. However, he had pre-supposed them to be Chinese, then “piratical Ladrones who secreted themselves here from pursuit.”¹⁰ Upon investigation, Flinders:

learned that they were prows from Macassar, and the six Malay commanders shortly afterwards came on board in a canoe. It happened fortunately that my cook was a Malay, and through his means I was able to communicate with them. The chief of the six prows was a short, elderly man, named Pobassoo; he said there were upon the coast, in different divisions, sixty prows, and that Salloo was the commander in chief. These people were Mahometans, and on looking into the launch, expressed great horror to see hogs there; nevertheless they had no objection to port wine, and even requested a bottle to carry away with them at sunset.¹¹

This initial dialogue demonstrates some adaptations and variations within the Macassan Muslim fishermen’s practice and observance of Islam, they were observing the *haram* nature of pork while ignoring the prohibition on alcohol. Whilst cultural adaptations have found their way into some of the world’s great religions; in Islam, the inclusion of these two items is in direct contravention to the Qur’an, as well as the *sunnah*.¹² This incongruence between belief and practice raises the question: were the Macassans caught between a series of ancient animist beliefs and Islam, or did they practice a more culturally appropriate version, based on the acceptance of existing local practices? Another alternative may have been that given an extended absence from home they had relaxed their religious observations being away from the prying eyes of the more observant members of their local community.

Later during the encounter, a further five prows arrived, making the total eleven and there appears to have been some hint of tension on both sides. The Macassans were armed with

⁹ Flinders, *A Voyage to Terra Australis*, Book 2.9.

¹⁰ *ibid.*, 9.

¹¹ *ibid.*

¹² With regards to Alcohol see Qur’an, 5:90, “O you who have believed, indeed, intoxicants (*khamr*), gambling, [sacrificing on] stone altars [to other than God], and divining arrows are but defilement from the work of Satan, so avoid it that you may be successful. For Pork, see Qur’an 2:173, He has only forbidden to you dead animals, blood, the flesh of swine, and that which has been dedicated to other than Allah . But whoever is forced [by necessity], neither desiring [it] nor transgressing [its limit], there is no sin upon him. Indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.

“a short dagger or cress,”¹³ and Flinders’ sailors were carrying firearms. His informant, Pobasso provided valuable information as to the scope of the trepang fleet, indicating, “sixty prows belonging to the Rajah of Boni ... carrying one thousand men.”¹⁴ The first indication of troubles between the Indigenous peoples of Arnhem Land and the Macassans comes from this encounter, with Flinders noting;

*They sometimes had skirmishes with the native inhabitants of the coast; Pobassoo himself had been formerly speared in the knee, and a man had been slightly wounded since their arrival in this road: they cautioned us much to beware of the natives.*¹⁵

It is worth considering that this encounter and the ensuing dialogue provided by the Macassans may have been protectionist in its nature; in that that the fishermen did not want any European interference with the almost exclusive access to what they saw as a rich and valuable source of recurring income. They may have feared that they would lose access or, at the very least come into competition with the new arrivals, something that would happen in later years as the colony grew and expanded outwards. Ultimately, this encounter marks the beginning of a period of hegemonic shift across Australia. When looking at the religious landscape, the course of the next century would see the European Christian influence spreading across the country, often seeking to evangelise the Indigenous Australians as opposed to learning about, and engaging in inter-religious dialogue with their long-standing culture and beliefs.

5.3 The Early Pioneers, 1788-1860

The nature of long-standing relationships between Indigenous peoples, the Land and the outside world changed with the First Fleet's arrival in 1788. Established as a penal colony, New South Wales and Tasmania, along with Norfolk Island, became home to a wide range of cultures and religions. Muslims were present as convicts, as were sailors from many countries around the world. Sailors came and went with the tides, leaving little in the way of meaningful discourse on record. The limited number of non-Christian convicts had little choice but to integrate into the predominantly Protestant Christian colony.

¹³ Flinders, *A Voyage to Terra Australis*, Book 2.9, 10.

¹⁴ *ibid.*

¹⁵ *ibid.*, 11.

As discussed in chapter 3, Governor Phillip's mission included creating a Protestant Christian hegemony at the expense of both the Indigenous People's Dreaming and any alternate religious viewpoints, including Catholicism. At this stage, it is prudent to restate the explicit nature of the place of religion in the new colony, as provided by the English Government that stated:

And it is further Our Royal Will & Pleasure that you do by all proper Methods enforce a due Observance of Religion & good order among all the Inhabitants of the new Settlement and that you do take such steps for the due Celebration of publick Woirship [sic] as circumstances will permit.¹⁶

This was to ensure the establishment of a particular Anglican version of Christianity at the expense of all other religious beliefs, leading to an initial lack of dialogue and acceptance for non-Anglicans, including other Christians such as the Catholic convicts.

The records surrounding religious beliefs for the first convict transport fleets are vague. It would appear that one of the first well-documented Muslim convicts was Zimran Wriam, transported for seven years following his trial at the Assizes of Cornwall.¹⁷ He arrived in Sydney in 1791 on the Third Fleet, was sent to the notorious Norfolk Island penal colony and ended up in Tasmania with a land grant.¹⁸ Other Muslim settlers in Van Diemens Land (Tasmania) included "Said Jacob Sultan, Muhammad Cossoms, Ram John Conn (Khan) and John Hassan."¹⁹ There were a "number of "Mohammedans" listed in the musters of 1802, 1811, 1822, and the 1828 census. Beyond this, Muslims generally are not thought to have settled in large numbers in other regions of Australia until 1860."²⁰ Whilst there was a predominance of Muslims from the Indian sub-continent, small numbers from other regions soon arrived including; Malays, Persians, Arabs and Africans. During the colonial

¹⁶ From Historical Records of New South Wales, Vol. 2, Part 2. Cited in Thompson, *Religion in Australia: A History*, 1.

¹⁷ Haveric, *History of Islam and Muslims in Australia: Early Encounters, Settlements and Communities Prior to the 1940's*, 52.

¹⁸ *ibid.*

¹⁹ *ibid.*, 53.

²⁰ Nahid Kabir, "The First Muslims in Australia: The Afghan Community," in *Muslims in Australia* (ProQuest Ebook Central: Routledge, 2005), 10.

period, reports exist of Muslim Mauritians,²¹ Omanis²² and Algerians,²³ again highlighting the small numbers from all areas of the greater Islamic world.

A hindrance to providing the exact number of Muslims throughout this period centres around how the early census and muster rolls grouped Muslims with other disparate and different religions. The Census Act of 1840 legislated that Muslims (Mahometans) were to be categorised alongside ‘pagans.’²⁴ Jews, Roman Catholics and Protestant denominations were separated; however, no provision was made for Hindus, Buddhists or any others. As this directive came from the top level of government, one must also question their level of understanding about Islam as a revealed tradition or an established religion and if they are just promulgating the Oriental viewpoint of Islam that was prevalent at the time. This lack of inclusion may also just be a representation of established colonial practice. Regardless, it was to continue into the beginning of the 20th Century.

Small numbers of Muslims meant that any organised inter-religious dialogue that occurred during the establishment of the colony of New South Wales was rare and would have effectively remained at the micro or day to day level. The dominant Protestant hegemony ensured that other religious views remained mostly unheard, and given the overwhelming majority of the immigrant population were Christians, with minimal numbers from other faiths, this should not be seen as surprising. Additionally, the early Muslim diasporas were from a diverse range of geographical and cultural backgrounds, often isolated at the frontiers of the new Australian civilisation. Given the diversity within Islam, the Australian *umma* tended to bring cultural groupings together, meaning that there was no unique voice able to emerge.

While the number of Muslims in the Australian *umma* was small and diversified, Islam was being reported on in the media, sometimes as a form of an internal cultural travelogue. One of the first recorded observations of Islamic practices in the new colonies was described in

²¹ Haveric, *History of Islam and Muslims in Australia: Early Encounters, Settlements and Communities Prior to the 1940's*, 55.

²² Bilal Cleland, *The Muslims in Australia: A Brief History*. (Melbourne, Vic.: Islamic Council of Victoria, 2002), 15.

²³ Haveric, *History of Islam and Muslims in Australia: Early Encounters, Settlements and Communities Prior to the 1940's*, 59.

²⁴ New South Wales Government. "An Act for Ascertaining the Number of the Inhabitants of the Colony of New South Wales, in the Year One Thousand Eight Hundred and Forty-One.". Sydney, NSW, 1840.

1806; the coverage of celebrations surrounding the Festival of Ashura in Sydney.²⁵ Enacted by, “Asiatic Seamen ...a temple composed of canework and beautifully decorated with paper stained by themselves,”²⁶ was constructed to mark the martyrdom of Husayn ibn Ali (626-680), the grandson of the Prophet Muhammad. This predominantly Shi’ite Muslim ceremony was viewed by the correspondent as “extravagant, and bear[ing] strong marks of their superstition,” demonstrating a certain degree of misunderstanding about what was taking place.

There were some situations where dialogue was recorded. The Australian court system, based on the English Common Law model was not one to let a difference of spiritual opinion concerning sacred texts interfere with justice. Whilst Protestant Christianity was dominant, the Colony of New South Wales was flexible enough to allow the use of alternate sacred texts in official court proceedings. In 1825, “Macboul, a Mahomeddan Lascar”²⁷ was sworn in as a witness using the Qur’an in the Quarter Sessions proceedings in Sydney. His testimony, provided via a translator saw the perpetrator sentenced to two years transportation for Thomas Jones, who had stolen a blanket from Macboul.²⁸ On the other side of the country, and very much frontier-land in 1833, Sammud Alli was sworn into court with a Qur’an to give his testimony.²⁹ The provenance of these Qur’ans is unknown; however, one could suspect that each of the witnesses provided their own, and given the dates,³⁰ possibly even heirloom handwritten copies. Both instances relied on a precedent that had been set in England in *Omychund v. Barker* in 1744, with the summation stating, “it would be absurd for [a non-Christian] to swear according to the Christian oath, which he does not believe; and therefore, out of necessity, he must be allowed to swear according to his own notion of an oath.”³¹ Whilst this use of the Qur’an was reported on in the press of the day; it failed to arouse and inflame correspondence or letters to the editor. Similar examples also exist from Fremantle, Western Australia as early as 1833,³² further

²⁵ "Sydney," *Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser*, 23 Mar 1806. 2.

²⁶ *ibid.*

²⁷ "Quarter Sessions," *Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser*, 14 Nov 1825. 3.

²⁸ *ibid.*

²⁹ "Court of Quarter Sessions," *Perth Gazette and Western Australian Journal*, 5 Jan 1833. 3.

³⁰ The Qur’ān did not go into widespread printed distribution until the middle of the 19th century.

³¹ Eugene Milhizer, "So Help Me Allah: An Historical and Prudential Analysis of Oaths as Applied to the Current Controversy of the Bible and Quran in Oath Practices in America," *Ohio State Law Journal* 70,1 (2009): 25.

³² "Court of Quarter Sessions."

demonstrating an understanding and acceptance of an alternate sacred text in these circumstances, especially with regard to following due process.

By the end of this era in 1901, the use of the Qur'an was well established and was reported on humorously in the regional New South Wales town of Manilla. Despite the tone of the article, the magistrate demonstrates an understanding that "the Koran is the book containing the faith and practice of the Mahometans, and there is no book so sacred to them,"³³ and the belief that there may have only been one official Qur'an in the New South Wales court system at the time.

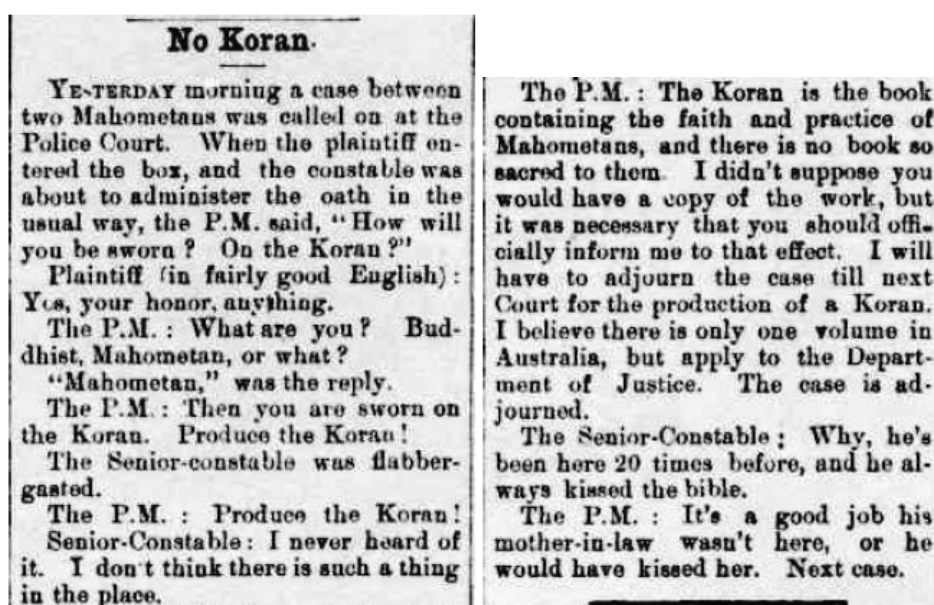


Figure 11 No Koran.³⁴

Some discussion has been given to the provision of places of worship for "convicts from different religious denominations."³⁵ This would have led to some form of inter-religious dialogue; however, in the colonial era, this would probably only have applied to denominations from within the Judeo-Christian faiths. This point highlights this lack of religious freedom, and that apart from a brief period in 1803-4, Catholic Mass was not performed until 1820, and in fact, it had been outlawed for a period following the Rouse Hill riots.³⁶ While some opportunities existed for alternative worship, the numbers were

³³ "No Koran," *Manilla Express*, 24 Feb 1900. 2.

³⁴ *ibid.*

³⁵ Haveric, *History of Islam and Muslims in Australia: Early Encounters, Settlements and Communities Prior to the 1940's*, 62.

³⁶ Robert Dixon, R Dixon, "The Catholic Community in Australia," Catholic Australia, accessed 3 Jan 2020, <http://www.catholicaustralia.com.au/page.php?pg=austchurch-history>.

initially too small to support anything that would resemble a cohesive diaspora, and it would have become an individual practice. Ultimately, many of the early Muslims seem to have “lost their Muslim religious identity by embracing Christianity, changing their names and inter-marrying within the local community.”³⁷ Ultimately, “they left no Muslim families, no institutions, no mosques.”³⁸ Bilal Cleland also highlights the issue of religious intolerance, stating that “even Christians suffered persecution at that time if they were from the wrong sect.”³⁹

As previously discussed, this initial period of Colonialism in Australia was marked by the dominance of Protestant Christianity. During this early era, religious dialogue between the growing churches appears to have been limited. Until 1836 the Church of England had a legal prerogative; however, this changed once the Churches Act (1836) was passed. “It definitely disestablished the Church of England and established legal equality between Anglicans, Catholics and Presbyterians; its provisions were later extended to Methodists.”⁴⁰ It did, however, fail to mention or acknowledge the Jews or any non-Christian religions. Given the numbers of believers in these ‘alternative’ faiths, this would not have been seen as an issue. By 1828 the Colony of New South Wales⁴¹ conducted its first census, and returns indicate 10 “Mohammedan” residents, out of a total population of 36,287.⁴² These Muslims would have been spread across the entire settled regions geographic range of the colony of New South Wales, limiting contact between them and inhibiting the regular practices of their rituals and beliefs in any congregational setting.

Any inter-religious dialogue that existed in the very early days of the colonies was that of the necessary, day to day, or micro level. Once early colonial Australia started to expand, it absorbed a range of people from many different ethnic, linguistic and cultural backgrounds. For many, the early dialogue would have been a struggle with language, meaning that it would have been kept to a minimum. The day to day dealings with English

³⁷ Haveric, *History of Islam and Muslims in Australia: Early Encounters, Settlements and Communities Prior to the 1940's*, 52.

³⁸ Cleland, *The Muslims in Australia: A Brief History.*, 14.

³⁹ *ibid.*

⁴⁰ T. L. Suttor, "Plunkett, John Hubert (1802–1869)" ANU, accessed 3 Jan 2020, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/plunkett-john-hubert-2556>.

⁴¹ In 1828, the Colony of New South Wales covered all of the settled areas of the mainland. Van Diemen’s Land (Tasmania) had been established in 1825. The other colonies would be established between 1836 and 1859.

⁴² "Census of New South Wales - November 1828," ed. Malcolm R Sainty and Keith A Johnson (Sydney, NSW: Library of Australian History, 1980).

speaking traders and merchants may have been conducted in some form of Pidgin English. Non-English speaking migrants or convicts were hardly in a position to engage in correspondence with the newspapers or government, less likely to take a stand at Speaker's Corner in the Domain.⁴³

5.3 The Afghans and others, 1860-1901

The next group of Muslims began arriving around 1860, with the importation of camels from India⁴⁴ along with handlers to assist.⁴⁵ Small in number, their experience in their homelands' harsh conditions and renowned for their skills in camel handling, they left a long-lasting legacy that exists to this day. It commenced when three individuals (two Muslims and a Hindu) accompanied Burke and Wills part of the way on their fateful journey to the Gulf of Carpentaria.⁴⁶

The Burke and Wills expedition employed two Europeans to purchase the camels and hire the sepoy or cameleers in India. George Landells (d 1871)⁴⁷ and John King (1838-1872)⁴⁸ were both old India hands and would have been familiar with both the language and religion of the cameleers they employed and would have engaged in some of the first inter-religious dialogue between Christians and Muslims in Australia. Landells resigned as second in command over disagreements around how the camels were utilised, and the loads they were expected to carry.⁴⁹ King would go on to be the sole survivor among the group who made it to the Gulf of Carpentaria.⁵⁰ Landells would return to the sub-continent, dying in Rawalpindi (in modern-day Pakistan) in 1872.⁵¹

⁴³ Sydney's version of the London Institution for free public speech, debate and discussion. Established 1878 and located in the Domain.

⁴⁴ "Telegraphic Intelligence," *South Australian Advertiser*, 11 Jun 1860. 3.

⁴⁵ Peta Jeffries, "Locating Settler Colonialism in the Myths of Burke and Wills—Aboriginal and Islamic People's Involvement in Reimagining Successful Exploration of Inland Australia," *Australian Journal of Islamic Studies* 3,3 (2019): 16.

⁴⁶ Stevens, *Tin Mosques and Ghantowns: A History of Afghan Cameldrivers in Australia*, 51.

⁴⁷ Len Meeny, "George James Landells," accessed 21 May 2021, http://www.burkeandwills.net.au/Explorers/VEE_Officers/landells.htm#:~:text=George%20James%20Landells%20was%20born,in%201856%20aboard%20the%20Havannah.

⁴⁸ Alan Moorehead, "King, John (1841-1872)," National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, accessed 27 May 2021 5, <https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/king-john-3956>.

⁴⁹ Phoenix, "More Like a Picnic Party": Burke and Wills: An Analysis of the Victorian Exploring Expedition of 1860-1861," 189.

⁵⁰ Moorehead, "King, John (1841-1872)".

⁵¹ Meeny, "George James Landells".

Later, others ran explorations into the South Australian interior with Sir Thomas Elder and the South Australian Government.⁵² The construction of the Overland Telegraph from Port Augusta to Darwin in the 1870s⁵³ and the building of the overland rail (1878-1884)⁵⁴ also required the services of these “ships of the desert” and their skilled handlers. Once gold was found in remote Western Australia in the 1890s, the camels were put into service providing water and provisions to these far-slung regions. Additionally, they also undertook rescue missions for stranded miners.⁵⁵

The cameleers who travelled to the Antipodes with their charges were a mixed lot. The collective ‘Afghan’ was a catch-all phrase: “the cameleers were, in fact, a rather loose federation of skilled camel handlers of various ethnicities,”⁵⁶ mainly drawing from tribes in modern Afghanistan, some from British India (modern Pakistan)⁵⁷ and the occasional Turk⁵⁸ and Persian.⁵⁹ This becomes clear when looking at Rashid and Antlej’s research on the places of origin for Australia’s Afghan cameleers. Geospatial mapping shows the early ‘Afghan’ Muslims came predominantly from colonial India, as well as regions to the west, including Afghanistan and the border regions with Persia.⁶⁰ May Schinasi highlights this issue and the diversity of languages, which would have also hindered both internal and external dialogue at all levels.⁶¹ Alongside the Afghans, there were Muslims from other areas, such as Malaysia and the Ottoman Empire, again a disparate group. Some of these groups may have harboured long-standing cultural divisions, meaning that a unified approach was not to be expected. This isolated ‘otherness’ may have also been a factor in

⁵² Stevens, *Tin Mosques and Ghantowns: A History of Afghan Cameldrivers in Australia*, 52.

⁵³ Cleland, *The Muslims in Australia: A Brief History*, 21.

⁵⁴ Basil Fuller, *The Ghan: The Story of the Alice Springs Railway* (Adelaide, SA: Rigby, 1975).

⁵⁵ "The Search for Gold in Western Australia," *W.A. Record*, 11 Jan 1894. 9.

⁵⁶ Peter Scriver, "Mosques, Ghantowns and Cameleers in the Settlement History of Colonial Australia," *Fabrications* 13, no. 2 (2004): 19-41.

⁵⁷ Abdullah Saeed, *Islam in Australia*. (Melbourne, Vic: Allen & Unwin, 2003), 5.

⁵⁸ Much of the research, as well as media reports from the era use the modern term Turkey, an anachronism given the Ottoman Empire only officially adopted the modern name of *Türkiye* in 1923. Also, given the wide distribution of the Turkic people, it appears that the term Turk is another catch all phrase, covering a range of nationalities and ethnic groups, including some of those from Afghanistan.

⁵⁹ Flinders Ranges Research, "The Afghan Camelmen." *South Australian History*, accessed 28 Aug 2018, <https://www.southaustralianhistory.com.au/afghans.htm>.

⁶⁰ Md Mizanur Rashid and Kaja Antlej, "Geospatial Platforms and Immersive Tools for Social Cohesion: The 4d Narrative of Architecture of Australia’s Afghan Cameleers," *Virtual Archaeology Review* 11, no. 22 (2020): 78.

⁶¹ May Schinasi, "The Afghans in Australia," in *Occasional Paper* (New York, NY: The Asia Society, 1980), 5.

conversion to Christianity to fit in. As a side note, the classification of ‘Afghan’ also included Hindus as well as Sikhs and other religious beliefs from the Indian sub-continent.

The range of languages imported with the Muslim diaspora was broad. Some of the more educated migrants spoke a range of Middle Eastern languages as well as English. Others brought the language of their homeland and a smattering of Arabic. These languages would have included the full range from the sub-continent such as; “Hindi, Urdu, Balochi, Pashto, [and] Farsi”⁶² and while some of the migrants would have spoken several languages; many would have been limited to their mother tongue. This diversity of language would also have been a barrier to dialogue, both within the Islamic community as well as limiting any external exchanges with non-Muslims.

The journals, diaries and reports of the many Europeans in contact with the Afghans often extolled their virtues through “their strict adherence to the code of Islam (especially regarding their daily prayers and the eating of halal meat and the avoidance of alcohol), and their excellent character, reliability, stamina and life-saving skills.”⁶³ Others described them as “very intelligent and paid strict attention to their Mohametan ritualism, unabashed, and it was remarked by many that they set a good example to the evangelical Christians in South Australia.”⁶⁴ This seems to support some form of limited contact theory being beneficial for greater social harmony.

This was not a universal view of the Afghans. At times, issues arose over ritual ablutions prior to prayer, where the Afghans were seen to be polluting the scarce waterholes by washing their feet and hands prior to prayer.⁶⁵ They were also linked with the transmission of a range of diseases and one 1893 West Australian Government report described them as “the filthiest lot that ever went near water.”⁶⁶ This concern demonstrates a barrier to dialogue at some levels in these regions between Muslims and non-Muslims, confounded by the lack of understanding about the requirement for ritual ablutions prior to the requisite five daily prayers in Islam.

⁶² Joshua Nash, "Linguistic Spatial Violence: The Muslim Cameleers in the Australian Outback," *Refract: An Open Access Visual Studies Journal* 1, no. 1 (2018): 112.

⁶³ Zachariah Mathews, "Origins of Islam in Australia," *Salaam* 1997, 27-29.

⁶⁴ "Country Correspondence. Sliding Rock, April 24," *Bunyip*, 5 May 1876. 3.

⁶⁵ Kabir, "The First Muslims in Australia: The Afghan Community," 52.

⁶⁶ *ibid.*, 51.

In response to these claims, a European correspondent to *The Bulletin*⁶⁷ provided some balance, noting that:

*There is a common white skin prejudice against 'the dirty black'; but it is astonishing what a number of whites contrive to get along without a bath from New Year to Christmas, Lots of women have only bathed on their wedding day; lots of men are never wet all over at once till they are laid out for the grave.*⁶⁸

The nature of their work meant they lived a nomadic life, with little in the way of organised religion. When in towns, they were usually segregated along racial lines, limiting communication between the dominant Christian population and any different 'others'. Therefore, this reduced contact and dialogue between Europeans and the Afghans, Chinese and Indians, in reality, any non-white. Maree, South Australia was divided into three sections; west of, and in close proximity to the railway for the white settlers, east of the line for the cameleers and the outlying margins for the Indigenous community.⁶⁹ This physical segregation, along with the colonial view that these non-European migrants were "also considered to be members of an inferior race"⁷⁰ appears to have been a significant impediment to any meaningful dialogue at any level.

Regardless, the Afghans and others did bring a growing sense of multiculturalism to regional Australia as well as providing transport solutions to the vast and as yet unopened interior, especially through their work with the Overland Telegraph and the Transcontinental Railway.

The earthworks of the next section of the Transcontinental Railway are progressing at a good rate. Over 400 men are employed, and another batch, of 100 are expected to arrive next week. The township on Thursday presented an animated appearance, over 150 camels being loaded for Birdsville and vicinity, the peculiar costumes of the several Afghans adding considerably to the novelty. Post-office business is still carried on

⁶⁷ Over time the masthead of *The Bulletin* morphed from "Australia for Australians" to "Australia for the White Man"

⁶⁸ Billabong, "The Odious Afghan," *The Bulletin*, 21 Jul 1894, 9.

⁶⁹ "Our Estate Far North," *South Australian Register*, 20 Sep 1899, 6.

⁷⁰ Kabir, "The First Muslims in Australia: The Afghan Community," 42.

*in a tent, and, notwithstanding the increase of business, there is only one officer.*⁷¹

By the mid-1880s, some had found a voice, and a means to open dialogue. Faiz Mahomet (1848 - 1910)⁷² garnered some positive coverage in the broader newspaper media when some camels were imported into South Australia.⁷³ This event was deemed newsworthy enough to be reported or syndicated in Sydney,⁷⁴ Melbourne,⁷⁵ Brisbane,⁷⁶ and Launceston.⁷⁷ A refined search of the Trove database returned 27 articles covering this issue in a one month period from all over the colony.⁷⁸ While the copy was generic, it was positive in its outlook for the proprietor and his venture and the usefulness of camels for opening up the interior. Mahomet was said to hail from an aristocratic background in Afghanistan, arriving in Australia in 1870 he began working for Sir Thomas Elder, building a friendship and a business.⁷⁹ Despite the racial prejudices of the time, he was described in 1888 as having “always displayed the strict integrity in commercial transactions for which the Moslem is well known.”⁸⁰ Mahomet was also credited with having “achieved an honourable reputation in the interior.”⁸¹ Then, as now, the press coverage of Islam could be misconstrued. Mahomet must have been an avid reader of the print media, and when an erroneous statement was made, “that the Sultan of Turkey is ...the spiritual head of all our Mohammedan fellow-subjects”, he provided a measured response, in excellent English, politely debunking the claim.⁸² In this case, the journalist was ill-informed on both counts, firstly the Sultan was not the head of Islam and secondly, he would have been the Sultan of the Ottoman Empire.

A limited number of other similar entrepreneurial and educated migrants fared well. Abdul Wade, whose command of English “was found to be perfect,”⁸³ represents one example.

⁷¹ "Marree (Hergott Springs)," *South Australian Register*, 27 Aug 1884. 3.

⁷² A.J. Koutsoukis, *Mahomet, Faiz (1848–1910)*, ed. National Centre of Biography, vol. 10, Australian Dictionary of Biography (Canberra, ACT: MUP, 1986).

⁷³ "Latest News," *Evening Journal, Adelaide*, 24 Jun 1884. 2.

⁷⁴ "Camels for Australia," *Evening News, Sydney*, 24 Jun 1884. 2.

⁷⁵ "Items of News," *Mount Alexander Mail*, 25 Jun 1884. 2.

⁷⁶ "No Title," *Brisbane Courier*, 3 Jul 1884. 5.

⁷⁷ "Camels for South Australia," *Tasmanian*, 28 Jun 1884. 6.

⁷⁸ Trove search string; (camels OR afghan OR Adelaide) AND (faiz OR haiz)

⁷⁹ Koutsoukis, *Mahomet, Faiz (1848–1910)*, 10.

⁸⁰ "This Day," *Express and Telegraph, Adelaide*, 28 Jun 1888. 2.

⁸¹ "The Pastoral Leases," *Evening Journal, Adelaide*, 28 Jun 1888. 2.

⁸² F.M., "The Mohammedans and the Sultan," *South Australian Register*, 20 Sep 1876. 3.

⁸³ Special Correspondent, "Camels in Australia. A Visit to the S.A. Quarantine Station.," *The Melbourne Leader*, 21 Jan 1893. 33.

His travels and trade are well reported in the print media as early as 1891.⁸⁴ A frequent contributor of letters to the press,⁸⁵ Wade was described as “a fine specimen...”⁸⁶, presumably something other Afghans were not, and the news of his journeys highlighted his travelling style, Saloon class; something not expected for someone of his background.⁸⁷ He was also noted for responding to alternate positions on the place of his countrymen through responses to stories in the media,⁸⁸ which in turn drew counter-responses from others.⁸⁹ As an entrepreneur, he was prepared to advertise in the media, who were happy to take his money, allowing him to build a business in his newly adopted homeland.

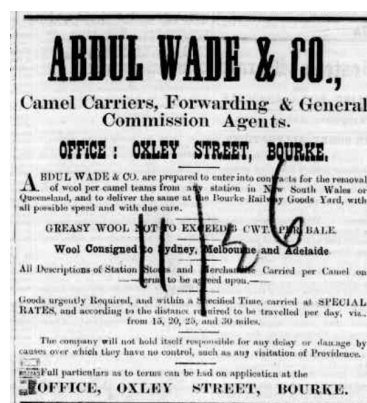


Figure 12 Abdul Wade & Co advertisement from Burke in 1892⁹⁰

In colonial Australia, the Afghans assisted in solving a problem. The vast desert interior represented the problem; the camels an effective solution. The Afghans were merely a necessary by-product of the arrangement, required due to their knowledge of the imported beast of burden. For the Afghans, the more than indifferent treatment would have met their expectations of colonial rule with a:

*familiar (if not comforting) logic of spatial division — of ‘divide and rule’
— that the Afghans would have known all too well from their contact with*

⁸⁴ "The Shearing Season," *Daily Telegraph, Sydney*, 26 Oct 1891. 5.

⁸⁵ "The Lansdowne Tower Camels," *Port Augusta Dispatch Newcastle and Flinders Chronicle*, 11 Nov 1892. 2.

⁸⁶ J.F.H., "Illustrations. At the Setting Sun. Rambles on the Western Horizon.," *Sydney Mail and New South Wales Advertiser*, 30 Jul 1892. 254.

⁸⁷ "Latest Shipping," *Evening Journal, Adelaide*, 14 Nov 1892. 2.

⁸⁸ Abdul Wade, "Open Column," *Port Augusta Dispatch Newcastle and Flinders Chronicle*, 13 Jan 1893. 3.

⁸⁹ *ibid.*, 20 Jan, 2.

⁹⁰ "Advertising," *Western Herald, Bourke*, 19 Mar 1892. 1.

*British colonial authority in Peshawar and other garrison towns on India's North-West Frontier.*⁹¹

As one of the white residents of Marree would later recall, the Afghans “knew their place.”⁹²

The city of Adelaide seemed to offer a different context and set of circumstances. As the closest town to the outback, the cameleers drifted in, some of them settling into moderate yet comfortable lifestyles, others needing some assistance. As the Afghans grew older or destitute, Adelaide offered a glimmer of hope in the form of Hadj Muller Merban (1801-1897),⁹³ who provided a place for rest and respite in surroundings that supported their faith. Construction of a mosque began in 1889 and was completed in 1890, with the drive led by Merban and Abdul Wade (1866- 1928).⁹⁴ It became a prominent feature of the Adelaide skyline with its minarets. Visits were made by prominent local officials and journalists, with reports appearing in newspapers as far away as Brisbane.⁹⁵ Merban seemed at ease with the place of his religion in Australia. In 1895 when asked about Muslims settling in Australia, he replied:

*‘Yes, it is a good country. Our religion is not interfered with, and we are not harassed by any unjust laws. In South Australia there are Mohometans who have married European women, bought farms and settled down. They do not want to return to their own country again; and more will come.’ But, and the Mollah emphasised this point, ‘we are all British subjects.’*⁹⁶

Although referred to as the caretaker,⁹⁷ Hadj Mullah was, in reality, the Imam, the spiritual leader and spokesperson for the community. From all accounts, he managed dialogue between the local *umma*, the media and a range of charitable Christian organisations.⁹⁸ From about 1891, the Adelaide Benevolent and Strangers’ Friend Society through their Sick Poor Fund began distribution of blankets, and other comforts to the Adelaide Mosque

⁹¹ Sriver, "Mosques, Ghantowns and Cameleers in the Settlement History of Colonial Australia," 30.

⁹² *ibid.*, 28.

⁹³ Haji, Hajj, Muller, Mulla, Mullah; again, the variations are endless.

⁹⁴ Katharine Bartsch, "Building Identity in the Colonial City: The Case of the Adelaide Mosque," *Contemporary Islam* 9, no. 3 (2015): 260.

⁹⁵ "Visit to a Mosque. Moslem Men and Women at Prayer," *Brisbane Telegraph*, 21 Feb 1894. 3.

⁹⁶ "Mosque for Sydney."

⁹⁷ "Visit to a Mosque. Moslem Men and Women at Prayer."

⁹⁸ "The Haji Mulla," *South Australian Chronicle*, 1 Sept 1894. 6.

“for the relief of the Afghans sent down sick and helpless from the Great Northern line.”⁹⁹ While it was established in 1849 as a Christian benevolent society,¹⁰⁰ it went to great lengths to announce its “non-sectarian” mission.¹⁰¹ This support was limited; however, it demonstrated some level of awareness and engagement within the local or state community across religious divides. It may also be that the reporting of this Christian philanthropy was a means to demonstrate and subjugate the low-status position of the Muslim community through an inability to care for their own.

Hadj Mullah was a significant individual in the early days of the Islamic community in Australia. He engaged in dialogue with all aspects of society while in Adelaide and sometime around 1894/5 travelled to Western Australia at the request of Faiz and Tagh Mohammed. Whilst there, he became ill, and “while calmly awaiting death, he requests pardon for all past differences, and desires it to be made known that he dies in peace with all men.”¹⁰² His passing was sympathetically reported the next day by the local paper, with the article announcing that:

*his funeral will take place this morning, and will be solemnised with all the rites prescribed by the religion of Muhammed. The death of the High Priest will be a great loss to his co-religionists in this country, to whom he has been a master and teacher and spiritual guide for nearly three years.*¹⁰³

The Coolgardie Miner did overlook his contribution in South Australia in the brief obituary, however, despite this, and through looking at the public record, Hadj Mullah was one of the first Muslims who attempted meaningful dialogue. Not as pro-active as some of the later arrivals, and with more limited language skills, he espoused Islam's positive values, especially regarding charity. Additionally, in this and other instances, the terminology used to describe the religious leaders was based on the Judaeo-Christian examples, using descriptors such as priest or minister to describe imams, muftis or sheikhs. We would only see this language shift to a more correct usage during the middle of the 20th century.

⁹⁹ "Sick Poor Committee," *South Australian Register*, 12 Sept 1891. 4.

¹⁰⁰ David Hilliard, "Playford, Thomas (1795-1873)," Evangelical History Association of Australia., accessed 9 Sep 2018, <<http://webjournals.alphaucrucis.edu.au/journals/adeb/p/playford-thomas-1795-1873/>.

¹⁰¹ "Poor Sick Fund," *South Australian Register*, 20 Oct 1891. 7.

¹⁰² "Local and General," *Coolgardie Miner*, 29 Jul 1897. 4.

¹⁰³ *ibid.*

Not far away, Kalgoorlie's peripatetic Afghan community appears to have been active participants in the local area. In 1899, theatrical impresario J.C. Williamson organised a week of entertainment, billed as the Gaiety Season.¹⁰⁴ Included within this extravaganza was the Afghan Carnival, a series of events that extolled and demonstrated the Afghans' talents. This entertainment was most probably included for the stereotypical nature, and exotic connotations than a genuinely cross-cultural event, such as we may expect today.



Figure 13 Advertisement for the Miners Gaiety Season, Kalgoorlie¹⁰⁵

The use of terms such as 'Afghan Gladiator' seems to be applied in order to further 'otherise' this group. Traditionally, in Ancient Rome, Gladiators were a lower social class, often "prisoners, slaves and social outcasts (*infamia*) forced into violent and often deadly fights for the purpose of entertainment."¹⁰⁶ By placing the Afghan cameleers in this category, the promoters are validating the lower status and projecting yet another aspect of orientalism onto the very group they needed for survival in many situations. It also implies

¹⁰⁴ "Amusements," *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 26 Jun 1899. 6.

¹⁰⁵ *ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ Heather L Reid, "8. Seneca's Gladiators," *Sport, ethics and philosophy* 4, no. 2 (2010): 204.

that they should follow the instructions of their masters as opposed to engaging in genuine two-way dialogue.

The Muslim presence spread well beyond the key centres of Maree, South Australia and the Western Australian goldfields. In remote towns such as Cloncurry, Queensland, the cameleers provided a service unmatched by European teamsters. In 1880, long before rail or telegraph reached the regions, the camel teams from Beltana, South Australia, managed to deliver Adelaide newspapers six weeks before the Queensland papers arrived.¹⁰⁷ Cloncurry, Queensland, was also home to a uniquely Australian mosque of the corrugated iron outback style.¹⁰⁸ With their wide breadth of travel and contact, these cameleers from central Queensland would have engaged in a broad meso-level dialogue with the extensive range of Australians they encountered.

Religious dialogue with the Afghans at any level was at best minimal but probably non-existent outside of small communities in Perth and Adelaide. At this point, no records have been found that demonstrate any organised meso or macro-level dialogue from the early groups. Those who came into contact with the Muslim diaspora and engaged in micro-level dialogue generally described positive virtues that abounded. Bejah Dervish, a member of the Calvert Expedition in 1896 was honoured with the title, “the Faithful” by the expedition leader.¹⁰⁹ During this expedition and in the Western Australian goldfields, Afghans and their camels were willing to search for lost or under-equipped Europeans, often at grave risk to themselves. Even while they were under sustained polemic attacks from the likes of Frederick Vosper (1869 - 1901), a key antagonist in the anti-Asiatic movement, the Afghans never lost sight of their humanity when lives were at risk.

5.4 Other Muslim communities

Whilst much of the focus of research has been on the Afghans and Indian Muslims, especially with regards to towns such as Maree, South Australia, Broken Hill and Bourke, New South Wales, other Islamic groups existed within Australia’s territories during the 19th Century, often at the extreme geographical fringes of settlement. Macassans, Javanese,

¹⁰⁷ "Sylvester Creek, Gregory District," *Brisbane Courier*, 19 Jul 1880. 5.

¹⁰⁸ Jessica Harris, "Tradition, Identity and Adaptation: Mosque Architecture in South-East Queensland," *Proceedings of the Society of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand* 30 (2013): 343.

¹⁰⁹ Fuller, *The Ghan: The Story of the Alice Springs Railway*, 19.

Malays and others formed part of the communities of some of Australia's furthest outreaches and most isolated areas. Many of them were sought for the unique skills they had, such as the pearl divers in Broome, Western Australia. Others, in places even more remote, may have been part of some orientalist fantasy. The initial European inhabitant of the Cocos Keeling Islands in the early 19th Century was Alexander Hare who brought with him his "harem of 40 women,"¹¹⁰ who:

*meanwhile had marked the little atoll as a sort of Eden for a seraglio of Malay women which he moved over from the coast of Africa...And so Hare was there with his outfit, as if he had come to stay.*¹¹¹

Hare left, after losing his wives to the sailors transporting the next inhabitant, John Clunies-Ross, who established a small settlement in the early 1820s and instigated a coconut industry.¹¹² This was in turn staffed by Malays assisted by the original members of Hare's harem. Around 1897, on his solo circumnavigation of the world, Joshua Slocum found his vessel stuck on a beach of the Cocos Keeling Islands. The local children recounted a local belief, "that a *Kpeting* (crab) was holding her by the keel"¹¹³ and:

*This being so or not, it was decided that the Mohammedan priest, Sanaa the Emim, for a pot of jam, should ask Mohammed to bless the voyage and make the crab let go the sloop's keel, which it did, if it had hold, and she floated on the very next tide.*¹¹⁴

While the Malays on the Cocos Keeling Islands enjoyed some semblance of religious freedom; the successive Clunies-Ross families kept them on the islands through a form of indentured slavery by paying them with company-issued promissory notes, only redeemable in the company store.¹¹⁵ The subservient position held by the Malays and their isolation reflected the Colonial practice of the time, however, hindered any form of external dialogue. Despite this, they thrived well into the next century, leaving scant records of their

¹¹⁰ Joshua Slocum, *Sailing Alone around the World* (New York, NY: The Century Co., 1901), 213.

¹¹¹ *ibid.*

¹¹² J.C. Ross, "Some Account of the Cocos or Keeling Islands; and of Their Recent Settlement," *Gleanings in Science, Baptist Mission Press* (1830): 294.

¹¹³ Slocum, *Sailing Alone around the World*, 217.

¹¹⁴ *ibid.*

¹¹⁵ Nick Squires, "The Man Who Lost a 'Coral Kingdom'," ed. Nick Squires (London, UK: BBC, 2007).

dialogue. This legacy of the early Malay pioneers lives on today, with 75% of the Cocos and Keeling Island's inhabitants identifying as Muslims.¹¹⁶

The settlement of Christmas Island in 1888 by the Clunies-Ross family also provided opportunities for Muslim Malays. Ross was described in avuncular colonial terms, and the Malays were deemed as:

*having reached a high degree of civilisation. When last heard of they were happy with no complaints except as to a certain scarcity of wives and clothes. They know little of rivalry, still less of ambition; they look on Mr Ross as their protector and friend, and live on placidly content.*¹¹⁷

Some of this must have rung true for the Muslim community, as by the middle of the twentieth century, "they have their own cinema, mosque (for the Moslems), and joss-house (for the Chinese)."¹¹⁸

In Far North Queensland, "the Javanese Muslims came to Mackay, Queensland, once known as the sugarpolis or sugar capital of Australia, as indentured labourers in the early 1880s to work in the sugar industry."¹¹⁹ Unlike their 'Afghan' counterparts, many "first-generation Javanese came to Australia in the 1880s as married couples."¹²⁰ Unlike other areas, this led to Islam being passed onto the next generation. Despite the continuation of beliefs, the dialogue continued to be limited owing to language difficulties.¹²¹ At some point, Queensland's earliest mosque was constructed, albeit made of grass and described as primitive, but functional.¹²² It was later destroyed in a cane fire. Cairns, Queensland was also home to a Muslim community, made up of Malays, Javanese, Indians and Sri Lankans, and like many regional settlements, it was a segregated community.¹²³ As in the rest of Australia at the time, anti-Asiatic sentiments were on the rise. Despite this, certain elements

¹¹⁶ Commonwealth of Australia. "2016 Census Quickstats Cocos (Keeling) Islands." edited by Australian Bureau of Statistics, 13. Canberra: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016.

¹¹⁷ "A Speck of the Empire," *Ballarat Star*, 17 Jul 1897. 1.

¹¹⁸ Gordon Cooper, "Story of Christmas Island," *Maryborough Chronicle*, 10 Jan 1949. 5.

¹¹⁹ Nahid Kabir, "Mackay Revisited: The Case of Javanese-Australian Muslims, 1880-1999," *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal* 16,3 (2007): 405.

¹²⁰ *ibid.*, 410.

¹²¹ *ibid.*, 411.

¹²² Jane Simpson, "Camels as Pidgin-Carriers: Afghan Cameleers as a Vector for the Spread of Features of Australian Aboriginal Pidgins and Creoles," in *Processes of Language Contact: Studies from Australia and the South Pacific*, ed. Jeff Siegal (Montreal: Fides, 2000), 198.

¹²³ Haveric, *History of Islam and Muslims in Australia: Early Encounters, Settlements and Communities Prior to the 1940's*, 116.

in the local community sought some semblance of equality and protection for the Javanese. One letter to the editor of the Mackay Mercury in 1886 called for a more humane approach to the planter's dealings with their Javanese labourers.¹²⁴

In Broome from around 1888 onwards, Malays and Indonesians were sought after as skilled divers for the pearl industry. According to Peta Stephenson, "around 1875, there were approximately 1800 Malay pearl divers who worked in the West Australian pearling industry."¹²⁵ While exact numbers are difficult to estimate, "the majority of the Malay speaking people were of the Islamic faith."¹²⁶ By 1901, it appears that around 699 Malays were working in the Pearling industry in Broome, which had become a multicultural regional centre.¹²⁷ As in the Ghan towns of Mainland Australia, the Asiatics, including the Indonesians, Malays, Kupangers (from West Timor) and Chinese as well as the Indigenous peoples were directed to live on the outskirts of the growing town in line with the racial segregation of the times. In Broome:

*the Europeans lived a salubrious British lifestyle in large houses with tropical gardens. Asians lived down town. Their accommodation, eating houses and other facilities were separated by race.*¹²⁸

As with mainland Australia, the new white arrivals imported their colonial and imperialist aspirations, which included separation between the different racial groups. This, in turn, led to limited dialogue between the groups.

For many of the non-European migrants, dark clouds were gathering on the horizon. In 1897 the Premier of Western Australia, Sir John Forrest (1847-1918) presented the prevailing attitude of the times.

Speaking for myself, and I may say for almost all hon. Members of this House, I have stated in the plainest language that we do not want this

¹²⁴ Justitia, "The Javanese: To the Editor of the Mackay Mercury," *Mackay Mercury and South Kennedy Advertiser*, 21 Sep 1886. 2.

¹²⁵ Peta Stephenson, *Islam Dreaming. Indigenous Muslims in Australia* (Sydney, NSW: UNSW, 2010), 31.

¹²⁶ Christine Choo, "Asian Men on the West Kimberley Coast, 1900-1940," *Studies in Western Australian History* 16 (1995): 96.

¹²⁷ Statistics re Pearl and Pearl Shell Fisheries, 1901-1912 (AN 108/1 ACC 477 115/13 PROWA) quoted in *ibid.*

¹²⁸ Ronald Moore, "The Management of the Western Australian Pearling Industry, 1860 to the 1930s," *The Great Circle: Journal of the Australian Association for Maritime History* 16, 2, (1994): 133.

*class of immigration to come to Australia, and the only reason why there is any exception made is that there is an industry in the Northern part of the Colony which it is believed would suffer if this kind of labour were absolutely excluded from coming here.*¹²⁹

This statement by a leading Australian demonstrates tolerance for the different other due to a perceived need for workers to generate revenue for the state, as opposed to any form of humanitarian concern.

5.5 The establishment of Mosques

Mosques were central to Islamic life in Australia, as they have been throughout history. Within the context of this study, they provide a focal point for inter-religious dialogue with the local Muslim communities. The first mosques were rudimentary affairs. Hergott Springs (Marree), South Australia, (c1884) and Broken Hill, New South Wales (1891)¹³⁰ both allowed for the construction of mosques during this period. Fundraising for the Perth, Western Australia and Adelaide, South Australia mosques began during this era, and later reports from Perth provide an example of early attempts at inter-religious dialogue. The *Second Annual Report* from the trustees of the Perth Mosque provides an elaborate statement of gratitude to the governing authorities in Western Australia, acknowledging:

*...the great blessings of protection, religious toleration, and peace which we enjoy, as we do here, under the benign flag of the British nation. We are proud of the privilege we have, and we sincerely thank God for the blessings of such privilege He has granted to us, of living under a just and humane Government, as our Holy Prophet (Mohammed, peace be on him) was proud and thankful when he found himself living under the Flag of the just' and humane Nowsherwan,¹³¹ the famous Persian Emperor in the Sixth Century of the Christian era.*¹³²

Parts of this statement are problematic as although the Prophet was born during this era; to assert that Islam and the Prophet were subjugated by the Persian King demonstrates how

¹²⁹ P. J. McGann, "Malays' as Indentured Labour: Western Australia 1870–1900" (Murdoch University, 1988), 81.

¹³⁰ Stevens, *Tin Mosques and Ghantowns: A History of Afghan Cameldrivers in Australia*, 171-75.

¹³¹ Variant of Anushirvan, or Khosrow I (c513-579). See Parvaneh Pourshariati, *Decline and Fall of the Sasanian Empire: The Sasanian-Parthian Confederacy and the Arab Conquest of Iran*. (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2008), 256.

¹³² Mohamed Hasan Musakhan, *History of Islamism in Australia from 1863-1932* (Perth, WA.1932), 14.

viewpoints and narratives can change over time, even amongst believers. The more traditional view was that Nushirawan represented a just and fair ruler, a point reiterated by the Prophet and here being applied to the rule of George V (1865-1936), the titular head of state for Australia.

The report also looked to source funding from the *umma* so that:

*all the current expenses could be paid, and a provision made for the salary of an "Imam" (clergyman)~ and the surplus, if any, could be used in maintaining a Public Library and Reading Room containing a good stock of Religious Books, Tracts and Magazines on the Mohammedan Religion, in order to enlighten all those gentlemen who often want to know whether we belong to the Roman Catholic or Protestant Church, or whether we worship the sun, the moon, the stars, the fire or other material objects.*¹³³

This report appears to demonstrate that the non-Muslim community were confused about the place of Islam within the Abrahamic faiths, and at the same time represents an attempt by the Muslim community to establish means of dialogue. Musakhan and the other trustee, Hoffiz Mohammed Hayat wrote in the reports that it:

*is necessary to convince them that we are followers of the same Divine Religion which was revealed to Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Mohammed (may peace and the blessings of God be upon these great prophets and messengers and teachers of spiritual, moral and divine knowledge), and to convince them that we worship "Allah," who in the Holy Koran is described by such attributes: "Say : He is God alone; God; the Eternal! He begetteth not and is not begotten, nor is there any like unto Him." "To God belong the secret things of the heavens and the earth: Unto Him all things return; Worship Him then and put your trust in Him; Thy Lord is not regardless of thy doings. Oh men! Ye are paupers in need of God, but God is the rich and praiseworthy. Verily, there is none in heaven and on earth but shall approach the Merciful as His servant.*¹³⁴

This seems to be an attempt at inter-religious dialogue, as opposed to any form of *da'wah* or evangelical activity on behalf of the *umma*, showing an attempt to educate and enlighten

¹³³ *ibid.*, 16.

¹³⁴ *ibid.*

West Australians about Islam's place with the trio of Abrahamic beliefs. In Perth, as in Adelaide, it also allowed for dialogue to move from micro to meso level. While the offer was not always taken up, media reports about the mosques and prominent members of the local *umma* led to a basic understanding of Islam as practised in many Australian towns and cities, allowing some meso-level dialogue, contributing to some levels of positive social harmony.

In regional Australia, multicultural communities evolved and integrated. Fruitful dialogue ensued between the Afghans and the Indigenous peoples, leading to a process Peta Stephenson describes as 'kinversion.'

Kinversion, it is proposed here, is a powerful means of creating social cohesion, and particularly warrants recognition in a time when the rhetoric of the 'clash of civilisations' devalues ordinary sociability and the creative ways in which individuals negotiate their religious and cultural identities. The phenomenon of Muslim kinversion amongst Australians of Indigenous descent is rooted in history. It emerges from an experience of legislative and institutional segregation, and in its resistance to the racism inscribed in this, constitutes a powerful counter-conviction: that people of different racial, cultural and national backgrounds can co-exist.¹³⁵

This dialogue could best be situated at a meso-level, between two "outgroup" communities and demonstrates aspects of a more positive social cohesion. Lack of contact between the dominant group, European Australians, meant that relationships between the two outgroups, Indigenous and Muslims, thrived. In many parts of regional Australia, this is still the case today.

5.6 The Churches

The churches in Australia during the colonial period held sway over much of the population. Throughout this period, religious dialogue concerned the sectarian divisions between the Protestant and Catholic churches, especially regarding their respective involvement in education in the growing colony.¹³⁶ At times, the Catholic Church railed

¹³⁵ Stephenson, "Keeping It in the Family: Partnerships between Indigenous and Muslim Communities in Australia," 98.

¹³⁶ "The Referendum on Religious Education. The Church of England View," *Kapunda Herald*, 24 Apr 1896. 3.

against Islam, with Cardinal Patrick Moran (1830-1911) describing Islam in 1899 as “a tempestuous confusion of errors,”¹³⁷ and its Prophet relying “for its support not on the doctrine but on the scimitar, and on the fanaticism and corruption of its followers.”¹³⁸ Likewise, the Anglican Bishop of Adelaide, George Kennion (1845-1922) stated in 1891 that “Mohammedanism...propagated itself by the sword.”¹³⁹ It appears that these educated gentlemen preferred the well-established orientalist view of Islam, as opposed to some of the more sympathetic and accurate treatments. The Rev F.W. Cox (1807-1904) provided a far more moderate voice, the first pastor of the Hindmarsh Square Congregational church whose lecture on religious equality in South Australia outlined his belief about religious freedoms in 1887.

*Their [the people of the colony] contention was that State authority should neither make nor allow difference in pay, power or prestige between one church and another; that in the eye of the law Protestant, and Catholic or even Mohammedan should stand on common ground.*¹⁴⁰

Cox was described as “strict in profession and practice but free from bigotry,”¹⁴¹ and appears to have been one of Australia’s early proponents of interfaith dialogue and religious equality.

Other proponents of an accepting and moderate approach include the Rev Canon George Goodman (1854-1908) whose lecture on Turkey and Mohammedism” described the Prophet Mohammed as “the ideal of a spiritualistic medium.”¹⁴² Following his presentation, “the lecturer was listened to with the greatest attention throughout, and at the conclusion votes of thanks were accorded to him and his chairman.”¹⁴³

¹³⁷ The Second of the Lenten Lectures as reported in the "The Cardinal at the Cathedral," *Freemans Journal*, 4 March 1899. 9.

¹³⁸ *ibid.*

¹³⁹ "Religious News," *Evening Journal*, 2 Dec 1891. 4.

¹⁴⁰ "The Jubilee of Congregationalism: The Struggle for Religious Equality in South Australia," *South Australian Advertiser*, 5 Aug 1887. 6.

¹⁴¹ Walter Phillips, "Cox, Francis William (1817–1904)," *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (1969), <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/cox-francis-william-3279/text4977>.

¹⁴² Ballarat Courier, "St John's Ballaarat," *Church of England Messenger and Ecclesiastical Gazette for the Diocese of Melbourne and Ballarat*, 6 Oct 1881. 16.

¹⁴³ *ibid.*

ST. JOHN'S, BALLAARAT.

A VERY interesting lecture on "Turkey and Mohammedanism" was delivered on Friday evening, 9th September, by Canon Goodman, in the Sunday-school of St. John's Church, Soldier's Hill. The Rev. R. J. Mercer occupied the chair, and introduced the lecturer. Canon Goodman commenced his lecture with a brief reference to the Eastern question, which he looked upon as one destined to be solved by the hand of God rather than by that of man. He passed on to a brief description of Constantinople, and then entered on the details of the life of Mohammed, whom he described as being, from his temperament and bodily condition, the ideal of a spiritualistic medium. After reviewing the doctrine promulgated by Mohammed, and the hold it acquired on the Turkish race, the lecturer passed on to deal with Mohammedanism as connected with prophecy, which was the concluding portion of his lecture. **The lecturer was listened to with the greatest attention throughout, and at the conclusion votes of thanks were accorded to him and to the chairman.—Ballarat Courier.**

Figure 14 St Johns, Ballarat, Lecture on Turkey & Mohammedanism¹⁴⁴

During the enlightenment, Western thinkers were drawn to the investigation of Islam. Starting with John Locke in England,¹⁴⁵ and crossing the Atlantic with Thomas Jefferson,¹⁴⁶ the intellectuals of the era led to a rise in what Edward Said termed 'Orientalism'.¹⁴⁷ During the 19th Century, Orientalism seems to have arrived in Australia as a new country founded on pre-existing European values. Locally, it seems to have become *de rigueur* for learned gentlemen of all religious persuasions to deliver lectures on "Mohammedanism; or, The Faith of Islam."¹⁴⁸ In Adelaide, the Rev. J.M. Donaldson delivered the above lecture "for which a musical accompaniment was provided".¹⁴⁹ A historical outline of 'Arabia' was provided, some scant and questionable claims made that Islam took all that was "good from the Jewish and Christian Scripture."¹⁵⁰ Whilst this lecture was a combination of fact and distorted fiction; it was the conclusion that announced the intent of his interest, focussing on "the necessity of understanding something of the religions they condemned."¹⁵¹ The Lord Bishop of Adelaide delivered a more accurate and sympathetic lecture in 1871. "The attendance was large,"¹⁵² and the Lord Bishop concluded

¹⁴⁴ *ibid.*

¹⁴⁵ John Locke, "A Letter Concerning Toleration (1689) and Other Writings, Edited and with an Introduction by Mark Goldie," (2010), <https://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/2375>.

¹⁴⁶ Denise Spellberg, *Thomas Jefferson's Qur'an: Islam and the Founders* (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 2014).

¹⁴⁷ Said, *Orientalism*.

¹⁴⁸ "Mohammedanism: Or, the Faith of Islam," *Kapunda Herald and Northern Intelligencer*, 2 Dec 1873. 3.

¹⁴⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁵⁰ *ibid.*

¹⁵¹ *ibid.*

¹⁵² "Mohammed and Mohammedanism," *Border Watch*, 11 March 1871. 2.

that ‘the aims of [Islam] were parallel with the religion of the cross.’¹⁵³ Similar lectures were delivered by the Rev. Mr Osbourne in Sydney,¹⁵⁴ the Very Reverend Dean Bromby in Hobart¹⁵⁵ and in Yackandandah by Reverend J. Howard Meek.¹⁵⁶ In 1889, a young John Monash B.A.¹⁵⁷ delivered a similar paper to the members of the Jewish Literary Society in Melbourne.¹⁵⁸ The result of these lectures was a growing awareness of Islam, albeit often tinged with Orientalism and traces of Imperial (Christian) superiority.

Another educated individual, was the Queenslander, the Rev. Dr Zillmann, self-described “as one of the oldest free white, born natives of Queensland, and the very oldest native Queenslander who has taken Holy Orders in the Church of England.”¹⁵⁹ In 1898 at the height of the anti-Asian debate in Western Australia, he delivered a lecture espousing the positive virtues of Islam, noting that “Spain under the Moors attained to almost the highest civilisation the world has ever known.”¹⁶⁰ He was taken to task at the end of the lecture by F.C.B. Vosper; however, the meeting ended with a viewpoint that “contended the social influence of Mahometanism was superior to the influence of sectarian Christianity,”¹⁶¹ indicating Vosper may have met a more worthy opponent.

In 1877, *The Queenslander* (1866-1939) published a thoughtful discussion and outline of Reginald Bosworth Smith’s (1839–1908) *Mohammed and Mohammedanism*,¹⁶² one of the first works in English regarded as sympathetic towards Islam. Smith posited that:

there is, in the lives of average Mohammedans, - from whatever causes, less of self-indulgence, less of the mad race for wealth, less of servility, than is to be found in the lives of average Christians and that “if the two social touchstones of a religion are the way which, relatively to the time,

¹⁵³ *ibid.*

¹⁵⁴ Hawkeye, "With the Rev. Mr Osbourne," *Wagga Wagga Advertiser*, 12 Jul 1883. 3.

¹⁵⁵ "Lecture on Islamism," *The Mercury*, 16 Mar 1883. 3.

¹⁵⁶ "Religious News," *Yackandandah Times*, 14 Aug 1896. 2.

¹⁵⁷ The future General Sir John Monash, GCMG, KCB, VD. (1865-1931)

¹⁵⁸ "Jewish Literary Society. The Education Question," *The Jewish Herald*, 19 July 1889. 5.

¹⁵⁹ Rev. J.H.L. Zillmann, *Past and Present Australian Life* (London, UK: Sampson, Low, Marston, Searle & Rivington, 1889), v.

¹⁶⁰ "Lecture by Dr Zillman," *West Australian*, 7 Feb 1898. 4.

¹⁶¹ *ibid.*

¹⁶² Reginald Bosworth Smith, *Mohammed and Mohammedanism*, Third ed. (London, U.K.: John Murray, 1889).

*it deals with it deals with the weaker sex, and the way in which it regards the poor and the oppressed, Mohammed's religion can stand the test*¹⁶³

The author also went on to defend some of the claims against the Ottoman Turks, observing that during the reign of Charles the Second he was described as “a hireling of France; and the court was a brothel,”¹⁶⁴ and suggesting that the West needed to “divest ourselves of insular prejudices in surveying their history.”¹⁶⁵ The question arises as to whether the statement that, “the average Moslem is acknowledged to be superior in morality to the average Frank. He is chaste, temperate, frugal, industrious, devout, charitable, hospitable, truthful and singularly kind to animals,”¹⁶⁶ would be run in any papers today in Queensland.

One of the fundamental questions raised in this discussion surrounds exactly where these learned gentlemen obtained their information regarding Islam. As evident above. Reginald Bosworth Smith's *Mohammed and Mohammedanism*¹⁶⁷ (published in 1874) was first discussed in the colonies in 1877. As one of the earliest sympathetic English language treatises on Islam, it was possibly influential amongst the intelligentsia in the Antipodes. Other sympathetic treatments of Islam such as George Sale's introduction to his English language translation of the Qur'an in 1734¹⁶⁸ and Thomas Carlye's lecture on Muhammad in 1841¹⁶⁹ may have also have made their way into the early Australian libraries. Despite this, what much of the evidence seems to demonstrate is the transmission of institutionalised Orientalism and its associated literature to Australia. Relationships between ethnic groups were led by this view that the Europeans were a race above all others.

5.6.1 The World Parliament of Religions

One of the earliest attempts of the modern age to establish a broad-reaching interfaith dialogue occurred in 1893, where the World Parliament of Religions was convened as part of the Chicago World's Fair. Driven by Charles Bonney (1831–1903) its inclusion in the

¹⁶³ "Muscovite and Moslem," *Queenslander*, 25 Aug 1877. 16.

¹⁶⁴ *ibid.*

¹⁶⁵ *ibid.*

¹⁶⁶ *ibid.*

¹⁶⁷ Smith, *Mohammed and Mohammedanism*.

¹⁶⁸ *The Koran, Commonly Called the Alcoran of Mohammed*, trans. George Sale (London, UK: Printed by C. Ackers in St. John's-Street, for J. Wilcoy, 1734).

¹⁶⁹ Thomas Carlyle, *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History* (London, UK: Fraser, James, 1841).

World's Fair in Chicago was "to unite all religion against all irreligion, make the Golden Rule the basis of this union, and present to the world... the substantial unity of many religions in the good deeds of the religious life."¹⁷⁰ It received coverage in the Australian media of the day, and early on two delegates were selected from Melbourne.¹⁷¹ Ultimately, it was attended by Rev. Dr L.D. Bevan (Congregational) from Melbourne, the Rev James Rickard (Congregational) from Brighton and the Rt. Rev. Saumaurez Smith, (Anglican) Bishop of Sydney. It was also noted locally that, "conspicuous by their absence were the Sultan of Turkey (the Caliph of Islam) and the Archbishop of Canterbury."¹⁷²

While described in the Congress proceedings as Australian, the Catholic Archbishop Redmond was based in New Zealand. His contribution to the opening of the congress stated:

*Man is not only a mortal being, but a social being. Now the condition to make him happy and prosperous as a social being, to make him progress and go forth to conquer the world, both mentally and physically, is that he should be free, and not only to be free as a man in temporal matters, but to be free in religious matters.*¹⁷³

His presence was unusual, given the Catholic Churches stance on inter-religious dialogue was that "church teaching and practice in regard to other religions had been encapsulated in the axiom, *extra ecclesiam nulla salus* (outside the church no salvation)."¹⁷⁴ Even more unusual was that he did espouse the virtues and values of interfaith dialogue, something that the Catholic Church would not officially accept until 1965.

The only papers presented by representatives from the Antipodes, was on Congregationalism in New Countries contributed by Mrs Louise J. Bevan, the wife of Dr Bevan; however, those who made the journey would have had the opportunity to engage with representatives of the entire range of religious beliefs from across the globe. From an

¹⁷⁰ Braybrooke, "Charles Bonney and the Idea for a World Parliament of Religions."

¹⁷¹ "A Parliament of Religions. A Unique Gathering," *The Age*, 16 Mar 1893. 6.

¹⁷² "The Parliament of Religions," *Maryborough Chronicle, Wide Bay and Burnett Advertiser*, 1 Mar 1894. 3.

¹⁷³ "World Congress of Religions, the Addresses and Papers", (paper presented at the World Parliament of Religions, Chicago, Il, 1894 1893), 36.

¹⁷⁴ Patrick McInerney, "'Nostra Aetate': The Catholic Church's Journey into Dialogue," *Australasian Catholic record* 90, no. 3 (2013): 259.

Islamic perspective, Dr George Washburn explained in a paper delivered on the fifth day that the:

Mohammedan conception of God, as infinitely removed from man, absolute in power, clothed with every conceivable perfection, requiring a religion of complete submission, or Islam, and known by many names, of which the first and most common is 'The Merciful, The Compassionate.' ... On the tenth day, and again on the eleventh, the religion of Islam or resignation, submission, aspiration to God, was expounded and defended by Mohammed Webb.¹⁷⁵

Webb was an unusual inclusion, given he was an American convert to Islam, rare for the era. Most reports seem to focus on ecumenism and the role of the Christian churches; however:

Jamal Effendi, a member of the Ottoman delegation, opened the grand occasion by facing east and performing the Islamic call to prayer. The Chicago Tribune noted that he raised his hands and "chanted prayers to Allah," while Muslims in the audience responded by repeating each refrain to themselves and making what sounded to the reporter like "loud Amen[s] in old fashioned Methodist style." Delegations from Muslim lands, especially the Ottoman Empire, presented striking displays of their histories and cultures in Hyde Park along the Midway Plaisance: a handsome, roseate mosque with a gleaming white minaret, splendid models of Islamic cities and Oriental bazaars, simulations of centers of religious learning, and other highly regarded feats of architecture.¹⁷⁶

Although this congress marks an attempt by the Christian West to establish a forum for universal dialogue, small numbers of participants from Australia, combined with a limited number of leading Muslim spokespeople reduced the impact of Bonney's mission of unity and acceptance. Australia's relationship and dialogue with other, non-Protestant, non-Christian religions would be clouded by issues of racism, legally enacted by the Immigration Restriction Act (1901). It would take two world wars, labour shortages and change in worldview to drive the Western churches towards the acceptance of greater

¹⁷⁵ *The Worlds Parliament of Religions. An Illustrated and Popular Story of the World's First Parliament of Religions.*, 1, 196.

¹⁷⁶ Abd-Allah, "Chicago World's Fair and First Parliament of Religions," 2.

dialogue in the latter part of the 20th century before inroads could truly begin. In Australia, this may have taken even longer.

5.7 The Media - Polemic Attacks vs Sympathetic Coverage

While the world was trying to establish some form of interfaith dialogue, it was affected by perceptions and viewpoints promulgated in the media. Much of the public discourse and dialogue concerning Islam during this period was polemic in its manner and clouded by some sections of Christianity's views towards Islam or the Saracens. Orientalist stories ran in the media, providing a filtered view of the Islamic world. These ranged from travelogues in Syria,¹⁷⁷ rumours of war between Afghanistan and Persia,¹⁷⁸ and reports of the disastrous British retreat from Kabul in 1842.¹⁷⁹ Letters to the editor described 'Mahomedans' as a "vicious, thieving and murderous people".¹⁸⁰ One claim made in 1876 was that during an outbreak of the plague in Baghdad in that year, "not one of the 3000 Christians was touched by the visitation, while at Hilla and Bagdad the number of Moslems and Jews stricken by it far exceeded 8000."¹⁸¹ Others outlined the orientalist view of the Ottoman Empire, building on the mythology, one stating "The ladies of the harem are said to be grossly extravagant; they run their husbands into debt, and the spouses are forced to take bribes in order to make ends meet."¹⁸²

Poetry was also published, describing the "Moslim Tyrants" subjugation of Constantinople.¹⁸³ Reports were also published speculating, "that the religion of the Crescent is rapidly falling into decay."¹⁸⁴ This view of the world filtered through a developing society at a time when the colonisers were looking to gain a foothold in Australia and would benefit from the labour provided by the various colonised countries. In Australia, the local Indigenous peoples were decimated to a point where other subjugated peoples would be utilised to provide the labour needed.

¹⁷⁷ "The Selector," *Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser*, 2 Jan 1826. 3.

¹⁷⁸ "Rumoured War with Persia," *Colonial Times, Hobart*, 27 Nov 1838. 3.

¹⁷⁹ "The Battles in the Khybur Pass," *Sydney Herald*, 28 May 1842. 4.

¹⁸⁰ Sylvanus, "Letter to the Editor: On Distillation," *Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser*, 31 Mar 1831. 3.

¹⁸¹ "India. The Plague at Baghdad," *Advocate*, 2 Sep 1876. 5.

¹⁸² "General News," *Kalgoorlie Western Argus*, 17 Jun 1897. 27.

¹⁸³ Aliquis, "Original Poetry," *The Monitor, Sydney*, 13 Jan 1827. 3.

¹⁸⁴ "Mohammedanism," *The Colonist, Sydney*, 15 Jan 1835. 6.

In 1896 celebrations to mark the festival of *Eid al-Fitr* were described in the Perth newspaper as an “unwonted spectacle of about 100 Indians, Afghans, and natives of Asiatic races marching towards the Esplanade.”¹⁸⁵ Other reports were more favourable such as a South Australian account of *Eid* from 1892 where the participants were described as “entering into the whole proceedings with great spirit, regardless of the curious gape of the spectators.”¹⁸⁶ Likewise, the media also reported a straightforward account of the rituals during the month of *Dhu al-Hijjah* in Adelaide and the Hajj Muller's involvement in 1892.¹⁸⁷

One of the most vociferous opponents of Islam in Australia in this period was the English migrant Frederick Vosper. A politician and journalist, he established a series of short-lived anti-Afghan leagues in Western Australia.¹⁸⁸ Vosper was an ardent opponent of Asian immigration and supporter of white (Europeans) working man's rights.¹⁸⁹ A vociferous agitator, he engaged with the newspapers and delivered public lectures on “The Asiatic Question.”¹⁹⁰ Describing the Afghans as “more manly and noble”¹⁹¹ (than the Chinese) and “brave hardy and cleanly,” however went on to disparage Islam, decry the dangerous practice of polygamy and in an about-turn outline unhygienic practices when watering their camels.¹⁹² In a letter to the editor in 1895 he rhetorically asked the editor, “... is there any white man in Perth who would like to see his daughter or sister in a Mohammedan harem?”¹⁹³ One suspects his initial comments were delivered with a hefty dose of sarcasm, although from reading the account it is difficult to recognise. Other articles linked the opium trade in China with the smokers of “taboosh in the bazaars of Smyrna”, describing “a young Moslem whose palsied hand and dotard head could not count the coins I offered him.”¹⁹⁴

¹⁸⁵ "A Mohammedan Festival," *Inquirer and Commercial News*, 20 Mar 1896. 11.

¹⁸⁶ "Religious News," *South Australian Register*, 9 May 1892. 3.

¹⁸⁷ "Religious," *Daily Telegraph*, 9 Jul 1892. 9.

¹⁸⁸ Stevens, *Tin Mosques and Ghantowns: A History of Afghan Cameldrivers in Australia*, 144-45.

¹⁸⁹ E Jaggard, Vosper, Frederick Charles Burleigh (1869–1901), (Canberra, ACT: National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, 1990), <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/vosper-frederick-charles-burleigh-8933/text15695>.

¹⁹⁰ "The Asiatic Question," *Inquirer and Commercial News*, 2 Sep 1897. 15.

¹⁹¹ *ibid.*

¹⁹² *ibid.*

¹⁹³ F.C.B. Vosper, "Correspondence. The Anti Asiatic Question. To the Editor," *Daily News*, 26 Apr 1895. 3.

¹⁹⁴ "Chinese Missionaries and the Opium Trade," *Mount Alexander Mail*, 19 Mar 1858. 7.

Not all media coverage was polemic in nature. In 1864, another correspondent, John Forbes, outlined the provenance of the Qur'an alongside the Torah and the Bible, pointing out that:

*the messages brought to our Prophet were also intended to furnish the miracle of eloquence, and were set down in fact in the very words in which they were by him delivered to us; and the language and style of these messages prove incontestably that this could never have been the production of man. So the Koran was transmitted from Heaven in the very words in which we have it...And we believe further that the Koran is the last message which came down from heaven, and that, without doubt it was delivered to our Prophet Mohamet.*¹⁹⁵

The inclusivity of this language indicates that the writer, who was described as an officer in India, was most probably a convert to Islam.

Other correspondents responded in order to enlighten the colonists further, introducing the concepts and beliefs of Islam.

"Mohammedanism is the one religion of the world, besides our own and the Jewish, which is strictly and avowedly Monotheistic. "Dispute not," said Mohammed to his followers, "against those who have received the Scriptures—that is, Jews and Christians, except with gentleness ; but say unto them we believe in the revelation which hath been sent down to us, and also in that which hath been sent down to you, and our God and your God is one. Verily, the believers and those who are Jews, those who are Christians, and Sabeans ; whoever believeth in God and the last day, and doeth that which is right, they shall have their reward with their Lord ; there shall no fear come upon them, neither shall they be grieved.— Koran, v. 73."

Figure 15 1875 Excerpt from a letter to the Editor of the Mercury¹⁹⁶

Given the date of the letter and the in-depth knowledge of Islam and the Qur'an, it appears possible the author, credited as M was, in fact, Muhammad Cossoms. Another letter to the editor of the Daily Telegraph in 1898 also took to the defence of Islam, addressing the "popular ignorance." In concluding his thoughtful explanation, he quoted the Hungarian

¹⁹⁵ John Forbes, "Mohammedan Commentary on the Holy Bible," *South Australian Register*, 1 Feb 1864. 3.

¹⁹⁶ H., "A Mohommedan Lesson. To the Editor of the Mercury," *Mercury*, 25 Mar 1875. 3.

Prince Emeric Thököly (1657-1705) who stated: “There is more faith and truth in the Grand Turk than is in all the courts of Christendom.”¹⁹⁷

The treatment of Muslims in the popular media of the times is best reflected by Katy Nebhan who stated that, “there is no simplistic discourse that articulates the representation of Muslims in Australian newspapers during this period.”¹⁹⁸ Coming from a European context and primed by “a powerful wave of Muslim religious revivalism,”¹⁹⁹ European colonists appear to have harboured long memories of the Islamic Ottoman threat that saw Vienna besieged in 1529, followed by 150 years of military actions. Much of the understanding of Islam seems to come from an Orientalist viewpoint, that of the exotic ‘Arabian Nights’ and this would have formed the viewpoint of the early Australian journalists and editors. Few, if any, had any depth of understanding about the nuances of Islam, the diversity of ethnic groups that constituted the early Australian *umma*. By promulgating this myth, the media of the day further hampered any meaningful dialogue at the meso and macro levels.

Much of this imported Orientalism would become problematic in the 20th Century. Grey clouds were looming for many of Australia’s recent non-European arrivals. Anti-Asian sentiment was on the rise and included Afghans, Indians and Malays as well as the Chinese. It would culminate in the Immigration Restriction Act (1901) and effectively put a halt to the expansion of much of the Australian Muslim community and any attempts at significant dialogue.

5.8 Conclusion

Until such time we stumble upon a goldmine of private correspondence, or as yet undiscovered church records, the public record is our best means of establishing the existence of any authentic inter-faith dialogue in the early years of Australia. Thorough searching has only uncovered limited examples of dialogue between Muslims and non-Muslims. Much of this resulted from the dominant nature of Colonialism of the times and

¹⁹⁷ "A Mahometan Mission. To the Editor," *Daily Telegraph*, 26 Aug 1898. 6.

¹⁹⁸ Katy Nebhan, "Revolution and Reflection the Coloured and White Muslim in Australia’s Print Media from the Late Nineteenth to the Early Twentieth Century," *Australian Journal of Islamic Studies* 3,3 (2018): 48.

¹⁹⁹ John L. Esposito, *The Islamic Threat" Myth or Reality?*, 3rd ed. (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1999), 47.

appeared more like a monologue than any genuine dialogue. New arrivals were expected to attempt to assimilate and integrate, as opposed to hanging on to vestiges of previous worldviews, especially if it was non-European in its origin.

Inter-religious dialogue in Australia during the first 120 years was limited in its scope and application. The only organised meso-level attempt at dialogue occurred around the Worlds Parliament of Religions, and while Australia was represented, its presence was limited. Some meso-level inter-religious dialogue occurred around the presence of mosques in both Perth and Adelaide; however, small numbers of Muslims from all over the world meant a disparate community evolved. As discussed, some would have converted to the dominant religion, Protestant Christianity, others would have remained in the margins. Many of the early Australian *ummas* lacked the necessary language skills to engage in any meaningful dialogue beyond the daily requirements, meaning that dialogue was limited to a micro-level.

While there appears to have been some interest in aspects of Islam, it would seem that the pervading viewpoint was that of the traditional Orientalist. Given most knowledge transfers and information came from Great Britain, a colonial superpower whose conquests included several Islamic countries, this is hardly a ground-breaking concept. However, it did lead to a view of Islam that was to see it relegated into a subservient position under the influence of Christian Orientalism.

Looking at this era through a theoretical lens, the application of Allport's contact theory would be difficult to apply given the small number of Muslims present, making them one of the many disparate outgroups. At its peak during this period, the Muslim population was no more than 3,500 (1890) spread across the vast continent, however mostly at the margins. Many people in the cities such as Melbourne and Sydney would have had minimal contact, and that they did was inevitably tainted by the orientalist stories circulated in the media of the day. Remote communities relied on the Afghan cameleers and Indian hawkers, however, this dialogue was also tainted by prejudices. This is not to say there was no contact. Relationships were established on the margins of settlements. Afghans and Indigenous Australians, as well as other marginalised members of society formed marital relationships. This allowed dialogue at the micro and possibly meso level.

Those with the skills and wherewithal to engage had a voice; however, it was drowned out by both the Christian monologue as well as the growing move towards nationalism and federation that included elements of racism. Local attitudes were affected by prejudices from the British experience in Asia, especially regarding the Afghan wars and the Indian mutiny. Anti-Asiatic fervour affected the Malay and Javanese communities, putting the brakes on any growth in these communities. This did not stop the enterprising and educated among the early Muslim migrants, who appeared to fare well during this era.

Chapter 6. The disappearing *umma* (1901 – 1945)

6.1 Introduction

The period between 1901 and 1945 marked nearly five decades of global uncertainty and calamity, with two world wars, a Great Depression, and the end of several old empires and governments. It also marked the beginning of greater access to more modern modes of long-distance transportation, enabling waves of migrants to travel the world in search of opportunities. These waves brought a range of beliefs with them, opening new areas for inter-religious dialogue. In Australia, the need for migration to open up the country was hindered by the implementation of the Immigration Restriction Act (1901), a thinly veiled racist policy designed to allow Australia to grow as a satellite state of Great Britain, with preference given to White Anglo-Saxon Protestant, preferably British, citizens. This policy was to remain in effect until “the last vestiges were eliminated by the Whitlam government, with Coalition support, in 1975.”¹ This had been a critical factor in reducing the number of Muslim migrants and limiting dialogue. Accordingly, any discussion about Islam and Australia during this period calls for some analysis of the impact and legacy of this legislation.

This chapter will argue that central to this era was the instigation of the Immigration Restriction Act which limited migration and reduced the ability for many non-Christians to remain in Australia. Given Australia at that stage was largely Christian, inter-religious dialogue was limited to the Afghans and their descendants as well as the small number of Muslims who arrived from places like Albania. Crucial to inter-religious dialogue in this era were the Muslims who remained in Australia and attempted to make their voices heard, despite the obstacles that were presented by the government legislation.

6.2 1901 – Federation, the Constitution and Immigration Restriction Act

In 1901 when Australia became a Federation, as opposed to a collection of colonies, a constitution was enacted, a democratic Federal Parliament was established, and a new era began. The new constitution prohibited the Commonwealth from: “establishing any religion, imposing any religious observation, prohibiting the free exercise of any religion, and requiring a religious test as a qualification for any office or public trust under the

¹ Windschuttle, "The White Australia Policy," 133.

Commonwealth.”² Often described in terms of ‘freedom of religion,’ “the drafters’ primary purpose of section 116 was not to protect religious freedom, ‘but to preserve the States’ exclusive powers to regulate religious practices and local affairs.’”³ Although this clause would be challenged over the next 100 years, it would remain unchanged, and through inference or interpretation would effectively allow freedom of religion in Australia, an issue central to any future inter-faith dialogue.

One of the first Acts of Parliament passed was the *Immigration Restriction Act (1901)*, also known as the White Australia Policy.⁴ Ostensibly, the Act was to prohibit the immigration of non-Europeans, through the application of a language test, as well as idiots or the insane, convicted criminals, and other undesirables.⁵ However, it was devoid of any overt restrictions on skin colour or religion. Before Federation, each of the colonies had invoked similar policies for a variety of reasons,⁶ and the coming of Federation meant that some form of all-encompassing national legislation was required. The real purpose of this Act has been the subject of much debate and disagreement by historians. David Day takes the traditional line that it was a racist policy, much like South Africa’s apartheid system,⁷ as opposed to Keith Windschuttle’s view that it was more about “civic patriotism” and economic issues, with little to do with overt racism.⁸ Regardless of the original intent of the policy, it had long-reaching ramifications and effects on the Muslim community. The effects also applied to others of ‘colour’ living in Australia after 1901, regardless of religious belief.

One of the significant issues for the Australian Muslims were the restrictions the legislation placed on overseas travel. Unless an exemption could be acquired, non-European Muslims who travelled back to their home countries for short visits faced the possibility of a European language dictation test on arrival back in Australia. Some may have spoken limited English; however, the ability to write was problematic. Initially imposed in English,

² "Interim Report into Federal Protection of Freedom of Religion or Belief." edited by Defence and Trade Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs. Canberra, ACT: Parliament of Australia, 2018.

³ Professor George Williams, Submission 71, p. 2. in *ibid.*, 1-2.

⁴ Commonwealth of Australia, "Immigration Restriction Act."

⁵ *ibid.*, 3a, 3c, 3e.

⁶ Graham Nicholson, "A Racist Constitution for a Nation: A Nation of Racists?," *Alt Law Journal* 82,5 (2000): 2.

⁷ Day, "The White Australia Policy," 1-16.

⁸ Windschuttle, "The White Australia Policy," 129-30.

other European languages were used to refuse re-entry to those ‘of colour.’⁹ After a brief period of confusion, border agents and “customs officials were instructed to use this test as an ‘absolute bar’ to the admission of ‘coloured persons.’”¹⁰ Initially, family reunions were permitted; however, they were only granted to a small number of migrants. Between 1903 and 1905, this provision was removed from the act,¹¹ limiting any form of growth for the local *umma*.

The granting of dictation test exemptions appears to have been somewhat haphazard. One cameleer who was successful on three occasions was Shadee Khan, a “camel driver who arrived in Australia in the late 19th century”.¹² He had made several visits to his homeland in Pakistan and, after 1901, was forced to apply for an exemption each time he wished to return. His were granted, others were not so fortunate. Abdul Rahman Khan, who had returned to India in 1910 to adopt his orphaned nephew, had his request for admission refused, despite representations showing him to be of good character and having resided in Australia for some time.¹³ This policy of selective racism had implications for those already in Australia.

Despite the initial provision allowing for family reunions, the reality appears to have been different. With limited options for finding a wife from their homelands, the Afghans already here were bereft of suitable (Muslim) females for marriage. The choice was simple, return to your homeland, marry and remain there, or take a local (non-Muslim) as a wife. Others, some due to being social pariahs and living on society's outskirts, married Indigenous women. Those with successful businesses and access to language skills fared better; however, they were not immune from persecution. As will be shown, this group, especially in the regional areas, contributed to any micro and macro level dialogue in the towns. The

⁹ Day, "The White Australia Policy," 35.

¹⁰ National Archives of Australia, "Uncommon Lives, Muslim Journeys," NAA, accessed 10/1 2019, <http://www.naa.gov.au/collection/snapshots/uncommon-lives/muslim-journeys/fragments.aspx#section2>.

¹¹ *ibid.*

¹² *ibid.*

¹³ *ibid.*

descendants of these unions still live in regional towns such as Maree¹⁴ and Broken Hill¹⁵, as well as cities such as Perth¹⁶.

Peta Stephenson has written in-depth about these relationships between Afghans and Indigenous Australians, citing considerable degrees of cultural convergence between the Afghans and the Indigenous Australians.¹⁷ Regardless of any cultural similarities such as age at marriage, the acceptance of polygyny, and issues of obedience to husbands, it would appear that this may have been the only matrimonial option available to the Muslim men, for whom family was an essential fundamental Islamic concept. These arrangements eventually led to what Stephenson relates as 'kinversion'; the acceptance of Islam by some Indigenous women and their offspring in outback Australia.¹⁸ One long term effect of these unions has been the willing acceptance of Islam amongst members of the Indigenous community, seen as a peaceful and alternative option to the often enforced Protestant Christianity.¹⁹

Another side effect of the *Immigration Restriction Act (1901)* was the cessation of the long-standing relationships between the Macassan trepang fishermen and the Indigenous peoples of Arnhem Land. This trade had been in existence long before colonisation, possibly for several centuries. As outlined in chapter 4, contact between the Muslim fishermen and the Yolngu and other mobs led to linguistic influences on local languages,^{20 21} as well as spiritual, cultural, and familial connections.²² Once the Act was enabled, this allowed the South Australian Government, who controlled the area at the time, to refuse access to what was seen as a traditional fishing ground for the Macassans.²³ This embargo presented a

¹⁴ Compass & Qur'an, "History of the Muslim Cameleers of Australia.," (2015).

¹⁵ Bobby Shamroze, grandson of Fazulla Ziadulla, Afghan cameleer. See Broken Hill City Council, "Broken Hill Mosque Museum," accessed 6 Jun 2020, <https://www.brokenhill.nsw.gov.au/Community/About-the-city/Outback-Museum-Stories/Broken-Hill-Mosque-Museum>.

¹⁶ Madison Snow, "Australia's Afghan Cameleers' Forgotten History Revived by Their Living Relatives.," ABC News, accessed 11 Jul 2020, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-02-02/descendents-remember-australias-cameleers/11890622>.

¹⁷ Stephenson, "Keeping It in the Family: Partnerships between Indigenous and Muslim Communities in Australia."

¹⁸ "Indigenous Australia's Pilgrimage to Islam," *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 32, no. 3 (2011).

¹⁹ See Stephenson, Peta. 2010. *Islam Dreaming. Indigenous Muslims in Australia*. Sydney: UNSW and Stephenson, Peta. 2011. "Indigenous Australia's Pilgrimage to Islam." *Journal of Intercultural Studies*. 32,3

²⁰ Evans, "Macassan Loanwords in Top End Languages."

²¹ Urry and Walsh, "The Lost Macassar Language of Northern Australia."

²² McIntosh, "Islam and Australia's Aborigines."

²³ Stephenson, "Syncretic Spirituality: Islam in Indigenous Australia," 429.

significant blow to both the Macassans as well as the Indigenous Nations of Arnhem Land. Highly prized trade goods were no longer available and “family and social ties were also severed.”²⁴ Another long-running chapter of Australia’s connection and dialogue with Muslims was effectively brought to an end.

From the perspective of dialogue, the Immigration Restriction Act forced many Muslims to engage with Government officials, requiring some level of language skills. For many, this would have been a barrier. In towns where Indigenous communities co-existed with marginalised Muslim communities, it led to the beginnings of a form of meso-level dialogue between ‘others’. When taken in combination, the various acts of legislation meant that both immigration and naturalisation were restricted, livelihoods had been removed, and economic pressures forced the hands of many migrants. Those who were able to, simply returned home. Whether it was overt racism, religious discrimination, or some form of an economic embargo led by union movements, the result was inevitable; a downturn in the number of Muslims willing or able to remain in Australia on favourable terms. This applied to the entire range of Muslim communities; the Afghans, Malay, Indians, and Macassans were all affected.

The reduction in numbers had a drastic effect on the small Australian *umma*. Although the records are not clear, in 1901, it has been estimated there were between 2,000 and 4,000 Muslims in Australia,²⁵ representing less than 0.001% of the population.²⁶ As a result of the passing of the *Immigration Restriction Act of 1901*, many Muslim migrants returned to their place of birth, as, apart from British Indians, citizenship would not willingly be conferred on them. The Afghan population was most affected. With around 2,000 Afghan Muslims in Australia before 1900,²⁷ and 3,908 in 1911, the population of Afghans had dwindled to 142 by 1933.²⁸ However, there were still some 1,877 Muslims (Mohammedans) counted in the Census that year,²⁹ demonstrating a reduction in numbers of just over 50%. Given the status of Indigenous Australians (not counted in the Census)

²⁴ *ibid.*

²⁵ Cleland, "Uncommon Lives: Muslim Journeys". 1.

²⁶ "The Churches."

²⁷ Stephenson, *Islam Dreaming. Indigenous Muslims in Australia*, 35.

²⁸ Nahid Kabir, "The Economic Plight of the Afghans in Australia, 1860-2000," *Islamic Studies* 44, no. 2 (2005): 238.

²⁹ Commonwealth of Australia, "Census of the Commonwealth of Australia. Volume II - Part XVI Religion," ed. Commonwealth Statistician (Canberra, ACT: Commonwealth of Australia, 1933), 1022.

and Macassans, there is no accurate census data to account for this group; however, they too were severely affected. All of this left significant gaps in the geographically diverse Australian *umma*. When the next significant wave of Muslim migrants arrived after World War II, some mosques were in existence, but with seriously depleted numbers of worshippers, as few as two were reported in Adelaide in the 1950s.³⁰

| RELIGION. | | | | | | | | C'WLTH. | | |
|--------------------|--------|------|---------|------|-------|------|------|---------|-------|--|
| | N.S.W. | Vic. | Q'land. | S.A. | W.A. | Tas. | N.T. | F.C.T. | | |
| 18.—MOHAMMEDAN— | | | | | | | | | | |
| Mohammedan | 803 | 390 | 692 | 428 | 1,503 | 9 | 38 | 1 | 3,864 | |
| Druse | 2 | .. | .. | 10 | .. | 1 | .. | .. | 13 | |
| Mussulman | 12 | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 12 | |
| Others | 2 | 1 | .. | 2 | 14 | .. | .. | .. | 19 | |
| TOTAL | 819 | 391 | 692 | 440 | 1,517 | 10 | 38 | 1 | 3,908 | |

Figure 16 1911 Mohammedan Denominations, Census extract³¹

The data from 1911 reflects several issues. Firstly, the 12 Mussulman recorded in Sydney may have been sailors or travellers passing through, as this is a reference to the Indonesian Muslims who have had prolonged contact with the Northern coast of Australia. It would appear that there was minimal dialogue between the Government officials and the individuals as they seem to have classified all three groups as separate schools of thought of Islam. Whilst the 'Mussulman' (Indonesians) and 'Mohammedans' (Afghans et al) may have demonstrated noticeable ethnic differences, the classification of the 'Druse'³² as Muslims could be problematic. They are often thought to be independent of, and not considered to be Muslims by some mainstream Muslim communities. How and why they arrived in Australia is not yet understood.

| NON-CHRISTIAN. | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|--------|--------|-------|-----|-------|----|----|-----|-------|--------|--------|
| Buddhist | 266 | 43 | 121 | 46 | 221 | 1 | .. | 37 | 272 | 463 | 735 |
| Chinese | 133 | 52 | 63 | 5 | 36 | .. | 5 | 11 | 61 | 244 | 305 |
| Confucian | 451 | 82 | 140 | 8 | 97 | 2 | .. | 7 | 133 | 654 | 787 |
| Hebrew | 10,305 | 9,500 | 1,041 | 528 | 2,105 | 70 | 4 | .. | 86 | 23,467 | 23,553 |
| Hindu | 86 | 38 | 72 | 13 | 3 | .. | .. | .. | 49 | 163 | 212 |
| Mohammedan | 523 | 159 | 547 | 267 | 333 | 2 | .. | 46 | 491 | 1,386 | 1,877 |
| Pagan (so returned) | 66 | 21 | 49 | 7 | 18 | .. | .. | .. | 36 | 125 | 161 |
| Shinto | 16 | 5 | 30 | .. | 70 | .. | .. | .. | 90 | 31 | 121 |
| Sikh | 10 | 12 | 28 | 5 | 10 | .. | .. | .. | 17 | 48 | 65 |
| Theosophist | 207 | 139 | 100 | 56 | 29 | 8 | .. | 1 | 9 | 531 | 540 |
| Other, Non-Christian | 65 | 14 | 10 | 14 | 7 | 4 | .. | .. | 6 | 108 | 114 |
| Total, Non-Christian | 12,128 | 10,065 | 2,201 | 949 | 2,929 | 87 | 9 | 102 | 1,260 | 27,220 | 28,470 |

Figure 17 1933 Census extract³³

³⁰ "Only Two Worship in Mosque Now."

³¹ Commonwealth of Australia, 769.

³² The Druze are a unique ethno-religious group from the Middle East. Whilst their teachings were developed from Isma'ilism, they do not identify as Muslims. See Samy S. Swayd, *The a to Z of the Druzes*, ed. Samy S. Swayd (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2009).

³³ Commonwealth of Australia, "Census of the Commonwealth of Australia. Volume II - Part XVI Religion," 1022.

While the Immigration Restriction Act impacted both the Afghans and Macassans, other Muslims managed to immigrate, probably because of ethnic or racial classification. In the 1920s, a small group of Albanian Muslims migrated to Australia and became accepted within regional communities. This was probably more about skin colour than religion, and given that Albania is located in South-Eastern Europe, they were not explicitly excluded in the Act. Regardless, the initial numbers of Albanian migrants fell well short of making up for the reduction in the number of Afghan and other Muslims.

However, there were some positive repercussions, although it took a while for them to become apparent. As discussed in chapter 5, the early Muslims had constructed mosques in several places, notably Adelaide and Perth, and some regional centres. Accordingly, some infrastructure was in place when the next significant wave of Muslim migration took place after World War II. Accordingly, this meant a new lease of life for mosques in towns such as Adelaide; however, for regional Australia, the opposite happened. Mosques in Maree, Broken Hill, and Bourke fell into disrepair, becoming shadows of their former vibrant selves. Through the actions of the remaining descendants, these three examples have been saved, restored, or reconstructed, providing an extant link to the pioneering Muslims who came to Australia seeking opportunities and provided so much to the developing country. Their histories and records provide a window into their attempts at micro and meso-level dialogue.



Figure 18 Bourke Mosque, 2020³⁴

³⁴ From authors collection, June 2020

6.3 Pre-existing areas of dialogue

The Legal System

As in the previous era, the Qur'an seems to have been widely used as an alternate for the administration of oaths for Muslims with matters before the courts.³⁵ Even though this had been standard practice in both English and Australian law, an understanding of specific nuances surrounding its use and the place the Qur'an holds for a Muslim were lacking. One newspaper report seemed to indicate some form of quizzical confusion about how one Muslim paid his respects towards his sacred text.

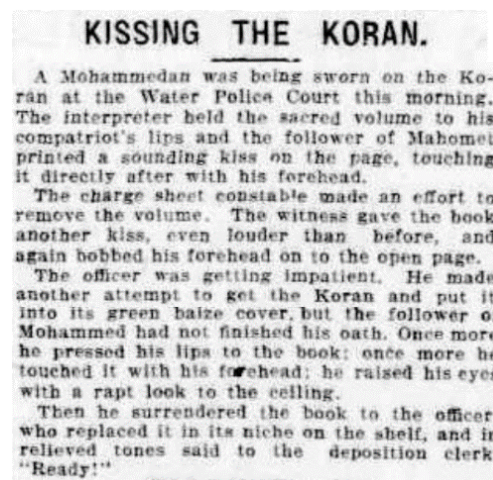


Figure 19 Kissing the Koran ³⁶

What was most likely being observed was a Muslim who may not have seen the Qur'an for a period of time, kissing it three times and touching it with his forehead to demonstrate his belief. This was followed by him looking upwards and giving thanks to Allah. The attitude of the court officer, as well as the reporter, shows a lack of will to engage in meaningful dialogue with the different other. There was an interpreter; however, it seems no questions were asked, nor any explanation given for the treatment of the Qur'an. It probably represented the dominant Anglo-Protestant worldview of the day. From the perspective of this research, this interaction demonstrates that any dialogue in this realm may have been more of 'necessary tolerance' by the authorities. The focus was to ensure that the witness had taken a meaningful oath; so that proceedings could continue in line with the legal requirements of the courts.

³⁵ "Oaths and Affirmations," *Register*, 29 Jun 1901. 4.

³⁶ "Kissing the Koran," *Evening News*, 22 May 1907. 5.

This may have been one of the few times when Muslims had a status equal to that of the Christian Australians, being viewed as equals under the eyes of the law. Additionally, some level of respect was shown towards the sacred text of Islam, as the Qur'an had its special niche and protective cover, representing some understanding of the sacred nature and accepted treatment for such a volume. Other courts were sticklers for procedural fairness, even adjourning for a week while a Qur'an was sourced to avoid potential perjury.³⁷

Overall, the legal system provided an avenue for dialogue, regardless of faith. Usually, this dialogue was of the necessary or day-to-day and often involved some form of dispute, for which resolution was being sought. There was some understanding in the Australian legal system of the need for alternate sacred texts; however, a nuanced understanding of the practices and requirements was often missing.

Adelaide, South Australia

Adelaide continued to be a centre for the peripatetic Muslims of outback South Australia and beyond. As discussed in the previous chapter, the Adelaide Mosque provided a refuge, community centre and place of worship for those who could make the journey. There was some coverage in the local newspapers, much of it more like an 'Oriental' travelogue. In 1904 the Adelaide Advertiser provided an explainer about the month of *Ramadan* for curious locals.³⁸ Using an extract from Kipling's 'Mandalay'³⁹ as a reference, this Orientalist viewpoint was evident in 1930 with the article entitled, 'Mohammedan Mosque brings the East to West Adelaide,' and went on to state that "Adelaide romance seekers have no need to travel east of Suez to find the glamour of the Orient."⁴⁰ The article, published over 30 years after the building of the mosque, went on to inform the readers of Adelaide that, "it is something of a paradox that this mosque, while one of the city's familiar landmarks, is one of the least known of all."⁴¹ While likening it to a scene from '*The Arabian Nights*,' the unknown author does go on to explain the practices and beliefs of

³⁷ "Australian State Telegrams," *Mercury*, 22 Jan 1902. 6.

³⁸ "A Moslem Fast," *Advertiser*, 12 Nov 1904. 8.

³⁹ Rudyard Kipling, *The Portable Kipling*, ed. Irving Howe (Ringwood, Vic: Penguin Books, 1982), 621. Ship me somewheres east of Suez, where the best is like the worst, Where there aren't no Ten Commandments an' a man can raise a thirst.....'

⁴⁰ "Mohammedan Mosque Brings the East to West Adelaide," *Mail*, 5 Apr 1930. 6.

⁴¹ *ibid.*

Islam sympathetically as well as explaining the reduced number of worshippers. Finally, it concludes on a poignant note:

*Nearly all of these old men, graybeards, whose tired old eyes have looked long on life. And the day cannot be far off when they will be gathered to the Mecca they so devoutly seek, and another quaint building will be left alone with its ghosts, its memories and the sighing breezes that float through the deserted courtyard like murmured prayers of other days.*⁴²

The tone of this article seems to sound the end of an era, a far cry from the small yet vibrant community of the late 19th century. Given the age of the *umma* and the lack of younger community members, dialogue with the outside world would have been limited, and it is possible that this diminishing congregation was just passing the time, awaiting their fate. In part, this may account for a lack of serious dialogue during this period. Three years later, the Adelaide Mail reinforced the nature of the small and diminishing congregation, describing it as, “but a shadow of what it was when the mosque was built, years ago.”⁴³ One wonders whether the correspondents lived long enough to see the *umma* grow and rejuvenate itself following World War II.

By 1939, the media view of Adelaide Mosque appears to have become firmly planted in the Orientalist school of thought, with a sub-heading leading a local travel piece about West Gilbert Street. The font used in the word ‘east’ reflects the calligraphic practices of Asia, as opposed to anything representing the actual ethnic origins of the remaining inhabitants. It conjures up images of the Asiatic East, thereby enshrining ‘orientalism’ into the conversation. There is also the issue of the title of the article, “Through Adelaide's Foreign Quarter,” indicating that the inhabitants were seen as the different ‘*other*,’ and accordingly validated the concept that they were not Australian, merely visitors from the exotic East.

⁴² *ibid.*

⁴³ "Through Adelaide's Foreign Quarter," *Mail*, 25 Feb 1933. 5.



Figure 20 Through Adelaide's Foreign Quarter ⁴⁴

Further evaluation of the sub-heading could indicate an 'alien' intrusion into the central core or heart of Adelaide. Symbolically, this may represent a very powerful statement to 'otherise' the diminishing *umma*. Again, this subtle treatment acts as a hindrance towards any meaningful dialogue and serves to reinforce stereotypes.

The description of the area surrounding the mosque, while within the precincts of the city, continued to provide a form of an exotic local travelogue. The idiosyncratic dress sense of the Afghan, "a loose white costume and swathed turban...[covered with] a modern sports blazer striped in blue and red, straight from the city store,"⁴⁵ was noted and their choice of Little Gilbert St to reside in, described as "exile."⁴⁶ This may be an example of one individual's version of assimilation, given the European blazer combined with the ubiquitous and traditional turban. From an overall perspective, we see a limited understanding of the importance of access to a mosque, reflecting an Orientalist approach imported from the mother country, Great Britain. This Western influence was critical in shaping and constructing Australian's understanding of Islam during this period, further reducing the *umma* to the status of 'outsiders' or dangerous others.

By 1945, the Adelaide *umma* had significantly diminished. The mosque became a retirement home for the last of the Afghan cameleers. It would be the next wave of migrants, leaving behind the devastation of Europe, who would arrive to reinvigorate the Muslim

⁴⁴ Clifton Rex, "A Little Bit of the East in the Heart of Adelaide.," *ibid.*, 15 Apr 1939. 7.

⁴⁵ N.F.C., "Little Known Byways of Adelaide Have Uncommon Sights," *News*, 29 Mar 1941. 2.

⁴⁶ *ibid.*

tradition in South Australia. They would utilise the pre-existing relationships and infrastructure built by the first wave of migrants, whose legacy has now been enshrined in Australian history. The new arrivals would bring another worldview with different practices and expectations due to differing socio-cultural backgrounds. They would also represent the migratory wave that would enable the beginning of the institutionalised levels of inter-religious dialogue.

Outback South Australia

During this era, the Muslim inhabitants of regional outposts such as Maree (Hergott Springs) and Farina remained in their isolated existence. The federal restrictions placed on new (non-white) migrants precluded family reunions or the obtaining of brides from their homelands, except under some exceptional circumstances. As both Afghans and Indigenous Australians existed on the ‘wrong’ side of the tracks, this would have further brought the two outlying groups in society into closer association, and mutual liaisons and relationships formed. Tracing and accurately accounting for these unions, outside of oral or limited family histories, is problematic as “unions with Indigenous women and their offspring were rarely recorded in official documents.”⁴⁷

Peta Stephenson states that:

*Intermarriage was common and today there are many Aboriginal families with surnames including Khan, Sultan, Mahomed and Akbar. After marrying an Afghan cameleer, a woman would often go to a remote settlement to live in the camelen’s community, where she was quickly drawn into her husband’s Muslim code and lifestyle.*⁴⁸

When discussing how and why the marriages survived given the peripatetic and remote nature of the Afghan’s work, one descendent responded that the Aboriginal women were “the only women who could put up with the hardships of the bush.”⁴⁹ The Afghans in outback regions suffered from a series of governmental impositions, with many targeting their beasts of burden, the camels. Additionally, the mechanisation of the transport industry through the use of motorised trucks saw a reduced need and the eventual abandonment of

⁴⁷ Deen, "Excavating the Past: Australia's Muslims," 69.

⁴⁸ Stephenson, "Syncretic Spirituality: Islam in Indigenous Australia," 430.

⁴⁹ FAIR, "Mona Akbar Interview," FAIR, accessed 8 Aug 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KEgB8LxuP2g&t=52s>.

the camel carrying business. All of this shows levels of necessary or micro-level dialogue within the local communities, in this case, between the two groups viewed as outsiders.

Given a paucity of recorded dialogue, the current population and descendants of the original Afghan's provide the only evidence showing the existence of continued dialogue. Through this period, the second generation of Afghan / Indigenous partnerships were born, came of age, and in turn, provided the next generation. This Afghan heritage is celebrated during the running of the annual Camel Cup; an event described as "partly a celebration of family, of culture, of religion, and of overcoming the odds."⁵⁰

Some oral histories exist, demonstrating that at least some levels, there were positive examples of social harmony. One Farina resident, Winifred Spry (1901-1987), described the segregation in Farina, as follows: "Farina was one side of the railway station - the town was - and over the other side was the Afghans' camp."⁵¹ Spry went on to talk of interactions with the few children in the male-dominated Afghan camp. When questioned about the settlers' view of relationships between the Afghan men and the local women, she responded that they were, "Quite happy. They didn't seem to take any notice of it at all."⁵²

Another South Australian pioneer recalled his interactions with the Afghan hawkers. He observed that the mosques serve as a place for:

the camel drivers to lounge through the heat of the day. The notion that 'to labour is to pray' is not shared by the Oriental. The Mohammedan maxim is rather that worship consists of lounging in the coolest place available; and though the Afghans at Hergott cannot get the heavenly coolness of a well-built Arab mosque, they have erected the coolest building in the town.⁵³

His observations seem to miss the point; the Afghans would have been escaping the intense heat of summer, as they had in their homelands, awaiting the next prayer in their daily timetable. The language, and the fact that it appears he never questioned what they were actually doing, indicate the prevalence of the Orientalist approach by the colonial settlers

⁵⁰ Mike Sexton, "7:30 Report," in *The Race that stops a Town* (Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 2010).

⁵¹ Winifred Spry, interview by Beth Robertson, 1985, interview OH 1/18.

⁵² *ibid.*, 6.

⁵³ "The Explorer. Through Sturt's Stony Desert," *Adelaide Observer*, 8 Feb 1902. 3.

towards the Afghan Muslims, yet another hindrance towards any meaningful dialogue. Additionally, the correspondent is comparing the Afghans' "lounging" to the concept of the Protestant work ethic, whereby to labour is to pray," a concept espoused by sociologist Max Weber.⁵⁴

Broken Hill, New South Wales

For much of this period, Broken Hill was a central location for the transshipment of agricultural produce, as well as being a regional hub for the outlying stations of New South Wales and eastern South Australia. This frontier town was also one of Australia's early pluralist societies, have both a mosque, a Jewish synagogue as well as Christian churches of all denominations. Then as now, there appears to have been some levels of tolerance and approval; however, certain elements existed within society who were prepared to impart their version of colonial superiority.

Oh, yes. The Afghans, they had their camp out in North Broken Hill, where they had a little temple and there would be, I suppose in my memory, there would be upwards of fifty camels. And the Afghans had their own religion, naturally, and their own customs, and they were respected by all decent people. Only the few larrikins who dared go out there, they would be left to the mercy of the camel drivers who could use a whip with great accuracy but never actually harm anyone. But they were quite terrifying. So they were left pretty much to their own devices to do as they saw fit, which was not any harm to anyone.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ See M Weber and S Kalberg, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, 3rd ed. (Blackwell: Roxbury Pub., 2002).

⁵⁵ Norma Goninan, interview by Rob Linn, 1997, interview OH 456/33.



*Figure 21 An early photo of the mosque and camel camp*⁵⁶

This “little temple,” once on the farthest outskirts of town, has since been swallowed by a growing suburbia. Now situated between domestic dwellings, its memory is kept alive by the caretaker, Bobby Shamroze, the grandson of Fazulla Ziadulla, a cameleer from the Punjab region, who arrived in Australia with his son, Shamroze Khan, in 1894.⁵⁷

The mosque, established in 1887, was the centre of Islamic life in the region. Following *Ramadan* in 1903, the Adelaide Advertiser reporter observed the festival of *Eid* celebrations, where “many Afghans, with the aid of sticks, were performing weird dances.” In this case, the intrepid reporter questioned one of the participants, who stated that they were celebrating “the end of the fast over Christmas.”⁵⁸

While the original Afghan migrants actively practised the rites of Islam, in many cases, it was not passed on to the next generation. When questioned about religion, Bobby Shamroze replied:

*They did not teach me our language or even our religion,” he says. “All I know is this,” touching his heart with his hand and bowing a little. “I learnt this by watching granddad.”*⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Bobby Shamroze and Robynne Sanderson, "Mosque Museum 2018," Broken Hill City Library, accessed 15 Jan 2021, <https://brokenhillhistoricalsociety.com/our-society/journal-extracts/museum-reports/museum-annual-reports/>.

⁵⁷ In 2020 the author spent a pleasant afternoon being shown the mosque by Mr Shamroze.

⁵⁸ "Mohammedans Rejoicing," *Advertiser*, 5 Jan 1903. 4.

⁵⁹ Neena Badhwar, "Bobby Amanullah Shamroze Khan, a Relic of the Surviving Cameleer Generation in Australia," *The Indian Down Under*, 12 Sep 2020.

The failure to pass on the beliefs further led to a diminishing of the local *umma*, in turn reducing the opportunities for any necessary or organised dialogue. Additionally, once the number of believers dips below a certain point, the need for places of worship is removed. This, in turn, led to the abandonment of the mosque in Broken Hill, until 1967, when it was rescued by the Broken Hill Historical Society. Islam was not unique in its diminishing *umma*; the local Jewish community would reach this point in the 1960s, culminating with the eventual closure of its Synagogue.

One key hindrance to meaningful dialogue at any level occurred on the 1st of January 1915. Australia had been a part of the Great British call to arms in 1914 supporting Britain's allies in the war against the Central Powers that included the last vestiges of the Ottoman Empire. One of the initial media reports declared boldly, "War in Broken Hill."⁶⁰ In some sensationalist reporting over the next few days, other correspondents went on to use language such as 'Turkish Murderers...Fanatics...[and] Moslem[s].' Empathy for the victims was reinforced by describing the victims as "Men, Women and Children," resulting in further 'othering' of the minority non-white non-Christian ethnic and religious groups. Nearly one hundred years later, it would still be referred to as "an act of terrorism"⁶¹ and on its 100th anniversary, it would be described as a 'jihadist attack on picnickers.'⁶² Despite this view, research has shown that the two perpetrators acted independent of the rest of the Afghan and Muslim community and that in fact, the *umma* had attempted to alert the police on the morning of the attack.⁶³ Regardless of who told what to whom, relations between the Afghans and the Teamsters had been deteriorating for years. Much of this centred around the rates the unionised bullock team drivers charged, being more expensive than the camel teams. This issue also drove a rift in the Broken Hill Afghan community,⁶⁴ with some happy to toe the union line. For one reason or another, and well before 1915, there were two camel camps, the northern camp situated around the mosque and the southern

⁶⁰ "War in Broken Hill," *Barrier Miner*, 1 Jan 1915. 2.

⁶¹ Damien Murphy, "Battle of Broken Hill an Act of War or Terrorism Won't Be Commemorated," *Sydney Morning Herald* (2014), <https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/battle-of-broken-hill-an-act-of-war-or-terrorism-wont-be-commemorated-20141031-11eukj.html>.

⁶² Penelope DeBelle, "A Jihadist Attack on Picnickers in Broken Hill Brought WW1 Home Adelaide Now," *Adelaide Now* (2015), <https://www.adelaidenow.com.au/news/south-australia/a-jihadist-attack-on-picnickers-in-broken-hill-brought-ww1-home/news-story/d32f5ba5ae84bdf9cb3628062ea8ff8c>]

⁶³ Mehmet Mehdi Ithan, "Broken Hill Attack 1915 - Revisited: A Battle Fought for Gallipoli on Australian Soil," in *Gallipoli Campaign 1915: History, Economy, Literature and Art* (Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University, 2017), 132.

⁶⁴ "Afghan Camel Carriers. Trouble Concerning Rates," *Western Mail*, 6 Apr 1912. 13.

camp, around Afghan rocks, potentially indicating some form of sectarian division in the Broken Hill *umma*.

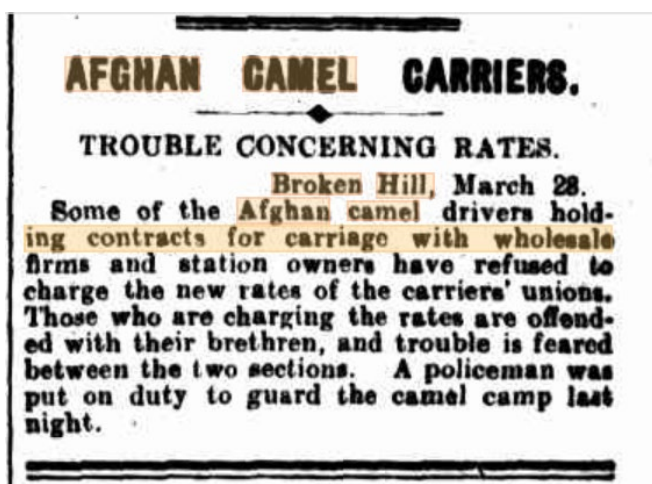


Figure 22 Trouble with Rates ⁶⁵

At the subsequent inquest into the incident, the only “Muslim to testify in court was Kodaram, who lived in the North Camel Camp. He took oath according to the Islamic creed.”⁶⁶ As he had not seen the perpetrators, the only evidence he could supply was second-hand, therefore treated as hearsay.⁶⁷ If relations and dialogue between the Muslim *umma* and the dominant Europeans had been fractious before this incident, the repercussions would be quite extreme. Whilst the German club was initially targeted and burned to the ground,⁶⁸ the mob turned on the Afghan Mosque, only to be turned away by “troops with fixed bayonets”⁶⁹ and the fact that the occupants were Afghans and not Turks.⁷⁰ Overall, this event impacted the relationship, dialogue and any social harmony that had previously existed between the European settlers and the Muslim *umma*.

Western Australia

Western Australia, specifically the north-western region around the Kimberlys, had been one of the furthest outposts of interaction between the Macassans, Malays, and Indigenous Australians. As the legislation that effectively closed the northern borders took effect, it would appear that some of the Macassans may have surreptitiously continued their trade

⁶⁵ *ibid.*

⁶⁶ Ithan, "Broken Hill Attack 1915 - Revisited: A Battle Fought for Gallipoli on Australian Soil," 144.

⁶⁷ *ibid.*

⁶⁸ "When Two Crazy Turks Waged War on Broken Hill," *Recorder*, 28 Jun 1948. 3.

⁶⁹ *ibid.*

⁷⁰ *ibid.*

missions into the 1920s. Mary Pandilow, an Indigenous elder from the Kimberly region, recalled sailing with the Macassans, recounting that she:

*...was on the Malay boat myself. The Malay people came with the boat [to Darkie Deutchman's place on Sir Graham Moore Island, c 1921], and they took us to Pago. We landed there in Pago, and we never returned.*⁷¹

Her accounts also demonstrate continued interaction, trade and dialogue, as:

*In the 1920s, perahus also sailed from the area of Madura at the eastern end of Java, some at least from the tiny island of Ra' as to the north of Bali. The crews collected beche-de-mer together with pearl shells, pearls and turtle shell. In the postwar period and probably earlier, people from Ra' as, Kupang and Roti have collected trochus shell, fish which they have dried and the meat from clam shells. They may have taken iron ore from the deposits on Koolan and Cockatoo Islands.*⁷²

These stories and reports demonstrate that some levels of dialogue continued between Australians and the Indonesian fishermen. While some of it is a continuation of the long-term exchanges between the Macassans and Indigenous Australians, in this region, there was limited contact and dialogue that included the Muslim Indonesians and the white Christian settlers.

Perth

As with the previous era, any inter-religious dialogue was mostly driven by those with the necessary language skills. One of the founding members of the Perth Mosque, Mohamed Hasan Musakhan, a Perth newsagent,⁷³ was a prime example of an educated migrant who engaged in dialogue across a broad spectrum of society. By his own account, he was educated in Karachi and at the University of Bombay, a scholar of “five oriental languages, viz.- Pashto, Persian, Sindi, Urdu and elementary Arabic,”⁷⁴ as well as English. He has been reported as arriving in Australia in 1896, although he appears in a newspaper article

⁷¹ Mary Pandilow in Crawford, "The 'Indonesians'," 69.

⁷² *ibid.*, 79.

⁷³ Located at 95 Brisbane St, Perth

⁷⁴ Musakhan, *History of Islamism in Australia from 1863-1932*, 56.

in 1895. He initially commenced working as a camel handler in and around Perth and the Goldfields region of Western Australia.⁷⁵

Throughout his time in Australia, his name appeared in the newspaper with ever-increasing frequency shortly after his arrival, commencing in February 1895.⁷⁶ In April 1895, he addressed the Anti-Asiatic league through an eloquently crafted letter to the Editor, addressing points raised by Frank Vosper in previous editions.⁷⁷ He accused Vosper of trying to “renew the crusades against the Moslems” as well as questioning the charitable nature of Vosper’s Christianity.⁷⁸

Musakhan’s work on the *History of Islamism in Australia from 1863-1932* contains examples of his correspondence and detailed financial accounts of the mosque. His communications demonstrate the breadth of dialogue that he attempted to initiate. The second half of his text contains a series of glowing testimonials for Mahomet Allum, the Adelaide herbalist. Musakhan’s correspondence covers the micro-level or day to day, including dialogue with printers, solicitors and banks.⁷⁹ There are also a series of letters to state and federal politicians, as well as the Governor-General of Australia.⁸⁰ Much of the focus of his attempted dialogue surrounds issues relating to the Afghans' welfare and the preservation of the local mosques. He provided the Prime Ministers department with an outline of the work of the ‘Camel men’ and requested that they “should receive pensions or some other form of help from the Commonwealth Government.”⁸¹ For many, the results of this plea were set aside, and a copy of the rejection sent to Gool Mohamed is also included. The rejection was based on “the ground that it is unproved that you are Indian-born in British India.”⁸²

He was a constant correspondent to the Editors of Perth’s newspapers. He supplied information on the early history of the Afghan camel-men and commentary on a wide range

⁷⁵ P Jones and A Kenny, *Australia’s Muslim Cameleers: Pioneers of the Inland 1860s-1930s*. (Adelaide: Wakefield Press and South Australian Museum, 2007), 186.

⁷⁶ "News and Notes," *West Australian*, 11 Feb 1895. 4.

⁷⁷ Mohamed Hasan Musakhan, "To the Editor," *Western Mail*, 27 Apr 1895. 38.

⁷⁸ *ibid.*

⁷⁹ Musakhan, *History of Islamism in Australia from 1863-1932*, 48-9.

⁸⁰ *ibid.*, 50-2.

⁸¹ *ibid.*, 52.

⁸² *ibid.*

of topics, including: Halley's Comet,⁸³ Tolstoy,⁸⁴ Japan,⁸⁵ Persian poetry,⁸⁶ American press-men,⁸⁷ as well as his continuing battle against anti-Asiatic leagues.⁸⁸ He also corresponded during his overseas travels and wrote about The Ottoman Empire, both before and during World War I.^{89 90}

His voluminous correspondence also included missives to Prince Mohamed Ali Pacha of Egypt,⁹¹ H.R.H. King George,⁹² and a range of foreign dignitaries who visited Perth.⁹³ One of the more interesting examples of dialogue concerns an advertisement placed in the Western Mail in 1924. It included a "cartoon of Mohammed with an insulting and offensive phrase regarding 'the mountain and Mohammed.'" ⁹⁴ Musakhan responded to the newspaper and the advertiser, Boans Limited, in an attempt to explain the critical issues of concern for the resident Muslims. His response was:

Those persons who are in-the habit of repeating the above phrase, or other similar ones, are hereby informed that by so doing, they deeply injure the religious feelings of the Moslems. They are respectfully requested to restrain themselves from offending the Mahommedans by speaking derisively or using insulting phrases, about their Holy Prophet, Mohammed. If they desire to use the phrase as a mere figure of speech, they should substitute the word "Jesus" for that of "Mahomet," because it was Jesus Christ who claimed to remove the mountain by the power of faith. 'Jesus Christ is reported in the Holy Gospels to have said to His disciples: "If ye shall say unto the mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea, it shall be done." St. Matthew, chap. 21, V. 21. Unfortunately, it is not recorded in the New Testament anywhere whether Jesus Christ or any of His followers ever performed that feat or miracle of making the mountain move from its place by the power of faith only.

⁸³ Mohamed Hasan Musakhan, "Halley's Comet," *West Australian*, 29 Jun 1909. 6.

⁸⁴ "Count Tolstoi," *West Australian*, 21 Sep 1908. 7.

⁸⁵ "Japan's Great Retrenchment," *West Australian*, 17 Sep 1908. 3.

⁸⁶ "A Persian Poet," *West Australian*, 20 May 1910. 6.

⁸⁷ "The American Pressmen," *West Australian*, 24 Sep 1908. 3.

⁸⁸ "The Asiatic Question," *West Australian*, 9 Oct 1909. 12.

⁸⁹ "A Letter from India. Turkey and the Mahommedans," *Sunday Times*, 16 Feb 1913. 4.

⁹⁰ "Turkey's Fate," *Sydney Morning Herald*, 10 Jun 1916. 19.

⁹¹ *History of Islamism in Australia from 1863-1932*, 51.

⁹² *ibid.*, 56.

⁹³ *ibid.*, 57-61.

⁹⁴ *ibid.*, 62-3.

*The modern Christians are removing the mountains by means of explosives and not by Christian Faith.*⁹⁵

It may have been that Musakhan was unaware of the origins of the phrase, variously attributed to Francis Bacon's 1625 Essays⁹⁶ or Turkish folk-lore.⁹⁷

A resolution was achieved as in response, the Managing Director of Boans wrote that they would like to "express our regret that the religious feelings of the Mohammedans have been injured."⁹⁸ He went on to say:

*It has been our aim at all times not to offend the religious feelings of any denomination, let alone the Mohammedans, with whom our business relations have been very cordial. We assure your co-religionists and yourself that had our Advertising Manager for one moment considered the matter offensive, it would not have appeared. The phrase is a very old one, and was simply used as a figure of speech. In conclusion, we have no hesitation in expressing our regret and trust you and your co-religionists will give us the credit of not having intentionally offended.*⁹⁹



Figure 23 Boans Limited, Advertisement 1924¹⁰⁰

⁹⁵ *ibid.*, 61-62.

⁹⁶ Francis Bacon, *The Essays of Francis Bacon*, ed. Mary Augusta Scott, trans. James Spedding (New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1908), 52.

⁹⁷ Dr Helen Mile, "If the Mountain Won't Go to Mohammed, Then Mohammed Must Come to the Mountain.," 2020, no. 8/08 (2019), <https://medium.com/@DrHelenMiles/if-the-mountain-wont-go-to-mohammed-then-mohammed-must-come-to-the-mountain-27fa22148326>.

⁹⁸ Musakhan, *History of Islamism in Australia from 1863-1932*, 62.

⁹⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ "Boans Limited. Advertisement," *Western Mail*, 25 Dec 1924. 13.

The collected correspondence indicates a complex series of dialogue between Musakhan and the full gamut of society. He remained focussed on his faith and sought to clarify the often ignorant positions or unknown slights that appeared in the media, many laced with overt Orientalism. While much of Musakhan's text could be seen as self-promoting, it does provide some valuable information around both the founding of the Perth Mosque as well as samples of the type of dialogue that the local Muslim community were attempting to initiate, along with the responses they received.

Broome, Western Australia

As discussed in the previous chapter, Broome had been the home to a small but diverse Muslim community from the late 1880s. Many of the Malays and Indonesians had been brought in to work in the lucrative pearling industry. By 1901 the town was described as being "at the present time one of the most prosperous places in the Commonwealth,...as far removed from Australia as if it were at the other end of the China Sea. It is in all respects an Eastern town..."¹⁰¹

With the introduction of the Immigration Restriction Act, many of these indentured labourers would risk being classified as undesirable aliens. With no sign of suitable replacements, the Master Pearlery Association sought and "secured an exemption from the Immigration Act of 1901 and the Commonwealth Government's edict intent on phasing out Asian indentured labour and train Australian workers to take up these jobs."¹⁰² With a Government exemption in place, in 1912, it remained "as much Asian as Australian,"¹⁰³ Broome relied on the imported workforce, and by 1909 some 1,869 imported workers were working under the guidance of 136 European Australians.¹⁰⁴ Despite the imbalance:

*...real power and most wealth remained in the hands of the small white community. By the 1920s Broome was clearly a stratified society, in which each different nationality had a distinct role to play.*¹⁰⁵

¹⁰¹ "Westralian Pearl Fishing," *Geelong Advertiser*, 1 Aug 1901. 4.

¹⁰² Deen, "Excavating the Past: Australia's Muslims," 70.

¹⁰³ John Bailey, *The White Divers of Broome. The True Story of a Fatal Experiment*. (Sydney, NSW: Pan Macmillan, 2001), endpapers.

¹⁰⁴ J.P.S. Bach, "The Pearling Industry of Australia," (Canberra, ACT: The Department of Commerce and Agriculture, 1955), 151.

¹⁰⁵ Michael Schaper, "The Broome Race Riots of 1920," *Studies in Western Australian History* 16 (1995): 114.

Dialogue and social acceptance between the various 'Asiatic' groups, the Buddhist Japanese, the Christian Koepangers¹⁰⁶, and predominantly Muslim Malays,¹⁰⁷ were fraught with tension.

Relations between the Japanese and the Koepangers had long been strained, with similar tensions apparent between the Japanese and other ethnic groups in town, such as the Malays. The Japanese wielded greater status, wealth and influence in Broome, and often exercised this to promote their own interests at the expense of the Koepangers. Japanese, for example, often sought to have Koepangers removed from their boats, and to prevent them holding positions of any real power. The two groups had already previously clashed on a number of occasions, including smaller-scale disturbances in 1907 and 1914 that involved several hundred people.¹⁰⁸

Riots occurred between these groups in 1907, 1914, and 1920; however, it appears that the Malays, "who identified themselves as separate from the Koepangers, did not participate; as always, they were respectful of whites."¹⁰⁹ An indication of this respect towards the Crown was demonstrated upon the passing of Queen Victoria with the Kimberley *umma* holding daily prayers in her memory.

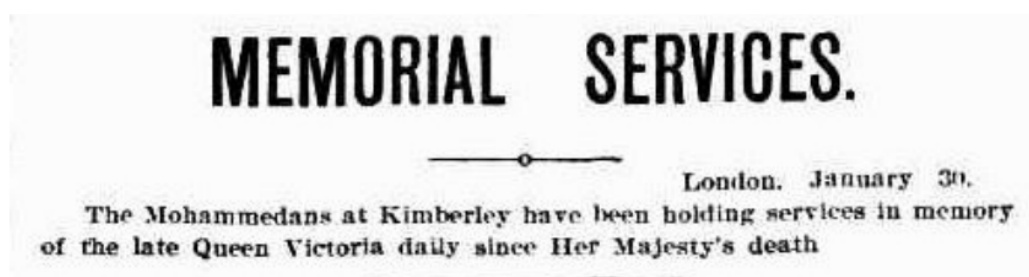


Figure 24. Daily prayers in memory of Queen Victoria's death. 110

The attitude displayed by this group of Muslims may represent a very liberal approach, or it could represent some form of assimilation, the official policy of the day. The other issue is one of sincerity; is it a genuine statement or a strategic position in an attempt to reduce

¹⁰⁶ From the Kupang, on the island of Timor.

¹⁰⁷ Christine Choo, "Inter-Ethnic Conflict in Broome, Western Australia: The Riots of 1907, 1914 and 1920 between Japanese and Other Asians," *Continuum* 25, no. 4 (2011): 476.

¹⁰⁸ Schaper, "The Broome Race Riots of 1920," 119.

¹⁰⁹ Choo, "Inter-Ethnic Conflict in Broome, Western Australia: The Riots of 1907, 1914 and 1920 between Japanese and Other Asians," 473.

¹¹⁰ "The Late Queen," *Evening Journal*, 31 Jan 1901. 2.

the issue of ‘othering?’ As a genuine statement, it may reflect the vision of Queen Victoria as a just ruler, a concept that seems to transcend religious beliefs or differences.

Early pioneers in the Kimberley region pearling industry, the Norman Brothers, seeing that “upwards of fifty percent [of their crews] were Muslim, and recognising their spiritual needs, set aside a prayer area.”¹¹¹ In 1924, a mosque was constructed on the outskirts of town,¹¹² erroneously described in 1937 as “the only mosque in Australia.”¹¹³ It was destroyed during World War II¹¹⁴ and never rebuilt or restored, despite the continued presence of Muslims in the town.



*Figure 25. The Site of Broome Mosque*¹¹⁵

As with much of the colonial world at the time, Broome was no different regarding attitudes towards the non-white/Europeans.

Racial segregation of many forms lay at the heart of the town’s social structure and operations. This society was an essentially colonial one, in

¹¹¹ J.E. Norman and G.V. Norman, *Journey of a Master Pearler, 1886-1942* (Strathfield, NSW: J.E. Norman, 2007), 3.

¹¹² "First Mosque Built in Australia," *Mirror*, 16 Aug 1924. 8.

¹¹³ "Educating the Blacks," *Advocate*, 2 Sept 1937. 32.

¹¹⁴ Qassim Saad, "Perth Mosque: A Cultural Structure Strengthening Collective Identity," *Garland Mag* 10 (2018): 2.

¹¹⁵ Unfortunately, not much is known about the mosque. The photo from 1989 that shows the remains – it was situated near the airport – which was also near the Malay camp. Correspondence with Broome Historical Society & Museum.

*which different ethnic groups had their own place, both functionally and geographically.*¹¹⁶

Extant accounts of meaningful dialogue, beyond the day-to-day or necessary, are rare in this region during the first half of the twentieth century. Christian missionary groups in the area were focused on converting Indigenous Australians and seemingly uninterested in dialogue with the Buddhists, Muslims and others. The anti-Asiatic sentiment of the era, combined with the numerical dominance of the Japanese, meant that much of the media attention was targeted toward them. It would appear that the Muslim Malays in Broome, like many other small Islamic communities in Australia at that time, kept their heads down and just got on with business.

Christmas Island, Overseas Territory of Western Australia

Settled towards the end of the 19th century, Christmas Island relied on the importation of labour, usually indentured, for the operation of its phosphate mine. Many of these labourers were from the far-east and included a significant proportion of Muslims, as well as Chinese. To cater for their various spiritual (and recreational) needs, the Clunies-Ross family ensured that “they have their own cinema, mosque (for the Moslems), and joss-house (for the Chinese).”¹¹⁷ Given the island's small size, micro-level inter-religious dialogue would have ensued between all groups, the Indonesian Muslims, Indian Sikhs, Chinese Buddhists or Confucianists, and included the Island's owners, the Clunies-Ross family.

The Christmas Island archives described the Japanese invasion in 1942. During World War II, there was a rebellion that served as a precursor to the invasion where there was a:

*...small detachment of the British Army stationed on Christmas Island to guard the island – Five British officers and twenty-seven Punjabi Mohammedan soldiers. One night the soldiers shot and killed the officers and threw them in the sea.*¹¹⁸

The two ringleaders, “Mir Ali and Ghulam Qadir were Muslims from the Punjab,”¹¹⁹ who had been listening to Axis radio and allegedly led the rebellion believing that India had, or

¹¹⁶ Schaper, "The Broome Race Riots of 1920," 114.

¹¹⁷ Cooper, "Story of Christmas Island."

¹¹⁸ V.E. Mathew, "V E Mathew and the Japanese Occupation," accessed 13 Sep 2020, <https://christmasislandarchives.com/mathew-japanese-occupation/>.

¹¹⁹ John Hunt, "Revolt on Christmas Island," *Sydney Morning Herald*, 14 Mar 2012.

was about to, succumb to the Axis powers. Occupied by the Japanese in 1942, the island was recaptured in October 1945, and seven of the participants in the rebellion were sent to trial in Singapore, initially receiving a death sentence, which was finally commuted to life in prison.¹²⁰ Despite some similarities to the ‘Battle of Broken Hill’ in 1916, newspaper reports did not run with polemic or religious attacks on the perpetrators, consistently referring to them as ‘Indians.’

Queensland

Queensland has had small pockets of Muslims living within its boundaries from the very early days of settlement. The first mosque in Queensland appears to have been in Cloncurry, established during the previous era.¹²¹ In the capital Brisbane, “Many years ago a number of Mohammedans from India settled at Mount Gravatt on the hill on the right side of the Logan Road.”¹²² During 1906, a group of local Muslims negotiated with a “local land owner Frederick Lamley Henzell to gather and meet.”¹²³ In turn, this led to the establishment of The Corporation of the Mohammedan Mosque Mt Gravatt in October 1908.¹²⁴ A committee was established, a letters patent sought and issued, and funds raised to purchase a property.¹²⁵ By 1909, they had created a mosque by converting a small cottage into a place of worship “with assistance from the local Muslim community through ‘working bees’ and donations.”¹²⁶

¹²⁰ "Death Sentence on Mutineers Commuted," *Daily Mercury*, 17 Dec 1947. 3.

¹²¹ Janeth Deen, "The History of the Holland Park Mosque," SBS News, accessed 1 Oct 2018, <https://www.sbs.com.au/guide/article/2017/11/01/history-holland-park-mosque>.

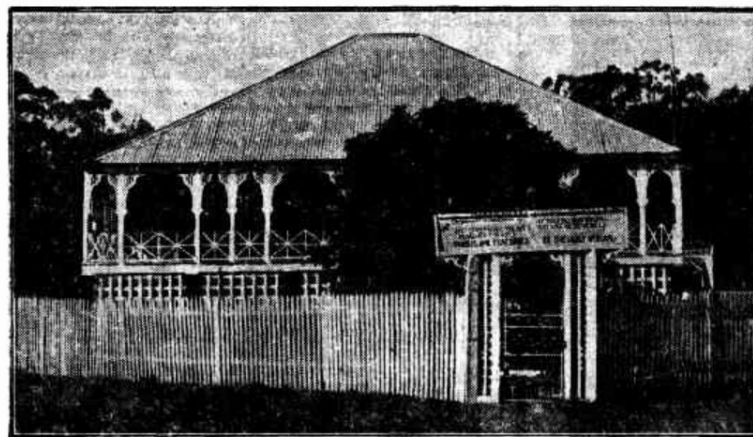
¹²² "Do You Know Your Brisbane? Mt.Gravatt and Eight Mile Plains Districts.," *Sunday Mail*, 28 Jul 1929. 23.

¹²³ Mustafa A. Ally, *100 Years of History. Holland Park Mosque 1908-2008* (Eight Mile Plains: Mustafa Ally, 2008), 10.

¹²⁴ *ibid.*

¹²⁵ *ibid.*, 11.

¹²⁶ *ibid.*



Mahommedan Mosque at Mount Gravatt.

Figure 26 The original 1909 Mosque at Mt Gravatt ¹²⁷

The series of negotiations that led the Indian and Afghan Muslims to establish a mosque required micro and some macro-level dialogue with the landowner, the local community, and the State's administrators. A positive relationship must have been established between the *umma* and the original landowner, and one or several of the committee would have negotiated the government's administrative process so as to get a letters patent issued. Over time, the local Islamic community developed; this dialogue would have continued and broadened.

During the early period, there was some sectarian division within the Muslim community, especially concerning relationships with members of the Ahmadiyya Muslim community, often referred to using the pejorative religious slur, '*Qadiyani*.' In 1914 the Iman, Sayed Jelal Shah, issued a public notice to all "Moslem members of the Mohammedan Mosque at Mount Gravatt that you are not to give accommodation in the *Musjid* or in your own houses to members of the Qadian Religion."¹²⁸ As with Christianity, some level of intra-faith dialogue would be required to unite the community.

By 1936, the mosque was included in the local exotic travelogues, in the same fashion as the Adelaide Mosque. As part of a series of twelve articles on the varied religious landscape that existed in Brisbane, the Mount Gravatt Mosque was visited. The effusive writer described the encounter in glowing terms, stating: "There was never so gracious heart.

¹²⁷ "Mahommedan Mosque at Mount Gravatt," *Sunday Mail*, 28 Jul 1929. 24.

¹²⁸ "Public Notices," *Brisbane Courier*, 15 Sep 1914. 1.

There was never so gracious a host.”¹²⁹ The Imam is described as ‘amiable’, in what is an extremely positive article. The text also reveals some variations in religious practice due to the structure of the working week. It was noted that “those who live in Brisbane go there for their devotions, mostly on Sundays, because they are more free that day, although Friday is the real Mohammedan sacred day.”¹³⁰ As Friday is a day of normal employment in Australia, moving the day of communal prayer (*salat al-jumu'ah*) to a Sunday could be some form of communal compromise, further enabling them to fit in with the broader society. It may also reflect the issue that their employment meant they were too away from the Mosque on Friday to attend.

The mosque was also documented as a place of local pilgrimage as:

*...travellers, Indian hawkers, and Afghan bushmen from the far inland and farmers and storekeepers from the country pay regular visits to the mosque, and make it a caravansera; where they put up sometimes for weeks.*¹³¹

It may have been that the journalist observed the period during Ramadan when some Muslims stay in a mosque for a week or ten days, sometimes more, for prayers and worship. They may sleep there, eat there, and generally would not go to their houses, presenting an image of some of an exotic boarding house or *caravanserai*.

Again, as with the Adelaide Mosque, it was central in the lives of Muslims, drawing believers from a large radius. In turn, this enabled and allowed for more internal dialogue and interactions with the non-Muslim members of society, although much of this micro-level dialogue would remain at a level of curious observation as distinct from serious engagement.

6.4 New areas of dialogue and different diasporas

From the beginning, the colony and then State, Victoria, as well as the other states had recorded small numbers of resident and transient Muslims. They had a historical presence as hawkers and objects of curiosity, and given that in 1902 they made up less than 0.04%

¹²⁹ R.K. Gerrand, "Religious Byways of Brisbane - X1. The Amiable Imam and the Keys of Paradise," *Courier-Mail*, 12 Sep 1936. 22.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Ibid.

of the State's population, any examples across the levels of dialogue will be limited. This situation was to change as geopolitics and warfare erupted in Europe, leaving many displaced persons in need of a destination.

RELIGIONS OF THE PEOPLE OF VICTORIA. —
The Government Statist of Victoria has divided the people of Victoria as follows as to their religious views :—

| | |
|--|------------------|
| Church of England | 431,700 |
| Presbyterian | 191,400 |
| Methodist | 187,300 |
| Other Protestants | 91,700 |
| Roman Catholics | 268,700 |
| Jews | 5,900 |
| Mohammedans | 465 |
| Buddhists, Hindoos | 1,600 |
| Confucians | 8,400 |
| Others (including Miscellaneous Sects, No Religion, &c.) | 13,176 |
| Total specified | 1,184,841 |
| Unspecified) Object to state | 10,100 |
|) Others | 6,200 |
| Grand total | 1,201,141 |

Figure 27. Religions of the People of Victoria, 1902¹³²

Bendigo, within recent years the scene of anti-mosque protests,¹³³ had been home to a small number of Muslims during the first half of the 20th century. In 1901, the members of the local *umma* engaged in dialogue with the local Mayor, who “granted to the Mohammedans of Bendigo the use of Rosalind Park tomorrow morning for the purpose of celebrating the last day of the great fast of Ramadan.”¹³⁴ It would appear that at that stage, Bendigo was tolerant of a multi-cultural society, an example of the influence that the gold rush had on migration and racial diversity before the implementation of the Immigration Restriction Act (1901).

European Muslims

Following World War I, and with the Immigration Restriction Act still in force, a new group of Muslim migrants found their way to Australia.¹³⁵ During the 1920s the newly established country of Albania¹³⁶ was suffering from a struggling economy. This led to groups of single young men migrating in search of greater opportunity, many of them

¹³² "Religions of the People of Victoria," *Border Watch*, 27 Aug 1902. 2.

¹³³ *Islamophobia in Australia 2014-2016*, 18.

¹³⁴ "A Mohammedan Festival," *Bendigo Independent*, 21 Jan 1901. 2.

¹³⁵ Not all Albanians migrants were Muslims; figures vary but they seem to have been equally divided between Islam and Orthodox Christianity.

¹³⁶ Formed in 1912 out of a diminishing and soon to be extinct Ottoman Empire.

“Muslims from Korçë in southern Albania.”¹³⁷ They were allowed entry into Australia as they were:

*...white, and therefore racially acceptable, [however] they were not really the type of migrant the government wanted. British migrants, safely Christian, were preferred. In 1928, to make it harder for them, a quota for non-British citizens was established.*¹³⁸

For various reasons, different groups of young Albanian men arrived in Australia, the first group of five disembarking in Fremantle, Western Australia, in 1924.¹³⁹ Soon, they and many who followed made their way to three distinct regions, the Goulburn Valley in Victoria, and Far North Queensland, with some remaining in the wheat belt area of York, Western Australia. These areas suited the agricultural experiences the young Muslim Albanians brought with them; stone fruit in Shepparton and sugar cane and tobacco in Far North Queensland. One must suspect that they would have been in awe of the wide-open spaces of the Western Australian wheat belt, in contrast to their homelands. During this period, it was stated that, “In Australia as a whole only 2.7% of male settlers originating in southern Europe came from Albania between 1890 - 1940.”¹⁴⁰ This migration ended abruptly in 1945, as “the communist government of Albania prevented emigration, so the only people to enter Australia were political refugees or the brides of men already here.”¹⁴¹

¹³⁷ Jones, "The Years of Decline: Australian Muslims 1900-40," 83.

¹³⁸ Cleland, *The Muslims in Australia: A Brief History.*, 59.

¹³⁹ Ahmeti, "Albanian Muslims in Secular, Multicultural Australia," 35.

¹⁴⁰ J.C. Carne, "Moslem Albanians in North Queensland," in *Lectures on North Queensland History.*

No. 4, ed. B.J. Dalton (Townsville: James Cook University of North Queensland, 1984), 184.

¹⁴¹ *ibid.*, 185.



Figure 28. Shepparton Cemetery © Google¹⁴²

As a multi-denominational, somewhat pluralistic country, many of Australia's cemeteries are segregated into sections according to religious beliefs or denominations. Tucked away on one side of the Shepparton cemetery lies a section of graves whose alignment differs from the rest. These final resting places appear to be aligned with the *qibla* and ensure the deceased are aligned perpendicular to the direction of Mecca. This difference marks the 'Moslem' section, showing the Albanians' long history and legacy in this region. It also demonstrates a willingness for the local government and community to engage in inter-religious dialogue in order to provide suitable facilities and differentiation for immigrant communities, regardless of race, creed colour or religion.



Figure 29. Moslem section, Shepparton Cemetery¹⁴³

¹⁴² Note the alignment of the 'Moslem' section on the right. Google Maps, "Shepparton Public Cemetery," accessed 12 Jun 2020, <https://www.google.com/maps/@-36.3582983,145.3696495,329m/data=!3m1!1e3>.

¹⁴³ From author's collection, April 2019.

Despite segregation in the Ghantowns and other areas where Muslims initially settled, the rural Victorian town of Shepparton does appear to have been an early success story for Islam in Australia. It also marks a clear shift towards a more significant community or meso dialogue, in what would be a protracted series of interactions. Shepparton has a long history of engagement with Islam. As early as 1914, stories have emerged linking Islam to this country town, a couple of hours north of Melbourne. During the festival of *Eid al-Adha* in 1914, over a ‘dozen of Shepparton’s Moslems gathered on the banks of the Goulburn River to celebrate’.¹⁴⁴ Said Jeelani Shah from Melbourne led the service, and he explained the proceedings to the bemused but interested locals who had gathered to watch. At the conclusion of the ceremony, he led prayers (in English) for all in attendance, Muslim and non-Muslim alike, in appreciation of “King George and the Royal family, and for the victory of the Allied forces over the Austro-German troops.”¹⁴⁵ This inclusive gathering shows an understanding and appreciation of the country these Muslims were inhabiting, as well as showing an attempt at meso level dialogue through supporting ‘King and Country’ and the burning issue of the day, World War I, despite the Muslim Ottoman Empire being aligned with the German protagonists.

The Albanian Muslims who settled in Shepparton found their place and managed to fulfil a labour shortfall.¹⁴⁶ By 1933 they had established the town’s first Social Club,¹⁴⁷ which by 1934 was contributing financially to the local community through donations to the hospital.¹⁴⁸ Like many previous (and subsequent) migrants, the Albanians were subject to discriminatory hazing in the media, often in a manner disproportionate to the alleged crimes.¹⁴⁹ In 1938, during the centenary celebrations of Shepparton, both the Muslim and Jewish communities were not included in the events’ official program. Despite this, the 500 strong Muslim community “felt compelled to take part in the celebrations to show their appreciation of the freedom of their life in Australia,” as did the 200 or so Jewish inhabitants.¹⁵⁰ While showing support for their local community, it does demonstrate a lack

¹⁴⁴ "A Moslem Festival," *Shepparton News*, 2 Nov 1914. 3.

¹⁴⁵ *ibid.*

¹⁴⁶ Shepparton Albanian Moslem Society, "History," Shepparton Albanian Moslem Society, accessed 4 Nov 2020, <https://sheppartonalbaniansociety.org/history/>.

¹⁴⁷ "Club for Shepparton," *Shepparton Advertiser*, 26 Jun 1933. 4.

¹⁴⁸ "Gift to Hospital," *Shepparton Advertiser*, 5 Mar 1934. 1.

¹⁴⁹ James, Barry, and Ihsan Yilmaz. 2018. "Liminality and racial hazing of Muslim migrants: media framing of Albanians in Shepparton, Australia, 1930–1955." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 1-19

¹⁵⁰ "Shepparton," *Argus*, 25 Oct 1938. 14.

of inclusive dialogue at a meso level with alternative religious views. Over time, Albanian Muslims and others created three social clubs and eventually, in the 1960s, a mosque.¹⁵¹

During this era, Shepparton demonstrated levels of social inclusion and cohesion for migrants from a range of backgrounds.

*A Shepparton interviewee from an Albanian background with family links in the area since the 1920s commented that when people came to Shepparton from migrant backgrounds they could see that they were among many other migrants, and this helped them to feel like they could find a place in Shepparton, that it was easier for them to settle in: 'I think, just because of the amount of different cultures here, that helps everyone find their own position quietly and comfortably.'*¹⁵²

It also paved the way for future immigration following the dismantling of the Immigration Restriction Act as:

*It is also estimated that more than 100 Albanian families have settled in Shepparton since 1990 and the fall of the communist regime in Albania, many of them from the same Korce region that had been the source of Shepparton's earlier Albanian migrations (Carswell 2005; key informant interview with Shepparton community member from Albanian background).*¹⁵³

In Far North Queensland, similar scenes emerged. Mareeba, an agricultural centre located approximately 60km inland from Cairns, offered employment for the Albanians, as well as other migrants such as the Italians during the depression of the 1930s.¹⁵⁴ Initially, this involved the sugar industry; however, the growing of tobacco soon became a major local industry. The need for labour seemed to override racial and religious prejudices, but contact was initially limited. Again, despite the *haram* nature of alcohol "contact between Australians and Albanians was probably limited to work or the occasional meeting at local pubs."¹⁵⁵ In pushing the boundaries of practice, this may demonstrate an adaptation to, or a diminishing of religious beliefs and practices to fit into community expectations, but

¹⁵¹ Shepparton Albanian Moslem Society. 2018. History.

¹⁵² Moran and Mallman, "Understanding Social Cohesion in Shepparton and Mildura: Final Report,"

34.

¹⁵³ *ibid.*, 18.

¹⁵⁴ Carne, "Moslem Albanians in North Queensland," 185.

¹⁵⁵ *ibid.*, 186.

regardless, it does show the beginning of a dialogue between the diverse groups. One issue that impacted the levels of micro-level dialogue was that "...sustained contact between these early [Albanian] labourers and their Australian neighbours was limited because the residence of the Albanians in North Queensland was regarded as only temporary."¹⁵⁶

While they may have been viewed as temporary workers, their input to the growing region was often seen as positive by the European settlers, many of whom placed importance on a solid work ethic.

*The Albanians in Queensland have a reputation of being excellent workers, honest and reliable. With one exception, all who came under notice were men of good type who could readily be assimilated into the general community. Albanians are essentially tillers of the soil.*¹⁵⁷

The keyword here is assimilate: become like us, without your strange customs and beliefs, a policy that would remain into the next era. As in Shepparton, prejudices and accusations of impropriety did come to the fore at times, but despite this liminal hazing:

*...relations between Albanians and the general Australian community proved to be peaceful at most times. Petty prejudice was sometimes expressed in hotels by individuals, but the Australian business community seems to have welcomed all new settlers as potential clientele.*¹⁵⁸

As with many situations, any customer represents good business, and like many areas, race or religion was not allowed to interfere with commerce, leading to micro-level dialogue between the new migrants and the existing business establishments.

There appears to be an overarching theme demonstrating some levels of integration into the growing communities in Far North Queensland. Micro and meso level dialogue appears to have ensued and led to some level of social harmony in the region.

¹⁵⁶ *ibid.*

¹⁵⁷ *ibid.*, 187.

¹⁵⁸ *ibid.*, 188.

*One of the main reasons for good relations between Moslem Albanians and their neighbours is that they were able to integrate into the affairs of their new Australian community.*¹⁵⁹

Very early in their migration experience, Albanians began the process of becoming naturalized Australians, and accordingly, legal notices appeared in the local papers. This process of leaving their native country behind would only have been contemplated by migrants confident of their ability to adapt and integrate into the newly adopted society, and would probably not have happened if they had not been accepted into the local community.

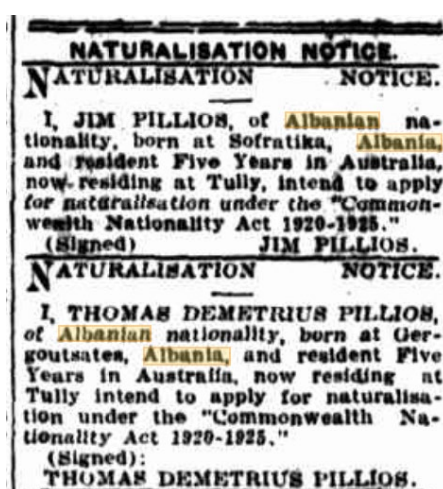


Figure 30. Naturalisation Notices¹⁶⁰

During this period, links existed between the Shepparton and Far North Queensland communities. In an interview with one of the latter group of Albanian migrants, Remzi Mulla describes how he met some men from Shepparton, who ultimately introduced him to his wife.¹⁶¹ She moved from Shepparton to Mareeba, where they thrived, with Remzi becoming an advocate for the Albanian community and a local community leader.

As had occurred in Shepparton, in 1943, the Albanian community in Mareeba formed a community association:

...with branches in Mareeba. Atherton. Babinda. Biloela and headquarters in Brisbane. By 1945 membership of the Far North

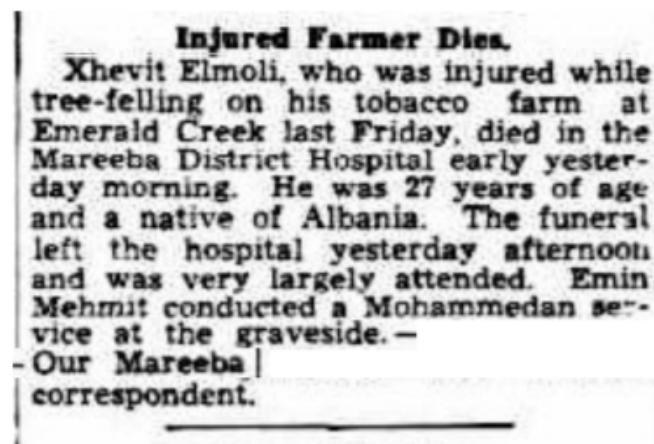
¹⁵⁹ *ibid.*, 189.

¹⁶⁰ "Naturalisation Notices," *Townsville Daily Bulletin*, 13 Dec 1929. 2.

¹⁶¹ Remzi Mulla, interview by Majlinda Lulo, 2019, <https://www.sbs.com.au/language/english/audio/early-migrant-stories-albanian-life-in-mareeba>.

*Queensland branches totalled 134. The Association Constitution stated that friendship between Albanians and Australians was to be promoted, but conditions produced by World War II made this aim difficult to achieve.*¹⁶²

Death, a universal and inevitable experience, albeit coming far too early for some, was also catered for within the broader community in Mareeba. The local cemeteries, run by the Shire Council, catered for burial plots for Muslims and allowed for the presence of religious leaders to oversee the final rites.



*Figure 31. Muslim Funeral, 1941*¹⁶³

Northam and York, Western Australia

Some of the Albanians gravitated to the wheat-growing areas in Northam and York, Western Australia.¹⁶⁴ One descendant of a Muslim Albanian recounted:

*My father came here in 1924, first, and he did clearing in the York region, and then he went clearing down South, and there he bought 250 acres... of just bush, which he cleared himself, and built a sort of a house, and started growing vegetables, potatoes mainly, he grew... potatoes which were under the Potato Board. So he grew them by the acreage.*¹⁶⁵

¹⁶² Carne, "Moslem Albanians in North Queensland," 190.

¹⁶³ Mareeba Correspondent, "Injured Farmer Dies," *Cairns Post*, 5 Jul 1941. 4.

¹⁶⁴ Deen, "Excavating the Past: Australia's Muslims," 72.

¹⁶⁵ Nahid Kabir, "Muslims in a 'White Australia': Colour or Religion?," *Immigrants & Minorities* 24, no. 2 (2007): 214.

As in Shepparton and Far North Queensland, integration and assimilation seem to have been the course of action, and:

eventually, people in the community, they got to [know] one another and they would come out and help too, and most of the time he [Dad] would go to the wharves in Bunbury, and he would pick up guys that wanted to stay in Australia, and he'd take them out to the farm, and they'd stay. I think if they stayed here one or two years or something, they could stay all the time. They were of Greek origin, and they would just work for their food and they would help him clear, and help him plant potatoes, until such a time that they applied for residency, and then they went their way, mainly in restaurants. In Bunbury, they went into businesses like restaurants.¹⁶⁶

Given their different backgrounds and beliefs, it would seem that the Albanians were able to engage in cross-cultural and inter-religious dialogue with other groups of migrants. In turn, this appears to have been beneficial for both parties.

However, in Sydney, persecution and racial vilification seemed to be at the forefront. One European migrant recounted that:

we were subjected to unutterable maltreatment by the people of Sydney, who pelted us with stones, filth, and rotten vegetables calling us 'Yoguslav Dagoes'. We were compelled to go into hiding, enduring hunger and hardships. Four of our members who had rented a small house at Broken Hill, were attacked one day by the English with stones...Next day the newspapers published articles with the heading 'Stoning of Yoguslavs' in heavy type. Why this persecution? Mainly because the emigrants include many Greeks, Bulgars, Turks, Italians and Albanians who do not know how to behave abroad. The people of Australia, which is a young country, fail to distinguish the different nationalities of the emigrants and call them all 'Yoguslav Dagoes'. Nowhere in the world have our emigrants sunk to such a low level as in Australia.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁶ *ibid.*

¹⁶⁷ *ibid.*, 215.

Turkish-Cypriot Muslims

Following World War I, migration from Turkey and Cyprus became a political issue. Given Turkey's location spanning Europe and Asia, at the heart of the matter is the issue that:

*centered on who were Asian Turks and who were European Turks .. however, as residents of the British territory, on the island of Cyprus, Turks held British passports. This allowed them to circumvent the White Australia Policy, which held other Turks to be 'Asian.'*¹⁶⁸

While not large in number, they would prove to be advance members for the next generation of Muslim migrants from this region who would arrive after World War Two, many going on to establish new communities, facilities, and organisations to drive interfaith dialogue.

6.5 The key individuals

The Healers

Then, as now, health problems transcend racial and religious boundaries. Just as we may see a physician of Islamic, Jewish, or other faith, so did early colonial Australians. In Adelaide, Mahomet Allum (d. 1964) established a successful practice.¹⁶⁹ Described variously as a 'herbalist,' 'healing wonder,' and 'miracle man,'¹⁷⁰ he was born around 1858 in Kandahar, Afghanistan. Allum migrated to South Australia between 1884 and 1890.¹⁷¹ Employed variously as a camel driver, station-hand, butcher, storekeeper, sailor, and mine-hand, he settled in Adelaide in 1928 or 1929.¹⁷² Prominent as a devout Muslim, he established a business as a herbalist and, by all accounts, managed a thriving practice, recorded as ministering to 2,000 patients a week.¹⁷³ Testimonials pronounce him curing all range of ills. Despite allegedly never learning to write in English, he was a prolific contributor to the media of the day and produced a range of pamphlets expanding on the virtues and beliefs of Islam.¹⁷⁴ This interaction with Adelaide's citizens shows interfaith dialogue and interaction attempting to move beyond the micro to the meso level through the network of patients who became reliant on his unique services. He ran afoul of the law

¹⁶⁸ Deen, "Excavating the Past: Australia's Muslims," 74.

¹⁶⁹ Musakhan, *History of Islamism in Australia from 1863-1932*, 68.

¹⁷⁰ *ibid.*, 72.

¹⁷¹ Valmai Hankel, "Allum, Mahomet (1858–1964)." Australian Dictionary of Biography, accessed 10 Oct 2018, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/allum-mahomet-5006/text8323>.

¹⁷² *ibid.*

¹⁷³ "Afghan with 2,000 Patients a Week," *Argus, Melbourne*, 23 Jan 1936. 13.

¹⁷⁴ Hankel, "Allum, Mahomet (1858–1964)."

in 1935 for not being registered under the Medical Practitioners Act of 1919.¹⁷⁵ In his defence, he produced “a motor car load of documentary evidence,”¹⁷⁶ including hundreds of testimonials.¹⁷⁷ When the case came before the courts, the defence called upon the Commissioner of Police (Brig.- Gen R. L. Leane), who stated he knew the “defendant well” and Allum had donated “large sums for charitable purposes.”¹⁷⁸ The case was also raised in Federal Parliament by Mr Riches (A.L.P., Newcastle), who inquired as to whether the case was an issue of persecution, given “many of the people who visited Allum did so on recommendations of the police officials and other officers (of the crown).”¹⁷⁹

Allum married for the third time in 1950 to a local Adelaide girl, Jean Emsley, and at the age of 83, he fathered a daughter with his 20-year-old bride. Headlines focussed on the age difference, not his religious beliefs.¹⁸⁰ Jean died from smallpox in 1954 in Afghanistan as they were returning from *hajj* (pilgrimage).¹⁸¹ On his return, he continued to live in and serve Adelaide's community, using his skills as a healer without charge, for the benefit of all.¹⁸²

He died in 1964, and the funeral procession was reportedly over “a mile long.”¹⁸³ Given there were less than 400 Muslims in South Australia at that time,¹⁸⁴ the majority of the crowd must have been Christians; a clear indication of the influence and public respect afforded to Allum. Importantly, it demonstrated his commitment to and engagement with micro and meso level dialogue that was not always reciprocated. As a role model of the most extraordinary nature, he demonstrated the altruistic, peaceful, and caring aspect of Islam that appeared to have been forgotten over the previous half-century.

From looking at the public record of Mahomet Allum, it is clear he was engaged in a broad range of dialogue with individuals and officials at state and national levels, including

¹⁷⁵ "Charges against Mahomet Allum," *News*, 21 Nov 1935. 11.

¹⁷⁶ *ibid.*

¹⁷⁷ See Musakhan, *History of Islamism in Australia from 1863-1932*, for examples.

¹⁷⁸ "Police Chief's Evidence in Allum Case," *News*, 28 Nov 1935. 11.

¹⁷⁹ "Charges against Mahomet Allum."

¹⁸⁰ "Father 83, Mother 19, Baby 9lbs.," *Telegraph*, 21 Aug 1941. 3.

¹⁸¹ The West Torrens Historian, "Mahomet Allum - a Most Unusual Man," *The West Torrens Historian* 7,3 (2015): 1-2.

¹⁸² Hanifa Deen, "Muslim Journeys, the Wonder Man," National Archives of Australia, accessed 15 Sep 2018, <<http://www.naa.gov.au/collection/snapshots/uncommon-lives/muslim-journeys/index.aspx>>.

¹⁸³ *ibid.*

¹⁸⁴ Muslims were included under “other” in the 1966 Census. For details see Australian Bureau of Statistics. “Census of Population and Housing, 30 June 1966, Part 7 – Religion”

communications to the Prime Minister.¹⁸⁵ He was philanthropic and was described as a “Friend alike to Human Beings and Dumb Animals.”¹⁸⁶ He espoused the positive virtues of Islam through his compassion and observance of both *zakat* (almsgiving) and *sadaqa* (optional charity). When many of his compatriots were suffering under the racism and prejudice imparted by the Immigration Restriction Act, Allum rose above it. He was never able to obtain citizenship; however, he contributed beyond the levels expected of any Australian at that time.

The ability of Muslim migrants to use and share their skills across faiths as herbalists or doctors has also gone mostly unsung, as is also evident by the story of Ali Acem Efendi,¹⁸⁷ who was an Ottoman Turk who came to Australia as a cameleer. Residing in Adelaide, he often travelled to Melbourne and visited the Turks from Cyprus, who immigrated after World War II. Additionally, he provided herbal remedies and treatment for a range of afflictions and, unlike Allum, was licensed by the government to provide herbal remedies.¹⁸⁸

The King of the Cameleers

Allum and Efendi were not alone in their contributions to early Australia. Another successful immigrant often referred to as the “King of the Cameleers,” was Abdul Wade. Born in Afghanistan in 1866 and arriving in Australia in the mid-1880s, he quickly seized the opportunity and imported large numbers of camels and Afghans to look after them.¹⁸⁹ He was naturalised in 1902, and, after founding the Bourke Carrying Company, it was reported in 1905 that Wade owned between 600 and 700 camels, dealing with many non-Muslim station owners and suppliers.¹⁹⁰ Again, this is an example of a Muslim unsuccessfully attempting to move the dialogue beyond the micro to the meso-level, by offering his services to the Federal Government.

¹⁸⁵ Deen, "Muslim Journeys, the Wonder Man".

¹⁸⁶ "Mahomet Allum Continues Work of Mercy," *Sport*, 17 Jan 1935. 11.

¹⁸⁷ Salih Yucel, *The Struggle of Ibrahim. Biography of an Australian Muslim* (New Jersey, NJ: Tughra Books, 2010), 52-54.

¹⁸⁸ *ibid.*, 53.

¹⁸⁹ Christine Stevens, "Wade, Abdul (1866–1928)," National Centre of Biography, accessed 10 Oct 2018, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/wade-abdul-13230>.

¹⁹⁰ Aron Lewin, "Special Report. The King of the Cameleers – the Rebellious Patriotism of Abdul Wade," Monash University, accessed 9 Mar 2018, <http://mojonews.com.au/special-report-the-king-of-the-cameleers-the-rebellious-patriotism-of-abdul-wade/>.

In 1914, after the Imperial Camel Corps was founded to fight in Egypt and Palestine, Wade offered the services of 500 camels and associated Afghan handlers. Despite this generous offer, the Australian Government took only five; however, it has been “speculated from old newspaper articles¹⁹¹ that this was an opportunity to showcase the superiority of white Australians over the Afghans and Indians in the tasks that they mastered.”¹⁹² He adopted the dress and mode of a European and purchased a large property in Lane Cove, Sydney,¹⁹³ with his children from his European-born wife receiving private school education in Sydney. While he espoused the key virtues of Islam, *rahmah*, *Ihsan*, and *hikmah*,¹⁹⁴ even giving away an expensive saddle after finding out it was made of pigskin and therefore not *halal*.¹⁹⁵ Despite his outward attempts at piety, like many, he had his faults; his gambling debts accumulated, and he lost most of his wealth.¹⁹⁶ Following his wife's death, and possibly due to racial persecution, he handed back his Australian citizenship and returned to Afghanistan, apparently dying in England sometime after 1928.

Despite suffering under the persecution of the White Australia Policy, Wade was a loyal Australian. The following statement sums up his commitment to his new country, along with his Islamic sense of justice (*‘adl*).

*I have suffered a number of hardships under the White Australia policy but am now quite independent. I, of course, would not like to see this beautiful country flooded with cheap labour, but rather than block a man from entering the country, because he happens to be a different colour, I would inquire into his qualifications, and, if he was worthy admit him, with full rights of citizenship.*¹⁹⁷

Again, this is an individual whose commitment to the Australian cause was exceptional, even in the face of governmental roadblocks. His dialogue took the micro form, while attempting to move to a meso level. Despite some serious individual failings from an Islamic perspective, he provided another Muslim role model for others to follow with his attempt at assimilation while maintaining some semblance of his cultural heritage. Wade’s

¹⁹¹ "The Sun", "The Camel Corps," *Richmond River Herald and Northern Districts Advertiser*, 9 Jan 1917. 3.

¹⁹² Lewin, "Special Report. The King of the Cameleers – the Rebellious Patriotism of Abdul Wade".

¹⁹³ *ibid*.

¹⁹⁴ Compassion, benevolence, and wisdom

¹⁹⁵ Lewin, "Special Report. The King of the Cameleers – the Rebellious Patriotism of Abdul Wade".

¹⁹⁶ Stevens, "Wade, Abdul (1866–1928)".

¹⁹⁷ Lewin, "Special Report. The King of the Cameleers – the Rebellious Patriotism of Abdul Wade".

descendants still live in Sydney, with his son (educated at the King's School in Sydney) serving in the Navy during World War II, despite being denied entry to Australia's military academy, Duntroon, during World War I.¹⁹⁸

The Entrepreneur

Another success story from this era concerns Fazal Deen (1898–1963), a Muslim from India's Punjab region. Arriving in Australia in 1922 to work as a hawker with his father, by 1933, he was a prominent individual in the community, presiding over a banquet in honour of the Nawab of Pataudi.¹⁹⁹ Described as an 'undergraduate of the University of Lahore' who "speaks excellent English and several oriental languages,"²⁰⁰ as the proprietor of a store in Tennant Creek, Northern Territory, he became embroiled in dialogue with the council over his request to purchase two trees, requiring the timber for foundations for his store.²⁰¹ A devout Muslim and supplier of *halal* meat, he was a vital member of the local community, "keeping Tennant's Creeks customers waiting for beef while he indulges in customary prayer."²⁰² It would appear that the issue of halal was of minimal concern during this era.



Figure 32 Fazal Deen and the Nawab of Pataudi²⁰³

¹⁹⁸ *ibid.*

¹⁹⁹ "Pataudi at Mohammedan Banquet," *Telegraph*, 10 Feb 1933. 1.

²⁰⁰ "Woman's World," *Townsville Daily Bulletin*, 3 Feb 1933. 6.

²⁰¹ "Administration in the North," *Advertiser*, 29 May 1934. 9.

²⁰² "Life and Mining at Tennant's Creek," *Chronicle*, 7 Feb 1935. 48.

²⁰³ "Pataudi at Mohammedan Banquet."

In 1935 he obtained a 40-acre gold mining lease²⁰⁴ in addition to his small independent gold stamping battery.²⁰⁵ In 1936 he appealed to the High Court over an unfavourable judgment,²⁰⁶ where he was granted a stay on the forced sale of his assets.²⁰⁷ Ultimately, the appeal was upheld, with costs to be paid by Mr Deen.²⁰⁸ His story made news in Perth, where in 1938, a brief biographical piece appeared, describing his rise and success as a “prosperous miner.”²⁰⁹ Deen’s dialogue represented the micro-level or necessary. He engaged with the media, the government, and the legal system; however, his early dialogue appears to have been focused on fulfilling his individual needs.

The Converts

In addition to Muslim migrants, there were European and Indigenous converts to Islam. Many of these converts married “in,” such as Jean Emsley, Allum’s wife, and Emily Ozadelle (née Murcutt), Abdul Wade’s wife. Others adopted Islam once the beliefs and practices became apparent, such as Allum’s secretary, Halimah Schwerdt.²¹⁰ Another significant individual was the indomitable Winifred Steger, possibly the first Australian woman to perform Hajj.

Steger’s story is somewhat remarkable. Born in England in 1882, she migrated to Queensland around 1890 with her father.²¹¹ Winifred married Charles Steger at the age of 16, giving birth to four children then deserting them, possibly due to issues of domestic violence.²¹² In 1915, she married Indian hawker Ackba Nuby and converted to Islam.²¹³ Following his death, Steger remarried, this time to Karum Bux in an Islamic ceremony at Marree Mosque.²¹⁴ In 1927, accompanied by Bux and her small children, she made *Hajj* to Mecca,²¹⁵ an account of which was published in the Adelaide Register on her return. The

²⁰⁴ "Government Notices," *Northern Standard*, 26 Apr 1935. 12.

²⁰⁵ "Where Lady Luck Is Favourite. Mining Outpost in Central Australia," *Telegraph*, 20 May 1935. 6.

²⁰⁶ "Appeal to High Court in Darwin Case," *Advertiser*, 1 Dec 1936. 18.

²⁰⁷ "To Stay Sale of Machinery," *Labor Daily*, 1 Dec 1936. 7.

²⁰⁸ "Law Report. High Court of Australia," *Sydney Morning Herald*, 29 Apr 1937. 5.

²⁰⁹ "Young Indian's Success," *West Australian*, 24 May 1938. 20.

²¹⁰ Daud Batchelor, "Mahomet Allum, Australia's Leading Herbalist-Benefactor ." *Australian Muslim Times* (2018), <https://www.amust.com.au/2018/09/mahomet-allum-australias-leading-herbalist-benefactor/>.

²¹¹ Hilarie Lindsay, "Steger, Jane Winifred (1882–1981)," ANU, accessed 11 Mar 2020, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/steger-jane-winifred-15523>.

²¹² Lindsay, "The Story Behind the Washerwoman's Dream."

²¹³ Lindsay, "Steger, Jane Winifred (1882–1981)".

²¹⁴ *ibid.*

²¹⁵ Bessie George, "A White Women in Mecca," *The Australian Women's Mirror*, 30 Aug 1927, 8.

entire journey was eventually serialised in the Register.²¹⁶ She also wrote 14 novels and a range of other writings, most of which never saw a printing press.²¹⁷ Her account of the Hajj is one of the first by an Australian, maybe one the earliest accounts by a 'white woman.' In her narrative, she is matter of fact, describing the scene from a unique perspective. The sad pity is that her voice was not heard outside of a few regional areas until a few years ago, indicating that, despite all her writings and reporting on various aspects of Islam, her contribution to meso level dialogue was largely unsuccessful.

Steger's marriage was not unique. Christine Steven's seminal work on the Afghans outlined problems with isolation and a lack of suitable brides.²¹⁸ Peta Stephenson adds that cultural convergence and kinversion played a part, given both groups were marginalised by white society, and the options available to Muslim men and some of the women involved were limited.²¹⁹ A range of solid relationships did form between Muslims and both First Nation People and Europeans. Nameth Khan married an Indigenous Sunday School teacher in Hermannsburg; Beejah Dervish married an Irishwoman, Amelia Shaw; and Gool Mahomet married a French courtesan, Adrienne Lesire.²²⁰

Today, towns like Marree in South Australia have descendants of the various unions between Afghans, Europeans, and Indigenous Australians, who come together for the annual Camel Cup,²²¹ demonstrating a local instance of social harmony. Many of the descendants of these unions still identify as Muslims, even though they may have lost the language, beliefs, and practices their forebears brought with them.²²² It remains a significant contribution to many peoples' cultural heritage and provides localised social harmony in country towns such as Marree.

The marriages of Muslim men to Australian women demonstrate some significant issues regarding early Muslim dialogue in Australia. Marriage demonstrates micro-level dialogue, despite cultural and language barriers. Furthermore, the Muslims gained a sense of

²¹⁶ Elizabeth Leigh, "Women under Islam. The Strange Story of Mrs Karumbux," *The Register, Adelaide*, 2 Aug 1926. 4.

²¹⁷ Lindsay, "The Story Behind the Washerwoman's Dream," 287.

²¹⁸ Stevens, *Tin Mosques and Ghantowns: A History of Afghan Cameldrivers in Australia*, 212-18.

²¹⁹ Stephenson, "Keeping It in the Family: Partnerships between Indigenous and Muslim Communities in Australia," 99-100.

²²⁰ *ibid.*, 212-14.

²²¹ Snow, "Australia's Afghan Cameleers' Forgotten History Revived by Their Living Relatives."

²²² *ibid.*

belonging in their new homeland, putting down roots and enabling the foundations of a family, an essential aspect of Islamic society. In some aspects, it showed a desire for permanency on behalf of the Muslim men, and the acceptance of Islam by their wives demonstrated that Islam could be a universal religion, not just the religion of Muslim immigrants but also of new Australian converts.

Islam seems to have been a viable option for some migrants, especially those with connections on the sub-continent. One convert, George James, about whom little is known, was reported as passing away at the age of 103. He was “born in Lucknow, India, and although white, adopted the Mahomedan religion.”²²³ It was reported that “he built himself a small mosque near his home where he engaged in prayers,”²²⁴ and “praised Allah for allowing him to sojourn so long upon earth, as set out in the Koran.”²²⁵ It is also possible that this is also a reflection of the Qur’anic narrative around Moses to “make your houses a place of worship and perform prayer and give glad tidings unto the believers” (Q 10:87).

One key difference between Christian and Muslims was noted in 1914. A correspondent for the Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate observing the “intolerance of one sect of Christians towards other sects holding some different forms of the same faith.”²²⁶ Further, he went on to say that “You never hear Mohammedans speak concerning those of other religions as you hear Christians talk of one another.”²²⁷ While this may not be completely accurate, given the ethnic and cultural differences that exist across the broad range of Muslims, it seems to portray Islam as more accepting than the Christian options, possibly invoking some form of pious envy. Another explanation might be that as the Muslims were a minority amongst the strong dominance of Christian groups, the small number of Muslims were more conscious about both their internal and external relations.

Research does demonstrate that conversions to Islam happened, both in the Indigenous communities through marriage or ‘K inversion,’ and in some select elements of white Australia. These would not have occurred without some form of meaningful dialogue, probably at a micro-level. In some cases, these converts went on to establish new branches

²²³ "Doings in Different Districts. Par from All Parts.," *Riverine Grazier*, 19 Feb 1929. 1.

²²⁴ "Obituary," *Geraldton Guardian and Express*, 26 Feb 1929. 4.

²²⁵ *ibid.*

²²⁶ "From All Quarters," *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate*, 10 Jan 1914. 14.

²²⁷ *ibid.*

and outposts of pre-existing schools of thought within Islam in Australia, such as the Koori Muslim Association.²²⁸

The Sufis

Sufism has been active in Australia for some time, embedded within the Macassan, Afghan, Indian, and other ethnically diverse Muslims.²²⁹ According to Abu Bakr Sirajuddin Cook, “The history of Sufism in Australia is not readily evident,”²³⁰ however, this changed during the 1930s. Following World War I, returning soldiers and access to travel allowed for greater awareness of the shrinking world.

The bucolic semi-rural setting of Camden, New South Wales, seems an unlikely place for Sufism, an alternative and spiritual approach to Islam, to arise in Australia. Baron Friedrich von Frankenberg represented a different type of follower: the European convert. Born of an Australian mother and an aristocratic German father, Frankenberg travelled to Australia in 1933 and established himself as a “representative of the Sufi movement. He was authorised to confer upon approved candidates the first degree of initiation in the Sufi Order in Australia.”²³¹ An avid advertiser, for a period in 1935/36, his services were announced regularly in the local newspaper. He made many attempts to introduce the concept of ‘Universal Worship,’ making his presentations “open to public of any denomination.”²³²

Frankenberg, also known as Sheikh Momin, provided a school of Sufism based on Inayat Khan's teachings, and “for over 50 years this was virtually the only Sufi order in the West and the only group readily available to Westerners.”²³³ His influence extended to Bernard Francis Brabazon, described in 1950 as the “new leader of Australia’s Sufis” following the death of Frankenberg.²³⁴ The full extent and understanding of how Sufism impacted dialogue and social relations in Australia may never be fully understood. As Cook states:

²²⁸ "A New Faith for Kooris," accessed 11 Nov 2020, <https://www.smh.com.au/national/a-new-faith-for-kooris-20070504-gdq25e.html>.

²²⁹ Abu Bakr Sirajuddin Cook, "Tasawwuf 'Usturaliya Prolegomena to a History of Sufism in Australia," *Australian Journal of Islamic Studies* 3,3 (2018): 62.

²³⁰ *ibid.*, 73.

²³¹ "Representative of Sufi Order," *Camden News*, 26 Oct 1933. 6.

²³² "Universal Worship Every Sunday," *Camden News*, 19 Sep 1935. 6.

²³³ Celia Anne Genn, "The Development of a Modern Western Sufism," in *Sufism and the "Modern" in Islam*, ed. Martin von Bruinessen and Julia Day Howell (New York, NY: I. B. Tauris, 2007), 257.

²³⁴ "New Leader of Sufis Has No Use for £100,000," *Daily Telegraph*, 22 Oct 1950. 10.

*The diversity of knowledges required for explicating this strand of Australian history makes it a challenging, but not insurmountable, task. To achieve this, disparate sources and documents will need to be examined, and in some cases reexamined, in light of an acute and nuanced understanding of Sufi orthopraxy.*²³⁵

Further research may uncover a greater depth of understanding of the place of Sufism in Australia, as well as any attempts to establish dialogue greater than that of the individual, micro, or necessary type.

6.6 The Churches and Dialogue

As per the last chapter, the religious landscape in Australia was dominated by the Protestant faiths with competition from the Catholics. This was an era where religion engaged in the issues of the day, including prohibition and the temperance movement and vocal opposition from the Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne, Daniel Mannix, towards conscription during World War I.

As the dominant Christian denomination in Australia, issues of interfaith dialogue were addressed during this era at the Edinburgh Missionary Conference of 1910. Significantly, “a whole commission of the event was given over to reflection on the attitude that should be taken to the non-Christian religions.”²³⁶ Ultimately, its focus was more towards the issue that the “Anglican reflection on interfaith relations throughout this period was always ecumenical; [*and that*] mission and interfaith reflection are deeply intertwined.”²³⁷ With our more modern understanding of the nature of effective interfaith dialogue, the aspiration of the conversion of others should not be part of this conversation.

While polemic attacks continued in the press, some of this was led by voices from the Christian missionary sector. Scottish born and Edinburgh educated, the Rev. George Lorimer of the First Baptist Church in Chicago²³⁸ was influential enough to have his views published in Adelaide in 1901, reiterating the viewpoint that “Mohammedanism is fanatical.”²³⁹ Other local Christian such as the Anglican minister, Rev. R.A. Courthope

²³⁵ Cook, "Tasawwuf 'Usturaliya Prolegomena to a History of Sufism in Australia," 73.

²³⁶ Paul Hedges, "Anglican Interfaith Relations from 1910 to the C21st," in *The Oxford History of Anglicanism*, ed. Rowan Strong (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 4.

²³⁷ *ibid.*

²³⁸ "Rev George C Lorimer, D.D.," *The Cornell Daily Sun*, 10 May 1883. 2.

²³⁹ Rev. George Lorimer, "The Greatest of These," *Chronicle*, 31 Aug 1901. 46.

(Bathurst, N.S.W.), used their voices to address the immoralities and issues surrounding polygamy with Islam, in line with their mission for conversion.²⁴⁰ The Rev Tisdal's article "The Blight of Islam"²⁴¹ is best summarised by his use of the biblical quote, "he that is not with Me, is against Me"(Matt 2:38).

Much of the era's religious writings concerned the missionary aspect, both in Australia and overseas, suggesting that pluralism was not the desired concept and that the expectation was that everyone would be converted to Christianity. In a 1926 article, the Rev. C.I. Benson, at that time working with the "Central Methodist Mission as evening preacher with an evangelistic emphasis,"²⁴² announced his surprise that Muslims were living in Australia and that they had established places of worship. He went on to state: "I cannot find any trace of Christian missionary work being carried on [or] among these people."²⁴³ It is most likely that this focus on the evangelical mission by many of the Christian churches provided a significant hurdle to any genuine inter-faith dialogue at the time.

Despite this continued marginalisation of Islam and the other faiths, there is a sense that there was some form of change in the wind. In 1908, The Jewish Herald published an account of a meeting between the Ottoman leaders of Islam and Judaism, Sheik-al-Islam and Haim Nahoum.

*The principles of our religion coincide with yours. I wish that no barrier should exist between Mussulman and Jew, and I am anxious that they should love and help each other like brothers. Are we not children of the same fatherland? Promise me, then, that you will work to this end. You may rely on my co-operation, and I can assure you that it will be pleasing for me to receive frequent visits from you.*²⁴⁴

Some of the change that appears to enter the narrative during this era is linked to an increase in the number of Australians whose education encompassed an understanding of the Middle East and Islam, albeit with an Oriental tinge. Griffithes Wheeler Thatcher (1863–1950), Melbourne-born and Oxford-educated, returned to Australia to take the position of Warden

²⁴⁰ Rev. R.A. Courthope, "Early Church History. Mohammedan Conquests," *The Bush Brother*, Nov 1917. 42.

²⁴¹ Rev. W. St. Clair Tisdall, "The Blight of Islam," *Daily News, Perth*, 2 Oct 1909. 3.

²⁴² Rev. C. Irving Benson, "Church and People. Mosques in Australia," *Herald*, 13 Mar 1926. 24.

²⁴³ *ibid.*

²⁴⁴ "Notes and News," *Jewish Herald*, 11 Dec 1908. 8.

of Camden College (the Congregational training institution in Sydney).²⁴⁵ An expert in Oriental languages, he published an English language treatise entitled, *Arabic Grammar of the Written Language* (1911), and travelled through Australia extensively, delivering lectures on all things Oriental.²⁴⁶

Before World War I, Australians had been travelling, and their accounts began to be published, both in book form and as extracts and reviews in the press. One such travelogue, *Two Australians on Pilgrimage to Jerusalem*,²⁴⁷ is said to have provided “thoughtful and useful” information on Mohammedanism; however, the reviewer’s view was “that the Christian world has not yet realised the power and peril of the Mohammedan religion in the East.”²⁴⁸

In 1919, reports from London²⁴⁹ announced the establishment of a league of religions, driven by the Jewish Peace Society.²⁵⁰ Its stated goal was “searching for the common factors in the religious teachings of various denominations; of minimising the differences which exist, and magnifying the general points of agreement.”²⁵¹ Presided over by the Bishop of Kensington, speakers included:

*Rev. Canon Horsley, Bishop of Bury, Chief Rabbi Herz; and Sir Willoughby Dickinson ... The Rev. Dr Scott Lidgett, Mr. Arthur Moro, Rabbi Mattuck, Miss Kate Simmons; Mr. de Silva (Buddhist), Koka Apparuo Naida (Hindu), and Inayat Khan (Sufi Order, the head of the Anglo-Mohammedan College, Woking).*²⁵²

As previously discussed, Inayat Khan would go on to influence Sufism in Australia through his association with Baron Friedrich von Frankenberg. Ultimately, this early attempt at organised interfaith dialogue went nowhere. Despite this, it marks another attempt to kick start a worldwide organisation dedicated to establishing institutional or macro-level

²⁴⁵ Alan D. Crown, "Thatcher, Griffithes Wheeler (1863–1950)," in *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (Canberra, ACT: National Centre of Biography, Australian National University 1990).

²⁴⁶ "Religious," *Brisbane Courier*, 25 May 1912. 16.

²⁴⁷ William Reed and Elizabeth Reed, *Two Australians on Pilgrimage to Jerusalem*. (London: Robert Culley, 1909).

²⁴⁸ "A Parcel of Books from the Methodist Publishing House," *Methodist*, 26 Mar 1910. 8.

²⁴⁹ "A League of Religions," *Register*, 6 Aug 1919. 6.

²⁵⁰ "An Immortal Aside," *Hebrew Standard of Australasia*, 27 Feb 1920. 5.

²⁵¹ "Editorial. A League of Religions," *Hebrew Standard of Australasia*, 21 Mar 1919. 8.

²⁵² "A League of Religions Proposed," *Hebrew Standard of Australasia*, 20 Feb 1920. 7.

dialogue. In the second half of the 20th century, this idea gained traction, unfortunately, driven by the persecution of the Jews and others during World War II.

One key question that has been raised during this research, especially concerning the discussion around Islam, has been; ‘where did the information used by Australians come from?’ Scholars, academics, and the university-educated would have been familiar with the concepts and western understanding of the Middle East and beyond. Many of them would have subscribed to an Orientalist approach, really the only option available to them at the time. As Australia relied on Great Britain as a source of the printed word, titles were imported dealing with many subjects, including Islam.

Reviews and advertisements exist for a range of books, including early works by Christadelphian Minister, Robert Roberts, on *The social laws of the Qorân: considered and compared with those of the Hebrew and other ancient codes*,²⁵³ and *Islamic Sufism*, by Sirdar Iqbal Ali Shah.²⁵⁴ Additionally, the small number of universities would have held some collections covering comparative religion, Islamic theology, and philosophy as well as (the western view of) Islamic History. For the educated, texts were available; however, they would have been from predominantly English scholars, written at the height of British Imperialism, and tinged with Orientalism.

It would also appear that the new medium of radio provided an avenue for information. In 1936, listeners could tune into broadcasts about “Mongols & Muslims in Chinese Turkistan” on 2BL, the Australian Broadcasting Authority’s radio service.²⁵⁵ Listeners to 2FC in Sydney may have tuned into *Milestones in History: The Rise of Islam*, presented just after the six o'clock news, however, condensed into a 15 minutes time-slot.²⁵⁶ Finally, in Melbourne on 3LO, George Matthews gave a “talk on an infidel in Islam.”²⁵⁷ These sporadic examples show some connection to Muslims; however, given the cost of a radio receiver in the 1930s, most of the listeners would have been the more affluent Christian Australians. They appear to be more from an Oriental historical perspective, and in no way

²⁵³ "General Literature," *Daily Mail*, 4 Apr 1925. 14.

²⁵⁴ *ibid.*

²⁵⁵ "General News.;" "Today's Radio," *Daily Telegraph*, 15 Oct 1936. 19.

²⁵⁶ "Radio Programmes," *Queenslander*, 18 Jan 1934. 46.

²⁵⁷ "Radio Schedule: Sunday 15th November," *Age*, 14 Nov 1931. 13.

would have constituted or advocated for dialogue. As to how many Muslims were interviewed or used as fact-checkers, well, that would be another issue.

During this era there was some early ecumenical dialogue, a necessary precursor to inter-religious dialogue. The Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne Daniel Mannix had some form of dialogue with his Anglican counterpart, F.W. Head. With regards to dialogue between the churches, “When the Anglican archbishop wished to see him, he simply replied, ‘I never pay social visits or return them. In that respect, I am truly a hermit.’”²⁵⁸ “One came to him.”²⁵⁹ Despite this, Mannix and Head corresponded from 1929 to 1935, mainly over the issue of large ecumenical processions on Sundays, the day of rest, towards which the Anglican Archbishop seemed to take umbrage. Ultimately, the correspondence comes to an end in 1934 and “as far as we are aware there are no more extant letters between the two.”²⁶⁰ Whilst limited in its scope, this series of letters demonstrates that at some level a seed had been sown that would develop in meaningful ecumenical dialogue in Australia. It would not indeed come to fruition until the greater Catholic Church changed its view on both ecumenical and interfaith dialogue following the Second Vatican Council in 1965.

6.8 The Polemic attacks and misunderstandings

As could be expected, the polemic attacks continued. While this was predominantly racial in nature, (“Get rid of the chows.”²⁶¹), religions were also targeted, and Muslims were not excluded. The menacing concept of Muslims in Australia commences during the latter part of the 19th century, through the works of Frank Vosper and others. At other times, sensationalist reports were published claiming “the Mohammedan religion gains converts from pagan tribes [in Africa] at a rate of 60,000 per year.”²⁶²

It continued through the first part of the next century. In 1908, the *Bendigo Independent* ran an article entitled “The Moslem Menace.”²⁶³ It outlined a world ruled by Islam, where Africa was ripe for a Muslim rebellion, and should it succeed, “In a very short while there

²⁵⁸ David Schutz, "May I Write to You...? (Part 1 : Letters 1-11, 1929-1933)," *Footprints*, no. December (2013): 14.

²⁵⁹ James Franklin, Gerald O'Nolan, and Michael Gilchrist, "Archbishop Mannix: Home Life at Raheen," *Journal of the Australian Catholic Historical Society* 35 (2014): 54.

²⁶⁰ David Schutz, "May I Write to You...? (Part 2 : Letters 12-24, 1933-1934)," *Footprints*, no. June (2013): 44.

²⁶¹ "An Alien Invasion," *West Australian Sunday Times*, 21 Apr 1901. 6.

²⁶² "Church Intelligence," *Advertiser*, 12 Mar 1903. 8.

²⁶³ "The Moslem Menace," *Bendigo Independent*, 11 Feb 1908. 2.

would not be a white man, at any rate, not a Christian, left on the continent.”²⁶⁴ It did also go on to discuss the possibility of a “Hindoo uprising” in India. Finally, the author concluded that both uprisings were unlikely. It was partly attributed to the treatment of natives in the British Commonwealth being far superior to that meted out in the Belgian Congo by King Leopold.

The newly arrived Albanians were described as the “wild men of Europe... whose main interest in life is cattle raiding and mutual assassination.”²⁶⁵ Albania was later described as “Europe’s most backward country.”²⁶⁶ 1920 saw the introduction of the Wahhabi school of Islam to Australian readers. It was described as a “Puritanical sect of Islam,...[with a] literal observance of the Koran ...[and] intensely fanatical.”²⁶⁷ In light of Australia’s involvement with World War I in the Middle East, especially regarding the Australian Light Horse, who were involved in the battle of Beersheba, some stories from the region would have resonated with the returned soldiers.

In a story on the early conflict in Armenia, one writer continued to promulgate the polemic link between Islam and violence. He stated that the “Mohammedans went with fire and sword in one hand and the Koran in the other, to make conquest and gain followers, and as a result by them had suffered untold misery.”²⁶⁸ At the other end of the spectrum, ‘Orientalist fantasy’ also provided light entertainment. Members of the Baptist Union Conference presented “an interesting dialogue by ladies and gentlemen in Indian characters.”²⁶⁹ One wonders as to whether they donned black face and provided the appropriate accents. This approach to Islam, especially the Westernised stereotypical view of the Qur’an and Sword that was promulgated by Edward Gibbon,²⁷⁰ reiterates the classical European understanding and accentuates the issue of imported Orientalism.

6.9 Muslim Australians or Australian Muslims?

²⁶⁴ *ibid.*

²⁶⁵ "The Albanians," *Great Southern Herald*, 25 Jun 1927. 4.

²⁶⁶ "A Backward Country," *Albany Advertiser*, 20 Apr 1939. 4.

²⁶⁷ "The Arab of Today," *Mercury*, 6 Aug 1920. 11.

²⁶⁸ "Church Intelligence," *Maitland Weekly Mercury*, 6 Jul 1901. 11.

²⁶⁹ "Baptist Union Conference," *Advertiser*, 22 Sep 1911. 12.

²⁷⁰ Edward Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, vol. III (New York, NY: Hurst & Co, 1914), 492.

While the Muslims and other ‘people of colour’ were viewed with suspicion by a country predominantly supporting the concept of a White Australia, in many instances, examples of their patriotic nature can be demonstrated. They were proud to announce their support, and the newspaper was happy to report it. When Queen Victoria died in 1900, the “Moslems of Adelaide...join in the general regret at the death of the great Queen, and prayers for King Edward have been offered in the Mosque.”²⁷¹

When the country was at war, they stepped up. Young Australian men of all religious beliefs have served in all of the conflicts of this era. Dzavid Haveric provides an extensive range of enlistments from the Muslim community in Australia during both major conflicts.²⁷² These young men most likely joined for the same reason as many others; patriotic fervour. However, it was not just about the fighting forces. At home, as World War II broke out, patriotic Australian Muslims declared that, “Islam will help” with the War effort.²⁷³ In a 1942 interview, a 106-year-old ex-cameleer’s only comment on the current war was, “British rule is the best in the world.”²⁷⁴

6.10 Conclusion

Dialogue during this era was limited. As previously mentioned, it was more akin to a monologue from the Australian point of view. Then, as in the next 50 years, new arrivals just had to fit in, assimilate or perish. This was not such a big issue for the Muslims; there were just not enough of them to be visible, and many of those who remained stayed on in remote locations such as outback New South Wales, Queensland, and South Australia. Additionally, many of the next generations had little or no connection with the parent’s culture, religion, or language, again diminishing the *umma*. By 1947, there were only 4,543 non-Judeo-Christians in a country with a population of around 7.5 million.²⁷⁵

From a sociological perspective, any dialogue was really at the micro-level. Given how many stories were re-run or syndicated around the country, the media provided a meso-level platform for the Muslim voice; however, it was filtered through the oriental visions

²⁷¹ "Prayers by Afghans," *Daily Telegraph*, 29 Jan 1901. 5.

²⁷² Dzavid Haveric, "Anzac Muslims an Untold Story," *Australian Journal of Islamic Studies* 3,3 (2018).

²⁷³ "Islam Will Help," *Daily News*, 13 Jun 1940. 4.

²⁷⁴ "He's 103 Today," *News*, 2 Sep 1942. 6.

²⁷⁵ Commonwealth of Australia, 874.

of the day. As is the case now, the media also provided a platform for the supporters of the White Australia Policy. While there are several disparaging and polemic attacks, my research results have also demonstrated positive examples of the treatment of Muslims in the press. Concerning the issue of social cohesion, the cities and towns where the Muslim communities existed seem to have fared no differently from any others. Stories of segregation abound; however, this occurred with all waves of migrants as well as continued dispossession and vilification of the Indigenous population. It was usually an issue of skin colour or perceived social standing, not religion. Remote towns such as Maree with an established Muslim population, along with the new arrivals in Shepparton and Far North Queensland, integrated into the local societies. They banded together, often in ethnic groups, other times in groups determined by immediate need. Mostly they kept their faith to themselves. Some of them got in trouble with the law. So did people of all religious persuasions. Polemic attacks occur; however, at a local level, people of all persuasions just seem to get on with life in a positive fashion. It seems that organised dialogue is not required for this to occur.

Religiously, Australia was a Christian-dominated society, led by the Protestant churches with a significant Roman Catholic minority. Other religions barely managed a mention. As with the previous chapter, the research continues to show a geographically disperse *umma*, with some small new ethnic groups emerging. With no formal mandate from the Christian Churches on interfaith dialogue, and with limited non-Christian participants, it would probably have been viewed as unnecessary or unproductive. During this period, Christianity in Australia was still suffering from forms of the imported sectarian division between the Protestants and the Catholics. Some focus on ecumenical dialogue was probably needed before any form of interfaith dialogue would be required.

Some members of the diverse *umma* who did prosper managed to engage authorities in dialogue. Much of this was necessary; permits, licenses, and legal documents, as well as just negotiating day to day life. Many, but not all, would have furthered their English language skills, if only to introduce the colloquial language of the bush. For those engaging with the government, rejection seems to have been a common thread. This is evident through the immigration record following the Immigration Restriction Act (1901) and the pleading requests for re-entry or family reunions. This dialogue would have been frustrating, as at times the decisions appearing at odds with the law. It would have been

further confounded by the British citizenship bestowed on Indian Muslims, but not Afghans during this period.

The world was changing, and as transport improved, the global movement of people increased, bringing different ethnic groups and beliefs into contact. Discussion around a modern form of organised interfaith dialogue had begun at the end of the 19th century. Attempts to organise dialogue began with the World's Parliament of Religions in 1893, were touched upon at the Edinburgh Missionary Conference of 1910, and 1919 saw the establishment of a league of religions, driven by the Jewish Peace Society in London. All of these mark significant milestones along the way to something akin to our modern concept of interfaith dialogue. It would take the horrors of World War II and the Holocaust to focus on the issue of religious freedom, the place of religion as a human right, and the importance of effective interfaith dialogue in facilitating these causes.

Chapter 7. Australia becomes multicultural

7.1 Introduction

Following the devastation of World War II, Australia entered a new era. Migration, focussed on displaced (white) Europeans was in order as the requirement for labour to commence a series of nation-building infrastructure was needed. By the 1970s, multiculturalism would become part of Australia's changing face, bilaterally sanctioned by both sides of Government.¹ One impact of this saw the range of religious beliefs in Australia diversify. Muslims were also arriving in Australia from across the world, in turn leading to changing levels of dialogue across the nation. Again, this dialogue will be critically analysed in line with the research questions. Of particular interest are the sociological levels and the perception of public/private dialogue between 1945 and 2001.

The era saw a range of movements and official declarations develop around interfaith and inter-religious dialogue at both national and international levels, as well as within the churches and individual beliefs. In response to the horrors of both world wars, the United Nations issued its Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948.² In 1990 the Muslim world responded with the Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam.³ Both dealt with the issues surrounding freedom of religion. Additionally, and notably, the Second Vatican council in 1965 issued its *Declaration on the Relation of the Church with Non-Christian Religions, Nostra Aetate*.⁴ The events of the Council marked a more outward shift in Catholic teaching and set the path towards greater ecumenical as well as interfaith dialogue, and it is expected that the research will support this move. In 1966, around 26% of Australians identified as Catholic,⁵ and this shift in direction by the Church led some of them to engage in dialogue with the other religions. An examination of the significance of these events alongside the various types and levels of dialogue will be undertaken.

The communities researched in the previous chapters will be further explored, with additional focus on Shepparton, Victoria, the Wheat Belt in Western Australia and Far

¹ Richards, "White Australia Dismantled: The 1970s," 258.

² United Nations, "Universal Declaration of Human Rights".

³ "Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam".

⁴ Pope Paul VI, "Nostra Aetate".

⁵ Commonwealth of Australia. "1966 Census - Volume 1 Population - Single Characteristics - Part 7 Religion." edited by Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics. Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, 1966.

North Queensland. This is with a view to establishing any changed levels of social harmony, given the long periods of cohabitation between Muslims and non-Muslims. Shepparton has been the focus of a study on social cohesion,⁶ and accordingly, this study shall be mined for suitable material.

Post-1945, an even broader section of the Islamic diaspora began to migrate to Australia, mainly to the major capital cities, but also to places such as rural Katanning in Western Australia. Many of these modern migrants sought a better life due to the effects of wars in Afghanistan, Lebanon and the Middle East, and the effect this has had on dialogue will also be researched and explored.

This chapter will argue that dialogue, both ecumenical and inter-religious moved into a new realm during this era. The reasons for this will be multifarious; changed patterns of migration, the removal of the Immigration Restriction Act (1901), the impact of warfare in the 20th century, and the impact of globalisation. Within the churches, Christian, Muslim, Jewish or other, dialogue began to mature. Once the various denominations could talk ecumenically, the next move was to engage externally. Additionally, the various ‘other’ religious communities would also begin to band together, with the Muslim communities developing state-based organisations and student associations from a range of local ethnic *ummas*. As this happened, a series of guidelines began to emerge. They provided a roadmap, leading to greater understanding and hopefully, fruitful meso-level dialogue.

7.2 Worldwide events impacting dialogue.

As with previous chapters, in order to look at the issue of interfaith dialogue in Australia, some exploration is needed of significant events, human rights declarations, and legislative changes. Many of these had a direct impact on the migration policies of the era, increasing the number of non-Judeo- Christian faiths. This change to migration policy added to the growing call for organised inter-faith, and ecumenical dialogue at a global level ensured that the Christian churches had someone else to engage with in their dialogue.

⁶ Moran and Mallman, "Understanding Social Cohesion in Shepparton and Mildura: Final Report."

7.2.1 World Events and Declarations

The era saw a range of movements and declarations develop globally around interfaith and inter-religious dialogue. In response to the non-combatant casualties of both world wars, especially the Holocaust led to “the institutionalisation of cosmopolitan morality”⁷ leading to a swathe of measures being enacted, many through the newly created United Nations. In 1948, they issued the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and specifically Article 18 deals with the issue of religion:

*Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.*⁸

In 1990 the Muslim world responded with the Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam.

*All men are equal in terms of basic human dignity and basic obligations and responsibilities, without any discrimination on the basis of race, colour, language, belief, sex, religion, political affiliation, social status or other considerations.*⁹

In theory, these declarations should enable both religious pluralism and encourage effective inter-religious dialogue at all levels, including at a macro, or global level. In reality, the process would take some time and would never actually be achieved in some places.

7.2.2 Government Policies

Just after hostilities ceased in World War II, Australia formally established a Department of Immigration.¹⁰ This marked the beginning of an ongoing change to Australia’s limited migration policy and would eventually see a shift “in emphasis from assimilation and integration to multiculturalism.”¹¹ This shift was not immediate; it would take some time

⁷ for further discussion on the impact see Daniel Levy and Natan Sznajder, "The Institutionalization of Cosmopolitan Morality: The Holocaust and Human Rights," *Journal of Human Rights* 3, no. 2 (2010).

⁸ United Nations, "Universal Declaration of Human Rights" Article 18.

⁹ "Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam".

¹⁰ Mark Lopez, *The Origins of Multiculturalism in Australian Politics 1945–1975*, (Carlton South, Victoria Melbourne University Press, 2000), 116.

¹¹ Elsa Koleth. "Multiculturalism a Review of Australian Policy Statements and Recent Debates in Australia and Overseas." edited by Social Policy Section. Canberra, ACT: Parliament of Australia, 2010.

for the existing legislation and attitudes to change and accept this seismic shift in migration policies and requirements. The existing expectation and policy of assimilation meant that new arrivals were expected to learn the customs and language of the country, leaving their cultural and religious idiosyncrasies behind. Despite this, “as late as 1969 the then minister for immigration, Billy Snedden, was still insistent that ‘we should have a monoculture, with everyone living in the same way, understanding each other, and choosing the same aspirations,’”¹² effectively negating any requirement for inter-religious dialogue.

Australia’s low post-war birth rate was of some concern, and in 1947 the “Labor government was forced, reluctantly, to consider the possible role of immigration in expanding Australia’s meagre population of seven million.”¹³ As issues arose around meeting the targets for ‘suitable’ migrants, restrictions around the Immigration Restriction Act (1901) began to be lifted. While it was still in place, the official preference for migration to Australia was for white Europeans. One of the most significant policy shifts occurred in 1956 during the Liberal leadership of Robert Menzies, when the then Immigration Minister, Harold Holt, “allowed highly-skilled non-Europeans to enter the country and become citizens and also allowed the non-European spouses of Australians to become citizens.”¹⁴ The Act was further revised in 1958, 1959, 1966 and finally, “the last vestiges were eliminated by the Whitlam government, with Coalition support, in 1975.”¹⁵

These changes allowed the Whitlam Government to introduce the concept of ‘Multiculturalism’, although it “initially emerged around the Whitlam Government rather than through it.”¹⁶ By 1975, the Federal Parliament had passed the Racial Discrimination Bill (1975),¹⁷ establishing a basic tenet of protection for new arrivals. The second major turning point was Al Grassby’s speech, *A Multicultural Society for the Future*.¹⁸ In doing so, “he officially endorsed multiculturalism and became the first Minister for Immigration to support these ideas.”¹⁹ This series of socio-political events introducing multiculturalism

¹² John Rickard, *Australia: A Cultural History*, 3rd ed. (Clayton, Vic: Monash University Publishing, 2017), 212.

¹³ *ibid.*, 210.

¹⁴ Windschuttle, "The White Australia Policy," 133.

¹⁵ *ibid.*

¹⁶ Lopez, *The Origins of Multiculturalism in Australian Politics 1945–1975*, , 233.

¹⁷ Hansard. "Racial Discrimination Bill." edited by House of Representatives, 1415. Canberra, ACT, 1975.

¹⁸ A.J. Grassby. "A Multi-Cultural Society for the Future." edited by Dept. of Immigration. Canberra, ACT: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1975.

¹⁹ Lopez, *The Origins of Multiculturalism in Australian Politics 1945–1975*, , 274.

would be a harbinger for future requirements and pave the way for the implementation of inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogue over the next few decades.

Post-war migration, initially from Western and Southern Europe, then a variety of other regions ramped up over the next 55 years. This broad group brought with them different beliefs and new denominations, including increasing numbers from the Orthodox Churches, “which emerged from the post-war era to become one of the strongest denominational forces in contemporary Australia.”²⁰ Additionally, small numbers of the eastern dharmic beliefs, such as Buddhism and Hinduism, and a growing number of Muslim migrants from a range of areas began to arrive. The *umma* would only increase over the rest of the century, as between 1947 and 2001, the number of Muslims in Australia would increase from 2,704 to 281,600. Out of the milieu of beliefs and religions would emerge the need for a more organised form of dialogue. In turn, this would lead to the establishment of organisations that would commence meso and macro level dialogue in Australia.

As a result, more Muslims began to arrive in Australia. During this era, initiatives included the signing of an agreement with Turkey in 1967 which saw an increase in Turkish migration to Australia.²¹ Australia had initially believed that the Turkish migrants would be ‘urbanised’, aiding in their integration into Melbourne, however, “the Turkish officials organised things, so we got a large number of those with rural backgrounds.”²² This led to concerns being raised about integration and assimilation, leading to the development of cultural pluralism.²³

²⁰ Hilary M Carey, "World Religions in Australia," *Believing in Australia. A Cultural History of Religions* (ProQuest Ebook Central, 1996), <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/acu/detail.action?docID=5534318>. 1.

²¹ Cleland, *The Muslims in Australia: A Brief History.*, 75.

²² Lopez, *The Origins of Multiculturalism in Australian Politics 1945–1975*, , 104.

²³ *ibid.*, 105.

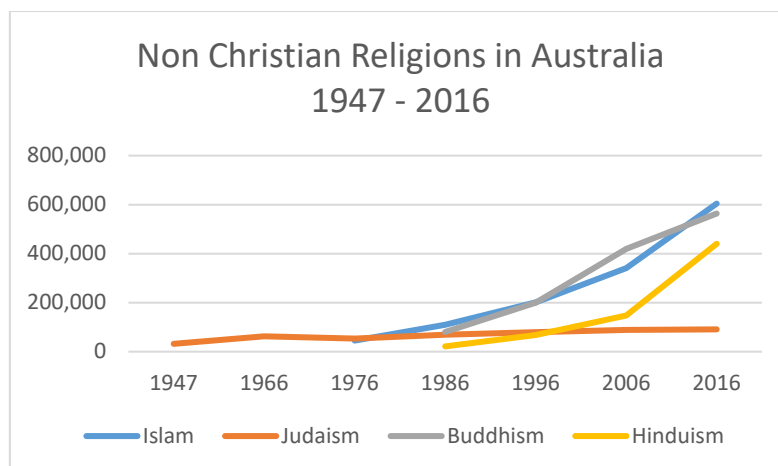


Figure 33 Non-Christian religions in Australia, 1947-2016²⁴

Another factor that led to an increase in the number of Muslims was the commencement of the Colombo plan in 1951. Enacted by the Menzies Government as part of a plan to “engage with Asia,”²⁵ it provided an opportunity for Asian students, “first in their hundreds, then in their thousands — to study at Australian tertiary institutions.”²⁶ This led to an increase in young Muslims from Indonesia and Malaysia, as well as India, Pakistan and Ceylon (Sri Lanka).²⁷ In turn, this would allow the development of the Muslim student associations, further aiding in the development of an Australian *umma*.²⁸

7.3.3 Population & Migration Overview

With regard to Australia, the previous chapter posited that most inter-religious dialogue was generally limited to the micro or day to day dialogue between individuals at a local level. This was probably due to the small numbers of non-Christians in the country. Non-Judeo-Christian beliefs accounted for only 4,543 individuals in a country with a population of just over 7.5 million.

²⁴ Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census data, 2947-2016

²⁵ Daniel Oakman, *Facing Asia : A History of the Colombo Plan* (Canberra, ACT, Australia: Canberra, ACT, Australia : ANU E Press, 2010), 1.

²⁶ *ibid.*, 2.

²⁷ Haveric, *Muslims Making Australia Home. Immigration and Community Building.*, 10.

²⁸ Mahsheed Ansari, "The Muslim Student Associations (MSAS) and the Formation of the Australian Ummah," *Australian Journal of Islamic Studies* 3,3 (2018): 99.

| Religion in Australia, 1947 | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------|--------|
| Belief | Total | % |
| Anglican | 2,957,032 | 39.11% |
| Roman Catholic | 1,587,458 | 21.00% |
| Other Christian | 2,128,446 | 28.15% |
| Buddhist ^{b.)} | 926 | 0.01% |
| Hebrew | 32,019 | 0.42% |
| Hindu | 244 | 0.00% |
| Mohammedan | 2,704 | 0.04% |
| Sikh | 38 | 0.00% |
| Other (Non Christian) | 631 | 0.01% |
| No Religion | 26,328 | 0.35% |
| No Response | 824,824 | 10.91% |
| | 7,560,650 | |

a. Total does not include indefinite responses.

b.) And other Chinese Religions

Figure 34 1947 Census summary²⁹

By 2001, there had been an increase in the number of people identifying as non-religious and larger numbers of non-Judeo-Christian beliefs. The number of Muslims had increased to 280,100, with Buddhism the largest of the non-Christian faiths. Christianity still accounted for two-thirds of all the religious believers in Australia.

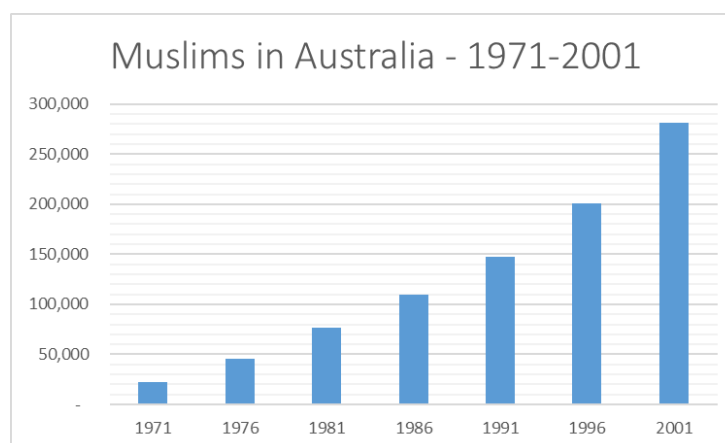


Figure 35 The increase in Muslims in Australia.³⁰

Overall, Muslim migration began its current revival in the early 1970s. From that point on, there has been a steady increase in the number of Australians who identify as Muslims, and post 2001, this trend has continued. Whilst still only a small percentage of the population, localisation has made them more visible. As with the previous migratory waves, new arrivals were drawn to the regions that provided the cultural and religious needs in this far away foreign country. In turn, this led to clusters in Melbourne (Brunswick) and Sydney

²⁹ Commonwealth of Australia.

³⁰ Based on ABS census data, 1971-2001

(Auburn, Lakemba), where, as the new millennium commenced, they would be easy targets for a new breed of Islamophobes.

7.3 The Existing (2,704) Muslims

In the first few decades of the 20th century, as the requirement for camels was extinguished, the imported beasts of burden were released into the wild to fend for themselves. Those cameleers who had remained in Australia were rapidly ageing, and as they passed on, stories were often run in the media outlining their contribution. Many lived long and fruitful lives, and sometimes their contribution was recognised, such as with Gool Mahomet.³¹ At other times it was more sensationalist, focusing on the age, as with Abdul Kaus who "...dies at 111, or 134."³² With the impact of earlier restrictions, many of these original Muslims left no families behind. Others left long-lasting genetic legacies, such as Shamroze Khan³³ and the Deen families.³⁴

Some of the remaining Queensland cameleers and hawkers had drifted to Brisbane and were left to fend for themselves, like their camels 50 years earlier. In 1947, when Said Matab Shah passed away in 1947, the Brisbane businessman was honoured as a descendant of Mahomet.³⁵ As newspapers gained access to better printing technology, photos appeared showing "Moslems at Prayer."³⁶ As in the past, any divisions in the *umma* were well covered in the media. Issues over women praying with men caused some conflict with the older Afghan Muslims when newer migrants objected.³⁷ At times they appeared to support assimilation, with one report stating that, "as a mark of respect to the religion of the country of their adoption – Christianity – Indians of the Islamic faith living in Brisbane will hold a religious festival at Christmas."³⁸ It would appear that this may have been some form of assimilation and not a misunderstanding around the Islamic observances of *Eid*.³⁹ There was some dialogue with mainstream society, however, mostly at the micro or necessary

³¹ "Death of Gool Mahomet," *Chronicle*, 1 Jun 1950. 6.

³² "Man Dies at 111, or 134," *Truth*, 2 June 1946. 22.

³³ Badhwar, "Bobby Amanullah Shamroze Khan, a Relic of the Surviving Cameleer Generation in Australia."

³⁴ Deen, "Excavating the Past: Australia's Muslims," 64.

³⁵ "Mahomet Descendant Dies Here," *Telegraph*, 27 Mar 1947. 5.

³⁶ "Moslems in Prayer," *Brisbane Telegraph*, 2 Jul 1949. 2.

³⁷ "Mosque," *Daily Telegraph*, 24 Jul 1949. 35.

³⁸ "Talk of the Town," *Sunday Mail*, 8 Dec 1946. 4.

³⁹ In 1946 *Eid al-Fitr* was observed on the 29th August and *Eid al-Adha* on the 5th of November.

level. The numbers of non-Judeo-Christian believers were too small for any real need for dialogue, beyond the necessary or day-to-day.

As existing centres of Islam in Australia, albeit small, Brisbane,⁴⁰ and Adelaide⁴¹ saw a wide range of stories printed covering a range of topics. Some explained Ramadan; there were some accusations of drug use⁴² and the ongoing theme of fit, elderly (110-year-old) ex-Hawkers, living in the mosques, continued. One of the critical areas we learn about in the media of the time, especially in Perth, Adelaide and Brisbane is the changing of the guard, as the new migrants begin to take control of the infrastructure put in place by the first groups of Muslim migrants. As the original and then the second wave of Muslim migrants passed away, they were being replaced by others, however, often with different ethnic backgrounds and therefore some different customs.

In Adelaide, the Afghans were being replaced by Muslims from Romania and Yugoslavia⁴³ and Albania,⁴⁴ some of whom were employed to work in the Clipsal factory. On arrival in what they thought would be:

a desert so far as Islam was concerned. They only discovered that there was a mosque in that city from a newspaper report of the death and funeral of Gool Mahomet. The following Saturday, they set out to find it. There was a congregation of only two or three aged Afghans.⁴⁵

**Only two worship
in mosque now**

**Sixty-one years ago the Mohammedan mosque,
off Sturt street, was built for 30 or 40 of the faithful.
Today only two worship there.**

Figure 36 The Mail. Adelaide, SA⁴⁶

⁴⁰ "Water Was a Luxury," *Courier-Mail*, 7 Jul 1951. 3.

⁴¹ "Moslems Begin Ramadan Fast," *News*, 8 Jul 1948. 12.

⁴² Geoffrey Tebbut, "On the Spot, Amok on Bhang," *Herald*, 12 Apr 1950. 4.

⁴³ Yucel, *The Struggle of Ibrahim. Biography of an Australian Muslim*, 70-71.

⁴⁴ Frank Dunhill, "New Faces in City's Old Mosque," *Mail*, 10 Nov 1951. 16.

⁴⁵ Yucel, *The Struggle of Ibrahim. Biography of an Australian Muslim*, 71.

⁴⁶ "Only Two Worship in Mosque Now."

Despite some issues initiated by the two groups' different socio-cultural backgrounds, the mosque would continue to operate with the two different cultural groups eventually cooperating, and micro-level interfaith dialogue could again develop. This seen as a blessing in Adelaide, as the new guard arrived to replace the ageing Afghan cameleers.

Ibrahim Dellal in his memories talked [about] two Afghans who waited to meet the first Turkish immigrants in 1968, after one or two week[s] both died. At that time one of them was blind, the other was unable to walk (extremely old). In my personal conversation with Ibrahim Dellal, these two men told to him (Ibrahim Dellal) after the arrival of the first Muslim group -Turkish workers-, now we can die happily, they thank God to see this. A couple of times the late Ibrahim Dellal told me this story, every time he told me, he cries.⁴⁷

Whilst not strictly an open day, one of the first reported occurrences of a group tour of a mosque in Australia occurred in Adelaide in 1951. A group of girl guides were shown the mosque's workings and given a talk on the “fundamental points of the Moslem religion and allowed them to look at a copy of the Koran written in Arabic with the translation alongside.”⁴⁸ As Australia moved into the 21st century, this type of event would become more of an imperative, opening the paths to a more meaningful dialogue between Muslims and non-Muslims.

By 1954, the Adelaide Mosque was welcoming Muslims from all parts of the globe as they made a home for themselves. The Adelaide Mail reported on *Eid al-Fitr*, showing Muslims from across the globe celebrating as a growing multi-ethnic *umma*.

⁴⁷ Ismail Albayrak, e-mail message to author, November 7, 2020

⁴⁸ "Local Guides See Mosque and Greek Church," *Bunyip*, 1 Jun 1951. 1.



LEFT: Members of Adelaide's Moslem community left their shoes outside the Gilbert street mosque today when they celebrated the end of the 30-day fast of Ramadhan. RIGHT: And here are the owners of the shoes. From left: Ahmad Shak, a Yugoslav; Mustafa Jablonskas, a Lithuanian; Miss Legila Chaleki, a Pole; A. I. Abbas, a Malay; O. Soebrato, an Indonesian; Miss M. Kuhari, a Pakistani; R. L. Priestley, an Englishman; A. Andeson, an Australian; A. B. Chaleski, a Pole; R. Shabau, an Albanian; A. R. Ibrahui, an Albanian; and Dr. Hassau Bey, a Hungarian.

*Figure 37 Adelaide Mail, 1954*⁴⁹

While the handover in Adelaide seemed to go smoothly, during 1950 in Perth, differences arose⁵⁰ between the “locally-resident Afghans as one faction and local Albanians and Pakistanis as another, concerning membership and authentic trusteeship of the Perth Mahometan Mosque,”⁵¹ which had sadly fallen into disrepair.⁵² With the issue proceeding to court, the newer arrivals were “seeking a declaration that all Mohammedans of Albanian nationality residing in WA are members and are entitled to the same rights as members.”⁵³ In response, the Afghans believed that “the Albanians did not practise true Mohammedanism.”⁵⁴ The original Afghans were Sunni Hanafis, and the Albanians possibly from the Baktashi school. This may have seen a difference in cultural practices, such as the veiling of women, and other alternative practices, all leading to a visible division in Adelaide’s *umma*.

⁴⁹ "Guess Whose? Take Your Pick from This Group.," *Mail*, 5 Jun 1954. 68.

⁵⁰ "Trusteeship of Mosque. Mahometan's Dispute," *West Australian*, 14 Jun 1950. 14.

⁵¹ "Membership of Perth Mosque. Factional Dispute," *West Australian*, 15 Jun 1950. 11.

⁵² "Mosque May Be Repaired," *West Australian*, 3 Dec 1949. 30.

⁵³ "WA Mohammedans Go to Law over Mosque," *Daily News*, 25 Jan 1950. 5.

⁵⁴ "Do Albanians Hold True Belief?," *Daily News*, 14 Jun 1950. 2.

Afghans said that true believers said certain prayers, observed certain feast days and donated one-fortieth of their annual income to poorer members of their faith. Albanians did not do this.

Figure 38 Differences arise⁵⁵

Ultimately the legal actions, “were dismissed in a reserved judgement delivered by Mr Justice Wolff in the Supreme Court.”⁵⁶ Despite these internal conflicts, Perth was home to Australia's first organised, multi-ethnic societies, the Muslim Society of Western Australia, established in 1949.⁵⁷ By 1951, the flavour of the local media coverage had changed from Oriental in its outlook to that of a more acceptable European flavour.⁵⁸

Both of these city-based Muslim communities experienced similar fates, a handover from a small group of predominantly Afghans to a multi-ethnic Muslim community. The new arrivals would have had language barriers similar to all non-English speaking migrants who came before, and in some cases, religion was what bound some of these disparate groups together. Any dialogue that happened during this period would only have been at a micro-level.

The media continued their approach to treating the practices and beliefs as some form of an oriental travelogue. One intrepid reporter was allowed to observe the preparations of the Islamic funeral of Sultan Mahmood.⁵⁹ The old men performing the preparation of the body lamented the lack of Imam to guide the faithful and hoped that “someday they will be able to revive all the pristine glory of the old mosque, bring back its traditional glory and make it once again, to us, the romantic place of worship where a full-time Muezzin will be able to mount the minaret at dusk and call the faithful to prayer.”⁶⁰ It would not be until the latter part of the 20th century that their collective prophecy would be realised.

⁵⁵ *ibid.*

⁵⁶ "Trusteeship of Perth Mosque. Three Cases Fail," *West Australian*, 22 Jul 1950. 30.

⁵⁷ Haveric, *Muslims Making Australia Home. Immigration and Community Building.*, 160.

⁵⁸ Peter Barnett, "Perth's "Little Europe"," *Western Mail*, 20 Sep 1951. 20.

⁵⁹ Jack Pettit, "I Saw Age Old Islamic Rites in Perth This Week at Mosque and Graveside," *Sunday Times*, 21 Jan 1951. 9.

⁶⁰ *ibid.*

Likewise, the ceremonies surrounding the two significant Islamic festive celebrations continued to provide content for reporters. In Adelaide in 1952, *Eid al-Adha* (sacrificial festival) was briefly outlined, demonstrating the changing face and broad geographical background of Islam in Australia as “eight countries were represented by 40 members of the Moslem community.”⁶¹ This growing diversity in the *umma* is also shown in a 1952 photo from *Eid al-Fitr* celebrations, showing a Bosnian, an Indonesian and a Pakistani removing their shoes before performing the required ritual ablutions.⁶²



*Figure 39 Moslems Celebrate 1952*⁶³

The above reports differ slightly from the previous era in that the reporter seemed more willing to engage with his subjects and sought more information about the practices and participants, however it was still very much a curious observation of the “different others.” Despite this, the reporter did place some focus on the external aspect of having to put shoes

⁶¹ "Festival at Mosque," *Advertiser*, 1 Sep 1952. 11.

⁶² "Moslems Celebrate," *Advertiser*, 24 Jun 1952. 6.

⁶³ *ibid.*

back on after worship in the mosque, without seeking an understanding of the belief that underpins the practice. It may mark a subtle change to the nature of the relationship and the dialogue between Muslims and others in Australia.

7.3.1 Rural Australia

In the regional centres, the once-thriving hubs of Broken Hill, Maree and Bourke had become more integrated, with the policy of assimilation taking effect. Descendants of the original Muslim pioneers such as Bobby Shamroze have lamented that “we have not learnt our religious practices,”⁶⁴ a familiar situation throughout the country. Mona Wilson, daughter of Afghan, Jack Akbar, described her father as “friends of all the different religions, and the Christian religion.”⁶⁵ She was educated in the Christian school system, and “when we was out the gate, we was little Aussie kids, but when we were in the yard we were little Afghan kids, little Moslem kids.”⁶⁶ In Maree, Raymond Finn describes the remaining Muslims during the 1960s having a place in the town, albeit without a mosque.⁶⁷ One of the descendants told how “the younger men, although raised as Mohammedans by their fathers, tended to drift away after the deaths of their fathers.”⁶⁸ At this stage, any form of inter-religious dialogue had effectively ended, given the diminishment of religious diversity.

During this era, some Afghan pioneers' histories began to appear in the media, with a 1954 article outlining the positive contribution made towards expanding Australia's frontiers.⁶⁹ Despite this, there were still vestiges of attitudes from earlier eras. Earlier in 1951, a travelling correspondent had reported that the Marree Mosque was for sale, complete with “a few old tattered and torn copies of the Koran.”⁷⁰ The article also proudly proclaimed how “most of the ‘Ghans’ in central Australia, have now become assimilated into the white race.”⁷¹ Another article elaborated, stating that through “intermarriage the ‘Ghans have been largely assimilated, becoming Christians, [having] been accepted into the white

⁶⁴ Badhwar, "Bobby Amanullah Shamroze Khan, a Relic of the Surviving Cameleer Generation in Australia."

⁶⁵ FAIR, "Mona Akbar Interview" 0:11 - 0:16.

⁶⁶ *ibid.*, 0:41 - 0:47.

⁶⁷ Raymond Finn, interview by Shaheed Drew, 2019.

⁶⁸ *ibid.*, 11:30 - 11:40.

⁶⁹ "Camels Extended the Frontiers," *Sydney Morning Herald*, 25 May 1954. 11.

⁷⁰ Michael Sawtell, "Beef and Aborigines on Western Lake Eyre," *Daily Examiner*, 8 Oct 1951. 4.

⁷¹ *ibid.*

community.”⁷² In the 1950s, the policy of assimilation was at the fore, and it would take an influx of refugees for this to change. Unfortunately, not many migrants chose Marree, Bourke or Broken Hill as desirable locations, leading to the almost complete depletion of any semblance of a local *umma*.

In towns like Mareeba, Queensland, the generation of Albanian Muslims had settled into a reasonably pluralist society, as the testimony of resident Florence Spurling demonstrates:

...Even my Dad, where he came from, half the population was the Greek Orthodox, they were close to the Greek border, and when the Greeks have their Easter at a slightly different time to we do here, they go, all the Moslems would go over and wish them all the best; they used to call it Pashka, I think the Greeks call it Pashka. And when the Moslems had their Ramadan, the Christian Albanians would go and wish them a happy Ramadan, yes. And we do that here, too, we go to Christmas parties, and they come to - and our daughter's parents, the one that's in Mareeba, they come to our Ramadan parties, and we go - and if there's a funeral on at the Catholic church, of our friends, we'll go to the church. We have no qualms about doing that. And I think Dad, being born in a town that had both, probably helped us become more tolerant, yes. Yes, there was one of the Ramadan festivals in Mareeba about five years ago, and we had a party going on at the hall in Mareeba, and on our way home, the police were doing alcohol checks and they pulled up about three cars in front of me, I saw them there, anyhow I ended up turning up on the scene of course, they pulled me up also. And I said to the officer, I said, 'Are you targeting these people who are coming from that party at the hall?' And he didn't answer me, but I said, 'You know there was no alcohol there at all, no alcohol is allowed.' So they let me go and they turned around and they left also, they went home.⁷³

Despite a long connection with Muslims in Mareeba, the local police seemed to be unaware of the restrictions on alcohol in Islam, showing a lack of understanding about certain members of their community. However, Spurling demonstrates she can engage in dialogue with the constabulary at a micro-level, and by her account, explain the circumstances. Her narrative also shows that interfaith dialogue at an individual and community level appears to have been common, part of the necessary micro dialogue of life in a small country town. It also demonstrates a growing awareness that the Muslims have found a place and expect

⁷² "Worry Finishes Where the Inland Begins," *Daily Telegraph*, 16 Sep 1951. 11.

⁷³ Various, interview by Florence Spurling, 30 Sep, 2007.

to be treated like everyone else, possibly a sign of a future paradigmatic shift towards greater multiculturalism and the need for pluralism.

Shepparton, Victoria also provided an example of how this ethnic and religious pluralism could work. Over time, the Albanian Muslims who arrived in the 1920s had become a part of the landscape and community and had initially managed to create three social clubs, and then in the 1960s, a mosque.⁷⁴ The dialogue had developed to the point that they managed to purchase a block of land and erect a mosque without any pushback that we have seen lately.⁷⁵ Examples of developing meso level dialogue included support from the local Shepparton Council and the local non-Muslim community. When the mosque was constructed, it was just out of town on a dirt, often muddy, road. The local council trucked in gravel for the opening ceremony to ensure accessibility for the Albanian Muslims and visiting dignitaries.⁷⁶ This ceremony was reported on and broadcast by ABC television and included speeches by a range of local non-Muslim dignitaries.⁷⁷ The coverage also showed many local non-Muslim residents in attendance, indicating that, after 40 years of cohabitation, dialogue had successfully moved to the meso-level in Shepparton.

By the 21st century, Shepparton was home to four mosques and one of the highest “per capita Muslim population[s] in the country, at 5.5% according to the 2016 census.”⁷⁸ Members of the local Muslim *umma* had moved into areas of local government, demonstrating acceptance and dialogue at a meso-level. Current local councillors include Cr Dinny Adem (Shepparton Mayor from 2015-2017) who is of Albanian Muslim descent and the current Deputy Mayor, Cr Seema Abdullah, who represents the south-Asian Muslim diaspora.⁷⁹

One study on Albanian and Turkish migrants highlighted a reason rural Australia was seen as more attractive:

⁷⁴ Shepparton Albanian Moslem Society, "History".

⁷⁵ "Victoria's First Mosque," (Australian Broadcasting Company, 1960).

⁷⁶ Cameron Wilson, "Rural Mosques," in *Bush Telegraph* (2014).

⁷⁷ "Victoria's First Mosque."

⁷⁸ Ihsan Yilmaz and James Barry, "Research on the Muslim Community in Shepparton, Victoria," Australian Association of Islamic and Muslim Studies Inc, accessed 20 Mar 2021,

<http://www.aaims.org.au/aaims-quarterly/research-on-the-muslim-community-in-shepparton-victoria>.

⁷⁹ *ibid.*

*...you don't feel comfortable going in the big city with millions of people with no driving skills, with no language, you don't know anyone. It's not easy and those small rural areas are more comfortable for the first few years of settlement ... and there is lots of community here.*⁸⁰

Being part of a community appears to allow for more positive dialogue at all levels and helps educate and enlighten all parties, especially when the focus is organic and local. Despite this, when groups remain insular and conduct gatherings without the involvement of others, it can become challenging to ascertain a complete picture of the interfaith activities from this era.

In 2017, when deliberations became problematic around the founding of a mosque in Bendigo, less than a few hundred kilometres away, Shepparton was put forward as a model demonstrating how Islam can integrate into Australian rural society.⁸¹ This could not have happened without increasing levels of dialogue, demonstrating how, following the initial contact, dialogue moved from the micro through to the meso levels.

7.4.3 Katanning

Katanning represents a significant departure from the standard patterns of Muslim migration. In 1974, a number of Muslims migrated from Christmas Island,⁸² with others following from the Cocos (Keeling) Islands.⁸³ In Katanning, "Halal meatworkers were in demand, to satisfy the Middle East trade...and at first it was a big adjustment for everyone."⁸⁴ Initial local observations in the 1970s were that "they stay in their own group, they're pretty friendly, yeah, they stay in their own group."⁸⁵ Described as having "paved the way for the 42 nationalities that followed,"⁸⁶ by the 21st century, another local view was that "When they first arrived, we were all a bit worried about it, but no, it's worked out pretty well."⁸⁷ By 1981, the *umma* in Katanning had founded what was to be Australia's

⁸⁰ Sue Carswell, "From Albania and Turkey to Shepparton: The Experiences of Migrants in Regional Victoria," *Around the Globe* 2,2 (2005): 29.

⁸¹ Ashlea Witoslawski, "Shepparton Most Accepting Community of Muslims in Country, Study.," *Shepparton News*, 29 Aug 2018.

⁸² Karen Michelmore, "Back Roads," in *Katanning* (ABC, 2016), 7:10.

⁸³ Monika Winarnita and Nicholas Herriman, "Caring and Family: Marriage Migration to the Malay Muslim Community of Home Island (Cocos Keeling Islands)," *Indonesia and the Malay world* 40, no. 118 (2012): 377.

⁸⁴ Michelmore, "Back Roads," 7:39.

⁸⁵ *ibid.*, 8:58.

⁸⁶ *ibid.*, 9:50.

⁸⁷ *ibid.*, 11:45.

27th mosque, opened by “Malaysia’s first Prime Minister and President of the Regional Islamic Council for South-East Asia and the Pacific, Tunku Abdul Rahman.”⁸⁸ When the mosque was constructed, “there wasn’t a murmur of protest, and local farmers and other local non-Muslim residents chipped in at working bees to help build it.”⁸⁹ This example shows how perceptions and viewpoints can be changed over time, through dialogue. In this case, the dialogue between Muslims and non-Muslims that played out over 20 years at a micro and meso-level, led to the construction of a mosque and some localised higher levels of social cohesion in rural Western Australia.

The current Imam, Alep Mydie reflected:

*how grateful we are, that back then [40 years ago], people accepted you. You know, looking back how lucky we are with these issues. This is the way we have done it, not just building a Mosque, but building a reputation, building a relationship with people, not the Mosque itself.*⁹⁰

“These days 10% of Katanning residents are Muslims, five times the national figure,”⁹¹ and the town has been described as one of “the towns where multiculturalism works, built on a foundation of tolerance.”⁹²



*Figure 40 New mosque at Katanning opened by Tunku Abdul Rahman, 1981*⁹³

⁸⁸ "Australian Foreign Affairs Record." edited by Department of Foreign Affairs. Canberra, ACT: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1981.

⁸⁹ Michelmore, "Back Roads," 20:19.

⁹⁰ *ibid.*, 21:08.

⁹¹ *ibid.*, 20:49.

⁹² Aaron Fernandes, "The Towns Where Multiculturalism Works, Built on a Foundation of Tolerance," accessed 5 Dec 2020, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-08-16/towns-where-multiculturalism-works-built-on-tolerance/10123058>.

⁹³ National Archives of Australia, "Religion - Places of Worship - New Mosque at Katanning Opened by Tunku Abdul Rahman," (Canberra 1981).

Katanning's success is partly due to the dialogue that occurred over the years since the Muslims arrived. As with many communities, the local emotion would have been one of trepidation, given the unknown nature of the new arrivals. A key aspect to the success of Katanning is that often small towns function because they are a community, and they rely on each other. As the Muslims integrated and became a much-needed part of the local community, relationships and dialogue grew, moving from the micro to the meso. It may be that Katanning represents one of the quicker transitions from no relationship, to one where the Muslims are an accepted part of the fabric that constitutes the local community.

7.4 The Impact of migration on dialogue

As outlined earlier, Australia's migration program changed significantly during this era. As more migrants arrived, most of them gravitated to the capital cities, often around the centres of employment. In Melbourne, this would see Turkish migrants centre on Brunswick and in Sydney, around Auburn and Bankstown. Blue-collar workers were required for the factory and assembly lines of a country rebuilding its industry after the war. For monotonous tasks, English language skills were not a priority, meaning Turkish, Albanian, Italian and Greek migrants could readily find employment.

Given Canberra's position as the Capital of Australia, the range of consulates and embassies grew and expanded after World War II. This included delegations from a range of Muslim countries, including those of our close neighbours, Malaysia and Indonesia. By 1960, plans had been announced for the establishment of a mosque in Canberra.⁹⁴ The mosque,

*...designed in Melbourne, was built in 1960 for £18,000 provided jointly by the three governments through their diplomatic missions in Canberra – the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia, the High Commission of Malaya (before the formation of Malaysia) and the High Commission of Pakistan.*⁹⁵

As a joint venture, this event represents the coming together of two schools of Islamic jurisprudence, with Indonesia and Malaysia being predominantly Shafi'i and the predominantly Hanafi Pakistanis. As there is a need for ecumenism in Christianity, so too

⁹⁴ "Plan to Build Mosque in Canberra," *Canberra Times*, 8 Jan 1960. 1.

⁹⁵ Islamic Society of ACT, "Canberra Mosque," accessed 13 Nov 2020, <https://isact.org.au/mosque/>.

for dialogue between the different schools and groups of Islam. This would be crucial in order to eventually achieve any meaningful interfaith dialogue at a meso or macro level.

7.4.1 Melbourne

By 1950 local media was reporting that in Melbourne, the *umma* had been reduced to “only five.”⁹⁶ This was about to change, as the need for workers during the post-war period was about to change Australia’s policy and worldview on migration. As manufacturing output grew, jobs were available on the factory lines with the likes of Ford, Holden, King Gee and Clipsal. Initially, these positions were taken up by the first waves of European migrants, firstly the British, then the Greeks and Italians. As the demand for workers outstripped supply, from the 1950s onwards, small waves of migrants, commencing with from Turks from Cyprus, began to arrive in Melbourne. In 1950, as an 18-year-old, İbrahim Dellal landed in Melbourne after a six-week voyage from Cyprus.⁹⁷ Fortunate to have English language capabilities, he readily secured employment. Whilst only a lay Muslim, he would be a keen participant and observer of the growth of the Melbourne *umma* over the next 50 years, contributing at a level greater than many trained Muslim theologians. He would go on to play “an important role in organising Muslims, establishing the Islamic Society of Victoria, the Australian Federation of Islamic Council (AFIC) and a number of mosques.”⁹⁸

Melbourne had no mosque at this stage, just a Mohamedan Chapel at the Fawkner Cemetery, which had been erected in 1930.⁹⁹ The only option for the small, but growing *umma* was to “hold meetings and common gatherings in houses of educated Muslims or those who possessed knowledge of Islam.”¹⁰⁰ As highlighted by Imam Fehmi in the 1950s “Muslims did not have a centre, they did not have any Islamic building at the time, even at Eid we hire a hall.”¹⁰¹ As many of the new Muslim migrants were finding their feet, the pre-existing Albanian Muslim community were well off enough to establish its own ethnic mosque in Carlton in 1967.”¹⁰²

⁹⁶ Barney Porter, "Five Praise Allah in Fitzroy," *Argus*, 17 Jul 1950. 3.

⁹⁷ Yucel, *The Struggle of Ibrahim. Biography of an Australian Muslim*, 40-41.

⁹⁸ *ibid.*, 136.

⁹⁹ "Where Mourners Undress," *Weekly Times*, 19 Apr 1930. 15.

¹⁰⁰ Haveric, *Muslims Making Australia Home. Immigration and Community Building.*, 81.

¹⁰¹ Jones, "To Rebuild What Was Lost: The Post War Years and Beyond," 97.

¹⁰² Haveric, *Muslims Making Australia Home. Immigration and Community Building.*, 85.

By 1976, a multi-ethnic Melbourne *umma* had succeeded in constructing a new mosque in Preston, the Umar Ibn al-Khattab Mosque, replacing the old houses they had been using. Much of this was due to the work of “Bosnian and Arab Muslims”¹⁰³ and represented by inscriptions in both languages “over the front and back entrances.”¹⁰⁴ Despite a push by the Islamic Society of Victoria to create a multi-ethnic *umma*:

*Some representatives, like the Turkish Cypriots, particularly after the arrival of a large number of Turks in Melbourne, believed their ethnic community should form their ethnic organisation not only to preserve and promote Turkish ethnic identity, language and culture, but to assist these new non-English speaking arrival more effectively.*¹⁰⁵

From this point on, as new ethnic groups arrived, control of the various organisations would go to the dominant group. Over time this would see the creation of a range of ethnic Muslim organisations from a range of geographical locations such as Albania, Bosnia, Turkey, Egypt, Lebanon, and Pakistan. By the end of the 20th century, Melbourne would be home to mosques in Preston, Carlton, Footscray, Heidelberg, Coburg, Maidstone and Noble Park. During this era, Melbourne would eventually see the *umma* grow and be represented by around “thirty major self-governing ethnic Islamic organisations.”¹⁰⁶ Ultimately, this diversity would have an impact on the growth of intercultural and inter-religious dialogue as Australia moved into the 21st century.

7.4.2 Sydney

Despite a small but continual Muslim presence, and talks of a mosque as far back as 1895,¹⁰⁷ Sydney was bereft of a dedicated place for Muslims to worship. As in Adelaide and Perth, Sydney’s *umma* had significantly diminished with it being described in 1939 as, “a ghost of its former self.”¹⁰⁸ Like Melbourne, a surge in migration was experienced, including Muslims from Bosnia, Pakistan and India, and some early arrivals from Lebanon.

An example of the growing diversity of the Sydney *umma* was the 1958 observation of *Eid el-Adha*, held at the Irish National Hall in Surry Hills, which was attended by “350

¹⁰³ *ibid.*, 86.

¹⁰⁴ *ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ *ibid.*, 86-87.

¹⁰⁶ *ibid.*, 88.

¹⁰⁷ "Mosque for Sydney."

¹⁰⁸ "Allah Guides Sydney's Sad Moslems," *Sun*, 26 Nov 1939. 16.

participants, in national dress, including Pakistanis, Indians, Turks, Syrians, Egyptians, Lebanese, Indonesians and local Muslims and their friends.”¹⁰⁹ Similar gatherings had been, and would continue to be held at the residence of various international diplomats, notably the High Commissioner of Pakistan.¹¹⁰

Sydney acquired its first mosque “on the site of the present King Faisal Mosque”¹¹¹ in Surry Hills in a pair of adjacent terrace houses, in 1974, with a generous donation from King Faisal “the late ruler of oil-rich Saudi Arabia, which contributed much of the \$225,000.”¹¹² Sydney’s second mosque was created by the Turkish community in Erskineville in 1973 in an old church, “the first former church building to become a Mosque.”¹¹³ By this point, it was stated that Sydney’s Muslim community had grown to around 75,000,¹¹⁴ with a broad range of ethnic groups becoming settled, mirroring the Melbourne experience. Over the next 30 years, mosques would be constructed in Lakemba, Auburn, Rooty Hill, Marsden Park, Arncliffe, Bankstown, Blacktown, Bonnyrigg, Greenacre and Mount Druitt, amongst others.¹¹⁵ As these mosques were established, they provided crucial avenues for micro and meso-dialogue. Initiated by the Muslims, non-Muslims would have been engaged in dialogue during the planning and construction phases. Once completed, interested locals would have had some contact with the congregation. Eventually, open days would provide one of the best examples of dialogue between Muslims and non-Muslims, attempting to bring about some form of mutual understanding and social cohesion.

Each mosque represents a piece of the jigsaw puzzle that is Islam in Australia. In Melbourne, the Turkish diaspora established the “Fatih Mosque in Coburg in 1971,”¹¹⁶ the Albanians had a mosque in Carlton in 1967,¹¹⁷ with a “Lebanese Muslim community continued to be centred on Preston Mosque, while the Egyptian Muslim community became well established in Heidelberg.”¹¹⁸ The situation was similar in Sydney with different

¹⁰⁹ Phillip De Lacey, "Eid Ul Adha," *Tharunka*, 6 Aug 1958. 7.

¹¹⁰ Dzavid Haveric, *Bosnian Muslim in Australia: A Historical Overview* (Melbourne Vic: Graphic Zone, 1999), 38.

¹¹¹ *Muslims Making Australia Home. Immigration and Community Building.*, 138.

¹¹² Bill Myatt, "Old Sydney's Newest Mosque," *Australian Women's Weekly*, 1/11 1978.

¹¹³ Haveric, *Muslims Making Australia Home. Immigration and Community Building.*, 133.

¹¹⁴ Myatt, "Old Sydney's Newest Mosque." This figure is problematic as at the the 1981 census the total number of Muslims in Australia was 76,800.

¹¹⁵ "Masjids and Musallahs in Australia," www.islamiaonline.com, accessed 1 Dec 2020, <https://web.archive.org/web/20150329232707/http://www.islamiaonline.com/masjidfinder/>.

¹¹⁶ Cleland, *The Muslims in Australia: A Brief History.*, 77.

¹¹⁷ *ibid.*

¹¹⁸ Haveric, *Muslims Making Australia Home. Immigration and Community Building.*, 108.

ethnic groups establishing mosques along cultural lines. Once these groups had planted roots, dialogue could be established between the local communities, leading to the need for a body to represent all of them.

Additionally, the regional New South Wales cities of Wollongong and Newcastle also received Muslim migrants. They too required places of worship, and in the “1970s, the Bilal Mosque was built to cater for the majority of Turkish migrants around nearby Port Kembla,¹¹⁹ the site of much heavy industry and blue-collar employment. Wollongong’s current Omar Mosque has a rich Abrahamic history, initially created as a Synagogue, then becoming a Christian church and finally a mosque.¹²⁰ Similarly, Newcastle and Armidale also established mosques in this era as Muslim migration increased.¹²¹ Despite Sydney’s late start, “by the end of the 1990s, there were twenty-five mosques throughout Sydney (including some cultural centres which contained prayer halls).”¹²² As with the creation of Mosques in Melbourne, this would have required micro and meso-level dialogue with the local residents, councils and associated planning organisations.

7.5 The Path to Organised Dialogue in Australia

To first get the Christian churches to engage with others, some degree of ecumenical dialogue would aid future interfaith and inter-religious dialogue. For some participants, this had already commenced; in other cases, it would require a substantial change in viewpoint from the highest level. As the world continued to shrink with further improvements to international travel, the world’s great faiths came into contact with each other at rates never seen before. By the end of 2001, most of these groups would have some form of representation in Australia. Further, many of them would have organised themselves into groups or associations, some with sections dedicated to interfaith or interreligious dialogue to engage with all levels of society.

7.5.1 The creation of Muslim Societies

¹¹⁹ *ibid.*, 139.

¹²⁰ "Omar Mosque - About Us," Wollongong Islamic Society, accessed 2 Dec 2020, <http://www.omarmosque.org.au/who-we-are/>.

¹²¹ Haveric, *Muslims Making Australia Home. Immigration and Community Building.*, 139.

¹²² Kevin M. Dunn, "Repetitive and Troubling Discourses of Nationalism in the Local Politics of Mosque Development in Sydney, Australia," *Environment and planning. D, Society & space* 23, no. 1 (2005): 30.

Traditionally, it would appear that the West have viewed Islam as a monolithic. The lack of numbers and geographic diversity of Australia's Muslims did nothing to change this worldview. This can present several problems for organised dialogue, often raising the question; 'Who is the spokesperson for Islam?' The creation of local, state and national organisations to represent the multi-ethnic Muslim community was a paramount requirement to negotiate life in Australia. Mosque and local community groups had been present in Australia from the establishment of the early mosques; however, Australia's religious and ethnic landscape was changing. As mosques had been established, local councils were created to oversee and provide governance for the local *umma*. They also proved central in any micro or meso level dialogue in the community. As greater diversity in ethnicity among the new Australian Muslims grew, often creating new places of worship, so did the number of councils. Greater unity or intra-faith dialogue between the differing 'sects' would allow interfaith dialogue at a more developed level. Added to this greater diversity were the Australian born Muslims' and their growing participation in dialogue that helped to accelerate this process. This would be due to greater English language proficiency that helped to further empower them. In many cases, they would be more self-confident than their parents, and provide some kind of catalyst, as culturally speaking these Muslims belong to Australia rather than their family's place of origin.

The first of the state-based organisations appear to have been established in 1949 in Perth, with the creation of the Muslim Society of Western Australia.¹²³ Despite some sectarian disagreements described earlier, it was a forerunner of the changes to come. In 1952, South Australian Alija Yatic placed an announcement in the Advertiser, seeking to establish an Islamic Society of SA.¹²⁴ By 1955, a not for profit society had been formed,¹²⁵ enabling the different ethnic groups to have a singular effective voice.

Locally in Victoria, Muslims in Shepparton established the Albanian Muslim Society in 1953,¹²⁶ establishing Victoria's first mosque in 1960.

¹²³ "Public Notice," *Sunday Times*, 24 Jul 1949. 21.

¹²⁴ Alija Yatic, "Announcement to All Moslem Residents in S.A.," *Advertiser*, 1 Nov 1952. 8.

¹²⁵ "Islamic Society of South Australia: History," accessed 6 Oct 2020, <http://islamicsocietysa.org.au/about-us/history/>.

¹²⁶ Haveric, *Muslims Making Australia Home. Immigration and Community Building.*, 80.

In Melbourne:

In 1957, a small group of Muslims formed the Islamic Society in Victoria (ISV). The first president of the ISV was an Albanian Muslim named Dervish. The members of this society were European Muslims from Albania, Bosnia (Yugoslavia) and Cyprus.¹²⁷

Likewise, in 1959 the Islamic Society of Queensland was formed,¹²⁸ initially consisting of the various bodies that had been formed, including; the Islamic Societies of Holland Park, West End, Lutwyche, Darra, Mareeba, Cairns and Mackay. In Western Australia, the Islamic Council of Western Australia (ICWA) was “established in 1976 and incorporated as a State Council for Islamic affairs in 1977.”¹²⁹ Furthermore, in 1984, “out of the necessity for united Muslim representation for the growing Islamic community in Queensland,” the Islamic Council of Queensland was established.

At a national level, in 1964 the Australian Federation of Islamic Societies (AFIS) was formed,¹³⁰ and:

By 1976 the community had grown considerably and the leaders decided to set up a three-tier structure of local Islamic societies at grass roots level, State Islamic Councils as state umbrella bodies and a federal body to be named the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils (AFIC). This structure provides for an inclusive organization that represent the diverse Muslim communities of the time and the future.¹³¹

Established to provide an occasional unified voice, they are removed from day-to-day activities within the member societies or mosques. A critical inclusion in the object and purpose of the AFIC is: “To stimulate interest in and appreciation of Islamic way of life.”¹³²

This is the locus of institutional level dialogue; for example, the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils meets regularly with the

¹²⁷ "Muslim Minorities in Victoria: Building Communities and Interfaith Relations from the 1950's to the 1980's."

¹²⁸ Ally, *100 Years of History. Holland Park Mosque 1908-2008*, 34.

¹²⁹ Islamic Council of Western Australia, "Who Are We?," accessed 6 Oct 2020, <https://www.islamiccouncilwa.com.au/about/who-is-icwa>.

¹³⁰ Haveric, *Muslims Making Australia Home. Immigration and Community Building.*, 30-36.

¹³¹ Australian Federation of Islamic Councils, "Who We Are – AFIC," Australian Federation of Islamic Councils, accessed 13 Nov 2020, <https://www.afic.com.au/who-we-are/>.

¹³² "The Constitution of the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils," (Sydney, NSW2011), 4.

*National Council of Churches (NCC) of Australia, and, at the state level, the Islamic Council of Victoria is similarly in dialogue with the Victorian Council of Churches. At a national level, the AFIC, the NCC of Australia and the Executive Council of Australian Jewry constitute the Australian National Dialogue of Christians, Muslims and Jews, founded in 2002.*¹³³

Once the migration levels of Muslims increased, coupled with the already existing associations and societies, there was at least some modicum of support on offer for new arrivals. Some of the Muslims who came to Australia as part of the post-war migration era also began the process of fitting into Australia. By 1973, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade was reporting “that there were about 55 Islamic societies in Australia,”¹³⁴ demonstrating the depth and breadth of the Muslim community in Australia.

Ibrahim Dellal (1932-2018) arrived in Australia in 1950 from Cyprus. Educated and multilingual, he soon became engaged in interfaith dialogue, commencing at the usual micro level. Dellal’s household was multicultural, his wife, Sheila Chapman, was once described as “a polite, well-mannered, and honest Irish girl.”¹³⁵ His work extended into the local and national community, and:

*He played an important role in establishing the Cypriot-Turkish Society in 1956, Islamic Society of Victoria in 1957, Preston Mosque in 1963, Australian Federation of Islamic Societies in 1964, Coburg Mosque in 1971, Australian Federation of Islamic Councils in 1976 and Selimiye Foundation in 1991, the last of which established six schools and Sunshine Mosque in 2001.*¹³⁶

In 2006 he was awarded an Order of Australia for “his service to the Islamic and Turkish communities of Australia, particularly through the establishment of educational facilities and settlement programs for immigrants, and the promotion of interfaith dialogue.”¹³⁷

¹³³ Keely, "Beginning Christian–Muslim Dialogue in Western Sydney: Context and Practice," 476.

¹³⁴ Brian D Hawkins. "Islam in the Modern World." edited by Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade, 223-25. Canberra, ACT: Australian Govt. Pub, 1973.

¹³⁵ *The Struggle of Ibrahim. Biography of an Australian Muslim*, 161

¹³⁶ Salih Yucel, "Sayyid Ibrahim Dellal: An Analysis of Untold Stories of a 'Living History'," *Australian Journal of Islamic Studies* 3,3 (2018).

¹³⁷ *The Struggle of Ibrahim. Biography of an Australian Muslim*, 161.

In 1971 Professor Qazi Ashfaq Ahmad migrated to Australia, settling in Sydney.¹³⁸

Before his arrival, Dr Ahmad did not know much about Australia but was amazed at how well he was treated by Australians and came to love Australia developing great friendships with fellow Australians and accepted to take up Australian citizenship in 1973 together with all his family members.¹³⁹

Within a few short years, he would be involved in establishing the Australian Islamic Mission in 1972 as founding secretary and founding President of the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils in 1976/7.¹⁴⁰ Over time he would be involved in a range of other associations, including an extended period as an “Assembly Member [on the] Council of Parliament of World Religions.”¹⁴¹ He too would be recognised for his services to the community, including interfaith dialogue, “receiving the Centenary Medal in 2001 for services to the community.”¹⁴²

These are just two of the many stories that exist in the Australian Muslims community, many yet to be fully recorded. In both instances, it would appear that a balance was found between complete assimilation and the maintenance of beliefs, all the while coupled with growing levels of dialogue. Both started with internal dialogue and over time, moved into the realm of interfaith dialogue.

Muslim Student Association of Queensland

Whilst not established for purely interfaith reasons, the formation of the Muslim Student Association of Queensland in 1964¹⁴³ was somewhat of a watershed event. Given the influx of Colombo Plan students from Indonesia and South East Asia, many of them Muslims, it would mark the beginning of a series of student-led associations that would be created around the country. It has been stated:

¹³⁸ Zia Ahmad, "Life and Achievements of Dr Qazi Ashfaq Ahmad," Australian Muslim Times, accessed 12 Dec 2020, <https://www.amust.com.au/2020/02/life-and-achievements-of-dr-qazi-ashfaq-ahmad/>.

¹³⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁴⁰ Cleland, *The Muslims in Australia: A Brief History.*, 78.

¹⁴¹ Ahmad, "Life and Achievements of Dr Qazi Ashfaq Ahmad".

¹⁴² Manar Ahmad, "Qazi Ashfaq Ahmad," Immigration Place Australia, accessed 10 Dec 2020, <https://immigrationplace.com.au/story/qazi-ashfaq-ahmad/>.

¹⁴³ Ally, *100 Years of History. Holland Park Mosque 1908-2008*, 29.

*that their ground-breaking efforts would have an indelible effect on the course of the Muslim youth movement and subsequently the positive development of the Australian Muslim identity and community.*¹⁴⁴

Given the broad range of students co-existing across the many Australian campuses, intra and interfaith dialogue would have initially occurred at the necessary or micro-level. Christian or secular students would have come into contact with the Muslim students in what appeared to be a safe and questioning place. This allowed some positive meso-level dialogue to commence in an environment that valued questioning and knowledge, before the polemic attacks, anti-Muslim rhetoric and barriers that occurred in the last two decades of the century.

7.6 The Religious response to dialogue

7.6.1 Ecumenical Dialogue

In Australia, at the beginning of this era, Christianity was the dominant faith, with around 6.5 million Christians. Some of the sectarian divisions continued to exist into the second half of the 20th century.

*The division between Catholic and Protestant remained significant, but the pursed lip silence of the old social accommodation had been broken. The Catholic minority was encouraged to examine its own cultural identity more openly and critically, and with less pressure to maintain traditional solidarity.*¹⁴⁵

For Christian Australia, the order of the day would initially be ecumenism, i.e., dialogue between the Christian churches. From the Protestant perspective, this process had begun in Edinburgh in 1910 during the Missionary Conference.¹⁴⁶ Ecumenism was further enshrined into much of the Protestant worldview during 1948 at the First Assembly of the World Council of Churches.¹⁴⁷ The Eastern Christian Churches were also active in the attempts to

¹⁴⁴ Ansari, "The Muslim Student Associations (MSAS) and the Formation of the Australian Ummah," 102.

¹⁴⁵ Rickard, *Australia: A Cultural History*, 218.

¹⁴⁶ Gerard Kelly, "Catholic and Protestant Relations and Dialogues," in *Catholics and Catholicism in Contemporary Australia*, ed. Abe Ata (Melbourne, Vic: David Lovell Publishing, 2012), 69.

¹⁴⁷ *ibid.*, 70.

encourage ecumenism. In 1920 an Encyclical was issued from the (Orthodox) Synod of Constantinople suggesting a "fellowship of churches" similar to the League of Nations."¹⁴⁸

In Australia, the diversity of Christian Churches is best indicated in the following extract from the 1947 Census returns, showing 23 distinct Christian denominations, as well as "Other Christians." Even before the Great Schism of 1053/4 and the Protestant Reformation in the 16th century, division has existed regarding various issues, albeit from members of the same broad church.

| RELIGION. | New South Wales. | Victoria. | Queensland. | South Australia. | Western Australia. | Tasmania. | Northern Territory. | Australian Capital Territory. | AUSTRALIA. | | | |
|---|------------------|-----------|-------------|------------------|--------------------|-----------|---------------------|-------------------------------|------------|---------------|-----------|--|
| | | | | | | | | | Tropical. | Non-Tropical. | Total. | |
| CHRISTIAN. | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Australian Church .. | 275 | 157 | 44 | .. | 14 | .. | 1 | 6 | 9 | 488 | 497 | |
| Baptist .. | 34,935 | 32,020 | 16,389 | 18,431 | 6,097 | 5,374 | 86 | 185 | 1,739 | 111,788 | 113,527 | |
| Brethren .. | 4,401 | 2,584 | 3,166 | 374 | 612 | 1,839 | 8 | 18 | 274 | 12,728 | 13,002 | |
| Catholic, Apostolic .. | 239 | 266 | 163 | 14 | 26 | 9 | .. | 3 | 7 | 713 | 720 | |
| Catholic, Greek .. | 7,226 | 2,788 | 3,036 | 1,527 | 2,267 | 43 | 74 | 51 | 1,088 | 15,924 | 17,012 | |
| Catholic, Roman (a) .. | 268,496 | 131,377 | 119,855 | 25,363 | 43,614 | 20,285 | 1,991 | 2,205 | 37,839 | 575,347 | 613,186 | |
| Catholic (a) .. | 408,497 | 285,496 | 132,097 | 55,627 | 52,608 | 19,559 | 508 | 2,148 | 36,645 | 919,895 | 956,540 | |
| Church of Christ .. | 10,269 | 29,722 | 5,717 | 16,877 | 7,043 | 2,039 | 55 | 49 | 667 | 71,104 | 71,771 | |
| Church of England .. | 1,293,964 | 729,902 | 388,621 | 188,151 | 222,457 | 123,158 | 3,688 | 7,991 | 92,972 | 2,864,060 | 2,957,032 | |
| Christadelphian .. | 2,004 | 932 | 1,137 | 722 | 165 | 52 | 4 | 3 | 96 | 4,923 | 5,019 | |
| Christian Scientist .. | 5,389 | 3,101 | 1,199 | 405 | 1,042 | 217 | 2 | 34 | 78 | 11,311 | 11,389 | |
| Congregational .. | 19,331 | 11,374 | 8,546 | 13,916 | 5,950 | 4,007 | 47 | 72 | 458 | 62,785 | 63,243 | |
| Letter Day Saints .. | 2,097 | 529 | 436 | 151 | 115 | 168 | 3 | .. | 9 | 3,490 | 3,499 | |
| Lutheran .. | 5,915 | 10,002 | 21,244 | 28,713 | 841 | 57 | 101 | 18 | 893 | 65,998 | 66,891 | |
| Methodist .. | 246,876 | 234,595 | 124,322 | 170,513 | 59,194 | 33,358 | 1,211 | 1,356 | 27,355 | 844,070 | 871,425 | |
| New Church .. | 51 | 77 | 37 | 45 | 35 | .. | 1 | .. | 5 | 241 | 246 | |
| Presbyterian .. | 262,166 | 288,383 | 121,604 | 24,304 | 31,809 | 12,644 | 686 | 1,944 | 28,050 | 715,490 | 743,540 | |
| Protestant, Undefined | 21,084 | 27,273 | 9,543 | 8,809 | 4,757 | 1,661 | 74 | 69 | 1,526 | 71,744 | 73,270 | |
| Quaker .. | 223 | 160 | 106 | 97 | 99 | 168 | .. | 4 | 36 | 821 | 857 | |
| Salvation Army .. | 10,871 | 10,984 | 5,734 | 5,130 | 3,200 | 1,612 | 15 | 26 | 1,342 | 36,230 | 37,572 | |
| Seventh Day Adventist | 7,157 | 3,276 | 2,808 | 1,269 | 2,072 | 960 | 6 | 2 | 871 | 16,679 | 17,550 | |
| Swedenborgian .. | 19 | 6 | 14 | 2 | 4 | 1 | .. | 1 | 1 | 46 | 47 | |
| Unitarian .. | 308 | 1,045 | 31 | 333 | 64 | 34 | 7 | 2 | 12 | 1,812 | 1,824 | |
| Other Christian (in- cluding Christian, Undefined) .. | 10,375 | 6,993 | 9,468 | 2,596 | 2,777 | 970 | 67 | 31 | 1,888 | 31,389 | 33,277 | |
| Total, Christian .. | 2,622,168 | 1,813,042 | 975,327 | 563,360 | 446,862 | 228,215 | 8,635 | 15,318 | 233,860 | 6,439,076 | 6,672,936 | |

Figure 41 Christian denominations in Australia, 1947

In 1947 the Protestant Church of England represented the largest belief system. Catholicism closely followed it, and as previously mentioned, there were some pre-existing tensions between these groups. For the Catholics, there was a further encumbrance, namely the Papal position on interfaith dialogue and relationships between the Catholic Church and both Judaism and Islam. Prior to the Second Vatican Council, Catholics were "forbidden to participate in ecumenical gatherings."¹⁴⁹ This point had been reinforced by Pope Pius XI, whose 1928 Encyclical, *Mortalium Animos*, described ecumenical gathering as an assembly "at which a large number of listeners are present, and at which all without distinction are invited to join in the discussion, both infidels of every kind, and Christians, even those who have unhappily fallen away from Christ or who with obstinacy and

¹⁴⁸ Tamara Grdzeldze, *Orthodoxy and Ecumenism*, ed. John M Anthony, The Encyclopedia of Eastern Orthodox Christianity (Wiley Blackwell, 2011), 211.

¹⁴⁹ Kelly, "Catholic and Protestant Relations and Dialogues," 70.

pertinacity deny His divine nature and mission.”¹⁵⁰ He then stated that “it is clear why this Apostolic See has never allowed its subjects to take part in the assemblies of non-Catholics: for the union of Christians can only be promoted by promoting the return to the one true Church of Christ of those who are separated from it, for in the past they have unhappily left it.”¹⁵¹ This would stand as an impediment to any form of interfaith or ecumenical dialogue until the 1960s

In 1938, just prior to World War II, “Leaders representing more than 100 churches voted in 1937-38 to found a World Council of Churches, but its inauguration was delayed with the outbreak of World War II.”¹⁵² Following the end of hostilities, 147 member churches sent representatives to the First Assembly of the World Council of Churches (WCC) in 1948.¹⁵³ As an ecumenical organisation, member organisations agree that “The World Council of Churches is a fellowship of churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the scriptures and therefore seek to fulfil together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.”¹⁵⁴ Whilst this limits membership and dialogue to Christians, over time discussion have taken place around interfaith and inter-religious dialogue, notably increasing as a need arose post 9/11.

As the various Christian churches promulgated the concept of ecumenism, ideas filtered back to Australia with the formation in 1946 of the “Australian Council of Churches which, in 1994, became the National Council of Churches in Australia.”¹⁵⁵ By the end of the 20th century, Australia had a range of state-based ecumenical organisations in addition to the national organisation. Whilst not interfaith in nature, the coming together of the Christian churches meant that there was a series of cooperative bodies who could come to the table when inter-religious dialogue became an imperative. Having said that, like many things, there was not a unified approach or a shared imperative to the issue of inter-religious dialogue amongst the Christian denominations.

¹⁵⁰ Pope Pius XI, "Mortalium Animos. Encyclical of Pope Pius XI on Religious Unity," (1928).

¹⁵¹ *ibid.*

¹⁵² World Council of Churches, "History," accessed 21 Nov 2020, <https://www.oikoumene.org/about-the-wcc/history>.

¹⁵³ *ibid.*

¹⁵⁴ World Council of Churches, "Constitution and Rules of the World Council of Churches," (Switzerland: WCC, 2006). Clause 1.3

¹⁵⁵ NCCA, "NCCA Story Churches Working Together," The National Council of Churches in Australia, accessed 10 Oct 2020, <https://www.ncca.org.au/about/story>.

In Victoria, the state-based Victorian Council of Churches, an ecumenical organisation, established a “Christian-Muslim dialogue group [that] met regularly between 1974 and 1982.”¹⁵⁶ The discussions began organically and developed from there.

*The work of the [Christian-Muslim dialogue] group has shifted its emphasis to a common task or project, from general 'chit chat'. Prior to embarkation on this project, the dialogue was spent in a haphazard discussion that incorporated the daily issues that impinged on the life of both parties represented. Sometimes this caught up current affairs, health issues, human rights difficulties, as well as social awareness issues. It varied according to the current involvement in issues by representatives' present, publicity received by Muslims and /or Christians in the press, and in one or two cases, directed by the VCC Executive or member bodies, delicate issues were probed.*¹⁵⁷

Ultimately, the momentum for this Christian-Muslim group was not sustainable as an independent commission, being replaced by the Commission on Living faiths, Community and Dialogue.¹⁵⁸

7.6.2 Inter-religious dialogue

During this era, there were significant paradigm shifts concerning the political situation in the Middle East, influenced by the West. This included a rise in materialism and secularism, and when combined with the conflict between the competing models of secular democracy and some form of socialism or Marxism, often meaning religion was sidelined.¹⁵⁹

In such circumstances the call for dialogue by the Christian Churches, especially from the West, was a very attractive option. They saw the Churches as an ally in their fight against materialism and socialism on one hand, and injustice of any kind on the other. Furthermore, the newly-created Muslim states were independent as well as being on an equal footing with other nations in international political fora, e.g. the United Nations. Therefore, dialogue between the Churches and Muslims was a dialogue of 'common cause' between 'equals'. Thus, at the first 'Muslim-

¹⁵⁶ Mary Leonora Moorhead, *Journey Begun Destination Unsighted: The Ecumenical Movement in the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne, 1960-1990* (Melbourne, VIC: David Lovell Publishing, 1991), 81.

¹⁵⁷ Report to the VCC of the 'Christian-Muslim Dialogue' (July 1982) in *ibid.*

¹⁵⁸ "Commissions," Victorian Council of Churches, accessed 20 Nov 2020,

<http://www.vcc.org.au/what-we-do/commissions>.

¹⁵⁹ Siddiqui, *Christian-Muslim Dialogue in the Twentieth Century*, 20.

*Christian Convocation' in Bhamdoun (Lebanon, 22-27 April, 1954) they participated in both its preparatory meetings and in the Convocation.*¹⁶⁰

This Convocation marks the first organised attempt in this era to create macro-level dialogue, between Christians and Muslims. Held in Bhamdoun, Lebanon, it," is sometimes praised as the first step to Muslim-Christian dialogue in modern history."¹⁶¹ One observer noted:

*There was a lack of freedom of discussion at first, but on Friday, the Muslim delegates invited the Christians to a service of worship in their finest spiritual tradition in which both Christians and Muslims participated in worship and prayer - an unusual and most moving experience. Then, on Sunday, an Episcopal Bishop led the Christian service of worship in which the Muslims worshipped and prayed together with the Christians. From that time on, the discussions seemed to be freer and easier, for here, without articulate expression of rational concepts, followers of two great monotheistic faiths were brought together in spirit to face a common intellectual responsibility.*¹⁶²

What marks it as significant for this research is the presence of an Australian, the Rev Allan Walker, whose participation was reported in the media.¹⁶³ Walker was a Methodist Minister who later went on to feature in one of the first religious television shows and founded Lifeline in 1963. During the 1954 convocation he delivered a speech entitled 'Are we living up to our spiritual assets?' which he felt lifted the meeting "to a new plane and brought him into a brotherly relationship with at least some Muslims."¹⁶⁴ Among the conclusions agreed upon by the majority was the statement that "under God, we will work unceasingly with mutual confidence and regard for the rights of others to promote understanding and brotherliness between the adherents of Islam and Christianity."¹⁶⁵ Whilst this concept may have travelled back to Australia with Walker, the message would become lost as his mission

¹⁶⁰ *ibid.*

¹⁶¹ Thomas Scheffler, "Interreligious Dialogue and Cultural Diplomacy in the Middle East," in *10th annual congress of DAVO (Deutsche Arbeitsgemeinschaft Vorderer Orient* (Hamburg, Germany 2003), 7.

¹⁶² Hurst R. Anderson, "Peace and the Middle East," *World Affairs* 117, no. 4 (1954): 106.

¹⁶³ "Church Meeting in East."

¹⁶⁴ D. I. Wright, *Alan Walker : Conscience of the Nation*, ed. Alan Walker (Adelaide: Openbook, 1997), 84.

¹⁶⁵ Anderson, "Peace and the Middle East," 107.

was more evangelical and promotional, primarily through his role as Principal of the Pacific College of Evangelism in Sydney.¹⁶⁶

7.6.3 The (Western) Catholic Church

In 1947, the Catholic Church in Australia accounted for 1,569,726 followers, representing the second-largest denomination within the Christian traditions. As outlined above, traditionally, the only dialogue with other believers involved urging them to “recognise the one true Church of Jesus Christ,”¹⁶⁷ and convert and become Catholic. Before any complete ecumenical or interfaith dialogue could proceed that included a Catholic voice, some form of directive was required. To address the need for dialogue, the Second Vatican Council in 1965 issued its Declaration on the Relation of the Church with Non-Christian Religions, *Nostra Aetate*. This change in attitudes is best summed up by Wayne Teasdale, who wrote:

*This statement is extraordinarily revolutionary for a number of reasons. It acknowledges for the first time in history that truth exists in the other religions, though the Catholic Church had known this about Judaism, particularly in the biblical tradition. It expresses respect for these truths found in the religions, their moral or ethical precepts and other teachings, and, of course, these venerable faiths themselves.*¹⁶⁸

It addressed both the Jews and the Muslims specifically, as “the descendants of Abraham,”¹⁶⁹ and formed part of an ongoing paradigm shift to “address a distorted image of the Jews and their religion.”¹⁷⁰ With regards to the Muslims:

The Church regards with esteem also the Moslems. They adore the one God, living and subsisting in Himself; merciful and all-powerful, the Creator of heaven and earth, who has spoken to men; they take pains to submit wholeheartedly to even His inscrutable decrees, just as Abraham, with whom the faith of Islam takes pleasure in linking itself, submitted to God. Though they do not acknowledge Jesus as God, they revere Him as a prophet. They also honor Mary, His virgin Mother; at times they even call on her with devotion. In addition, they await the Day of Judgment

¹⁶⁶ Rev. H. Eddie Fox, "Sir Alan Walker, World Methodist Evangelist, Dies at 91," news release, 2003, <https://web.archive.org/web/20050416074913/http://www.wfn.org/2003/01/msg00245.html>.

¹⁶⁷ Pope Pius XI, "Mortalium Animos. Encyclical of Pope Pius XI on Religious Unity."

¹⁶⁸ Wayne Teasdale, *Catholicism in Dialogue : Conversations across Traditions*, (ProQuest Ebook Central: Sheed & Ward, 2004), <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/acu/detail.action?docID=1342731>. 18.

¹⁶⁹ NA 4

¹⁷⁰ Raymond Canning, "Nostra Aetate (1965): Historical Genesis, Key Elements, and Reception by the Church in Australia," *The Australasian Catholic Record* 93,4 (2016): 392.

*when God will render their deserts to all those who have been raised up from the dead. Finally, they value the moral life and worship God especially through prayer, almsgiving and fasting.*¹⁷¹

Furthermore, the statement then went on to address past issues with a plea for all parties to move forwards.

Since in the course of centuries not a few quarrels and hostilities have arisen between Christians and Moslems, this sacred synod urges all to forget the past and to work sincerely for mutual understanding and to preserve as well as to promote together for the benefit of all mankind social justice and moral welfare, as well as peace and freedom.

This marked a decided change in the thought and teaching of the Catholic Church. The impact was to steer a path towards greater inter-religious dialogue and “however small it may have appeared at the time, continues to resonate more than fifty years later.”¹⁷² Although Australian Catholics seemed slow to embrace the change, organisations such as the Columban Mission took to driving inter-religious dialogue forward over time.¹⁷³

Importantly, in 1964, just before the Declaration *Nostra Aetate*, Pope Paul VI created the Secretariat for Non-Christians. It was renamed the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue by Pope John Paul II in 1988.¹⁷⁴ The nature and goals included;

- to promote mutual understanding, respect and collaboration between Catholics and the followers of others religious traditions;
- to encourage the study of religions;
- to promote the formation of persons dedicated to dialogue.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷¹ Pope Paul VI, "Nostra Aetate".

¹⁷² Canning, "Nostra Aetate (1965): Historical Genesis, Key Elements, and Reception by the Church in Australia," 388.

¹⁷³ Patrick McInerney, "History," Centre for Christian-Muslim Relations (Sydney, NSW: Columban Mission Institute, 2004).

¹⁷⁴ Vatican.va, "The Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue," in *"Progrediente Concilio" (in Italian)* (Libreria Editrice Vaticana 1964).

¹⁷⁵ *ibid.*

The Council also established a methodology outlining the two-way nature of dialogue, importantly stating that dialogue, ‘is not a betrayal of the mission of the Church, nor is it a new method of conversion to Christianity.’¹⁷⁶

By 1966, the number of Catholics had almost doubled from the 1947 figures, and around 26% of Australians identified as Catholic. This shift in direction by the church allowed them to engage with the other religions formally. While Gerard Hall has stated that “Australian Catholics are fortunate to have a church that is highly committed to interfaith dialogue.”¹⁷⁷ This commitment was not immediate, as Gerard Kelly noted.

*The Declaration on the Catholic Church's Relations with Non-Christian Religions probably did not have much impact in Australia at the time it was promulgated. However, things have changed, due in large part to the changing population in Australia.*¹⁷⁸

Before inter-faith dialogue could gain traction within the Catholic Church, some engagement in ecumenism was probably required. It would be 1994 before the Catholic Church in Australia became a full member of the peak ecumenical body, the National Council of Churches in Australia (NCCA).¹⁷⁹

In the last few decades of the millennium, organised interfaith dialogue began to coalesce. Following the declaration of *Nostra Aetate*, in 1967 “Archbishop James Knox established the Ecumenical Affairs Commission of the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne,”¹⁸⁰ and in the same year, the Anglican Church established their Ecumenical Commission. Over time both of these commissions would be enlarged to include an inter-religious component, many of them at the turn of the millennium.

Additionally, in 1984 the Catholic Church delineated four forms of dialogue; life, action, theological exchange and spiritual experience,¹⁸¹ which provided a continuum of dialogue, from the layperson through to the trained theologian and those willing to, “share their

¹⁷⁶ ibid.

¹⁷⁷ Hall, "Interfaith Dialogue: The Australian Catholic Scene," 56.

¹⁷⁸ Kelly, "The Impact of the Second Vatican Council," 147.

¹⁷⁹ NCCA, "NCCA Story Churches Working Together".

¹⁸⁰ Ecumenical & Interfaith Commission, "History".

¹⁸¹ Secretariat for Non-Christians, "The Attitude of the Church toward Followers of Other Religions : Reflections and Orientations on Dialogue and Mission," in *Bulletin: Secretariatus pro non Christianis* (Vatican City 1984), 11-14.

experiences of prayer, contemplation, faith, and duty, as well as their expressions and ways of searching for the Absolute.”¹⁸²

Pope John Paul II (1978-2005)

At a global level, the direction of Catholic dialogue was shifting. Pope John Paul II (1920-2005) “readily embraced Paul VI’s commitment to dialogue and quickly expanded the Church’s interreligious outreach.”¹⁸³ It has been stated, “that nobody has had a more positive impact on the importance of interreligious dialogue at the heart of the Church’s life and mission than John Paul II.”¹⁸⁴ Leading by example from the first day of his papacy, he welcomed and embraced the full range of beliefs, issuing a “missionary encyclical,¹⁸⁵ [for which] he explicitly recognizes that inter-religious dialogue is an integral element of the Church’s evangelizing mission.”¹⁸⁶ This included all of the Abrahamic faiths, as well as Buddhists, Hindus, Indigenous Religions and others.¹⁸⁷ Importantly, for the purpose of this research, he was responsible for many Catholic-Muslim initiatives, in both the Middle East and globally. Additionally, in 2001, Pope John Paul II issued “a formal apology to the indigenous peoples of Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Islands for injustices perpetrated against them by the Church.”¹⁸⁸

7.6.4 The Anglican Church

As early starters in the field of ecumenism and interfaith dialogue, some of the Protestant churches may have had a head start; as many “Protestant bodies in America and elsewhere had already made statements of a similar nature [to *Nostra Aetate*]. The earliest of these statements go back to the years just following World War II.”¹⁸⁹ Despite this, and especially in the Australian Anglican context, the initial post-war focus was one of ecumenism and the evangelical aspect of church life. Douglass Pratt noted that “there lies a century of Anglican engagement in interfaith activities which, after a slow beginning, gathered a

¹⁸² *ibid.*, 13-14.

¹⁸³ Paul McKenna, "Pope John Paul II—Interfaith Giant," Scarboro Missions, accessed 14 Oct 2020, <https://www.scarboromissions.ca/interfaith-dialogue/the-church-dialogue/pope-john-paul-ii-interfaith-giant>.

¹⁸⁴ Gerard Hall, "Conversing with Others," *Compass (Kensington, N.S.W.)* 43, no. 1 (2009): 4.

¹⁸⁵ Pope John Paul II, "Redemptoris Missio," (1990).

¹⁸⁶ Hall, "Conversing with Others," 4.

¹⁸⁷ McKenna, "Pope John Paul II—Interfaith Giant".

¹⁸⁸ *ibid.*

¹⁸⁹ Sherman Franklin, "Protestant Parallels to *Nostra Aetate*," *Studies in Christian-Jewish relations* 10, no. 2 (2015).

forceful momentum during the latter part of the 20th century.”¹⁹⁰ Despite many discussions, commencing in Edinburgh in 1910, by the 1950s, the Anglican Church was “rather more focused on evangelical mission; dialogical engagement with other faiths was not yet a feature of Church life.”¹⁹¹ It would take the declaration of *Nostra Aetate* as well as, “another Vatican II document, *Lumen Gentium*, the salvific validity of other faiths,”¹⁹² as “factors that fed the growing engagement of the Anglican Church in the interfaith journey.”¹⁹³ In 1968, at the Lambeth Conference, “dialogue with these [other] faiths is affirmed theologically, for Christians must be prepared to listen and learn.”¹⁹⁴ It was not until 1978 that the “first substantial theological statement of an Anglican approach to people of other faiths”¹⁹⁵ was codified in “Resolution 37, ‘Other Faiths: Gospel and Dialogue’ from the report of the Lambeth Conference.”¹⁹⁶

Despite this overarching view of the international Anglican leadership, local events in Melbourne would lead the move towards organised dialogue, beginning with micro-level dialogue in an intimate personal setting. According to Anna Halafoff:

*The first formal attempts at multifaith dialogue occurred in Melbourne in the 1960s. Anglican Archbishop Frank Woods began inviting diverse faith leaders to meet for a meal and discussion at his home, Bishops court.*¹⁹⁷

By 1986, the Anglican Church were dealing with a range of issues, including the role of women, an understanding of what constitutes a family as well as “its relationship with other faiths.”¹⁹⁸ The secretary-general of the Anglican Consultative Council, Canon Samuel Van Culin, stated that:

The development of an inter-faith dialogue would help in the understanding of what was happening both to the Christian Church and

¹⁹⁰ Pratt, "From Edinburgh to Georgetown: Anglican Interfaith Bridge-Building," 2.

¹⁹¹ *ibid.*, 18.

¹⁹² *ibid.*, 20.

¹⁹³ *ibid.*

¹⁹⁴ *ibid.*

¹⁹⁵ *ibid.*, 21.

¹⁹⁶ *ibid.*

¹⁹⁷ Halafoff, "Muslim Participation in Multifaith Initiatives in Victoria," 117.

¹⁹⁸ Graham Downie, "Church Tries to Live with Diversity," *Canberra Times*, 15 Oct 1986. 22.

*to the non-Christian religious community; it would especially help in the understanding of the missionary work of the church.*¹⁹⁹

As a leading figure in the worldwide Anglican movement, Canon Van Culin, appears to be looking to the Church to understand better how his church can better adapt to, and become a significant player regarding interfaith dialogue.

In 1988, again at the Lambeth Conference, the Anglican Church released one of the more influential edicts surrounding interfaith relations entitled, “Jews, Christians and Muslims: The Way of Dialogue.”²⁰⁰ This document outlined that:

*Whilst dialogue with all faiths is highly desirable, we recognise a special relationship between Christianity, Judaism and Islam. All three of these religions see themselves in a common relationship to Abraham, the father of the faithful, the friend of God. Moreover these faiths, which at times have been fiercely antagonistic to one another, have a particular responsibility for bringing about a fresh, constructive relationship which can contribute to the well-being of the human family, and the peace of the world, particularly in the Middle East. Dialogue is the work of patient love and an expression of the ministry of reconciliation. It involves understanding, affirmation and sharing.*²⁰¹

At an international level, relationships and dialogue were commencing between the Anglican Church and sections of the Muslim world. Led by a drive from the Permanent Committee of al-Azhar for Dialogue with the Monotheistic Religions in Cairo, lecture visits between the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Grand Mufti occurred “between 1995 and 1999.”²⁰² While all of this was being driven by the broader international Anglican Church, in Australia much of the impetus seemed to have gone by the way. It would not be until the new century and the disastrous events of 9/11 that would reinvigorate the Anglican approach to interfaith dialogue.

¹⁹⁹ *ibid.*

²⁰⁰ Anglican Communion Office, "Appendix 6. Jews, Christians and Muslims the Way of Dialogue," (1988).

²⁰¹ *ibid.*, 1.

²⁰² "An Agreement for Dialogue between the Anglican Communion and Al-Azhar Al-Sharif," (<https://www.anglicancommunion.org/media/111577/An-agreement-for-dialogue-between-the-Anglican-Communion-and-al-Azhar-al-Sharif.pdf2002>).

7.6.5 The Uniting Church

As a result of ecumenical dialogue, the Uniting Church came into being in 1977, “after three denominations - Congregational Union in Australia, the Methodist Church of Australasia, and the Presbyterian Church of Australia - joined together.”²⁰³ As a newly created Christian denomination, founded at the time of the adoption of Australia’s national policy of multiculturalism, the Uniting Church was reasonably prompt in its adoption of the principles of interfaith dialogue.

*In 1985 the Uniting Church declared itself a multicultural church ‘acknowledging the changed and changing multicultural and multi-faith context of life and ministry in Australia and the presence of people from culturally diverse backgrounds in its membership’. In recognising the importance of interfaith relationships and the role of faith in creating and sustaining communities of peace, the Uniting Church Assembly established the Working Group on Relations with Other Faiths in 1989.*²⁰⁴

Over the course of the next few years, the Uniting Church would develop a range of guides for practitioners²⁰⁵ including, *Guidelines for Multifaith Worship: Australian Consultation on Liturgy* (1995), prepared by the Australian Consultation on Liturgy²⁰⁶ and *So you want to worship together? Guidelines for multi-faith gatherings for members of the Uniting Church in Australia* (1996), prepared by UCA National Assembly Working Group on Relations with Other Faiths.²⁰⁷ Additionally, in 2000, in response to the continued growth in religious diversity, the Uniting church published a text entitled, *Living with the Neighbour Who Is Different: Christian Faith in a Multi-Religious World*,²⁰⁸ as a further aid to inter-religious dialogue and neighbourliness.

²⁰³ The Assembly Uniting Church in Australia, "About the Uniting Church in Australia," Uniting Church in Australia, accessed 10 Dec 2020, <https://assembly.uca.org.au/about/uca>.

²⁰⁴ *ibid.*

²⁰⁵ Uniting Church in Australia Assembly "Relations with Other Faiths - Interfaith Gathering," accessed 20 Dec 2020, <https://assembly.uca.org.au/rof/resources/interfaith-gathering>.

²⁰⁶ Australian Consultation On Liturgy, "Guidelines for Multi-Faith Worship," (Uniting Church in Australia, 1995).

²⁰⁷ UCA National Assembly Working Group on Relations with Other Faiths, "So You Want to Worship Together? Guidelines for Multi-Faith Gatherings for Members of the Uniting Church in Australia," (Uniting Church In Australia, 1996).

²⁰⁸ Rev. Dr. Keith Rowe, "Living with the Neighbour Who Is Different: Christian Faith in a Multi Religious World," (2000), <https://assembly.uca.org.au/images/Ministries/ROF/images/stories/theology/livingsummary.pdf>.

7.6.6 Judaism

Internationally, Judaism had been working toward Jewish-Christian relations for some time. At a local level, some progress had been made towards dialogue between the Jews and the Christians, although it was short-lived.

Amid the Australian government's post-war acceptance of Jewish refugees from Europe, in-fighting and a lack of resources caused the Sydney CCJ's collapse in 1948. Unfortunately, real dialogue between Christians and Jews in Sydney was not re-established until after the visit of Pope John Paul II in 1986 and the Sydney CCJ [Council of Christians & Jews] was formally revived in 1988.²⁰⁹

One of the reasons given for a slower response to the call for Judeo-Christian dialogue in Sydney was that:

In Melbourne there is a strong ecumenical movement amongst the churches, whereas in Sydney a strong evangelical strain within some sectors of the Christian churches makes ecumenical and interfaith dialogue more difficult.²¹⁰

At the time of writing, most of the activity and many of the key proponents of inter-religious dialogue are based in Melbourne, highlighting that city as a leader in the area. It may be that this hampered the growth of macro-level dialogue, as it would not be until 2003 that the Jewish Christian Muslim Association (JCMA) would be formally created,²¹¹ having as its model an interfaith group called Jewish Christian Muslim (JCM) established earlier in Germany.²¹² While there seems to have been some informal social occurrences, Jewish-Muslim dialogue remained in the background, percolating away at a micro-level.

7.6.8 The Eastern (Orthodox) Churches

Although there had been members of various Orthodox communities in Australia for some time,²¹³ the Eastern Orthodox churches represented part of European Australia's view of

²⁰⁹ Philip Bliss, "Councils of Christian Jews - History," (Sydney, NSW: Australian Council of Christian & Jews, 2019).

²¹⁰ Marianne Dacy, "Jewish-Christian Relations in Australia," Australian Council of Christians and Jews, accessed 10 Dec 2020, <http://ccjaustralia.org/en/>.

²¹¹ Jewish Christian Muslim Association of Australia, "History".

²¹² Cheryl Camp, email message to author, 21 September, 2020

²¹³ Anastasios Tamis, "Greek Orthodoxy in Australia," in *The Encyclopedia of Religion in Australia*, ed. James Jupp (Melbourne, Vic: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 476.

the different other. Following World War II, and as beneficiaries of the geographical anomaly with Greece seen as a region in Europe, Greek Orthodoxy began to increase, especially in Melbourne. At times, the Greeks, and other members of the Eastern Churches took the new position of ‘different other’ and accordingly, any dialogue with the growing Muslim community was at a micro, or necessary level. Like many religions, the pressing need was for ecumenism within the various schools of thought. This was enabled through the “establishment of the Standing Conference of the Canonical Orthodox Churches in Australia (SCCOCA) in September 1979.” The following year “delegates of the Greek, Russian, Antiochian, Serbian and Romanian Orthodox Churches decided to work together”²¹⁴ with a focus on ecumenism, as opposed to inter-religious dialogue. The creation of regional intercultural and interfaith initiatives in Melbourne after 2001 would the Orthodox Churches become more involved in inter-religious dialogue.²¹⁵

7.7 Organic to Organised

In Australia, issues surrounding interfaith dialogue begin to come to the fore during the end of the 1980s. Prior to, and during the last 25 years of the millennium, many multicultural societies had been established, building on the changes enacted by the Whitlam government. Given that their direct remit was not about interfaith dialogue, this research will only touch on these groups as it directly relates to the issue. However, a side effect of any multicultural event or organisation is the micro-level dialogue that it enables as a result of bringing people together.

Two organisations were created prior to the 1980s with initial goals around the issue of ecumenism. The importance of their ecumenical mission was later able to be harnessed in the pursuit of organised, meaningful interfaith dialogue. In 1946 the Australian Committee for the World Council of Churches was created as the Christian ecumenical organisation, initially to bring Anglicans and Protestants into some form of Christian Unity.²¹⁶ In turn, “this developed into the Australian Council of Churches which, in 1994, gave way to the National Council of Churches in Australia.”²¹⁷ When the current NCCA was established in

²¹⁴ *ibid.*, 488.

²¹⁵ See Michális S. Michael, "Framing Interfaith Dialogue in Australia's Multicultural Setting: Mounting an Interfaith and Intercultural Network in Melbourne's Northern Region," *Religion, state & society* 41, no. 1 (2013).

²¹⁶ NCCA, "NCCA Story Churches Working Together".

²¹⁷ *ibid.*

1994, “the Catholic Church become a full participant in Australia's national ecumenical body.”²¹⁸ Remaining focused on the need for ecumenical dialogue, the NCCA is a member of the Australian Partnership of Religious Organisations (APRO), created in 2003 as the peak national body for interfaith relations.²¹⁹

In response to a desire for peace and a desire for ecumenism, the Catholic organisation, Pax Christi Australia, was created in the 1970s,²²⁰ based on a model initiated in France during the latter part of World War II.²²¹ Despite its establishment as an ecumenical organisation, “the presumptions that the founders could engage in predominantly Christian [dialogue] ... in the 1940s no longer exist[ed] in an increasingly plural world.”²²² Over time, and particularly with regards to the Second Vatican Council, “we have always encouraged dialogue with other groups, some of whom are non-Christian, and some of whom have no religious affiliation whatsoever.”²²³ Their quest for peace has seen them involved in international meso-level dialogue, in and around the Asia/Pacific region with regional consultations “in Hong Kong in October 1991, the second in Bacolod in the Philippines in 1996, and the third took place in Bangkok in October 2001.”²²⁴

A third organisation evolved locally, again in a multi-faith pursuit of peace. In 1970 Australian Chapter Religions for Peace Australia was created following the establishment of the Worlds Conference for Religions of Peace.²²⁵ Despite a promising start and the “early participants,...a who’s-who of religious peace and ecumenical workers...interest had gradually waned.”²²⁶ Kept alive through the work of Revd. Philip Huggins in Melbourne, with Stella Cornelius and Rev. Berne Stephens in Sydney, the group was brought to the forefront after the 1987 decision to hold the Fifth World Assembly in

²¹⁸ *ibid.*

²¹⁹ "Australian Partnership of Religious Organisations," Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia, accessed 27 Dec 2020, <http://fecca.org.au/partner/a-partnership-of-religious-organisations/>.

²²⁰ Pax Christi Australia, "Our History," accessed 27 Dec 2020, <https://paxchristi.org.au/about/our-history>.

²²¹ Tom Roberts, "Pax Christi Marks 70 Years of Pursuing Peace," Kansas City: National Catholic Reporter, accessed 26 50, <https://www.ncronline.org/news/justice/pax-christi-marks-70-years-pursuing-peace>.

²²² *ibid.*

²²³ Pax Christi Australia, "Our History".

²²⁴ *ibid.*

²²⁵ Susan Ennis and Desmond Cahill, "Religion and Social Cohesion in Australia: An Overview of Multifaith Activity," (2018).

²²⁶ John Baldcock, "Responses to Religious Plurality in Australia," in *Many Religions, All Australians: Religious Settlement, Identity and Cultural Diversity*, ed. Gary D. Bouma Am (Adelaide, SA: Open Book Publishers, 1996), 196.

Melbourne in 1989.²²⁷ Following this conference's success, and despite independent issues concerning representation from Palestine and Tibet, a “national office was established in Melbourne in 1989 and Revd. John Baldock was employed as its Secretary-General.”²²⁸ Whilst having a focus on an international multifaith quest for peace, it aims explicitly “to work with religious and interfaith organizations as well as with government and civil agencies in achieving social cohesion in Australia.”²²⁹ It has continued its work over the last 50 years

7.7.1 It Gets Serious

From this point on, this research attempt to provide a chronicle of events that led up to the end of September 11, 2001, a period where the pursuit of inter-religious dialogue began to accelerate and coalesce. As discussed earlier, Muslim societies had been established in Western Australia, South Australia, New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland by the beginning of the 1960s. Inevitably, they would become involved in, and crucial to the process of macro-level interfaith dialogue in Australia. The same is true of many of the ecumenical groups established by the various non-Muslim religions.

1976 – Bendigo Interfaith Conference

An essential contribution to regional interfaith dialogue was made by Mohamed Hassan, an engineer who arrived from Egypt in 1967. Eventually settling in Bendigo, a regional area that was devoid of suitable facilities and:

*we had to travel to Shepparton or Melbourne on holidays and Eid. It was the lack of halal food and wudu at work - no Islamic burial was allowed - just coffin, no cloth shroud allowed'. Practising the Islamic faith where a mosque didn't exist, and under pressure to assimilate, was hard, especially in rural settings.*²³⁰

²²⁷ ibid.

²²⁸ ibid.

²²⁹ Religions for Peace Australia, "Mission," accessed 20 Dec 2020, https://religionsforpeaceaustralia.org.au/?page_id=1251.

²³⁰ Dzavid Haveric, "Mohamed Hassan - Egypt Migrant, 1967," (2019), <https://collections.museumsvictoria.com.au/articles/16625>.

As he became part of the community “he realised people didn’t really know much about other faiths,”²³¹ so in 1976 “he hosted the first Christian-Muslim Interfaith Conference in Bendigo with international speakers.”²³²



Figure 42 Bendigo Interfaith Conference, 1976. AFIC President Dr Mohamed Ali El-Erian., with Mr Mohamed Hassan and delegates.²³³

One of the first regional conferences of its type in Australia, “the conference included the Islamic Council of Victoria and Anglican and Catholic ministers as well as international speakers.”²³⁴ As a layperson, Mr Hassan’s initial contribution to the field of dialogue led the way for meso level dialogue in both his region, but also at the state and national levels. Additionally, this event marks the first conference that included both lay-people and theologians, in line with the Catholic Churches four-way division of inter-religious dialogical activities; life, action, theological exchange and spiritual experience,²³⁵

1979 – Islam and Christianity. First Conference of its kind in Australia

In 1979, following “a directive from the 1974 General Chapter of the Dominican order, A secretariat for Islamic Affairs was established and held its first *Journées Romaines*

²³¹ Andy Yu, "Fighting the Stereotype," accessed 27 Jan 2021, <https://www.bendigoadvertiser.com.au/story/2412071/fighting-the-stereotype>.

²³² Ahmed Hassan, "Mr Mohamed Hassan Oam: A Lifelong Pioneer of Islamic Education," Australian Muslim Times, accessed 2 Jan 2021, <https://www.amust.com.au/2020/06/mr-mohamed-hassan-oam-a-lifelong-pioneer-of-islamic-education/>.

²³³ Haveric, "Mohamed Hassan - Egypt Migrant, 1967".

²³⁴ *ibid.*

²³⁵ Secretariat for Non-Christians, "The Attitude of the Church toward Followers of Other Religions : Reflections and Orientations on Dialogue and Mission," 11-14.

Dominicans at Grottaferrata, outside Rome.”²³⁶ This led to the appointment of Fr. Laurie Fitzgerald as the regional representative for “Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines and Indonesia”²³⁷ and upon his return began organising a conference “conducted by the Dominican Fathers and affiliated with Monash University.”²³⁸ In attendance were 147 participants, with representatives from the Catholics, Muslims, Baptists, Anglicans, Melchites and Orthodoxy.²³⁹ Notably, the diversity of ethnic groups was broad, including Albanians, Egyptians, Indonesians, Jordanians, Lebanese, Malaysians, Pakistanis, Saudis, Turks and Yugoslavs as well as others.²⁴⁰ Fifteen papers were presented and, “there were 8 Muslim and 4 Catholic speakers.”²⁴¹ There was some unease from members of the Coptic Orthodox participants who feared that the Muslims would use the occasion for the purpose of *Da'wah*, or evangelising, “as they must on all occasions.”²⁴² This claim was countered by Fr. Fitzgerald, who explained that “it was not the purpose of the conference to bring this about.”²⁴³

*For their part, Muslims found that Christians were ready, in fact eager, to listen with genuine respect to an exposition of Islamic faith and theology. The Christians were pleasantly surprised to find how many things both they and Muslims held – and venerated in common.*²⁴⁴

The presentations were broad-ranging in nature, including discussion of the place of Jesus and Mary in both faiths, the Pillars of Islam, the Bible and the Qur’ān, common themes and included a trip to Preston Mosque for *Zuhr* (noon) prayers.²⁴⁵

At one stage, an Australian born Muslim, Haset Sali said that he “believed that I have been fortunate to grow up in a country that in practices is probably more Islamic than any other country in the world today.”²⁴⁶ Given the timing of this conference, Mr Sali’s reflection may indicate a view prior to the issues in the Gulf post the 1980s, when some may not have

²³⁶ Dr H.M Bajouda et al., "Islam and Christianity" (paper presented at the Islam and Christianity. First Conference of its kind in Australia, 28-31 Aug 1979).

²³⁷ *ibid.*

²³⁸ *ibid.*

²³⁹ *ibid.*, iii.

²⁴⁰ *ibid.*

²⁴¹ *ibid.*

²⁴² *ibid.*, iv.

²⁴³ *ibid.*

²⁴⁴ *ibid.*

²⁴⁵ *ibid.*, vii.

²⁴⁶ *ibid.*, v.

felt as included, given the rise in tensions towards the Muslim population precipitated by those events.

1988 - Multifaith Association of South Australia

In 1988, the Multifaith Association of South Australia was created, and today has become South Australia's 'main multi-faith organisation.'²⁴⁷ Like many of these organisations, it is a grassroots multifaith organisation, run by volunteers, having affiliations with both Religions for Peace and the United Religious Initiatives.²⁴⁸ Its charter concerns issues of social cohesion, through "meet[ing] in fellowship with people from a wide range of faith tradition,"²⁴⁹ with the expected outcomes to allow members "to deepen within and grow in each of our own faiths, and to generate community."²⁵⁰ As Australia's longest-running, state-based organisation, it continues to hold meeting and events to promote and encourage dialogue at a range of sociological levels.

1989 - The Faith Communities of the City of Springvale

In the late 1980s, as ecumenism bubbled away amongst the Christian churches, outer suburban Melbourne was the birthplace of what would appear to be Australia's first organised interfaith network. Until 2006, "the south-eastern suburbs of Monash, Greater Dandenong and Casey have become Melbourne's most linguistically diverse area."²⁵¹ With linguistic diversity comes diversity of beliefs, and in 1989 as The Faith Communities of the City of Springvale were formed, becoming known as The Interfaith Network of the City of Greater Dandenong in 1994 following council mergers. It marked a significant milestone:

as the first Interfaith Network in Australia, the Network consists of various traditional and multi-faith groups who meet monthly at the Council offices. Their goal is simple – promoting understanding, respect

²⁴⁷ The Multifaith Association of South Australia, "About Us," accessed 12 Dec 2020, <https://multifaithsa.org.au/about-2>.

²⁴⁸ Ennis and Cahill, "Religion and Social Cohesion in Australia: An Overview of Multifaith Activity". 10.

²⁴⁹ The Multifaith Association of South Australia, "About Us".

²⁵⁰ *ibid.*

²⁵¹ Michael Clyne, Louisa Willoughby, and Julie Bradshaw, "Linguistic Diversity in Melbourne's South-East," *People and Place* 17, no. 1 (2009).

*and tolerance for each other's belief by living together in peace and good will.*²⁵²

The Springvale Council, who initially established the network:

*Following negative media publicity given to Indo-Chinese youth late last year, the CEO Mr Ian Tatterson asked the Council's Access & Equity Officer Ms Joyce Rebeiro to 'identify a community relations strategy aimed at raising awareness of the diverse nature of the Springvale population and the need for positive interaction between all communities, which could only be of benefit to all. With this in mind she had suggested subsequently that as Springvale is not only a multicultural, but a multi-faith community, it may be that the leaders of the Faith Communities could give positive leadership in this matter'.*²⁵³

However, the path to some form of multifaith community with any levels of interfaith dialogue encountered some initial hurdles, initially ecumenical in nature. The initial meeting took place on the 21st February 1989 at the home of "Fr Ross Fishburn, [who] was Minister of the Anglican Church of the Ascension."²⁵⁴

*...the proposal was generally well received. However, there were clearly two positions within the group. One view was that more attention needed to be given to Christian Unity as a first step. Inherent in this response was some difficulty with the idea of working with non-Christians. The other view was summed up by Rev. Malcolm Holmes, Minister of the Springvale Uniting Church, when he said, 'We have no choice in the matter,' on the strength of which he and Fr. Anthony Fox OFM, Conv., a Catholic priest, agreed to work with the Project Officer in exploring areas with other faith communities.*²⁵⁵

Over the next few months, after "visits to various Faith Leaders; it was obvious from these visits that there was a basis of a supportive network for interfaith co-operation."²⁵⁶ The first officially minuted meeting was held on the 10th May 1989 in the Springvale Council

²⁵² Interfaith Network City of Greater Dandenong, *Many Faiths, One People* (Dandenong, Vic: Greater Dandenong, 2019), 4.

²⁵³ City of Springvale, "Record of 1st Meeting of Faith Communities," (Springvale, Vic: 1989), 1.

²⁵⁴ Joyce Rebeiro, "Springvale: Many Faiths, One People.," (Springvale, Vic: City of Springvale, 1994), 4.

²⁵⁵ *ibid.*

²⁵⁶ Helen Heath, "Culture Identity, Religion, Language and Belonging" (paper presented at the From Multiculturalism to Inclusion, City of Greater Dandenong, 31/8 2016), 3.

Reception room.²⁵⁷ Representatives from many of the world's faiths were present from Buddhism, Christianity, both western and orthodox as well as Ibrahim Omerdic, Imam of the Islamic Society, Noble Park.²⁵⁸ Discussions were wide-ranging and included a variety of suggestions for interfaith activities moving forward. The bulk of the suggestions were civic in nature as opposed to any form of organised dialogue, but necessarily included dialogue as part of the process. One essential suggestion was around "the need for preparatory work within each community,"²⁵⁹ if the proposed venture was to prosper and thrive.

By August the path had been cleared, so that:

One year after the initial beginnings, in August 1989 at City Hall, leaders of faith communities signed a Common Statement, making a personal commitment to the Mayor and Councillors to work together. The CEO of Council recommended continued support for the Interfaith Project through the Access and Equity Officer.²⁶⁰

One key outcome of the initial discussion was that:

...the Common Statement, as we know it, was drawn up by the 'Network' and presented to the Mayor at Council Chambers at the Council Meeting of August 21, 1989, and this re-commitment is expressed each year. There has also been an Annual Gathering each year since 1989 - except 2020 due to COVID-19.²⁶¹

The operational structure is an interesting blend of religious spokespersons, part of the 'network' and:

though supported by Council with a small grant and executive services, is not a formal committee of Council. The Network's President and Chairman are not Councillors but members of the Network. The

²⁵⁷ City of Springvale, "Record of 1st Meeting of Faith Communities."

²⁵⁸ *ibid.*, 1.

²⁵⁹ *ibid.*, 3.

²⁶⁰ Heath, "Culture Identity, Religion, Language and Belonging," 3.

²⁶¹ Helen Heath, email message to author, 8 December, 2020

*Council's diversity officer acts, however, as the Network's convenor and as such, is an ex officio member of its executive.*²⁶²

Helen Heath, the current Interfaith Network Development Officer, outlined the steps towards interfaith dialogue as having three defining stages;

*An organic evolvement of interfaith engagement, A crisis response to world events, An event - The Parliament of the World's Religions, Melbourne December 2009*²⁶³

For this research, Springvale Council's creation of an organisation to address interfaith dialogue seems to have arisen from an organic need to bring elements of social cohesion to a growing and disparate community. This involved dialogue at the micro-level, with day to day interactions leading to an organic coming together. Whilst it was not a world crisis that initiated this action, it was still a crisis at a local level. Whilst the trigger was an issue with the Vietnamese youth,²⁶⁴ over the years the Network would support the Yugoslavian community when issues arose and were able to provide support during the Gulf War when Iman Omerdic's community came under attack locally.²⁶⁵ Likewise, support was offered to the Muslim community via communal prayers at the Albanian Mosque as well as ensure the council's support for the Muslim Statement condemning Terrorism immediately after the events of 9/11.²⁶⁶

In the years following, other groups would also arise, such as the Interfaith Group of the Moreland City Council. The impetus for the creation of other local and state-based interfaith groups would occur following the events of 9/11 in 2002, one of the 'crisis' points in the 20th century and both Moreland and Springvale would be held up as positive case studies for future use.²⁶⁷

1990 – The Gulf War intervenes

²⁶² Desmond Cahill and Michael Leahy, *Constructing a Local Multifaith Network* (Canberra ACT: Commonwealth of Australia, 2004), 24.

²⁶³ Helen Heath, "Broad Defining Stages of Interfaith Relations," (Melbourne, Vic: Interfaith Network of the City of Greater Dandenong, 2012), 1.

²⁶⁴ City of Springvale, "Record of 1st Meeting of Faith Communities," 4.

²⁶⁵ "Record of 20th Meeting of Faith Communities," (Springvale, Vic 1991), 2.

²⁶⁶ City of Greater Dandenong, "Record of 74th Meeting of Faith Communities," (Dandenong, Vic2001), 3-4.

²⁶⁷ Cahill and Leahy, *Constructing a Local Multifaith Network*.

The outbreak of the first Gulf War in 1990 led to attacks and threats on mosques and Islamic Schools, as well as “a spate of racially based attacks on residents of ‘Middle Eastern appearance’ or of the Islamic faith.”²⁶⁸ Despite this, attempts were made by the Muslim community in Victoria to initiate serious dialogue.

*Sherene Hassan, Interfaith Officer of the Islamic Council of Victoria (ICV), described how, while there was a rise of anti-Muslim sentiments in Australia in the 1980s and 1990s (around the time of the First Gulf War and the Salman Rushdie fatwa), ‘there were a number of [Muslim] people who took it upon themselves to actually try and start this whole process of interreligious understanding’ in response to international events. As a result of these events, Muslim communities in Victoria became more active in dialogues with Christians and Jews in the 1990s.*²⁶⁹

1993 - The Canberra Interfaith Forum

Canberra, home for many diplomatic missions, has housed many informal interfaith functions through the natural cycle of doing business and government business. Trade dinners, sales pitches, party fundraisers would have had a component of non-Judeo-Christians as the capital grew during the 1950s. Additionally, Colombo plan students at the Australian National University would have added to the religious mix. In 1993 the Interfaith Forum of the ACT was established, one of the early state-based multifaith groups.²⁷⁰ “and is the primary multifaith group”²⁷¹ in the Australian Capital Territory. They are a volunteer-based organisation, and “run activities with 12 different spiritual traditions represented.”²⁷²

1993 - World's Parliament of Religions

At an international level, after a hiatus of one hundred years, the World’s Parliament of Religions convened in Chicago in 1993. There has been debate over the focus of the conference, however, “both of these perspectives of the goal of the Parliament,

²⁶⁸ Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (1991) in Scott Poynting, "Bin Laden in the Suburbs" Attacks on Arab and Muslim Australians before and after 11 September," *Current Issues in Criminal Justice* 14,1 (2002).

²⁶⁹ Halafoff, "Muslim Participation in Multifaith Initiatives in Victoria," 118.

²⁷⁰ Canberra Interfaith Forum, "About," accessed 12 Dec 2020, <http://www.canberrainterfaith.org.au/about.html>.

²⁷¹ Ennis and Cahill, "Religion and Social Cohesion in Australia: An Overview of Multifaith Activity".

11.

²⁷² *ibid.*

conversation and expedition of world peace, found explicit expression in the signing of an inter-faith document entitled the "Global Ethic" at the conclusion of the Parliament on September 4th.²⁷³ "This ethic emphasized common teachings that united different faith traditions,"²⁷⁴ something required to assist with interfaith dialogue in the future. The event was not without its controversies, with one newspaper running the headline, "Religion Parliament Sees More Discord than Unity,"²⁷⁵ in response to issues surrounding the withdrawal of the Orthodox Christian Delegation over the involvement of "certain quasi-religious groups"²⁷⁶ and "four Jewish delegations also withdrew because of the participation of the leader of the Nation of Islam, Louis Farrakhan."²⁷⁷ "A third breakdown of relations at the Parliament occurred among the Indian delegations"²⁷⁸ over geopolitical issues concerning the Kashmir region. While dialogue at a meso-level did see some benefits and agreements, regional disputes and the broad representation of beliefs, some of them non-theistic, led to barriers being placed between certain groups limiting complete participation in the dialogue process.

1995 - Leaders of Faith Communities Forum

At a state level in Victoria, in 1995 the Leaders of Faith Communities Forum was founded in 1995,²⁷⁹ eventually becoming the "Faith Communities Council of Victoria (FCCV), Victoria's umbrella multifaith body."²⁸⁰ The FCCV and:

*... its 1995 forerunner, the Multifaith Advisory Group (see later) and local interfaith networks have individually or jointly organized a number of events. For example, the religious component of the Centenary of Federation in 2001.*²⁸¹

²⁷³ Cory Hollon, "Dialogue and the 1993 World's Parliament of Religions" (Western Kentucky University, 1995), 2.

²⁷⁴ "Interfaith Journeys an Exploration of History, Ideas, and Future Directions," *World Faiths Development Dialogue* (2017): 7.

²⁷⁵ Michael Hirsley, "Religion Parliament Sees More Discord Than Unity," *Chicago Tribune*, 5 Sep 1993. 1.

²⁷⁶ Hollon, "Dialogue and the 1993 World's Parliament of Religions," 5.

²⁷⁷ *ibid.*, 6.

²⁷⁸ *ibid.*

²⁷⁹ Ennis and Cahill, "Religion and Social Cohesion in Australia: An Overview of Multifaith Activity". 7-8.

²⁸⁰ "Welcome to FCCV," Faith Communities Council of Victoria, accessed 19 Dec 2020, <http://www.faithvictoria.org.au/about-fccv>.

²⁸¹ Ennis and Cahill, "Religion and Social Cohesion in Australia: An Overview of Multifaith Activity".

As a group, they issued a common statement, which they continue to uphold in which the community “as people of many faiths, seeks to work together to build a better society now and for future generations, through our dedication to shared values and ideals: love, peace, compassion, justice, freedom, truth, personal integrity, human dignity, trust, respect and understanding.”²⁸² An example of religious diversity, the FCCV is currently co- vice-chaired by “Mohamed Mohideen (Islamic Council of Victoria) and Frances Prince (Jewish Community Council of Victoria).”²⁸³

1996 - The Moreland Interfaith Gathering

Another critical development occurred in Melbourne’s northern suburbs, an area of growing multiculturalism leading to a diversity of faiths. Prompted by the local “religious leaders’ perception of the growing religious diversity in the Moreland area, and the need they felt to engage with newcomers in a meaningful way.”²⁸⁴ Whilst the impetus “came from the Anglo Christian churches, the formal lead was taken by Council, which convened it and still provides its executive support.”²⁸⁵ The mechanics of its operation proved an insight into the flexibility and adaptations that have made it a successful model of an interfaith organisation.

The Moreland Interfaith Gathering is a committee of the Moreland City Council though it was formed neither by the Council nor is it governed by the Council. ...its membership includes the following faith communities: Muslim, Sikh, Buddhist, Catholic, Anglican, Greek Orthodox and Syro-Malabar Orthodox. Meetings are held every two months for the purposes of sharing ideas and organising community activities. ²⁸⁶

As another example of an organic local network, the Moreland interfaith network is still relevant today, having provided a role model for other organisations and enabling the smoother settlement of new migrants moving into the still-growing region.

²⁸² "Common Statement," FCCV, accessed 20 Dec 2020, <http://www.faithvictoria.org.au/about-fccv/common-statement>.

²⁸³ "Management Committee," FCCV, accessed 20 Dec 2020, <http://www.faithvictoria.org.au/about-fccv/management-committee>.

²⁸⁴ Cahill and Leahy, *Constructing a Local Multifaith Network*, 23.

²⁸⁵ *ibid.*

²⁸⁶ *ibid.*, 21.

1997 - Centre for Christian-Muslim Relations (Columban Mission Institute)

In 1997, the St Columban Mission Society established the Columban Centre for Christian-Muslim relations. Sr Pauline Rae was initially appointed the Convenor of the Centre, and at the initial meetings, the way forward was not exact;

When the staff of the newly formed Centre for Christian-Muslim Relations convened for the first time in 1997 they asked themselves “what do we do?” There were no models, no precedents. This was a pioneering venture, the first of its kind in Australia, a truly missionary enterprise. To this day it remains almost the only Catholic institution in Australia specifically dedicated to Christian-Muslim Relations.²⁸⁷

It was decided some in-depth reading and immersion in Muslim culture, including a visit to the Auburn Gallipoli mosque would be required, as would partnerships with the growing network of ecumenical and interfaith networks.²⁸⁸ An offshoot of the centre was the:

Women’s Dialogue Network (WDN). This organization lasted from 1998 to 2003 and proved seminal in Christian outreach to women from other faiths, arranging functions, dinners and other opportunities for building friendships.²⁸⁹

A visit in April 2001 by Professor David Thomas from the University of Birmingham’s Centre for Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations would prompt a pertinent question from Mehmet Ozalp, leading to the creation of the Affinity Intercultural Foundation.²⁹⁰ The centre has also been involved in the publication of *Bridges, A Newsletter of the Christian-Muslim Network* since 1998.²⁹¹

1999 - The Women's Interfaith Network

Along similar lines to the Women’s Dialogue Network, Josie Lacey founded the Women’s Interfaith Network in 1999. An active member of the “NSW Jewish Board of Deputies, president of WIZO,²⁹² a life member of the Executive Council of Australian Jewry and the

²⁸⁷ McInerney, "History," 2.

²⁸⁸ *ibid.*

²⁸⁹ *ibid.*, 3.

²⁹⁰ *ibid.*

²⁹¹ "Bridges. Building Relationships between Christians and Muslims.," St Columbans Mission Society accessed 20 Apr 2021, <https://www.columban.org.au/media-and-publications/newsletters-and-bulletins/bridges/archive/>.

²⁹² Women's International Zionist Organisation

Ethnic Communities Council of NSW,”²⁹³ Josie was active in interfaith dialogue, initially as a member of the Australian Council of Christians and Jews, and:

*in 1998, while attending a Catholic Bishops’ interfaith conference, she suggested to the other women who were participating that they should form an interfaith group for women. They agreed, and she gathered a group of women of nine different religious groups, who meet regularly to explore issues of religious interest. In 1999 the Women’s Interfaith Network was officially launched at Parliament House. The Network has now expanded and there are five active groups in NSW.*²⁹⁴

The Women’s Interfaith Network:

*operate from a conviction that mutual understanding and respect for different religious expressions proceed from building personal relationships, co-operation and discussion. ...[and] meet monthly, listening to one another’s faith stories and support each other in projects that promote our ideals.*²⁹⁵

7.7.2 Peak dialogue during the era

2000 - Ceremony for collaboration among religions

During the Christian Jubilee year, in the period around Pentecost, a unique series of events was held in Melbourne, sponsored by the Catholic Church’s Ecumenical Affairs Commission of the Archdiocese of Melbourne. These multi-faith services brought “Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Jewish and Christian worshippers to gather, pray and listen to each other’s scriptures.”²⁹⁶ Two smaller regional events in Geelong and East Thornbury preceded a larger event held on June 11, 2000, the ‘Ceremony for collaboration among religions’ at St Patrick’s Cathedral in Melbourne.

St Mary of the Angels Church in Geelong was the scene of an interfaith gathering on May 28th, 2020 that included representatives from the local “Buddhists, Sikhs, Moslems,

²⁹³ "Josie Lacey – an Inevitable Path," Religions for Peace, Australia, accessed 29 Dec 2020, <https://religionsforpeaceaustralia.org.au/?p=7042#more-7042>.

²⁹⁴ Religions for Peace Australia, "Organisational Structure," accessed 14 Dec 2020, https://religionsforpeaceaustralia.org.au/?page_id=1248.

²⁹⁵ "Josie Lacey – an Inevitable Path".

²⁹⁶ "Ecumenical Bulletin," ed. Ecumenical Affairs Commission (East Melbourne, Vic: Ecumenical Affairs Commission of the Archdiocese of Melbourne., 2000), 1.

Orthodox, Jewish, mainline Christian churches and Aboriginal people.”²⁹⁷ Driven by the local parishioners desire to “get to know them,”²⁹⁸ the service included “prayers and chants” along with an Indigenous Nations ‘Welcome to Country,’ marking a turning point in local interfaith dialogue. Monsignor Jim Murray, a leading member in bringing the multi-faith service to fruition, would also go on to help establish the Geelong Interfaith Network in 2003.²⁹⁹

In Melbourne's northern suburbs, one parish provided a demonstration showing the progression of dialogue from a micro to meso level. Between 1988 and 2001, the current Archbishop of Canberra and Goulburn, Christopher Prowse, spent two periods as Parish Priest of Holy Spirit Parish, East Thornbury. Then a working-class suburb with a large population of Italian migrants and their families, a mosque governed by the local Alawi Islamic Association was “within a football drop-kick from my church.”³⁰⁰ Archbishop Christopher Prowse recounted his initial encounter with his Muslim neighbours, during his first posting around 1988.

Well, we were neighbours and it's important to be neighbourly...So I went in that Saturday afternoon, and I didn't really know where to go or anything and all of a sudden this very big man came moving towards me in a somewhat aggressive manner, clearly the security man. He thought I was trespassing and wanted to know what I was doing there. ...This [was] where I was on a learning curve too. So what do you say? If it was a Catholic church, I would say can I speak to the parish priest, or could I speak to the President. I didn't know what you call the person in charge of the Mosque.³⁰¹

I found myself saying to him, “please take me to your leader.” ... later on, I laughed about because I thought here I am on ..., a different planet. But it was like going to a different planet. Everything was different; the setup was different. I explained I was the Parish Priest. He was English as a second language, that was fine, and once he realised who I was and

²⁹⁷ *ibid.*, 2.

²⁹⁸ *ibid.*

²⁹⁹ Geelong Interfaith Network, "About Us," accessed 26 Nov 2020, <https://geelonginterfaith.org.au/about-us/>.

³⁰⁰ Archbishop Christopher Prowse, "Correspondence," ed. David Sneddon (2020).

³⁰¹ *ibid.*, 5:40.

[that] I was without any malice in my heart, only the love of God, he changed.

So it wasn't convenient at the time because the council that rang things [were not there, and] the deputy did invite me back. So I went back a few days later and then a few of the representative on the council of the Mosque they treated me very graciously. And we sat down and I had my first chat, neighbourly, you try and be neighbourly, and that I found that I found that they were very keen for us to be neighbourly too, and so that began series of interchanges between the two communities.

After a few years, Archbishop Prowse moved to Rome and before leaving:

...went back on the Saturday afternoon on my little trips on the bicycle to say goodbye to people and the same man, Muhammed was his name, and this time when he saw it was me, and this was the lovely end to the story, ... he knew I was leaving, he had his arms out and started crying, and he gave me a big hug and thanked me so much for bringing our two communities together at different moments. Along with, ... of course, I wasn't just me. There's the road of interreligious dialogue on a local level.

During his second posting to East Thornbury, Archbishop Prowse made an:

*...attempt at something of just more formalised dialogue, to get to know each other's backgrounds and offer some respect., sincerity,...these are the keys, friendship, respect, sincerity; [an] explicit `decision not to proselytise and despite the fact that it was a bit edgy to do it because I remember, that's rights, at the time I went to the Archdiocese headquarters, and I asked perhaps one of the Bishops to come, and I said you might know a bit more about this than me. And they said, "Oh, were not aware of this happening in the Archdiocese of Melbourne." So I said, "Well there's always a first time," so unfortunately, the person I asked was not available that night, so basically myself with the help of somebody else, well it was very low key, but to was very much supported by the Catholic Archdiocese, they knew I was doing it.*³⁰²

At the Holy Spirit Church in East Thornbury on the 7th of June, 2000 a key event in local interfaith dialogue, entitled 'Making Peace in Darebin' occurred, bring the local Catholic community together with members of the Alawi Islamic Association. "Mr Abraham Khalil

³⁰² ibid.

Ibrahim... gave a presentation on peace from the Islamic perspective.”³⁰³ This was followed by a response outlining the concept of peace from a Christian perspective by “Fr Christopher Prowse, Parish Priest at East Thornbury.”³⁰⁴ “Readings from the Koran and the New Testament on the topic of peace were prayed. At the conclusion, gifts were exchanged.”³⁰⁵ The choice of a Wednesday is interesting as it represents neutral “territory” regarding days of worship, avoiding the significance of Friday for the Muslims, and Sunday for the Christians.

A key point of discussion demonstrating both commonality and difference was that “We both honour Mary, the Mother of Jesus and although we differ in our understanding of who Jesus was, we both revere him.”³⁰⁶ Other common areas were outlined, including, “regular prayer and acts of denial...the sharing of common moral beliefs, especially regarding marriage and the family.”

The results of this dialogue appear to have been reflected in the post 9/11 attitudes of some members of the local Catholic community, especially as Archbishop reflected that the,

*...ones that were involved would have greeted each other a little bit more courteously and knew each other. ...Perhaps they were thinking twice when later on terrorist attacks came up and a lot of blame going on in Islamic communities and they would have perhaps though there was another side to the story that's not captured there and a lot of stereotyping. But, you know the old expression, “I hate you because I don't know you”, but once you know somebody you may not agree with them, but at least you understand where they are coming from.*³⁰⁷

Over the years, the relationship that developed between the mainly Italian, Roman Catholic Community and the Alawi Islamic Association developed from the micro to meso-level dialogue. Meetings and ‘socials’ were organised, gifts exchanged during religious observations such as Easter and Ramadan. This dialogue was not always supported by all members of the Catholic community, as

³⁰³ "Ecumenical Bulletin," 1.

³⁰⁴ *ibid.*

³⁰⁵ *ibid.*

³⁰⁶ Archbishopo George Pell in *ibid.*

³⁰⁷ Prowse, "Correspondence."

*they [the Catholic parishioners] wanted to know, they knew I was doing this, and they wanted to know what reception was I getting and a couple of them had bad experiences with Islam, from their childhood background overseas they cautioned me against it, it was a waste of time to do it. They said, "Father, I'm sure you have more important things to do." But I said, "oh no, not really," and so I often met them because they were shopping in the same shops, the same shopping centre there.*³⁰⁸

The capstone to this series of local encounters in Melbourne was the 'Ceremony for collaboration among religions,' held at St Patrick's Cathedral in Melbourne on Sunday 11th June 2000, the Year of the Great Jubilee. It was organised to coincide with a similar service being held in Rome presided over by Pope John Paul.³⁰⁹ During the service, timed to avoid *salat al-'asr*, the Muslim afternoon prayer, Islamic prayer, Sheikh Isse Musse chanted Surah 16:90-97. According to Fr John Dupuche, "it is probably the first time that the Qur'ān was chanted in a Catholic cathedral in Australia."³¹⁰ It would appear that this was a significant event in the history of interfaith dialogue in Australia, as from a Catholic perspective it has been described as "a unique event in a multicultural and multi-faith society [that] has resulted in many accolades and generated much goodwill, delight and appreciation and a desire for follow up."³¹¹

Approximately 700 guests attended the service, and the list of key participants demonstrates the breadth of religious beliefs in attendance. These included:

Ms Joy Murphy, elder, the Wurundjeri people, Ms Vicki Walker, Coordinator of Aboriginal Catholic Ministry, Mr Shashi Kochhar, President Hindu Society, Mr. Abhay Awasthi, Executive Director, Hindu Foundation, Mr Brian Ashen, The Buddhist Council of Victoria Inc., Pandit Chintamani Datar, Head of the Hindu Community, Pandit Abhay Awasthi, Hindu Foundation, Mr. Arvind Shrivastava, Hindu Foundation, Ven. Santhindriya, Theravada Buddhism, Ven. Phuoc Tan, Mahayana Buddhism, Rabbi John Levi AM, DD, The Executive Council of Australian Jewry, Shaikh Isse Abdo, Imam, City Mosque, West Melbourne, Mr Philip Knight, secretary, Islamic Council of Victoria, Rev. Dr. John Dupuche, CIC and E-W, Most Rev. George Pell, Catholic Archbishop of

³⁰⁸ *ibid.*

³⁰⁹ "Ecumenical Bulletin," 3.

³¹⁰ John Dupuche, email message to author, 20 July, 2020

³¹¹ "Ecumenical Bulletin," 3.

Melbourne, Reverend Pamela Kerr, Chairperson of the Heads of Victorian Churches(Anglican).³¹²

The proceedings also included a sermon by the “Rev Pam Kerr, Uniting Church Moderator, and Chairperson of the Victorian Heads of Churches.”³¹³ Her focus was on the spirit of reconciliation between all participants of all faiths and included both Indigenous Australians and Muslims.³¹⁴

Such a broad congregation, engaged in respectful, mutual dialogue took some negotiation and dialogue, and when arrangements were being made, the Columbans became involved:

In late 1999 the Bishops Committee preparing for the Great Jubilee asked the Centre and others for the names of leaders of religions to invite to a multi-faith service to be held in 2000.³¹⁵

While this event appears to mark the zenith of dialogue during the period of this research, it by no means represents the complete fulfilment of meso-level dialogue, something that would not occur until the next millennium.

2000 - The Interfaith Centre of Melbourne

Helen Summers, as a newly ordained Interfaith Minister, returned to Melbourne in 1998,³¹⁶ noting a lack “of inter-religious organizations in Melbourne at that time and only one had events for non-members of their organization: the Multifaith Network of the City of Greater Dandenong.”³¹⁷ Approaching the issue from different angles, Summers set about establishing “an Interfaith Centre, which would operate as a full-time Centre rather than an organization which meets occasionally or monthly.”³¹⁸ Once momentum had been achieved, and:

with a small committee, formally established the Centre as an educational and cultural non-profit organization in 2003. The Centre’s programs

³¹² John Dupuche, email message to author, 20 July, 2020

³¹³ "Ecumenical Bulletin," 4.

³¹⁴ *ibid.*

³¹⁵ McInerney, "History," 3.

³¹⁶ Ennis and Cahill, "Religion and Social Cohesion in Australia: An Overview of Multifaith Activity". 6.

³¹⁷ "About Us," The Interfaith Centre of Melbourne, accessed 20 Dec 2020,

<https://interfaithcentre.org.au/about-us>.

³¹⁸ *ibid.*

*included Ceremonies for the Work of the United Nations, Ceremonies for World Peace, seminars, forums, prayer and meditation events, visual art exhibitions, and the sacred arts.*³¹⁹

Although the centre commenced in 2000, it would not be until post 9/11 that it would become an operational reality.

2000 - Australian Intercultural Society

In 2000, Australia's first Islamic group dedicated to interfaith and intercultural dialogue was established in Melbourne. Based on the principle of Fethullah Gullen's approach to dialogue:

*The Australian Intercultural Society (AIS) was established in 2000. It is one of the pioneers of interfaith and intercultural dialogue amongst organisations of a Muslim background in Australia.*³²⁰

Part of the AIS mission involved hosting multi-faith *Iftar* dinners as well as coordinating mosque opening days in NSW, although these activities did not commence until 2002.³²¹ The focus of its energy is around "building bridges through information, interaction and cooperation,"³²² a series of actions that involve dialogue at all levels.

At its 10th anniversary held in Melbourne's Windsor Hotel in 2010:

*a keynote speech was delivered by the governor of Victoria, Professor David de Kretser. The governor praised the contribution of the AIS, proving it to be not only a timely but a successful organisation for promoting dialogue and social harmony between diverse cultural and religious groups in Australia since its inception in 2000.*³²³

³¹⁹ *ibid.*

³²⁰ Australian Intercultural Society, "Our History".

³²¹ *ibid.*

³²² *ibid.*

³²³ Sureyya Nur Cicek, "The Gülen/ Hizmet Movement in Melbourne and Sydney and Its Development of Social Capital in Dialogical Engagement with Non-Muslim Communities." (Monash University, 2017), 133.

2001 - Affinity Intercultural Foundation

The second of the Muslim organisations dedicated to interfaith activities, Affinity Intercultural Foundation, was also “inspired by contemporary Muslim scholar Fethullah Gulen,”³²⁴ was established in Sydney:

*by a group of young Australian Muslims in 2000 and incorporated in 2001, to meet the needs of the Muslim community in interacting with the greater society along with the needs of the general public to increase its awareness of the Muslim community, its religion and culture.*³²⁵

This organisation, “comprising a group of mainly Turkish Muslims in Auburn, Sydney,”³²⁶ developed at a significant point in Australia’s dialogical history, coming after a series of wars in the Gulf Region and just pre-dating the atrocities of 9/11. The Australian *umma* had grown to a point where it was a substantial minority group, whose presence was misunderstood by many non-Muslim and “the evolution of the Muslim community in Australia was at a stage where it was ready to integrate with the wider society having established itself at the core level.”³²⁷

Co-founder and current President of Islamic Sciences and Research Academy (ISRA) Mehmet Ozalp recounted the genesis of its formation:

I still remember the scene at Turrumurra, in early 2001, when I gave the critical feedback about the lack of a Muslim speaker in a Christian–Muslim gathering organized by the Columban Centre for Christian–Muslim relations. Centre’s convenor, Pauline Rae, responded: ‘where Mehmet! Tell me who wants to be involved! I have tried for so many years to have a committee counterpart from the Muslim community with no response’ ... I also remember my answer to Pauline, ‘Pauline, give me six months.’³²⁸

7.8 Conclusion

As with the eras from 1877 until 1945, interfaith dialogue was initially limited in its scope following the Second World War II. Any dialogue before the 1950s that had been

³²⁴ "10th Year Anniversary Reception," *Affinity Newsletter*, no. 69,7 (2011).

³²⁵ Affinity Intercultural Foundation, "Our History".

³²⁶ Keely, "Beginning Christian–Muslim Dialogue in Western Sydney: Context and Practice," 476.

³²⁷ Affinity Intercultural Foundation, "Our History".

³²⁸ Keely, "Beginning Christian–Muslim Dialogue in Western Sydney: Context and Practice," 476.

conducted by the Muslim population occurred at a micro-level. This was a continuation of the necessary or day-to-day dialogue required, in essence, the dialogue of survival. It would appear the Muslim *umma* was so small and geographically isolated in regional Australia that there was no impetus to consolidate or grow dialogue with the dominant Christian hegemony.

From 1945 onwards Australia underwent some substantial social changes. Critically, Government policy brought changes to migration patterns that encouraged other non-Christian faiths to gain a foothold in Australia. From the perspective of this research, the most significant early arrivals during the post-war era included the Turkish diaspora, who quickly became organised and involved themselves in a range of dialogical activities. In some instances, the new migrants could utilise existing infrastructure such as the mosques constructed in Adelaide, Brisbane and Perth. In other cases, the new communities had to create the required infrastructure from scratch. In all cases, dialogue was required; negotiation with previous inhabitants or consultation with local councils to access the required development and building permits.

Once the Muslim community was established in the major cities, other issues came to the fore. Notably, the long sectarian division between the Catholic and Protestant believers in Australia, coupled with the pre-Vatican II attitudes towards dialogue require attention. The key to this was the instigation of ecumenical dialogue, which could only happen once *Nostra Aetate* had been proclaimed in 1965. With the ability for the Christian denominations to engage in dialogue, it would take some time for the previous prejudices to be overcome. Although ecumenism, like interfaith dialogue, does not necessarily require agreement, it does require mutual cooperation between the partners. For the Christian community, this would be enabled by the NCCA and its work during the latter part of the 20th century.

During this era, the various Muslim communities gradually developed level interfaith dialogue from micro to meso and the limited macro level. This dialogue's success was hampered by a fresh growth in anti-Islamic and Muslim sentiment, leading to rising tensions and the beginnings of modern Islamophobia. With negative images and portrayals in the media around the 1979 Iranian revolution and the Gulf Wars, dialogue at micro and

meso-levels became problematic for Muslims.³²⁹ From an organisational perspective, it may be that this tension ultimately brought many religious groups together, as demonstrated by the creation of the Jewish Christian Muslim Association of Australia. Unfortunately, it would take another series of events after 2001 to raise the urgency for this to develop fully.

Despite an often stereotypical viewpoint, Islam is not a monolith. Some Australians are aware of the Sunni/Shia division; however, the nuances of the various schools of Islam often confound or confuse those with little education in the field. The common question raised appears to be, ‘Who speaks for Islam?’ While specifically focused on the dialogue between Christian faiths, ecumenism was also required to gain an authoritative voice within the Muslim community. Crucially, this was enabled through the creation of local, then state and finally, a national body, the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils (AFIC), to represent the different Muslim ethnic groups.

One of the key findings of this chapter is that during this era, interfaith dialogue in Australia grew from the micro-level with the day-to-day conversation of life, through the meso-level with the creation of local societies and organisation. Finally, with the creation of national societies that covered the various stakeholders; in this case, the NCCA and the AFIC, dialogue moved to the macro level. This path follows the development outline surrounding many issues, start local and build upon those who have gone before.

The shift in dialogue followed a pattern, beginning at the organic level that allowed the micro-level dialogue. Various local crises led to more formalised dialogue, such as the Vietnamese Youth ‘problem’ in Springvale in 1989. Imported issues and overseas disputes also provided a trigger for dialogue, in the case of Muslim/non-Muslim dialogue the triggers would be Australia’s participation in the Gulf Wars and to a limited degree, the issues raised by the Salman Rushdie affair. A crisis calls for a solution and in some cases, this involved the creation of interfaith networks allowing meaningful, organised dialogue. While full macro-level dialogue was not genuinely achieved during this era, the organisations and structures came to the fore following the crisis in New York in 2001, Bali in 2002 and London in 2005.

³²⁹ For a more complete discussion see Halim Rane, Jacqui Ewart, and Mohamad Abdalla, *Islam and the Australian News Media* (Carlton, Victoria: Carlton, Victoria : Melbourne University Press, 2010).

Given the roadblocks that have occurred during the post-war era, such as the Gulf Wars and the continued and protracted disturbances in and around the Middle East, it is a marvel that any dialogue occurred at all. It is testimony to the various stakeholders, Muslim and non-Muslim, and their positive persistence that any dialogue was instigated. By 2001, all the pieces were in place for fruitful and meaningful dialogue to move to the next level, and in 2003 the Australian Partnership of Religious Organisations (APRO) was founded “to help build interfaith harmony and understanding in Australia.”³³⁰ None of this would have been possible without the work done leading up to 2001 by the various groups and individuals outlined in this research, who established the groundwork, the communities and the organisation required for meaningful interfaith dialogue.

³³⁰ "Australian Partnership of Religious Organisations".

Chapter 8. Conclusion

This thesis has set out to contribute to some of the gaps in the literature surrounding inter-religious dialogue in Australia between Muslims and non-Muslims. Through a thorough examination of the written and oral records found in a range of archival repositories, this research has examined and analysed attempts by Muslims to engage with Australians in dialogue. Uniquely, one of the key contributions of this research has been that by applying the sociological groupings of micro, meso and macro, this thesis has been able to categorise levels of inter-religious dialogue between Muslims and non-Muslims from before colonisation through until 2001. Importantly, it has outlined the pathways the various religions took towards a more organised form of dialogue that included ecumenism as a precursor for inter-religious dialogue.

Inter-religious dialogue is not necessarily a modern concept. As chapter 3 demonstrates, there have been demonstrated periods of inclusion, pluralism and dialogue between majority and minority religious groups across recorded history. In contrast, despite the urgings of most of the sacred texts to engage in peaceful dialogue, this has not always been the case. The introductory chapters serve to establish the various Abrahamic religious positions on dialogue, as well as the place of inter-religious dialogue in global history. Additionally, there is discussion around the literature and how dialogue it fits into Australia's religious and social history, in both the colonial and pre-colonial era.

The crucial findings from this research demonstrate the differing sociological levels of inter-religious dialogue between Muslims and non-Muslims as far back as the extant records exist. This dialogue appears to have enabled peaceful relationships at certain points in history. However, one must accept that at times tensions arose, such as those reported to Mathew Flinders in 1802,¹ the 'Afghan issue' of the late 1800s, or the rise of modern Islamophobia during the latter part of the 20th century. As a caveat, and to highlight a potential shortcoming of this research, one must be cautious of the lack of records left behind by the early Muslim pioneers due to language and educational differences and the fact that their voice had limited social and cultural value to the European colonists. We must remain mindful that only some of those 'other voices' have survived in the records.

¹ Flinders, *A Voyage to Terra Australis*, Book 2.9.

Despite this, the existing records are vital for this research to draw some form of conclusion, paving the way for future researchers to build on this foundation.

Additionally, the findings indicated a need for a critical mass of participants, some form of organisation for dialogue to occur at a meso-level, and the importance of ecumenical and intra-religious dialogue. Finally, the legacy of the inter-religious dialogue as well as barriers that arose form part of the findings. This will be summarised below, with some reflection in the light of the main research questions through the different findings.

8.1 Measurable and Cyclical

By introducing the sociological constructs of micro, meso and macro group sizes to the study of inter-religious dialogue, this research has found that the breadth and depth of inter-religious dialogue can be better observed and categorised. One of the major contributions from this thesis is that we now have an understanding of how inter-religious dialogical relationships have developed through Australia's history, rising and falling as the dominant hegemony and worldview changed. As part of this new understanding, chapter 3 provides a clearer view of the nature of the dialogue between Australia's Indigenous Nations and their many northern Muslim neighbours.

Establishing an exact date for the first contact between Muslims and Australia's Indigenous people is not an easy task. If Haveric's and others' work concerning visits by the Omani sailors, as represented by Al-Khwarizmi's map of 820 could be substantiated, this could place the date sometime before the 9th century. Regardless of the actual date, there is evidence to show that this contact happened around the middle of the second millennium before the first European explorers arrived. This research theorises that initial contact would have begun organically, with necessary or micro-level dialogue; through establishing an invitation or acceptance for the visitors to disembark on Australia's northern shores. Over time, this relationship grew, both around the sociological levels of dialogue and the range of contact. By the late 18th century, Muslims were interacting with the Indigenous people across Australia's northern regions, from the NW coast of Western Australia to the Gulf of Carpentaria in the Northern Territory. As the dialogue shifted to the community or meso-level, the interactions began providing benefits for all groups involved. For the Muslim Macassan fishermen, this meant a recurring income through the sales of the trepang to the Chinese, and in some instances, life partners through marriage.

A key point that has been established by this research has shown that the long-standing relationships initiated in the pre-colonial era marked an early peak in relations and inter-religious dialogue between Muslims and Indigenous Australians. Towards the coming of colonisation, the relationship appeared to have become strained. At this distance, the cause of this can be difficult to pinpoint. However, it may have been a result of diminishing trading relationships with China or the impact of the advancing European coloniser's slow march through S.E. Asia and into the Pacific.

The research illustrates that the coming of European colonisation effectively reset any inter-religious dialogue. The long-term interactions and dialogue between the Indigenous Nations and the Macassans came under pressure as the new European arrivals sought to stamp their mark on and control the 'Great Southern Land.' In the long-term, this would lead to a ban on the Muslim Macassan fishermen continuing their relationship with Indigenous Australians due to colonisation's inherent racist nature. Patrick Dodson's words bear repeating once again; that if the European colonisers had adopted "the model of engagement established by the Muslims of Macassar and the Aboriginal people of Northern Australia ... then the history between us all, over the past 220 years may have been a very different story."²

Through the available records, chapter 5 has established that any early post-colonial inter-religious dialogue between Muslims and non-Muslims was at a necessary or micro-level. Aside from the initial directive to establish Australia as a Protestant Christian community, there were simply not enough Muslims for Australians to engage with in meaningful dialogue. With a need for camels to help explore and open up Australia's vast inland, the Afghan cameleers arrived, almost as a second thought alongside their four-legged charges. From this point on, the Muslims in Australia began the slow process of building local communities such as Beltana, Maree, Bourke and Broken Hill. Additionally, during this period, a small number of Muslims from other parts of the world, such as India and Syria, also made Australia their new home along with various Muslim sailors from S.E. Asia such as Malays and Lascars. Again, the numbers were small, and they were treated as the different other, most likely due to issues of racism, as opposed to religious intolerance. Again, the dialogue was at a micro-level, with some of the cameleers finding a voice in the

² Dodson, "Key Note Address," 1.

media of the day, often responding to some of the imported stereotypical orientalist views being expressed. This study highlights that even despite efforts at positive dialogue by Muslims, individual attempts became lost and disappeared in the white noise surrounding the white Australia debate and overt racism.

Once some other key areas were addressed such as the White Australia Policy, a more tolerant immigration policy and a need for a labour force, the *umma* could grow. This in turn helped to drive inter-religious dialogue to the next level, especially with regards to the *Nostre Aetate*. Sometime in the 1970s, inter-religious dialogue moved into both the meso and macro-level. Chapter 7 shows that first organised occurrence may have been instigated by a Muslim engineer in rural Bendigo, Victoria. Regardless, the era of growth in inter-religious dialogue would be accelerated through the series of crisis at the beginning of the 21st century.

8.2 A Critical Mass

The fundamental strength of this research is that through the use of sociological groupings of micro, meso and macro, the population sizes and levels of interaction become evident. Post colonisation, there were simply not enough Muslims for the first colonists to engage with in dialogue. The early Muslim migrants were also spread through a vast geographical range, predominantly located in outback or rural regions where extensive contact was limited. In the major cities, small groups of Muslims often limited themselves to their local supportive community, engaging only in the necessary or day to day dialogue at a micro-level. In regional centres such as Shepparton, Victoria, Mareeba, Queensland and Northern and York in Western Australia where the Albanian Muslims diaspora settled, they seem to have become integrated into the community more quickly, leading to greater levels of dialogue and a higher level of acceptance, however only in those areas. Again, this would be due to the nature of small-town communities where the entire community needs to be working together to survive and thrive. They were also engaged in occupational dialogue, as most of them appear to have filled the labour shortages these areas were experiencing, aiding a shift of dialogue to the next level.

These small regional towns had smaller populations than the major cities, therefore establishing a critical mass required fewer immigrants. The research has demonstrated that the Muslims in these areas became organised earlier than other ethnic groups and began to

shift the dialogue from micro to meso-level through establishing clubs and places of worship. As these migrants were of European background, they may have had a smoother path towards integration, given the lack of visual differences and the nature of their employment alongside their Anglo neighbours. It may also be that as they were generally a more homogenous ethnic group, meaning that their ability to work together to establish pathways to dialogue was easier.

Despite the low numbers of Muslims and lack of organised dialogue, the infrastructure that had been put in place was valuable once the migration levels of Muslims increased. This would not occur until after World War II, as a range of Muslims from Europe and the Middle East chose Australia as their migration destination. From the 1950s onwards, the number of Muslims entering the country steadily increased, leading to greater opportunities for dialogue between them and the mostly Christian Australians. Again, this dialogue commenced at a micro-level, gradually developing to the community or meso-level as relationships were built, usually requiring a critical mass of participants.

Chapter 6 provides clear evidence that from the 1950s, a paradigm shift occurred. Once the Australian *umma* increased in size and became part of the urban landscape, the nature of dialogue changed and grew. New migrants were looking to, and were expected to assimilate into the local or regional societies they adopted. Safety in numbers was one method that helped, leading to areas that were more ‘friendly’ to the new arrivals. These areas often provided the religious, language and dietary requirements, and given that Islam calls for certain foodstuffs to be ‘*halal*’, moving into an area dominated by non-Muslims could hinder assimilation as well as causing problems with religious observance.

This research has shown that a critical mass of participants is crucial to enable both sides of the inter-religious dialogue issue. When one side has few members, the tendency is for the majority to deliver a monologue, reducing engagement. In this instance, there needed to be enough Muslims to engage in dialogue, but secondly, the existing Australians had to be willing participants, probably requiring a valid reason or trigger. As part of our modern understanding, interfaith dialogue is problematic if it is forced, disingenuous or evangelical. Australians seemed to become more willing to participate as we became more multicultural; however, there were, and probably will always be holdouts. This also applies to the Muslim communities; they had to be willing players in the arena as well.

8.3 The need for organisation

The research shows that by the end of the 20th-century dialogue had moved through the meso level, with local religious and ethnic community groups initiating a move from a regional to national, or macro-level dialogue. Much of this was due to the establishment of national associations, in some cases born from the ecumenical movement, in others from a need to present a united front. Once national level associations were established, it was only a matter of time before they would engage in a higher level of organised interfaith dialogue. As the various Muslim organisations began to coalesce and organise, often growing out of local and regional areas, it became possible for them to gain a seat at the dialogue table. Perhaps driven by the events overseas, or due to a need to assimilate and find a place in Australian society, these organisations became fundamental in the shift from micro to macro-level dialogue. As with many other issues that impacted dialogue, it would not become genuinely organised at a macro-dialogue level until after September 2001.

A key contribution towards greater levels of dialogue concerns the establishment of mosques. Usually established by organisations with participants from the same ethnic groups or schools of thought, meso-level dialogue ensued with residents, councils and State representatives. This would have required meso-level dialogue to negotiate the requirements of constructing their places of worship involving community-level dialogue in obtaining completing the applications for permits, licences and approvals at a local and state level. Additionally, any mosques constructed provided a visible reminder that other cultures and beliefs existed, again increasing the level of interest and potential for inter-religious dialogue. Many of the records of the local mosques have been lost to time and the discovery of these may provide more information.

As Australia became more multicultural and diverse in faith, this aspect was crucial. Assimilation, although more about the uniquely Australian way of life did not require conversion to Christianity. Although the original colonists were forced to attend services based on the Church of England regardless of belief, this diminished over time with growth in the Catholic, Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu and other religions. The early governments' acceptance allowed for the construction of Catholic churches and cathedrals, and later on mosques and Temples. This demonstrated a willingness at the meso or macro-level to allow for pluralism, however, it may not have been readily accepted at some local levels, given recent opposition to the development of mosques in some areas.

Another of the most important findings of this research is that a key component to organised, meso and macro-level inter-religious dialogue in the Australian context was the need for ecumenical dialogue as a precursor to any external dialogue with other religions. This required the establishment of organisations within the various Christian churches to address this issue. Given the Anglican Church's dominant position and the (imported) historical sectarian division with the Catholic Church, ecumenism was crucial to bring the Christian churches into meaningful dialogue. Once this was established, along with an understanding that there would be differences between these two schools of thought, a more organised form of interfaith dialogue could commence. This allowed for differing interpretations of the scriptures to be understood with regards to the two main schools of Christian theology that existed in Australia.

Likewise, the same applied to the various groups within the Muslim diaspora. Each new group brought different interpretations and practices that went unnoticed by the mostly Christian Australians, many of whom were ignorant of the subtle differences between the schools of thought within Islam. The establishment of local, state and national organisations allowed the intra-faith discussion to occur and provided a platform to engage with other beliefs. Despite the establishment of organisational structures, there have been groups that have remained unwilling or uninterested in participation. Most of the organisations representing Muslims in Australia are dominated by Sunni groups, with minimal input from Shi'ite Muslims. Similar circumstances arise across the full range of religious organisations, leading to certain groups avoiding any organised micro-level inter-religious dialogue.

As the major belief systems became organised in intra or ecumenical dialogue, the various organisations' path was cleared to engage in meso or macro-level dialogue. This in no way diminished the micro-level dialogue that occurred at a local level between communities bonded by locale; however, it did allow dialogue to develop at a greater level. A combination of local-level dialogue, combined with discussions at the state and national level eventually led to the creation of organisations and commissions to engage in meaningful inter-religious dialogue; however, it would take the incidents of 2001 and beyond for it to attract the necessary urgency to proceed to complete meso-level interfaith dialogue

8.4 The legacy of dialogue.

Interfaith dialogue requires two or more partners in order to be dialogical in nature. During the pre-colonial period, the two sides consisted of the Muslim Macassans and their predecessors, along with the various First Nations people of northern Australia. The exact numbers are impossible to ascertain; however, it was an annual occurrence for an extended period. This research has demonstrated that both sides benefited from the nature of this dialogue, the Muslims gaining access to the lucrative fishing and collecting of trepang, while Australia's Indigenous people benefited from material gains such as the dugout canoe.

Another key legacy of the inter-religious dialogue outlined by this research for Australia's Indigenous Nations on the north coast was the acquisition of new knowledge, language and spirituality. Technological advances were passed on, especially with regards to maritime developments. Unknown concepts such as money required a word, and a range of new vocabulary was absorbed. Critically, the introduction of a different version of the 'sky god', one the Muslim fishermen called '*Allah*' was a product of this dialogue. This led to some syncretism of religious practice for the Yolgnu and other indigenous peoples in the region.

The research has clearly demonstrated that this early dialogue led to a period of social harmony involving the Macassan and Australia's Indigenous peoples. Post-1788 this is not so clear and the measuring of social harmony is problematic for the sake of this research. There are no longitudinal studies that cover the vast time period dealt with by this document. Additionally, when the existing records are viewed, they are potentially impacted by the author's worldview, possibly imparting some form of bias into the interpretation.

As this research has discovered, from a Muslim perspective, the findings illustrate some levels of group cohesion with the early Islamic communities. The Macassans were generally from a similar ethnic and religious group, therefore following similar interpretations and practices. Once we moved into the colonial age, the *umma* was a lot less cohesive, with different ethnic groups representing a wide range of the theological and juristic schools within Islam. This led to some internal conflict as new groups came into contact with the old, as was demonstrated in Perth, WA in the 1950s concerning the existing mosque, established by the Afghans who were being replaced by the Albanians. The dispute

would probably have been driven by significant cultural and ethnic differences as opposed to sectarian issues.

In the most extensive study of its kind in Australia, the Scanlon Monash Index defines five domains of social cohesion in their annual survey.³ These include belonging, worth, social justice and equity, participation and acceptance or rejection.⁴ Until after the 1950s, Muslims in Australia may have scored low on these markers, especially regarding the Australian way of life and culture, financial satisfaction, economic opportunity, political participation and issues of acceptance. Much of this would have been enforced by legislative issues such as the Immigration Restriction Act (1901) and taxes and fees levied on Hawker licences and camels. As the Australian *umma* grew in size and significance, some of these areas, such as those concerning economic issues and political participation may have improved; however, others such as the Australian way of life and acceptance of them as the different '*other*' appear to have continued to be problematic.

While my original hypothesis posited that extended contact would lead to higher levels of social harmony, it was not supported unilaterally. During the pre-colonial era, this research has outlined clear examples of social harmony between the Macassans and the Yolgnu peoples, most likely a result of an extended period of contact. In the colonial era, the size and location of the community appear to have had a bearing on the issue. Where Muslims were in closer contact and provided a necessary service, especially with regards to certain small-town Australia, some form of social harmony seemed to be achieved at a more rapid pace. In the big cities, this sense of inclusion was hampered by imported prejudices and stereotypes. Additionally, the weight of numbers plays a significant part in perceptions, stereotypes and cohesion. Towns such as Katanning, WA and Shepparton, Vic have larger than average numbers of Muslims, leading to a more pressing requirement for people to 'just get along' together. This is different in the larger cities, where migrant groups tend to cluster in certain suburbs, leaving other areas bereft of diversity.

As this research shows convincingly, when the first Muslim contacts were made before colonisation, the two groups, Macassans and the First Nations Peoples, were disparate;

³ Andrew Markus, "SMI: The Scanlon-Monash Index of Social Cohesion," (Monash University, 2017).

⁴ "Mapping Social Cohesion. The Scanlon Foundation Surveys," (Melbourne, Vic: Monash University, 2018), 21-27.

however, they may have viewed each other as being of similar status,⁵ a domain that predicates lesser levels of prejudice, leading to more accepting relationships. Post-colonialism, any Muslims were viewed as having an inferior status, not so much about religion but more about race or ethnic background. Some of the contact was occupational; however, the Afghans were generally employed by Australians and remained subjugated, mere serfs to complete the work the Australians were unwilling or unable to perform. This left the Muslims at a disadvantage in any dialogue, given the prejudices and status differences that existed.

Over time, with an increase in the number of Muslims from different ethnic groups and other skill sets, a change in the status seemed to occur, with skilled workers filling the employment opportunities that existed after 1945. The White Australia Policy ensured that ‘people of colour’ remained at a lower level of status; however, those Muslims deemed ‘white enough’ or classed as European seemed to have a smoother path. Occupational contact, such as those cases recounted by the Turkish factory workers in Adelaide, SA and Melbourne, Vic demonstrated that contact, and the ability to perform the required occupation function, led to more positive relationships.

It is one thing to come into contact with the other group and engage in micro-level dialogue; however, prejudices can be re-ignited by events beyond the local population’s control. In this case, events overseas inflamed fears and reduced the local Muslims’ status through a generalised lack of understanding of Islam, allowing previous religious vilification to override and negate any positive gains that had been previously made. The old cliché, ‘time heals all wounds’ may not be relevant; sometimes, the “wounds are buried and resurface,”⁶ allowing prejudices to overrule previous relationships and any hope of positive dialogue.

8.5 Barriers to Interfaith Dialogue

Across the years, there have been many barriers to interfaith dialogue. These have included language, racism, official state and federal policy and an imported Orientalist attitude or stereotype. Initially, Indigenous Australians and Muslims encountered language barriers; however, these seem to have been overcome with sufficient time and patience. Importantly, as indicated earlier, Indigenous Nations overcame this aspect through the syncretism of

⁵ Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice*.

⁶ Credited variously to either Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy or Eleanor Roosevelt.

terminology and language on both sides. Likewise, for the Afghan pioneers, language was also a barrier, and as outlined in chapters 4 and 5, those with sufficient language skills managed to find a voice and engage in dialogue. Many of those without this skill will have mostly gone by the way, and we may never be able to reveal the true extent of any dialogue or issues they encountered. It would appear that the only attempt by colonial Australians to learn any of the languages of the Afghans related more to dealing with the camels, as opposed to engaging with the cameleers themselves, demonstrating a lack of willingness to engage in any meaningful dialogue or attempts at social cohesion in the early colonial era.

Specific regulatory barriers, such as the White Australia Policy were problematic but did allow European Muslims to migrate. Once this was dismantled, and migration from other parts of the world increased, new barriers would emerge. With the small number of Muslims and ever-increasing Southern European diaspora arriving during the 1950s, any of the media's polemicised attack was directed at the Italians and Greeks, the new different 'other'. As this research demonstrates, during the 1960s and 70s as the number of Muslims increased, so did their visibility, leading to early Islamophobia. Higher visibility, coupled with events in the Middle East, a region still viewed with an Orientalist lens, and a lack of understanding led to fear of the unknown. In turn, interfaith dialogue at any level was impacted and restricted, through mutual fear.

One key aspect of modern interfaith dialogue is the requirement to come to the table with "no hard-and-fast assumptions."⁷ Given how Muslims have been depicted historically in Western societies, often utilising Gibbons' image of Islam being a "religion of the sword,"⁸ many Australians had been tainted with this as the dominant European image. When combined with some overt racism, this hurdle needed to be overcome for any meaningful dialogue to occur. This stereotyping still stands as a barrier to serious dialogue. Education was and is the key, and while there is evidence of many presentations, speeches and correspondence denouncing this view, it has remained an issue, even into the 21st century. Once the churches had begun to move past this assumption, organised dialogue could become authentic and fruitful; however, it seems to have remained an issue for many

⁷ Swidler, "The Dialogue Decalogue: Ground Rules for Interreligious Dialogue," 2.

⁸ Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, III.

laypeople to this day. Once these areas are overcome, the way forward to authentic meaningful dialogue will open.

The anti-Muslim sentiment also found a place at some local levels, raising further issues for Australian Muslims. Although framed along racial lines, concepts such as the ‘Afghan Problem’ pushed any attempt at organised dialogue into the margins. In tandem with a series of laws designed to protect the unionised teamsters, state regulations such as the Camels Destruction Act, levies and licence fees for hawkers also served to marginalise the small, disparate and dispersed Muslim community. The ‘Battle of Broken Hill’ during World War I also ensured that the Afghan Muslim community were on the receiving end of vitriolic attacks. There seems to have been a lull in the anti-Muslim sentiment after the war, most likely due to the small number of Muslims in Australia. Once the Muslim diaspora began to increase after World War II, they, like all foreign arrivals, were on the receiving end of racist attacks.

Although arbitrary, it has been suggested that a valid starting point for the rise of modern anti-Muslim sentiment, or at least” pivotal period framing the rise of Islamophobia [started around the] ‘Salman Rushdie affair’ in 1989 and the (first) Gulf War (1990).”⁹ In 1989 part of the dialogue moved to a national level when issues arose around financial mismanagement of the Islamic Abattoirs in Melbourne, “a factor in the collapse of the Victorian Labour Government and a complete revolution in the economic management of the State.”¹⁰ For the Muslim community, this demonstrated “the negative potential of naming privately controlled business organisations ‘Islamic’.”¹¹ Other issues that became part of the macro-level dialogue around Muslims included controversies over Sheikh Taj El-Din Hamid Hilaly and the impact of global geopolitical issues that led to complications for Muslims. As in previous times, permits or development applications were refused or held up in both New South Wales and Victoria,¹² hindering the development of positive dialogue and social harmony.

⁹ Victoria Mason and Scott Poynting, "The Resistible Rise of Islamophobia: Anti-Muslim Racism in the UK and Australia before 11 September 2001," *Journal of sociology (Melbourne, Vic.)* 43, no. 1 (2007).

¹⁰ Cleland, *The Muslims in Australia: A Brief History.*, 82.

¹¹ *ibid.*

¹² *ibid.*, 88-92.

Whilst the Muslims in Australia had always been subject to some form of ‘*othering*’ as the research has demonstrated, it would begin its transformation to the next level during the last two decades of the 20th century. This ‘*othering*’ would significantly impact dialogue at all sociological levels, from micro to macro, given the tensions that existed at a global level. Some of this attitude towards others was driven by the external issues and political conditions of previous times.

8.6 Political Conditions

From 1788 onwards, the European colonisers brought with them a very different sense of *weltanschauung* or worldview. Amongst other concepts, they applied a Eurocentric Christian hegemony to everything they came into contact with, including the First Nations people and the Macassans. In doing so, it reset any previous inter-religious dialogue between Australians and Muslims back to a necessary or micro-level. It is important to note that this did not happen across the country at one point in time. As the colonisers spread out from Sydney Cove, they enforced their position on all aspects of a long indigenous cultural history. This included a Christian evangelising mission towards the Indigenous peoples, akin to the worldview contained in Kipling’s “White Man’s Burden.”¹³ It was, in essence, a monologue, a one-way conversation whereby those who did not fit the mould were told what to do, how they should behave and what to believe.

During World War I, with the Ottoman Empire having sided with the Axis powers, there was racism directed at the ‘Turks,’ which would have had some impact on dialogue; however, at that stage, there were simply not enough of them. Chapter 6 clearly demonstrates that this changed following World War II, with the Turkish diaspora being welcomed into the country by the government, if not all of the people. This group also left a clear legacy of organisation, mosque building and early attempts at meso and macro-level dialogue. As previously discussed, despite the local attempts at inter-religious dialogue, global events overtook the local situation, with events around the world leading to further stereotyping and marginalisation of Muslims in Australia.

¹³ Kipling, *The Portable Kipling*, 619-21.

8.7 The Academic and historical Gaps

One of the key aims of this thesis was to look at the existing gap in the historical record. Through outlining and providing a chronology of inter-religious dialogue a significant part of this gap has now been filled, based on the available records. What the research has found is that Australia has a long association with the modern concept of inter-religious dialogue. From the first World Parliament of Religions (1893), the First Assembly of the World Council of Churches (1948) and the first 'Muslim-Christian Convocation' in Bhamdoun (1954), there has been an Australian presence. This demonstrates a long and extensive history of involvement and understanding about the requirement for inter-religious dialogue in Australia.

The findings also support the claims that “interfaith activity in Australia did not exist organisationally until the early 1970s,”¹⁴ and was initially associated with the work of the Australian chapter of the WCRP, now called Religions for Peace Australia. At a national level, this may be the case, however, this research has clearly uncovered that there has always been dialogue at a local or regional level, initially at the micro-level and progressing to a macro-level.

Historically, inter-religious dialogue has been centred in Melbourne. However, it now has associated state-based branches in Sydney, Brisbane and Tasmania, and there are organisations in Adelaide and Canberra. Despite the need for dialogue, and over 100 years of Muslim presence, Perth has not had a longstanding interfaith organisation,¹⁵ although as at the time of writing Religions for Peace Australia have a regional outpost and there is currently a Perth Interfaith Community active on social media.¹⁶

As argued at great length in this thesis, much of the drive towards organised meso-level dialogue occurred following the Declaration *Nostra Aetate* in 1965. As a policy of the Catholic Church, it also provided the impetus for other Christian Churches to begin or accelerate a formalised policy of engagement. While some religious groups had commenced dialogue overseas, Australia seemed to lag behind other parts of the world. In

¹⁴ Jupp, *The Encyclopedia of Religion in Australia*, 636.

¹⁵ *ibid.*

¹⁶ Cheryl Camp, *Interfaith Networks and Organisations in Australia*, 2nd ed. (Geelong, Australia 2018).

Australia, dialogue became more of an imperative as a paradigm shift occurred around migration following World War II. Due to the ever-increasing number of Muslims arriving in Australia, in part led by the first members of the Turkish diaspora, and students on the Colombo Plan, more Muslims were available to be participants in the process. They were aided by the Lebanese, Syrians, Indonesians, Malaysians and others who chose Australia as their post-war migration destination. What appears to have been ignored are the other levels of dialogue that pre-existed in Australian history. This is especially relevant to relationships between the Baijini, Macassans and other Muslims with Indigenous Australians, who have had various levels of dialogue for time immemorial. If one takes the view that the Yolgnu, Tiwi, Larrakia and other Indigenous groups were ‘Nations,’ alongside the view that the Macassans came from the Gowanese nation, then dialogue before colonisation may be viewed at a macro-level. We may not view it as organised; however, the research demonstrates that it was sustained and grew from an initial micro-level base, and accordingly, we may need to review and re-frame the narrative surrounding inter-religious dialogue in Australia before colonisation.

8.8 Future recommendations

8.8.1 Shortcomings

Time constraints and the fact that this research covers an enormous time period has meant that there have been some areas that will require further research. Additionally, a heavy reliance on secondary sources and the extant oral histories means that some of my conclusions are speculative, based on the best available evidence. Primary sources from both Indigenous Australians as well as some of the Muslim migrant groups are scarce, most likely due to the lack of a written language in the first instance, and issues of literacy and English language competency in the second. Additionally, in both cases the perceived value of any records would have been viewed as of low importance, leading to a lack of urgency in the compiling and collection of any records left behind. With many of the issues, the author is an outsider, especially with regards to Indigenous Australia. Knowledge is sacred in the Indigenous world and as an outsider, many resources are (rightly) unavailable to me. If possible, this area should be further explored by Indigenous academics and researchers, however, again with the caveat that much of this information may be for insiders only.

The use of oral history presents some problems. Greater value has been placed on the written word over history. For Aboriginal Australia, this is not an issue as they have passed on the stories of their culture for over 65,000 years. Recent research has demonstrated that the memorization techniques utilised by Indigenous Australians demonstrate “a 3-fold greater probability of improvement”¹⁷ when applied correctly, than other methods. Maybe we need to review our standpoint on a long-standing oral tradition of our First Nations Peoples. Additionally, as mentioned earlier, extracting a western understanding of ‘history’ from some of these Indigenous stories is problematic as time is viewed differently. In a similar vein, language and literacy issues meant that not a lot of written primary sources were left behind. Finally, undiscovered private holdings may shed more light on the post-colonial and modern era.

Researching during the time of COVID presented its own series of barriers. Travel restrictions hampered access to certain resources, however, much was able to be sourced via digitised resources. This reduced, but not removed this barrier. It is hoped that some of the areas that may be perceived as gaps may be addressed in the future, especially involving face to face discussion with Australia’s ethnically and geographically diverse Muslim community. Whilst it is difficult to find any positives with the current pandemic, in this instance, it did provide the author with extra time to complete the research.

It does need to be acknowledged that there are some gaps in the research. One area surrounds the role and place of Muslim academics in shaping dialogue. The other key area is the involvement of second and subsequent generations of Australian Muslims in inter-religious dialogue. Both areas represent further opportunities and potential avenues of research.

8.8.2 Moving Forward

One of the puzzling areas for non-Muslims to comprehend and negotiate is the Muslim community’s organisational structure in Australia. Rabbis, bishops and moderators of many religious beliefs are recognised as spokespeople for their respective groups. Who speaks for whom in the Muslim community? The title of Grand Mufti of Australia does not denote an imam whose authority is recognised by all Muslims in the hierarchical sense the title

¹⁷ David Reser et al., "Australian Aboriginal Techniques for Memorization: Translation into a Medical and Allied Health Education Setting," *PLOS ONE* 16, no. 5 (2021): 2.

may suggest to non-Muslims.¹⁸ In part, this is due to the representative organisations being mostly Sunni, with limited participation by the Shi'ite community. As we have moved into the 21st century, this has changed with the creation of some umbrella Muslim groups and Shi'a focussed organisations, however, there is still fragmentation within the *umma*, some of it concerning the issue of who has overall authority. This issue appears to have an impact on organised dialogue; however, one must accept that not all Muslims share the same view, in the same way that all Christians, Buddhists, Hindus and others may not share a consistent worldview within their religion. Often this is impacted by ethnic or cultural difference, something demonstrated by this research and an issue that must be taken into account. The view that Islam is monolithic and will have one 'voice' who speaks for all is unrealistic; after all, the Pope and the Dalai Lama only speak for one group within their respective religious traditions.

By looking at the research, some areas may need further attention to move forward to full and frank authentic dialogue. Firstly, amongst these concerns the issue of ongoing education, both about religion and the purpose of inter-religious dialogue. From a religious perspective, an area that often comes to the fore is that the three Abrahamic faith share the same God, regardless of the term utilised. This, along with the inherent concept that Islam is about peaceful submission to God is of paramount importance. Likewise, the stance taken by all religions towards dialogue and pluralism also requires attention from the perspective of education and meaningful dialogue. As Australia becomes more multicultural and therefore home to a greater range of the world's great faiths, understanding your neighbour's beliefs will only become more critical if we are to develop into a truly cohesive and harmonious society.

The issue of both the age and gender of inter-religious practitioners has been evident throughout the course of this research. A great number of the religious participants in inter-religious dialogue before 2001 were males, mostly in the older age brackets. Given the general lack of opportunities for women to participate in leadership positions in the Catholic and Anglican churches, as well as within Islam, this should not be a surprising finding. From the perspective of laypeople, there were greater numbers of women involved,

¹⁸ Keely, "Beginning Christian-Muslim Dialogue in Western Sydney: Context and Practice," 475.

but again, many in an older demographic. What this research has uncovered is the potential for a greater involvement of women at all levels, as well as younger people in general.

Part of this process is underway with mosques around Australia regularly hosting open days. These open days allow for interested non-Muslims to talk to Muslims about their faith and observe and engage with aspects of Islam that they may not understand. While the current pandemic has been problematic for this program, once we move beyond the current COVID era, the restarting of this program is essential for peaceful dialogue and understanding. This openness applies to all faiths and has been embraced by the Hindus and Sikhs, both of whom make their temples available for outsiders to visit. Again, an understanding of your neighbours' faith and position helps to underpin positive inter-religious dialogue and mutual trust.

One potential area of further research should focus on the other faiths that have been later arrivals to Australia. Like the Muslims, there has been a Buddhist and Hindu presence in Australia for some time. They do not feature heavily in this research as the number of believers was low before 2001, and they had not reached the levels of organisation that would sustain any significant dialogue. Since 9/11, this has changed, and some investigation of the nature of dialogue between later arrivals would also be prudent. The author's local region (NSW Central Coast) is home to an enormous range of beliefs, from Antiochian Orthodox to Zoroastrianism and everything in between.¹⁹ It may be that this current research provides some form of a roadmap to inform the newer arrivals of the ways to meaningful dialogue and the pitfalls they may encounter along the way.

Another issue for future research and discussion could surround the growing number of Australians who indicated having no religious affiliation. In the 2016 census, this figure increased to 30.1% of the population.²⁰ Exactly how will they be represented in the inter-religious dialogue of the future is uncertain. By definition, they are not religious, so should they be excluded from any inter-religious dialogue? If this figure increases in the future as predicted, a significant section of Australians may be unaware or unable to engage in any form of organised dialogue with the various religious groups. This is an area that requires further investigation as both adherents of different religions grow, alongside a potential

¹⁹ Australian Bureau of Statistics, "2016 Census Data Summary: Religion in Australia."
²⁰ *ibid.*

increase in ‘non-religion.’ Given the stereotypical view of Islam that still seems to exist, research around Muslim – atheist/agnostic dialogue may become paramount in the future.

While this research has uncovered new material surrounding early encounters between Muslims and Australians, it is far from exhaustive and the discovery of new materials and resources may shed new light on the findings. That said, we now have a more comprehensive understanding of the history of inter-religious dialogue as it pertains to Australia, and we must ensure that we avoid the pitfalls and roadblocks that occurred in the past. If we are to continue to be a migration destination, then it is imperative that we can understand and accept pluralism with different faiths becoming part of our religious and cultural landscape. With Christianity declining and other faiths growing in numbers, alongside an increase in non-religion in the community, the importance of dialogue will become paramount to achieve this goal.

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