

STANDING IN SOLIDARITY WITH THE TOOWOOMBA COMMUNITY: REFLECTIONS ON THE PEACE VIGIL, 9 MAY 2026

By Reverend Melissa Conway, St James' Anglican Church



In mid-April, the Toowoomba Interfaith Working Group was informed that members of the Toowoomba Iranian community were deeply concerned about the recent military actions and were finding it difficult to stay connected with their loved ones. A peace vigil was suggested, and once again, the Faith Communities and Community Organisations of Toowoomba responded with compassion and a sense of urgency. The peace vigil, 'Standing in Solidarity with the Toowoomba Community', was quickly organised and held on Saturday 9 May, with many faith groups and community organisations represented, along with a small group of supporters. After a welcome by a traditional custodian, a number of speakers shared their perspectives on the importance of peace and extended good will towards those who are currently witnessing conflicts in their homelands from a distance.

The peace, harmony and safety we experience living in Toowoomba is contrasted against division, conflict and violence in many parts of the world, particularly the places that were the first homes to our migrant and refugee communities. This is a source of sadness and anxiety for many, as they re-live their own trauma, or fear for the safety and security of loved ones who remain in those places. Nevertheless, we are all grateful for the security we have here.

The speakers we heard that morning shared their compassion and love for all those who are suffering, along with solidarity with all people and all creatures. We are all one. We were encouraged to speak and act with kindness and understanding in all our interactions with others. Further, we can commit to dialogue and friendship and the doors of gentle curiosity and learning that these can open for us.

Those who have a faith background prayed together for peace throughout the world, for the healing of relationships and the flourishing of all creatures in our precious world.

QUEENSLAND POLICE SERVICE ANNUAL EID DINNER

The Multi-faith Multicultural Centre (MMC PLLCA) was honoured to be represented at the Queensland Police Service Annual Eid Dinner by two of our youth members.

The evening brought together faith leaders, community representatives, and members of the Queensland Police Service in a spirit of friendship, understanding and mutual respect. The warm hospitality extended by the Queensland Police Service ensured that all attendees felt welcomed and valued.



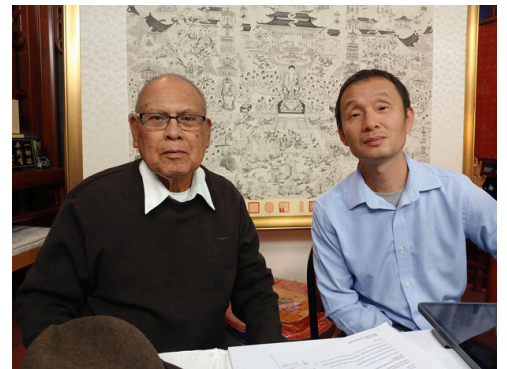
Events such as these play an important role in strengthening relationships between law enforcement and the communities they serve. The gathering was a wonderful reflection of the trust, cooperation and shared commitment to social harmony that exists within our diverse Queensland community.

We thank the Queensland Police Service for their invitation and for providing such a meaningful opportunity for dialogue, connection and celebration.

SHARING KNOWLEDGE THROUGH VOICES OF FAITH

We were privileged to welcome Dr Shang and Father Nanda, who generously shared their knowledge, experience and insights with our community.

Dr Shang presented an engaging talk on acupuncture, exploring its history, principles and role within Traditional Chinese Medicine. Practised for more than 2,000 years, acupuncture involves the insertion of very fine needles at very specific points on the body to promote healing and restore balance. Today, it is widely used around the world as a complementary therapy for pain management, stress reduction and overall wellbeing.



Father Nanda of St Matthew's Church, Crows Nest, delivered a thoughtful presentation on the Theology of Fasting, reflecting on its spiritual significance across religious traditions. Fasting has been practised for thousands of years as a means of self-discipline, reflection, prayer and spiritual growth. Beyond its religious dimensions, fasting is often seen as an opportunity to cultivate gratitude, mindfulness, and a deeper awareness of others' needs.



We are pleased to share that recordings of both talks were broadcasted on our Voices of Faith program on Radio 102.7 FM this June. We encourage our readers to continue tuning in and enjoy these enriching conversations.



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VISIT BY MR CHARLIE SHANDIL



On 17 June, the Pure Land Learning College Association was honoured to welcome Mr Charlie Shandil, Regional Director North (Queensland and Northern Territory), during his visit to Toowoomba.

The visit provided a valuable opportunity to share the work, activities and community programs undertaken by Pure Land and its partners. Discussions covered a range of initiatives focused on social cohesion, intercultural understanding, community engagement and peacebuilding within the Toowoomba region.

We extend our sincere thanks to Mr Shandil for taking the time to meet with us and for his interest in our work. His visit was greatly appreciated and serves as an encouragement to continue strengthening community connections and promoting understanding across cultures and faiths.

THE POWER OF KINDNESS

On 17 June 2026, members of the community gathered at the Toowoomba City Library Community Rooms to hear Associate Professor Jason Hartley present a thought-provoking talk on 'The Power of Kindness'.

Associate Professor Hartley brings a wealth of experience in leadership, community engagement, policing and social cohesion across various global and local institutions. Drawing on his professional and personal experiences, Associate Professor Hartley explored how kindness can be a powerful force for building trust, strengthening relationships and creating more connected communities.

We thank Associate Professor Jason Hartley for sharing his insights and inspiring us to recognise the profound impact that kindness can have in our communities and everyday lives.

International Peace Conference

SAVE THE DATE!

The Multi-faith Multicultural Centre of Toowoomba will be holding our annual International Peace Conference on 29th August. Register here! <https://events.humanitix.com/shared-humanity-shared-responsibility-international-peace-conference-2026> or search up "Shared Humanity, Shared Responsibility - International Peace Conference 2026" on Humanitix. We hope to see you here :)