

Interfaith Talk
Campsie Library
Thursday 19 November 2015
6.00 pm- 7.30 pm

Speech Notes for Welcoming Address by Councillor Karl Saleh

Acknowledgements:

- The traditional owners of this land, the Bediagal people of Dharug nation
- Councillor Linda Eisler and other members of City of Canterbury Interfaith Reference Group
- All guests, residents and members of various congregations and local organisations

Opening Statement:

It is my pleasure to welcome you to this evening's Interfaith Talk.

This is the fourth in a series of such events this year which have been organised by the City of Canterbury Interfaith Reference Group.

The Group was established as an initiative of Council's Multicultural Advisory Committee back in February 2013 and it has since benefitted from the active participation of numerous local faith leaders.

The Group meets quarterly as a way of supporting community leaders to maintain close relationships with each other and to regularly exchange ideas and explore issues that they have in common.

The members of the Group, while reflecting the diverse faith traditions in our City, operate from a shared conviction that all religions have a common focus on connecting people and supporting community life in ways that build mutual understanding and trust between people from all backgrounds.

The Group also aims to build relationships of respect between different traditions and customs by creating opportunities for people of diverse faiths to learn about, and from, each other through open dialogue and a sharing of ideas such as you will witness tonight.

Such interfaith conversations play a critical role in highlighting how much all of our faith traditions have in common, especially in terms of the benefits that we seek for our communities and for humanity as a whole.

I'd like to reaffirm our commitment to supporting the Interfaith Reference Group so that it can implement its future programs and I'd also like to thank all of its members for their continued dedication to fostering a harmonious and co-operative community in our City.

Tonight we will hear speakers discuss spiritual beliefs from the Aboriginal and the Buddhist perspectives.

Our speaker on Aboriginal spirituality is Aunty Joan Tranter, an Elder who is an educator and teacher as well as a member of our Canterbury Aboriginal Advisory Group.

Our Buddhist speaker is Dr Ban Foo Lau, (pronounced **Bun** Foo Lau) of the Providence Maitreya Buddhist Missionary Institute of Australia, based in Belmore South.

As the Chair of the Multicultural Advisory Committee, I wish to express my appreciation to our speakers for sharing their time, knowledge and ideas with us tonight.

Thanks also to all of you for bringing your open minds and hearts along to this session.

I will now hand you back to our MC for the evening, the Reverend David Wallace from Lakemba/Belmore Anglican Church. Thank you Reverend Wallace.