

# **SOR II**

## **Religion and Belief Systems in Australia post-1945**

### **Syllabus - Religion and Belief Systems in Australia Post-1945**

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## Instructional Verbs

<u>Account</u>	Account for: state reasons for, report on. Give an account of: narrate a series of events or transactions
<u>Analyse</u>	Identify components and the relationship between them; draw out and relate implications
<u>Apply</u>	Use, utilise, employ in a particular situation
<u>Appreciate</u>	Make a judgement about the value of
<u>Assess</u>	Make a judgment of value, quality, outcomes, results or size
<u>Calculate</u>	Ascertain/determine from given facts, figures or information
<u>Clarify</u>	Make clear or plain
<u>Classify</u>	Arrange or include in classes/categories
<u>Compare</u>	Show how things are similar or different
<u>Construct</u>	Make; build; put together items or arguments
<u>Contrast</u>	Show how things are different or opposite
<u>Deduce</u>	Draw conclusions
<u>Define</u>	State meaning and identify essential qualities
<u>Demonstrate</u>	Show by example
<u>Describe</u>	Provide characteristics and features
<u>Discuss</u>	Identify issues and provide points for and/or against
<u>Distinguish</u>	Recognise or note/indicate as being distinct or different from; to note differences between
<u>Evaluate</u>	Make a judgement based on criteria; determine the value of
<u>Examine</u>	Inquire into
<u>Explain</u>	Relate cause and effect; make the relationships between things evident; provide why and/or how
<u>Extract</u>	Choose relevant and/or appropriate details
<u>Extrapolate</u>	Infer from what is known
<u>Identify</u>	Recognise and name
<u>Interpret</u>	Draw meaning from
<u>Investigate</u>	Plan, inquire into and draw conclusions about
<u>Justify</u>	Support an argument or conclusion
<u>Outline</u>	Sketch in general terms; indicate the main features of
<u>Predict</u>	Suggest what may happen based on available information
<u>Propose</u>	Put forward (for example a point of view, idea, argument, suggestion) for consideration or action
<u>Recall</u>	Present remembered ideas, facts or experiences
<u>Recommend</u>	Provide reasons in favour
<u>Recount</u>	Retell a series of events
<u>Summarise</u>	Express, concisely, the relevant details
<u>Synthesise</u>	Putting together various elements to make a whole

## Glossary

From pages 244, 249, 254, 263, and 267 of Living Religion

<u>Country</u>	Term used by Aboriginal people to refer to the land to which they belong and their place of Dreaming. Aboriginal English usage of the word is much broader than standard English
<u>Elders</u>	Key persons and keepers of various knowledge within Aboriginal communities. Chosen and Accepted by their own communities
<u>Estate</u>	Heartland of a local group and centre of their attachment to territory
<u>Kinship</u>	System of relationships traditionally accepted by a particular culture and the rights and obligations they involve
<u>Assimilation</u>	Nineteenth century idea that Aboriginal people should be ‘improved’ by being ‘civilised’ and Christianised. From the 19’30s assimilation was a Government policy and in the 1950s legislation was introduced to enforce it
<u>Evangelise</u>	Bringing people to Christianity.
<u>Mission</u>	An Aboriginal settlement that may or may not have once been a religious institution. A person is described as living ‘in or off’ a mission rather than ‘in or at’. The name derived from the original purpose of many Aboriginal settlements – as a mission of one of the various denominations of Christianity.
<u>Integration</u>	A form of assimilation that recognises many Aboriginals’ wish to keep a distinct identity.
<u>Land Rights</u>	Claims by Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander peoples to repossession and compensation for White use of their lands and sacred sites
<u>Native Title</u>	The name given by the High Court to Indigenous property Rights recognised by the Court as handed down in the Mabo decision. 3 June 1992.
<u>Self-Determination</u>	About achieving the full and effective participation of Indigenous peoples in Australian society. This involves recognition of the cultural distinctiveness and diversity of Indigenous people.
<u>Tithing</u>	The act of a person contributing one tenth of their income to the religious body to which they belong
<u>Ecumenism</u>	The movement among Christian churches to promote the restoration of unity among all Christians

# Contemporary Aboriginal Spiritualities

## Aboriginal spirituality as determined by the Dreaming

### **Syllabus Point 1.1 – Contemporary Aboriginal Spiritualities 1.1**

Discuss how Aboriginal spirituality is determined by the Dreaming - Kinship

#### The Dreaming

- refers to all that is known and understood by Aboriginal people.
- It is the central spiritual concept because it determines not only beliefs and values but also relationships with other people and the overall environment.
- Aborigines are able to understand creation in a continuing and living sense by virtue of the Dreaming.
- It explains how the world was created by their ancestors and is passed on orally.
- E.g. dreaming stories such as the rainbow serpent. Dreaming links Aboriginals to the land, they are interdependent: “Aboriginals live their lives being at one with the land, and without land their Dreaming, tradition and culture are sure to die” (Anne Gray).
- Dreaming joins all elements of environment. and its people together  
“Dreaming is the past, present and the future”

#### Kinship

- Complex and sophisticated networks of relationships, rights, and obligations
- Complex family relations: Each person knows their Kin and their Land
- Extended family relationships are at core of Indigenous Kinship
- Central to the way culture is passed on
- Defines where a person fits in, their rights and responsibilities
- Aboriginals grow up with a mental map of these relationships
- Land is important to kinship and is often referred to as “my mother” so it is shared by many people.
- Traditionally all women in a tribe are a child’s mothers as all men are their father
- All things in our country here have law.... and they have people who are related to them.”

### **Syllabus Point 1.2 – Contemporary Aboriginal Spiritualities 1.2**

Discuss how Aboriginal spirituality is determined by the Dreaming - Ceremonial life

#### Ceremonial Life

- Traditional Aboriginal peoples have rich ceremonial life
  - Rites of passage
  - Death and Burial ceremonies
    - Death not end of life but last ceremony in present life
    - Burial grounds held in great fear
    - Burial customs vary: main thing to be interred in one’s own Land

- Periodic ceremonies
    - For enjoyment
    - Balance Rites
  - Balance Rites
    - Important as Aboriginals had no control over food supply
    - Perform rituals to please spirit associated with certain animals
- *Rituals* heighten the presence of the Dreamings:
    - Link the present world to the Dreamtime
  - *Art* is used to communicate the dreaming:
    - By providing maps of the land; clans, sacred sites, waterholes etc.
    - Used to pass on sacred knowledge
  - *Stories* describe the Aboriginal law and lifestyle:
    - Describe how ancestral beings move through land creating nature
    - Provide foundation for Aboriginal existence by explaining creation and sharing how dreaming shapes daily life
    - Used as a form of oral history
  - *Totems* represent individual as they existed in the dreaming:
    - Form of animal, plant or natural phenomena
    - Links individual and ancestor spirit
    - Totems carry ceremonial responsibilities (balance rights)

<b>Syllabus Point 1.3 – Contemporary Aboriginal Spiritualities 1.3</b>
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Discuss how Aboriginal spirituality is determined by the Dreaming - Obligations to the land and people
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Obligations to Land and People

- ‘Ownership’ of the land means they must care for/nurture it
- Land not only provides food etc but is also repository of the secret/sacred
- Group may regularly traverse an area of land but not have responsibility for all of it. The area they do have responsibility for is their Ritual Estate
- Rarely can a group survive just on their own Ritual Estate. Great care must be taken in other groups Estates to obey the law. Sacred sites must not be approached
- Each Ritual Estate has at least one site from Ancestral Beings
- Responsibility of Elders to perform appropriate rites each year

Effect of Dispossession on Aboriginal spiritualities

<b>Syllabus Point 2.1 – Contemporary Aboriginal Spiritualities</b>
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Discuss the continuing effect of dispossession on Aboriginal spiritualities in relation to: Separation from the land
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<b>Syllabus Point 2.1 – Contemporary Aboriginal Spiritualities</b>
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Discuss the continuing effect of dispossession on Aboriginal spiritualities in relation to: Separation from kinship groups
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### **Separation from the land:**

- Interfered with rituals and ceremonies which followed Dreaming tracks (paths that follow the Spirit Ancestors as they created the landscape) that provided the people with a physical connection to the Dreaming. Out of context the ritual/ceremony is meaningless and the people become misplaced spiritually and psychologically with no home and no stable base of life.
- The land is the context of the Dreaming stories, a constant around which their spiritual world revolved. Removal from this land would then be likely to cause a severe disruption to the normal pattern and processes for handling traditions
- Physical presence in the country was important to the people in keeping the lore (stories, songs, dances, art, customs) alive and passing it on. The lore is related land were their shared personal property, perhaps the most important 'permanent' and 'tangible' constant in their nomadic life.

### **Separation from kinship groups:**

- Kinship groups are vital in the aboriginal culture in that they tie clans and families together, allocating roles and responsibilities within a community.
- Separation from kinship groups, working systems, then meant that the aboriginal society lost its point of fixture and every personal affiliation became lamed.
- The complex interrelationship of social status, personal identity and health must be borne constantly in mind. When the kinship system is destroyed it members inevitably suffer from psychological distress such as withdrawal and depression where the individual has suffered a loss of identify this extends to the breaking up of communities and a spirit of solidarity.

<b>Syllabus Point 2.3 – Contemporary Aboriginal Spiritualities</b>
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Discuss the continuing effect of dispossession on Aboriginal spiritualities in relation to: The Stolen Generations
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### **The Stolen Generation**

Aboriginal children were forcibly removed from homes by government officials to be placed in missions or reserves such as the Cootamundra Girls' Home between the 1900 and 1970's as well as being adopted or fostered into white families if the children were 'half caste'.

- Separation from elders: no generation to pass knowledge, language and traditions to. This results in a loss of identity and self esteem the Aboriginal culture deteriorated
- Kinship ties were broken resulting in a loss of identity where the young indigenous generation is lost in-between two opposing cultures in a struggle to find balance (see above)

#### *Protection Policy:*

- Removal of Aboriginal children from their families under the pretence that they were living in an 'uncivilised' environment followed by placement into missions and reserves

#### *Assimilation Policy:*

- 1951: Forced integration of Aboriginal peoples into white society through abandonment of their traditional beliefs and practices.

*Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (1996):*

- Issued the ‘Bringing them home’ report which told of the horrific conditions Aboriginal children were forced to face

Outline the importance of the following for the Land Rights movement

**The Land Rights Movement and the Dreaming:**

- A series of government decisions in response to land claims which explored the right of Aboriginal peoples who had maintained continual contact with their traditional lands for hundreds of years before settlement
- Both a religious and political movement
- Aimed to secure the inherent rights of Aboriginal peoples to their land so that their religious and cultural integrity is preserved.

<b>Syllabus Point 3.1 – Contemporary Aboriginal Spiritualities</b>
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Outline the importance of the following for the Land Rights movement: Native Title
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Native Title

- (1993): The Native Title Act validated the existence of non-Indigenous interest in land such as freehold leases and other grants and licenses. It accepted that Indigenous peoples who had continuing interest in the land had rights to the land. Where both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people had interest in the land, the Act provided an appropriate forum for dealing with this.
- Allowed Aboriginal people claim ownership of traditional land under ‘Native Title’ with proof such as
- In order to claim Native Title, must meet 2 prerequisites
- Land must not be owned by anyone else
- This included governments and individuals
- Aboriginal people must show a traditional and ongoing connection with the land since 1788
- This was very hard to prove without legal papers and contracts
- Very small portion and percentage of Australian land is owned by Aboriginal people through Native Title because:
- Most land is already owned by other people or institutions
- Insufficient proof could be provided

<b>Syllabus Point 3.2 – Contemporary Aboriginal Spiritualities</b>
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Outline the importance of the following for the Land Rights movement: Mabo
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Mabo

- This case was initiated by five indigenous plaintiffs, led by Eddie Mabo, from the Murray Islands in the Torres Strait – the Meriam People suing for land claims.
- June (1992), High Court of Australia ruled in favour of Eddie Mabo: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders had a continuous link with the land and continued to practice laws and customs associated with the land before British colonization.
- Overthrew the legal fiction *terra nullius*, acknowledging that Australia was occupied by Aboriginal people in 1788 when British settlement took place.

*Claimed ownership of land under the 'Native Title Act' which existed since 1788, Mabo raised awareness of its existence and this was a step to the passing of the Native Title Act 1993*

<b>Syllabus Point 3.3 – Contemporary Aboriginal Spiritualities</b>
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Outline the importance of the following for the Land Rights movement: Wik
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Wik

The Wik case concerned land that was subject to pastoral leases.

- (1996) The High Court of Australia decided that native title rights could co-exist with the rights of pastoralists. But when pastoralists and Aboriginal rights were in conflict, the pastoralists' rights would prevail.

The importance of the Dreaming for the Land Rights movement

<b>Syllabus Point 4 – Contemporary Aboriginal Spiritualities</b>
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Analyse the importance of the Dreaming for the Land Rights movement
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Importance of The Dreaming for the Land Rights Movement

- Land is at the heart of the Dreaming and all relationships within Aboriginal communities are determined through relationships with the land.
- The declaration of *terra nullius* made by the white settlers denied foundational principles of the Aboriginal belief systems
- Aboriginal spirituality is founded on the people's inextricable connection to the land. They are part of the land and the land is part of their being
- Daily life, Rituals and Ceremonies reflect and revolve around the land and are dependent upon it to be whole, without it these practices cannot be observed

Religious expression in Australia – 1945 to the present

Outline changing patterns of religious adherence from 1945 to the present using census data

<b>Syllabus Point 5.1 – Contemporary Aboriginal Spiritualities</b>
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Outline changing patterns of religious adherence from 1945 to the present using census data
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Changing Patterns of Religious Adherence From 1945

- 5 Major Trends



- Decline of Major Christian denominations
- 1947 81.2% Christian.
- 2001 56.9% Christian
  - Age Structure
- Churches have greater proportion of over 50's and less under 40's than society at large
- 82% of Australians 65+ identify as Christian. 60% of 18-24 year olds
- Largest group of Buddhist affiliates 35-44. Similar for Hindu and Muslim
- 18-24 most likely to state no religion. 20%
  - Increase in those identifying with a tradition other than Christianity
- From 1996 to 2001 Buddhism increased by 79%, Hindu 42%, Islam by 40% and Judaism by 5%
- Due to Immigration. Christianity still dominant in Immigrants but others more so than in population at large
- From 1996 to 2001 Half a Million new arrivals to Australia. 9% Buddhist. 9% Islam. 5% Hindu. 1% Judaism.
  - Increase in those identifying with the Orthodox Religious Traditions
- Due to South Eastern European Immigration
- Up by 7% from 497,000 from 1996 to 2001
  - Emergence of Catholicism as the major Christian religion
- In 1947 39% Anglican, 21% Catholic, 27% Other Christian
- In 2001 27% catholic, 21% Anglican
- Mainly from influx of Italian immigration in 50's and 60's

Account for the present religious landscape in Australia in relation to

**Syllabus Point 6.1 – Religious expression in Australia – 1945 to the present**

Account for the present religious landscape in Australia in relation to: Christianity as the major religious tradition

Christianity as the Major Religious Tradition

- Original migration strictly Irish/British, entirely Christian
- White Australia Policy ensured that almost all immigrants were Christian
- Christians still make up majority of immigrants, from Britain, NZ and Europe

**Syllabus Point 6.2 – Religious expression in Australia – 1945 to the present**

Account for the present religious landscape in Australia in relation to: Immigration

Immigration

- Except for Israel, Australia has received more immigration in proportion to its existing population than any other country
- Initially majority of immigrants were European Christians
- Post War immigration changed this mix
- In major Christian Denominations many ethnicities have been catered for. Eg. Maronite and Melkite in Catholic community
- There are now fourteen Orthodox denominations in Australia
- Ethnic diversity has forced recognition that not all Australians associate with England and Ireland

**Syllabus Point 6.3 – Religious expression in Australia – 1945 to the present**

Account for the present religious landscape in Australia in relation to: Denominational switching

Denominational Switching

- Within Protestant/Anglican denominations people are very prepared to switch denominations
  - 1991 Church life Survey showed that 29% of people surveyed had switched in the last 5 years
  - Switchers came from broad range of backgrounds and ages
  - Key reasons for in/outflow in Christian Denominations
- Denominational Switching
  - Newcomers joining for first time or re-joining after years of absence
  - Birth of Children
    - - Decreasing or ceasing attendance
  - Death
  - Catholicism has very high denominational loyalty. Mainly due to prevalence of Catholic Schools
  - Pentecostal churches have greatest amount of Switchers both in and out

- National Church life survey Estimates that one third of Pentecostals switched or ceased going to church through the 1990's
- Conservative churches have weathered the storm of declining numbers surprisingly well. Remained stable or grown. Strong evangelising.

<b>Syllabus Point 6.4 – Religious expression in Australia – 1945 to the present</b>
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Account for the present religious landscape in Australia in relation to: Rise of New Age religions
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Rise of New Age Religions

- Modern emphasis on personal experience - people want personal fulfillment.
- Differ from traditional churches as they lack any single unifying creed or doctrine
- No Holy text, no central organisation, no formal leadership
- Fastest growing religious faiths in 2001 census, increasing by 140% since 1996
- Concerned with the body and objects: crystals, flowers, reducing stress, becoming happy rather than living in servitude to god. Concern for ecology, equality & feminism

<b>Syllabus Point 6.5 – Religious expression in Australia – 1945 to the present</b>
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Account for the present religious landscape in Australia in relation to: Secularism
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Secularism

denoting attitudes, activities, or other things that have no religious or spiritual basis

- Australia is a very secular society
- From 1788 to the present regular church attendance has waxed and waned from 10-20%
- People stating 'No Religion' on the census rose from 7% in 1971 to 16% in 2001
- An ANU survey showed 42% of respondents believed Religion was not at all important to them
- Over 50% of all marriages are conducted by civil celebrants

Describe the impact of Christian ecumenical movements in Australia

<b>Syllabus Point 7.1 – Religious expression in Australia – 1945 to the present</b>
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Describe the impact of Christian ecumenical movements in Australia: The National Council of Churches
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Ecumenism Definition

- Movement among Christian Churches to promote restoration of unity among all Christians

### The National Council of Churches

- 1922 the main Protestant churches formed the Joint Australian Council of the Churches Contemplating Reunion. Dissolved in the 1930's
- Australia council of Churches (ACC) formed in 1946
- Succeeded by National Council of Churches in Australia in 1994. Catholic church joined
- 1998 Lutheran church joined
- July 2004 NCCA committed to “Australian Churches: Covenanting Together” with Five Dimensions
  - One: General commitment to common prayer, intercession, and exploration of common beliefs
  - Two: Commitment to the shared use of resources
  - Three: Commitment to Common mission and ministry
  - Commitment to common sacraments
- Different combinations signed each dimension. All fifteen signed one. Nine mutually recognised Baptism.
- Has led to a level of cooperation between Catholic, Anglican and Protestant that would have been unbelievable 30 years ago.

### **Impact of NCCA:**

- Helped create positive relationships throughout many Eastern and Western churches which continue to last today through dialogue and practical cooperation so there is no conflict or tensions between Christian denominations
- NCCA works through a number of commissions, networks and programs including the Christian World Services (CWS) which is responsible for international programs such as Make Poverty History and the National Program on Refugees and Displaced People (NPRDP)
- NPRDP helped to resettle and protect hundreds of refugees in horrific conditions from countries such as Afghanistan, Iraq and East Timor
- Assisted asylum seekers by creating ‘Houses of Welcome’, offering English classes and free accommodation

<b>Syllabus Point 7.2 – Religious expression in Australia – 1945 to the present</b>
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Describe the impact of Christian ecumenical movements in Australia: NSW Ecumenical Council
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### NSW Ecumenical Council

- Causes include the Christmas Bowl, the House of Welcome (organisation that provides help for refugees who have been released from detention centres – organises visas, accommodation and employment assistance) theological reflection and social justice.
- NSW Council of Churches is more conservative and evangelical the NSW Ecumenical Council. End of 2005 – both groups met for fellowship to explore areas of co-operation. Council of Churches noted there were substantial differences in the outlook, ethos and activities of the two bodies and considered the NSW Ecumenical Council to be too liberal.

## Evaluate the importance of interfaith dialogue in Multifaith Australia

<b>Syllabus Point 8 – Religious expression in Australia – 1945 to the present</b>
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Evaluate the importance of interfaith dialogue in Multifaith Australia
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### **Interfaith Dialogue in Multi-faith Australia:**

- Australia is a multicultural society and whilst this is positive, it can lead to many misunderstandings and clashes in belief, particularly throughout religious faiths
- Australian Christians believe Jesus Christ is God and the Messiah, Australian Jews believe Jesus Christ was a prophet and that calling him God is blasphemous whilst Australian Muslims believe Jesus Christ was a minor prophet
- Clashes in belief have been the result of much blood shed, war and violence throughout history

### **The role of Interfaith Dialogue:**

- It is when representatives from different religious traditions meet together peacefully to talk and exchange information about their respective faiths and clear up misunderstandings
- Not about debate or attempts to proselytise
- One example was the Australian National Dialogue of Christians, Muslims and Jews in 2003 by the NCCA
  - Purpose was to provide opportunities for faiths to build understandings and harmony whilst clarifying issues

### **International Dialogue:**

- In December 2004, 14 countries with ten interfaith delegates met in Indonesia for the purpose of friendly dialogue.
- Was initiated by Foreign Minister, Alexander Downer who stated that religion may well be the key to ‘cracking the global tensions problem’

### **Cebu Dialogue:**

- March 2006, delegates from 15 different countries met in the Philippines for Cebu dialogue and concluded that:
  - Interfaith dialogue builds upon understanding, good will and relationships
  - Interfaith cooperation plays a central role in fostering peace and security
  - Interfaith dialogue is essential in de-linking religions from terrorMade a call for religions to recognise pluralism, multiculturalism and peace and to develop openness and respect for other faiths, traditions and cultures

### **Limitations of Interfaith Dialogue:**

- Belief that there is a point where important differences cannot be overlooked
- Controversy that some people are trying to ‘water-down’ and distort their religious beliefs in a desperate attempt to reconcile between other religions
- Many believe that a God cannot be revitalised to be right for all

### **Impact of Interfaith Dialogue**

- Post war period forced diversification and re-evaluation of Sectarian ways

- Holding fifth world assembly of World Conference on Religion and Peace in Melbourne in 1989 was turning point in inter religion relations in Australia
- Interfaith Appeal for Peace staged in Sydney January 000 was stand against religious violence in Indonesia. Jointly initiated by NCCA and Federation of Islamic Councils
  - Examples
    - Uniting Church established working groups with Muslim and Jewish communities
    - Catholic Church has committee for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations
    - Council of Christians and Jews continues to expand

Examine the relationship between Aboriginal spiritualities and religious traditions in the process of Reconciliation

<b>Syllabus Point 9 – Religious expression in Australia – 1945 to the present</b>
Examine the relationship between Aboriginal spiritualities and religious traditions in the process of Reconciliation

Relationship Between Aboriginal Spiritualities and Religious Traditions in the Process of Reconciliation

- 1991 Federal Parliament voted unanimously to set up the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation (ACR). 10 years to find desirability of ‘Instrument of Reconciliation’
- Reconciliation has support of all religious traditions
- Saturday 27 May ACR presented report. Next day hundreds of thousands of people walked across bridges for reconciliation
- Many Christian churches incorporate Aboriginal Ministries and Aboriginal Spirituality into services, particularly protestant churches
- Many people feel that incorporating Aboriginal beliefs into Christianity degrades both
- Path to Reconciliation stalled. ‘Self-determination’ replaced with ‘Main-Streaming’. ‘Practical Reconciliation’ is now the term used rather than a real acknowledgement of past wrongs.
- *“We welcome this initiative and hope it (the Uniting Church ‘About Face’ program) will have results, changing dramatically for the better the lives of indigenous people who have suffered alienation and dispossession in their own land far too long.”* - Australian Catholic Bishops conference.

# Religion and Belief Systems in Australia Post-1945

## Religious Expression

### Specimen Questions

1. **Discuss the relationship between kinship and the Dreaming in Aboriginal spiritualities. (5 marks)**
2. **Analyse the relationship between ceremonial life and the Dreaming in Aboriginal spiritualities. (5 marks)**
3. **Assess the impact of separation from the land on contemporary Aboriginal spiritualities. (5 marks)**
4. **Discuss the impact on the removal of Aboriginal children from their families on contemporary Aboriginal spiritualities. (5 marks)**
5. **Outline the history of the land rights movement and assess its importance for contemporary Aboriginal spiritualities. (5 marks)**
6. **Explain the relationship between the Dreaming and the land rights movement. (5 marks)**

### Sample Responses

#### **Assess the impact of separation from the land on contemporary Aboriginal spiritualities. (5 marks, 150 words)**

Separation from the land, also known as dispossession, has had a vast and overwhelmingly detrimental impact on contemporary Aboriginal spiritualities. Separation from the land has had the devastating effect of severing an Aboriginal person's ties with their spirituality because the Dreaming is inextricably linked to the land. The Government policies of protection and assimilation, which separated Aboriginal people from the land, has significantly affected the maintenance of traditional beliefs regarding land, languages, totems, kinship and ceremonies. Firstly, the loss of land amounts to a loss of identity due to the existence of an ever present burden of not being able to fulfil ritual responsibilities. Secondly, the loss of land has destroyed the system of totemic responsibilities and their connections with the ancestor beings who dwell in the land. Thirdly, the removal of Aboriginal people to missions and reserves where traditional Aboriginal practices were prohibited resulted in a loss of language and tradition. This has made it almost impossible to pass on beliefs in an authentic manner. Finally, dispossession has resulted in the destruction of the kinship system. The separation from land to be placed on missions and reserves did provide some Aboriginal people with minor benefits in the areas of health care and education. On the whole however dispossession has had an overwhelmingly detrimental impact on contemporary Aboriginal spirituality.

#### **Analyse the relationship between ceremonial life and the Dreaming in contemporary Aboriginal spiritualities. (5 marks, 150 words)**

All aspects of the Aboriginal ceremonial life (including art, stories, songs, dances, rituals and totems) are derived from the Dreaming. The Dreaming is a term used to describe all knowledge and understanding in Aboriginal societies. Subsequently, the ceremonial life is a medium through which the core tenet of all Aboriginal societies, that is, the Dreaming is communicated. Art that is used in ceremonies offers a multifaceted interpretation and explanation of the Dreaming for different groups of Aboriginal people. Similarly, stories told during rituals are derived from the Dreaming. These Dreaming stories describe the process of creation, explain the foundations of

various aspects of Aboriginal law and tradition. They are ways of teaching about right and wrong behaviour in society, and ultimately reinforce the importance of ceremonies to keep the Dreaming alive. In rituals the ancestor beings of the Dreaming are made present through the people and symbols involved. Balance rites are ceremonies that aim to ensure harmony within the land and assist the proliferation of a particular animal or plant. Initiation ceremonies at particular significant stages of people's lives lead them into a deeper understanding of the Dreaming. Because of the separation of Aboriginal people from their traditional land many important ceremonies that are tied to specific sacred sites of the Dreaming can no longer be done and have been lost.

**Outline the history of the land rights movement and assess its importance for contemporary Aboriginal spiritualities. (5 marks, 150 words)**

The modern land rights movement began in 1966 as a result of the efforts of Vincent Lingiari, the leader of the Wave Hill Mob. After a protracted dispute, the Whitlam Government provided the first land rights legislation in 1975. In 1992, the High Court in the Mabo decision, overruled the long held fiction that Australia was terra nullius in 1788 and concluded that in certain circumstances native title exists over Australian land. This was followed by the Wik decision of 1996, which is authority for the principle that the rights of Leasehold Title holders, co-exists with the rights of Native Title holders. The land rights movement is of critical importance to the maintenance of contemporary Aboriginal spiritualities, because the Dreaming, which is the concept that lies at the heart of Aboriginal spirituality, is inextricably linked to the land. Land is essential to Aboriginal spiritualities because the land is the medium through which the Dreaming is communicated. The land is also important because it is the resting place for ancestral spirit beings. Though Native Title has provided some Aboriginal groups with economic and social independence, the effect of the land rights movement on Aboriginal spirituality has been limited. This is because native title can only be claimed on a very small percentage of Australian land; proving native title is a long, complicated and expensive legal process; and native title does not always provide access to sacred sites which may be on freehold land.

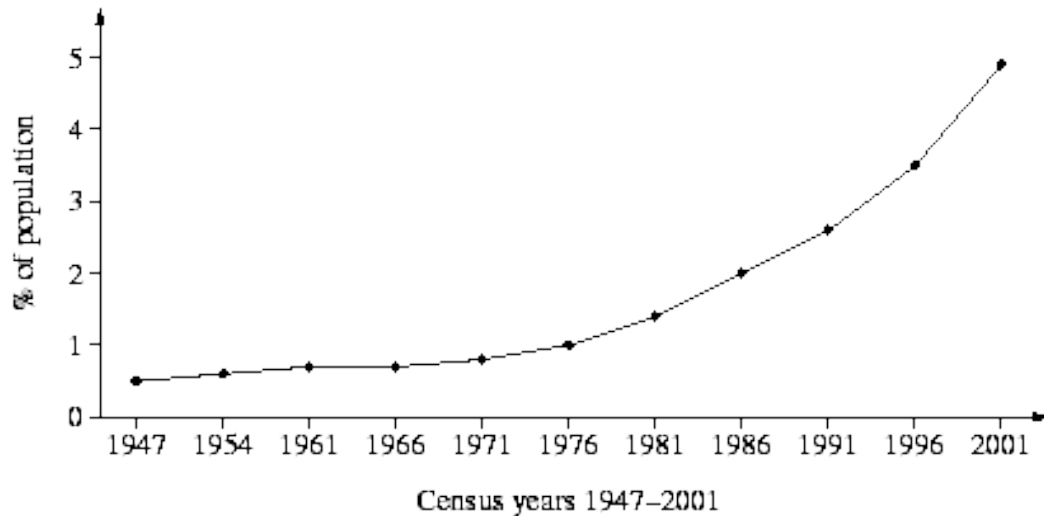
**Religious expression in Australia - 1945 to the present**

**Specimen Questions**

- 1. Identify two examples of ecumenical developments in Australia since 1945. (5 marks)**
- 2. "Many are still looking for some sense of spiritual direction...they just may be shuffling through a deck of tarot cards instead of rifling through the pages of the Bible". (Sunday Life 15 th July 2001) More and more Australians are turning away from mainstream religions. Analyse the reasons for this movement and discuss your understandings with reference to at least two alternative "new age" religions. (5 marks)**
- 3. Account for the popularity of New Age religions in Australia. (5 marks)**
- 4. The graph shows the percentage of Australians who have identified with religions other than Christianity. Account for the trends shown in the graph. (5 marks)**



**Belief of religions other than Christianity in Australia 1947 – 2001**



5. Explain the factors that have led to the growth in Pentecostalism in Australia. (5 marks)
6. Analyse the relationship between religious traditions and Aboriginal spiritualities in the process of reconciliation. (5 marks)

### Sample Responses

#### **Account for the popularity of New Age religions in Australia. (5 marks, 150 words)**

New age religions which refer to a range of alternative spiritualities that aim to foster personal happiness, health and meaning in life. Examples of new age religions include feng shui, tarot cards, numerology, astrology and transcendental meditation. There are various reasons as to why they are so popular. The first and main reason for their popularity is because there is a general dissatisfaction with mainstream religions along with a growing longing for a spiritual dimension to life. For example, what makes new age religions attractive to many is its emphasis on creation centred spirituality, which is seen as diametrically opposed to the idea of external means of salvation as taught by the Western Church. Another significant reason for its popularity is the fact that new age religions are liberal in nature. That is, the very nature of new age religions makes it open to people picking and choosing particular aspects they want to incorporate to their personal philosophy. Another reason for their popularity is because some new age practices attest to being a supernatural means to gain personal wealth, be miraculously healed or know the future.

#### **The graph shows the percentage of Australians who have identified with religions other than Christianity. Account for the trends shown in the graph. (5 marks, 150 words)**

On the whole, there has been a steady increase in the number of Australians who have identified with religions other than Christianity. The number of people following religions other than Christianity significantly increased in the 1970s. The significant increases in the number of people professing to follow religions other than Christianity from 1970 onwards can be attributed to the waves of immigration that came following the demise of the 'White Australia' Policy in 1973. The effect of the end of this policy was an increase in the diversity of the religious character in Australia because the demise facilitated the immigration of people from non-Anglo-Celtic backgrounds. For example, immigration from the Middle East and Asia has increased the

number of Muslims in Australia. For instance, the Lebanese civil war, conflict in Afghanistan and Bosnia have all led to increased Muslim immigration from these places. Immigration from Vietnam, Laos, Thailand, Hong Kong and China have increased the proportion of Buddhists in Australia. For example, following the Vietnam War in the 1960-70s came increased Buddhist immigration from that area. Buddhism has also increased due to conversion of non-Buddhists in Australia. The figures for Hinduism have been increased as a result of immigration from India and Fiji.

**Explain the factors that have led to the growth in Pentecostalism in Australia.  
(5 marks, 150 words)**

Pentecostalism is a charismatic and evangelical strand of Christianity that has shown rapid growth over the last few decades. This can be attributed to various factors. One reason for its popularity is the feeling that traditional Christian denomination are out of touch with modern society with staid worship and irrelevant preaching. Pentecostalism's slick use of contemporary music and lively worship is often attractive to younger people. A second reason for their growth is that Pentecostal groups provide a strong sense of community and spiritual support. They often are based around a charismatic leader who is a dynamic and relevant communicator. A third reason for the popularity of Pentecostalism is because it provides definitive, clear cut answers to complex difficulties faced by contemporary society. Pentecostalism has also grown because it provides worshippers with spiritual experiences in the form of 'praying in tongues' and prophecy. Finally, Pentecostalism is increasingly popular as it often promises miraculous healings and prosperity to people who have faith.

**Identify two examples of ecumenical developments in Australia since 1945.  
(5 marks, 150 words)**

1. The formation of the Uniting Church. The Uniting Church was formed through a merger of the Presbyterian, Methodist and Congregational churches in 1977 as they realised what they had in common outweighed the things that kept them separated. The Uniting Church continues to have ecumenism as one of its key goals and is involved with ecumenical activities such as the NCCA.
2. The formation of the National Council of Churches in Australia (NCCA). The NCCA's membership consists of 15 Christian denominations in Australia. The NCCA developed out of the Australian Council of Churches, which began after World War II involving Anglicans and Protestants. Orthodox churches joined in the 1980s. It finally disbanded to become the NCCA in 1994, now incorporating the Roman Catholic Church as well. It promotes shared worship, work and dialogue between different Christian denominations.