



INTERFAITH NETWORK INC. CITY OF GREATER DANDENONG



PROCESSES AND STRUCTURES

The Network was previously known as *The Faith Communities of the City of Springvale* (from 1989) and of *Dandenong* (since Council amalgamation in 1995). The title *Interfaith Network* has evolved as being the preferred title.

In May 2003, the Interfaith Network became incorporated (Interfaith Network Inc.).

Interfaith indicates a development in understanding and relationships between members, while *Network* describes the process and dynamic of the group.

Who are the members?

Local faith leaders and faith representatives of faith communities, who support the ideals of the “Common Statement” and sign it, belong to the Interfaith Network. The faith leaders and faith representatives attend monthly meetings, contribute to the development of the Network, assist in planning and participate in activities of the Network. After participating as *observers*, faith leaders and faith representatives may formalise their community membership by signing the “Common Statement” at the Annual Gathering.

The “Common Statement” is as follows:

“We bring greetings from the faith communities to the Mayor, Councillors and people of Greater Dandenong.

We offer to the City of Greater Dandenong our common commitment to seek to live together in peace and goodwill.

We affirm our desire to promote respect and tolerance for the integrity of each other’s beliefs, cultures and traditions. This desire arises not only from our common humanity but also from our being people of faith and people of prayer.

We recognise that as neighbours, we have responsibilities to the community, the world and ourselves. We therefore urge all citizens, both religious and non-religious, to put aside intolerance, prejudice and divisiveness, to attain peaceful and fruitful co-existence in our City.”

Members may also consist of individuals who make application for membership. The Executive will determine eligibility criteria.

Individuals may join the Network as observers on a permanent basis or attend meetings or events when involved in projects with an Interfaith component.

Currently the Interfaith Network has a policy not to charge membership fees. This will be reviewed on an annual basis.

Representation

The Network generally operates out of a consensus model. If, however, a vote is required, each member has one vote.

We, the members of the Network, recognise:

- The local nature of the Network. First and foremost a community relations initiative dependent on the understanding and goodwill of the participants;
- The wider nature and benefit of the Network as a model for other civic and religious bodies that can be adapted to local needs of communities;
- The encouragement to the faith traditions themselves that we can talk and listen to one another;
- The example to their governing bodies of the advantages and blessings associated with such dialogue at this time in our human and global history, nationally and internationally;
- The witness to what can happen locally, nationally and internationally.

Partnership between the Interfaith Network and the City of Greater Dandenong Council

The partnership consists of equal partners:

- The Interfaith Network;
- The City of Greater Dandenong Council.

Each partner is independent and quite able to hold and express views not necessarily the same as those held or expressed by the other.

When either partner is speaking on behalf of the partnership, or on behalf of either partner, certain protocols will be followed.

Each partner can only speak on behalf of the other, after agreement between the President of the Interfaith Network and the Mayor of the City of Greater Dandenong or a senior member of staff.

A report on the Network will be presented to Council before the Mayoral Induction. This will be done to demonstrate the work of the Network for the previous year. Council will be asked to formally endorse the partnership for the coming year. The commitment is given by the Network through the “Common Statement” at the Mayoral induction.

The Executive operates outside the general meetings.

The Executive includes:

President

The President is a member of the Interfaith Network and in this role reflects the views of the Network.

The President takes a leadership role for the Network:

- As spokesperson for the Network, reporting back to the Network meetings;
- In promoting the aims of the Network as spelled out in the “Common Statement”;
- At Network events, eg. the Induction of the Mayor, Reconciliation events and the Annual Gathering of the Interfaith Network;
- In representing the Interfaith Network when invited;
- In preparing media releases in consultation with Council;
- In co-ordinating the preparation and updating of information and educational materials;
- By keeping in contact with leaders who are unable to attend meetings;
- By welcoming faith leaders and communities who do not yet belong to the Network;
- In consultation with the Executive, developing the direction and initiatives of the Network;
- By consulting with the Executive on financial issues regarding the Network;
- Together with the Chairperson, by drawing up the agenda for monthly meetings;

- In presenting a report to the Network meetings;
- In delegating an alternative representative as needed.

Chairperson

The Chairperson is a member of the Interfaith Network.

The role of the Chairperson is to:

- Conduct the monthly meetings of the Interfaith Network;
- Together with the President draw up the agenda of Network meetings;
- Facilitate decision making at meetings;
- Work with the Executive to ensure necessary administrative action is carried through;
- Together with the Convenor, coordinate the roster of leaders for prayer at Council meetings.

Convenor

The Convenor is a member of Council staff.

The role of the Convenor is to:

- Convene meetings;
- Carry out administrative and follow up tasks relating to the minutes, educational publications and media releases of the Network;
- Maintain an up-to-date contact list for the Network;
- Advise on financial issues with regard to the Network;
- Be a first point of contact for the Network with Council where a joint understanding, policy or statement is required;
- In consultation with the Executive, develop the direction and initiatives of the Network;
- Present a report from Council to Network meetings;
- Co-ordinate the roster of faith leaders for prayer at Council meetings in conjunction with the Chairperson;
- Act as Returning Officer at the Network's AGM.

Public Officer

The Public Officer is a member of the Interfaith Network.

The role of the Public Officer is to:

- Inform the Registrar of Consumer Affairs of any changes to the name of the incorporated entity;

- Inform the Registrar of Consumer Affairs of any changes to the address of the incorporated entity;
- Inform the Registrar of Consumer Affairs of the change in Public Officer;
- Inform the Registrar of any change in Public Officer's address;
- File within two months from the date of the AGM the financial report of the incorporated entity to the Registrar of Consumer Affairs.

Treasurer

The Treasurer is a member of the Interfaith Network.

The role of the Treasurer is to:

- Consult with the Executive of the Network on all financial matters including insurances;
- Keep proper books of accounts for all income and expenses;
- Open any bank accounts as appropriate for the running of the financial affairs of the fund;
- Report the financial position of the Network to its members;
- Receive any grants from Council and/or Government and be responsible for its acquittal.

Secretary

The Secretary is a member of the Interfaith Network.

The role of the Secretary is to:

- Act as administrative secretary to the Council, Interfaith Network partnership;
- Together with the Convenor, convene meetings including Special Meetings;
- Take the minutes at all meetings of the Network;
- Together with the Convenor, carry out administrative and follow up tasks relating to the minutes, educational publications and media releases of the Network;
- Maintain and co-ordinate all administrative aspects of membership;
- Together with the Convenor, maintain an up-to-date contact list for the Network, including details of membership registrations;
- Receive and deal with the correspondence
- Receive nominations and proxies from members for the Annual General Meeting.

Ordinary Members (2)

The two ordinary members of the Executive are members of the Interfaith Network.

The role of an ordinary member is to:

- Broaden the scope of discussion by being a part of the Executive;
- Receive delegated tasks as appropriate;
- Have an opportunity to understudy the roles of Office Bearers.

Where possible and practical, the Executive should be made up of Interfaith Network members representing different faith communities.

Election Process of President, Chairperson, Treasurer/Public Officer, Secretary and the Two Ordinary Members

1. To ensure an open and democratic process of election for the positions of President, Chairperson, Treasurer/Public Officer, Secretary and the two Ordinary Members voting will be conducted by secret ballot by the Convenor with due sensitivity to the nature of the group;
2. Elections will be held annually for President, Chairperson, Treasurer/Public Officer, Secretary and the two Ordinary Members. A person shall not serve in one role for more than three consecutive years except under exceptional circumstances as determined at an AGM;
3. Nominations for the positions will be called for in the June and July meetings;
4. Elections will take place at a full meeting of the Network at its August meeting;
5. A hand over of leadership responsibilities for the Network will occur at the Annual Gathering.

Working Groups

Working Groups will be convened as necessary and for a specific purpose.

Co-Option

Interfaith Network members may be co-opted as needed.

Amending the Processes and Structures

These Processes and Structures may be amended from time to time by a motion adopted by a majority of members present at a general meeting.