

RELIGION IN AUSTRALIA

ENCYCLOPEDIA PROPOSAL

The OBJECT of this project is to prepare for publication an encyclopedia of Australian Religions. This proposal originated with Cambridge University Press, following the model previously adopted for *The Australian People* (1988/2001)

Approach: Contributors will include adherents to particular denominations as well as those who are not. Religion will be looked at in several dimensions: historic development, especially within the Australian context; organisation of religions and denominations; the sociology and ethnicity of religion; belief systems and controversies; The role of religion in a secular society. The object is to provide basic information together with informed discussion of similarities and differences rather than the truth or lack of it between different religions and denominations.

Possible Partners: Other proposed participants include the Australian Multicultural Foundation, the Monash University Institute for the Study of Global Movements , the NSW Community Relations Commission, the Victorian Ethnic Affairs Commission, the Federation of Ethnic Communities Councils of Australia, all of which have already been approached.

Editorial Advisory: A small group of editorial advisers will be sought from the major religious strands and others with an expert knowledge of this area. Relevant religious bodies will be kept advised as the project proceeds.

Timetable:

For the first year - **2006** - preparatory work will be conducted within the existing resources of the Centre as currently available,. Most of this work involves preliminary reading, contacting contributors general administration. The second year - **2007** - will require paid research and field work and the holding of workshops for contributors and

other interested parties. The third year - **2008** - will enable the resulting publication to be based on the latest statistical information, as the Australian Census has recorded religious adherence for over a century.

2006: preliminary work on locating authors, seeking publication funding, constructing reference guide, familiarisation with existing literature, selecting advisors.

2007: receiving and editing material, arranging workshops of authors and advisors, conducting research into unexplored areas. Grant required for a fulltime research assistant and costs of workshops.

2007: purchasing and processing results of the 2005 Census., further editing of contributions, filling 'gaps' in information, preparing for publication, mapping and pictorial. PUBLICATION.

Outcome: This publication will not only provide a unique guide to the religious variety of Australia for researchers but will hopefully enhance and expand the study of comparative religion in schools and tertiary institutions. It is reasonable to anticipate a heightened consciousness of the importance of religious adherence and organisation in the coming decade and this work will inform such a consciousness.

OUTLINE OF PROPOSAL: (This is based roughly on the proportions subscribing to various denominations as measured in the Australian Census of 2001).

A text of 433 500 words divided as follows: Each segment will be covered by a single author where possible. Illustrations, maps and diagrams will be additional to the word allocation.

- An overview of Australian religious variety, including Indigenous religions, religions introduced primarily from the British Isles, religions from elsewhere in Europe, the Middle East, Asia, the Pacific and the United States(10 000); basic information

using the 2001 and earlier Censuses (10 000);. an historical approach seeing religions as related to ethnic variety and the immigration experience.(2 500) words each.

- Indigenous Australian religions: traditional belief systems (10 000); Christian missions (7000); Churches and Aboriginal Issues (5000);syncretic religions (500).words each.
- The major Protestant denominations: Anglican; brief history, beliefs and practices (5000); Church of England in Australia (7000),Evangelism (5000);Structure and Organisation (5000);Debates and issues (5000); Anglican Communion and non-British Anglicans (3000); Methodists; Brief history of Methodism, beliefs and practices (4000); Methodism in Australia (5000); Uniting; Formation and character of the Uniting Church (5000); Presbyterians/Reformed;; Scottish origins of Presbyterianism (5000); Presbyterianism in Australia (7000);
- The Reformed churches (3000); Congregationalists (3000); Baptists (5000); Lutherans; German origins, beliefs and practices (5000); Lutheranism in Australia (6000); words each.
- The Catholic Church: brief history, structures, beliefs and practices (10 000); Irish Origins in Australia (10 000); Later History in Australia (10 000); Structure, Organisation and Leadership (10 000); character of its changing support (10 000); Orders and Institutions (10 000); intellectual influences and debates (10 000);Jesuits (2500); Maronites (2500); , Melkites(500), Ukrainian(500), Chaldean (500) ; Catholicism in a secular society (9000); words each.
- Australian Church, Pentecostals, Churches of Christ, Assemblies of God ; about 3000 words each.
- The Orthodox churches; brief outline of Orthodox history, beliefs and practices (5000); Greek (10 000), Russian(4000), Macedonian(4000), Serbian(4000), others (500). words each. (emphasis within Australia).
- Oriental Christians:Coptic(3000),Armenian(3000),Assyrian(2000),Antiochians(1000) words each . (emphasis within Australia)

- Smaller Christian denominations: Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons, Salvation Army, Seventh Day Adventists,, Christadelphians, Ratana,Quakers, Unitarians, Brethren; about 1500 words each.
- Islam: brief history of Islam (4000); Basic Islamic beliefs and practices(4000); origins of Australian Islam to 1975 (2000); immigrant origins of modern Australian Islam (4000); current issues and organisation (4000) words each.
- Bahai (2000), Druse (1 500); other Middle Eastern groups (500) words each.
- Jews: brief history, beliefs and practices (5000); settlement in Australia 1788-1930 (4000); modern Australian Jewish community (5000); religious, educational and secular organisation (4000) words each.
- Buddhists; Brief history, beliefs and practices (7000); Australian Buddhists (6500); words each.
- Hindus; brief history, beliefs and practices (5000); Hindus in Australia (4000) words each.
- Sikhs (2000),Parsis (1250), Hare Krishna(1250) words each.
- Chinese Religions (4 500 words)
- Sectarian Groups: Scientology, Wiccan, Spiritualism, Theosophy etc. (about 500 words each)
- Rationalists and non-believers; the dimensions of non-belief historically (4500); secularism and the state(3000); rationalist and atheist organisations (3000);recent trends in belief and disbelief (3000); words each.

Issues for general discussion: (all with special reference to Australia)

- Religion and Politics; varying views of the relationship of "church" and "state" (7000); Australian debates and practices (5000); religions as interest groups(1500) words each.
- Religion and Charity; varying attitudes towards charity (3000); welfare work and organisations (3000); hospitals, the aged and orphans etc.(3000); words each.

- Religion and Education; the Australian debate between religious and secular schools (7000); the religious school systems (5000); universities and seminaries(1500); words each.
- Religion and Moral Order; varying views on moral issues (7000); religious influences on behaviour (6000); responses to changing society(1500); words each.
- Religion and Secularism; trends in secularisation (5000); accommodation and resistance (4000); words each.
- The Rise and Fall of Religions; shifts in adherence and organisation (4 000); factors affecting changing followings (5000); words each.
- Religion and Social Cohesion; multifaith relations and concepts of truth and orthodoxy (4000); non-Christian religions in Australia (3000); fundamentalism (2000) words each.

Illustrations, Maps and Diagrams.

Bibliography and Chronology

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Religious Statistics from the 2006 Census.

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