

International Day of Peace Conference

21 September 9.30 - 3.30 PM

Venue: Mount Waverley Community Centre - 47 Miller Crescent, Mount Waverley

2024 United Nations Theme - "Cultivating a Culture of Peace"



UN International Day of Peace Conference

2024 United Nations Theme - “Cultivating a Culture of Peace”

The United Nations asks us to consider the following: This year marks the 25th anniversary of the United Nations General Assembly’s adoption of the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace.

In the declaration, the United Nations recognised that peace is “not only the absence of conflict, but also requires a positive, dynamic participatory process where dialogue is encouraged, and conflicts are solved in a spirit of mutual understanding and cooperation.”



In a world with rising geopolitical tensions and protracted conflicts, there has never been a better time to remember how the UN General Assembly came together in 1999 to lay out the values needed for a culture of peace.

These include respect for life, human rights and fundamental freedoms; the promotion of non-violence through education, dialogue and cooperation; commitment to peaceful settlement of conflicts; and adherence to freedom, justice, democracy, tolerance, solidarity, cooperation, pluralism, cultural diversity, dialogue and understanding at all levels of society and among nations.

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION:

<https://events.humanitix.com/way2happiness-and-peacebuilding-seminar-series-2024>

Program

<p>9:30 – 10:00</p> <p>10:00 – 10:30</p>	<p>Registration and Morning Tea</p> <p>MC – Anne Bellavance President, WFWP Australia WFWP International IVP (rep. Oceania and SE Asia) WFWPI UN Regional Office Representative.</p> <p>Acknowledgment of Country and Introductions to the Day</p> <p>Video Presentations: The Founders – Man and Women of Peace</p> <p>Welcoming Remarks</p>  <p>Sylvia Coombe is the first Pacific Island Multi-Cultural Commissioner in Victoria, and President of the Fijian Community Association Victoria Inc. (FCAV).</p>
<p>10:30 – 10:50</p>	<p>His Eminence Sheikh Imam Dr. Yussif Amdani Suleimana</p> <p>Keynote Address: Interfaith Harmony as a Peacebuilding Tool for Promoting Peaceful Coexistence and Mutual Understanding Among Societies and Nations Globally.</p>  <p><u>Topic Summary</u></p> <p>As we mark the 25th anniversary of the UN's Declaration on a Culture of Peace, it's crucial to embrace peace, cooperation, and mutual understanding to create a serene world.</p> <p>Despite current global challenges, we can overcome these by fostering love, respect, and peaceful coexistence. By acting with sincerity and truth, we can triumph over violence, racial discrimination, and fear, ensuring a more harmonious and compassionate world for all. The spirit of giving, kindness, and mercy will sustain this culture of peace and help build a brighter future.</p>

His Eminence Sheikh Imam Dr. Yussif Amdani Suleimana, born in Koforidua, Ghana, is a renowned advocate for peace, interfaith dialogue, and Islamic education. He studied at Al-Azhar University, Egypt, where he earned his master's and PhD in Islamic studies.

Appointed as the Eastern Regional Chief Imam of Ghana in 2002, he has initiated numerous peacebuilding projects, including the establishment of the Imam Suleimana Ture School of Peace Building in collaboration with the Kofi Annan International Peace and Training Centre.

His Eminence collaborates with international organisations to promote global peace, security, and interfaith harmony, and has played a key role in preventing electoral violence in Ghana.

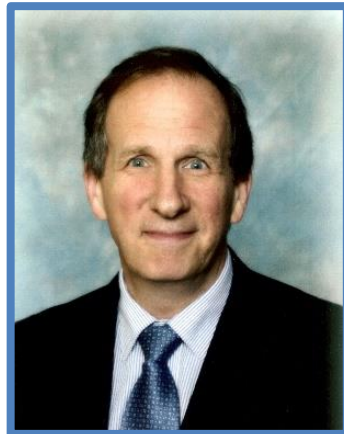
10:50 - 11:05

Q&A | Discussion

11:05 – 11:25

Dr John Bellavance

Topic: Countering Polarization, Breaking Down Barriers and Enlarging Circles.



Topic Summary

The war in the Middle East is straining social cohesion. Australian multiculturalism is moving into a more challenging phase because of the polarisation caused by *us versus them*.

Multiculturalism has been one of Australia's great achievements because it has fostered in us a heart that seeks to break down barriers and enlarge the circle of people we relate to.

The *common-enemy identity* politics tries to unite a coalition using the psychology of us versus them which leads to a mindset that life is a battle between good people and evil people. A *common-humanity identity* seeks to find common ground based on shared values.

Dr John Bellavance has a PhD in values education from Monash University, focusing on moral psychology and the use of technology. John is an Information Technology educator, writer, and public speaker.

11:25 – 11:40	<p>John is also the Oceania Coordinator, International Association of Academicians for Peace, and National Vice-President of UPF Australia.</p> <p>Q&A Discussion</p>
11:40 – 12:00	<p>Grab a Cuppa Break</p>
12:00 – 12:15	<p>Dr Bruce Wong</p> <p>Topic: The Importance of Shared Values in Fostering a Harmonious and Prosperous Society.</p> <div data-bbox="438 707 767 1034" data-label="Image"> </div> <p><u>Topic Summary</u></p> <p>Bruce highlights the vital importance of shared values in fostering a cohesive and thriving community. Reflecting on Australia's multicultural success and its accompanying challenges, he emphasizes the need for respect, equality, and fairness as foundational to social harmony and economic prosperity. Bruce also underscores Australia's responsibility as a global citizen, advocating for a commitment to global ethics and the pursuit of positive peace—defined by justice, harmony, and mutual prosperity. He urges the audience to embrace universal values as essential tools for addressing global challenges and building a brighter future for all of humanity.</p> <p>Dr Bruce Wong, an Australian entrepreneur and philanthropist, has journeyed from a Cambodian refugee in 1980 to a successful business leader over 40 years.</p> <p>As Managing Director of Foot Solutions Australia Pty Ltd, he has built global enterprises, attracted high-profile clients, and achieved significant profits. His leadership, marked by creativity and teamwork, is recognized internationally.</p> <p>Beyond business, Bruce is known for his philanthropy, supporting causes like child health, the Salvation Army, and international aid in countries such as Cambodia, Sri Lanka, and India. He also serves as a trusted board director and advisor to various associations and foundations.</p>
12:15 – 12:30	<p>Q&A Discussion</p>

12:30 – 12:45

Preetah Bolaky

Topic: Everyone needs someone in their corner.



Topic Summary

Having a supportive presence in your life cultivates emotional strength and resilience, empowering individuals to act with peace and positivity.

This encouragement not only benefits the individual but also creates a ripple effect of kindness and compassion within communities. By fostering these connections, we contribute to a more harmonious society, ultimately advancing the cause of global peace.

Preetah Bolaky is a global business strategist and motivational speaker who has made a significant impact in finance and personal development. With over a decade of banking experience, she has served as a strategic advisor and co-founded a fintech company, showcasing her innovative financial solutions. As a mindset coach, Preetah empowers financial professionals to overcome fears and build resilience, driving transformation in both their personal and professional lives.

12:45 – 1:00

Q&A | Discussion

1:00 – 1:45

Group Photo

Lunch

1:45 – 2:00

Rev. Daniel Meadows

Topic: The role of family in building a culture of peace



Topic Summary

Exploring the foundation of a culture of peace involves understanding the core values that promote harmony and cooperation within communities. One key area of focus is how we can expand peace starting from within our families, as they are the fundamental units of society. By fostering respect, empathy, and open communication at home, we lay the groundwork for broader societal peace.

<p>2:00 – 1:15</p>	<p>The United Nations differentiates between negative peace, the absence of conflict, and positive peace, the presence of justice, equity, and harmony. To achieve true positive peace, we need mechanisms that support dialogue, education, and social justice, creating environments where peace can flourish.</p> <p>Rev. Daniel Meadows is the Victorian Director of Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (FFWPU) Australia and Vice-President of FFWPU Australia.</p> <p>Q&A Discussion</p>
<p>2:15 – 2:30</p>	<p>Mary Zeit Musleh</p> <p>Topic: Cultivating a Culture of Peace: A Global and Palestinian Perspective.</p> <div data-bbox="443 898 778 1229" data-label="Image"> </div> <p><u>Topic Summary</u></p> <p>The United Nations' 2024 theme, "Creating a Culture of Peace," underscores the global need for fostering harmony, justice, and equality. It highlights the pivotal role of education in addressing the root causes of conflict and promoting dialogue and empathy.</p> <p>The message also reflects on the Palestinian quest for peace, advocating for justice, equality, and a two-state solution as essential to global stability and a brighter future for all. Ultimately, it calls for a unified, border-transcending commitment to peace, bringing people together in pursuit of a more just and harmonious world.</p> <p>Mary Zeit Musleh is a seasoned professional with expertise in translation, administration, and community leadership. Holding an Advanced Diploma in Interpreting from RMIT University, Mary has led the women’s committee at the Orthodox Club in Beit Jala, Palestine, and directed the SAWA and AFKAR organizations, focusing on violence prevention and educational development, respectively.</p> <p>She also served as secretary for the YWCA in Ramallah. Currently, she is the president of the Beit Jala Palestinian Association in Victoria.</p> <p>2:30 – 2:45</p> <p>Q&A Discussion</p>

2:45 – 3:15	Ambassador for Peace Awards
3:15 – 3:30	Closing Remarks – Anne Bellavance

Ambassadors for Peace

Dr Bruce Wong



An inspiring Australian entrepreneur and philanthropist, Bruce has spent over 40 years building a remarkable legacy since arriving in Australia as a refugee from Cambodia in 1980. From humble beginnings, he has become a dynamic leader, founding and leading successful global enterprises, and currently serves as the Managing Director of Foot Solutions Australia Pty Ltd.

Service to Others

Bruce is a staunch advocate for human rights, social justice, and community empowerment. His philanthropic efforts extend across Australia and internationally, supporting causes such as child health, the Salvation Army, and educational initiatives in Cambodia, Sri Lanka, Nepal, the Philippines, and India. A champion of multiculturalism in Australia, Bruce's community-focused philanthropy has earned widespread recognition.

Bruce's unwavering commitment to integrity and positive impact is evident in his roles on the Scientific Advisory Committee of the Mental Health Foundation of Australia and the Refugee Communities Association of Australia. He also plays a vital role in governance and strategic direction for various organizations.

Early Life and Resilience

At 14, Bruce endured the horrors of the Khmer Rouge regime in Cambodia, losing four family members to the genocide. After years of hardship, he and his surviving family fled to Australia, where he began a new chapter marked by resilience and determination.

Rafaela López



Rafaela has dedicated over four decades to social research and community services, with a focus on migrant and refugee settlement, disability support, aged care, community housing, women's health, and domestic violence services. From 2004 to 2009, she also taught in the International Education sector, delivering units for the Diploma of Community Work.

Service to Others

Her volunteer work spans numerous nonprofit and community organizations since the early 1980s. She played pivotal roles such as Founding Member of the Foundation for Spanish-speaking Older People Inc., President of CELAS' Committee of Management, and Member of the Management Committee of the Women's Liberation Half-Way House. Rafaela has also contributed to various Victorian State Government advisory bodies, including the Ministerial Health Advisory Council and the Ministerial Advisory Council of Senior Victorians.

Rafaela's contributions have been recognized through numerous awards, including the Centenary Medal (2001), induction into the Victorian Honour Roll of Women (2017), and the Medal of the Order of Australia (2020). Additionally, she was honoured by the King of Spain with the Order of Isabel the Catholic in 2022 for her outstanding service to the Spanish community in Victoria.

Surendra Man Shrestha



Surendra is a practicing lawyer and Managing Director of the Australian Immigration and Citizenship Centre, and Honorary Official Representative to Australia: Nepal Chamber of Commerce.

In Nepal, he served as a constitutional lawyer, executive director of the Nepal Law Society, and advocate at the Supreme Court.

Service to Others

In Nepal, Surendra provided free legal services to the poor and played a significant role in drafting Nepal's 2047 Constitution. He was also an executive member of the International Commission of Jurists (Geneva) and a legal activist for establishing the rule of law in Nepal. He represented victims of the 2018 US-Bangla Airlines crash, securing compensation for those who couldn't afford legal services.

In Australia, after obtaining a Master of Laws from Monash University, Surendra has been a social and legal activist, providing free legal advice to international communities. As a registered migration agent for nearly 30 years, he has helped over 20,000 people from more than 75 countries settle in Australia.

His firm maintains a policy of offering free legal services to at least 10% of its clients, focusing on humanitarian cases from African and Asian countries. Surendra continues to champion legal and social justice, benefiting communities both in Nepal and Australia.

Conference Organisers



**WOMEN'S FEDERATION
FOR WORLD PEACE AUSTRALIA**

Women's Federation for World Peace is an international NGO in General Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. WFWP promotes women as an essential ingredient in creating a peaceful global society. The organisation is united globally by this vision, while addressing the unique issues and barriers in each region on the grassroots level, and through high-level events. www.wfwpaustralia.org/



Universal Peace Federation is an NGO in General Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. We support and promote the work of the United Nations and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. www.upf.org/



International Association of Academicians for Peace. (IAAP) represents a new global interdisciplinary academic initiative aimed at contributing to the realization of a world of lasting peace by building a professional network for academicians to foster a world of peace based on the ideals of interdependence, mutual prosperity, and universal values.



Family Federation for World Peace and Unification is comprised of families from around the world striving to establish a world of peace and unity among all peoples, races and religions as envisioned by Rev. and Mrs. Sun Myung Moon and to embody the ideal of true love, which is to live for the sake of others. FFWPU champions three ideals: family, peace, and unification.

www.ffwpaustralia.org/

Supporting Organisations

The Center for Global Nonkilling



Imagine a world in which humans no longer kill each other. Is a nonkilling world possible? Amidst continued killing following the violent 20th century, the

Center for Global Nonkilling arises out of new understanding that a killing-free world is possible. It is possible for humans to stop killing each other from homicide to genocide, terrorism and mass murder in war. A killing-free world is a measurable goal. The methods and means of realization are open to infinite human creativity.

The Australia Arab Chamber of Commerce & Industry (AACCI) is the only



national association for two-way trade and investment between Australia and the Arab League countries. AACCI is a member of the Union of Arab Chambers of and has fostered strong links with the

Australian State and Federal governments since it began in 1975.

The Global Opportunities Commercialisation aligns human and societal values in different geographies with business and prosperity by encompassing employees and communities to create social values.



The Global Somali Diaspora (GSD) is a global not-for-profit organization



working to bring together and mobilize members of the Somali Diaspora for positive action. Global Somali Diaspora (GSD) is a global not-for-profit

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