

*Third Diversity Matters Forum
Kolkata, India, 28 February – 2 March 2005*

Plenary Address – Forum Day 2
Leadership and interfaith initiatives for the
Commonwealth – Multifaith Advisory Council for the Commonwealth

3:30pm, Wednesday 2nd March 2005

By
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In Australia, with the recent launch of the report **Religion, Cultural Diversity and Safeguarding Australia** by the Australian Multicultural Foundation, in association with the World Conference of Religions for Peace, RMIT University and Monash University, maps out the interrelationship between religious and cultural diversity in the context of Australia's social cohesion and internal security, taking into account September 11, Bali and the broader context of the relationship between religion and the state on the one hand, and between globalisation on the other.

- To identify current and emerging issues, challenges and possibilities regarding the interface of religious groups with Australian society and each other, including areas for further research and exploration.
- To document and analyse recent occurrences of racist and bigoted attacks, both verbal and physical, on faith communities and their members, including post-September 11th.
- To suggest policy and program initiatives that foster a health, interactive religious diversity and that utilises religion as an asset and resource for Australia's social, political and economic well-being in a globalising world.
- To investigate the feasibility of Australian inter-faith bodies and structures to advise the Council for Multicultural Australia and other government and non-government bodies.
- To investigate data sources for the construction of an electronic network for the transmission of information to religious groups at local, regional and national levels.

The one I wish to highlight is our findings and suggestions to structure to advise government and non-government on faith issues.