

Australian Catholic University

An Australian Catholic University (ACU) education is grounded in the Catholic understanding of faith and reason working together in the pursuit of knowledge, promotion of human dignity, and advancement of the common good.

We aim to transform lives and communities. Students are challenged to look beyond the classroom, solve real-world problems, develop their own search for meaning and cultivate strong professional ethics. They are invited to stand up for people in need and causes that matter.

Our research and enterprise activities develop innovative solutions to issues impacting human dignity and the common good. Through ethically informed research we deliver positive change across ACU, industry, community and government.

We foster academic collaboration and engage with local and international partners to enable the exchange of knowledge and skills, and develop dynamic educational and research initiatives. We build healthy social partnerships, assisting communities in actively shaping initiatives that directly impact them.

ACU is a university for everyone. Like all Catholic institutions, the university is inclusive and supportive of everyone, every day – regardless of their faith, tradition or circumstance.

The university has seven campuses around Australia, a campus in Rome, Italy, and an online campus – ACU Online.

FEDERAL PARLIAMENTARY
INTERFAITH BREAKFAST 2024
Great Hall, Parliament House
Canberra

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Federal Parliamentary Interfaith Breakfast

21 November 2024



Message from the Vice-Chancellor and President



It is my pleasure to warmly welcome you to Australian Catholic University’s 2024 Federal Parliamentary Interfaith Breakfast.

Nearly ten years ago, when this event was first launched, we envisioned it as a space where leaders from across the religious and political spectrum could come together to celebrate the diversity and tolerance that holds our nation together.

Since then, the Federal Parliamentary Interfaith Breakfast has become a cornerstone of our commitment to open dialogue – a platform where conversations could take place concerning our democracy, our community, our culture, and the role that faith plays in our everyday lives.

Representing Australia’s rich religious and cultural fabric, leaders from many faith traditions join with parliamentarians from across both chambers, embracing the opportunity to break bread together.

In a time when public debate can often lead to division, such a gathering demonstrates a shared determination to bring respect and tolerance not only to parliament and places of worship, but also to the broader Australian community.

This act of unity and acceptance fosters a culture of tolerance and harmony. It stands as a testament to the strong foundation of trust, dignity, and love that underpins our democracy, and reaffirms our commitment to embracing the multitude of cultures, faiths and communities that define Australian life.

The Federal Parliamentary Interfaith Breakfast offers a chance to deepen understanding, to forge connections, and promote national healing. It also serves to demonstrate ACU’s mission in action – namely, to foster an appreciation of the sacred in life, and a commitment to serving the common good.

Professor Zlatko Skrbis
Vice-Chancellor and President
Australian Catholic University

Message from the Speaker of the House of Representatives



On behalf of my parliamentary colleagues, I would like to welcome everyone to the 8th annual Australian Catholic University Federal Parliamentary Interfaith Breakfast.

As Speaker of the House of Representatives it gives me great pleasure to co-sponsor this event with the ACU. It is wonderful to welcome you into the people’s house – the Parliament of Australia. This is your building and I am so pleased that so many of you have found the time to come together for this unique event.

I am a passionate supporter of the interfaith mission, which seeks to increase mutual understanding between different faiths and increase acceptance and tolerance across our society. As faith leaders, I know this is an ethos you live in your daily lives as you connect with members of your own communities and others in need through your charitable works. Australian society is made richer by the work and influence of our many different faith communities.

As well as enjoying the company of your fellow guests this morning, I urge you to take some time to meet the many parliamentarians who have joined today’s event. We are here to learn from you; to understand the challenges you face and hear about your experiences and hopes for the future.

We have come together in the spirit of open dialogue with a shared purpose to connect with our fellow Australians and find ways to ensure that the ideals of tolerance and harmony – long the hallmarks of our society – are strengthened and protected for future generations.

The Hon Milton Dick MP
Speaker of the House of Representatives
Parliament of Australia

Order of
proceedings



Please scan the QR code to view the speakers bios
acu.edu.au/interfaith



Master of Ceremonies
Ms Kelly Humphrey
Pro Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous)
Australian Catholic University



Welcome to Country
Mr Paul Girrawah House
Ngambri-Kamberri, Walgalu, Ngunnawal,
Wiradyuri custodian



Speaker’s Welcome
The Hon Milton Dick MP
Speaker of the House of Representatives
Parliament of Australia



Vice-Chancellor’s Address
Professor Zlatko Skrbis
Vice-Chancellor and President
Australian Catholic University



Prayer before the Meal
Sr Giovanni Farquer RSJ
Director of the Archdiocese of Sydney’s
Commission for Ecumenical and
Inter-Religious Relations



Keynote Address
Dr Rachael Kohn AO
Religion Journalist, Author,
Commentator and Broadcaster



Closing Remarks
The Hon Martin Daubney AM KC
Chancellor
Australian Catholic University