

## Religious leaders launch unique initiative for food sustainability



*(L-R): Clarence Slockee, Aboriginal Programs at Botanic Gardens & Centennial Parklands Sydney; Imam Ahmed Abdo of the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils; Rabbi Zalman Kastel of Together for Humanity; Heather Fagan of Islamic Science and Research Academy; Peter Burr, Meat Free Week; Jacqui Remond, Catholic Earthcare; Reverend John Buchanan of North Sydney Presbyterian Church; Judy Friedlander, Institute for Sustainable Futures, UTS; Hayriye Aknar, Islamic Science and Research Academy; Anita Kwan and Kim Lee, Tzu Chi Buddhist Sydney; Vijai Singhal, Hindu Council of Australia; Sister Elizabeth Delaney, National Council of Churches Australia; Gareth Johnson, Catholic Earthcare*

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A world-first initiative on food sustainability bringing together representatives of the world's major religious faiths, Indigenous leaders, sustainability activists and university academics has been launched in Sydney.

The FoodFaith initiative aims to respond to concerns around climate change, hunger, loss of biodiversity, water restrictions and other environmental crises in which food and agriculture play a major role. Its founders include a Jewish Rabbi, Muslim Imam and leaders from the Catholic, Protestant, Hindu and Buddhist communities.

The group has developed a series of recommendations for action that include limiting food waste, reducing meat consumption to lower carbon footprints, the sharing of excess food with organisations that can benefit from it, building links with community supported agriculture, and bans on the use of endangered plant and animal ingredients in food and medicines.

It also plans to host regular communal meat-free meals as a platform for different religious groups to come together and assist people in need, and will be developing an edible garden as an interfaith youth project.

Organisations supporting the initiative include the University of Technology Sydney's Institute for Sustainable Futures, the Australian Religious Response to Climate Change and Meat Free Week.

The launch was attended by a wide cross-section of community and religious leaders including Rabbi Zalman Kastel of Together for Humanity; Jacqui Remond, director of Catholic Earthcare Australia; Imam Ahmed Abdo of the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils; Sister Elizabeth Delaney, general secretary of the National Council of Churches Australia; Dr Miriam Pepper of Uniting Earthweb; Vijai Singhal of the Hindu Council of Australia; Clarence Slockee, education co-ordinator, Aboriginal Programs at Botanic Gardens & Centennial Parklands Sydney; and Kim Lee from Tzu Chi Buddhist Sydney.