



Australian Government
Department of Defence



Guide to Religion and Belief in the Australian Defence Force

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF OF THE DEFENCE FORCE

During my forty years in the Australian Defence Force I have witnessed the change in Australia's multicultural diversity. It is important that Defence engages a culturally diverse workforce that not only represents the community in which its personnel live and serve, but that draws from the full breadth of skills available.

Defence is committed to creating a fair and equitable workplace that encourages personnel to reach their full potential and positively contribute to organisational goals. People are, and always will be, a fundamental part of our capability and valuing the differing skills and attributes of all personnel is essential to providing an inclusive workplace.

Improved workplace diversity is critical to Defence achieving its capability and personnel goals for Force 2030. Diversity is also important to Defence as it encourages good business practise, innovative thinking and cultural sensitivity both in the workplace and when engaging with other communities while on operations. By encouraging a diverse workforce and valuing the different contributions of everyone, Defence can capitalise on the diverse talents and skills of all personnel.

It is important that diversity in the workplace is managed appropriately. The *Guide to Religion and Belief in the Australian Defence Force* has been developed as a tool for managers and personnel to increase awareness of the diversity that may exist in their workplace, and to provide some guidance to relevant legislation and policies.

The guide is intended to be used in conjunction with relevant Federal and State legislation and related Defence policies and instructions. While the information provided in this guide is as accurate as possible, it is not a definitive statement of law, an authoritative summary about the religions and beliefs represented in it, nor absolutely or wholly applicable to all circumstances. It is good business practise to resolve any doubt or misunderstandings with the individual involved in the first instance.

I commend the "*Guide to Religion and Belief in the Australian Defence Force*" to you and I look forward to your participation in building a diverse Force 2030.



D.J. HURLEY, AC, DSC

General

Chief of the Defence Force

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PART ONE: LEGISLATION AND POLICY

Commonwealth and State legislation provide the legal foundation for the free exercise of religion and belief in the community, including employment opportunities. All personnel are reminded that whilst we have Defence policy which must be complied with, nothing in Defence policy can authorise the breaching of Australian law.

ADF members are recruited from the Australian community, subject to specific exemptions related to citizenship, age and gender, health and fitness, and behaviour and appearance. Defence policies are in place to ensure that all members of the ADF are treated equitably throughout their period of service.

Defence policies require compliance as a minimum to ensure all members have a fair opportunity to achieve their potential. Commanders and supervisors are encouraged to go further than compliance, and to promote and recognise the contributions that a diverse workforce can make.

1.1 AUSTRALIAN LEGISLATION

The Federal Parliament has passed a number of laws which aim to protect people from certain kinds of discrimination in public life and from breaches of their human rights. The Australian Human Rights Commission has responsibility for administering the following laws:

- *Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986*
- *Age Discrimination Act 2004*
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*
- *Racial Discrimination Act 1975*
- *Sex Discrimination Act 1984*
- *Racial Discrimination Act 1975*
- Part II, paragraph 9 of the Racial Discrimination Act states:
'It is unlawful for a person to do any act involving a distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of any human right or fundamental freedom in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life.'

1.2 RELIGION AND BELIEF DEFINED

The term 'religion' is difficult to define as there are no solid parameters that are able to be applied to all religious belief systems or systems of faith. Religion is referred to in the legislation as any recognised religion, religious belief or similar philosophical belief that offers a way to find meaning and purpose in life. The phrase 'or belief' is also used because it encompasses non-religious beliefs. The term 'religion or belief' encompasses theistic, non-theistic and atheistic beliefs.

Often terms and definitions referring to religion, belief, faith and culture are interchanged. It is important to recognise their differences and be careful when speaking to individuals. For example, Hinduism is not regarded as a religion, and so applying this term may cause offense to a follower of the Hindu faith.

1.3 DEFENCE POLICIES

Defence is committed to making the principles of equity and diversity part of everyday business. This means that all people in the workplace are to be treated in a fair and inclusive manner that enhances capability and operational effectiveness.

The ADF benefits from a diverse workforce as people from different backgrounds and cultures can each contribute in a unique way. For this reason, Defence has a multicultural policy and a policy on religious practices to ensure all personnel are respected for their cultural, ethnic and religious differences and are free from harassment or discrimination.

ADF members are encouraged to pursue and practice their religion/belief/faith according to their freedom of choice, subject to the considerations of operational effectiveness, health and safety, and business priorities.

Guidance on Defence policy can be found in the following Defence Instructions:

■ DI(G) PERS 50-1 Equity and Diversity in the Australian Defence Force

'The Australian Defence Force (ADF) has made a commitment to promote equity and diversity in the workplace and in its management practices. The aim of promoting equity and diversity is to enhance operational capability and effectiveness in order to achieve the Defence mission through the development of fair and inclusive workplaces.

Equity and diversity emphasises the importance of valuing fairness and difference as good leadership practice. When everyone is valued, the ADF can expect the retention of the best people, increased effectiveness of teams and a more cohesive workforce with higher morale. Moreover, by using the various skill sets of all personnel, the ADF will have greater ability to successfully defend Australia and its national interests.

Equity and diversity apply to all personnel, ADF and APS, as good management practice and Government policy.' (*paragraphs 3-5*)

■ DI(G) PERS 35-5 Defence Multicultural Policy

'Defence supports all members in meeting their particular needs through access to a range of employment conditions and facilities that will allow them to manage their work and other commitments and responsibilities. Members are to be allowed to use workplace flexibilities provided to access appropriate social, cultural and religious services and facilities where practicable. This includes making allowances, subject to operational or safety requirements, for specific cultural and religious needs such as dress, diet and funeral rites.' (*paragraph 11*)

■ DI(G) PERS 26-2 Australian Defence Force policy on religious practices of Australian Defence Force members

'Australian Defence Force (ADF) members are encouraged to pursue their own religious beliefs and practices, subject to the requirements of ADF operations.

Care should be taken to ensure that any constraints, which would restrict particular religious observances, are minimised.

Commanding Officers (CO) are to ensure that members, regardless of their religious affiliation, are provided with the opportunity and facilities for the proper observance of their religious practices, so far as is possible.' (*paragraphs 1-5*)

1.4 UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR IN DEFENCE

Defence does not tolerate unacceptable behaviour in the workplace.

Unacceptable behaviour is behaviour that, having regard to all of the circumstances, would be offensive, belittling, abusive or threatening to another person or adverse to morale, discipline or workplace cohesion, or otherwise not in the interests of Defence. These behaviours may relate to a person's attitude to some real or perceived attribute or difference, including race, colour, ethnicity or national extraction, or religion.

■ DI(G) PERS 35-3 Management and Reporting of Unacceptable Behaviour

'All Defence personnel have a responsibility to foster an equitable, fair and safe workplace environment free from all forms of unacceptable behaviour... The Defence Values, Single-Service Values, Australian Public Service (APS) Values and the APS Code of Conduct collectively set out the behaviour expected of all Defence personnel.'

For advice on unacceptable behaviour issues see the Fairness and Resolution Intranet site:
<http://intranet.defence.gov.au/fr>

1.5 RELIGION AND SEXUAL ORIENTATION POLICIES

Australian legislation and Defence policy make it unlawful to discriminate against a person based on their race, religion or sexual orientation. These policies have the potential to conflict because some religions have specific beliefs about sexual orientation.

The right for Defence personnel to be treated in a fair and inclusive manner in the workplace applies equally to all members regardless of their religion or belief, or sexual orientation. In accordance with the Principles of Equity and Diversity (*DI(G) PERS 50-1 Equity and Diversity in the Australian Defence Force paragraph 7*), personnel are expected to treat each other with respect and dignity, and recognise that all people are different and value these differences.



PART TWO: A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO DEFENCE POLICIES

Part two of the Guide draws together the relevant sections of Defence and Single Service policies that discuss cultural and religious affiliation that may impact on the everyday business of a workplace. This is intended to assist commanders and supervisors to manage workplace equity and diversity.

Religious and cultural diversity cannot be understood in absolute terms. As religion and culture are a part of many areas of an individual's life, it can have effect on many areas of the workplace. The topics discussed in this section reflect some common issues that may arise due to religious practices, belief systems or cultural background.

ADF personnel are affiliated with a very wide range of religious, cultural and faith groups. Each of these groups can be understood to have common practices however members may practice and interpret their faith differently. The extent to which a member of a particular group practices their religion or faith may vary greatly between individuals.

2.1 CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES AT WORK

Defence embraces this diversity and aims to provide a workplace for all members that encourages the practice of religious observances by providing flexibility in daily routines and facilities, without compromising health and safety requirements, operational demands or business priorities.

- **DI(G) PERS 35-5 Defence Multicultural Policy, paragraph 7**

'Defence recognises and respects the significance of people's culture and beliefs and expects all personnel to treat other people's culture with respect and dignity. This cultural respect gives all Australians, subject to the law and within the confines of military discipline and the *Defence Force Discipline Act 1982*, the right to express their own culture and beliefs and obliges them to accept the right of others to do the same.'

- **DI(G) PERS 26-2 Australian Defence Force policy on religious practices of Australian Defence Force members, paragraph 5.**

'Attention to the spiritual need of ADF members is a matter of the highest importance. Commanding Officers (CO) are to ensure that members, regardless of their religious affiliation, are provided with the opportunity and facilities for the proper observance of their religious practices, so far as is possible.'

2.2 TIME OFF AND FACILITIES FOR PRAYER

Under Australian legislation, Defence is not obliged to provide facilities or time off work for members to observe religious practices. However Defence policy states that, wherever possible, opportunities are to be provided for individual requests for time or facilities required for religious practices or belief systems. This could include allowing time for morning tea break/prayer time or a quiet room available to all personnel.

- **DI(G) PERS 35-5 Defence Multicultural Policy, paragraph 11**

'Defence supports all members in meeting their particular needs through access to a range of employment conditions and facilities that will allow them to manage their work and other commitments and responsibilities. Members are to be allowed to use workplace flexibilities provided to access appropriate social, cultural and religious services and facilities where practicable.'

2.3 REQUESTS FOR LEAVE ON RELIGIOUS FESTIVALS/HOLIDAYS

Many religions or beliefs have special festivals or spiritual observance days, and members may request annual leave or short leave from duty so they may celebrate festivals or attend ceremonies. Commanders and supervisors should consider every request for time off to celebrate religious festivals or holidays.

- **DI(G) PERS 26-2 Australian Defence Force policy on religious practices of Australian Defence Force members, paragraph 3c**

‘Every effort is to be made to allow members of any faith group to practice their faith according to their own particular observances. Personnel are not to be employed on recognised Holy Days other than on necessary duty.’

- **DI(G) PERS 26-2 Australian Defence Force policy on religious practices of Australian Defence Force members, paragraph 8**

‘Where practicable, and dependent on operational requirements, personnel are not to be employed to work on a day where that is contrary to the principles of their religion. Where a force deploys in support of another cultural group, commanders and supervisors should be cognizant of the religious observances, Holy Days and cultural practices of that group.’

2.4 TIME OFF FOR BEREAVEMENT AND COMPASSIONATE PURPOSES

Compassionate leave arrangements for ADF members allow for time off when a close relative is seriously ill, very seriously ill or dies. The significance of a period of bereavement and the interpretation of ‘close relative’ may vary between individuals dependent upon their cultural background and religious affiliation.

- **PACMAN Chapter 5, Part 7, Division 2 Paragraph 5.7.9 : Compassionate leave**

Additional compassionate leave may be granted if considered reasonable or appropriate due to the member’s circumstances.

- **PACMAN Chapter 9, Part 3, Division 7: Compassionate Travel**

A member’s commander or supervisor may also grant compassionate travel, or the cost of the journey to visit a person with a serious or very serious illness, or who has died. Compassionate travel may be granted in conjunction with compassionate leave, other leave, or in exceptional circumstances.

2.5 DRESS

Many religions, beliefs and cultures have items of dress and appearance that hold special significance. All ADF personnel are required to wear the standard issued uniform and adhere to clothing policies and instructions. Defence policy includes specific exemptions whereby commanders and supervisors may grant permission to individuals who request to wear items of dress for religious and cultural reasons, provided that these do not conflict with health and safety regulations, or operational requirements.

Commanders and supervisors may approve different types of head dress (such as turbans, hijabs or yarmulkes) or simply be more flexible with uniform requirements (such as allowing Muslim women to wear long sleeves and tracksuit pants during physical training). Part three of this guide has details on any specific dress requirements of different religions and beliefs.

It is important for commanders and supervisors to be aware of any religious/cultural dress requirements of individuals when planning activities or applying standing orders. Members must also remain flexible with religious dress requests. Health and safety requirements may impact on the wearing of some religious dress.

Some trades require specialist headgear to be worn for health and safety purposes, especially in operational circumstances. Turbans are often incompatible with such specialist equipment and so members, in both

training and on operations may be required to either wear a patka (mini turban) or cut their hair in order to fulfil these requirements.

Some religions require that women have their heads, arms and legs covered at all times. In circumstances where this is not practical, such as completing a swim test, commanders and supervisors are to consider alternatives including allowing an activity to be conducted in an all female environment.

Service specific advice on dress can be found in the following references:

Navy

Religious/Cultural dress or grooming

- **ABR 81 Uniform Instructions for the Royal Australian Navy paragraph 3.40**

‘An Administrative Authority or CO may allow a member professing a particular religious affiliation or cultural heritage which requires the wearing of particular items of dress, or variances to grooming standards to observe the relevant practice.’

Army

- **Army Standing Orders for Dress (ASOD), volume 2 part 3 paragraph 1.90**

‘Turbans may be worn by members of the Sikh religion who have been granted exemption from the cutting of hair. The colour of the turban worn with all form of military uniforms is to be black in colour. The material used is to be the standard currently worn by a Sikh religious member. The provision of turbans for Sikh members is a unit responsibility.’



Air Force

Exemptions from dress regulations on religious grounds.

- **Australian Air Publication 5135.003 (AM1) Manual of Dress paragraph 14-15**

‘Members or prospective members of the Air Force or AAFC may apply through normal channels to DCOORD-AF for exemption from particular dress regulations, where genuine religious grounds exist. In each case, the application should state the regulation involved, the reason for being unable to comply and how the exemption would affect the member’s uniform and/or appearance. If applicable, any proposed alternative or additional item of clothing should be listed. Applications should include comments from the Commanding Officer, Chaplain or Recruiting Officer in relation to the request. Where approval has been given to wear a non-standard item of uniform, CLOSPO is to decide on the method of procurement. Exemptions will not be granted where standards of operational effectiveness, safety or hygiene may be compromised.’

Turbans – Note that a standard exemption has been made for members of the Sikh faith who may wear turbans of Air Force blue material instead of normal headdress. The appropriate cap badge is to be fitted centrally on the turban with its base at the apex of the triangle of the headband. When necessary to wear specialist headgear such as combat helmets or flying helmets the turban has to be removed and the patka (mini turban) may be worn.’

2.6 APPEARANCE (FACIAL HAIR, HAIR STYLES, TATTOOS AND JEWELLERY)

Many religions, beliefs and cultures have regulations about appearance that hold special significance. Defence has specific guidelines on grooming and appearance which are strongly related to health and safety requirements. Defence policies are flexible with variations in appearance for religious or cultural purposes.

Hair Styles

Some religions have specific rules about hair styles and length, including that hair may not be cut from the body. In such occasions, as stated above personnel may cover their hair with the appropriate headdress and in accordance with a neat and professional standard. This right may be waived if there is a perceived health or safety threat to the individual and / or their colleagues.

- SAFETYMAN chapter 16 paragraph 16.3

‘Hazards relating to hair length and style exist in all work practices where there is a risk of hair being caught in moving or rotating equipment, being hooked on protruding or sharp objects or being ignited by flammable sources. For these reasons, hair hanging freely below the bottom edge of the collar, and hair styled in such a way that it sticks out or is not otherwise kept close to the head, poses an unacceptable risk to all Army personnel during battle physical training (battle PT), all field activities, most industrial employment and other tasks where the risks identified in this paragraph may exist.’

- SAFETYMAN chapter 16 paragraph 16.5c

‘The issue of hair incompatibility with helmets or other protective devices does not constitute grounds for non-compliance (of the SAFETYMAN).’

Facial Hair

Each of the Services has its own policy on facial hair being worn. The overarching policy on facial hair however relates specifically to safety requirements. Approval to wear facial hair for religious reasons may be granted if doing so poses no risk to health and safety.

- SAFETYMAN chapter 16 paragraph 16.4

‘Hazards relating to beard length may also exist in all work practices where there is a risk of hair being caught in moving or rotating equipment, being hooked on protruding or sharp objects or being ignited by flammable sources. For these reasons, beards which are not kept clipped short pose an unacceptable risk to all Army personnel during most industrial employment and other tasks where the risks identified in this paragraph may exist.’

Navy

- ABR 81 paragraph 4.96

‘The CO may direct members to remove facial hair where its presence significantly reduces the effectiveness of respiratory protective equipment.’

Army

- **ASOD Volume 1 chapter 3 paragraph 3.33c**

‘A member who is granted permission by a CO on religious grounds [can have a beard]’

- **ASOD Volume 1 chapter 3 paragraph 3.34**

‘When worn, beards are to be kept neatly trimmed with the whisker length not greater than two centimetres and tapered to blend with the hairstyle. No area of the face is to be shaved when a beard is worn.’



Tattoos and Jewellery

Some religions or cultures place significance on body tattoos or jewellery, and this may conflict with *DI(G) PERS 36-3 Inherent Requirements of Service in the Australian Defence Force*, specifically relating to maintaining a professional, uniformed appearance. Requests for tattoos and jewellery for religious or cultural reasons should be considered by the Commanding Officer and decisions made on fair and equitable grounds.

For specific guidance by Navy, Army and Air Force, please also see the following service instructions:

- DI(N) PERS 31-18 RAN policy on tattoos, branding, body piercing and mutilation
- DI(A) PERS xx Australian Army policy on tattoos, branding, body piercing and mutilation (in development)
- DI(AF) PERS 29-32 RAAF policy on tattoos, branding, body piercing and mutilation

For general advice on tattoos and jewellery, please see below:

Navy

- **ABR 81 paragraph 4.71 (Tattoos)**

‘RAN personnel are not permitted to have tattoos or brands on their face, scalp, ears or neck (generically referred to as facial tattoos) that would be visible when wearing an open necked, collared shirt. If personnel are required to obtain such a tattoo or brand for religious or cultural reasons, a waiver is to be sought from DGNPT.’

- **ABR 81 paragraph 4.63 (Personal effects, adornments and jewellery)**

‘All members are permitted to wear religious symbols on a necklace/chain whilst in uniform, providing the necklace/chain is not visible.’

Army

- **ASOD, volume 2 chapter 3 paragraph 3.58**

'Members are prohibited from obtaining tattoos on the hands, neck, face, ears or scalp. If for religious reasons members are required to obtain tattoos on these areas, approval is first to be sought from AHQ.'

Air Force

- **5135.003 (AM1) chapter 17 paragraph 23 (Body Piercing Jewellery and Tattoos)**

'When in uniform or on duty, Air Force personnel are not permitted to wear body piercing jewellery (visible or not) such as, but not limited to, nose, ear and tongue studs and eyebrow, navel and nipple rings, this also includes the placement or affixing of ornaments on the enamel of teeth.'

The Air Force policy in relation to tattoos is set out in DI(AF) PERS 29-32. This policy applies to serving members as well as candidates for entry. In essence, tattoos which by their nature or because of their location may cause offence or invite provocation are not permitted.'

2.7 DIETARY NEEDS

Defence personnel are to be treated equitably with regards to their dietary choices, including both lifestyle choices (such as vegetarianism) and a religious or cultural dietary restriction. Catering arrangements should, where possible, make every effort to provide flexibility to accommodate ADF personnel with such dietary requirements.

Members must be aware that in some cases, it may not be possible to guarantee availability of dietary requests. For example, preparation of Kosher food in a strict Jewish observance may be difficult to adhere to in a mess. Operational situations may also decrease availability of some varieties of ration packs.

- **ADF Ration Scales and Scales of Issue Manual (SUPMAN4), chapter 3 (Special Rations) paragraphs 3.16**

'Defence has a responsibility to provide meals to members with religious, cultural or medical dietary requirement. Members who have a religion that is recorded on PMKeyS which requires special dietary considerations should liaise with unit caterers. Members who are yet to have their religious or cultural dietary requirement recognised and recorded on PMKeyS should visit their respective spiritual representative for guidance before visiting the Unit Medical Officer who will provide them with a chit. ... The chit supplied by the medical staff will enable the caterer to purchase dietary requirement that fall outside those provided in the ADFRS'.

For specific religious dietary restriction, please refer to part 3 of this guide, or SUPMAN4, chapter 3 paragraphs 3.17-3.27

2.8 FASTING

Some religions require their followers to undergo extended periods of fasting at different times throughout the year. Defence policy requires commanders and supervisors to remain flexible to accommodate religious practices, and this includes fasting. There may be some occasions when fasting would be inappropriate or hazardous to either the individuals concerned or other members, such as operational exercises where physical demands on personnel are necessarily high. In these circumstances, health and safety requirements must take precedence.

Where possible, fasting may be able to occur by remaining flexible with daily routines. For example during Ramadan, Muslims fast between dawn and sunset. In this situation, it may be appropriate to arrange with the mess to make adequate provision for eating outside the normal meal times.



2.9 WORSHIP

Many religions set aside specific times during the week for worship, and this often requires attendance at a ceremony or service. The ADF has a large network of Chaplains that provide an opportunity for members to meet their spiritual needs either at arranged meetings or on an ad hoc basis.

If a member requests the opportunity to worship a religion or belief that is not available from a Unit Chaplain, they may request to attend a service at an alternate location, and a commander or supervisor can provide approval for this.

- **DI(G) PERS 26-2 Australian Defence Force policy on religious practices of Australian Defence Force members, paragraph 7**

‘When a Chaplain is not available to conduct a particular denominational Service, the CO or delegate may either conduct a Service of Worship or make provision for:

- personnel to attend their respective Services of Worship in another unit or establishment, or at a civilian place of worship; or
- lay persons, with denominational accreditation endorsed by the: appropriate member of the Religious Advisory Committee to the Services (RACS), to conduct Services of Worship within the level of their particular religion.’

2.10 DEATH IN SERVICE

There may be particular religious requirements for the disposal or treatment of bodies at the time of death. These are to be treated with reverence and respect, and every effort is to be made to respect these religious practices and rights of the deceased member.

Principles Governing the Conduct of Mortuary Affairs

‘The conduct of Mortuary Affairs in the ADF is governed by the following key principles:

Respect and dignity. The deceased are to be treated with respect, dignity and compassion, and where reasonably practical, commensurate with the deceased member’s family religious and cultural beliefs, desires and expectations.’

Chaplains and religious protocols

- **DI(G) PERS 20-6 Death of ADF personnel (paragraph 13a, and 110-111)**

‘Chaplains will usually assist/participate in the notification process and provide solace and spiritual comfort to family/loved ones of the deceased. Chaplains will also be involved in organising/conducting appropriate religious rites/ceremonies.

Each religion has its own requirements for the handling of deceased. However, operational imperatives and legal requirements may preclude the observance of normal religious protocols. Mortuary Affairs procedures are to be followed regardless of the religion of the deceased.’

- **DI(A) 31-3 Army Funerals paragraph 34**

‘Wherever practicable, the service appropriate to the religious denomination of the deceased is to be observed. In the case of a multiple burial of remains, every effort is to be made to ensure the presence of a representative of the religious denomination of each of the deceased.’

PART THREE: BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO MAJOR RELIGIONS PRACTISED IN AUSTRALIA

Australia's religious diversity is subject to influences such as globalisation, generational trends and migration. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics 2006 census, Christianity continues to be the most common religion in Australia, however there have been rapid increases in non-Christian religions, and people identifying as having no religious affiliation.

From 1996 to 2006, the numbers of Buddhists, Muslims and Hindus have almost doubled, largely due to migration from Asian countries. Furthermore, different sectors of Christianity are showing changes, in particular the number of Anglicans have dropped by 4.6% since 1996. These changes are most obvious in Generation X and Y, who were less likely to identify as Christian. Buddhism, Islam and Hinduism were among their top ten religious affiliations.

Secularisation has also shown large increases as people from younger generations are approximately three times more likely to state 'no religion' than older generations (23.5% of 15-34 year olds compared to 7.9% of 65+).

Religious diversity is not only reflected in the numbers of people affiliated with different religious or faith groups. The Australian census data from 1986 to 2006 shows a trend in Generation X and Y shifting to 'no religion' around the age when many would have likely left the family home and begun to respond to the census survey for themselves. This suggests that the level of commitment or active involvement to the religious group may change with age and be spreading out further along the spectrum. Additionally with more external influences on traditional religions, many different interpretations are emerging. This means that religious groups now have many variations within their traditional boundaries.

For all of these reasons, religious affiliation should not be assumed based on a person's ethnicity. Although there are strong trends between migration and religious diversity, a person's country of origin does not necessarily imply their religious affiliation. For example, in 2000 Indonesia reported 88% Muslim and 9% Christian; however in 2006 Indonesian-born Australians consisted of 17% Muslims and 59% Christians. Similarly, in 2001 India was predominantly Hindu (81%) with only 2.3% Christian; however in 2006 34% of India-born Australians were Christians.

In Australia, the religions that show the highest rates of affiliation, and/or a fast rate of growth are Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Sikhism and non religion/non belief. Section 3 of this Guide provides basic overviews of these religious groups. To find more information, see the reference section on page 29.

3.1 ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER SPIRITUALITY

Increasing numbers of members of the ADF from Aboriginal and Torres Strait communities and origins are being recorded. Additionally the ADF conducts operations and tasks within areas that are inhabited by those communities.

It should be noted that each community is very distinct and has its own identity. There is significant respect between the individual communities for the spiritual tradition of each other. There are a variety of spiritual traditions in these communities which are fundamental to their understanding of life principles, values and behaviours. Within these traditions there are some common elements which can be extended to all.

In Aboriginal spirituality the spiritual beliefs and values derive from a sense of close 'belonging' to the land, water and nature. Creation stories have been transmitted within the communities that explain and define that relationship. These stories are often collated together into the term "Dreaming" which embodies the cultural understandings and principles that form the basis for codifying an understanding of the complexity of origin, customary law and belief systems. The Dreaming recounts the emergence of the Ancestor Spirits from the formless mass and their role in the specific events that gave form to the land and of all life to be found on it (humans, animals and plants). There is an acceptance of responsibility passed on from the Ancestor Spirits to continue to exercise a responsibility to preserve, care for and respect the land and all life forms.

Torres Strait spirituality is very similar in origin but because of the geography the focus is more upon the sea, the action of the Tagai (warrior) and includes a stronger context of the stars.

The Spirituality of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is not exclusive and is often brought into their relationship with other religions and is both influenced by them and influences them.

The traditional community structure of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is based on the strong extended family (kinship) system which defines rights, obligations and responsibilities within the communities. Combined with Traditional Law this can determine many social elements like marriage regulations, relationship boundaries, care and nurture of children, and a sense of 'shame'.

Daily Rituals

Ceremonies and rituals take on many forms and are often secret and sacred. There are sites that are sacred to them and are often restricted to specific members of the community.

Religious Festivals/Holidays

Many groups and communities have their own specific festivals which can involve a significant ceremonial element. Due to their relationship with other religions they will often celebrate the religious festivals of those in surrounding communities.

However there is general acceptance of the following days of observance of recognition across the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities:

- 26 January: Survival Day, marking the survival of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.
- 26 May: National Healing Day (Sorry Day), marking the tabling of the "Bringing Them Home Report (1997).
- 27 May – 3 June: National Reconciliation Week, marking the granting of citizenship and voting rights to Aboriginal People and that Mabo Decision granting native title rights.
- 1 June: Coming of Light, marking the introduction of Christianity to the Torres Strait.
- July: NAIDOC Week, celebrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture. (NAIDOC = National Aboriginal and Islander Day Observance Committee).

Dress

There are no specific dress requirements.

During times of mourning, members of some communities may wear “string”. Those wearing “string” may be restricted from interaction with certain other people.

Appearance

There are no specific requirements with regard to appearance.

Dietary Needs

As many communities have a specific identity with a life form (a clan emblem e.g. a goanna), called a ‘totem’, members of that community would normally refrain from eating or harming that life form.



Medical Treatment

There are no religion-based restrictions from receiving medical treatment.

However, in some communities, there are strict protocols concerning interaction with members of the opposite sex. Wherever possible, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders should be managed by a member of the same sex.

Death and Grieving

According to traditional belief, death is not feared – it is a time when a person’s spirit is released to the Dreaming and reconnected with its traditional land.

Most communities have restrictions on photographs of the deceased being displayed and on the name of the deceased being used until another member of the community is given that name.

Grieving is expressed in community during a time of ‘sorry business’ or, in some communities ‘bad news’ or ‘sad news’. Observation of this time takes precedence over all other matters.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders are normally buried – wherever possible in their ‘home country’.

3.2 BAHAI

The Baha’i Faith is the youngest of the world’s independent religions. It was founded in Iran in 1844 and came to Australia in 1920. There are over 12,000 Australian Baha’is, according to the 2006 census.

The central theme of the Baha’i Faith is that humanity is one family or a single people with a common destiny of unification into a peaceful global society. Baha’is believe in the teachings of Baha’u’llah, a divine messenger that descended from a line of messengers of God including Abraham, Moses, Krishna, Buddha, Zoroaster, Jesus and Mohammed.

Baha’is believe in the oneness of God, the oneness of religion and the oneness of humanity. They practice high standards of moral and ethical principles throughout their daily lives as they aim to eliminate poverty and prejudice in the world.

Daily rituals

Members of the Baha’i faith have a daily routine of praying, meditating and reading the Baha’i sacred writings. This must occur in a quiet place and facing the Qiblih (the shrine of Baha’u’llah in Israel). Baha’is are required to wash their hands and face before prayers.

It is up to the individual how long they spend in these activities, but moderation is encouraged.

Religious Festivals/Holidays

A centre piece of the Baha'i community life is the "Nineteen Day Feast". During this time, Baha'is of the local community will come together for a spiritual feast of worship, companionship and unity.

The most important Baha'i festival is Rivdan (21 April – 2 May), which includes three holy days:

- 21 April: First Day of Rivdan, marking Baha'u'llah's declaration of His mission as a Messenger of God.
- 29 April: Ninth Day of Rivdan
- 2 May: Twelfth Day of Rivdan

Baha'is commemorate these holy days, during which they will suspend work:

- 21 March: Naw Ruz, the Baha'i New Year
- 23 May: Declaration of the Bab (Baha'u'llah's predecessor)
- 29 May: Ascension of Baha'u'llah
- 9 July: Martyrdom of the Bab
- 20 October: Birth of the Bab
- 12 November: Birth of Baha'u'llah

Baha'is also celebrate these festivals, but will not suspend work:

- 26 November: Day of the Covenant
- 28 November: Ascension of Abdu'l-Baha

Dress

There are no specific dress regulations.

Appearance

There are no specific requirements with regard to appearance.

Dietary Needs

Baha'is are required to participate in an annual fasting period, 2-20 March. During fasting, Baha'is from the age of 15 years abstain from food and drink between sunrise and sunset.

Baha'is also have prohibitions against the non-medical use of alcohol and drugs.

Medical treatment

Generally, there are no religion-based restrictions for Baha'is receiving medical treatment.

Death and Grieving

Baha'is have no specific period of mourning. Burial should take place as soon as possible after death and whenever possible the body should not be transported more than one hour from the place of death.

3.3 BUDDHISM

Buddhism is one of Australia's largest growing faiths. The 2006 census recorded approximately 420,000 Buddhist Australians, which is about 2.1% of the population.

Buddhism is a religion that is based on the teachings of Siddharta Gautama, who experienced a profound realisation of the nature of life, death and existence, and later became known as "Buddha" or "Enlightened One". Buddhism is about reaching enlightenment through understanding the roots of suffering, and in overcoming worldly attachments and grief.

Buddhists understand life as a process of birth, illness, ageing, death and rebirth. The life you lead has a direct effect on your next life, and so there is an emphasis on love of all living things, wisdom, compassion, generosity, hospitality and self-discipline.

The core of Buddha's enlightenment was the realisation of the four Noble truths:

- The truth of suffering.
- The truth of the cause of suffering.
- The truth of the end of suffering.
- The truth of the path that frees us from suffering.

There are two main branches of Buddhism common in Australia; Theravada and Mahayana, which differ according to their country of origin.

Daily rituals

To be a Buddhist is to live by the teachings of the Buddha throughout everyday life. This includes practicing certain rituals, such as chanting or meditating, or simply altering behaviour to show compassion and kindness.

Buddhists practice the Buddha's teachings, in particular the Eightfold Path; the means by which enlightenment might be realised. The Eightfold Path is divided into three main themes, which are wisdom, ethical conduct and mental discipline.

Wisdom means perceiving the true nature of one's self and the world around them. It also refers to the energy and commitment one needs to be fully engaged in Buddhist practice.

Ethical Conduct calls Buddhists to take care in their speech, actions, and daily lives to do no harm to others and to cultivate wholesomeness.

Mental Discipline aims to cut through delusion, worries, daydreams and passions to achieve clarity and focus of mind. This is often practiced through meditation or chanting.

Although these practices are ongoing throughout life and do not require specific times or facilities to be completed, Buddhists commonly meditate or chant during early mornings or evenings.

Religious Festivals/Holidays

Most Buddhist observances are determined by moon phase rather than date, so the dates change every year.

The most important Buddhist festival is Vesak during February/May, which celebrates Buddha's birth, enlightenment and death.

Other festivals continue throughout the year and vary according to Buddhist variations and country.

Dress

There are no specific rules relating to dress but some Buddhists may prefer to wear clothing which conforms to their belief in non harm (e.g. not wearing leather clothing or shoes).

Appearance

Lay Buddhists do not have specific restrictions on appearance, however may choose to wear their hair very short or shaven. They may also choose to wear medallions, prayer beads and/or coloured string around their necks or wrists.

Dietary Needs

Some Buddhists choose to be vegetarians, based on the belief that taking the life of any living creature is a negative action. Others may only practice vegetarianism at certain times of the year or for certain festivals.

Devout Buddhists may also abstain from eating root vegetables, or strong smelling plants, such as garlic, shallots and leek, as they tend to excite senses.

Some Buddhists may also choose to only have one meal a day, which is the lunch meal, and undergo periods of fasting, although this often only occurs during retreats.

Alcohol and drugs are often avoided because of their effect on the mind and mindfulness.

Medical treatment

If possible medical treatment should be delivered by a practitioner of the same gender.

Death and Grieving

In Buddhist tradition the funeral usually takes place within a week after death. Funerals usually focus on a reflection on the transition of life. Bodies can be cremated or buried.

It is usually appropriate for friends to call at the home of the deceased family after the funeral, but not before.

3.4 CHRISTIANITY

Christianity was brought to Australia with the English and European settlers and convicts in 1788, and remains Australia's largest religion with over 12.5 million followers according to the 2006 census. Approximately 63% of ADF personnel have identified as being Christians.

Christianity is a religion based on the life, death and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth, also known as the Christ or Messiah. Jesus was the Son of God, and his coming fulfilled the prophecies in the Old Testament to the people of Israel regarding the birth of the Messiah. He taught that the Kingdom of God was imminent, bringing with it forgiveness and new life for all who believed.

Jesus' claim to be the Messiah roused opposition from religious and political authorities and he was crucified. Three days after his death, Jesus rose from the dead and, 40 days later ascended into heaven. Christians believe Jesus will come again and bring fulfilment of the Kingdom of God and a final day of judgement.

Christianity's holy scripture is the Bible, which is a collection of books which they believe to be the inspired Word of God. The Bible is divided into two major sections – the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Old Testament contains the books written before the birth of Christ and many of these books – particularly the first five books - are shared with both Judaism and Islam. The New Testament contains four accounts of the life and teachings of Jesus (the Gospels), the record of the teaching of the Apostles (the Acts), and the teachings that were proclaimed through letters of the Apostles (the Epistles) written to early Christian communities.

Christian communities are in four main groups of churches – Catholics (Western – also called Roman or Latin – and Eastern), Anglicans, Protestant and Orthodox. Although many beliefs are consistent across all the groups, there are significant inherent differences. These major groups are often called denominations.

The Catholic, Anglican and Orthodox churches comprise communities (each one called a parish) – each group of communities is called a diocese which centre around one designated as a Bishop. In the Catholic tradition the dioceses consider the Bishop of Rome (the Pope) as the source of unity between the dioceses. In the Anglican tradition a similar role is invested in the Archbishop of Canterbury and by the General Synod. In the Orthodox churches this role is invested in the Patriarch of that church. In the Protestant churches the tradition is maintained by more localised structures called Assemblies, Synods and Conferences.

The Catholic, Anglican and Orthodox churches express their worship in ceremonies of differing degrees of elaboration. All Christian churches give prominence to the reading of the Bible and drawing instruction from that reading. In addition the Catholic and Orthodox (and some Anglican) churches give equal prominence to an act of worship (called the Mass, the Divine Liturgy, or Holy Communion) which involves the consecration of bread and wine to become the body and blood of Jesus.

Daily rituals

Christians follow the Ten Commandments, which guide their behaviour and provide a moral code for their lives. Some Christians may worship or pray everyday either in public or private, but many will only attend gatherings on Sundays.

Religious Festivals/Holidays

As there is great variation in Christian churches, rituals and festivals also vary between denominations. The core Holy days are:

- Christmas (December 25): The celebration of Jesus' birth.
- Good Friday which commemorates the crucifixion of Jesus. (March/April)
- Easter Sunday which celebrates the resurrection of Jesus. (March/April)

Other important times and celebrations are:

- Advent: The beginning of the Christian Year. Four Sundays before Christmas, Christians set aside time for reflection and preparation for recalling the coming of Christ. (November/December)
- Christmas to Epiphany: Marks the traditional 12 days of Christmas. Epiphany marks the arrival of the magi or wise men at Jesus' birthplace. (December/January)
- Season of Lent: (February/March) The 40 days of preparation and penance which begins on Ash Wednesday and concludes at sundown on Holy (Easter) Saturday.
- Holy Week: The holiest period of the Christian calendar. It begins with Palm Sunday (Sunday before Easter) which commemorates Jesus' entry into Jerusalem for the last time.
- Holy (Maundy) Thursday which commemorates the Last Supper. Good Friday, which solemnly commemorates Jesus' crucifixion, and continues until Easter Sunday.
- Ascension Day: Takes place 40 days after Easter and celebrates Jesus' ascension into heaven. (April/May)
- Pentecost: Takes place 10 days after Ascension Day (50 days after Easter). It is the celebration of the Coming of the Holy Spirit upon Jesus' disciples. It is popularly accepted as the birthday of the church and represents the power of God in the life of believers.

Some denominations also celebrate Saints' Days and Feast Days.

Dress

There are no specific dress requirements.

Appearance

There are no overarching requirements for appearance. Many Christians choose to wear a crucifix or cross on a chain around their neck.

Dietary Needs

There are no specific dietary restrictions, however on certain Holy days – the Fridays of Lent and including Good Friday many Christians are obliged to fast or abstain from red meat. Some Christians may fast throughout the Lent period.

Medical treatment

Generally, there are no religion-based restrictions for Christians receiving medical treatment.

Death and Grieving

Christians believe in eternal life after death, but not earthly reincarnation.

Many Christians would expect to have the Last Rites when they are in danger of death. For Catholic Christians this involves the administration of a Sacrament that must be administered by a priest.

Funerals usually occur within a week or two of death. Christians may be buried or cremated.



3.5 HINDUISM

According to the 2006 census, there are almost 150,000 Hindu's in Australia, and it is one of the fastest growing religions in Australian society.

Hinduism is without a beginning or end, and exists as a continuous process. Many Hindus refer to their religion as an “eternal” religion, and have a strong emphasis on the fulfilment of duties appropriate to class and stage of life.

Hinduism is not a homogeneous, organised, systematic religion and followers can vary in their beliefs greatly. Most Hindus will recognise the existence of Brahman, the unifying principle and Supreme Reality behind all that is. Most Hindus also believe in one Supreme God who manifests him/herself in many different forms. Some of these include Shiva, Vishnu, Krishna, Durga, Ganesh, Sakti (Devi), Surya and Skanda (Murugan). However while some Hindus regard Shiva or Vishnu as the only true God; others will look inward to the divine Self.

Authority is respected in the Vedas (a collection of ancient sacred texts) and the Brahmins (the divine priestly class) however some Hindus will reject one or both of these as authorities. Hindu religious life can take several forms, including devotion to God or gods, the duties of family life, or concentrated meditation.

The majority of Hindus are in the search for salvation, which means release from the cycle of death and rebirth. There are generally three recognised paths to salvation:

- karmamarga – path of works and action, fulfilment of worldly duties, obligations and responsibilities.
- jnanamarga – path of knowledge or philosophy and discipline usually through yoga and meditation, and the stripping away of illusion from reality.
- bhaktimarga – path of devotion through allegiance and worship of particular god/s.

The four main aims in life are:

- dharma – fulfil moral, social and religious duties.
- artha – attain financial and worldly success, and betterment of the family.
- kama – satisfy physical desires and pleasures, but in moderation.
- moksha – attain freedom from reincarnation.

Daily rituals

Individuals will vary in their daily routines, but generally Hindus are encouraged to pray at least once a day at sunrise. Although it is encouraged to pray at dawn and dusk, actual time is not critical.

Religious Festivals/Holidays

Hindu local and temple festivals will vary according to region. There are numerous festivals annually, however some of the main ones observed in Australia are:

- Vasant Panchami (January)
- Holi (Spring Festival)
- Ramanavami (March)
- Hanuman Jayanti (March)
- Raksha Bandhan (August)

- Krishna Janmashtami (September) – This festival is one of the most important events in the Hindu calendar. It celebrates the birth of Krishna, one of the incarnations of Vishnu. Celebrations take place over two days.
- Diwali (Deepavali) Festival of Lights (November)

Dress

Traditional dress for Hindu women includes the sari and shalwar (loose fitting pants). Traditional male Hindus wear the white cotton dhoti (long tunic) and always cover themselves from waist to knee.

Appearance

Hindu women will often wear a bindi (a dot) on their forehead. Married women will wear a red dot, whereas single women may wear other colours. Many married women will also wear glass wedding bangles and a mangalsutra on a chain around their neck. The mangalsutra consists of a gold ornament strung from a yellow thread, a string of black beads or a gold chain. These items would only be removed if their husband dies.

Some Hindus may also wear a Janoy (a coir thread) around their body that runs around their waist and diagonally over their shoulder, or a beaded necklace. These items must not be removed.

A few orthodox Hindu men may also wear a shikha, a hairstyle similar to a ponytail. These are traditionally worn with a shaved head but more recently are often hidden beneath the remaining hair.

Dietary Needs

As the cow is considered to be sacred, Hindus will not eat beef. Some Hindus are strictly vegetarian and will not eat meat, fish, eggs or products made from these foods. Vegetarian and non-vegetarian foods cannot be cooked together. Fasting may be practiced on new moon days and during certain religious festivals. Some Hindus may also consider alcohol to be forbidden.

Medical treatment

Hindu people, especially women may be reluctant to undress for medical treatments and examinations. If possible medical treatment should be delivered by a practitioner of the same gender.

Death and Grieving

Hindus believe in reincarnation and it is important that the body be cremated and returned to dust as soon as possible after death. Prayers and ceremonies are conducted in homes before the cremation.

Traditionally, the closest relative of the deceased (usually the eldest son) takes charge of the final rite and (if that is cremation) lights the funeral pyre. Afterwards, the immediate family remains in isolation for a number of days (usually 10, 11 or 13).



3.6 ISLAM (MUSLIM)

The word Islam means 'to submit to God' (Allah), and followers of the religion are called Muslims. There are about 340,000 Australian Muslims according to the 2006 census.

Islam originated in Arabia and is based on the teachings of the Prophet Mohammed. Mohammed was delivered the word of Allah from the archangel Gabriel, and this word is now recorded in the Qur'an, Islam's Holy book. Muslims believe that Mohammed was as perfect as any human could be, and they live their lives in a way that follows his example by worshiping one God and constructing ethical social order.

Islam is divided into two main sects; Sunni and Shi'a. Sunni Muslims constitute 90% of the world's Muslims and are considered the orthodox face of Islam. Shi'ites are followers of Ali, Mohammed's son-in-law.

The framework of Muslim life is built on the five pillars of Islam:

- **Shahadah (the declaration of faith):** Shahadah is the declaration of the faithful that there is no God but Allah and Mohammed is the messenger and servant of Allah.
- **Salaah (prayer):** Muslims are required to pray five times a day, at dawn, noon, mid afternoon, after sunset and late evening. They are required to wash themselves before prayer and face in the direction of Mecca whilst praying.
- **Zakat (charity):** Muslims are required to give away a percentage of their wealth to help the poor and the needy on an annual basis.
- **Saum (fasting):** Muslims fast throughout the ninth lunar month each year, during a period called Ramadan. They must abstain from food, drink, smoking and sexual relations from dawn until sunset. During Ramadan, Muslims reflect on their behaviour and strive to purify their thoughts.
- **Hajj (pilgrimage):** Muslims are required to travel to Mecca once in their lifetime. Pilgrims wear simple garments, eliminating distinctions of class and culture, so that all stand equal before Allah. Considered the 'journey of the heart and soul', the Hajj is the biggest and most important journey in a Muslim's life.

Daily rituals

Muslims are required to pray five times a day, at dawn, noon, mid afternoon, after sunset and late evening. These prayers must be conducted in a space that is clean and quiet, and a ritual washing of hands, face and feet occurs prior to praying. Whilst praying, Muslims face towards the Ka'ba in Mecca.

Friday is the holy day. Friday midday prayers are particularly important to Muslims and are usually required to be communal and conducted at a Mosque.

Religious Festivals/Holidays

The dates of Muslim festivals are based on the lunar calendar and so vary from year to year.

The two major religious observances are:

- **Eid-al-Fitr:** marking the end of Ramadan, a period of sacrifice and fasting to achieve clarity and sympathy for the less fortunate. This occurs in the ninth month of the lunar calendar.
- **Eid-al-Adha:** a three day festival, celebrating Hajj.

Dress

Islam requires Muslims to dress in an overall modest and dignified manner, which means always covering certain parts of the body when in public. For males, this means covering from the navel to the knee and for females, every part of the body except the face and hands. Both males and females wear clothing that is loose enough so as not to reveal their body shape.

Many females wear a hijab, a head scarf covering the hair, neck and upper chest. Traditional Muslim women may choose to wear a burqa, which is a type of dress that covers the face, head and body of the women. The wearing of the burqa is not essential and is not common in Australia.

Appearance

In Islam it is sunnah (usual practice/tradition) for one to grow a full beard, up to the length of a fist, and trim the mustache. Some Muslims believe it is haram (forbidden) to shave his beard as that would be deviating from the word of Allah and Mohammed, who encourage followers to strive to imitate them in every way.

For many Muslims, it is seen as a sign of honour and beauty.

For some ceremonies (such as marriage), Muslim women may use henna (temporary tattoos) to decorate their hands and feet.

Dietary Needs

Diet is very important to Muslims. The Qur'an dictates which foods are forbidden, including the way in which some meats are slaughtered. Meat for consumption must be slaughtered by the Halal method, cooked with separate utensils and must not be served or stored with non-Halal food.

Muslims do not eat any product from a pig, or from a carnivorous animal. There are restrictions on cooking also as blood is forbidden.

Alcohol, tobacco and drugs (other than medicinal) are strictly prohibited.

Medical Treatment

If possible medical treatment should be delivered by a practitioner of the same gender.

Death and Grieving

Burial must take place as soon as possible after death, and if possible in the location death occurred. Cremation is forbidden. Prayers and ritual washing and shrouding of bodies in clean white cloth is carried out at Mosques. Family and friends then mourn for a period of up to three days.



3.7 JUDAISM

Judaism is one of the world's oldest religions. The 2006 census recorded almost 90,000 Jews in Australia.

Beliefs and practices

Jewish identity arises primarily from belonging to an ancient people and upholding its traditions. The core of Jewish belief is that there is only one God and that the Jews have a contractual agreement with Him: Jewish people agree to obey God's law, and in return God charges them as His chosen people to represent Him on earth.

Jewish people live by the teachings in the Torah and the Talmud for social and religious guidance. The Torah contains the Ten Commandments and first five books of the "Old Testament." The Talmud is a collection of rabbinical teachings based on an interpretation of the Torah's meaning.

There are three major sects of Jews; Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform. Orthodox Judaism is more conservative and follows the traditional rituals and practices. Conservative Jews have a more moderate approach to applying the tradition to the modern world. Reform Jews retain their Jewish identity and some traditions but take a liberal approach to many Jewish beliefs and practices. The majority of Australian Jews identify themselves as Orthodox even if they are not religious.

Weekly rituals

The Holy day for Jewish people is Saturday, or the Sabbath. The Sabbath extends from sunset on Friday to nightfall on Saturday. As the Sabbath represents God's rest from creation of the world, devout Jews may not perform "creative" work on that day, including activities such as travel (except by foot), commercial transactions, use of the telephone and writing. On the Sabbath Jews must rest, meaning they are to cease work and study, and spend the day in prayer and with family.

Orthodox Jews usually pray three times per day.

Religious Festivals/Holidays

Jewish festivals and Holy days are a combination of the biblical and the historical. The biblical holidays which follow the lunar calendar are:

- Pesach – Passover (March/April). This festival goes for 8 days and marks the Jewish exodus from Egypt.
- Rosh Hashanah – Jewish New Year (September/October).
- Yom Kippur – Day of Atonement (September/October). This is the most important holy day of the year and is usually observed with fasting and prayer for 25 hours, seeking atonement for sins of the past year.
- Sukkot – Tabernacles or The Festival of Booths (September/October, for 8 days) representing the fragile homes the Jews lived in during their forty years of wandering in the wilderness of Sinai after leaving Egypt.
- Shavuot – Pentecost (May/June), the day on which the Ten Commandments and moral code were given.

Other holidays Jewish people celebrate are historically based, and celebration of these days may vary between individuals. Some historical holidays include:

- Purim – Celebration for escape from Persian genocidal plans(February/March).
- Tisha b'Av (July/August) – Day of fasting for destruction of the Temples of Jerusalem by the Babylonians and Romans and other persecution.

- Channukah – The Festival of Lights (December).
- Yom HaShoah – Holocaust Memorial Day (April).

Dress

Most Australian Jews will not have dress requirements in their day-to-day lives. Religious men wear head coverings called skullcaps or kippot at all times. All males place a cover on their heads during prayer and married religious women cover their hair at all times.

Some Orthodox Jewish women dress modestly and do not wear trousers, short skirts or short sleeves.



Appearance

Orthodox Jews may wear a beard or have side locks. Some Jews may not shave during certain periods throughout the year.

Dietary Needs

Orthodox Jews observe the laws of kashrut, eating only foods that God has designated kosher and that are listed in the Torah. Kosher meats come from animals that have been slaughtered in a particular way, observing the art of a quick kill.

Foods that are not Kosher and therefore prohibited include pork, any meat that has not been ritually slaughtered, shellfish, and any meal that combines dairy with meat.

Medical treatment

Generally, there are no religion-based restrictions for Jewish people receiving medical treatment.

Death and Grieving

Burial takes place as soon as possible after death. The body is washed and prepared for burial by the Jewish Burial Society (The Holy Brotherhood, or Chevra Kadisha). The deceased is treated with great respect and is never to be left alone.

After burial, family and friends enter a formal period of mourning. The first stage, mourners remain at home for seven days and refrain from work and usual activities. The second stage involves refraining from light hearted activities and shaving for a month. The final stage which is observed for parents only, occurs over the course of the year whereby mourners refrain from attending celebrations or entertainment where music is played.

The deceased is then remembered and honoured each year on the anniversary of his/her death, called the yahrtzeit.

3.8 SIKHISM

There are approximately 26,000 Australian Sikh's, according to the 2006 census.

The word Sikh means disciple or student of God. The founder of the Sikh religion was Guru Nanak who was born in 1469. He preached a message of love, understanding, and achieving a spiritual union with God which results in salvation. Nanak passed on his enlightened leadership to nine successive Gurus. The tenth and final Guru established the Khalsa (pure) order soldier-saints who have undergone the Sikh baptism ceremony and uphold the highest Sikh virtues of commitment, dedication and a social conscious.

Sikhs believe in a single, formless, timeless God. They aim to build a close and loving relationship with God through living a pure and honest life, meditating in the name of God, and participating in charitable work. To a Sikh, it is not the religion that people follow but their knowing God and the way they live that is important.

Sikhism rejects the caste system of the Hindu religion as well as idol worship and superstitions. They believe that everyone has equal status in the eyes of God. This is a very important principle that permeates all Sikh beliefs, behaviours and rituals.

Daily rituals

Sikhs will pray several times during the day, usually in the morning and the evening. Morning and evening prayers take about two hours a day, starting in the very early morning hours. Devout Sikhs are encouraged to begin the day with private meditations or in the name of God.

The Khalsa will also pray to God before starting any work. This will be over and above usual prayers.

Religious Festivals/Holidays

Sikhs have two types of festivals. The more important ones are gurupurbas which celebrate the birth or death of a Guru.

The most important Gurupurbas are:

- The birthday of Guru Nanak, founder of Sikhism (November)
- The birthday of Guru Gobind Singh, founder of the Khalsa (January)
- The martyrdom of Guru Arjan (June)
- The martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur (November/December)
- Amrit is the ritual in which young Sikhs pledge fealty to the spiritual path outlined by the gurus and to the wider Sikh community.
- Vaisakhi (13/14 April): The Sikh New Year festival and the anniversary of the founding of the Khalsa in 1699 by Guru Gobind Singh.
- Divali (end of October/early November): Sikhs share this autumn festival with Hindus. Small lamps are lit inside and outside houses to celebrate the release of Guru Hargobind.
- Hola Mahalla is a martial arts festival that follows the Hindu festival of Holi.

The other festivals are melas which often relate to particular towns or areas. Melas provide opportunities for Sikhs to care for other people. Sikhs give money to charity, food to the poor and donate their time and skills in the service of others.

Dress

Khalsa Sikhs are required to always carry with them 'the five Ks'. These are:

- Kesa (uncut hair). This term can also be used to refer to the turban, which is used to cover the hair.
- Kangah (small wooden comb). This is a symbol of cleanliness.
- Kachera (knee length pants/underpants). These symbolise leaving behind old ideas and following better ones.
- Kara (plain metal bracelet/bangle). This symbolises one God and one truth, without beginning or end.
- Kirpan (a ceremonial dagger). This is symbolic only and not a sharp tool. It reminds Sikhs of their duty to fight against evil.

Appearance

Sikhs must never remove any hair from any part of their body.

They will keep their hair long as a symbol of spirituality. To cover their hair, Sikhs wear a turban, which is a symbol of royalty and dignity. The turban cannot be covered by any other head gear or replaced by a cap or hat. The turban is mandatory for Sikh men and optional for Sikh women.

Khalsa men and women will not make holes in their ears or nose, and Sikh women will not wear a veil. A Khalsa's dress should be simple and modest.

Dietary Needs

Tobacco, alcohol and other intoxicants are prohibited. Many Sikhs will also refuse to eat Halal meat.

Medical treatment

Hair may not be removed from the body without consent of the individual or family except in a life threatening situation. Generally, there are no gender-based restrictions for receiving medical treatment.

Death and Grieving

In Sikhism death is considered a natural process and God's will. Public displays of grief are discouraged. Cremation is the preferred method of disposal, although if it is not possible alternatives are acceptable. The body is usually bathed and clothed by family members and taken to the cremation grounds.

A non-continuous reading of the entire Sri Guru Granth Sahib is undertaken and timed to conclude on the tenth day. The conclusion of this ceremony marks the end of the mourning period.

3.9 NON RELIGION/NON BELIEF

According to the 2006 census, the second largest selection made by Australians was "no religion", after Christianity. There were over 3.6 million people who declared no religion, which is approximately 18.6% of the population. A further 2.3 million Australians reported 'not defined' or 'not stated'. In the ADF, 36.6 % of personnel report either that they have no religion or they have exercised their right not to declare what their religion is.

Non-religious groups do not necessarily have no beliefs, rather their beliefs lie outside of the religious scope. Many non-believers obey a moral standard that originates in social contexts. Some of the most common varieties of 'non-belief' in Australia include agnostics, atheists, free thinkers, humanists, nature religions (or neo-pagan), non-religious, non-conformists, rationalists and secularists.

Agnostic

- The term agnostic generally refers to indecision or open-mindedness about religious beliefs. It can also mean that the true value of religious or deity related claims is unknown or unknowable.

Atheist

- Atheists include those who reject any belief in the existence of God, gods or holy beings, or those who choose to simply live without them. Atheists also tend to reject the idea of the soul, the after life and other religious or unknown phenomenon.

Free Thinkers

- As implied in their title, free thinkers prefer to think for themselves, and so tend to reject authority and traditions based in religious organisations.

Humanists

- Humanists maintain that moral values and behaviour is founded in human nature and experience, and find their ethical principles in reason, united human values and respect for others. This term can be used to describe those who seek to live good lives without religious or superstitious beliefs.

Nature Religions

- This group of religions generally focus on the idea that gods and other supernatural powers can be found through the direct experience of natural events and natural objects. Some neo-pagan religions, such as Wicca (modern witchcraft) can be considered nature religions.

Non-Religious

- Those who are 'not-practising' religion they are nominally or culturally affiliated with may consider themselves non-religious. This can also refer to those who are uninterested, vague or unaffiliated with religion.

Non-Conformists

- A nonconformist was originally a term used in England referring to Protestants and Christians in England and Wales who refused to conform to the Church of England after the introduction of the Act of Uniformity 1662. More recently, it refers to someone who advocates religious liberty.

Rationalists

- Rationalists are those who reject religious belief on the grounds that it is unreasonable and does not have enough factual evidence. Rationalism argues for a reasonable, scientific and knowledge based approach to human problem-solving and rejects religious dogmas as assumption-based beliefs.



USEFUL TOOLS and REFERENCES

External Legislation

Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986

- <http://www.comlaw.gov.au>

Racial Discrimination Act 1975

- <http://www.comlaw.gov.au>

Defence Policies

All policies listed are available on the Defence Intranet site

- <http://intranet.defence.gov.au/>

Some policies listed here are also available on the Defence internet site:

- <http://www.defence.gov.au/index.cfm>
- DI(G) PERS 20-6 Death of ADF personnel
- DI(G) PERS 26-2 Australian Defence Force policy on religious practices of Australian Defence Force members
- DI(G) PERS 32-4 Complaints of discrimination and harassment through the Australian Human Rights Commission
- DI(G) PERS 34-1 Redress of Grievance - Tri-Service Procedures
- DI(G) PERS 34-3 Inquiries and investigations by the Commonwealth Ombudsman and the Defence Force Ombudsman
- DI(G) PERS 34-4 Use and Management of Alternative Dispute Resolution in Defence
- DI(G) PERS 35-3 Management and Reporting of Unacceptable Behaviour
- DI(G) PERS 35-5 Defence Multicultural Policy
- DI(G) PERS 50-1 Equity and Diversity in the Australian Defence Force
- DI(N) PERS 31-18 RAN policy on tattoos, branding, body piercing and mutilation
- DI(A) PERS xx Australian Army policy on tattoos, branding, body piercing and mutilation (in development)
- DI(A) 31-3 Army Funerals
- DI(AF) PERS 29-32 RAAF policy on tattoos, branding, body piercing and mutilation
- ABR 81 Uniform Instructions for the Royal Australian Navy

A silhouette of a person in a military uniform, including a beret, is shown against a background of a sunset or sunrise over a landscape with trees. The person is looking towards the right. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent white horizontal band containing text.

Further information can be found at Fairness and Resolution sites

INTRANET | <http://intranet.defence.gov.au/fr> **INTERNET** | <http://www.defence.gov.au/fr/>