



WORLDVIEWS OF AUSTRALIA'S GENERATION Z (AGZ): **NEGOTIATING RELIGION, SEXUALITY AND DIVERSITY**

Associate Professor Andrew Singleton, Deakin University
Associate Professor Anna Halafoff, Deakin University
Emeritus Professor Gary Bouma, Monash University
with a response from Associate Professor Dan Woodman,
University of Melbourne

A PUBLIC EVENT

Sponsored by the Australian Association for the Study
of Religion, the Consortium for Youth, Generations
and Culture, and The University of Newcastle School
of Humanities and Social Science

Wednesday, 4th of December, 2019
5:30PM – 7:00PM
Room X-502, UON NewSpace Campus
Wine and cheese from 5:15PM

Panel overview:

Australian state and private educational bodies have invested to some degree in educational programs to promote respect for religious diversity, yet up until now there hasn't been a coherent, evidence-based understanding of young Australians' perspectives on religions and non-religious worldviews, or on the impact of worldviews education.

This panel reports on a recently completed ARC-funded project, conducted jointly by researchers from ANU, Deakin and Monash Universities. The AGZ study explores young Australian's attitudes to religion and belief, sexuality and diversity across all three sectors of public, Catholic and independent schools. The research team conducted 11 focus groups with teens across Australia, a nationally representative survey of 1200, 13 to 18-year-olds, and 30 in-depth interviews with survey participants.

We argue that systematically eliciting diverse young people's understandings about worldviews can enhance and inform debate about how education assists or impedes interreligious understanding as well as enhancing wellbeing and social inclusion. We will present an overview of the AGZ study findings, and consider the implications they have for teaching about diverse worldviews, and religious exemptions in Australia.

Professor Andrew Singleton is a sociologist at Deakin University. His research interests include secularisation, youth religion and personal belief. He is author of *Religion, Culture and Society* (2014) and co-author (with Michael Mason and Ruth Webber) of *The Spirit of Generation Y: Young People's Spirituality in a Changing Australia* (2007), a book about the first national study of youth religion and spirituality in Australia.

Associate Professor Anna Halafoff is a sociologist and a member of the Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and Globalisation at Deakin University. She is also a Research Associate of the UNESCO Chair in Interreligious and Intercultural Relations – Asia Pacific at Monash University. Anna's current research interests include: religious diversity; interreligious relations; countering violent extremism; and education about religions and worldviews. She is the author of *The Multifaith Movement: Global Risks and Cosmopolitan Solutions* (2013) and co-editor, with Elisabeth Arweck and Daniel Boivert, of *Education about Religions and Worldviews: Promoting Intercultural and Interreligious Understanding in Secular Societies* (Routledge 2016).

Emeritus Professor Gary D Bouma AM is the UNESCO Chair in Intercultural and Interreligious Relations – Asia Pacific, Emeritus Professor of Sociology at Monash University, Acting Director of the Global Terrorism Research Centre. His research in the sociology of religion examines the management of religious diversity in plural multicultural societies, postmodernity as a context for doing theology, religion and terror, religion and public policy. He is the author or co-author of over 25 books. Recent books include: *Australian Soul: Religion and Spirituality in the Twenty-First Century* (Cambridge University Press) and *Being Faithful in Diversity: Religions and Social Policy in Multifaith Societies* (ATF).

Associate Professor Dan Woodman is TR Ashworth Associate Professor of Sociology in the School of Social and Political Sciences. Dan's primary research area is the sociology of youth, young adulthood, and generations and he uses this focus to also contribute to the sociology of work, and to sociological theory. His writing conceptualizing generational change and the new social conditions impacting on young adults is internationally recognized. Dan is the current President of The Australian Sociological Association (TASA) and was the founding convener of the Sociology of Youth Thematic Group within the Association.