

Faith and Settlement

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Uluru



St F X Cathedral. Adelaide (1851-)



St Mary's Macedonian Orthodox, Sydenham Vic



Connect Church, Bendigo, Vic (Source: Google Maps)



Great Stupa of Universal Compassion, Myers Flat, Vic, Jan 2015 http://stupa.org.au/images/pages/time-line/Stupa_steelwork_jan2015.jpg



Bendigo Joss House Temple (1870) image 1972

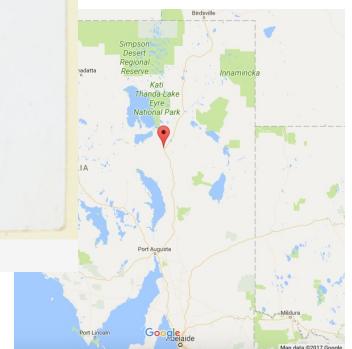






B 15341

Hergott Springs, Marree South Australia (c1884)



PRG 287/1/13/13



Lt. Gilbert St. Adelaide (1888) Image c1945



Shepparton Albanian Mosque Image 1960



Google

Image capture: Nov 2009

Newport, Vic



Processes and Symbols of Change

| Socio-Cultural Norms | Economics | Institutional | Spatial |
|--|------------------|---|--|
| Migration | Globalised Trade | Legislative Amendments | City, state, national development projects |
| Demographic change e.g.: religion, language | Education | Regulatory systems e.g.: discrimination, free speech, asylum seekers, policing | Aggregation, clustering |
| Gender & family norms | Employment | | Structures, aesthetics; |
| Dress | Income | | |
| Mannerisms/habits | | | |

Religion and Secularity

By religion, I mean the practice of particular narratives regarding divine action, transcendent presence, or supernatural reality in the immanent world that in turn inform conceptions of placemaking. By the secular, I refer in particular to the grounded theologies that focus on this worldly concerns, whether by attempting to create consensus among different positions through dialogue, by privatizing transcendent experiences as irrelevant to the immanent, or by imposing a political regime to eradicate ‘religion’ altogether. (Tse, 2014: 202)

Grounded Theology

- Ordering of space;
- Territorialising of space;
- Religious practice;
- Ways of being in the world;
- Secularisation as a theological process;

= Place making

Nationhood

Anderson (2008):

Argues that the fertile ground of the imagination is the essence of nationhood, which in itself lacks definition and common meaning.

“The nation is ‘an imagined political community – and imaged as both inherently limited and sovereign’ (Anderson 2006: 6) Thus, it exists only in so far as ‘... the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion’” (Anderson 2006: 6).

Meanings of nation include the following functions:

- administrative;
- Legal;
- technical constructs; and
- sits firmly within the public imagination;

Socio-historical representations, are integral to debates of what it means to be a member of a particular state, which is continually being debated.

Public Space as an Expression of Societal Trends

It is in public space that the currents and moods of public culture are frequently formed and given symbolic expression. The iconography of public space, from the quality of spatial design and architectural expression to the displays of consumption and advertising, along with the routines of usage and public gathering, can be read as a powerful symbolic and sensory code of public culture. It is an active code, both summarizing cultural trends as well as shaping public opinion and expectation, but essentially in the background as a kind of atmospheric influence

(Amin, A. 2008. "Collective culture and urban public space." City **12**(1): 5-24. p.13)

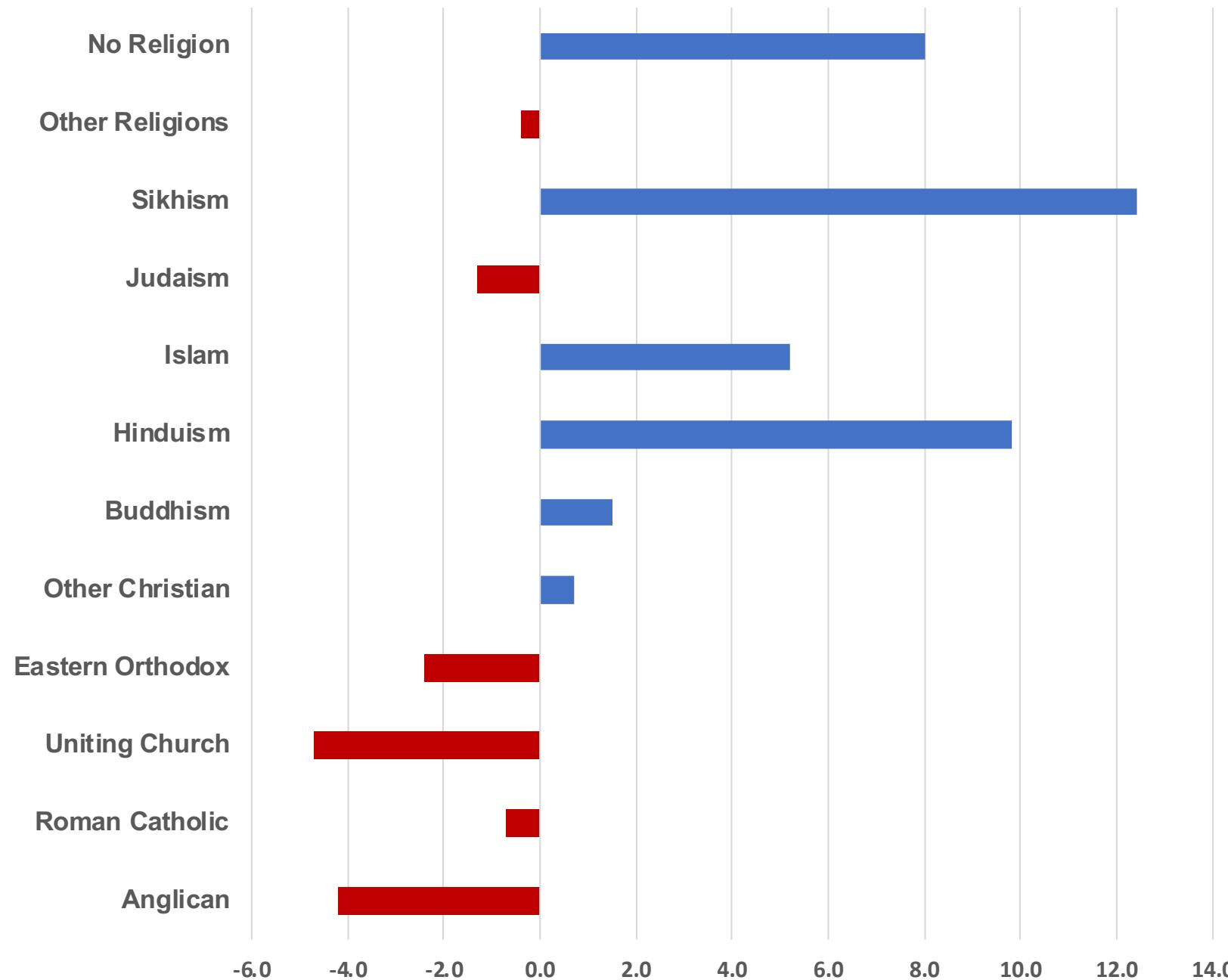
Flashpoint!



From 2014 to 2016, Bendigo experienced anti-Islam and anti-racism protests triggered by a development application for a mosque.

Conflict distilled national debates about Australian identity multiculturalism and security.

It was a battle to define and articulate the future of the city and of Australia.



Religious Affiliation – Average Annual Change (%) Victoria 2011-2016
(Census of Population and Housing)

Multicultural Bendigo

In 2016::

- 36.2% No religion
- 51.5% Christian;
- 2.4% Non-Christian:
 - 1.0% Buddhism;
 - 0.5% Hinduism;
 - 0.4% and Islam.

Figure 1 Bendigo place of birth

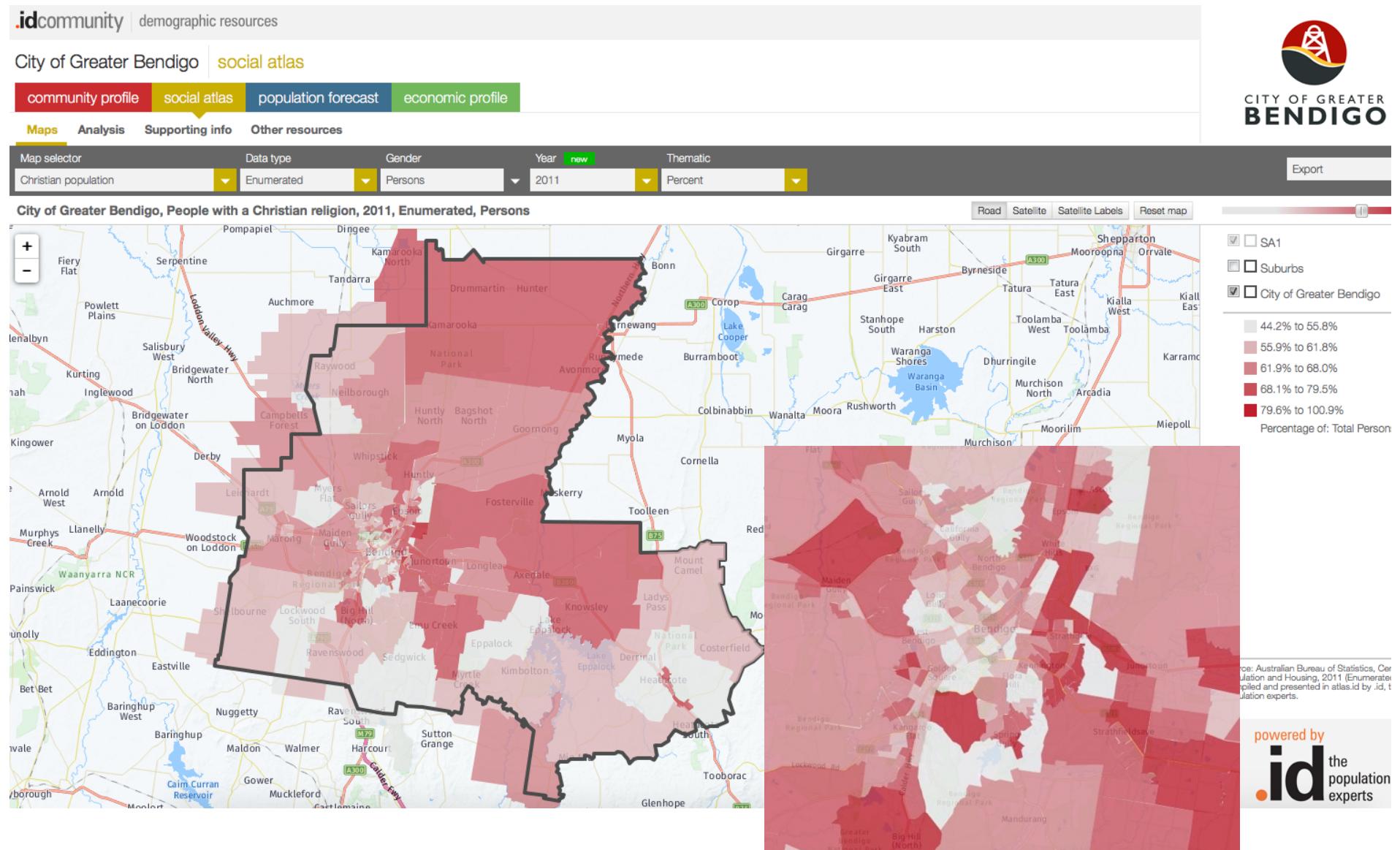
| Year Birth Place | 1911 | 1921 | 1933 | 1947 | 1954 | 1966 | 1981 | 2001 | 2011 |
|-------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|
| Australia | 47002 | 23079 | 23667 | 25710 | 35100 | 38170 | 55144 | 78157 | 89585* |
| New Zealand/ other Oceania | 177 | 125 | 117 | 79 | 84 | 81 | 256 | 528 | |
| Europe | 6,368 | 2,173 | 1360 | 864 | 1614 | 1883 | 2486 | 2917 | 3711 |
| Asia | 345 | 133 | 90 | 53 | 15 | 152 | 293 | 492 | 1406 |
| Africa | 28 | 33 | 24 | 16 | | 12 | 18 | 90 | 255 |
| Americas | 83 | 38 | 27 | 12 | 15 | 22 | 106 | 85 | 124 |
| Polynesia | 9 | 2 | | 4 | | | | | |
| North Africa/ Middle East | | | | | | | 24 | | 541 |
| At sea | 45 | 18 | 7 | 1 | | | | | |
| Unspecified | 353 | 81 | 69 | | 5 | 3 | | | 9 |

*Includes NZ & Oceania

Figure 1 Bendigo Religion

| Year Religion | 1911 | 1921 | 1933 | 1947 | 1954 | 1966 | 2001 | 2011 |
|-----------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Christian | 53048 | 11445 | 22493 | 24069 | 33499 | 30039 | 59968 | 62781 |
| Jewish | 54 | 16 | 49 | 11 | 14 | 10 | | 203 |
| Chinese | | 21 | 0 | | | | | |
| Confucian | 21 | | 0 | | | | | |
| Islam | 26 | 13 | 7 | 1 | | | 88 | 202 |
| Buddhist | 3 | | 0 | | | | 395 | 809 |
| Pagan | 0 | | 0 | | | | | |
| Hindu | | | | | | | 75 | 243 |
| Other Non- Christian | 57 | 62 | 13 | 10 | 3 | 6 | | 37 |
| Agnostic/No Denomination | 154 | 79 | 46 | 56 | 94 | 85 | | |
| No Religion/ Atheist | 108 | 30 | 45 | 51 | 50 | 77 | | 335 |
| Object to state | 671 | 62 | 0 | | | | | |
| Unspecified | 386 | 86 | 3461 | 2558 | 3258 | 4140 | 3972 | 8294 |

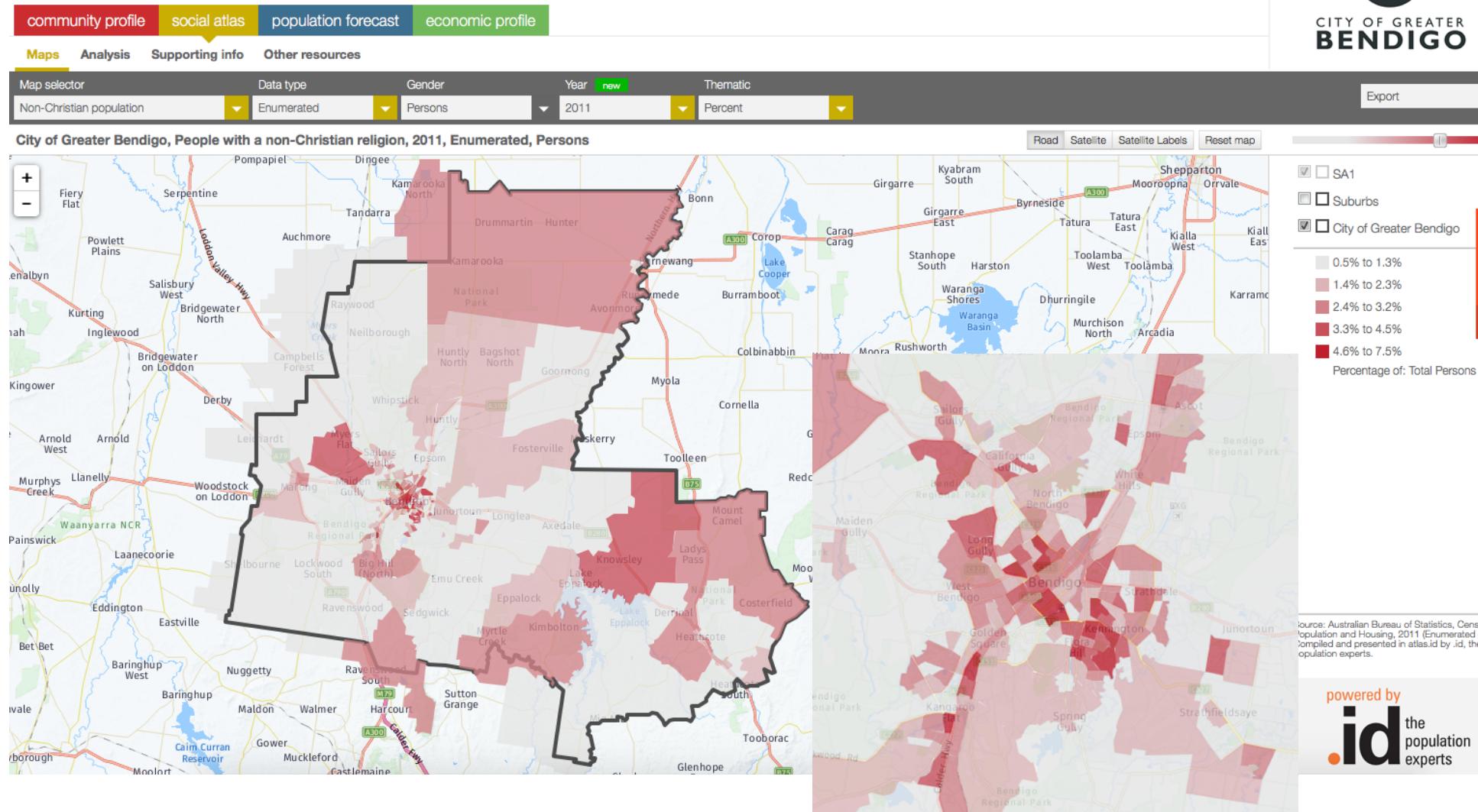
Religious Territories: Christians in Bendigo



Non-Christians in Bendigo

.idcommunity | demographic resources

City of Greater Bendigo | social atlas



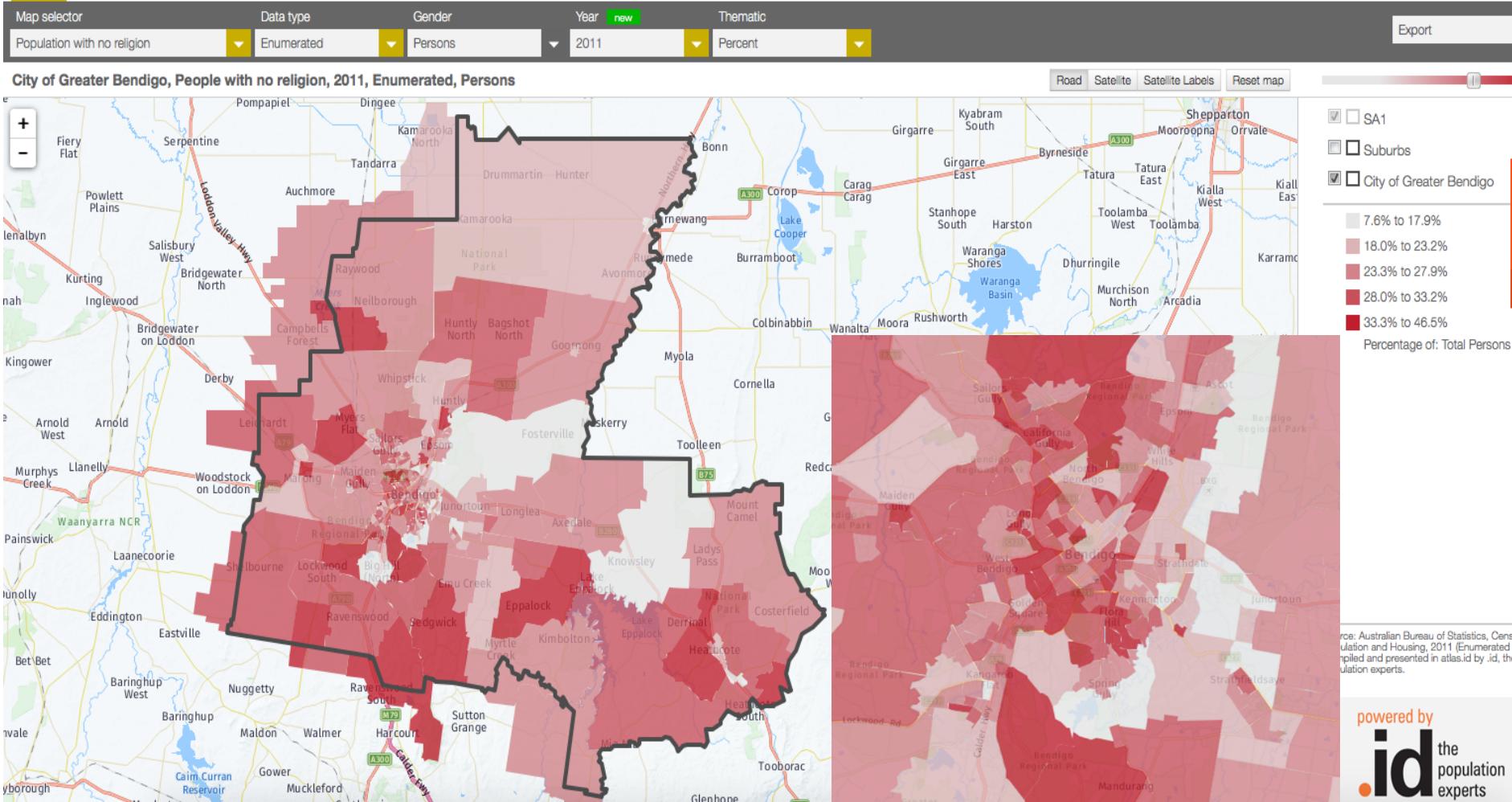
No Religious Belief in Bendigo

.idcommunity | demographic resources

City of Greater Bendigo | social atlas

community profile | social atlas | population forecast | economic profile

Maps | Analysis | Supporting info | Other resources



CITY OF GREATER
BENDIGO

Placemaking

- Engagement with education/work; community and leisure activities; shopping; contributing to physical change
- Includes: right to worship and fulfil cultural, spiritual and religious needs
- Through social encounter in various spaces, familiarity and understanding can increase over time and over generations.
- These spaces are continuously negotiated: they can represent sites of inclusion or exclusion, sites of safety or insecurity for different groups at different times.

Images of Development



Figure 7: North elevation

Source: GKA Architects



Figure 9: South elevation

Source: GKA Architects



Figure 8: East Elevation

Source: GKA Architects

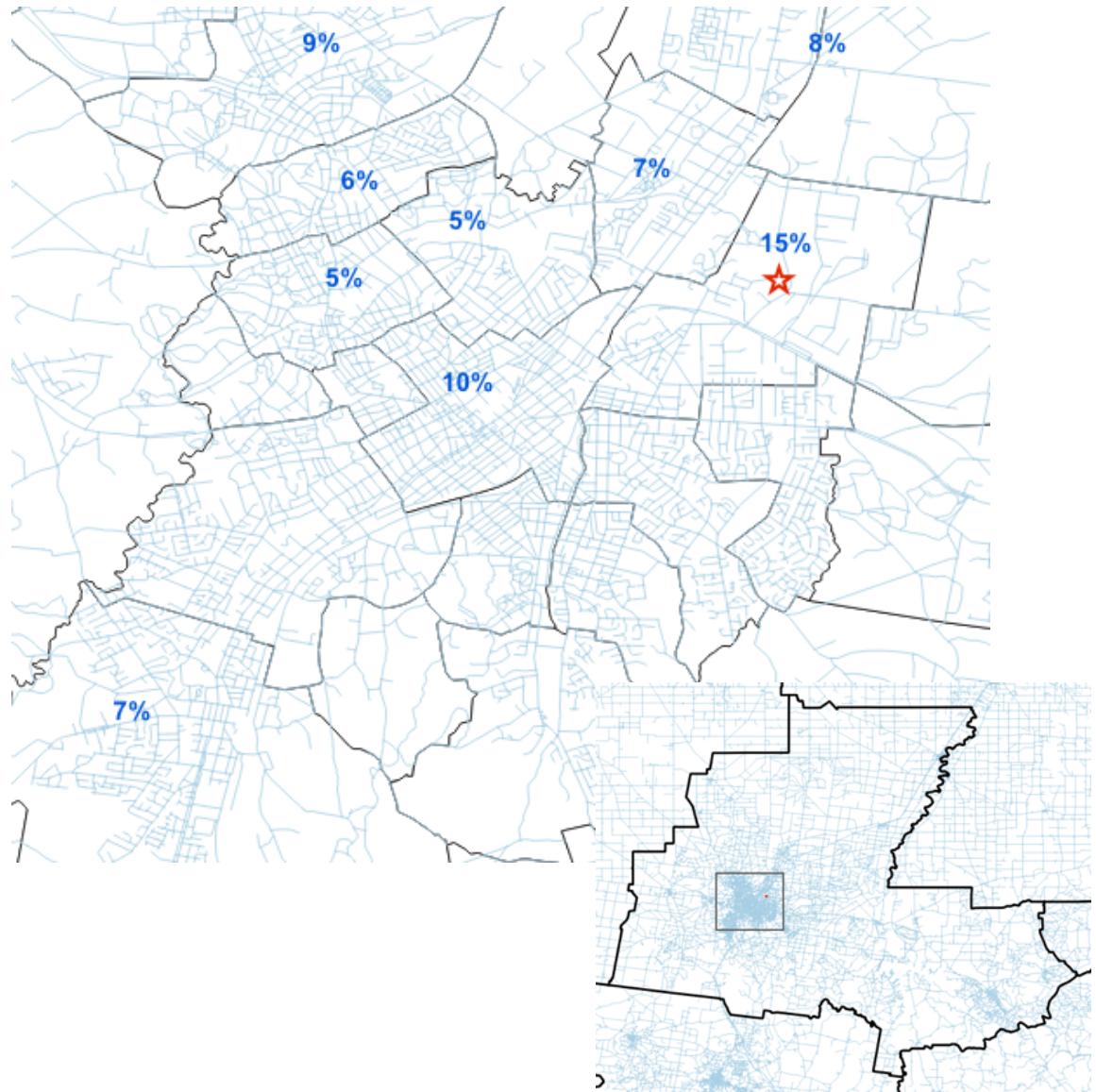


Figure 10: West elevation

Source: GKA Architects



Spatial Relationships: Site and Objections



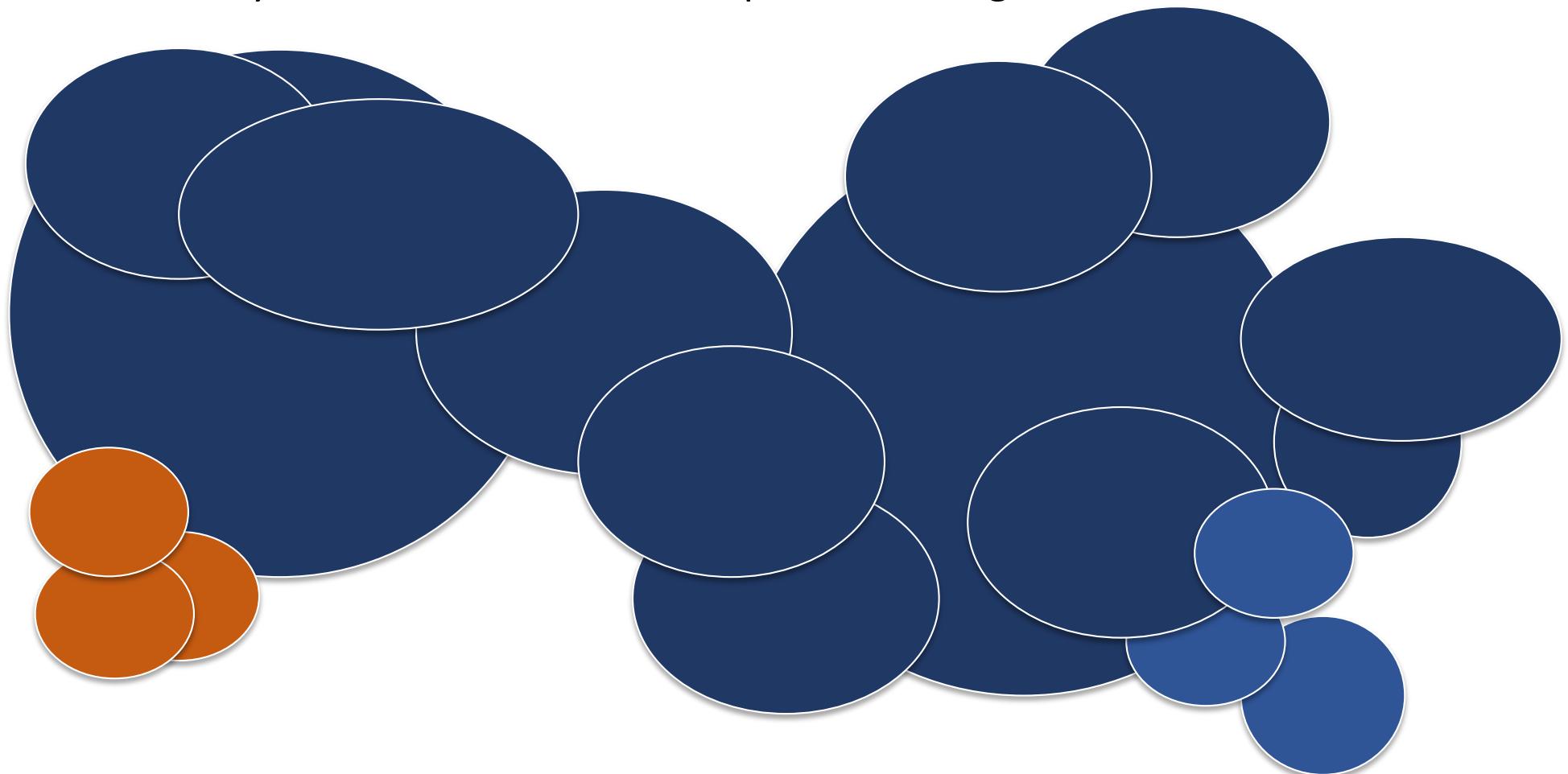
Mosque as Placemaking, Placestaking, Provoking and Destroying?

Environmental change has emotional impact, and new structures are more than the materials from which they are built. This is because:

“[a]rchitecture intervenes, maps and signifies, and in doing so it constructs identities. It helps to shape how we know the world by mediating power, social relations and cultural values” (Beynon 2009: 109).

Life worlds

Each stakeholder has their own 'lifeworld' & associated rationalities re: needs, desires, aspirations, values, beliefs, attitudes, cultures...This affects how they view, understand and respond to change, as well as evaluate risk.



Beliefs

Muslim People & Supporters

Islam is one of three Abrahamic religions incl. Christianity & Judaism

Prophets in Christianity and Judaism are recognised in Islam; Muhammed is viewed as last prophet.

All Abrahamic religions have influenced legal, educational & cultural systems.

Sharia law is a moral & practical code for living; Muslims have publicly supported adherence to national laws.

Islam, like all religions, have some individuals & groups of followers who think & act in extreme ways.

Muslims have publicly condemned violence against women, children, other Muslims and non-Muslims.

Anti-Islam Groups

Islam is an ideology or cult

Muhammed is violent.

Islam is a whole legal, educational, & cultural system

Sharia law is a repressive code that usurps national laws.

Islam is inherently violent & supports killing of its own followers & others to achieve compliance.

Muslims are violent to women & children & will be violent against non-Muslims.

Aspirations

Muslim People & Supporters

To be a non-remarkable part of Australian society.

To have a place to worship that includes a sports centre for the whole of Bendigo community

Democratic multinational, multi-ethnic, multicultural and multi-religious society

Anti-Islam Groups

No Muslims in Australia

No mosque; or limit to prayer room at La Trobe that only serves local people without connections to larger Muslim communities in the big cities

Democratic society in which Anglo-European heritage, language, culture and Christian religion is dominant

Materialising Discourses

For many, the anti-Islam message is more coherent and seems to better explain what they see, how they feel and how they view their neighbourhoods. This is partially due to socio-economic divisions and views about power and influence.



Anti-Mosque Message

- Organised;
- Shared along social networks;
- Influenced by UK & other places;
- Supported nationally;
- Manipulated people's fear, observations & ignorance;
- Went too long without being contested.

Mosque development Q&A

The proposed development of Bendigo's first mosque has caused some misunderstanding in the community. Many claims have been made that are simply untrue. The City of Greater Bendigo is taking this opportunity to respond to some of the frequently asked questions.

FACTS ABOUT THE MOSQUE

Q Why is a mosque being built in Bendigo?

The mosque will provide a place for Bendigo's Muslim community to meet and pray. It will include two prayer halls, classrooms, sports hall, cafe, library and office, and will be built in stages. The Victorian Charter for Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 states every person has the right to freedom of religion and the freedom to demonstrate their religion as part of a community.

Not allowing the mosque to be built based on religious grounds would be unconstitutional. Section 11(1) of the Australian Constitution states the Commonwealth shall not "prohibit or restrain the exercise of any religion..."

Q How many Mosques are there in Greater Bendigo?

There are approximately 200 Muslim people in Greater Bendigo, many of whom work as medical professionals, academics, engineers and business people. For the past 20 years the local Muslim community has had access to a room at La Trobe University that holds approximately 40 people. Only 10 days ago it was announced a larger room is to attend Friday prayer (approximately 70) to attend Friday prayer (approximately 70).

Q Who purchased the land where the mosque will be built?

The Australian Islamic Mission purchased the 5.2 acre property. For more information on the Australian Islamic Mission visit www.aim.org.au

Q What is the City of Greater Bendigo's role in this project?

The City of Greater Bendigo is the responsible planning authority for planning matters. The planning application needs to be considered under the planning rules. That is the City's only decision making power relating to the mosque. It has no other direct or financial interest in the mosque, nor does any of the Councilors or staff involved in the decision making process.

Q Will the mosque be the largest in the Southern Hemisphere? Is it planned to accommodate over 2,000 people?

The conditions on the planning permit limit the capacity to a maximum of 200 people. The development is intended to increase other mosque buildings in Australia. At this stage, the City has not received any planning permit applications or enquiries for other mosques to be built in the municipality.

Q What if the hours of operation for the mosque change in the future?

The Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) has approved the hours of operation for the mosque. Any proposal to change the operating hours would need to go through the court, which is yet to determine an outcome.

Q Why will additional facilities such as a sports hall be built? Can't they use community facilities that are already here?

The facilities will be available for wider community use too. As the City grows, we will need more facilities for the community. Schools or churches are also sharing their facilities with the wider community when they are not in use, in accordance with decision making guidelines.

Q Why doesn't the mosque building have the same footprint?

No. There is no suitable or available land around the mosque site to accommodate a housing development in the scale claimed. The land area for the mosque site is zoned either industrial or low density residential and any large scale development would require an amendment to the Greater Bendigo Planning Scheme, which would be costly. Take several years and have no guarantee of receiving the required for residential development.

Q Is a residential (22,000 houses) community housing building the same site?

The Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 allows for people to conduct a protest and protects their right to freedom of expression. In accordance with the Charter, the City does not have the ability to refuse access to open public space. In some cases, access to open public space may require a permit for use but if the application to use the space meets all requirements, then the City can and refuse to take place and it is the responsibility of the organiser to ensure a rally is conducted lawfully and in accordance with the Charter.

Zone (LDR2) There are no plans in the new Residential Development Strategy to increase residential densities in the area around Low Density Residential near the mosque site. Most importantly, the East Bendigo Structure Plan, adopted by the Council and which forms part of the planning scheme, discourages intensification of housing development on this LDR2 land because it forms part of the northern precinct near the Bendigo Recreational Park.

Q Will there be a call to prayer?

The imam, a tall, slim tower on a mosque that typically broadcasts the call to prayer – included as part of the mosque's design is only sympathetic. Condition 26 of the planning permit, approved by VCAT also prevents any noise, including a call to prayer, extending beyond the boundaries of the property.

Q Why were the community and neighbourhood, particularly neighbouring residents?

They were. Notices were sent to 13 owners and occupiers in the area around the site for the mosque. Notice was also placed on the site. All notifications and comments were carefully considered in the evaluation process to make sure the procedures and decision-making followed set out in Victorian planning law.

Q Will the Council receive increased rates revenue from the mosque?

No rate revenue will be collected on the mosque. Once constructed, the mosque will be classified as a place of worship.

Q Why won't the Council allow a public vote on the mosque?

This would achieve nothing. VCAT has ruled in favour of the proposal and ordered that a permit be granted. There is no legal mechanism for such a decision to be overturned as part of a local referendum or legal review. Why such planning matters should not and cannot be decided by popular vote. The Council deals with such matters as a daily occurrence and people already have rights as part of the planning process.

Q Did some local people in Bendigo appear to be opposed to the development of a mosque?

There has been no official or formal polling or survey undertaken by Greater Bendigo or anyone on this topic. Thirteen objections appealed to VCAT to overturn the Council's decision to allow a mosque to be built. Of these 13 objections, two people have taken their case to the Court of Appeal, an arm of the Supreme Court, which is yet to determine an outcome.

Q Why doesn't the City of Greater Bendigo have the same footprint?

The Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 allows for people to conduct a protest and protects their right to freedom of expression. In accordance with the Charter, the City does not have the ability to refuse access to open public space. In some cases, access to open public space may require a permit for use but if the application to use the space meets all requirements, then the City can and refuse to take place and it is the responsibility of the organiser to ensure a rally is conducted lawfully and in accordance with the Charter.

Keeping you informed

Pt: 5434 6000 | www.bendigovic.gov.au | 11/08/14

CITY OF GREATER BENDIGO

Nationalist Narrative

Objectors' imagined impacts of mosque development were products of distorted analyses of migratory settlement, as noted below (Hoskin & ANOR v Greater Bendigo City Council & ORS [2015] VSCA 350):

- When their numbers are sufficient they then try to force the laws of the land to be changed to Sharia law.
- Entire suburbs are now no-go zones in Europe, as they have been totally taken over by Muslims who are enforcing their own Sharia laws instead of those of the host country.
- Ultimately people feel unsafe and are forced to sell their homes and leave the area which makes way for the Muslim population to buy the homes and take over.
- People are intimidated and threatened and pushed out.
- To properly assess the proposed planning application for an enormous Islamic mosque to be built here, which, one must conclude, would mean a huge influx of Islamic migrants to Bendigo, there must be thorough investigation of all the issues.



Stop the Mosque in Bendigo added 3 new photos.

February 4, 2014 ·

ISLAM IS ANTI-AUSTRALIAN and anti-multiculturalism.

Where are the laws and procedures that protect Australians from being taken over by another set of laws, steeped in inequality, and hatred of the democratic way of life? The limits of Multiculturalism apply to Islam and its teachings. What is being done to stop this social invasion?

Please tell us. Why are ordinary Australians having to make a stand and defend our constitution here at BENDIGO...Ballarat...

Territorialising Space

“... all those sort of things were deliberately designed to ... symbolically take back the public space. I suppose in the sense that the public space had been violated by groups of people who particularly - I think there was resentment that people from outside had been bussed in.” Council Staff

So we were really just hijacked for those times, and the trouble is, the UPF's got a very good following here. For some reason, they've got a strong supporter base here, so that's why they built on that success for that first rally, and they've just gone from there. They've had rallies up the eastern border of the country, and they haven't had that support. Victorian Police Service



De-territorialising Space

“A few of the Muslim community did leave, and I know of others that are thinking about leaving. They are basically reconsidering staying here. ... Roughly five families I know of have left and two are considering leaving. It’s sad because one of them [families] ... used to love Bendigo and used to try and convince other people what a great place it was. Now they themselves are leaving; this is very sad.”

“In terms of safety, many of the women who wear hijab will avoid the centre of the town and anywhere there are groups of young people gathering. They feel much safer around the University. A lot of people have reported that they have stopped using busses, which makes things hard too.”

Community Member

Pro-Diversity Message & Re-Territorialising Space

- Response emerged, and for many consolidated in Believe in Bendigo;
- Locally based with deep network ties;
- Used material objects (balloons, signs etc.) in a variety of private, commercial & public spaces;
- Side-stepped adversarial events and created family days rather than rallies;
- Focused on issues of human rights, social inclusion, prosperity;
- Contributed to polarised conversation.



PHOTO: A Believe in Bendigo rally in support of a local mosque. (Supplied)

Article: Janine Cohen, ABC News, 26 Nov 2015.
Photographer Unknown.

Belonging, Rejection, Belonging...

“I cannot describe to you how all of this felt. ...I felt such a shock when the protests against the mosque started. Really the best way to explain it is that I felt two shocks. Firstly, when all we felt was the shock of hate – of people all around us hating us and not understanding who we were. Then there was a second shock of love”.

Community Member



Why Bendigo?

- Relatively low level of people born overseas, especially from areas other than Europe;
- Low levels of religious diversity;
- History of evangelical movement;
- Stronghold of United Patriots Front;
- Two councilors vocal against the proposed mosque;
- Federal and commercial media discourse.

Flow of Transnational Ideas

In 2015, a Canadian journalist, observed a curious thing. The conservative Prime Ministers of Canada, the UK and Australia issued the same statements to their citizens in relation to Islamic extremism (Burman, 2015):

“It would be absolutely foolish for us not to go after this group before they come after us.”

“This is the threat of our generation, the battle of our generation and the fight that we’re going to have.”

“They’re coming after us. We may not feel we are at war with them, but they are certainly at war with us.”

Flow of National Ideas

'All cultures are not equal, and frankly, culture that believes in decency and tolerance is much to be preferred than one that thinks that you can kill in the name of God, and you've got to be prepared to say that'

Tony Abbott 2015

'People do have a right to be bigots. In a free country people do have rights to say things that other people find offensive or insulting or bigoted'

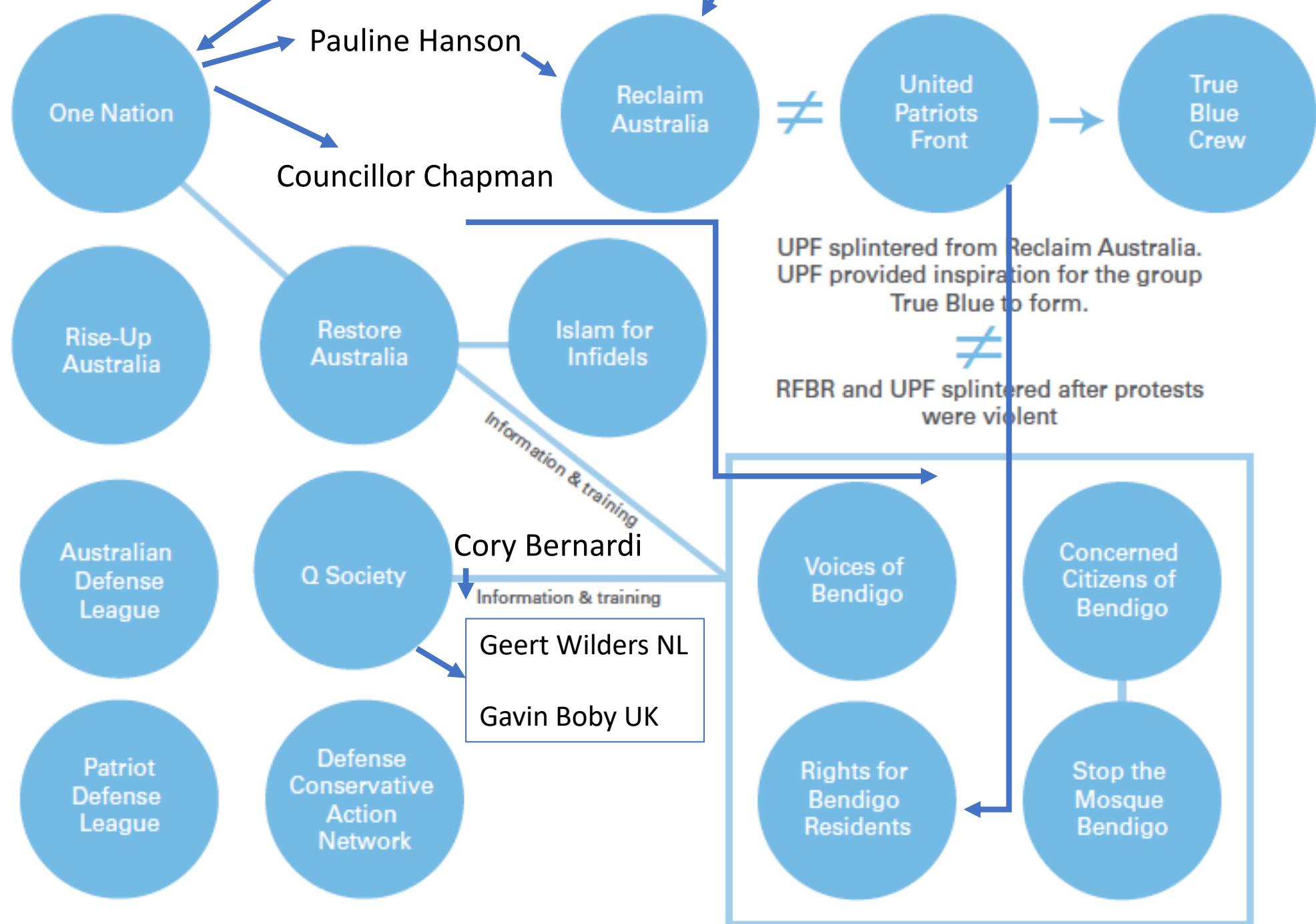
George Brandis 2014

There are two aspects to Australia's history that are paramount. The first, of course, is our Indigenous history, because for thousands of years Indigenous Australians have lived on this continent. The second aspect of our history is our beginnings as a colony and, therefore, our Western civilisation, which is why we are the kind of country we are today.

Christopher Pyne 2014

Tony Abbott's Office via David Oldfield

George Christensen



Flow of Local Ideas

"I think it's sad that many residents are afraid to publicly voice their concerns for fear of being labelled racists and bigots."²

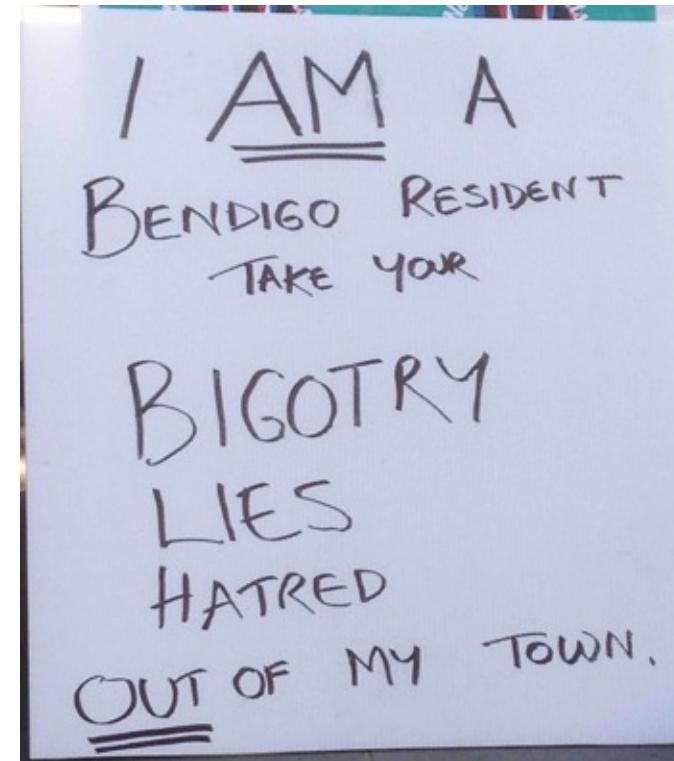


The Age (Bucci & Spooner, 26 Feb 2015) reported:

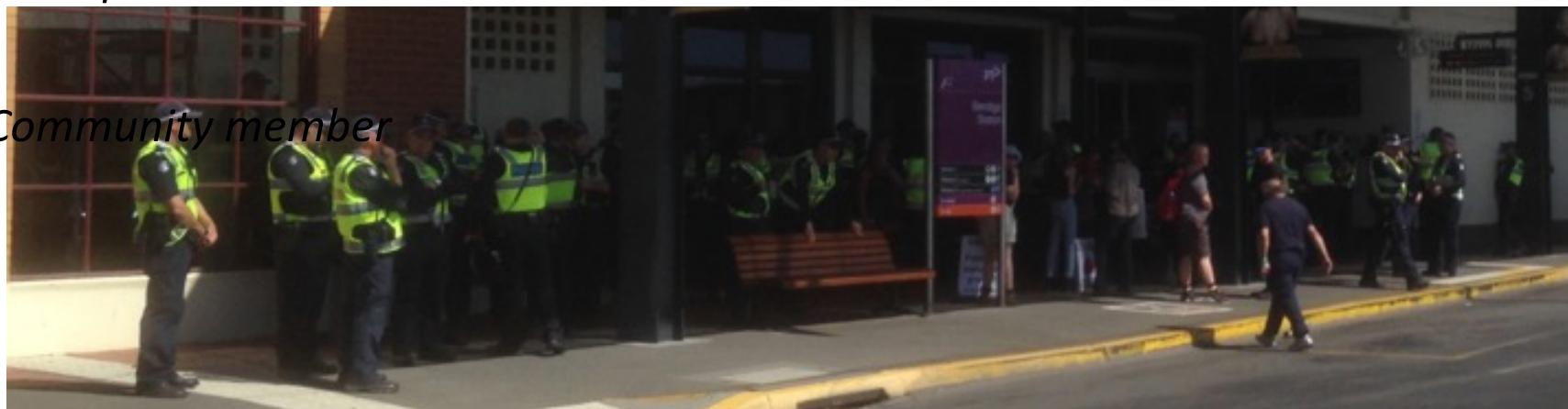
The VCAT hearing continued this week, with a decision not expected for months. Cr Chapman describes herself as "proudly Team Australia" on Twitter, and writes that the views she shares are hers, and not those of the [Council]. She has not signed the [Council] code of conduct, saying she does not agree with its contents.

Counterpoint

"The biggest difference is that there were two people on the council, in the key positions and they made the situation as bad as it could be. They invited the UPF into Bendigo. That's what happens when a person of authority invites a group like that in. They had the insight into the planning process because they were in a position of leadership and they invited them in and spread rumours e.g. mosque means there will be no more Christmas, that it would be the largest one in the southern hemisphere."



Community member



“Because also Tony Abbott was the pin-up boy for all these groups. That's the other thing.... John Howard opened the door... by not shutting down Pauline Hanson. Everybody knows and recognises that. What people forget is that David Oldfield, who was the force behind Pauline Hanson worked as an advisor in Abbott's office. He was working there at the time.

George Brandis saying we should repeal 18C. People have the right to be a bigot. No, they don't.”

“While we are educating people, what is sad is when people like Abbott are elected because when a person is elected by the majority they are speaking for the majority; and if they are speaking with hate and racism then that is the Muslim community will feel that most Australians are like.”

“It's out there for the world to see like crazy at the moment because the politicians on the right have gone about actively validating these people for making these views.”

Community members

Common Ground

Muslims/Pro-Diversity

- Denounce terrorism.
- During protests experienced public and online abuse – Greater vitriol aimed at Muslims and women experienced higher levels of street abuse;
- Currently feeling anger, anxiety and fear about violence.
- Support legal processes and democratic values.
- Want to engage in democratic processes.
- Want to be respected and engage in respectful dialogue.
- Desire to live peacefully without fear or interference from others
- Desire to contribute to their families, communities and the nation.

Anti-Muslim/Nationalists

- Denounce terrorism.
- During protests experienced public and online abuse.
- Currently feeling anger, anxiety and fear about violence.
- Support legal processes and democratic values (but believes these have been corrupted).
- Want to engage in democratic processes.
- Want to be respected.
- Desire to live peacefully without fear or interference from others
- Desire to contribute to their families, communities and the nation.

Moving Forward: Dialogue, Interaction, Time

Muslim Community

- Providing support by counteracting misinformation and disinformation;
- Ensuring Muslim representation in public discourse;
- Avoid accidental disempowerment of Muslim community - can promote their leadership, skills training in media, representation on committees and boards;
- Set higher standards of conduct by identifying when ‘free speech’ crosses into vilification, incitement, and abuse.

People With Questions

“I never had the opportunity to make up my mind for myself, that was the thing, I went straight into the right wing and that was all I was given to work on. ... There's so many people just like me who are still caught up in it and all it would take is that one conversation to see, hang on a minute, that person we call a lefty that we're meant to hate is actually ... just like me.

... Then you start applying that to, well why couldn't I do that with a Muslim person? ... It really just takes that one thing, ... to break down the wall in your own mind and you can't do that as long as you've got ... tunnel vision and you're only letting in people who have the same beliefs.”

What Advice Stems from this Research?

- Understand different life worlds to make change;
- Identify effective messages;
- Develop coherent narratives;
- Explain processes and procedures better;
- Present possible futures and how to get there.

What are Key Points for Decision-Makers?

Focus for Managing Conflict

- Strong leadership;
- Early identification of issues;
- Swift coordinated action;
- Strong communication.

Reiterate Democratic Message:

- Legal and regulatory structures facilitate democracy;
- Different forms of participation, including protest is democracy;
- Democracy ≠ getting your own way/winning.

Why is this Research Important for Decision-Makers?

Problem

- Issues in Bendigo are representative of broader tensions;
- Issues aren't going away;
- Affects policy objectives of inclusion, multiculturalism and safety;
- Has implications for strategic planning of cities and towns.

Trends

- Increased political polarisation;
- Increased social polarisation;
- Increased violence;
- Increased radicalisation.

