



# Freedom of religion and belief

Draft for discussion



Human Rights  
Commission

*Te Kaitiaki Take Kōwhiri*



Human Rights  
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*Te Kāhui Tika Tangata*

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# Foreword

## Mihi

**The Human Rights Commission is updating its status report – Human Rights in New Zealand Today. The report, first published in 2004, formed the basis for the New Zealand Action Plan for Human Rights 2005-2010 – Mana ki te Tangata which has led the direction of the Commission’s work as a guardian of and advocate for human rights. This section deals with the right to freedom of religion and belief.**

As noted here, New Zealand is a secular State with no State religion, in which religious and democratic structures are separated. In legislation and policy, the State respects freedom of thought, conscience and religion. There are few constraints on the freedom to manifest one’s religion or beliefs.

Matters of religion and belief are deemed to be a matter for the private, rather than public, sphere. New Zealand secularism is, however, infused with its Judaeo-Christian origins. For example, Easter and Christmas are observed as public holidays, and Christian prayers often form a part of public ceremonials. There is also a degree of statutory recognition of Māori spiritual beliefs, which are inextricably connected to Māori culture.

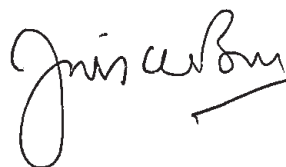
Any religious group can set up and operate in New Zealand without legal constraints or State interference, while still required to conform to the law like everyone else. Parents are free to direct the religious and moral education of their children, and ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities are able to profess and practise their own religion.

There has been a marked increase in New Zealand’s religious diversity in recent years, as a result of people of different religions migrating here and people changing or discarding their religious beliefs. This chapter examines some of the issues this raises in terms of human rights.

Throughout 2010, draft discussion documents for the updated status report will be released for public consultation. The Commission welcomes your thoughts.

Send you feedback to:

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# Introduction

## Kōrero whakataki

**“Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.”**

**Universal Declaration of Human Rights,  
Article 18**

### What is the right to freedom of religion and belief?

The right to freedom of religion and belief includes the right to hold a belief, the right to change one’s religion or belief, the right to express one’s religion or belief, and the right not to hold a belief. The right to believe is not limited to religion. It also includes atheistic beliefs, as well as matters of conscience, such as pacifism and conscientious objection to military service<sup>1</sup>.

The protection of religion and belief extends to communities of interest as well as individuals. It does not preclude criticism of beliefs, but requires respect for the right of others to hold a different belief.

The right to express a belief encompasses a range of activities<sup>2</sup> including:

- assembling for worship and the establishment of places of worship
- establishing humanitarian institutions
- using articles and materials or customs related to the belief
- writing and disseminating religious material
- teaching religion or belief at suitable places
- soliciting and receiving voluntary financial contributions
- training, appointing, electing or designating religious leaders

- observing religious holidays and ceremonies
- establishing and maintaining religious networks.

Worshipping, observing and teaching one’s beliefs can be practised in the community of interest or alone, both publicly and privately.

### Limitations

The freedom to act in accordance with one’s religion is not as wide as the freedom to believe. Limitations can be imposed on how religion is expressed, particularly where matters of public safety or the fundamental rights and freedoms of others are affected.

<sup>1</sup> Jayawickrama, N. (2002). *The Judicial Application of Human Rights Law: National, Regional and International Jurisprudence*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>2</sup> Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. (1981, November). Article 6, Declaration on the Elimination of all Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief. Proclaimed by General Assembly resolution 36/55. from [http://www.unhcr.ch/html/menu3/b/d\\_intole.htm](http://www.unhcr.ch/html/menu3/b/d_intole.htm) 27/01/2004

# International context

## Kaupapa ā taiao

The right to freedom of religion is referred to in a number of international treaties. The most significant is the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which:

- affirms the right not to be coerced into choosing or changing a religion
- identifies situations where legal limitations may be appropriate
- affirms the right of parents to educate their children in a manner consistent with their own religious beliefs.

Article 20(2) provides that “any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence shall be prohibited by law.”

International Labour Organisation Convention 111 on Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) prohibits discrimination in employment on the grounds of religion.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child makes explicit the rights and duties of parents to provide direction to the child regarding freedom of thought, conscience and religion in a manner consistent with the evolving capacities of the child. It also provides that, when a child is temporarily or permanently deprived of his or her family environment, in determining the alternative care for the child, “due regard shall be paid to the ... child’s ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic background”. Placing children with families of faiths other than their own requires careful consideration and justification. It affirms the right of children who are Indigenous or belong to a minority group to profess and practise their own religion.

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples affirms the right of Indigenous peoples to their spiritual and religious traditions, customs and ceremonies, as well as to access and protect sacred sites, ceremonial objects and the remains of their ancestors (Article 12).

The same article provides that States have a responsibility to either return or enable access to ceremonial objects or human remains in their possession. Article 37 the Declaration affirms Indigenous people have the right to the recognition, observance and enforcement of existing treaties and agreements. In affirming the foundational status of the Treaty of Waitangi, the Declaration therefore upholds the rights conferred by that agreement, including protections for religions and beliefs.

# New Zealand context

## Kaupapa o Aotearoa

### New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990

The New Zealand Bill of Rights Act (BoRA):

- affirms the right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief; this includes the right to hold and embrace views without interference
- protects the right to express religion and belief in worship, observance, teaching and practice
- affirms the right of minorities to be free from discrimination.

### Human Rights Act 1993

The Human Rights Act (HRA) prohibits discrimination based on religious and ethical belief (which the HRA defines as lack of a religious belief, whether in respect of a particular religion or religions or all religions) in employment; in business partnerships; in access to places, vehicles and facilities; in the provision of goods and services; and in the provision of land, housing and accommodation. The Act provides for specific exceptions for purposes of religion; for example, in relation to the employment of a principal or teacher in an integrated or private school, or of a social worker by an organisation whose members are adherents of a particular belief (s. 28(2)). It also allows for educational establishments maintained wholly or principally for students of one religious belief (s. 58(1)).

The exceptions in the HRA are designed to respect religious beliefs. The international human rights standards give protection to the expression of religion and belief regardless of whether a particular religion or belief embraces doctrines that contradict those standards. Within their own communities, religious groups are able to discriminate. In some churches, for example, the office of minister can only be held by men. Religious groups are also able to exclude people in same sex-relationships from official positions.

The Act requires employers to accommodate the religious or ethical belief practices of an employee as long as any adjustment required "does not unreasonably disrupt the employer's activities" (s. 28(3)).

### Education Act 1964

The Education Act 1964 sets out the secular character of primary schooling and makes provision for religious instruction. Before schools can set time aside for religious instruction, there has to be agreement from the Board of Trustees (Education Act 1964). However, there is an important distinction between religious instruction and religious education. Education about religions in the school curriculum is an important means of fostering religious understanding and tolerance and of highlighting the universal values expressed by the world's major religions.

The Private Schools Conditional Integration Act 1975 provides for religious primary and secondary schools to receive public funding subject to certain requirements.

### Treaty of Waitangi

Articles 2 and 3 of the Treaty of Waitangi provide protection for Māori to observe and practise their religions and beliefs. Article 2 does so by reference to taonga (in the Māori version,) – "everything that is held precious". Article 3 provides for Māori to have "the same rights as those of the people of England." Although it is not part of the text of the Treaty, Lieutenant-Governor Hobson, in response to a question from Catholic Bishop Pompallier, made the following statement prior to the signing:

"The Governor says that the several faiths (beliefs) of England, of the Wesleyans, of Rome, and also Māori custom shall alike be protected"<sup>3</sup>.

Some legislation dealing with the environment makes specific reference to Māori sacred places and spiritual beliefs. For example, both the Resource Management Act 1991 and the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act 1996 (HSNO) require decision-makers to take into consideration "[t]he relationship of Māori and their culture and traditions with their ancestral lands, water, sites, waahi tapu, valued flora and fauna, and other taonga" (HSNO, 1996, s. 6(d)). The Historic Places Act 1993 also has specific provisions relating to waahi tapu.

### The Mental Health (Compulsory Assessment and Treatment) Act 1992

The Mental Health (Compulsory Assessment and Treatment) Act 1992 says a person's religious beliefs are not enough on their own to invoke the procedures and processes set out in the Act.

<sup>3</sup> Te Puni Kokiri. (2001). A guide to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi, as expressed by the Courts and the Waitangi Tribunal. Wellington: Te Puni Kokiri.

# New Zealand today

## Aotearoa i tēnei rā

### Overview

New Zealand is a secular State with no State religion, in which religious and democratic structures are separated. In legislation and policy, the State respects freedom of thought, conscience and religion. There are few constraints on the freedom to manifest one's religion or beliefs.

Matters of religion and belief are deemed to be a matter for the private, rather than public, sphere. New Zealand secularism<sup>[2]</sup> is however infused with its Judaeo-Christian origins. For example, Easter and Christmas are observed as public holidays, and Christian prayers often form a part of public ceremonies. There is also a degree of statutory recognition of Māori spiritual beliefs, which are inextricably connected to Māori culture.

Any religious group can set up and operate in New Zealand without legal constraints or State interference, while still required to conform to the law like everyone else. Parents are free to direct the religious and moral education of their children, and ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities are able to profess and practise their own religion.

**Religious affiliation** (2006 census) The decrease in affiliation with Christian religions has continued since the 1991 census, when 67 per cent of the population identified as Christian. In 1996, this decreased to 59 per cent, 55 per cent in 2001 and 51 per cent in 2006.

There was an increase in people affiliating with non-Christian religions. The number of Sikhs increased by 83 per cent to 9507 between 2001 and 2006; people affiliated with Hinduism rose by 62 per cent from 39,798 to 64,392; and the Muslim population increased by 53 per cent from 23,631 to 36,072.

The number and proportion of people indicating they had no religion continued to rise. Thirty two per cent of the population in 2006 indicated they had no religion, compared to 28 per cent in 2001, 24 per cent in 1996 and 20 per cent in 1991.

### Top 20 religious affiliations of New Zealanders (2006 census)

Religious affiliation	2006 count	2006 percentage
No religion	1,297,104	32.20
Anglican	554,925	13.78
Catholic	508,812	12.63
Presbyterian	385,350	9.57
Not stated	249,711	6.20
Objected to answering	242,610	6.02
Christian	186,234	4.62
Methodist	122,076	3.03
Hindu	64,392	1.60
Baptist	56,919	1.41
Buddhist	52,392	1.30
Ratana	50,565	1.26
Latter-day Saints	43,536	1.08
Pentecostal	36,372	0.90
Islam/Muslim	36,072	0.90
Response outside scope	30,945	0.77
Jehovah's Witness	17,910	0.44
Ringatu	16,419	0.41
Assemblies of God	15,330	0.38
Salvation Army	11,490	0.29
Seventh Day Adventists	13,815	0.34

(Source: Statistics New Zealand)

### Statement on religious diversity

A statement on religious diversity in Aotearoa New Zealand was published by the Human Rights Commission for the New Zealand Diversity Action Programme in 2007. The statement provides a framework for the recognition of New Zealand's diverse faith communities and their harmonious interaction with each other, with government and with other groups in society. It has been endorsed by a wide range of organisations, and has a foreword by the Prime Minister<sup>4</sup>.

The Statement comprises eight principles:

#### 1. The State and religion.

The State seeks to treat all faith communities and those who profess no religion equally before the law. New Zealand has no official or established religion.

<sup>4</sup> Accessible at <http://www.hrc.co.nz/home/hrc/racerelations/tengirathenzdiversityactionprogramme/statementonreligiousdiversity/statementonreligiousdiversity.php>.

## 2. The right to religion.

New Zealand upholds the right to freedom of religion and belief and the right to freedom from discrimination on the grounds of religious or other belief.

## 3. The right to safety.

Faith communities and their members have a right to safety and security.

## 4. The right of freedom of expression.

The right to freedom of expression and freedom of the media are vital for democracy but should be exercised with responsibility.

## 5. Recognition and accommodation.

Reasonable steps should be taken in educational and work environments and in the delivery of public services to recognise and accommodate diverse religious beliefs and practices.

## 6. Education.

Schools should teach an understanding of different religious and spiritual traditions in a manner that reflects the diversity of their national and local community.

## 7. Religious differences.

Debate and disagreement about religious beliefs will occur but must be exercised within the rule of law and without resort to violence.

## 8. Cooperation and understanding.

Government and faith communities have a responsibility to build and maintain positive relationships with each other, and to promote mutual respect and understanding.

Issues relating to some of the principles set out in the statement on religious diversity are addressed below.

### The State and religion

Public displays of religion in State, government and local authority ceremonies and activities have prompted some people to complain about official religious expression or about Christian observance, which they consider exclusive

and potentially discriminatory. The issue of being able to use sacred texts other than the Bible for the swearing of oaths has also been raised, although there is already considerable flexibility provided for in the Oaths and Declarations Act 1957. It was the subject of a review by the Ministry of Justice in 2004, which led to the introduction of an Oaths Modernisation Bill. The select committee considering the Bill was unable to reach agreement on whether it should be passed. It remains on the order paper, awaiting a second reading.

Parliament has traditionally opened its sittings with a prayer. In 2003, a petition was submitted to amend the wording to make it no longer specifically Christian in nature. MPs were surveyed in 2007 and said they generally wished to retain the prayer in its current form, though some did not agree or identify with the prayer. The Speaker of the House recommended the prayer remain unchanged<sup>5</sup>.

Parliament has held an official reception to mark Diwali, the Hindu Festival of Lights, since 2003<sup>6</sup> and the Islamic festival Eid-ul-Fitr, which marks the end of Ramadan, since 2005. The Jewish festival of Rosh Hashanah has also been marked.

The Office of Ethnic Affairs, in association with the Federation of Islamic Associations of New Zealand (FIANZ) and New Zealand's Muslim communities, has delivered the Building Bridges programme since 2005. The programme aims to demystify Islam and promote participation by Muslims in New Zealand society. This is done through a series of training workshops, forums and visibility activities<sup>7</sup>.

The Government adopted a national implementation plan in 2008 for the United Nations Alliance of Civilisations initiative, established to improve understanding and relations among religions and cultures and to promote intercultural dialogue. The plan drew on existing initiatives such as Building Bridges and the Diversity Action Programme. It also outlined new initiatives, including an Islamic Studies centre, a media literacy and standards programme, strengthening the focus on religions and

<sup>5</sup> See "MPs vote to retain prayer", New Zealand Parliament website. Accessed 5 November 2009 from <http://www.parliament.nz/en-NZ/AboutParl/HowPWorks/Speaker/PressReleases/6/1/b61b20eda0d2847aa8ca98bfa6ebfea44.htm>.

<sup>6</sup> Henry Johnson and Guil Figgins, "Diwali Downunder: Transforming and Performing Indian Tradition in Aotearoa / New Zealand", New Zealand Journal of Media Studies, 9:1. Accessed 5 November 2009 from <http://www.nzetc.org/tm/scholarly/tei-Sch091JMS-t1-g1-t5.html>.

<sup>7</sup> Office of Ethnic Affairs, "Building Bridges". Accessed 5 November 2009 from [http://www.ethnicaffairs.govt.nz/oeawebsite.nsf/wpg\\_URL/Resources-Ethnic-Affairs-Publications-Leadership-Development?OpenDocument](http://www.ethnicaffairs.govt.nz/oeawebsite.nsf/wpg_URL/Resources-Ethnic-Affairs-Publications-Leadership-Development?OpenDocument).

cultures in the school curriculum, and scholarships to promote religious understanding in the Asia-Pacific region<sup>8</sup>.

### **Observance of holy days**

The manifestation of belief can include the observance of days of religious significance, including ceremonies and festivities. In New Zealand, while some public holidays observe major Christian festivals, there are no public holidays covering festivals of equally sacred significance for other religious groups. Some employment agreements do make provision, either through special leave or the option of taking alternative days to the Christian public holidays.

In 2009, a review of the Holidays Act 2003 asked the public for their views on whether the Act should provide employees with the option of transferring current public holidays for other days of religious observance. There were mixed reactions to the proposal from representatives of faith communities, and it appears unlikely legislative change will be made to give effect to this.

### **Medical treatment**

Some religious groups object to medical treatment as a breach of their religion or belief. The BoRA allows adults, in line with their religious belief, to refuse health care, unless they are legally unfit to make their own decisions. This is not the case for children, as the State has a responsibility to protect the lives of children and can enforce health care over the religious concerns of parents and guardians (Rishworth, Huscroft, Optican & Mahoney, 2003).

### **Māori spirituality – wairuatanga**

While aspects of Māori beliefs were suppressed in the past, some Māori spiritual practices, such as karakia, today occupy a visible place in public ceremonies. Those who object to Christian prayers in public ceremonies on the grounds of their belief raise similar objections to Christian prayers in Māori, or any recognition of spiritual beliefs at all in such ceremonies.

Māori spirituality is an inherent part of tikanga Māori, linking mana atua, mana whenua and mana tangata. In

accordance with international human rights standards and with the Treaty of Waitangi, Māori spiritual beliefs can not, therefore, be separated from the recognition and protection of tikanga Māori.

References to Māori spirituality in environmental legislation have attracted some criticism, either on the grounds that Māori spirituality should not have special recognition if other spiritual beliefs are not recognised, or that no spiritual beliefs of any sort have a place in environmental legislation. While the Resource Management Act provides explicitly for Māori spiritual beliefs only, it does provide for "historic heritage" as a matter of national significance. The Act's definition of historic heritage does not specifically include spiritual significance, but the Historic Places Act, in defining historic places, includes reference to places or areas that possess "spiritual significance or value" and these must be considered under the Resource Management Act.

In balancing Māori spirituality with scientific and commercial concerns (particularly if no explicit alternative exists), the weighting is towards scientific and commercial concern (Adhar, 2003). For example, in the approval process to conduct bioengineering trials that sought to fuse a human gene with that of a cow, a local hapu expressed opposition on the basis of their kaitiaki status, as identified in the legislation (Adhar, 2003). The concerns of the local Māori were not upheld in this case.

### **Discrimination**

Of 1405 complaints of discrimination received by the Human Rights Commission in 2008-09, only 66 (4.7 per cent) claimed discrimination on the basis of religious or ethical belief. A quarter of the complaints were in the area of employment, 22 per cent related to government activity, and 17 per cent related to the provision of goods and services. The main issues raised by these complaints were personal allegations of discrimination relating to specific religions; matters of appearance (such as the wearing of turbans or burqa); accommodation of prayer and holy days; accommodation of religious diet; and the saying of karakia or prayers in schools and workplaces.

<sup>8</sup> See Human Rights Commission 2009 Tū Tūi Tuitiā - Race Relations. Auckland

Year	Number of discrimination complaints	Number of ethical or religious belief complaints	Percentage of ethical or religious belief complaints
2004-05	1862	89	4.8
2005-06	2058	87	4.2
2006-07	1665	92	5.5
2007-08	1326	63	4.8
2008-09	1405	66	4.7

### Clothing and religious symbols

Some groups manifest their belief by wearing particular clothing or other symbols, for example, a headscarf, turban, cross, taonga or dreadlocks. Some people who have been denied access to goods and services or employment because of their religious attire have complained to the Commission. Health and safety requirements may in some circumstances constitute a justification for removing such attire.

### Employment of clergy and religious officers

There has been contention over the employment of clergy and religious officers. For example, where employment as a religious officer is refused because of the applicant's sex, sexual orientation or marital status, this discrimination breaches the applicant's human rights. In 2003, the Human Rights Commission sought the opinion of four experts on the question of the employment of gay and lesbian clergy<sup>9</sup>. A key question is whether clergy are employed at all. Three of the experts were of the view that they are not, and that the prohibition on employment does not apply. This view is supported by a 1998 decision of the New Zealand Court of Appeal that (for the purposes of the Employment Contracts Act and in relation to the situation prevailing in the Methodist Church) the relationship between clergy and the church is not an employment relationship. According to this view, the question whether the

discrimination exception provision for churches in the HRA (s. 28) is applicable does not arise, because the parties are not in an employment relationship in the first place.

A different view, under the HRA rather than the Employment Contracts Act, was that clergy are in an employment relationship with their church authorities, and that this is why section 28 exists and discrimination is therefore lawful. All the opinions lead to the same conclusion: that the HRA allows churches to discriminate on grounds of sex (including sexual orientation) with respect to the engagement of clergy.

### Safety

There continue to be instances of hate crimes, such as the vandalism of mosques and temples, desecration of Jewish graves and verbal abuse or threatening behaviour towards people wearing religious attire, such as a hijab or turban.

### Freedom of expression

Unease about media representation of Muslims reached a peak with the publication of caricatures of the Prophet Mahommed in New Zealand media in 2004, in the context of a worldwide controversy. At a meeting between media and faith community representatives, convened by the Race Relations Commissioner, parties agreed that New Zealand's increased diversity of cultures and faiths raised new challenges for the media and the New Zealand community. They affirmed the importance of freedom of the media but noted that such freedom was not absolute. It included responsibilities to be sensitive to diverse cultures and beliefs and the diversity within cultures and beliefs, to inform the community about diverse cultures and beliefs and to provide dialogue and channels of communication between the media and faith communities. The Broadcasting Standards Authority considered a complaint at the time about an episode of Southpark that contained images of the Virgin Mary deemed offensive by many Christians. The Broadcasting Standards Authority found airing the show was not in breach of broadcasting standards, because "showing disrespect does not amount to the sort of vicious or vitriolic attack normally associated with the denigration standard." They also said the episode

<sup>9</sup> The full text of these opinions is available on the Commission's website, [www.hrc.co.nz](http://www.hrc.co.nz).

was "of such farcical, absurd and unrealistic nature that it did not breach standards of good taste and decency in the context in which it was offered".

### **Recognition and accommodation**

An employer is required by the HRA to accommodate the religious or ethical belief practices of an employee as long as any adjustment required "does not unreasonably disrupt the employer's activities" (s. 28 (3) HRA). In one case, following a complaint to the Commission, a shift worker and his employer reached an agreement to enable the employee's shifts to be adjusted so he could honour his religion's sacred day. The Commission, in conjunction with the Victoria University Religious Studies Programme, is preparing guidelines on religious diversity in the workplace for employers and employees. These were initiated after the topic was addressed at the annual Religious Diversity Forum in 2009.

Some prisoners have complained to the Commission that they were prevented from practising their belief by not being given meals appropriate to their religion.

### **Education**

Schools face a number of issues in respecting the religious diversity of pupils. These range from wearing religious attire or other symbols (for example, Muslim headscarves, Sikh turbans, Jewish yarmulke, Christian cross, taonga Māori) to the content of the curriculum and classes. The Commission, in conjunction with the Victoria University Religious Studies Programme, published *Religion in New Zealand Schools: Questions and Concerns in 2009* to provide guidance to School Boards of Trustees, teachers and parents dealing with these issues.

One of the key values of the new school curriculum, launched in 2007, is diversity, which provides for students to explore and learn about cultural and religious diversity<sup>10</sup>.

<sup>10</sup> New Zealand Curriculum Online, "Values". Accessed 5 November 2009 from <http://nzcurriculum.tki.org.nz/Curriculum-documents/The-New-Zealand-Curriculum/Values>

# Conclusions

## Kōrero whakatau

### Changes since 2004

Interfaith councils in a number of centres now meet annually in a national interfaith forum and are looking to establish a national structure to promote interfaith dialogue. The establishment of new bodies, such as the Hindu Council and the Buddhist Council, has enabled greater representation of minority religions.

Government engagement with faith communities has increased through participation in the Alliance of Civilisations initiative, the Asia-Pacific regional interfaith dialogue, the Building Bridges programme, and the marking of major religious festivals in Parliament.

New resources to assist understanding of religious diversity have been developed, including the New Zealand Police Practical Reference on Religious Diversity, the Funeral Directors Association's guide to death and dying in diverse cultures, and materials to support the diversity strand in the new school curriculum.

A joint Islamic Studies Centre has been established at Victoria and Otago Universities, and a UNESCO chair of interreligious understanding has been appointed at Victoria University.

The Human Rights Commission has established a religious diversity network, including a monthly e-newsletter and an annual religious diversity forum. With the Victoria University Religious Studies Programme, the Commission has published the Statement on Religious Diversity and guidelines on religion in schools. It has also dealt with a range of complaints of religious discrimination.

### What next

Freedom of religion and belief is incorporated in New Zealand law, and New Zealand is generally tolerant of religious diversity. Respect for religious diversity would be further enhanced by the development of:

- a national structure for interfaith communication and dialogue
- guidelines for respecting religious diversity in domains such as the workplace, media, universities, health services and the criminal justice system
- further educational resources to teach about religion and belief in the school curriculum and information to aid public understanding.



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