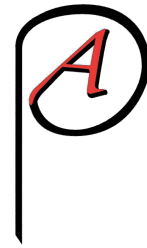


Progressive Atheists Inc.

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Proud Member of Atheist Alliance International

Member Group of Secular Coalition of Australia



Media Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

14 October 2015

Conference: Secularism in the Modern World

Melbourne – 31 October 2015

Conference: Secularism in the Modern World will be held at the Melbourne Unitarian Peace Memorial Church, 110 Grey St, East Melbourne VIC 3002 from 9.30 am – 4.10 pm on Saturday, 31 October 2015.

President of Progressive Atheists Alice Carr said that *“this conference will address the cornerstones of a free and secular society, namely, freedom of thought, freedom of belief, supporting universal human rights and countering religious extremism. We need to be reminded about the value of secularism to maintain a peaceful, fair and safe society.”*

Keynote speaker Professor Spencer Zifcak, Allan Myers Professor of Law and Director of the Institute of Legal Studies at Australian Catholic University, will speak about the vexed relationship between freedom of expression and protection against racial and religious discrimination.

In the morning panel, Rosslyn Ives from the Humanist Society and Lev Lafayette, President of the Victorian Secular Lobby will talk about the history and importance of secularism in our society. Lara Wood, coordinator of parent action group Fairness in Religion in Schools (FIRIS), will speak about the importance of secular schools and Dr Paul Tonson, Administrator of the Pathways for Diversity Education in Schools, will speak about secularism from a Christian faith perspective.

The afternoon panel offers insight into the importance of supporting and promoting secularism in countries such as Bangladesh. Shubhajit Bhowmik is a freethinking secular writer from Bangladesh. Though he writes on different social and political issues, the involvement of religious fundamentalism was one of the main focus of his writings. Due to this

writings, he started getting death threats from Islamic fundamentalist groups. In 2013, Anjuman Al Baiyenaat handed over a list of 84 atheist bloggers to the Home Ministry of Bangladesh asking for punishment for hurting religious sentiments. Shubhajit was one of them. Later, when Islamic fundamentalists started killing Bangladeshi bloggers, Shubhajit was able to escape to Australia. Shubhajit will speak about the recent history of secular bloggers in Bangladesh including the horrific attacks and killings.

Ex-Muslim refugee from Pakistan, Ali Sayed will speak about the place of religion in a secular world. Ashraful Alam will speak about countering Islamic extremism in Australia and Peter Farago will speak about his work with refugees, who are often survivors of societies that lack the freedoms we enjoy in a secular society.

References:

Conference website: Secularism in the Modern World – Melbourne – 2015

Venue / Schedule / Speakers / Workshops / Sister Events Sydney & Perth

<http://progressiveatheists.org/campaigns-projects/secularism/conference-2015/>

Purchase Tickets:

\$30 General Admission / \$20 Concession

<http://progressiveatheists.org/product-category/conference/>

Press Pass:

Press passes are available for free admission into the event - email

conference2015@progressiveatheists.org to register.

About Progressive Atheists Inc:

Website: <http://progressiveatheists.org/>

Purpose statement: <http://progressiveatheists.org/about-us/purpose-statement/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ProgressiveAtheistsInc>

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