

# Progressive Atheists Inc.

Est. 10 Jan 2010 Reg: A0054119U Member of AAI

## Progressive Atheists Inc. Open Meeting

Progressive Atheists Inc. Open Meeting | 25th October 2015

Our next Progressive Atheists Inc. Open Meeting will be held on Open Meeting at 12 pm, Saturday, 25<sup>th</sup> October 2015 at Clover & Rye, 410 Bridge Road, Richmond, Vic 3121. . All who support our purpose are welcome.

<http://www.meetup.com/Melbourne-Atheists/events/224846868/>

## Progressive Atheists Purpose Statement:

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

## Melbourne Atheists MeetUp Group | Event Calendar

Keep in touch with atheists around Melbourne via the Melbourne MeetUp:

<http://www.meetup.com/Melbourne-Atheists/events/calendar/>

## Membership Term 2015 | 1 July 2015 – 30 June 2016

Progressive Atheists Membership is \$20 per annum / \$10 concession.

## JOIN US | Purchase New Membership Online:

<http://progressiveatheists.org/about-us/membership/application/>

For other methods to renew and join please see our website:

<http://progressiveatheists.org/about-us/membership/>

Email our Membership Officer:

[membership@progressiveatheists.org](mailto:membership@progressiveatheists.org)

OR ASK the person who gave you this bulletin

## Progressive Atheists Inc. 'Proudly Atheist' T-shirts & Badges

T-shirts ONLY \$15 for members!

Badges \$2.50 each ~ 2 designs / 3 colours

Order your t-shirt or badge on our website:

<http://progressiveatheists.org/products-for-sale/>

Sales Rep. Elida Radig: [sales@progressiveatheists.org](mailto:sales@progressiveatheists.org)

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# Progressive Atheists Inc.

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*"Your participation is PA's future"*



## November 2015

*... we seek to go beyond divisive racial, religious, tribal, and sectarian constructs, and instead, contribute to a universal humanity.*

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## MEMBERSHIP

**Term 2015:** 1 July 2015 – 30 June 2016

\*\*\* ONLY \$20 Annually \*\*\*

**Purchase Membership Online:**

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

## CONTACT PROGRESSIVE ATHEISTS INC.

**President:** [president@progressiveatheists.org](mailto:president@progressiveatheists.org)

**Vice President** – Andrew: 0438 043 050

**Secretary:** [secretary@progressiveatheists.org](mailto:secretary@progressiveatheists.org)

**Website:** [progressiveatheists.org](http://progressiveatheists.org)

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/ProgressiveAtheistsInc](http://www.facebook.com/ProgressiveAtheistsInc)

**Twitter:** [twitter.com/ProgAtheistsInc](https://twitter.com/ProgAtheistsInc)

*Please send articles, news, letters and comments to:  
[editor@progressiveatheists.org](mailto:editor@progressiveatheists.org)*

# Progressive Atheist Inc. | Headlines

## Progressive Atheists 2015 Team:

### **President: Alice Carr**

*October 2013 – present*

[president@progressiveatheists.org](mailto:president@progressiveatheists.org)

Alice grew up within a Hindu sect called Brahma Kumaris. After much thought about God, the souls, heaven and the afterlife came to the conclusion that they were all in the realm of wishful thinking. Alice has since read books by Richard Dawkins, Daniel Dennett and Sam Harris and watched some interesting youtubes including Lawrence Krauss, which has assisted to develop a good understanding on the atheist 'creation stories' - the big bang, abiogenesis and evolution. Alice now identifies as a philosophical naturalist inspired by philosophical naturalist and writer Tom Clark. Alice has a special interest in protecting human rights, gaining justice for survivors of abuse and calling out religious privilege.

### **Vice President: Andrew Rawlings**

*October 2013 – present*

[vicepresident@progressiveatheists.org](mailto:vicepresident@progressiveatheists.org)

### **Secretary: Brian Jones**

*December 2013 – present*

[secretary@progressiveatheists.org](mailto:secretary@progressiveatheists.org)

### **Treasurer: Ash Alam**

*September 2015 – present*

[treasurer@progressiveatheists.org](mailto:treasurer@progressiveatheists.org)

Ashrafal was born in Bangladesh and has recently migrated to Australia with his family. He belongs to a generation of Bangladeshi's who are indebted to the recently slain blogger Dr. Avijit Roy and the free-thinking movement Dr. Roy spearheaded. Blog site 'Mukto-Mona' and the free-thinking movement is a great source of rational nourishment for the Bangladeshi freethinking community. Ashrafal has a special interest in Blasphemy law around the world, same sex marriage, supporting LGBT communities, religious extremism in the migrant communities in Australia and religious prosecution in South Asia.

## **Attacks in Paris: QUILLIAM HORRIFIED BY PARIS ATTACKS**

Press Release | 14 November 2015

Quilliam stands in solidarity with France following the devastating attacks in Paris on Friday night. Over 120 people have been killed in a series of attacks across the French capital. In a coordinated operation by Islamic State, the six attacks included suicide bombings outside the Stade de France, shootings in a restaurant, cafe and pizzeria, and a hostage situation in Bataclan Concert Hall.

We further commiserate for the victims of the deadliest terror attack seen in Lebanon on Thursday. Carried out by two suicide bombers in Beirut, the explosions killed at least 43 people, and wounding 250, for which Islamic State has also claimed responsibility.

Like Quilliam, security services across Europe and the Middle East have predicted such coordinated multi-casualty attacks in recent years. The priority now is to care for victims, support their families, catch the perpetrators, and prevent reprisal or copycat attacks.

Attention must turn to the long-term prevention of future attacks by considering the appropriate security and counter-extremism response. For over a year now, Quilliam has warned of a full-blown jihadist insurgency. No insurgency is sustainable, let alone possible, without the levels of residual support it commands for its core ideological aims, among the communities from which it draws its fighters.

In the last decade, the modus operandi of Islamist terrorists, including those of Islamic State, has included simultaneous coordinated mass casualty attacks, suicide bombings, and shootings. It is clear that jihadism has taken root among a generation of young, angry Muslims who are susceptible to sustained Islamist propaganda. Our response must focus not only on identifying, isolating and undermining the Islamist ideology that fuels such recruitment, and in alleviating the resentment that this group of invisible recruits can use as potential or perceived grievances, but also in avoiding the far right, sweeping xenophobe rhetoric that polarises communities and breeds radicalisation.

Quilliam urges a considered response from governments, free from knee-jerk reactions, and calls for sober analysis and critical thinking from civil society to cut through the sensationalist and apologist noises that inevitably prevent this. Moreover, it is essential to remember that, though this could change, so far it has been European born and raised jihadists who have posed the biggest challenge, not immigrants or refugees. Now is a time to stand with the victims of these abhorrent attacks, not point fingers or score political points.

Quilliam stands with Paris. **#ViveLaFrance**

## **Donations: Bloggers in Bangladesh**

Many of us were very saddened to come home to the news that yet another Bangladeshi had been killed in Bangladesh as part of 2 attacks on 4 people that left 1 dead and 1 critically injured.

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/oct/31/faissal-abedin-deepan-bangladesh-secular-publisher-hacked-to-death>



In an email sent 19 October 2015, Islamist extremists threatened atheists and said that it would target anyone who would assist atheists to publish their message. The most recent attack included publishes of books written by Bangladeshi atheists.

<http://bdnews24.com/bangladesh/2015/10/19/ansaraullah-bangla-team-asks-bangladesh-media-not-to-run-anti-jihadi-news>

Progressive Atheists is currently raising funds to assist atheists in danger in Bangladesh to gain safety at this very dangerous time.

<http://progressiveatheists.org/product-category/secular-bloggers-in-bangladesh-fund/>

## **Membership Officer: Phillipa Toia**

September 2014 - present

[membership@progressiveatheists.org](mailto:membership@progressiveatheists.org)

## **Bulletin Editor: Oriana Zanon**

May 2015 – present

The product of a catholic Italian father and a very 'old school' Church of England mother, Oriana attended a catholic private school as a teenager which demanded twice weekly professing of sins and begging forgiveness, difficult when she was a pretty unadventurous child. The more Oriana studied world religions, the more she realised that they all had one thing in common. A lack of scientific or historical proof of the existence of a miracle worker! She has a passion for history, which makes the beginnings of the Christian bible a fascination. She has an interest in the works of Bart D Erhman and his contemporaries, but also loves the works of Christopher Hitchens and Tim Minchin's irreverent take on religion and society.

[editor@progressiveatheists.org](mailto:editor@progressiveatheists.org)

## **Event: Annual General Meeting - October 2015**

As well as a the general business of an annual general meeting, Term 2015 President of Progressive Atheists, Alice Carr, gave an overview of Progressive Atheists Inc. activities during the period July 2014 – June 2015. This was done via a PowerPoint presentation and involved a synopsis of 16 categories ranging from the work in promoting Secular Schools, whereby a letter was sent to the Ministries on Secular Schools and in June 2015 a discussion on Secular schools was held; to Religious Persecution – Apostasy and Blasphemy, and their negative effects, with a letter being sent September 2014 regards Islamic Extremism; the atrocities of the religious fundamentalists in Bangladesh in April 2015; Quillam's belief in November 2014, that Islam needs reform; Persecution of Atheists globally, reported February 2015; Justice for survivors of abuse at the hands of religious and other institutions; domestic violence against women; Public Relations activities, Community Events and events hosted by Progressive Atheists. Secretary Brian Jones followed with a membership and financial report for Term 2015.

<http://progressiveatheists.org/events/annual-general-meeting/annual-general-meeting-2015/>

**Committee Member: Peter Veitch**

*September 2015 – present*

[peter@progressiveatheists.org](mailto:peter@progressiveatheists.org)

**Committee Member: Trish Delaney**

*October 2013 – present*

[trish@progressiveatheists.org](mailto:trish@progressiveatheists.org)

**Committee Member: Rick Barker**

*February 2014 – present*

[rick@progressiveatheists.org](mailto:rick@progressiveatheists.org)

**Committee Member & Welfare Officer: Tracy Oliver**

*October 2014 – present*

[tracy@progressiveatheists.org](mailto:tracy@progressiveatheists.org)

**Committee Member: Sharmin Akhter**

*September 2015 – present*

[sharmin@progressiveatheists.org](mailto:sharmin@progressiveatheists.org)

**Committee Member: Paul Garrett**

*September 2015 – present*

[paul@progressiveatheists.org](mailto:paul@progressiveatheists.org)

Paul is a recently retired public servant living in Canberra. After more than 30 years working in science, industry and environment policy he has joined a number of antitheist organisations, including Progressive Atheists, and is also pursuing his interests in biodiversity conservation, evidence-based policy processes, STEM education (particularly for women and girls), internet censorship and surveillance, and the "maker movement". He personally lobbies governments on these issues as well as on particular current PA issues such as the the Schools Chaplaincy Program, religious education in schools and asylum-seeker policy. A current "hobby horse" for him is the lack of transparency around the religious affiliations of political candidates. He would be able to help PA in areas such drafting submissions, letter writing and direct lobbying as well as bringing his experience to bear on current issues involving governments.

**Members Only: Discussion Group on Facebook**

Members of Progressive Atheists are invited to join this closed group on Facebook.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/ProgressiveAtheists/>

**Members Only: Opt In Members Email Exchange**

All current members are able to join the opt in members email exchange. If you would like to join the exchange, please send an email request to 'join the members email exchange' to [contact@progressiveatheists.org](mailto:contact@progressiveatheists.org)

**Upcoming Events: Writer Meg Wallace**

**Meg Wallace discusses her new book on Human Rights**

*Wednesday, 18 November 2015 - 7:30 pm*

Albion Hotel: 41 Mollison Street, Kyneton

[http://www.meetup.com/CVAF\\_Gathering/events/222568954/](http://www.meetup.com/CVAF_Gathering/events/222568954/)

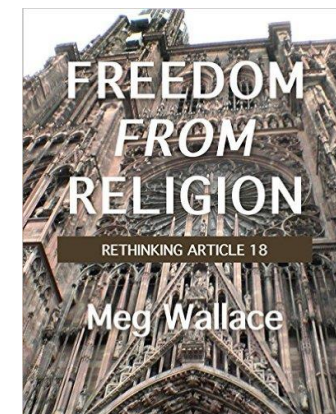
**Meg Wallace: Freedom From Religion?**

*Friday, 20 November 2015 – 7:00 pm*

Melbourne Unitarian Peace Memorial Church:

110 Grey St, East Melbourne VIC 3002

<http://www.meetup.com/Melbourne-Atheists/events/226366014/>





Charlie Hebdo cartoonist **Joann Sfar** sketched this response to the #PrayForParis hashtag being used in the wake of the weekend's massacre:



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## Conference: Secularism in the Modern World - Melbourne October 2015

This conference hosted 9 excellent speakers that gave us much food for thought. Our keynote speaker, Professor Spencer Zifcak discussed the vexed relationship between freedom of expression and protection against racial and religious discrimination, ending with a recommendation to retain restrictions on speech that humiliates and intimidates but abandon limits on speech that insults or offends.

The morning panel gave us a history of secularism in Australia, the importance of secularism, secularism at work in our public schools and secularism from a Christian perspective. All talks invited interest and questions from the audience.

The afternoon panel discussed the issue of secularism and Islam in context to Pakistan, Bangladesh and Australia, as well as exploring how the violation of human rights, and freedom of belief can impact individuals leading to the need for people to seek asylum outside of their country of birth. Panel members contributed personal and very moving accounts.

Progressive Atheists have invited all speakers to submit papers to be published on our website. You can view these submissions here:

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



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