

Dr Peter Vardy was Vice Principal of Heythrop College, University of London, from 1999 to 2011 and has been credited with doing more to get young people choosing to study Religion in schools than anybody else. The author of fifteen bestselling books – including “The Puzzle of Ethics” for HarperCollins – and a familiar voice on Australian radio, Dr Vardy worked with The Coexist Foundation and Microbooks (projects including understandingfaiths.net) to improve teaching about Islam from 2007. Following on from this work, Peter was invited to give the keynote address at the ISRA conference in Sydney in 2012 on Islam in Europe and has addressed a number of University Islamic Societies since.

Dr Vardy has run teacher-training events related to Islam in the UK, in Singapore, Hong Kong and New Zealand as well as in Australia back in 2010.



“I couldn’t fault yesterday. The material you were presenting was stimulating, provocative and pitched at the perfect level...Many thanks for an excellent day and for the resources (which will be more than helpful)”

JS Rutland

#### To Book...

Places at Teaching About Islam Today cost \$190. Discounts are available for three or more teachers from the one school who book at the same time. Morning tea and a light lunch will be provided. Course materials and resources will be provided after the event. Registration will take place at 9.30am for a prompt 10am start and the conference will conclude at 3pm. Cancellations will be accepted up to one week before the conference.

Bookings must be made through Wendy Rowe.

To reserve your place, please email or telephone Wendy Rowe. Bookings can also be made via the website. An invoice will be forwarded with payment instructions.

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# Teaching About Islam Today

with **Dr Peter Vardy**

An intensive one-day event for teachers of Religion  
or SOSE / Humanities & Social Sciences

**2017**

Adelaide 9th May, Melbourne 11th May, Brisbane 16th May,  
Sydney 23rd May, Hobart 26th May. Venues are on the website



[www.wombateducation.com](http://www.wombateducation.com)

When Captain Cook “discovered” Australia in 1770 Muslim traders had probably been visiting and trading with what became the Northern Territories and WA for a hundred years. Although Islam has always been a minority religion in Australia – not quite 2.5% of the current population – Australians had to engage with Muslims in the course of travel, trade and politics well before 2001. This engagement has often been difficult, but is now more important than ever... as “Reclaim Australia” rallies and instances of violence at anti-Islam protests in Melbourne demonstrate, without even considering what is happening overseas.

It is all-too easy to base judgements about Islam on misinformation, to fail to understand the difference between religion and culture and to assume that the views of a tiny minority are representative of what will soon become the world’s largest religion. This intensive day of CPD will support teachers of religion or SOSE / Humanities and Social Sciences to approach lessons or courses on or relating to Islam confidently, helping young people to become well-informed and open-minded in their consumption of news and in their engagements with Muslims, whether in the classroom or the office.

### Did You Know?

Quite apart from Senior Secondary courses such as **Studies of Religion**, there are many opportunities to plan to teach about Islam in different areas of the curriculum and in all schools, religious or otherwise.

Some examples taken from the Learning Area and Content Descriptions of the new **Australian Curriculum** include...

- Year 7 **Civics and Citizenship**: How groups, such as religious and cultural groups, express their particular identities; and how this influences their perceptions of others and vice versa
- Year 8 **Civics and Citizenship**: The values and beliefs of religions practised in contemporary Australia.
- Year 9 **Civics & Citizenship**: How and why individuals and groups, including religious groups, participate in and contribute to civic life.
- Year 8 **History**: The spread of Islam, contact & conflict, emergence of ideas about the world and the place of people in it. Any of the three Depth Studies.
- Year 10 **History**: Post-Cold-War conflicts; Afghanistan and the Gulf Wars.

Dr Peter Vardy has been running the best attended events for teachers and senior students of Religion and Philosophy in Australasia and across the world for well over twenty years. His events are always inspirational, fast-paced and up-to-the minute in terms of content, challenging and academically stretching. Sessions include plenty of film-clips, images, references to current events and examples as well as opportunities to discuss and debate key points one-on-one, in small groups or as a whole group.

Full resources are provided so there is no need to make reams of notes on the day and there is plenty to support further reading and planning after the event. These events are also a great opportunity to make professional contacts from across the State, who could provide invaluable support via an online network.

**“We thought the day was absolutely fantastic on Friday; great that as regional teachers that we had such an opportunity to see Peter first hand, fantastic that our school gave us this opportunity... Peter really instilled in us, as educators how important that our subject is for our future generations. So they can ask those big and valuable questions, so they can be prepared as best as can be, for the future...”**

Mary-Anne Searle-Tebbit (SOSE and English Teacher)  
Centenary Heights State High School, Toowoomba QLD

### Sessions will include:

#### Why teach about Islam?

This introductory session will set the scene by exploring the pressing reasons for teaching about Islam in Australian schools and considering how Islam can be incorporated into the curriculum effectively. The session will end with an open discussion about the challenges that teaching about Islam can present and ways to resolve them.

#### Getting our facts straight

This session will set out the “facts” about Islam and consider the reasons that there can often be confusion about these. Peter will cover the origins of Islam and life of the Prophet, the spread of Islam in the past and today, the origins and status of the Qur’an and how it is used by modern Muslims, central Islamic beliefs about God and equality, the practice of Islam, including prayer, the mosque, pilgrimage, giving to charity, fasting and celebrations. The session will end with a discussion about the pedagogical skills needed to teach about religions well and the resources available to teachers.

**A full, editable teaching PowerPoint, designed to support approaching the topics covered in this session in the classroom, as well as a .pdf of a student textbook will be provided as part of the resources.**

### Islamic Ethics

Many people (not just young people) get the impression from the news that Muslims don’t care about life, that they think of women as inferior, resist technological advances and scientific explanations. Every day we see images of burning oil-wells and hospitals looted or bombed to destruction, videos of summary executions, “honour-killings” and Yazidi sex-slaves, the traditional call to prayer the soundtrack for new acts of barbarity. Yet the impression people have of Islamic values is very far from those preached and maintained by more than 99% of Muslims. This session will explore Islamic Ethics and show just how much Muslims, Christians and many Humanists agree on.

**Detailed teacher-notes will be provided explaining Muslim responses to a range of 21st Century challenges, including bioethics, and recommending sources of further information.**

### The Philosophy of Islam

This short session will explore central Islamic beliefs about God in more detail, considering the Islamic origins of popular arguments for the existence of God, the reasons behind the rapid development of science and technology in the ancient Muslim world and the implications of Islamic beliefs about God for the Muslim world-view and engagements with modern science, technology and society. Fascinating background for anybody interested in culture and language and essential for anybody tackling Islam in Years 11 or 12.

### Teaching about Islam through Art

This final session will consider how Islamic Art can be a great “starter” for lessons and courses on Islam, being far more than cultural expression, communicating central beliefs and concepts such as the oneness and supremacy of Allah and the sacred beauty of His creation despite resisting all representations of people and most literal representations of other things. After an introduction to the principles of Islamic Art and the opportunity to see and analyse some examples, practical lesson ideas will be provided before the day concludes with a plenary session.