

HECTIC 07 Presentation: Equality, Diversity and Conflict

Dr Zachariah Matthews, AIM President

Friday 10 August 2007, PCYC Minto NSW

The AIM president, Dr Zachariah Matthews, gave a presentation entitled "Equality, Diversity and Conflict" at Robert Townson High School's HECTIC 07 program. HECTIC stands for:

Hope Empower Change Teamwork Inspire Courage

- Hope for a better future
- Empower yourself to make a difference
- Change your way of thinking
- Teamwork with other people
- Inspire the people around you
- Courage to have a voice

Robert Townson High School in Raby NSW ran the HECTIC program for the first time in 2006 and due to its success decided to make it an annual event. Last year the program was created in response to events of race related fighting and name calling at school. The School wanted to decrease tensions and promote integration and acceptance.

The HECTIC 07 program included around 50 students from years 7 and 8 and six leaders from years 9-11. The aim of the program was:

- To create a forum for students to be open and discuss their feelings and anxieties in a non-threatening and supportive arena.
- For students to associate with other students they normally wouldn't associate with.
- Breaking down barriers of stereotype and prejudice against Muslims and non-Muslims.
- Be inclusive of different cultures and backgrounds.
- To lessen the occurrence of racism and segregation of different cultures at school.

Issues that were dealt with included:

- What are Australian values?
- What do we all have in common?
- What is it that connects us and makes us all the same?

People involved included:

- Zeina Iaali, Denise James, Michelle McKenzie, Juan Tennant, Robert Townson High School.
- Uncle Ivan Wellington, Aboriginal elder doing the welcome to country.
- Ummu Matthews and Zunaid Moosa, Global Islamic Youth Centre.
- Mark Stead, Minto PCYC
- Yousef Bahrain, Ingleburn Community Health Services.
- John Tennant, Self defence workshop
- Hazem Elmasri, Canterbury Bulldogs rugby league player, special guest appearance and touch footy.

Dr Matthews also performed the Friday prayer for the fifteen Muslim students in the program.

