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HEALTH & RELIGION

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■ RELIGIOUS PRACTICES AND HEALTH CARE

- Queensland is a diverse society with a great variety of cultures, languages and religions. According to the 2001 Census, the main Queensland religious affiliations are:

Christianity 2, 547, 589 (71 % of the total population)

Buddhism 37,758 (1.1 % of the total population)

Islam 15, 031 (0.4 % of the total population)

other religious groups 14, 745 (0.4 % of the total population)

Hinduism 8, 980 (0.3 % of the total population)

Judaism 4,261 (0.1 % of the total population)

- Staff will encounter the interface between religious practices and health when caring for or treating these diverse groups. Every day routines and the need to pray or meditate; food and/or medication restrictions or the need to fast; acceptance or denial of illness or death; customs for social and spiritual support; and rituals around birth and death, are examples of this interface between religion and health care.
- Awareness of the practices of your patient/client can improve communication, understanding, the health care relationship and ultimately health outcomes.
- The following tables present basic information about the major religions practised in Queensland. However, it is important to recognise that within specific religious affiliations not all people will have the same practices, beliefs or the same degree of observance.
- Websites with further information and also the contact details of local religious groups in Queensland are presented at the bottom of each table. To find local religious groups in your area, go to www.multicultural.qld.gov.au/media/maq_resource_directory.pdf This Queensland Government directory is updated annually.

Please note: this information provides a *broad guide only* and provides some general information for staff to discuss the impact of religion or faith on health care. Staff should use discretion in applying these guidelines broadly to individuals from specific or all faiths.

■ BUDDHISM

MAIN REGIONS WHERE PRACTICED	KEY BELIEFS	DIETARY NEEDS	KEY CONSIDERATIONS	MEDICAL PROCEDURES	HANDLING OF DECEASED PERSON
<p>There are two main strands of Buddhism:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Theravada Buddhism</i> is practiced in Sri Lanka, Burma, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia, Singapore and Nepal ▪ <i>Mahayana Buddhism</i> is practiced by Tibet, Mongolia, Taiwan, Korea, Vietnam, Japan, China, Malaysia, Singapore and Nepal. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Buddhism, founded by Gautama Siddharta in India, is a tradition that focuses on personal spiritual development and the attainment of insight into the true nature of life ▪ the central teaching is that all life is interconnected, therefore having compassion is important ▪ Buddhism is not a God-centred faith. Buddhists do not worship. Buddhist icons are meant to be images of reflection, for inspiration and a focus for aspirations ▪ Buddhists* believe in the law of <i>karma</i>, which explains that one's own happiness or suffering, success or failure, health or illness etc, is caused by one's own previous actions (<i>karma</i> means action), bodily, verbal or mental ▪ Buddhists believe in reincarnation. ▪ Places of worship include monasteries, temples, stupas and pagodas. 	<p>Many Buddhists are vegetarian and fast on special days. However, there is no fixed diet.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ when treating Buddhists monks or nuns, health care workers should be of the same gender ▪ the family of a sick Buddhist in hospital will often want to attend their sick relative. A sick Buddhist in hospital may also request a visit from a monk or nun, however in some Buddhist cultures this is only for the terminally ill. 	<p>There are no religious objections to the majority of medical procedures such as organ transplants and blood transfusions. However patients or their families should always be informed of procedures and allowed to decide upon the course of treatment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ many Buddhists believe that the spirit stays in the body for several hours after death and therefore prefer if the body is not handled for some time ▪ Mahayana Buddhists prefer the body to be left for up to eight hours while Tibetan Buddhists prefer up to three days ▪ for Japanese Buddhists, the Buddhist priest should be notified if possible. The deceased is dressed in a white Kimono and wears straw shoes called <i>warai</i>.

* the term 'Buddhists' refers to people who believe in/practice the Buddhist faith and is consistent with language from a fact sheet developed by the Buddhist Society of Western Australia (reference below).

Sources:

Australia. Office of Multicultural Issues Western Australia. Buddhist Society of Western Australia. Culture and Religion Sheet. [online] October 2005 [cited 19 June 2007] Available from:

www.omi.wa.gov.au/Publications/cr_diversity/buddhism.pdf

Australia. Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital Intranet. Babacan, H. and Obst, P. *Death, Dying and Religion An Examination of non-Christian Beliefs and Practices A guide for human service professionals* [online] undated [cited 18 June 2007] Available from <http://hi.bns.health.qld.gov.au/rbh/multicultural/Guidelines.htm#Death,%20Dying%20and%20Religion>

Australia. University of Western Australia Interfaith Calendar – Buddhism [online] undated [cited 20 June 2007] Available from: www.equity.uwa.edu.au/welcome/priority_areas/cultural_diversity/interfaith_calendar/buddhist

Further information:

Information sheet www.omi.wa.gov.au/Publications/cr_diversity/buddhism.pdf

Buddhist organisations in Queensland www.buddhistcouncilofqueensland.org/index.php

■ CHRISTIANITY

COUNTRIES WHERE WIDELY PRACTISED	KEY BELIEFS	DIETARY NEEDS	KEY CONSIDERATIONS	MEDICAL PROCEDURES	HANDLING OF DECEASED PERSON
Christians may be from European countries, Asia, Pacific Island countries, Africa and Latin America. Christians churches include: Anglican, Baptist, Lutheran, Assemblies of God, Catholic, Churches of Christ and others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Christianity was founded in Israel and centres on Jesus Christ ▪ it has many forms around the world and has many cultural adaptations in its practice ▪ the Bible is a book of writings which is considered sacred by Christians ▪ Christians* believe in one God who is revealed in three distinct persons (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) ▪ Christians uphold Jesus as the Son of God; accept Jesus' teachings; prayer and worship; the significance of life, death and resurrection of Jesus; the need to help others. ▪ Places of worship include churches, chapels, cathedrals, basilicas, meeting houses and Kingdom Halls. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ many Christians have no particular cultural practices regarding food and drink ▪ however, some Christians fast during lent, the six week period prior to Easter usually not eating meat on Good Friday and the Fridays of Lent ▪ Seven-Day Adventists may be vegetarian - lacto-ovo vegetarian (no meat, but eggs and dairy ok) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ because Christians come from such diverse cultural backgrounds, denominations and churches, it is advisable to check whether the patient has any particular religious needs that may affect health care ▪ Christians may worship at any time but the expected worship time is Sunday mornings. 	Some Christians may hold religious objections to abortion, euthanasia and in- vitro fertilisation procedures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ there are no particular rules about the handling of the body, except that respect must be observed ▪ there are no religious objections to autopsy ▪ Christians may have a preference for burial over cremation ▪ For some Christians the following should be respected: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - last Rites for Catholics - baptism for dying infants

* the term 'Christians' refers to people who believe in/practice the Christian faith and is consistent with language from a fact sheet developed by the Council of Churches (reference below).

Source:

Australia. Office of Multicultural Issues Western Australia. Council of Churches of Western Australia. Culture and Religion Sheet. [online] October 2005 [cited 19 June 2007] Available from:

www.omi.wa.gov.au/Publications/cr_diversity/christianity.pdf

Australia. Royal Brisbane & Women's Hospital Intranet. Rev I Carden, *Death, dying and belief, Christianity*, undated [cited 19 June 2007] Available from:

<http://hi.bns.health.qld.gov.au/rbh/multicultural/Guidelines.htm#Death,%20Dying%20and%20Religion>

Correspondence, South Queensland Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, General Secretary, 27 March 2007

Further information:

Information sheet: www.omi.wa.gov.au/Publications/cr_diversity/christianity.pdf

National Council of Churches: www.ncca.org.au/

■ HINDUISM

MAIN REGIONS WHERE PRACTICED	KEY BELIEFS	DIETARY NEEDS	KEY CONSIDERATIONS	MEDICAL PROCEDURES	HANDLING OF DECEASED PERSON
Hindus in Australia have migrated from countries such as India, Fiji, Nepal, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Philippines, UK, Mauritius, Bhutan, South Africa, Burma and Singapore	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ there is no founder or organisational hierarchy in Hinduism, but it stems from India. It is a way of life, upholding the principles of good/virtuous living ▪ the Hindu belief is non-exclusive and accepts all other faiths and spiritual/religious paths ▪ a Hindu views the entire universe as God's and everything in it as God. Each person is intrinsically divine and the purpose of life is to seek and realise the divinity within ▪ Hindus are encouraged to seek self realisation through one of four paths: worship; service (helping others); yoga and meditation; and self inquiry ▪ Hindus believe in the law of <i>karma</i> (action) in which each and every action has a reaction, generating conditions and experiences for this and future lives. People therefore craft their own destiny ▪ Hindus believe in reincarnation. ▪ Places of worship are called temples. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ many are vegetarians – no meat or eggs ▪ those who are not, usually abstain from beef or pork. The cow is sacred to all Hindus and the pig is considered unclean by many ▪ fasting is observed on special days. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ health care workers should be sensitive to the food and dietary needs of the patient ▪ also consider bovine ingredients in common drugs eg. Heparin. Ask the patient for permission before administering. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ a disregard of modesty can cause considerable distress to Hindus and in particular to Hindu women. Even in a medical/ health care context, women are generally reluctant to undress for examination. ▪ same-sex health provider may be preferred. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ should be handled by person of same sex who observes respect and modesty ▪ autopsies are considered objectionable and deeply disrespectful to the dead and his/ her family ▪ the preference is not to have autopsies unless required by law ▪ Hindus are generally cremated except for children under three who are buried ▪ white is the colour of mourning.

* the term 'Hindus' refers to people who believe in/practice the Hindu faith and is consistent with language from a fact sheet developed by the Hindu Association of Western Australia (reference below).

Sources:

Australia. Office of Multicultural Issues Western Australia. Hindu Association of Western Australia. Culture and Religion Sheet. [online] October 2005 [cited 19 June 2007] Available from:

www.omi.wa.gov.au/Publications/cr_diversity/hinduism.pdf

Correspondence with Hindu Council of Australia, Chairman, dated 23 February 2007

Australia. University of Western Australia Interfaith Calendar – Hinduism [online] undated [cited 20 June 2007] Available from: www.equity.uwa.edu.au/welcome/priority_areas/cultural_diversity/interfaith_calendar/buddhist

Further information:

Information sheet www.omi.wa.gov.au/Publications/cr_diversity/hinduism.pdf

Hindu organisations/temples in Queensland [/www.hinducouncil.com.au/ahtl.html](http://www.hinducouncil.com.au/ahtl.html)

■ ISLAM

COUNTRIES WHERE WIDELY PRACTISED (most relevant to Qld)	KEY BELIEFS	DIETARY NEEDS	KEY CONSIDERATIONS	MEDICAL PROCEDURES	HANDLING OF DECEASED PERSON
Indonesia, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Egypt, Turkey, Iran, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Afghanistan, Sudan, Iraq, Malaysia, Tanzania, Somalia, Cote d'Ivoire, Congo, Philippines, Sierra Leone, Thailand, Eritrea, Lebanon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Muslims follow the teachings of the Qur'an and their last Prophet Muhammad ▪ Muslims believe in the oneness of God; angels; books of Allah; prophets; life after death; and divine decree and destiny ▪ the Five Pillars of Islam are: the declaration of faith; five daily prayers; zakaat (donations to the poor); fasting during the month of Ramadan; and pilgrimage to Mecca (Hajj) if one has the means ▪ the world according to Islam is a place of trial and people are being put to test in it ▪ the word Islam refers to the complete submission to Allah's (God's) will ▪ places of worship are called mosques. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Muslims do not eat pork, or any products derived of pork, or any food that has been prepared with utensils that have touched pork ('<i>haram</i>', ie. forbidden) ▪ other meats can only be eaten from animals that have been ritually slaughtered ('<i>halal</i>') ▪ during Ramadan, the ninth month of the Muslim calendar, observant Muslims do not eat or drink from dawn-break to sunset ▪ the Muslim calendar is lunar and therefore Ramadan takes place on a different date every year ▪ consumption of alcohol is forbidden. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ modesty is essential ▪ devout Muslims do not shake hands with the opposite sex ▪ same-sex health staff are preferred. However, Islam allows exceptions to its rules in emergency situations ▪ a Muslim patient will try to maintain the schedule of prayer three or five times during the day ▪ Muslims are required to wash their genitals with running water after urinating and defecating. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ pain control measures, blood transfusions and organ transplants are permissible ▪ euthanasia is forbidden ▪ when a Muslim woman is in labour, a female doctor or at least a mid- wife would be preferred ▪ some Muslims may wish to take the placenta home, to be buried properly as it is considered part of the body, although it is not compulsory to do so ▪ visiting the sick and dying is emphasised. Therefore there may be large numbers of visitors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ while in hospital or elsewhere, the body must not be left naked or uncovered ▪ the body should be wrapped in a plain sheet while still unwashed ▪ if possible, same sex staff should handle the body, preferably with disposable gloves ▪ the body is believed to feel pain after death. The body will be buried as soon as possible, even on the same day of death if this is possible ▪ there are cultural differences, but generally white is the colour of mourning.

* the term 'Muslims' refers to people who believe in/practice the Muslim faith and is consistent with language from a fact sheet developed by the Islamic Council of Western Australia (reference below).

Source:

Australia. Office of Multicultural Issues Western Australia. Islamic Council of Western Australia. Culture and Religion Sheet. [online] October 2005 [cited 19 June 2007] Available from:

www.omi.wa.gov.au/Publications/cr_diversity/islam.pdf

Australia. Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital Intranet. Babacan, H. and Obst, P. *Death, Dying and Religion An Examination of non- Christian Beliefs and Practices A guide for human service professionals* [online]

undated [cited 18 June 2007] Available from <http://hi.bns.health.qld.gov.au/rbh/multicultural/Guidelines.htm#Death,%20Dying%20and%20Religion>

Australia. University of Western Australia Interfaith Calendar – Islam [online] undated [cited 20 June 2007] Available from: www.equity.uwa.edu.au/welcome/priority_areas/cultural_diversity/interfaith_calendar/buddhist

Further information:

Information Sheet www.omi.wa.gov.au/Publications/cr_diversity/islam.pdf

Queensland Muslim Times www.qmt.org.au/

Australian Federation of Islamic Councils 'Halal' guide www.afic.com.au/Halal.htm

Diabetes Australia Ramadan fasting guide www.diabetesaustralia.com.au/multilingualdiabetes/

■ JUDAISM

COUNTRIES WHERE WIDELY PRACTISED (most relevant to Qld)	KEY BELIEFS	DIETARY NEEDS	KEY CONSIDERATIONS	MEDICAL PROCEDURES	HANDLING OF DECEASED PERSON
USA, Israel, France, Canada, UK, Russia, Argentina, Ukraine, Brazil and South Africa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Judaism originated with Abraham and the main prophet is Moses ▪ the Torah is the central text- the five books of Moses containing 613 commandments. It was passed from God to Moses and the Jewish people on Mt. Sinai ▪ Judaism believes that God is one, has no form, created the world, is eternal and is still actively involved in world affairs ▪ Judaism also believes in the concept of free will and the belief that the Messiah is yet to come ▪ places of worship are called synagogues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ only proper ritually slaughtered meat may be eaten ▪ only fish that have both fins and scales are permitted ▪ any food, which contains substances, extracted from forbidden meats or fish, like oil and gelatine, is prohibited ▪ meat and milk (or any dairy product) should not be mixed ▪ during Passover (in March or April) observant Jews only eat specially prepared food and have stricter dietary requirements than the rest of the year ▪ observant Jews* have a number of fasts during the year linked to various festivities ▪ foods that are permissible are called 'kosher'. 	When matters of health are involved, particularly where there is danger to life, most of Judaism's rituals are set aside in the interests of the patient's wellbeing.	Judaism teaches that all actions that may protect or prolong life should be taken. Therefore organ transplants, blood transfusions, life support, and pain control measures are all acceptable.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ do not wash ▪ wrap in plain sheet ▪ the family may contact Chevra Kadisha (Burial Society) who will prepare the body for burial ▪ orthodox Jews do not permit cremation. (Orthodox Judaism adheres to a relatively strict interpretation and application of the sacred texts).

* the term 'Jews' refers to people who believe in/practice the Jewish faith and is consistent with language from a fact sheet developed by Jewish Community Council of Western Australia (reference below).

Source:

Australia. Office of Multicultural Issues Western Australia. Jewish Community Council of Western Australia. Culture and Religion Sheet. [online] October 2005 [cited 19 June 2007] Available from:

www.omi.wa.gov.au/Publications/cr_diversity/judaism.pdf

Australia. University of Western Australia Interfaith Calendar – Judaism [online] undated [cited 20 June 2007] Available from: www.equity.uwa.edu.au/welcome/priority_areas/cultural_diversity/interfaith_calendar/buddhist

Correspondence with Kosher Australia Pty Ltd, General Manager, 27 March 2007

Further information:

Information sheet www.omi.wa.gov.au/Publications/cr_diversity/judaism.pdf

Jewish organisations in Queensland www.jewishaustralia.com/community.htm#QUEENSLAND

Kosher information: www.kosher.org.au

■ SIKHISM

COUNTRIES WHERE WIDELY PRACTISED (most relevant to Qld)	KEY BELIEFS	DIETARY NEEDS	KEY CONSIDERATIONS	MEDICAL PROCEDURES	HANDLING OF DECEASED PERSON
India, Fiji, United Kingdom, United States of America, New Zealand, East Africa, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, and Canada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sikhism was founded in India by Guru Nanak Dev Ji. 'Guru Granth Sahib' is the spiritual text and is regarded as the eternal living Guru ▪ Sikh belief includes universal acceptance of all humanity; belief in one God; name of God is truth '<i>Sath Naam</i>'; equality of all persons; equality of the sexes ▪ the Sikh way of life is based on remembering God with every breath; honest work and family life; share and live as an inspiration and support to the community; control of desire, anger, greed, attachment, pride ▪ Sikhs* believe in reincarnation ▪ places of worship are called gurdwara. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ observant Sikhs are vegetarian and do not drink alcohol ▪ many abstain from pork or beef ▪ meat-eating Sikhs do not eat ritually slaughtered meat (eg. <i>Hala</i>) – they prefer meat that has been slaughtered in one blow (ritually slaughtered meat is normally bled to death). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sikhs known as Amritdhari Sikh wear the five signs of their faith (known as the Five K's): <i>Kesh</i> (hair), a Sikh must not cut hair from his/her body (males wear turbans); <i>Kachera</i> special underwear, akin to boxer shorts; <i>Kirpan</i> a small size sword placed in a shoulder belt; <i>Kara</i> an iron wrist bangle; and <i>Kanga</i> a small wooden comb. These should not be removed ▪ a devout Sikh may want to follow the daily ritual of private prayer involving an early rise, a bath in running water, recitation of prayers and meditation time. This prayer is done before breakfast, and is also done at dusk. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ there are no religious objections to transplants or transfusions ▪ pain relieving drugs are also acceptable ▪ euthanasia is not considered an option as death is seen as a natural part of life ▪ only in life threatening situations should hair be removed from the body without consent from the person or their family ▪ an Amritdhari Sikh must not be asked to separate any of the Five K's from his/her body. Likewise, the cutting of hair or abandoning the turban should not be suggested as these are important to the Sikh faith. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ do not remove Five K's (Kesh, Kanga, Kachera, Kirpan, Kara) ▪ relatives may prefer traditional washing and preparation of the body for cremation ▪ cremation should occur as soon as possible after death ▪ for Sikhs the colour of mourning is white.

* the term 'Sikhs' refers to people who believe in/practice the Sikh faith and is consistent with language from a fact sheet developed by the Sikh Association of Western Australia (reference below).

Source:

Australia. Office of Multicultural Issues Western Australia. Sikh Association of Western Australia SAWA. Culture and Religion Sheet. [online] October 2005 [cited 19 June 2007] Available from:

www.omi.wa.gov.au/Publications/cr_diversity/sikh.pdf

Correspondence with Brisbane Sikh Temple, President, 4 June 2007

Further information:

Information sheet www.omi.wa.gov.au/Publications/cr_diversity/sikh.pdf

Sikh organisations in Queensland www.sikh.com.au/gur_list/australia.htm

■ Religious restrictions and medications¹

People who want to avoid certain animal products for religious or cultural reasons need to know about the origin/source of drugs and excipients contained within their medicines (see table).

A number of medicines (including tablets, capsules, creams, mixtures and vaccines) contain animal products or are animal derived. For example, gelatin is a partially hydrolysed collagen which is usually bovine (beef) or porcine (pig) in origin, and is one of many types of stabilisers added to pharmaceutical products such as vaccines. Heparin, an injectable anticoagulant, is prepared from porcine or bovine sources. (A comprehensive list of pharmaceutical products known to be of animal origin is being developed and will be published on QHEPS.)

Patients are much more likely to comply with treatment if they have been active partners in the decision making process and their views and preferences have been recognised. For this reason, healthcare professionals should take into consideration patients' religious beliefs and lifestyles when prescribing and administering medicines.

The extent to which people adhere to their religious beliefs is a matter for the individual. However, informing patients about the origins (if animal derived and no suitable synthetic alternative exists) of their proposed medication will assist them to make informed decisions regarding their treatment. There are provisions within various religious groups to provide some form of dispensation (relaxation of the rules), depending on the nature of the need for treatment.

The manufacturer's product information and details on the composition of the medicine (ie. listing the active and inactive constituents/ingredients), provides a description on how the medicine is produced (eg. whether manufacture of the product included exposure to animal derived materials).

A final decision on whether to use a particular product will need to be arrived at as part of the clinical process between the patient and clinician. People who do not speak or read English have few options for accessing information about their medicines². For this reason, healthcare professionals may need to spend some time discussing the issue of medicines and their ingredients with their patients.

Further resources:

Australia. Medical Journal of Australia. Eldred et. Al *Vaccine components and constituents: responding to consumer concerns* 2006 [cited 20 June 2007] Available from:
www.mja.com.au/public/issues/184_04_200206/eld10500_fm.pdf

United Kingdom. National Prescribing Centre *Drugs of porcine origin and their clinical alternatives - An introductory guide*, March 2004 [cited 19 June 2007] Available from:
http://www.npc.co.uk/med_partnership/assets/drugs-of-porcine-origin.pdf

Canada. Calgary Health Region. Medications derived from animals and culturally diverse patients undated [cited 19 June 2007] Available from:
http://www.calgaryhealthregion.ca/hecomm/diversity/medication_derived_from_animals.doc

¹ Please note: as at June 2007, the Queensland Health Pharmacy and Medicines Unit was developing a policy on the administration of medicines / pharmaceutical products of animal origin. This information can be used as a guide in the interim, until the policy is adopted.

² The Consumer Medicine Information (CMI) leaflets are not translated into different languages. The National Prescribing Services (NPS) Medicines Line advises that it does not use telephone interpreters

Religion	Countries where widely practised (relevant to Queensland)	Medication restrictions
Buddhism	Tibet, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Burma, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, Malaysia, Vietnam, China, Bangladesh, Korea, Japan, Singapore, parts of Russia.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ for some vegetarian Buddhists - all animal products prohibited ■ however, no fixed rules.
Hinduism	India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Philippines, Fiji, UK, Mauritius, Bhutan, South Africa, Burma, Singapore	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ for majority who are vegetarian – all animal products including egg prohibited ■ for those who are not vegetarian, restrictions still include bovine* and porcine products
Islam	Indonesia, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Egypt, Turkey, Iran, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Afghanistan, Sudan, Iraq, Malaysia, Tanzania, Somalia, Cote d'Ivoire, Congo, Philippines, Sierra Leone, Thailand, Eritrea, Lebanon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ porcine products prohibited ■ all animal products not killed in the prescribed ritualistic way (<i>halal</i>) prohibited ■ products containing alcohol prohibited ■ please note: gelatin is contentious**
Jehovah's witness	Australia, USA, Mexico, Brazil and many other countries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ abstain from blood products – eg. blood transfusions ■ many Health Service Districts have policies on the procedure for refusal of blood products.
Judaism	USA, Israel, France, Canada, UK, Russia, Argentina, Ukraine, Brazil and South Africa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ all porcine and shellfish products prohibited ■ other rules about animal products that can be ingested: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – land animals must be mammals which chew their cud and have cloven hooves – birds of prey are prohibited – fish must have fins and scales – non-fish seafood is prohibited eg. shellfish – meat and milk (any dairy) cannot be mixed ■ observers only consume <i>kosher</i> products – complex set of rules.
Seventh Day Adventist	Australia, USA, South America, some African countries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ some abstain from meat but eggs are permissible – therefore most animal products
Sikh	India, Pakistan, Malaysia, Singapore, Fiji, New Zealand, USA and UK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ for some who are vegetarian – all animal products including egg prohibited ■ for those who are not vegetarian, restrictions still include bovine and porcine products ■ all animal products from halal sources prohibited ■ products containing alcohol prohibited.

* bovine (cow derived); porcine (pig derived)

**some Muslims accept a ruling by the World Health Organisation that gelatin has been transformed to such an extent from its original source, that it is permissible for Muslims. Others do not accept this and will object to the presence of gelatin in medicines.

■ CALENDAR OF SIGNIFICANT RELIGIOUS DAYS

Please note that many religious dates are based on astronomical calculations. There are differences in observances in the northern and southern hemispheres. Also, some traditions observe their holy days from sunset of the previous day until sunset of the holy day.

Sources for both calendars:

Australia. Queensland University of Technology (QUT), *Cultural Diversity Calendar* undated [cited 20 June 2007] Available from: www.equity.qut.edu.au/diversitycalendar/apr.html

Australia. Department of Immigration and Citizenship *Australians Together 2007, Calendar of Cultural and Religious Events* undated [cited 20 June 2007] Available from: www.immi.gov.au/media/publications/multicultural/multi-diary/Intro_2007.pdf

Australia. The University of Western Australia, HR Equity and Diversity, *UWA interfaith Calendar* undated [cited 19 June 2007] Available from: www.equity.uwa.edu.au/welcome/priority_areas/cultural_diversity/interfaith_calendar

United States. When-Is. *When-is, dates of religious and civil holidays around the world* [online] undated [cited 25 June 2007] Available from: www.when-is.com/

Year 2007

July		August	
9	Martyrdom of the Bab (Baha'i)	15	Assumption of Blessed Virgin Mary (Christian)
15	LeVu Lan (Vietnamese)		Obon – Ullambana- Feast of the Ghosts (Buddhist)
20	New Year's Eve (Mandaean)	27	Nisf Shaban (Islamic)
24	Tish'a B'av (Jewish)		LeVu Lan (Vietnamese)
	Mormon Pioneer Day		Raksha Bandhan (Hindu)
25	Santiago/ St. James Feast Day (Spanish)		
September		October	
1	Parkash (First Reading) Aadh Granth Sahib Ji (Sikh)	4	Shmini Atzeret (Eighth Day- Jewish)
3	Krishna Jayanti (Hindu)	5	St. Francis of Assisi (Patron Saint of Italy)
8	Nisf Shaban (Islamic)		Simchat Torah (Jewish)
12	Coptic New Year/ Rosh Hashanah (Jewish)	12	Navaratri (Hindu) (Until 20 October)
	Ramadan begins (Islamic)	13	Eid- Ul- Fitr (End of Ramadan- Islamic)
13	Rosh Hashanah (Jewish New Year)(until 14 September)	19	Commemoration of Noah (Mandaean)
14	Ganesh Chaturthi (Hindu)	20	Gurgadi (Inauguration) of Guru Granth Sahib Ji (Sikh)
15	Yom Kippur (Jewish)		Birth of the Bab (Baha'i)
22	Sukkot (Feast of the Tabernacles) (Jewish)	21	Dassera (Hindu)
27	Saradhas (Hindu)		
November		December	
1	All Saints Day (Christian)	2	First Sunday of Advent (Christian)
2	All Souls Day (Christian/ Catholic)	4	Chanukah Festival of Lights (Jewish)
9	Diwali Festival of Lights (Hindu)	8	Immaculate Conception (Christian)
10	Vikram New Year 2064 (Hindu)		Bodhi Day- Rohatsu (Buddhist)
12	Birth of Baha'u'llah (Baha'i)	19	Annual Pilgrimage (Hajj) to Mecca commences
15	Nativity Fast begins (Orthodox Christian)		Eid- ul- Adha (Islamic)
	Birthday of Guru Nanak Dev-	20	The Hajj ends (Islamic)
24	Founder of the Sikh Religion	25	Christmas Day (Christian)
	Christmas Fast (Coptic Orthodox)		
26	Day of the Covenant (Baha'i)		
	Ascension of 'Abdu'l – Baha		
28	(Baha'i)		
30	St. Andrew's Day (Scotland)		

Year 2008

January		February	
5	Guru Gobind Singh birthday (Sikh)	8	Nirvana Day (Buddhist)
6	Epiphany (Christian)	6	Ash Wednesday – Lent begins (Christian)
9-6/2	Al-Hijra / Muharram (Islamic)		Vasant Panchami (Hindu)
10	Muharram (new year) (Islamic)	11	Lent (Christian)
14	Maghi (Sikh)	6-20/3	Chinese new year (Confucian/ Daoist/ Buddhist)
18	Ashura (Islamic)	7	
22	Tu Bishvat (Jewish)		
March		April	
2-20	Fast (Baha'i)	7-13	Ram Naumi (Hindu)
6	Mahashivratri (Hindu)	13	Visakhi (Sikh)
10	Lent begins (Orthodox Christian)	14	Hola Mohalla (Sikh)
16	Palm/Passion Sunday	20	Hanuman Jayanti (Hindu)
17	St. Patrick's Day (Christian)		Palm Sunday (Orthodox Christian)
20	Fast of Esther (Jewish)	20-23	Theravadin new year (Buddhist)
	Mawlid al Nabi (Islamic)	20-27	Pesach (Passover) (Jewish)
21	Good Friday (Christian)	21-2/5	Ridvan (Baha'i)
	Purim (Jewish)	23	St. George's Day (Christian)
	Nawaz (Baha'i)	25	Good Friday (Orthodox Christian)
22	Holi (Hindu)	27	Easter Sunday (Orthodox Christian)
23	Easter (Christian)		
May		June	
1	Ascension of Christ (Christian)	9-10	Shavout (Jewish)
2	Guru ArjanDev (5 th Guru) Martyrdom Day(Sikhs)		
	Yom HaSho'ah (Jewish)		
8	Yom Ha'Atzmaut (Jewish)		
11	Pentecost (Christian & Eastern Orthodox Christian)		
20	Buddha Day (Buddhist)		
23	Declaration of the Bab (Baha'i)		
24	Vesak Day (Buddhist)		
29	Ascension of Baha'u'llah (Baha'i)		
July		August	
9	Martyrdom of the Bab (Baha'i)	6	Transfiguration (Christian)
20	Fast of Tammuz (Jewish)		Beginning of Ecclesiastical Year (Eastern Orthodox Christian)
18	Guru Purnima (Hindu)	10	Tisha B'Av (Jewish)
29	Lailat al Miraj (Islamic)	15	Lailat al Bara'a (Islamic)
		16	Raksha Bandhan (Hindu)
		24	Krishna Jayanti (Hindu)
Sept		October	
1	Guru Granth Sahib (Sikh)	9	Yom Kippur (Jewish)
	Ramadan starts (Islamic)		Dussera (Hindu)
3	Ganesh Chaturthi (Hindu)	14-20	Succot (Jewish)
26	Lailat al Kadr (Islamic)	21	Shemini Atzeret (Jewish)
	Quds Day (Islamic)	20	Birth of the Bab (Baha'i)
30-1/10	Rosh Hashana (Jewish)	22	Simchat Torah (Jewish)
3	Ramadan ends - Eid al-Fitr (Islamic)	28	Diwali/Deepavali (Hindu, Sikh)
November		December	
1	All Saints (Christian)	7	Waqf al Arafa (Islamic)
2	All Souls (Christian)	8	Bodhi Day (Buddhist)
12	Birth of Baha'u'llah (Baha'i)		Eid – al – Adha (Islamic)
14	Birth Guru Nanak (Sikh)	22-30	Chanukah (Jewish)
26	Day of the Covenant (Baha'i)	25	Christmas Day (Christian)
30-21/12	Season of Advent Begins (Christian)		