



**WORLD HUMANIST DAY**  
**AUSTRALIA<sup>1</sup>**  
**SYMPOSIUM**  
*Enlightenment*  
*the*  
*Roots of Humanism*



**Friday 20<sup>th</sup> June 2014**  
**Waratah Room**  
**State Parliament House Sydney**  
**10 am - 4 pm**

**9.30 Registration**

**10.00 Introduction: MC/Convenors:**

Dr. Victor Bien and Dr. Affie Adagio

**Welcome to Country: Aunty Joan Tranter**

Aboriginal Elder, Jambunna House of Learning UTS

**10.15 Opening Ceremony/Parliamentary Sponsor and City of Sydney MP:**

Alex Greenwich MP

**10.30 Film – Heroes of the Enlightenment: Introduction:**

Dr. Victor Bien

**10.45 Topic:** David Tribe reknown Humanist author 'The Enlightenment - who is criticising it and why'.

**11.15 MORNING TEA**

**11:45 Topic:** Chrys Stevenson Queensland freelance writer social activist 'Christian Nation? Nonsense on Stilts! How Jeremy Bentham's humanism shaped Australia'.

**12.15 Topic:** Meredith Doig President Rationalist

Association of Australia 'Reason vs Emotion: key drivers in the history of moral progress'.

**12.45 LUNCH**

**1.15 Topic:** Prof Frank Stilwell Emeritus Professor Political Economy Sydney Uni. 'The Enlightenment, Political Economy and Modern Society'.

**1.45 Topic:** Dr. Ian Ellis-Jones Lawyer, Unitarian Minister, past president of National and NSW Humanists 'A Rational Faith: Humanism, Enlightenment Ideals, and Unitarianism'.

**2.15 Introduction of 2014 OHA Dennis Morris (5 minute speech) Panel Representatives led by Dr Victor Bien express their opinions (5-10 mins each). Q&A to follow with previous speakers.**

President of CAHS Paul Zagoridis.

**Resolution from the Council of Australian Humanist Societies Convention AGM of 2013**

That the Australian Humanist movement adopt the defence and promotion of the values of the Enlightenment as an ongoing process for organising our aims, objectives and programmes.

Defining or conceptualising Humanism in this way expresses in a compact more encompassing form what Humanism is than existing statements. The Enlightenment is of course a big subject, many faceted, flows from earlier history such the Renaissance and the Greek philosophical period and not uncontroversial but key concepts can be set out as follows:

- freedom of speech and freedom of and from religion;
- the rule of law;
- independent checks and balances;
- notions of equity and human rights which today explicitly includes equality of the sexes and freedom of sexual preference;
- innovation and economic growth which today extends to care for the environment and the non-human world;
- advancement of science;
- fostering the arts including architecture, literature, music, theatre and the visual arts contributing to the development of our aesthetic senses;
- cosmopolitan character (implying tolerance of other cultures and ethnicity, building multiculturalism) and universal, not parochial values or at least negotiating these dialectically for specific reasons;
- uphold civility and civil culture;
- optimistic stance (a confidence that appropriate action will yield beneficial results which would not otherwise occur);
- formalised arrangements as institutions;
- honest, trustworthy, transparent accounts or accountability, publish statistics, conduct scientific inquiry and endeavours unbiased by vested interests, regard that we can control our future;
- these amount to a statement of secular moral values, i.e Enlightenment values and secular moral values are synonymous;
- all this conveys Humanism's altruistic character, that it/we have a substantial history and it should forever dismiss the arguments that not having a religious belief means we have no ethics.

The above could be encapsulated as: To encourage respect for the universal rights of men, women and children free from discrimination on the basis of race, class, disability, gender, age, nationality, or sexual orientation without belief in the supernatural and based on the values of the Enlightenment as the roots of Humanism.

**REGISTRATION FORM:**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

phone \_\_\_\_\_

Fee: morning tea and lunch \$30 per person \$

Dr V Bien Humanist Soc NSW  
 PO Box 400 Rockdale NSW 2216

Available on the day for purchase : interesting African melodic music tapes and Humanist literature and books.

RSVP Please by 10<sup>th</sup> June for catering purposes to  
 Affie 0421 101 163

<sup>1</sup> 21st June is the actual World Humanist Day