

MEDIA RELEASE

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RELIGION AND POLITICS: FINDING THE RIGHT MIX

One of Australia's leading religious and political experts has called for greater tolerance and acceptance of religious views in Australian politics in a presentation to Queensland's public sector employees this week.

Professor Frank Brennan SJ AO addressed guests on the link between religion and politics at the Institute of Public Administration Australia (IPAA) Queensland's Annual President's Address in Brisbane on Tuesday night.

Professor Brennan is a Jesuit Priest, Professor of Legal Studies at the Australian Catholic University, Professor of Human Rights and Social Justice at the University of Notre Dame Australia and founder of the Australian Jesuit Social Justice Centre. He is also the author of works including *The Wik Debate*, *One Land One Nation* and *Too Much Order Too Little Law*.

In his presentation, Professor Brennan drew on his latest book, *Acting on a Conscience*, which looks at the place of religion in Australian politics and law.

IPAA Queensland President Jim Varghese said Professor Brennan was invited to speak from his expert knowledge on many issues that affect public sector employees, including law, social justice and human rights.

"His presentation at our Annual President's Address was designed to promote a greater understanding of issues that affect Australia's political landscape that are not usually discussed publicly," Mr Varghese said.

"We actively promote these presentations to enable our policy makers to have a balanced understanding of issues that affect all Queenslanders," he said.

Professor Brennan discussed Australia's historic reluctance to speak religious thoughts or admit to religious impulses.

"Australians are used to politicians, public intellectuals and media figures who have little time for religion in their own lives or in the public forum," said Professor Brennan.

He said Australia's history has many examples, from both sides of politics, where religious views have been considered a silent matter, not for public discussion.

"In Australia, the public silence about things religious does not mean that religion does not animate and inspire many of us," Professor Brennan said.

Professor Brennan commended Kevin Rudd on his openness with respect to his religious beliefs and for establishing himself as a politician who takes religion seriously.

IPAA Queensland represents employees across all three levels of government and aims to promote innovation in the public sector through conferences, training, networking events, mentoring and coaching, research and support networks.

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