



Government of **Western Australia**
School Curriculum and Standards Authority



Western Australian Certificate of Education Examination, 2014

RELIGION AND LIFE

Stage 3

RESOURCE BOOKLET

Question 1 Sources

Read Sources 1A and 1B, then answer Question 1 in the Question/Answer Booklet.

Source 1A

For copyright reasons this text cannot be reproduced in the online version of this document, but may be viewed at www.theage.com.au/national/faith-what-australians-believe-in-20091218-l5qy.html#ixzz2qz11TqVG

Source 1B

Over the past decade, the total number of Australians identifying with a religion has risen from 13.7 million to 14.7 million in 2011. However, the population has grown faster than this, which means that the total proportion of Australians identifying with a religion has declined a little. Between 2001 and 2006, there was a decline of 3.3 per cent in the proportions of Australians identifying with a religion. Between 2006 and 2011, that change was just 1.2 percentage points (a decline from 69.5 per to 68.3 per cent of Australians). In an age in which there is increasing realisation among people that they can choose whether to identify with a religion, the large majority (almost 70 per cent) of Australians continue to make that identification and this is just 1.2 percentage points less than in 2006. The imminent demise of religion has been very much exaggerated.

See next page

Question 2 Sources

Read Sources 2A, 2B, and 2C, then answer Question 2 in the Question/Answer Booklet.

Source 2A

Sir Isaac Isaacs, the future Governor-General, was born in Elizabeth Street, Melbourne, in 1855, the son of a poor Jewish tailor. He always said he owed his early learning and cultural background to his mother.

Having taken his Bachelor of Law degree and been admitted to the Bar in 1880, Mr Isaac Isaacs' progress was meteoric, his greatest successes being in the field of constitutional law. Within a few years he was recognised as one of the outstanding constitutional authorities in Australia.

Previously, in 1897, he had been elected as a member of the convention which brought about Federation, and took a leading part in the drafting of Australia's Constitution. He was appointed a Queen's Counsel in 1899.

He was knighted in 1928 for meritorious services to the nation, and on the retirement of Sir Adrian Knox in 1930, he was elevated to the position of Chief Justice of the High Court. The following year, on the recommendation of the Scullin government, he was appointed Governor-General.

There were some protests, for it was felt that the appointment of an Australian would weaken the link with the Crown. Sir Isaac Isaacs, however, by his wisdom and dignity, adorned the office and, when he retired in 1935, he retired as one of the most successful and popular Governor-Generals Australia has had.

Isaacs was Jewish. After a long and distinguished legal career, on his retirement Isaacs devoted a great deal of time to studying Jewish scripture and conversing with Rabbi Jacob Danglow of the St Kilda Synagogue.

Source 2B

For copyright reasons this text cannot be reproduced in the online version of this document, but may be viewed at http://famouspoetsandpoems.com/poets/oodgeroo_noonuccal/biography

Source 2C

Waleed Aly [Wally] is the son of Egyptian migrants who came to Australia to further their education. He grew up in Melbourne's eastern suburbs. Waleed commented, 'My parents were odd in that they didn't try to infuse in me love of the home country. I remember having a conversation with my dad especially, that he was keen for me not to be with the Egyptian community really tightly so I wasn't going to all the religious classes and all these sorts of things. I played footy; I didn't like soccer, and I played cricket and they'd never heard of cricket. And you know I think dad was actually very keen to make sure that I wasn't going to be an outcast in Australia.'

Through his work as a lawyer and a journalist he saw the devastating effects of violence against women. As a result he has written a number of articles on this issue. He speaks on issues concerning Australia's Muslim community and the relationship between Islam and western values.

As an Australian and a Muslim, he gently emphasises and affirms the shared values which underpin the whole of the Australian community, while drawing on his religious and cultural background. When he was asked about praying five times a day, Aly responded, 'It regulates my day and gives balance to my life. I think that is incredibly enriching because when I feel at my worst and my most humiliated, when I've just had it ... it's usually when my spirituality is at its lowest point.'

See next page

Question 3 Sources

Read Sources 3A and 3B, then answer Question 3 in the Question/Answer Booklet.

Source 3A

Freedom – to be unfettered – is a value for which, throughout history, people have been prepared to give their lives. Some philosophers have argued that freedom is an absolute value, and that when people are denied the freedom to pursue their goals and to act to fulfil their potential, they are denied their humanity. It was this powerful idea that inspired the struggle for political freedoms over the past several centuries, and opposition to tyranny and despotism continues to drive the political agenda in much of the world.

However, the idea of freedom has much wider implications. Philosophers, both East and West, have argued that attaining inner freedom or spiritual liberation from the suffering inherent in life, regardless of the prevailing institutions, is equally important as attaining ‘the rights of people as a social being’. Individual freedoms must also be reconciled with the need for social systems that are reflective of people’s interdependence and mutual responsibilities. Clearly the interaction between different types of freedom is necessary to human happiness.

But while great progress has been made in promoting social and political liberties, freedom remains scarce. Far too many people in the world find their lives severely constrained by the grim reality of poverty, often enforced by exploitative structures within global economics. In the affluent world, there is a crisis of the opposite order, a rampant materialism and pursuit of the gratification of desire that can become a kind of enslavement and has led to great environmental destruction.

Source 3B

See next page

Question 4 Sources

Read Sources 4A, 4B, 4C and 4D, then answer Question 4 in the Question/Answer Booklet.

Source 4A

Islamic scholars, when considering the ethics of stem-cell technology or reproductive cloning¹, often seek guidance in religious texts, mainly the Qur'an. But in the absence of a central institution, there is a plurality of independent ethical or jurisdictional opinions on the Shari'ah, the religious law of Muslims. There is no agreed consensus on the moral status of the embryo among the various schools of Islamic thought, but many believe that it acquires a soul 120 days after fertilisation, towards the end of the fourth month of pregnancy. In addition, the Shari'ah makes a distinction between actual and potential life, determining that the former should be afforded more protection than the latter. Under most interpretations, the embryo is therefore not considered to be a person and using it to create stem-cell lines would not violate Islamic law. More generally, Islamic scholars emphasise the belief that all knowledge emanates from God and that, as such, human beings have an obligation to use that knowledge to serve society. In Islam, research on stem cells is therefore regarded as an act of faith in the ultimate will of God, as long as such an intervention is undertaken with the purpose of improving human health.

¹ reproductive cloning – a type of cloning that is performed for the purpose of creating a duplicate copy of another organism

Source 4B

The Catholic Church is against any form of human cloning and even against the creation of human embryonic stem-cell lines from 'excess' in vitro fertilisation (IVF) embryos. Roman Catholics believe that cloning is categorically 'considered contrary to the moral law, since [it is in] opposition to the dignity both of human procreation and of the conjugal union.' Any attempts at cloning are therefore a violation of the dignity of the human embryo, which is granted the status of a person from the point of fertilisation of the oocyte¹. The Catholic Church has stuck to this position and judged the destruction of an embryo after conception as murder. No distinction is made between embryos that are conceived naturally and those created through IVF or cloning.

¹ oocyte – an immature egg cell

Source 4C

According to the Torah, Jews have an obligation to seek knowledge, and scientific knowledge is granted high value. 'Our theological predisposition is not only to welcome, but to aggressively pursue new technologies that improve our lives and our world', said Rabbi Edward Reichman. The strong value placed on human life has the potential to encourage therapeutic stem-cell¹ research and to see it almost as a mandate, rather than a permission.

The possibility of cloning humans challenges deeply held beliefs about creation and mankind's relationship with God. If God is seen as the only Creator and creation as a completed act, then there would be no right for people to tamper with it. Others, however, regard God as the Power of Creation and creation as a transformative process, and therefore find a role for human participation. Some Jewish scholars advocate the latter view when considering reproductive cloning as a means to accomplish good. 'The process or "mechanical" aspects of human cloning present no major legal obstacles from a Jewish perspective', commented Reichman. 'However, the low efficacy and potential adverse outcomes of human cloning are legal concerns that would lead us to reject any human cloning at this time. Prospectively creating people of legally ambiguous lineage, and who may suffer profound social and psychological complications, may preclude any future acceptance of cloning despite perfection of the procedure from a medical perspective'.

¹ therapeutic stem-cell research – cloning of human embryos, which can then be harvested of their stem cells after about five days

Source 4D

If an embryo's cells can be used to alleviate human suffering, the good consequences seem to outweigh the harmful ones, as long as the legal cut off point for the research is sufficiently early. So most humanists would support therapeutic cloning¹, because they do not consider very early embryos to be people.

There has been a breakthrough with human stem cells. Embryonic stem cells can be grown to produce organs or tissues to repair or replace damaged ones. Skin for burn victims, brain cells for brain damaged, spinal cord cells for quadriplegics and paraplegics, hearts, lungs, livers, and kidneys could be produced. By combining this technology with human cloning technology it may be possible to produce needed tissues for suffering people that will be free of rejection by their immune systems. Conditions such as Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, diabetics, heart failure, degenerative joint disease, and other problems may be curable if human cloning and its technology are not banned.

The above list only scratches the surface of what human cloning technology can do for mankind. The suffering that can be relieved is staggering. This new technology heralds a new era of unparalleled advancement in medicine if people will release their fears and let the benefits begin. Why should another child die from leukaemia when if the technology is allowed we should be able to cure it in a few years' time?

¹ therapeutic cloning – cloning that is performed for the purpose of medical treatment. It could theoretically be used to grow a replacement organ

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- Source 1A** Adapted from: Marr, D. (2009, December 19). Faith: What Australians believe in. *The Age*. Retrieved February 4, 2014, from www.theage.com.au/national/faith-what-australians-believe-in-20091218-l5qy.html#ixzz2qzl1TqVG
- Source 1B** The persistence of religion: What the census tells us. (2012, September). *Pointers: Bulletin of the Christian Research Association*, 22(3), [1–5]. Abstract retrieved February 4, 2014, from www.cra.org.au/the-persistence-of-religion-what-the-census-tells-us/
- Source 2A** Adapted from: Isaacs, Sir Isaac Alfred (1855–1948). (1948, February 12). *Obituaries Australia*. Canberra: Obituaries Australia, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University. (Originally published in *Argus*, 12 February 1948, p. 2). Retrieved February 14, 2014, from <http://oa.anu.edu.au/obituary/isaacs-sir-isaac-alfred-6805>
- Source 2B** Adapted from: *Oodgeroo Noonuccal (1920–1993)*. (n.d.). Retrieved February 15, 2014, from http://famouspoetsandpoems.com/poets/oodgeroo_noonuccal/biography
- Source 2C** Adapted from: *Waleed Aly*. (n.d.). Retrieved February 20, 2014, from www.civicsandcitizenship.edu.au/cce/aly_waleed,15569.html
Used a Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Australia licence.
- Source 3A** Finding freedom. (2011, July). *SGI Quarterly*. Retrieved March 3, 2014, from www.sgiquarterly.org/feature2011July-1.htm
- Source 3B** Keefe, M. (2010, August 22). 'Freedom from religion' [Cartoon]. *The Denver Post*. Retrieved March 3, 2014, from <http://politicalhumor.about.com/od/pulitzercartoons/ig/2011-Pulitzer-Prize-Cartoons/Freedom-From-Religion.htm>
- Sources 4A–4C** Adapted extract from: Frazzetto, G. (2004, June). Embryos, cells and God. *EMBO Reports*. 5(6), 553–555. doi: 10.1038/sj.embor.7400175. Retrieved 20 February, 2014, from www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1299083/
- Source 4D** Wolpert, L. (2014). *A humanist discussion on embryo research*. Retrieved March 4, 2014, from <https://humanism.org.uk/humanism/humanism-today/humanists-talking/humanist-discussion-on-embryo-research/>

This document – apart from any third party copyright material contained in it – may be freely copied, or communicated on an intranet, for non-commercial purposes in educational institutions, provided that it is not changed and that the School Curriculum and Standards Authority is acknowledged as the copyright owner, and that the Authority's moral rights are not infringed.

Copying or communication for any other purpose can be done only within the terms of the *Copyright Act 1968* or with prior written permission of the School Curriculum and Standards Authority. Copying or communication of any third party copyright material can be done only within the terms of the *Copyright Act 1968* or with permission of the copyright owners.

Any content in this document that has been derived from the Australian Curriculum may be used under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 3.0 Australia licence.