

Exposure: living @ the margins

10-14 July 2005 : Sydney

About the conference

The conference is being hosted by the [Australian Student Christian Movement](#) and the [National Council of Churches in Australia Youth Network](#).

The conference aims to provide an experiential learning opportunity for university students and young people (loosely defined as 18-30) about the reality of living at the margins of society in Australia today. People will be exposed to life in disadvantaged communities, meeting people who manage to maintain dignity through trials of life.

The conference program follows the “pastoral cycle” or the “circle of praxis”. Four "moments" characterise this methodology:

"See"	1. Exposure: the moment of insertion, of touching the reality through objective observations and subjective feelings.
"Judge"	2. Analysis: the moment of asking questions of time, structures and values and their interconnections in order to understand the deeper reality of the situation.
	3. Reflection: the moment of discerning the meaning of the situation in view of our shared values, our faith commitments, the teaching of our scriptures, the norms of our communities, the wisdom of traditions.
"Act"	4. Action: the moment of planning concrete actions, taking the steps necessary, and evaluating the results in order to plan anew as necessary.

These four moments are described as being in a “cycle” or “circle” because the experience that is exposed, analysed and reflected upon undergoes changes in the active response taken (reality, consciousness and action could be said to share a "dialectical" relationship) and therefore we must go around in a never-ending cycle or circle that spirals deeper and wider.

- thanks to [IMCSA](#) for this description

Conference Program (rough outline)

Sunday	3:30pm	Welcome, Introduction to the conference and the pastoral cycle
	6:00pm	People attend one of 4 worship services in a different denomination to their own, have dinner then stay overnight in a hostel in the city
Monday	All day	day-long exposures, at 5pm head to Stanwell Tops for dinner and rest of conference
Tuesday	AM	Debrief, storytelling about exposure experience
	PM	Community building exercises & free time
Wednesday	AM	Analysis of poverty & disadvantage
	PM	Theological reflection
Thursday	AM	Personal response
	PM	Final worship and depart by 3pm.

About the Exposures

“Exposure”, also known as “immersion”, is a chance to visit disadvantaged communities and find out for yourself what life is like. The emphasis is on meeting people, not visiting service programs, to provoke personal responses and subjective feelings about what you observe and how that correlates to your ‘knowledge’ about people and issues in relation to poverty, marginalisation and disadvantage. Many people study the ‘issues’ in school and/or university and read about them in papers, but never experience for themselves how these issues intersect with peoples’ lived experience.

We have selected places which between them cover a number of different communities who face marginalisation in different ways:

Villawood Detention Centre	Asylum seekers
Cabramatta	Recent (mostly Asian) migrants
Redfern	Aboriginal people
Loaves & Fishes Restaurant	Homeless people
Minto	Public housing tenants on the fringes of Sydney

These are just some of the exposure locations being organised. Everyone will choose one location at the beginning of the conference (subject to availability) for a day-long visit which will be hosted by a community organisation that works in that area.

Note on Registration Costs

A few people have asked what the registration fee includes.

The fee includes all accommodation, meals, morning and afternoon tea, and transport during the conference, as well as a few ancillary costs.

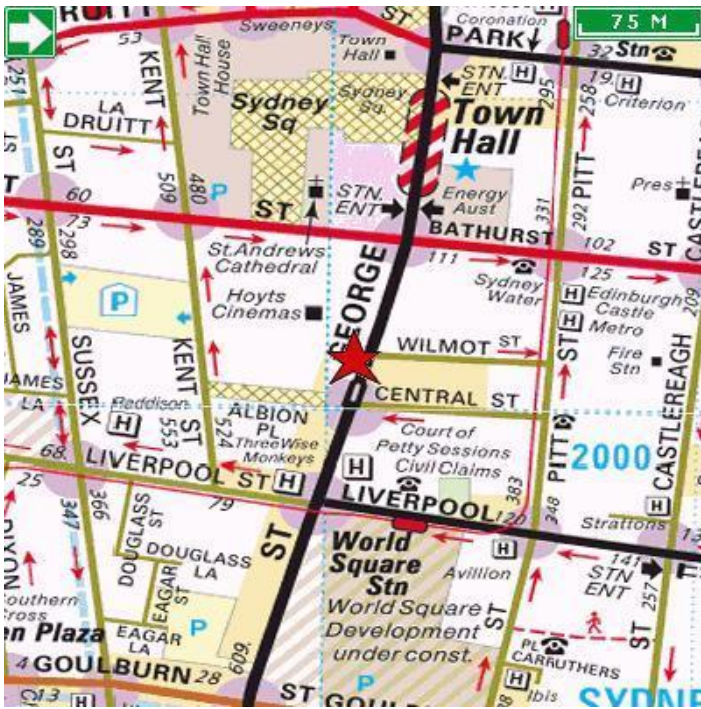
At this stage we do not expect participants will need to pay for anything ‘necessary’, only luxury items like chocolate, etc.

The idea of ‘waged’ (\$190) and ‘unwaged’ (\$150) costs is that those who have an income can afford to pay a little more than full-time students struggling on a casual job. We leave it to your honest discretion as to which category describes your financial situation.

We do not want cost to become a barrier to participation, however. Please contact Justin Whelan (see below) to discuss subsidies and other ways we might make it easier for you or someone you know to attend.

Where is it being held?

The conference begins in the centre of the city, at [Sydney Backpackers Hostel](#). This hostel focuses on groups and has a room where we can meet and welcome people. Sydney Backpackers is 2 minutes from Town Hall station on 7 Wilmot Street (see map).



Participants will be able to check in to the hostel from 12pm (but you can safely leave your bags there before that), find their rooms, drop off bags, etc. before the start of the conference at 3:30pm. We will begin with a welcome and introduction to the theme, allocation of exposures and a guided reflection “pre-brief” to get us ready for the following day’s visits.

Preparation

We will send registrants some further details close to the time regarding what to bring and so on, as well as some recommended reading/viewing to start thinking about the themes of the conference.

Further Information

Please contact

Justin Whelan on (02) 8267-4241 (w) or nsw@ascm.org.au

Melanie Crawford on (02) 9299-2215 or mcrawford@ncca.org.au (Mon/Wed only)