

Appreciate the contribution of religion to: Society

- Explore current media to identify the way in which religions contribute to the community. Ensure that you find examples that represent a range of contributions, positive and negative. To do this, visit sites like:

- <https://www.abc.net.au/news/>
- <https://www.smh.com.au/> or <https://www.theage.com.au/>
- <https://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/au>
- <https://www.theaustralian.com.au/>
- <https://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/>
- <http://www.multiculturalaustralia.edu.au/>
- <http://www.jewishaustralia.com/>
- <https://www.arrcc.org.au/religious-leaders>
- other

and use the search function available on the websites to search for words/phrases like:

- Christian Australia
- Jewish Australia
- Buddhist Australia
- Muslim Australia
- Hindu Australia
- church group Australia
- Sydney Anglicans
- Catholic church Australia
- church-going Australia
- Christian charity Australia
- etc. be creative!

What evidence can you find of religions contributing to the community/society?

Choose two articles that you think best demonstrate positive contributions made by religions and two articles that you think best demonstrate negative contributions made by religions.

Briefly describe the contributions, both positive and negative, that each of your articles explore:

Article 1.	Circle:	Positive	/	Negative	Article 2.	Circle:	Positive	/	Negative
Source:					Source:				

<p>Article 3. Circle: Positive / Negative</p> <p>Source:</p>	<p>Article 4. Circle: Positive / Negative</p> <p>Source:</p>
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In your opinion does the good outweigh the bad or is it the other way around? Justify your answer.

Read the following: Mark a (!) next to ideas you find new or interesting, a (?) next to ideas/terms you don't understand and a (X) next to ideas that you disagree with.

Interaction between culture and religion

There is a close **reciprocal relationship** between the areas of religion and culture. Religion is profoundly influenced by its cultural context because religion cannot be expressed other than through a particular cultural setting and context. For example, the fact that Theravadan Sangha in Thailand, do not allow women to become abbesses is a reflection of how men have been culturally conditioned to accept restricted roles for women in this form of Buddhism. Conversely, religion has a strong formative influence on culture given the dynamic ever changing nature of culture.

Religion as a conservative influence on society

Religion is most often seen to exert a conservative influence on society in areas regarding sexual morality and bioethics. The recent contributions of religious groups to social debates on issues ranging from stem cell research to euthanasia and homosexual relationships is evidence of this conservatism. Religion is often seen to be quite clearly trying to prevent society from moving away from traditional values.

Religion as a progressive influence on society

Religion can also act as a progressive influence on society. Religion, with its emphasis on human dignity, can be readily seen as proactive in areas such as the advocacy of refugee and Indigenous rights, protection of the environment, and opposition to military action. This is because religion has sought to instil a **sense of justice** in prominent social debates as a way of attempting to change community views to embrace a new approach.