

## The Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina

David Re, of Frederick Jordan Chambers, is one of 15 international judges on the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina. He reports for *Bar News* on that court's war crimes jurisdiction.

Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), perhaps not unsurprisingly, has the world's largest and busiest war crimes court. In some respects the system is surprisingly similar to Australia's; in other ways it is markedly different.

But why Bosnia, of all the numerous other post-conflict societies? The best explanation probably relates to the massive international presence in the country after the war's end in 1995 and the overlapping role of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia in The Hague, The Netherlands (ICTY).

First though, a little historical context: a brief diversion into post-war (WWII) history, then a selective descriptive, not analytical, overview of the Court of BiH.

### Yugoslavia before the war

The Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) – formed at the end of World War II – had six constituent socialist republics: Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Slovenia and Montenegro. The Serbian autonomous region of Kosovo had a 90 per cent Albanian majority. From 1945 onwards Josip Broz Tito held the various ethnicities and republics together. In 1963 he was proclaimed 'president for life', which he indeed was until his death in 1980. He is buried in a large mausoleum on a hill in Belgrade.

### The break-up of Yugoslavia

The SFRY began to break apart in 1989/1990. In June 1991, Slovenia and Croatia declared their independence from the SFRY. Slovenia managed to secede after a brief ten-day war against the SFRY military; it is now the only former Yugoslav republic in the European Union. Macedonia seceded peacefully in September 1991.

Unlike the other republics, the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina was complicated by its having three 'nationalities' or ethnic groupings; Bosnian Serbs (Orthodox), Bosnian Croats (Catholic) and Bosnian Muslims (now Bosniaks). The constitution of the former SFRY guaranteed the rights of the constituent 'nations'.

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Unlike Macedonia and Slovenia with their distinct boundaries, languages and ethnicities, the Bosnian Serbs were mixed throughout the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina; no neat geographical boundaries could be drawn based upon nationality. To illustrate, the (self-declared) ethnic composition in 2000 was Bosniak 48 per cent, Serb 37.1 per cent, Croat 14.3 per cent, and 'other' 0.6 per cent.

In 1991 the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) and Croatia went to war over territory bordering the two countries in which mixed Serbian-Croatian populations lived. The FRY took control of the territory known as the Krajina in 1991 and held it until Croatia retook it in a military operation known as 'Operation Storm' in 1995. Military leaders from both sides have been tried in the ICTY in The Hague for war crimes committed in the Krajina region. Notable events in the conflict between the FRY and Croatia included the siege of Dubrovnik in late 1991, resulting in the prolonged shelling of the UNESCO World Heritage listed old town of Dubrovnik, and the FRY army's siege of Vukovar, marked by the massacre of 200 prisoners who were taken from a hospital, and by the prolonged shelling which reduced the town to ruins.

In October 1991 the Parliament of the Socialist Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina declared its sovereignty. In January 1992 Bosnian Serb leaders declared the formation of the Serb Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Bosnian presidency declared Bosnia's independence from the FRY in March 1992 after a referendum boycotted by the Bosnian Serbs. Its independence was recognised by the United States

and the European Community in April 1992. In May 1992, it was admitted to the United Nations.

In April 1992 war broke out between forces loyal to the Bosnian Government and the FRY army. The FRY army left Bosnia in May 1992 after a UN resolution called for its withdrawal. The Bosnian Serbs led by their President Radovan Karadzic formed their own army, the Bosnian Serb army (the VRS) using FRY army equipment, and laid siege to the capital Sarajevo until late 1995. The successive commanders in charge of the VRS Corp besieging Sarajevo were found guilty after trial by the ICTY of conducting a campaign of terror on the civilian population of Sarajevo in a sustained campaign of shelling and sniping of civilians and civilian property.

In 1992 Bosnian Croats in Herzegovina in an area bordering Croatia declared a break away Republic of Herzeg-Bosna with its own government and army (the HVO). Hostilities broke out between the HVO and the Bosnian Army (ABiH) in Central Bosnia and continued until the two sides brokered a cease-fire in January 1994.

In March 1994 the Bosnian Government and the Bosnian Croats signed an agreement to create a joint Bosniak-Croat Federation.

In November 1995 the warring parties initialed a peace agreement in Dayton Ohio to end the war. The president of Serbia, Slobodan Milosevic, represented the Bosnian Serb President, Radovan Karadzic, who by then had been jointly indicted in the ICTY with VRS commander General Ratko Mladic for genocide. The agreement was signed in Paris in December 1995.

The Dayton Peace Accords retained BiH's international boundaries. It recognised two 'entities' the borders of which coincided with the territory held by the two warring parties at the date of the cease-fire, namely, the Republika Srpska (called the Bosnian Serb Republic or RS) and the Bosniak-Croat Federation. The two entities are roughly equal in size – the RS wraps around the federation. A third northern 'district' not attached to either entity, Brcko has a population around 100,000.

One result of the population displacements during the war is that the ethnic composition of Sarajevo has increased from being about 60 per cent Bosniak before the war to 90 per cent Bosniak today. The International Commission for Missing Persons estimates that some 13,500 people are still unaccounted for some 13 years after the war's end. Mass graves are regularly being discovered and exhumed.

Dayton created a weak but multi-ethnic state level government charged with conducting foreign, diplomatic, and fiscal policy.

The federation and RS governments were given responsibility for most government functions. The Office of the High Representative (OHR) was established to oversee the implementation of the civilian aspects of the agreement. The deputy HR administrators Brcko. The former British Liberal Democrats leader, Lord Paddy Ashdown, was the HR between 2002 and 2006. The current HR is a Slovakian diplomat, Miroslav Lajcak.

The OHR has wide-ranging powers to implement the Dayton Peace Agreement. These powers have been used to dismiss elected and government officials, including police and military members alleged to have been involved in committing war crimes, and merging the two



The old Bridge in Moster, Bosnia  
Photo: iStockPhoto.com

armies into a national Bosnian military.

The country – with an estimated population of maybe 4.5 million – and a size of 51,000 sq km (bordering Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro and with a 20 km long coast line) also has 13 cantonal governments, each with their own prime ministers and full complement of ministries and responsibilities.

A NATO led peacekeeping force of 60,000 soldiers served in Bosnia after the war to implement and monitor the military aspects of the peace agreement. An EU peacekeeping mission replaced the NATO led mission in 2004, and from October 2007, the EU mission changed to civil policing, with about 2,500 members of the mission.

The language spoken in Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia, until the war, was known as Serbo-Croat. In Serbia it is now known as Serbian; in Croatia as Croatian. Bosnia has three official languages, Serbian, Croatian and Bosnian. The ICTY calls the language 'BCS' (for Bosnian, Croatian, Serbian). The Court of BiH calls it BHS (or Bosanski, Hrvatski, Srpski).

#### The Court of BiH

The Bosnian national or state-level institutions are far weaker than those of federal systems such as Australia's. Bosnia has one national court but no Supreme Court. The entities and the state each have their own Constitutional Court. Six judges of the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina are appointed by the entity parliaments and three judges are appointed by the president of the European Court.

The Constitution of BiH is actually an annex (4) to the Dayton Accords. Issues relating to its interpretation and implementation are decided by the Constitutional Court of BiH. As a signatory to the European Convention on Rights and Freedoms and a member of the Council of Europe, appeals may be taken from decisions of the Constitutional Court of BiH to the European Court in Strasbourg.

The Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina is the only national court. It was established in 2002 as the first national court for the State of Bosnia and

Herzegovina. The high representative promulgated a decree in 2000 for its establishment. The national parliament then passed legislation establishing the court.

As a permanent national court it differs significantly from the ICTY in The Hague, although it could theoretically try any Bosnian case heard in The Hague. The ICTY is an ad hoc tribunal with a limited existence and jurisdiction to try serious violations of international humanitarian law committed in the former Yugoslavia since 1991. The ICTY referred six cases to the court under Rule 11 bis of the ICTY's Rules of Procedure and Evidence. The conduct of the cases was monitored by the OSCE.

Between 1996 and 2004 the Office of the Prosecutor at the ICTY referred approximately 550 cases to Bosnian prosecuting authorities under a process known as 'Rules of the Road' in which the ICTY advised on the sufficiency of evidence for prosecution before Bosnian authorities laid charges in Bosnian courts. At the conclusion of the programme in November 2004, the remaining cases were transferred to the Prosecutor's Office of BiH.

The court is divided into a criminal division comprised of a war crimes section, an organised and economic crimes section and a general crimes section, an administrative division and an appellate division.

The war crimes section can try cases of war crimes committed anywhere in Bosnia. The court has 43 national judges and 15 international judges. Proceedings of the war crimes section are simultaneously translated into English and BCS; the international judges and prosecutors may use English.

The international judges sit in the war crimes section, the organised crime section and the appellate division. Three judge panels hear war crimes and organised crime cases. Until recently the panels were comprised of two international judges and one national judge with the national judge presiding. Now one international judge sits with two national judges.

Judges and prosecutors are appointed by the High Judicial and Prosecutor Council after a competitive and transparent advertised selection process. National judges must have at least eight years of experience as judges, prosecutors, attorneys or other relevant legal post bar-exam experience, and are appointed for life (i.e., 70 years of age).

The president of the court is appointed by the High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council for a six year renewable appointment. The president represents the court, assigns judges to divisions, appoints replacement judges in cases of disqualifications, schedules plenum sessions of the court and manages the staff of the court.

International judges and international prosecutors are now appointed after an interview.

### **The crimes - war crimes jurisdiction**

The court has jurisdiction to hear war crimes including genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes committed against the civilian population. Specific breaches of international humanitarian law taken from treaty and customary international law are also prescribed in the Criminal Code.

Cantonal courts in the entities have concurrent jurisdiction to hear similar cases, but the Court of BiH has primacy in that it may take over a case pending before another court or prosecutor's office. The adoption of a national war crimes strategy is currently under discussion.

The court rendered its first instance (trial) war crimes verdict in July 2005 and by the end of October 2008 had rendered another 35. Since the first appeal decision in November 2005 it has rendered 22 war crimes second instance (appeal) verdicts.

Chapter 17 of the Criminal Code of BiH, 'Crimes Against Humanity and Values Protected by International Law', contains a very thorough prescription of breaches of international humanitarian law, human rights and other international treaties.

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Article 171 prohibits genocide as enunciated in the 1948 Genocide Convention. Article 172 prohibits crimes against humanity committed against a civilian population as part of a widespread and systematic attack directed against any civilian population. The listed crimes include extermination, enslavement, deportation or forcible transfer, torture, imprisonment in violation of the fundamental rules of international law, rape, persecution, inhumane acts and enforced disappearance.

The definition mirrors Article 8 of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, in requiring that the attack be 'pursuant to or in furtherance of a state or organisational policy to commit such attack'. This differs from Articles of the ICTY Statute and Article 3 of the ICTR Statute, neither of which require this.

Articles 173, 174 and 175 prohibit war crimes against civilians, the sick and wounded and prisoners of war, mirroring provisions in the Geneva Conventions of 1949.

The penalty for committing any of these offences is between a minimum of 10 years and 'long term imprisonment' (20 to 45 years). The same penalty applies for organising a group to commit any of these offences.

Other offences within the court's jurisdiction in Chapter 17 include:

- unlawful killing or wounding of the enemy;
- marauding the killed and wounded on the battlefield;
- violating the laws and practices of war;
- violating the rights granted to bearers of flags of truce;

- unjustified delays in the repatriation of prisoners of war;
- destruction of cultural, historical and religious monuments;
- misuse of international emblems;
- slavery, trafficking in persons;
- international procuring of prostitution;
- unlawful withholding of identity papers;
- people smuggling;
- torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment;
- taking of hostages;
- endangering internationally protected persons;
- illicit trafficking in arms and military equipment;
- unauthorised trafficking in chemicals;
- illicit procurement and disposal of nuclear material;
- narcotics trafficking;
- piracy;
- hijacking; and
- ‘terrorism’.

The differences between these prohibitions and those in the more familiar Crimes Acts in Australia are obvious.

### Panel

A single judge presides in offences carrying a penalty of up to ten years; otherwise a panel of three judges hears cases in the first instance. Appeals are to a panel of three judges of the appellate division in the second instance with further appeals in defined circumstances to a third instance panel.

### Human rights guarantees

The Criminal Procedure Code contains legislative human rights guarantees such as:

- the principle of legality;
- the right to a paid lawyer (in stipulated cases);
- the right to quick and fair trial;
- the right to impartial trial;
- the right to adequate time and place for preparation of defence;
- equality of arms;
- the right to cross-examine witnesses; and
- presumption of innocence.

These rights accord with Bosnia’s obligation under the ECHR and other international instruments. The Constitutional Court has determined only one appeal from an appellate decision of the Court of BiH. One issue was legality under Article 7 of the European Convention and whether the Criminal Code in force in 1993 prescribed a lesser penalty than the 2003 Code under which the accused was convicted. The Constitutional Court held that the accused had been validly convicted and sentenced under the later code.



Bullet holes in a house in Sarajevo. Photo: iStockphoto.com

### The procedures

In 2003 a new Criminal Procedure Code was introduced. A major feature of the code is the introduction of adversarial procedures in trials, in a move away from the inquisitorial system used in the former Yugoslavia and in other courts in Bosnia. The 2003 Code applies only in the Court of BiH while the two entities and Brcko have their own (near identical) criminal codes. Harmonisation of the criminal law and courts within Bosnia is an ongoing debate and is the subject of active discussion with the European Union in accession negotiations.

The investigative and preliminary trial process differs from that in Australia. One major difference is the exercise of prosecutorial discretion in Australia. The Bosnian state prosecutor, however, is obliged to file an indictment if, during an investigation, he or she finds that enough evidence for a grounded suspicion that an offence has been committed exists.

As in Australia, the questioning of suspects is strictly regulated by the Criminal Procedure Code, including the exclusion of records not conducted in accordance with those provisions.

The procedure after investigation mixes the common law and civil law processes. The indictment and supporting evidence go to the preliminary hearing judge who decides, within eight days of receiving it, to confirm or discharge all or some of the counts in the indictment. Upon a discharge the prosecutor may then bring a new or amended indictment.

Upon confirmation of an indictment the suspect becomes an accused and has 15 days to plead guilty or not guilty. The preliminary hearing judge then refers the case to the trial judge or panel. The trial must commence within 60 days of the referral, or, in exceptional cases, it may be extended by another 30 days.

The court must sentence the accused within three days of receiving a guilty plea.

The preliminary hearing judge also decides upon ‘prohibiting measures’ (i.e., bail) which may include house arrest, travel bans, restrictions



upon movement and deposits and sureties. Pre-trial custody may only be ordered in specified circumstances. A person taken into custody may appeal within 24 hours. The preliminary proceedings judge may impose custody for one month, after which the trial panel of three judges, on the prosecutor's request, may extend it at two month intervals.

Apart from the introduction of the concept of a 'guilty plea', another new feature of the Criminal Procedure Code is the introduction of legislative 'plea bargaining'. This allows the prosecution and defence to negotiate the conditions for admitting guilt by which the prosecutor may propose a sentence less than the minimum prescribed. The agreement must be in writing and the court may accept or reject the agreement. No appeal is allowed from a verdict under a plea agreement.

A practice has developed, similar to that in the ICTY, of the plea agreement containing a recommended sentencing range, of say, 5 to 10 years in a case in which a minimum sentence of 10 years is prescribed. 'Plea bargaining' as defined is probably closer to 'charge bargaining' in that negotiations between the parties allow the prosecutor to file an amended indictment to a lesser charge with the agreement of the accused.

Trials are public but the public may be excluded if the court decides – after hearing the parties – that closed session is necessary to preserve national security, official secrets, public peace, the personal life of an accused or the interest of a minor or witness.

Because of the nature of much of the work of the court in hearing testimony from victims of war crimes, it may order closed session testimony to protect from public disclosure the identity of a witness determined to be under threat and vulnerable. A major difference with Australian criminal procedure is that the court may hear, in strictly defined circumstances, a witness whose identity is concealed from the accused and defence counsel. The court, however, may not base a conviction 'solely or to a decisive effect on evidence provided through such a witness'.

Evidence at trial is taken in a manner similar to common law proceedings, namely, prosecution followed by defence. Several differences exist though, in that the code then goes on to list: prosecution rebuttal; defence rejoinder; and evidence ordered by the court. The court may, in the interests of justice, change this order. It may also hear witnesses it has determined are 'under threat and vulnerable' out of the prescribed order.

Inevitable overlap will exist between cases determined to finality by the ICTY and co-accused or others charged with complicity in the same offence at the Court of BiH. Recognising this, another unique feature of the Bosnian criminal process is a special law allowing the court to accept as established facts (as evidence against an accused), facts proven in ICTY judgments. The court may also admit ICTY documentary evidence. It may receive testimony given in ICTY hearings and allow an accused to cross-examine such a witness.

Public policy reasons exist for this procedure. These include the significant time lapses between the events in question and the court proceedings, the traumatic nature of the crimes charged and reducing the possibility of witnesses having to testify in multiple proceedings.

It also recognises that some matters requiring proof - and not going to the direct acts or conduct of an accused - may have already been established in other proceedings. An example could be the background evidence necessary to satisfy the chapeau elements of a crime against humanity.

The court cannot, however, base a conviction 'solely or to a decisive effect on the prior statements of witnesses who did not give oral evidence at trial'.

At trial or in a sentencing hearing, witnesses are examined in a similar order to common law proceeding of direct examination (examination in chief), cross-examination and additional examination. Cross-examination is far more restrictive than in the common law.

The accused, however, has a much greater participation in the main trial than in common law proceedings and sits at the bar table next to defence counsel and is permitted to ask his or her questions of witnesses (after defence counsel) and to make submissions and statements. At the close of the case the prosecutor, defence counsel and accused make their closing arguments with the last word always reserved for the accused.

An oral verdict must be rendered within three days of the close of a trial. The reasoned written verdict, which must follow the oral verdict, must be delivered within 15 days, or 30 days in complicated matters.

### **Criminal intention**

Some differences exist between the Australian formulation of mens rea and that in Bosnia. The Criminal Code has an equivalent provision to the common law 'honest and reasonable mistake of fact', but extends the common law defence to provide that 'a person is not criminally responsible if at the time of the perpetration of a criminal offence he or she was not aware of one of its elements defined by law'.

A provision without Australian legislative equivalent, entitled 'mistake of law' provides 'that a perpetrator of a criminal offence, who had

justifiable reason for not knowing that his conduct was prohibited, may be released from punishment'. The offender may be found guilty but released from punishment.

### **Punishment**

Imprisonment may not be shorter than one month or longer than 20 years unless 'long term imprisonment' is prescribed.

Article 42 (2) Criminal Code provides: 'For the gravest forms of serious criminal offences perpetrated with intent, imprisonment for a term of twenty to forty-five years may be exceptionally prescribed (long-term imprisonment).'

A prisoner may be released on parole after serving half of his or her sentence, or in exceptional circumstances, after serving a third.

The objectives of punishment are set out in the Criminal Code. These include mitigating and aggravating circumstances but listing in particular: the degree of criminal liability, the motives for perpetrating the offence, the degree of danger or injury to the protected object, the circumstances in which the offence was perpetrated, the past conduct of the perpetrator, his or her personal situation and conduct after the perpetration of the criminal offence, as well as other circumstances related to the personality of the perpetrator.

In 'highly extenuating circumstances' the court may reduce a sentence to five years where a minimum of ten or more years is prescribed, from three to one, from two years to six months and from one year to three months.

The State of Bosnia, like the federal government in Australia, has no prison facility of its own. Sentenced prisoners must serve their sentences in the entity prisons. This situation has been unsatisfactory for a number of reasons.

The need for a state level prison was shown by the case of Radovan Stankovic, the first accused transferred from the ICTY under Rule 11 bis. On appeal in March 2007 he received 20 years for enslavement, torture, imprisonment and rape as committing crimes against humanity. He was transferred to serve his sentence in a prison in the Republika Srpska, in Foca, the location of his crimes. He escaped in May 2007.

### **Rehabilitation and deletion of criminal records**

The Criminal Code also contains provisions designed to assist rehabilitation. One, without mirror in New South Wales, is the deletion of sentences from criminal records within a relatively short period of time.

The court, on appeal by a convicted person, may delete a sentence of between one and three years from an offender's criminal record if five years from the date of release the offender has not perpetrated new criminal offences. If a person has been 'released from punishment' the court may delete the offence from the criminal record a year later, so long as he or she has committed no criminal offence.

### **Appeal**

The parties have 15 days to appeal the verdict.

An appeal lies by either the prosecution or accused to the appellate division. Unlike in Australia and common law jurisdictions the appeal

from a three judge panel is to another three judge panel which decides both the appeal and conducts any retrial itself. Limited appeals lie to the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and potentially, to the European Court.

A major difference between the Bosnian and the common law systems – common to civil law systems – is the absence of a doctrine of precedent. Appellate decisions are binding only in the proceedings subject to appeal.

The grounds for appeal are thoroughly listed and, in summary, are (a) an essential violation of the provisions of criminal procedure; (b) a violation of the Criminal Code; (c) the state of facts being erroneously or incompletely established; (d) errors relating to sanctions, costs, criminal forfeiture and property claims.

The role of the appellate panel differs from, say, that of the Court of Criminal Appeal in New South Wales. The second instance appellate panel may revise the first instance judgement (in effect to correct it), or may revoke the decision and conduct a retrial itself. Or it may revoke parts of the verdict and hold a limited retrial. The procedure is analogous to an appeal de novo, but only after first revoking the original verdict.

A retrial is held by examining the first instance trial record and receiving it into evidence, but the procedures of the main trial apply. The court cannot modify a verdict to the detriment of an accused in the absence of a prosecution appeal.

An appeal against an appellate second instance verdict to a 'panel in the third instance composed of three judges' is permitted where the second instance panel has reversed a first instance trial acquittal.

Another feature differing from the common law traditions, and those applied in international criminal courts and tribunals such as the ICTY, ICTR, ICC and the Special Court for Sierra Leone is whether dissenting judgments can be published. The Criminal Procedure Code contains no explicit provision allowing a judge in a minority to publish his or her reasoned dissent and a legal debate exists as to whether it is possible to do so under the current provisions without infringing the secrecy of the panel deliberations.

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**The future**

Bosnia is poor – the GDP per head of population in 2007 was only an estimated US \$6,700. Numerous problems remain in developing permanent functioning state institutions. Transparency International’s 2007 report rated Bosnia in equal 84th position in its corruption perception index.

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Approximately 45 million euros of international donor money has flowed into the court and Bosnian justice sector since 2002. The major donors are the United States, the European Union and individual member states. The Court is located in a former Bosnian army military barracks in Sarajevo, situated near the front-line in the war, and it suffered heavy damage in the war. A primary task was to reconstruct and renovate the premises: the UNDP and the EU jointly financed the rebuilding. Japan contributed to building several high technology courtrooms. The government of Belgium donated the fixtures in the high-security courtroom. Countries including Japan, Canada and the United States have provided technical assistance including educational and training programme.

Australia is yet to provide any such assistance to the court. In October 2008 the first Australian parliamentary delegation to visit Bosnia, led by the president of the Senate, Senator John Hogg, visited the court. The president of the court presented to the delegation a proposal seeking Australian technical assistance in financing Bosnian court lawyers to travel to Australia for several months to work in New South Wales legal institutions such as the Legal Aid Commission of New South Wales and the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions. Another part of the proposal is for judges to observe the work of the New South Wales Supreme and District courts for four to six weeks. The proposal – including nine judges and lawyers – is costed at approximately \$205,000 for a year.

The international presence on the court - judges and prosecutors - may end at beginning of 2010. As in any country experiencing its transitional post-conflict phase, developing all state and justice institutions to acceptable international standards will take some time.

**THE HEART OF THE CITY** **ST JAMES CHURCH**

**CHRISTIAN MEDITATION GROUPS**

Four ecumenical Christian meditation groups meet each week at St James’ Church at the top of King Street in the city. The groups are part of a worldwide network of over 1500 groups meeting in about 110 countries.

The ancient Christian tradition of meditating on a simple sacred phrase was revived by the English Benedictine monk John Main (1926-1982). Meditation involves coming to a stillness of spirit and a stillness of body. It is the aim given by the Psalmist (“Be still and know that I am God”). Despite all the distractions of our busy lives, this silence is possible. It requires commitment and practice. Joining a meditation group is a very good start.

Anyone who already meditates or who is interested in starting to meditate is welcome. You may quietly join the group and slip away afterwards or stay around to talk or ask questions.

**When** Tuesday: 12.10pm – 12.50pm  
 Wednesday: 7.45am – 8.30am  
 Friday: 1.10pm – 1.50pm  
 Sunday: 3.00pm – 3.30pm

**Where** Crypt of St James’ Church  
 176 King Street, Sydney  
 (enter under the spire)  
 The Friday group meets in the church, over in the side chapel

**Website** [www.christianmeditationaustralia.org](http://www.christianmeditationaustralia.org)  
[www.wccm.org](http://www.wccm.org)

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