



TITLE:

Young Buddhists' experiences of belonging in multicultural Australia

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Narratives about the success of multiculturalism in Australia, along with a perception of Buddhism as a popular and benign religion have resulted in a lack of research on the exclusion experiences of young Australian Buddhists. As I argue in this paper, these narratives need to be re-examined as they do not take into account a longstanding narrative of Australia as a White, European and Christian nation founded on the notion of *terra nullius*, and the intersection of religion with race, ethnicity and national context in postmodern, secular Australian society. Utilising data obtained from 22 qualitative interviews, I argue that although young Australian Buddhists experience exclusion within and beyond Buddhist communities, they show no signs of developing minoritised religious identities, which tend to pit minority religions against 'mainstream' host culture. Rather, to borrow Bryan Turner's term, I suggest that young Australian Buddhists' negotiations of belonging are indicative of a 'cosmopolitan irony', which enables them to reflexively navigate contexts of cultural difference.