

Australian Anglicans engage atheists online

by [Matt Fenwick](#)

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Canberra, February 4 (ENInews)--Outspoken atheists have captured attention worldwide; now, Australian Anglicans have launched a website encouraging Christians to enter the debate. The Anglican Diocese of Melbourne's new website offers a set of resources answering the hard questions about why people can believe in God.

Prominent atheist thinkers such as Richard Dawkins have attacked Christianity through their books and media appearances. They claim that is not rational to believe in God, and question the moral foundations of Christianity. "What makes my jaw drop is that people today should base their lives on such an appalling role model as Yahweh," Dawkins wrote in his 2006 book *The God Delusion*.

The new website was created by a committee of Anglican theologians and thinkers, including Professor John Pilbrow, its deputy chair and a prominent physicist. "We want to equip people in the pews with the courage to sit down and talk to people who don't have the same beliefs," he told ENInews.

Pilbrow described the website as a gateway to the debate between Christians and atheists. It collects articles and over 50 book reviews covering a wide range of perspectives on the issue, and will be updated regularly. "We've put something readily accessible in the hands of people who don't want to chase the hundreds of websites that are out there," he said.

The organisers have also embraced social media, with an online discussion forum where a panel of theologians will respond to questions people post. "We want to respond to the really important and deep questions that people haven't ever heard answered properly," Pilbrow said.

The committee hopes that the website will help bring a more thoughtful and constructive quality to the debate with atheists. "Hopefully Dawkins and others will begin to tease out their own assumptions, and realise that even their absolute trust in science is itself a leap of faith," said Pilbrow. "I've been a scientist and a Christian for over 50 years and I know we all make assumptions about the nature of the world," he added.

The secretary of Australia's Atheist Society, David Miller, said he welcomed the new website, and said that he looks forward to participating in the discussions. He also expressed concern at the abusive nature of discussions with more militant atheists. "Because of Dawkins, [the Atheist Society] is tending to attract more fanatical, dogmatic people," he said.