



National Council of
Churches in Australia
6th National Forum

**Alexandra Park
Conference Centre**

**Alexandra Headlands
Queensland**

13th ~ 17th July 2007

Life Together

Working Documents

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Let Us Pray...

God of life, unity and peace,
you have called us to be your people.
Bring us to closer unity with you
within the household of your Church.
Direct our steps as we journey
in the National Council of Churches in Australia,
that we may become what you have called us to be;
and that together we may walk in newness of life;
new and old, east and west, indigenous and all
who have gather in this land from the
corners of the earth.

We ask this in the name of Jesus
and through the grace and communion of the
Holy Spirit. Amen.

A Prayer for the National Council of Churches in Australia
From the Inaugural Forum 1994.

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Proposed Forum Program

This program is subject to change. Please view the online Program for the latest updates at http://www.ncca.org.au/about_us/national_forums/6th_national_forum and clicking on the 'program' button.

<u>When</u>	<u>What</u>	<u>Where</u>
❖ <u>Friday 13th July</u>		
3.00 p.m.	Registrations	
6.00 p.m.	Evening Meal	Dining Room
7.30 p.m.	Welcome to Country	Plenary Room
7.45 p.m.	Opening Worship	Plenary Room
8.05 p.m.	Election of Chairperson	Plenary Room
8.15 p.m.	Purpose of Forum	Plenary Room
8.20 p.m.	Preliminary Actions	Plenary Room
8.25 p.m.	Introduction to Theme	Plenary Room
8.35 p.m.	Introducing key people	Plenary Room
8.40 p.m.	Explanation of Process	Plenary Room
8.50 p.m.	New Member Churches	Plenary Room
9.15 p.m.	Closing Prayer	Plenary Room
❖ <u>Saturday 14th July</u>		
7.30 a.m.	Breakfast *	Dining Room
8.45 a.m.	Worship	Plenary Room
9.15 a.m.	Civic and other greetings	Plenary Room
9.45 a.m.	Bible Study: "The Prodigal God"	Plenary Room
10.30 a.m.	Morning Tea	
11.00 a.m.	Address: The President of NCCA	Plenary Room

11.15 a.m.	Table Discussion: Reflection on the President's address	Plenary Room
11.30 a.m.	Address: The General Secretary of NCCA	Plenary Room
11.45 a.m.	Table Discussion: Reflection on the General Secretaries' address	Plenary Room
12.00 noon	Lunch	Dining Room
1.15 p.m.	Reporting arrangements	Plenary Room
1.30 p.m.	Reporting Sessions: + Gender + Youth + CWS + NATSIEC + Social Justice + Faith & Unity	Various Places
3.30 p.m.	Afternoon Tea	
4.00 p.m.	Information Sessions: + Safe Church Project + Growing Churches in an Australian Context + Interfaith + Communications	Various places
5.00 p.m.	Closing Prayer	Plenary Room
5.10 p.m.	Denominational Meetings	Meeting Spaces
6.00 p.m.	Evening Meal	Dining Room
	Evening Free	

❖ Sunday 15th July

7.30 a.m.	Breakfast *	Dining Room
	Unscheduled time	
11.00 a.m.	Worship - Public Celebration	Immanuel Lutheran Church
12.45 p.m.	Lunch	Dining Room
2.00 p.m.	Plenary Discussion: Previous day's sessions	Various places
3.30 p.m.	Afternoon Tea	

4.00 p.m.	Reporting Session: Finance	Plenary Room
4.15 p.m.	Discussion Session: Finance Report	Plenary Room
4.30 p.m.	Business Session	Plenary Room
5.30 p.m.	Workshop Session: + Objectives of the NCCA	Plenary / Small Groups
6.00 p.m.	Evening Meal	Dining Room
7.30 p.m.	Workshop Session	Plenary / Small Groups
8.50 p.m.	Evening Prayer	

❖ Monday 16th July

7.30 a.m.	Breakfast *	Dining Room
8.45 a.m.	Worship	Plenary Room
9.15 a.m.	Bible Study: “The Gift”	Plenary Room
10.00 a.m.	Focus Session: + Making Indigenous Poverty History	Plenary Room
10.30 a.m.	Morning Tea	
11.00 a.m.	Focus Session: Covenanting	Plenary Room
11.30 a.m.	Focus Session: + Themes from the World Council of Churches Assembly 2006	Plenary Room
12.00 noon	Lunch	Dining Room
1.15 p.m.	Business Session	Plenary Room
3.00 p.m.	Special Address: Sylvia Haddad (MECC)	Plenary Room
3.30 p.m.	Afternoon Tea	
4.00 p.m.	Workshop Session	Plenary / Small Groups
6.00 p.m.	Evening Meal	Dining Room
7.30 p.m.	Public Lecture: Fr Don Bolen (Vatican)	Plenary Room

8.20 p.m.	Evening Prayer	Plenary Room
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❖ Tuesday 17th July

7.30 a.m.	Breakfast *	Dining Room
8.45 a.m.	Prayers	Plenary Room
9.00 a.m.	Bible Study: "The Common Life for the World"	Plenary Room
9.45 a.m.	Workshop Session	Plenary Room
10.15 a.m.	Morning Tea	
10.45 a.m.	Business Session	Plenary Room
12.00 noon	Closing Worship	Plenary Room
12.30 p.m.	Lunch	Dining Room

* Note: Breakfast is provided at the Alexandra Park Conference Centre for only those participants who are staying in the accommodation provided by the Centre. Participants staying elsewhere are responsible for their own breakfast catering. All other meals for all participants are provided for at the Centre for the duration of the Forum.

Recommendations

Opening Actions

❖ Appointment of Chairperson

It is recommended that the Most Reverend Michael Putney be appointed as the Chairperson for this National Forum.

❖ Appointment of Committees

It is recommended that

1. the following persons be appointed as a Steering Committee for this National Forum: Michael Putney, Tara Curlewis, Margaret Naylon, John Gilmore, Jackie Perkins, Shenouda Mansour, David Powys and Paul Ryan (staff).
2. the Steering Committee be asked to make any proposals it deems necessary regarding the ordering of business;
3. the following persons be appointed as a Nominations Committee for this National Forum: Loretta Wholley, Sandy Yule, Philip Huggins, Ian Allen, Graham Harris, Aghan Baliozian, Alistair Gee (staff) and Graeme Mundine (staff).
4. the Nominations Committee be asked to bring recommendations for membership of the commissions, committees, networks and working groups based on the recommendations of the member Churches.

❖ Business to be considered

It is recommended that

1. the deadline for recommendations moved and seconded by member Churches be submitted in writing to the Chairperson no later than pre-lunch time on Sunday, July 15th, 2007.
2. comment be sought from the Treasurer prior to action being taken on any recommendation or motion that has financial implications, with the mover of any such recommendation asked to indicate what the practical implications are likely to be.

❖ Minutes

It is recommended that the Executive be authorised to approve the Minutes of the National Forum.

❖ Program / Timetable

It is recommended that the proposed timetable and procedures be adopted, subject to such variations as may be approved in the course of this National Forum.

Acceptance of the New Member Churches

It is recommended that

1. the Mar Thoma Church be accepted and embraced into membership of the National Council of Churches in Australia by the delegates of this National Forum.
2. the Chinese Methodist Church in Australia be accepted and embraced into membership of the National Council of Churches in Australia by the delegates of this National Forum.

Constitutional Amendments

It is recommended that

the Constitution be amended to read

Election of President

1. (Clause 9.02)

In addition to any other business which may be transacted at a meeting of the National Forum the business of the ordinary meeting shall be:

...

[c] to elect the President and not more than six *[6]* members of the Executive whose nominations for election have been endorsed by their member Churches;

...

2. (Clause 11.02)

The President of the NCCA will normally

[a] be elected by the National Forum;

[b] hold office until the conclusion of the next ordinary meeting of the National Forum and

[c] be eligible for re-election;

In the event that an unexpected vacancy in the office of President occurs between meetings of the National Forum, the Executive may elect the President who will hold office until the commencement of the term of office of a President elected by the National Forum.

Appointment of General Secretary

3. (Clause 16.02)

The General Secretary of the NCCA will be appointed by the Executive, which will also decide the terms and conditions on which the General Secretary is appointed. The General Secretary is also accountable through the Executive to the National Forum.

Proposed by the Uniting Church in Australia, the Anglican Church of Australia and the Catholic Church in Australia.

Report Recommendations

It is recommended that

Executive (*see pages 19~43*)

1. the Executive report be received.

NCCA Executive – Special (*see page 44*)

2. the appointment of the Reverend John Henderson as General Secretary of the NCCA be extended for a further 3 years (i.e. to the end of 2010) on the same terms and conditions as agreed to at the time of his original appointment.

Finance (*see pages 45~53*)

3. the Finance report be received.

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ecumenical Commission (NATSIEC) (*see pages 55~60*)

4. the NATSIEC report be received.
5. NATSIEC be encouraged to continue its efforts to bring Indigenous affairs back to the centre of our common concerns and to continue to bring these matters to the attention of the NCCA, member Churches and the wider community.
6. NATSIEC calls a further gathering of Indigenous Church leadership to address the issue of the place of Indigenous peoples in church and society.
7. NATSIEC supports and develops Indigenous leadership in member Churches.
8. NATSIEC be encouraged to stand in solidarity with and support Indigenous peoples from other parts of the world.

Christian World Service (*see pages 61~71*)

9. the CWS report be received.

Commission of Faith and Unity (*see pages 73~84*)

10. the Faith and Unity report be received.
11. the report from the Commission on Faith and Unity be received.
12. the National Forum express deep appreciation to the Reverend Dr Christiaan Mostert for his leadership of the Faith and Unity Commission over the last six years.

BAPTISM

13. those churches, which have agreed to the mutual recognition of Baptism, be asked to ensure that Certificates of Baptism used within those churches contain the common wording as agreed
14. the paper on Baptism be noted and received as an addendum to this report

RECEPTION

15. the resource document on 'Reception' be noted and received with thanks to the Commission for this work.

ECCLESIOLOGY

16. the resource document on ecclesiological issues be noted and received with thanks to the Commission for this work.
17. the churches be encouraged to discuss together the statement "Called to be the One Church" and the questions it contains, and that the churches' bilateral dialogue groups be asked to examine it and to assess their work in the light of it.

Gender Commission (*see pages 85~87*)

18. the Gender Commission report be received.
19. the NCCA supports the work of the Gender Commission to continue communicating nationally with contact persons in each state and territory Council of Churches.
20. the NCCA supports the Gender Commission in its ongoing organisation of public events to further interfaith dialogue and/or promote dialogue on other social justice issues of concern to the Commission.
21. the NCCA will support the Gender Commission in continuing to develop its work on the grassroots issues raised during the ecumenical workshops. This will include follow-up programs in partnership with state and territory Councils of Churches.
22. that each member Church of the NCCA nominates a representative to the Commission as requested by the Gender Commission.

Social Justice Network (*see pages 89~95*)

23. the Social Justice Network report be received.
24. the Forum consider the issues listed in the report for discussion and reflection.

Youth Network (*see pages 97~102*)

25. the Youth Network report be received.

Communications Desk (*see pages 103~111*)

26. the Communications report be received.

The Safe Church Project (*see pages 113~115*)

27. the Safe Church Project report be received.
28. the 2007 NCCA Forum acknowledges the progress of the Safe Church Project over the last five years.
29. the 2007 NCCA Forum support the prayerful discernment process of the Safe Church Project Working Group to develop future directions for this ecumenical work.
30. the 2007 NCCA Forum asks the Working Group to report to the NCCA Executive until the next Forum

Ronald Wilson Ecumenical Leadership Fund (*see page 117*)

31. the Ronald Wilson Ecumenical Leadership Fund report be received.
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Reports

General Secretary and Executive Report

‘LIFE TOGETHER’

Pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s book *‘Life Together’*¹ was first published in Germany in 1939. It draws on the experience of an ‘illegal’ seminary of the Confessing Church outlawed by Adolf Hitler. During its short life, the seminary faced immense opposition from the state and the official church. Its faculty and students deliberately formed a Christian community that would confess Christ despite the hostile *zeitgeist* (*spirit of the time*). *‘Life Together’* is practical guidance for people who want to live as Christians and as members of Christ’s church.

We have chosen the title of this work, *‘Life Together’*, as the theme for the 2007 Forum of the National Council of Churches in Australia. It directs us to our calling and community in Christ. The Basis of the NCCA says that we “*gather(s) together in pilgrimage those churches and Christian communities which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the Scriptures...*”

The journey of Australian Churches together, as represented by the NCCA, is not just desirable but necessary. If the NCCA did not exist, we would be trying to create it, or something like it. If we discover that the NCCA does not authentically represent our journey together, then we should reshape it. It is not to be a product of the spirit of the times, but of intentional thinking about what our common life in Christ should look like. This represents an extraordinary opportunity that we shouldn’t miss.

I believe that we need to nurture, shape, and encourage the work of the NCCA as our effective instrument. At this Forum I want to encourage churches to ‘own’ and celebrate the National Council of Churches as our Council, created and sustained by us, to be used for the common good in our life together.

The NCCA will not work if churches sit back and become passive about participation. It will always be what we make it, together. The NCCA does have its own history and its own internal dynamics, but these are not the determining features of the Council. We always come back to the question, “What do the churches say about this? What do they want the NCCA to be and to do?”

Through the processes, discussions, and decisions of this Forum we will reaffirm our commitment to the goals of the NCCA and to shaping a future in which Christian unity rises to the forefront of our ecclesial consciousness. We don’t do this for the sake of the NCCA, but for the sake of Christ, and the world. We need to be as practical about this as Bonhoeffer was about the Christian community in *‘Life Together’*.

Everyday life at the NCCA

The day to day fabric of the NCCA is made up of the many volunteers and handful of paid staff who work to fulfil its mandate. Volunteers include people who come to the office to assist with mail outs and other tasks, but there are also many others who help out in one way or another. To everyone who helps we would like to say ‘Thank You’.

As with most organisations of this kind it is the ‘idea’ of the NCCA that gives it substance. The reality of churches working together is reflected in the multiplicity of traditions represented on committees, network, and working groups. Much more happens than I can

¹ *Gemeinsames Leben*

present in a Forum Report such as this. In what follows I will attempt to report on some routine matters from the life of the NCCA that might not be covered elsewhere.

Functioning of the NCCA Executive

- ❖ Meetings – the Executive of the NCCA has met three times per year since the last National Forum in July 2004. Apart from the NCCA offices in Kent St Sydney we have met at St Mary's Assyrian Church of the East in Smithfield NSW, the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture in Barton ACT, St Ephraim's Syrian Orthodox Cathedral in Lidcombe NSW, and in the hall of St James' Anglican Church King St Sydney (twice). The NCCA is most grateful to each of these groups for their kind and generous hospitality. Since the rearrangement of the NCCA's Sydney office it will no longer be possible to hold Executive meetings there.

The majority of meetings have been for two days, which is a fair commitment from members of the Executive, and there have also been a number of one day meetings. Special focus sessions have been run on Social Justice, Covenanting, and Make Indigenous Poverty History.

- ❖ Standing Committee – the Executive has established a Standing Committee to:
 1. Provide support and advice to the General Secretary.
 2. Deal with any matters referred to it by the Executive.
 3. Make recommendations to the Executive.
 4. Meet at least once between each regular meeting of the Executive.
 5. Report to each regular meeting of the Executive.
 6. Be convened by either the General Secretary or President.

Widening the Fellowship

Since the last Forum the Executive has been very glad to welcome 3 new observer churches into the life of the NCCA:

- The Chinese Methodist Church – *applying for membership at this Forum*
- The Mar Thoma Church – *applying for membership at this Forum*
- The Serbian Orthodox Church

Information on those churches which are applying for membership is attached to this report. The Serbian Orthodox Church was once a member of the Australian Council of Churches and it is heartening that Bishop Irinej, who has recently arrived in Australia, is keen that they move towards membership in the NCCA

Several other churches have continued as observers – the Baptist Union, the Seventh Day Adventist Church, the Presbyterian Church, and Australian Christian Churches (formerly the Assemblies of God). It has been pleasing to note their increased involvement through initiatives such as the Safe Church Project.

The Role of President and Chairperson of the Forum

President of the NCCA is an honorary position that attracts a lot of effort and few tangible rewards. We have been privileged to have outstanding churchmen (no women so far) as our Presidents since 1994 – Archbishop Aghan Baliozian of the Armenian Apostolic Church, Archbishop John Bathersby of the Catholic Church, Rev Dr Lance Steicke of the Lutheran Church, Rev Professor James Haire of the Uniting Church, and now Bishop Richard Appleby of the Anglican Church. All of these have served or are

serving with distinction, and have held together the unique ‘ecumenical space’ that is central to the successful functioning of the NCCA.

We deeply regret that Bishop Appleby will not be available to lead this year’s Forum due to illness. I invite your prayers for him and for his wife Elizabeth. Bishop Appleby will be undergoing radiotherapy in Newcastle during July for what he says is a very treatable form of cancer. Despite his absence at the Forum, we look forward to his continuation in the role of President.

The absence of the President means that at the first session of the Forum we will need to elect a Chairperson, as provided in the NCCA Constitution. The nominee of the Forum Planning Group for this role will be Bishop Michael Putney of the Catholic Diocese of Townsville.

Executive Staff

As General Secretary I have been joined by three new Executive Staff members since the last forum: Mr Graeme Mundine (September 04) as Executive Secretary of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ecumenical Commission, Mr Paul Ryan (September 04) first as Business Manager and now as Director of Support Services; and Mr Alistair Gee (June 05) as Director of Christian World Service. These men came from successful careers in travel, accountancy, and law. I am grateful for the enthusiasm and dedication with which they serve the churches through their important roles at the NCCA.

The four Executive Officers, together with two elected non-Executive Staff members, form the internal Management Team of the NCCA that handles most of the day to day office issues that arise.

Memorandum of Understanding between National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ecumenical Commission and the NCCA

The Constitution commits the NCCA “to encourage and enable the member Churches in the light of the Gospel to give prophetic leadership to each other and the community by ... acting in solidarity with Aboriginal and Islander people ...” In March 2005, the Executive resolved to support the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ecumenical Commission (NATSIEC) and the NCCA as presented by the NATSIEC.

The intent of this *MOU* is to have in place an agreed procedure for the NCCA to act respectfully, appropriately, and in solidarity, with Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander peoples, through NATSIEC. The full text of this MOU is attached. (Appendix C)

Meetings of the National Heads of Churches

The informal meeting of the national heads of Churches has continued the arrangement by which, as General Secretary of the NCCA, I act as honorary secretary to the group.

Australian Ecumenical Officers Network – AEON

In an effort to create greater co-ordination and information sharing between state and national ecumenical bodies, the NCCA, the NSW Ecumenical Council, the Victorian Council of Churches, the Tasmanian Council of Churches, the South Australian Council of Churches, the Council of Churches of Western Australia, and Queensland Churches

Together, have formed the Australian Ecumenical Officers' Network. This network meets face to face once a year, and once per month via phone conference using the most cost effective method available. The meetings usually fall into two parts, the first dealing with wider church and ecumenical issues, and the second dealing with the work of Christian World Service and Christmas Bowl.

The Network has had some success in improving relationships and keeping each State informed of what is going on elsewhere. Unfortunately the Northern Territory Council of Churches has not been able to be part of this network as it has no staff support.

The AEON network has developed a Memorandum of Understanding between State Councils and the NCCA, and I have attached this to my report.

Decade to Overcome Violence

The Decade to Overcome Violence (DOV) is an ecumenical initiative of the World Council of Churches and runs from 2001-2010. In the early part of the Decade the NCCA took a lead role in helping to advance the decade. With the help of special grants mostly from the Glenburnie Program we were able to employ a project officer, the Revd Dr Jonathan Inkpin, to head up the work for the Decade. We undertook a range of activities to promote peace and worked with others to raise awareness of non-violent solutions using the 'ripples of peace' concept. Some of that work continues through e-groups and other forums.

Unfortunately, we haven't been able to continue the paid staff position, despite the request of the 2004 Forum that this should happen. While much of the work done by the NCCA can be reframed within a peace building framework, currently there is no specific work in the name of the DOV. The decade will draw to an end around the time of the next Forum, and the Executive will need to think about how the themes of the Decade can inform the Council's ongoing work.

Christian Conference of Asia

The NCCA is a member council of the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) which has recently moved its office from Hong Kong to Chiang Mai in Northern Thailand. The NCCA invited the CCA to hold its 2005 General Assembly in Australia but ultimately it went to Chiang Mai. We were also preparing to host a meeting of the CCA General Committee in Australia in March 2007, but this was shifted to Taiwan for strategic reasons. We still expect, some time in the next few years, for at least one meeting of CCA to be hosted in Australia.

We have been successful in arranging Australian participation in a number of CCA events related to sustainability, youth, mission, and ecumenical formation. As always it is costly to arrange such participation, and we are grateful to those who have supported it, through personal contributions and contributions from churches. CCA has also increasingly recognised the need to support Australian participation. The NCCA continues to contribute financially to CCA through CWS sponsored development and capacity building work. A number of Australians are also on various committees and commissions of CCA on behalf of their churches. Australian churches that are formally part of CCA are the Anglican Church, the Uniting Church, the Armenian Apostolic Church, and the Churches of Christ.

Community Partnerships

❖ Australian Collaboration

The NCCA is a foundation member of the Australian Collaboration, a gathering of non-government 'not-for-profit' organisations that attempts, through research, publishing, and projects, to play a part in raising Australian consciousness about key issues.

Publications so far have been:

- How Ethical Is Australia? An examination of Australia's Role as a Global Citizen
- The Big Fix: Radical solutions for Australia's environmental crisis
- Into The Future: The Neglect of the Long term in Australian Politics
- Which Direction? A review of monitoring and reporting in Australia
- Success In Aboriginal Communities: A pilot study
- A Just And Sustainable Australia
- Where Are We going: Comprehensive social, cultural, environmental and economic reporting

Further publications on Reconciliation, a just and sustainable society, and an extension of 'Where are we going?' are underway, as is more research to complete the project on success in Aboriginal communities.

Website: <http://www.australiancollaboration.com.au>.

❖ Civil Society Dialogues

Together with the Australian Council of Social Services (ACOSS), the Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF), the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU), and other community groups, the NCCA was part of setting up the first Civil Society Dialogue, held in Parliament House Canberra 2006. At the time of writing this report we are again part of planning for the second dialogue for Canberra in August 2007.

The purpose of these dialogues is to draw together civil society and non-government groups to explore common views and responses to contemporary Australian issues. The exercise is intentionally non-party political, which is why the NCCA has been able to participate under its social justice mandate. In recent decades both government and business have been recognised as the two major players or 'sectors' in Australian society. There is a growing mood that the 'not-for-profit' sector is equally valuable to the wellbeing of our society, as is recognised in many other countries. In the past 'not-for-profit' community groups and non-government organisations have been fragmented due to their single issue nature or ideological differences. That is now changing, and these Dialogues reflect that change.

By finding a common voice on values and issues that matter across the broader community this emerging movement will form a healthy voice in Australia's development as a mature, compassionate society. Common issues so far include the practice and development of our nation as a democracy, human rights, justice and a 'fair go', and the ongoing responsibility of society to care for vulnerable sectors of the community. Partnership in the development of the Indigenous sector of the community is of special concern.

❖ Not-For-Profit Round Table

The NCCA, on behalf of the churches, is a core group member of this ‘not-for-profit’ group. The goal of the Round Table is to strengthen the reputation and recognition of the sector, and to develop its capacity and infrastructure. The current focus is the reform of the legal and regulatory environment of non profit organisations.

Website: <http://nfprounhtable.org.au>.

International Church visitors

Since the 2004 Forum the NCCA has been pleased to host, among others, the following overseas visitors:

- His Eminence Metropolitan Bishoy, Secretary of the Holy Synod of the Coptic Orthodox Church in Cairo, and His Grace Bishop Moussa, Bishop for Youth in Cairo
- Archbishop Pius Ncube, Catholic Archbishop of Bulawayo in Zimbabwe
- Mr Bernard & Mrs Mary Sabella from the Middle East Council of Churches. Bernard is now an elected member of the Palestinian Authority for the Fatah Party
- Bishop Mvume Dandala, General Secretary of the All Africa Council of Churches, and Mr Bright Mawudor
- Prawate Khid Arn, General Secretary of the Christian Conference of Asia
- Bishop Daniel Thiagarajah, Bishop of Jaffna, Sri Lanka
- Ms Barbara Rudolph, General Secretary of the Council of Christian Churches in Germany
- Gabriel Manyangadze of the Zimbabwe
- The Revd Valamotu Palu, General Secretary of the Pacific Council of Churches
- Aisake Casimira of the Ecumenical Centre for Research, Education, and Advocacy in Suva, Fiji

Overseas visits made by the NCCA in an official capacity include:

- Attendance at the final meeting of the Council of Churches in Aotearoa New Zealand
- His Beatitude Archbishop Torkom Manoogian, Armenian Patriarch of Jerusalem, and Bishop Aris of St James Cathedral in Jerusalem
- His Beatitude Archbishop Teoctist, Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church, and Fr Michael Tita for the Department of External Affairs in Bucharest

Interfaith Relations

❖ Australian Partnership of Religious Organisations (APRO)

Originally called the ‘Australian Partnership of Ethnic and Religious Organisations’, this co-operative group was formed in 2003 by a wide range of religious and ethnic organisations under the sponsorship of Federation and Ethnic Communities

Organisations of Australia (FECCA) and the encouragement of the then Department of Immigration, Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs, now the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC).

The organisations, and the communities that they represent, are committed to and promote:

- an Australia of ethnically and religiously diverse peoples that is their home;
- the practices and principles of social justice (this encompasses the equality of access to political and legal rights, the right to full social and economic participation through the reduction of material disadvantage);
- Australian Multiculturalism as a core value that defines what it means to be an Australian in the 21st century and that encompasses respect and celebration of our diversity; and an Australia that:
 - is democratic,
 - adheres to the rule of law,
 - promotes and protects freedom of speech, freedom of religious belief, freedom of assembly and movement, freedom of association, freedom of expression (including the freedom to dress as an expression of cultural identity) and freedom of thought,
 - condemns any form of abuse or discrimination based upon race, ethnicity, religion, gender, nationality, age (or any other grounds) by either individuals or organisations,
 - actively supports equal access to opportunity, services and information, and
 - treats individuals and communities with acceptance and respect without regard to their ethnicity or religion.
- Additionally, the organisations:
 - uphold the right of all Australians to live without the fear of violence in any form,
 - respect the rights of all Australians no matter their ethnicity, religion or beliefs,
 - undertake to work together, in mutual respect, to promote these values in practical ways,
 - undertake to work together to minimise community disharmony, inter and intra-faith, ethnically and/or nationality-based tensions within Australian society, and
 - will promote Australian Multiculturalism, and the principles it enshrines, as a good-practice model of social harmony and community participation to diverse communities within Australia as well as to the rest of the world.

In June 2007 it is taking its first foray into wider activity through the organisation of a national Forum on Interfaith issues – ‘Australia’s Faiths: Building Community Together’.

To see the list of organisations involved, see the NCCA website:
http://www.ncca.org.au/partnerships/community_partners/apro

❖ Australian National Dialogue of Christians, Muslims, and Jews

The NCCA was a key partner in launching the Australian National Dialogue of Christians, Muslims, and Jews in 2002. In 2006 this Dialogue took a short ‘sabbatical’, and we expect to relaunch it in the second half of 2007. Our partners in the Dialogue are the Executive Council of Australian Jewry, and the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils. It usually meets 3 times per year to discuss religious themes and community issues, and it occasionally makes public statements about interfaith co-operation.

See more at http://www.ncca.org.au/special_projects/interfaith_dialogue.

❖ Regional Interfaith Dialogue

In 2004 Australia’s Foreign Minister, Alexander Downer, together with his counterpart in Indonesia, launched a series of interfaith meetings among ASEAN nations in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Further meetings have been held in Cebu, the Philippines (2006), and Waitangi, New Zealand (2007). Each has involved around 15 Asian nations, Australia and New Zealand, and the last two dialogues have included Fiji. Each nation sends a representative delegation of around 10 religious leaders, although some have included government ministers and civil servants.

The NCCA became involved in the early stages when the Department of Foreign Affairs approached us to assist in nominating the Christian members of the Australian delegation. Since then the delegation has remained very similar, and we continue to be involved with each dialogue. These dialogues are a little different to our usual activities in that they take place on a regional platform using government resources. The behaviour of the Australian government in this regard has been exemplary as it has never attempted to influence the contributions of the participants, or to determine the outcomes. Unfortunately that cannot be said of every nation that participates, and it has been interesting to watch the various levels of control exercised by governments over religious affairs in their country.

❖ Overseas Interfaith visitors

In recent times the NCCA has been glad to be able to assist groups of visitors from Indonesia and Malaysia to meet Christian leads from Australia in Melbourne and in Sydney to engage in discussion about religious affairs in our respective countries. These visitors have come here at the invitation of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) as part of an ongoing program aimed at regional stability and harmony. The most recent such meeting was a group of leading Indonesian English language journalists and newspaper editors.

As General Secretary I also had a similar opportunity when Professor Ali Bardakoğlu, President of the Religious Affairs Department of Turkey, visited Australia in late 2006.

Other international interfaith visitors received by the NCCA include Mr Shimon Samuels of the Simon Wiesenthal Center in Paris and Rabbi Dr Brikha Nasoraia, President of the International Mandaean Nasoraean Supreme Council.

❖ Interfaith Reference Group

Since the last National Forum the Executive of the NCCA has established an Interfaith Reference Group to guide the interfaith activities of the NCCA. Unfortunately, due to lack of resources, the group has not really been able to fulfil this function. At the moment oversight is conducted mostly from the Secretariat, with reporting to the Executive through the General Secretary. At this Forum there will be a dedicated interfaith session as part of the reporting process.

International and Regional Issues

❖ Climate Change / Global Warming

The NCCA is frequently asked why it is not taking a lead on Climate Change and Global Warming. Over the last 3 years we have participated in producing a pamphlet for churches on Climate Change in collaboration with the Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF). We are currently co-operating with the ACF on an updating and expansion of this work. We have participated in meetings with the Climate Group, and through CWS we have been associated with a number of NGO efforts on Climate Change.

None of this, however, constitutes 'leadership' on the issue. If we are to take up such a role then we will need to find out, from member Churches, what their will for the NCCA is on this matter and on what issues, and in what ways, the NCCA should be empowered to work and make comment.

Obviously a key factor to allow the NCCA to work Climate Change issues will be our ability to join the public debate on these issues. To enable this to happen we might need a specific consultation on the issue, as provided for in the NCCA Constitution. Such consultations can be called by the National Forum or the Executive. It could be done regionally or nationally in order to test the will of the churches and discover where we agree and where there are differences. This process would empower the NCCA to act more decisively in this area. Nothing can happen without the commitment, and resources, of our member Churches, especially if there is ongoing work to be funded. As our current resources are fully deployed and even overstretched, any expanded or additional work will require additional resources, replacement of existing work, or a combination of both. If we are to undertake this the churches, through the Forum need to give clarity as to what the direction they want the NCCA to take. The process of this Forum, through reporting and workshops, has been planned to allow this to emerge during the meeting.

❖ Refugees and Displaced Persons

Although refugee work will be reported on under CWS I mention it here because its place in the formation of the ecumenical movement in Australia. For 60 years the NCCA and its predecessor organisations have worked to resettle of refugees and alleviate the factors that make people refugees. Today this continues under the Refugee and Displaced Persons unit of Christian World Service. It is an important aspect of the NCCA for which we are well known nationally and internationally.

❖ Israel/Palestine

Along with broader refugee issues, the ecumenical movement has long been deeply concerned with the controversial issues of Palestine/Israel, and the ongoing violence and strife that beset that part of the world. The NCCA has particularly stood in solidarity with Palestinian Christians, many of whom are being forced to leave their land and their people to take up life in new countries around the world. The exodus is becoming so large that some have predicted that within a few decades there will be very few Christians, or none at all, left in the region. In 2006 a small group from the churches visited Israel in the company of Rabbi John Levi from Melbourne, and during that visit we saw clear evidence of the difficulties of life everyone encounters in that part of the world. An audience with the Armenian Patriarch of Jerusalem, His Beatitude Archbishop Torkom Manoogian, in the company of Bishop Aris of St James' Cathedral, was a highlight of that visit.

In 2006 the NCCA decided to establish an Australian 'desk' of the Ecumenical Accompaniment Program in Palestine/Israel. This is a program located in the World Council of Churches which arranges for 'Ecumenical Accompaniers' – volunteers who spend 3-12 months in Palestine living in the local community and accompanying local people in their everyday lives. This immersion program creates a powerful voice for the needs of Palestinians, a witness to the injustices suffered, and a team of advocates around the world to speak up for those who are marginalised and who suffer under the troubles of the region.

An Australian desk will enable us to promote the program here and open up the opportunity for more Australians to become Ecumenical Accompaniers. Alongside this there are a number of other initiatives, such as the International Church Action for Peace in Palestine/Israel (ICAPPI) that we try to support. 2007 is an important year for these actions, as it marks 40 years since the 6 Day War of 1967, and the occupation of Palestinian territory.

Through the leadership of the Revd Gregor Henderson, President of the Uniting Church in Australia, we are also organising a visit of Australian Church leaders to the Middle East in December 2007. At the same time Christian World Service continues its working relationship with the Middle East Council of Churches and development programs in the Middle East under its auspices, and those of local churches.

❖ Zimbabwe – Archbishop Pius Ncube

In May this year the NCCA was privileged to host the Catholic Archbishop of Bulawayo, Pius Ncube, on the first leg of his Australian visit. The Archbishop was brought to Australia by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and he said it is the first time that any foreign government has invited him to visit their country to talk about the plight of the people of Zimbabwe. The Archbishop is an outspoken critic of President Robert Mugabe, at great risk to his life. Recent statements by the Catholic Bishops Conference in Zimbabwe have also drawn the ire of the government.

He presented a chilling account of the decline of conditions in Zimbabwe, and the plea that his country might become a democracy. We should be pleased that our government saw fit to bring such a significant Zimbabwean here, and it would seem that the invitation is there for us to speak out and to ask everyone, including the Australian government, to do what we can to help the people of Zimbabwe.

Respectfully submitted,

John Henderson
General Secretary
May 2007

Appendices

- Appendix E1 Information on Executive Meetings and Statements since the 2004 Forum
- Appendix E2 Actions arising from the 2004 Forum
- Appendix E3 Memorandum of Understanding between NATSIEC and the NCCA
- Appendix E4 Memorandum of Understanding between State Councils and the NCCA
- Appendix E5 Background paper for Growing Churches in an Australian Context

Appendix E1

Information on Executive Meetings and Statements since the 2004 Forum

- ❖ Executive meetings have been held 3 times each calendar year in accordance with the NCCA Constitution.

8 March 2007

St James Church Hall, Sydney, NSW

9 November 2006

St James Church Hall, Sydney, NSW

23-24 June 2006

NCCA Boardroom, Sydney, NSW

9-10 March 2006

NCCA Boardroom, Sydney, NSW

3-4 November 2005

St Ephraim's Syrian Orthodox Cathedral, Lidcombe, NSW

23-24 June 2005

NCCA Boardroom, Sydney, NSW

3-4 March 2005

Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture, Barton, ACT

19-20 November 2004

St Mary's Assyrian Church of the East, Smithfield, NSW

13 July 2004

Lincoln College, North Adelaide, SA

- ❖ Statements of the NCCA

September 2006

Put Indigenous Australia at the Centre of our Concerns – Social Justice Sunday 2006

September 2005

After the Tsunami, Building Justice and Peace – Social Justice Sunday 2005

1 July 2005

Churches Call for an End to the Warehousing of Refugees

1 July 2005

Africa's Great March Home – Refugee & Migrant Sunday

September 2004

Security at all Costs? – Social Justice Sunday 2004

Appendix E2

Actions by the NCCA arising from the Minutes of the 2004 National Forum of the NCCA

Australian Churches Covenanting Together

04.07.06 It was resolved that

This National Forum

1. receives the document “Australian Churches Covenanting Together”;
2. celebrates the reception of the document as a sign of what the NCCA member Churches can covenant to do together at this point in our journey; and
3. commends the churches’ commitment to continue to explore such further steps as will be necessary to make more clearly visible the unity of all Christian people in this country.

Actions by the NCCA:

- The document was signed at St Peter’s Cathedral, Adelaide, as part of the Forum worship celebrations

NCCA Christian World Service Ltd

04.07.08 It was resolved that

1. in order to achieve the objectives of the NCCA as outlined in 4.01.b.iii, iv & v of the NCCA Constitution, the Forum approve in principle the creation of a new company, NCCA CHRISTIAN WORLD SERVICE LIMITED.
2. the Forum approves in principle the draft Constitution of NCCA CHRISTIAN WORLD SERVICE LIMITED.
3. the Forum reappoint the current CWS Commission until such time as NCCA CHRISTIAN WORLD SERVICE LIMITED can be established, at which point the Commission will cease to exist.

Actions by the NCCA:

- While the decisions in principle cleared the way for the registration of NCCA Christian World Service Ltd, subsequent developments meant that the company never ‘traded’ as such, and it has since been de-registered.
- See the Christian World Service report for further information

Gender Commission ‘On the Wings of a Dove’

04.07.11 It was resolved that

1. the Forum endorses the work of the Gender Commission
2. the Forum endorses the following current directions:
 - i. develop programs with the Youth Network and the NATSIEC; and
 - ii. work with CCA, WCC and DOV to promote the “On The Wings of a Dove” program in Australia.

Actions by the NCCA:

- Budget limitations, changing priorities and other restrictions mean that the Gender Commission has not proceeded down this path. See their report for current directions in the work of the Commission

The work of Christian World Service

04.07.13 Resolutions re the work of Christian World Service, Christmas Bowl, Australia's ration of overseas development assistance and East Timor.

Actions by the NCCA:

- See the CWS report for further information.

Faith and Unity Commission

04.07.17 **It was resolved that**

1. the specific report on the Covenanting process be noted with pleasure, and that the Commission be requested to keep the ongoing challenge of this process before the churches.
2. the Commission be encouraged to give priority to the monitoring of bilateral dialogues in Australia.
3. the Commission be asked to keep the member Churches informed of international developments in ecumenical dialogue and agreements.

Actions by the NCCA:

- The Faith & Unity Commission has is just publishing the second volume of 'Stages on the Way', a collection of papers from bilateral dialogues, including a glossary of dialogue terms.
- The Commission is still in dialogue with churches about their use of the Covenant agreement. State Councils of Churches have promoted and made use of the Covenant in their work. The task continues to progress slowly.

Decade to Overcome Violence

04.07.17 **It was resolved that**

1. the Forum urge member Churches to engage in active peacemaking, sharing with the DOV Working Group initiatives undertaken;
2. Forum members commit themselves, and take every opportunity to ensure their churches are committed to cultivating a culture of peace;
3. the Forum encourages the Executive to continue the position of DOV Coordinator from January 2005 for up to 3 years, subject to funding availability.

Actions by the NCCA:

- The Executive was unable to continue the position of DOV Coordinator. See the General Secretary / Executive Report.

The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ecumenical Commission

04.07.19 **It was resolved that**

1. the National Forum encourages member Churches to do more to bring Indigenous affairs back to the centre of their attention, and the attention of the wider community, by these and other means:
 - i. liaising with and supporting the work of NATSIEC;
 - ii. respecting, listening to and responding to Indigenous voices in the churches and wider community;
 - iii. continuing the commitment begun through the Continuing the Journey Report (2001); and
 - iv. speaking out for justice for Indigenous Australians.

2. That a follow up review from the Continuing the Journey report takes place during the upcoming term of the Commission.
3. That NATSIEC calls a gathering of Indigenous Church leadership to address the issue of the place of Indigenous peoples in church and society.
4. That NATSIEC investigate the possibility of creating a ‘Think Tank’, which aims to produce action solutions to address the disadvantage of Australia’s Indigenous peoples.

Actions by the NCCA:

- Immediately prior to the Forum NATSIEC is holding the second in its series of Indigenous Theology Conferences, drawing together leading Indigenous theologians and thinkers from around the country.
- NATSIEC has been active in creating and promoting the ‘Make Indigenous History’ campaign, particularly in the context of the 40th anniversary of the 1967 Referendum.
- NATSIEC has cooperated with other Indigenous Christian bodies in the creation of the new National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Christian Alliance (NATSICA).

Commission on Mission

04.07.23 **It was resolved that**

the churches review their representation on the Commission on Mission and appoint to the Commission key denominational leaders in local mission so that the Commission will be able to fulfil its mandate into the future.

Actions by the NCCA:

- In 2005, acting at the request of the Commission, the NCCA Executive decided to close down the Commission on Mission.
- In 2007 the Executive decided to begin a new project on mission ‘Growing Churches in the Australian Context’. The project is just beginning and the project brief will be workshopped during the Forum information sessions. For further information see the background notes attached to the General Secretary / Executive Report.

Dialogues

04.07.27 **It is resolved that**

the NCCA Forum requests the Executive to

1. find effective means through which the results of dialogues can be made available to church members by way of popular reports;
2. make available the results of dialogues to non-dialoguing members of the NCCA; and
3. facilitate the availability of the dialoguing church participants to inform other churches within the NCCA.

Actions by the NCCA:

- Note the publication of ‘Stages on the Way 2’ reported under 04.07.07.
- A consultation of the 13 bi-lateral dialogues is being convened by the Faith and Unity Commission just prior to the 2007 Forum.

Common Baptism

04.07.28 **It is resolved that**
the NCCA Forum

1. note that a number of churches practice common baptism; and
2. request the Executive to prepare guidance for these churches on how they may conduct baptisms according to their own rites within a common service.

Actions by the NCCA:

- The Faith and Unity Commission has examined ways of making the Common Baptism Certificate available more widely, and approached churches and publishers in this regard.
- Discussions are under way with the Presbyterian Church about its continuing involvement with the Common Certificate as that church is not a member of the NCCA and is not part of the Covenanting exercise in which the agreement on baptism was reaffirmed.
- Investigations have demonstrated that there can be no enforced alterations of an individual church's rite of baptism, but that the shared understanding of baptism can be reflected on an agreed set of words to appear on the reverse of whatever baptism certificate is used to mark the event. In some places clergy and others also attend baptisms in other local churches.

Interfaith discussion / dialogue

04.07.29 **It is resolved that**

the NCCA Executive be encouraged to provide guidelines for churches that assist them to distinguish between interfaith discussion and interdenominational dialogues, and that the group appointed to develop such guidelines include a significant representation from Orthodox Churches.

Actions by the NCCA:

- To date the NCCA has not developed these guidelines. There have been attempts in some State ecumenical Councils. To complete this project effectively the NCCA will need to gather / develop / receive resources from the churches. So far this has not been happened as other interfaith initiatives have taken up what resources we have.

Regional Interfaith Dialogue

04.07.30 **It is resolved that**

In the light of recent announcements of the Foreign Minister, Alexander Downer, of joint proposals by the Australian and Indonesian Governments to develop interfaith regional conferences in South East Asia:

1. the NCCA welcomes the possibility of such interfaith conferences;
2. notes the interfaith discussions already underway in Australia initiated by the NCCA and others; and
3. requests the NCCA Executive to approach the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade to offer support and assistance in the development of such interfaith regional conferences in South East Asia.

Actions by the NCCA:

- The NCCA has been actively involved in the 3 regional interfaith dialogues so far.

Funding the NCCA

04.07.31 **It is resolved that**

1. the Forum requests member Churches to promote in all their congregations the conduct on one Sunday each year of a special offering for the work of the NCCA and state ecumenical bodies;

2. the Forum request the state ecumenical bodies to agree to a 50-50 division of the net monies received (receipts less expenses) between the NCCA and the relevant state ecumenical body; and
3. the Forum request the Executive to:
 - i. arrange implementation of the annual special offering, including liaison with member Churches and state ecumenical bodies, the setting of the date each year and
 - ii. the provision of publicity materials; and take any further decisions needed in relation to the annual special offerings.

Actions by the NCCA:

- After canvassing member Churches it was apparent that the actions in this resolution could not practically be followed through. It really fell at the first hurdle, that of a special 'NCCA Sunday'.

Support 'in kind'

04.07.32 **It is resolved that**

when commissions and committees report on the financial support they receive from the churches that they acknowledge the contribution they receive in kind from the churches, e.g. personnel or use of facilities.

Actions by the NCCA:

- While it is not practically possible to include 'in kind' assistance in financial reports, the NCCA has endeavoured to acknowledge practical 'in kind' support in making its narrative reports – for instance hosting NCCA Executives, provision of meeting rooms, secondment of personnel without charge. It is constantly acknowledged that those who attend meetings as representatives of their churches or undertake tasks for the NCCA frequently do so as volunteers giving of their own time and talents.

Recommendations referred to the Executive

- Australian Prayer Network – the Executive, through the President, the General Secretary and Recd Gregor Henderson, has had discussions with this Network, and both parties have agreed to ongoing periodic contact to get to know one another.
- Guidelines for Churches & Nominations Committee – guidelines are not complete for every Commission & Network. A set has been provided for churches in selecting members for the Christian World Service Commission.
- Expanded Observer Participation – formal 'Observer' status is held by a number of churches, at the moment the Mar Thoma Church, the Chinese Methodist Church, the Presbyterian Church, the Assemblies of God (becoming Australian Christian Churches), the Baptist Union, and the Seventh Day Adventist Church. 'Para Church' groups are invited to participate in projects and attend meetings as much as possible without removing the NCCA's particular character as a council of Churches. In the case of the Youth Network groups such as SCM have long been full participants.

**Memorandum of Understanding
between the
National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Ecumenical
Commission and the National Council of Churches in Australia**

Signed 3rd December 2005

By

President of the NCCA, Revd Professor James Haire

General Secretary of the NCCA, Revd John Henderson

Chairperson of the NATSIEC, Bishop James Leftwich

Executive Secretary of the NATSIEC, Graeme Mundine

And endorsed by the Executive of the NCCA and

All members of the NATSIEC

Preamble

1. The National Council of Churches in Australia and its member Churches are aware of the importance of the First Peoples of this land: the Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander peoples who have been custodians of this country for many thousands of years.
2. The National Council of Churches in Australia (NCCA), and the National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Ecumenical Commission (NATSIEC) acknowledge the importance of mutual respect and understanding by modelling reconciliation to its member Churches and to the wider Australian community; and the benefits of a close and informed relationship.
3. The NCCA is committed to furthering reconciliation and ensuring that the First Peoples of this nation are shown respect and are valued for their contribution to Australian church life.
4. The National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Ecumenical Commission is mandated to:

“Provide a basis for further political action by church-related Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups, other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and the member Churches of the National Council of Churches in Australia.”

5. The National Council of Churches in Australia is mandated to:

“Encourage and enable the member Churches in the light of the Gospel to give prophetic leadership to each other and the community by

iv] acting in solidarity with Aboriginal and [Torres Strait] Islander people”

Intent

The intent of this *Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)* is to have in place an agreed procedure for the NCCA to act respectfully, appropriately, and in solidarity, with Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander peoples, through NATSIEC.

Objectives

The objective of the MOU is to:

1. Put on record the key requirements of the consultation process for the National Council of Churches when making comment on Indigenous issues to the member Churches, the wider non-Indigenous community, and the Indigenous community.
2. Ensure those members of NATSIEC and through them, Indigenous communities around Australia are consulted before statements are made to them and on their behalf by the National Council of Churches in Australia.

Principles

The following principles underpin the implementation of this MOU:

1. the NCCA is expected to consult with the NATSIEC in all matters relating to Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander peoples of Australia as a matter of respect;
2. as the Indigenous Ecumenical peak body in Australia, the NATSIEC has an important role to play in addressing the NCCA's involvement in Indigenous issues;
3. particular member Churches have Indigenous members and/or Indigenous Church bodies² with whom they can consult about matters relating to them and NATSIEC encourages member Churches to use those resources when involving themselves in Indigenous Issues.

Implementation: How to consult with the NATSIEC

1. Media Statements

In the event of a media statement made by the National Council of Churches in Australia (including its various Commissions and Networks) relating to Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander issues, the Council is expected to bring a draft copy of the statement to the NATSIEC³ for endorsement.

2. Public Events

The NCCA, its Networks, Commissions and staff, are requested to include a 'Welcome to Country' or an 'Acknowledgment' of Country⁴ at the start of any events in which they are involved, regardless of Indigenous content or involvement, as a sign of respect.

In the event that the President, General Secretary, an Executive member, a member of a Commission / Network or a staff member of the NCCA is to speak at a public event involving Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander issues, they are to involve the NATSIEC by including them in the preparation of speeches.

3. Articles for print

If the President, General Secretary, an Executive member, a member of a Commission / Network or a staff member of the NCCA is preparing an article for publication (for either a resource produced in-house or for an external body), involving Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander issues, they are requested to involve the NATSIEC in the preparation of such articles by informing the NATSIEC⁵ of their intent and by producing a draft for endorsement by the NATSIEC **before** the article goes to print.

² Such as NATSIAC (Anglican), NATSICC (Catholic), UAICC (Uniting), ACCIM (Churches of Christ), Salvation Army Aboriginal Ministries (Southern Territory).

³ The NATSIEC Executive and where possible the total membership of the NATSIEC will be involved in endorsing any press releases, speeches or articles produced by the NCCA relating to Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander peoples / issues / affairs.

⁴ Please see Appendix I for an appropriate formulation.

⁵ See footnote no. 2

4. Projects

If a Commission or Network of the NCCA is planning a project that has any impact on Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Peoples, they are to invite the NATSIEC into the planning phase of the project. They are also required to consult directly with the stakeholders of the project⁶

Review and Amendment

The MOU will commence on the date it is signed by all parties, and, unless otherwise agreed between the Parties, continue until the next meeting of the NCCA National Forum in 2007.

The Parties will undertake a joint review of the consultation process outlined above before the meeting of the NCCA National Forum in 2007.

This MOU may be amended at any time by an agreement in writing between the Parties.

Signed on the 3rd December by:

President of the NCCA, Revd Professor James Haire

General Secretary of the NCCA, Revd John Henderson

Chairperson of the NATSIEC, Bishop James Leftwich

Executive Secretary of the NATSIEC, Graeme Mundine

And endorsed by:

The Executive of the NCCA and all members of the NATSIEC

⁶ Where the project is targeting, or taking place within, a particular Indigenous community, consultation with NATSIEC **only** is **not** sufficient.

Appendix I

Welcome to Country

What is a 'Welcome to Country'?

A 'Welcome to Country' is where the traditional Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander custodians (usually the Elders) welcome people to their land. It always occurs in the opening ceremony of the event, preferably as the first item.

Adopting such practices enables the wider community to share in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ceremony and has been found to lead to better community relationships and therefore assists the reconciliation process.

Welcome to Country, also known as the Traditional Welcome, allows the Traditional Custodians of the region to give their blessing for the event to take place on their land. It must be done by a representative of the Traditional Custodians of the location at which the event is taking place. If it is not possible to arrange a Traditional Welcome by a local representative, a simple acknowledgment of Traditional Custodians by other speakers is appropriate (see Acknowledgement of Country).

Welcome to Country may consist of a single speech, or it may include some kind of ceremony (a song, dance, didjeridu solo, etc), or it may be a combination of these. It is important to remember that the Indigenous representative/s must feel comfortable with the arrangements. Rather than a gesture of tokenism and political correctness, *Welcome to Country* is a right of the local Indigenous Custodians and not a privilege.

Contact with the Traditional Custodians should be made as early as possible in the planning of the event. It is protocol that a gift be given to individuals or to an organisation for providing such a service. What form the gift takes should be negotiated between the Indigenous Custodians and the event organisers.

Acknowledgement of Country

As a sign of respect, it is appropriate for speakers at public events to acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land at the beginning of their speeches⁷.

Acknowledgement of Country is a way that the wider community can show respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the ongoing relationship of the traditional Custodians of the area with that land, waters and seas. It is a significant and symbolic reconciliation gesture. *Acknowledgement of Country* may also occur when Traditional Custodians are not available to provide an official *Welcome to Country*.

⁷ To find out the name of the traditional custodians of the area you are in, contact your local Aboriginal Land Council

Memorandum of Understanding

between the members of the Australian Ecumenical Officers' Network (AEON),
representing:

New South Wales Ecumenical Council (NSWEC)
Queensland Churches Together (QCT)
South Australian Council of Churches (SACC)
Tasmanian Council of Churches (TCC)
Victorian Council of Churches (VCC)
Council of Churches of Western Australia (CCWA)
National Council of Churches in Australia (NCCA)

Our Aims

With this Memorandum of Understanding (also referred to in this document as MoU) we, the parties named above, aim to facilitate cooperation between us to the following ends:

- to share resources optimally towards the fulfilment of our common goals
- to create synergies wherever possible and avoid duplication
- to maximise the impact of our efforts across Australia
- to support and learn from each other
- to empower the individual parties to carry out their work more effectively, thus empowering the churches to work together more effectively
- to project a credible public image of ecumenical cooperation.

Our Values

Our cooperation is based on the values of honesty, trust, mutual respect, transparency, reliability and respect for difference, as well as the acknowledgement and appreciation of each other's contributions.

Decision-Making

Since different joint projects might require different models of decision-making, we agree to determine the most appropriate model at the commencement of each joint project. This means that we either:

- a) seek consensus and initiate the project in question once all parties agree that they can "live with" it,
or:
- b) agree to initiate a new joint project with the participation of those parties which are able and willing to do so, not expecting the remaining parties to participate (opt-in model).

The process of decision-making relates to the planning, execution and evaluation of each joint measure.

Permission-Giving

The agreement allows all of us to use the material and content covered by it in order to further our common aims. We seek the endorsement of the member bodies of each of our councils for the cooperation outlined by the MoU. By facilitating sharing and synergies the MoU empowers the councils to participate in joint initiatives for the benefit of their members.

DRAFT

What the MoU Covers

- a) In drawing up long-term plans for each of our councils we agree to seek together, as AEON, directions and areas of activity which, if pursued together, could enhance our work and the achievement of our overall goals.
- b) Wherever practicable we agree to consult with each other in a timely fashion concerning those aspects of our short-term planning which could lead to, or be relevant to, joint undertakings.
- c) We will share resources that have been developed by each of us and could be useful for others. In so doing we agree to acknowledge the source of the resource whenever it is reproduced in whole or part and to respect any wishes expressed by the party which has created the resource concerning the way in which the resource can be used by others.
- d) We agree to seek possibilities for creating new resources jointly.
- e) We agree to share information e.g. concerning ecumenical visitors or any relevant decisions made by individual signatories.
- f) We will consider from time to time whether joint fund-raising initiatives may be expedient.

The Way This MoU Will Operate

We agree to draw up a set of guidelines to assist us in our joint activity, and to follow these guidelines, which may be reviewed from time to time in a fashion agreed to by all parties. They form an annex to this Memorandum of Understanding.

Communication and Information

We commit ourselves to the ongoing development and maintenance of a communication strategy to optimally further our work together.

At the time of signing the MoU the vehicles of information and communication will be:

- ten monthly telephone conferences with a rotating chair and minute-taking. The agenda is put together by the chair after consultation with all parties;
- at least one face-to-face meeting of all parties annually, convened by the General Secretary of the NCCA;
- the use of a shared space on the internet, in which resources are posted (including a calendar) and some discussions held;
- email consultations on an ad-hoc basis.

We commit ourselves to sharing information in a form and time-frame which allows others to participate fully in the decision-making process.

Our Commitment to Each Other

By signing this Memorandum of Understanding we affirm our ecumenical commitment to each other and to work together in the framework of AEON to the best of our ability.

Resolution of Disputes

We agree to try to resolve any points of tension in a spirit that reflects the values listed above. Should it become apparent that a particular issue cannot be resolved by dialogue between us, we agree to participate in a process of conflict resolution according to a mechanism to be decided upon by consensus as soon as possible after the signing of the MoU and added to the MoU as an appendix. The focus of the mechanism chosen should be restorative justice.

DRAFT

DRAFT

This Memorandum of Understanding will come into effect with its signing by the Ecumenical Officers of all State Ecumenical Councils and the NCCA.

Signed:

NAME: SIGNATURE:

REPRESENTING: DATE:

DRAFT

Appendix E5

Growing Churches in an Australian Context

Background Notes - Monday 21 May 2007

The National Council of Churches in Australia (NCCA) was formed in 1994 as a new Council that incorporated, along with Orthodox and Protestant Churches, full participation from the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference. At its inception the NCCA took over a number of activities of the former Australian Council of Churches (ACC).

An important one of those activities was the **Commission on Mission**. The following paragraph is from the report to the first National Forum of the NCCA in July 1994:

*“Mission provided a major impetus for the modern ecumenical movement, and structurally the **National Missionary Council** [formed 1926] predated the ACC. The National Missionary Council went through several transformations and became a commission of the ACC in the 1960s ... Originally focused on overseas mission, the Commission in recent years has had the broader task of assisting Australian churches in their common reflection on the content and meaning of the gospel and the manner of its proclamation and witness ... new programmes concerning evangelism have been taken up. One feature of the Commission ... is the inclusion of representatives of mission agencies of churches not otherwise linked with the ACC - or the NCCA ... It (has) identified aspects of mission on which ... the churches need to reflect more deeply together: the relation between gospel and cultures within the Australian context, for example, and the shifting understanding of mission, both at home and abroad.”*

At the end of 2004, at the request of the Commission, the NCCA Executive decided to wind up this Commission, which had been in existence in one form or another for 78 years. There were a number of reasons, including:

- Unresolved issues about mission in Australia and overseas
- Key Church mission decision makers were no longer involved
- A general decline in the effectiveness of the Commission

The wind up of the Commission left a small amount of money to ‘seed’ a new initiative on mission.

In November 2006 the NCCA Executive decided to establish a working group to explore a new project titled **Growing Churches in the Australian Context** which would intentionally bring Australian churches together for a special consultation. As with the former Commission we want to involve a wider group of churches than those represented by the membership of the NCCA, and also to include the voice of Indigenous Australians.

The brief of our working group is fairly broad, and it will be up to us in our first meetings to specify our task and the way we will go about it. The NCCA has asked us to build a national, church based consultation on issues of mission and evangelism. The difference from the many mission Conferences and Workshops that are held around Australia is the intention of bringing together people from a wide range of churches who are responsible policy and activity in this area, with an emphasis on the national agenda.

John Henderson - General Secretary

Special Report on the Appointment of the General Secretary

At the National Forum in 2001 it was resolved to appoint the Revd John Henderson as General Secretary of the National Council of Churches in Australia for 6 years from January 2002.

In order to prepare for the end of this period, in June 2006 the NCCA Executive appointed a process committee of the Revd Terence Corkin, Archbishop Aghan Baliozian, and the Revd Dr Erica Mathieson, to discuss the appointment/reappointment of the General Secretary.

An employment review of the General Secretary was subsequently conducted, and at its meeting in November 2006 the Executive resolved to recommend to the National Forum in July 2007:

that the appointment of the Reverend John Henderson as General Secretary of the NCCA be extended for a further 3 years (i.e. to the end of 2010) on the same terms and conditions as agreed to at the time of his original appointment

NCCA Executive
19 June 2007

Finance Committee Report

The Finance Committee is responsible, on behalf of the NCCA Executive, for the oversight of all financial matters pertaining to the operations of the NCCA and associated bodies, particularly the processes of the budget development and control.

Looking Back

The past 3 years have seen many projects undertaken by the Finance Committee....

❖ **Systems**

Ensuring staff have access to appropriate systems has been a priority of the last 3 years. The arrival of the new Business Manager in 2004 identified a number of areas where the NCCA was not keeping pace with changes in processing systems, and a number of changes have been made.

Simplification has been a key driver in these processes, allowing staff to focus their limited time on priority matters

To this end we have:

- constructed a new Standard Chart of Accounts (SCOA) harmonising all account codes within the NCCA;
- built a system of management reports allowing Department Heads to better analyse their monthly results;
- implemented an accrual based accounts payable system allowing immediate recognition of expenses in the financial reports;
- introduced system generated cheque runs and EFT's to suppliers;
- improved information sharing and data security by building a Virtual Provide Network with the Victorian Office and remote workers;
- reduced the need to retain excessive documents in paper form by utilising scanning and optical character recognition software.

❖ **Property**

The NCCA operations are currently based in 4 properties (all owned):

1. Commercial office space in Sydney (CBD)
2. Residential units in Petersham (suburban Sydney)
3. Aged Care Facility in Strathfield (suburban Sydney)
4. Commercial office space in Melbourne (CBD)

During the last 3 years there has been considerable focus on the NCCA office in Sydney. Initially minor modifications were made to “de-clutter” the work areas and to comply with OH&S legislation, but a very significant building project was undertaken in 2006.

Well thought out architectural plans and modern workstation design have meant that all staff can be located on a single floor, which has greatly improved communication between departments. A new phone system was also installed during the fit out allowing direct in dial access and voicemail to all staff.

Discussions about the potential of having a presence in Canberra remain on the agenda.

❖ **Personnel**

The NCCA employs 25 full time equivalent permanent staff and a number of casual/project staff from time to time.

New policies on recruitment, information technology and OH&S were added to the existing operational policies and aggregated into a single document. A separate induction manual was also developed to assist new staff to adapt to working at the NCCA.

A review of pay scales saw a reworked version being introduced in 2005, and in 2006 salary packaging was rolled out to Executive Staff.

❖ **Risk Management/Legal**

A staff Occupational Health and Safety Committee was formed in late 2004 to work with the Finance Committee (through the Business Manager) to ensure that potential hazards were identified and corrective action taken.

The Finance Committee oversaw the registration and subsequent deregistration of NCCA Christian World Service Limited. The Audited Statutory Accounts for NCCA Limited are lodged with ASIC on an annual basis.

A number of service contracts were renegotiated by the Committee since the last Forum, resulting in significant savings to the NCCA.

The NCCA holds insurance policies covering all major risks.

Looking Forward

The Committee will of course be directed by the newly appointed Executive. Some of the projects already identified include....

❖ **Systems**

Our existing fundraising database system operates independently of our accounting system, resulting in some degree of duplication of work. A review is planned for 2008 to investigate alternate systems.

❖ **Property**

At the time of writing, level 6 of 379 Kent St Sydney is on the market. The Finance Committee is working with a property marketing firm to achieve a satisfactory price.

❖ **Personnel**

To better equip managers for leadership positions within the NCCA, a professional development program will be rolled out during 2007/8.

A parity review of wages has been scheduled for late 2007, as has a review of the Policy Manual.

❖ **Risk Management/Legal**

Ensuring a safe work environment is an ongoing responsibility, and the wellbeing of staff and visitors to our sites will continue to be considered.

There will need to be a considered process of contract review and negotiation in the lead up to the sale of level 6, 379 Kent St.

❖ **Thanks**

During the last term, Wendie Wilkie chaired the Finance Committee as Treasurer until she moved to Wagga Wagga in March 2006. David Cohen and Ron Brown have co-chaired since this time. The Committee wishes to express its gratitude to all three. The Committee has actively sought a Treasurer since Wendie's departure, and would gratefully receive nominations.

We have all enjoyed the opportunity of serving the churches as members of the NCCA Finance Committee.

David Cohen and Ron Brown

Co-Chairs

Finance Committee

Appendix F1 – Financial Statements

Comparative Financial Reports

Departments with External Revenue > \$100k

- o **Secretariat (Incorp Communications and Business Services)**

- o **NATSIEC**

- o **Christian World Service**

Secretariat (Incorporating Communications and Business Services)

	2006	2005	2004
	\$	\$	\$
Revenue			
Church Contributions	220,653	228,875	210,380
Appeals and Other Income	45,051	72,499	73,699
Contributions from CWS	409,500	380,200	364,423
Contributions from NSW EC	31,500	27,010	25,968
Contributions from Other Departments	33,408	38,533	29,691
Forum	-	-	35,807
Total Revenue	740,102	747,117	739,968
Disbursements			
Staff Costs	510,083	488,203	487,082
Travel and Meetings	21,034	22,316	21,922
Allocations to Departments	32,459	38,073	66,066
Office and Other Expenses	168,887	180,308	164,994
Forum	-	-	37,388
Abnormal Depreciation Catch Up	-	-	106,736
Total Disbursements	732,463	728,900	884,188
Surplus / (deficit) for the year	7,639	18,217	(144,220)
Funds available at 1 January	2,062	(16,155)	128,065
Funds available at 31 December	9,701	2,062	(16,155)

NATSIEC

	2006	2005	2004
	\$	\$	\$
Revenue			
Church Contributions	13,620	136,828	70,270
Appeals and Other Income	148,371	73,310	43,559
Contributions from CWS	121,982	137,500	137,500
Contributions from General Secretariat	-	2,575	2,500
Total Revenue	283,973	350,213	253,829
Disbursements			
Staff Costs	114,856	172,185	154,507
Travel and Meetings	61,459	90,594	71,519
Project Payments	77,329	86,571	37,500
Office and Other Expenses	55,921	65,652	42,089
Total Disbursements	309,565	415,002	305,615
Surplus / (deficit) for the year	(25,592)	(64,789)	(51,786)
Funds available at 1 January	70,730	135,519	187,305
Funds available at 31 December	45,138	70,730	135,519

Christian World Service

	2006	2005	2004
	\$	\$	\$
Revenue			
Donations and Gifts	3,498,195	3,869,050	3,276,978
Grants AusAID	1,258,458	1,832,965	2,461,908
Investment Income	82,558	37,432	42,430
Other Income	695,773	497,275	289,206
Total Revenue	5,534,984	6,236,722	6,070,522
Disbursements			
Overseas Projects			
Funds to overseas projects	3,785,111	4,046,505	3,992,847
Other project costs	246,940	198,141	206,378
	4,032,051	4,244,646	4,199,225
Fundraising Costs			
Public	565,128	451,901	641,325
Govt. and Multilaterals	20,191	15,271	14,586
	585,319	467,172	655,911
Domestic Projects	441,993	479,226	404,474
Community Education	288,941	224,056	216,952
Administration	574,670	611,535	644,257
Total Disbursements	5,922,974	6,026,635	6,120,819
Surplus / (deficit) for the year	(387,990)	210,087	(50,297)
Funds available at 1 January	1,586,888	1,376,801	1,427,098
Funds available at 31 December	1,198,898	1,586,888	1,376,801

Appendix F2 – Independent Auditor Statements

NCCA Limited
ACN 000 391 104

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT
OF NCCA LIMITED
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

Scope

We have audited the financial report of NCCA Limited for the financial year ended 31st December, 2006 comprising the Balance Sheet, Income Statement, Cash Flow Statement, Notes to and forming part of the Accounts and the Directors Declaration. The Company's Directors are responsible for the financial report. We have conducted an independent audit of the financial report in order to express an opinion on it to the members of the Company.

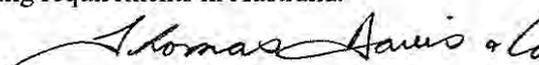
Our audit has been conducted in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards to provide reasonable assurance whether the financial report is free of material misstatement. Our procedures included examination, on a test basis, of evidence supporting the amounts and other disclosures in the financial report and the evaluation of accounting policies and significant accounting estimates. These procedures have been undertaken to form an opinion whether, in all material respects, the financial report is presented fairly in accordance with the Accounting Standards and other mandatory professional reporting requirements in Australia and statutory requirements so as to present a view which is consistent with our understanding of the Company's financial position, and performance as represented by the results of its operations and its cash flows.

The audit opinion expressed in this report has been formed on the above basis.

Audit Opinion

In our opinion, the financial report of NCCA Limited is in accordance with;

- (a) the Corporations Act 2001, including:
 - (i) giving a true and fair view of the Company's financial position as at 31st December, 2006 and of its performance for the year ended on that date; and
 - (ii) complying with Accounting Standards in Australia and the Corporations Regulations 2001; and
- (b) other mandatory professional reporting requirements in Australia.



THOMAS DAVIS & CO.



R.C. GEEVES

PARTNER

Chartered Accountants

SYDNEY, 20 June, 2007

"Liability limited by a scheme approved under Professional Standards Legislation"

NCCA Limited
ACN 000 391 104

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT

OF NCCA LIMITED

(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

Scope

We have audited the financial report of NCCA Limited for the financial year ended 31st December, 2005 comprising the Balance Sheet, Income Statement, Cash Flow Statement, Notes to and forming part of the Accounts and the Directors Declaration. The Company's Directors are responsible for the financial report. We have conducted an independent audit of the financial report in order to express an opinion on it to the members of the Company.

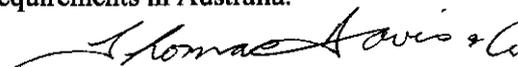
Our audit has been conducted in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards to provide reasonable assurance whether the financial report is free of material misstatement. Our procedures included examination, on a test basis, of evidence supporting the amounts and other disclosures in the financial report and the evaluation of accounting policies and significant accounting estimates. These procedures have been undertaken to form an opinion whether, in all material respects, the financial report is presented fairly in accordance with the Accounting Standards and other mandatory professional reporting requirements in Australia and statutory requirements so as to present a view which is consistent with our understanding of the Company's financial position, and performance as represented by the results of its operations and its cash flows.

The audit opinion expressed in this report has been formed on the above basis.

Audit Opinion

In our opinion, the financial report of NCCA Limited is in accordance with;

- (a) the Corporations Act 2001, including:
 - (i) giving a true and fair view of the Company's financial position as at 31st December, 2005 and of its performance for the year ended on that date; and
 - (ii) complying with Accounting Standards in Australia and the Corporations Regulations 2001; and
- (b) other mandatory professional reporting requirements in Australia.



THOMAS DAVIS & CO.



R.C. GEEVES

PARTNER

Chartered Accountants

SYDNEY, 31 May, 2006

"Liability limited by a scheme approved under Professional Standards Legislation"

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT TO THE MEMBERS

OF NCCA LIMITED
A.C.N. 000 391 104
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

Scope

We have audited the financial report of NCCA Limited for the year ended 31st December, 2004 comprising the Statement of Financial Position, Statement of Financial Performance, Statement of Cash Flows, Notes to and forming part of the Accounts and Directors Declaration. The Company's Directors are responsible for the financial report. We have conducted an independent audit of the financial report in order to express an opinion on it to the members of the Company.

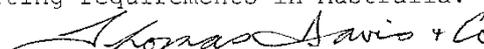
Our audit has been conducted in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards to provide reasonable assurance whether the financial report is free of material misstatement. Our procedures included examination, on a test basis, of evidence supporting the amounts and other disclosures in the financial report, and the evaluation of accounting policies and significant accounting estimates. These procedures have been undertaken to form an opinion whether, in all material respects, the financial report is presented fairly in accordance with Accounting Standards and other mandatory professional reporting requirements in Australia and statutory requirements so as to present a view which is consistent with our understanding of the Company's financial position, and performance as represented by the results of its operations and its cash flows.

The audit opinion expressed in this report has been formed on the above basis.

Audit Opinion

In our opinion, the financial report of NCCA Limited is in accordance with;

- (a) the Corporations Act 2001, including:
- (i) giving a true and fair view of the Company's financial position as at 31st December, 2004 and of its performance for the year ended on that date; and
 - (ii) complying with Accounting Standards in Australia and the Corporations Regulations 2001; and
- (b) other mandatory professional reporting requirements in Australia.



THOMAS DAVIS & CO.


R.C. GEEVES PARTNER

Chartered Accountants

SYDNEY,

29 April, 2005

"Liability limited by the Accountant's Scheme approved under the Professional Standards Act 1994 (NSW)"

NATSIEC Report

“Life Together”



Introduction:

It's More than Time

‘How long O Lord?’ The Psalmist’s cry continues to echo in the hearts and lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait peoples today. Despite the belated recognition of Indigenous peoples and our experiences, through such as events as the 1967 Referendum and the 1997 inquiry into the Stolen Generations, we continue to live as exiles in our own land. In the backwash of a myriad of research studies, new initiatives and Government new starts over forty years, we Indigenous Australians, as a whole, fail to see the realisation of all the promises made. Life expectancy is 17 years less than for other Australian citizens; traditional lands, languages and cultural practices remain under threat, and Indigenous participation in areas such as education and the labour force remain much lower than for other Australians. Such are the realities of the time in which we live.

The Reality (or ‘Kingdom’) of God is very different. The great prophets of the Bible; Mary in her Magnificat; Jesus himself, speak of another, very different, time: God’s time. Through the stories of our faith and of our culture we know of this different time. As we share, and enter into, these stories, so we are transformed by, and become transforming agents of, that Reality. Let me therefore share with you, just a few of the many, many great stories, which enable that transformation.

The first story is one that is very well known, but little understood as a story pointing us towards liberation. This is the second account of Creation in the book of Genesis (ch.2 vv.4b-9). How evocative this story is; as we hear how God reaches down and takes the soil of the earth itself to form human beings, and then, how God breathes into human nostrils the breath of life. Surely this is a Dreaming story, if ever there was one! This story says to us is that God created each and every one of us as being very, very, very special to God. For such a message is at the heart of the story; it is not so much an account of how things come to be in a literal, scientific, sense, as it is a revelation of how we relate to God, God’s Creation, and all that is. It tells us that, not only do we belong, but that we are intimately connected to everything and everyone else; that our life itself is impossible without understanding that we are the Land itself and that the life we share is the very breath of the Creator Spirit. What a self-understanding this offers, and how different from so much of the media and mainstream messages we receive! Knowing this, we are truly transformed. Story after story in the cultures of our people tells the same message. Sometimes the story is shaped and coloured a little differently, like the stories from the different clans within my people, the Bundjalung people, which speak of our relationship with the same sacred mountain, but from different perspectives. Yet, like the two different views of Creation in Genesis, they speak of the same reality, of our connection to the Land and Creator Spirit, and of the consequent sacred worth and purpose we each share. For such ancient stories are not about a time long ago, but about a time that is ‘everywhen’: then, now, and to come.

In the light of what Christians have called our true spiritual identity, what then should be our re-action when this reality is not present in our lives and world? Again, the major stories of both the Christian Faith and Indigenous culture concur. We are called to live out the relationship, which is our gift and true nature. The second story of which I remind you is, therefore, that of the Emu, Brolga and Jabiru, as told by Pastor George Rosendale in that wonderful little book 'The Peacemaker' published recently by Wontulp-Bi-Buya College. Emu is walking on her own, when she spots her cousins Brolga and Jabiru fighting. What is she to do? She cannot help but be involved, for she is related to them, as we are to everyone. They are her family. So she gets between them and tries to stop the fighting. That is the first moral of the story: get involved! Don't pass by on the other side. We each have responsibility and relationship for, and to, each other. Secondly, however, that involvement may cost us; for - whack! - down come the digging sticks upon her back and blood erupts, leaving her, and her descendants, with a bent, broken, back and those distinctive red markings upon her sister birds. If we live with the breath of the Spirit in and upon us, and if we seek to share the good news of freedom which Jesus declared at Nazareth, we may also expect the kind of rejection Jesus also suffered.

Let us not run away from this however. For freeing others is at the heart of the Gospel. A third story, the story of the raising of Lazarus, is powerful and instructive here. On the one hand, it speaks of a brother who has been lost, dragged down into the powers of death. Perhaps each of us in some way still know those powers in our lives and families, bringing people down, causing such sorrow and distress. The word of God is clear in response: 'come out!' Jesus commands Lazarus, become what you were created to be, what you truly are and will be. This is a challenge to each and every one of us, to live in that Reality which creates, saves and sanctifies us. On the other hand, it is difficult, and often impossible, for our people to enter into their freedom alone, without assistance. So Jesus issues a second command: 'untie him!' Our role, as Indigenous peoples, is to let our people go free, tied up as they have been. This is a challenge for non-Indigenous people also.

Indeed, the Gospel is not only a comfort to us, but also a profound challenge, not least to non-Indigenous Australia. Sometimes it seems as if the biblical words continually ring true: 'though their ears are open, they do not hear; though their eyes are open, they do not see.' What might make a difference? My fourth, and final story, is that of Jesus and Zacchaeus. In the story, the people surround Jesus, responsive to what he is saying and doing. Zacchaeus also wants to find out what is going on, but he does not do so properly. Instead of mixing with the people, and sharing their lives, with Jesus, he climbs into a tree and looks down upon Jesus and the crowd around him, assessing the situation from a safe distance. In so doing, he represents many non-Indigenous people who are intrigued, or genuinely seek to understand, but cannot because of their unwillingness to change their perspective, their, literal and metaphorical, standing-point in relation to Indigenous people. Jesus is blunt in response. Come down from that tree, he says to Zacchaeus: get down in the dust and share in the life of others, then you will understand and be in relationship with me.

We have heard many promises and many cries from others that 'it's time'. Such promises and cries have all too often failed because they have been founded on false realities and on the non-Indigenous standpoints of others. Our call in contrast is to enter the Reality of God and see things from Indigenous standpoints, the standpoints of costly relationship. The campaign to Make Indigenous Poverty History has been part of this call. Note well, it took us, as in NATSIEC, to do something about this. We cannot leave it to others, though others must be called upon to join in, and not leave it all to us. It's more than time!

What has taken place:

Since the last National Forum in 2004, NATSIEC has, in partnership with the NCCA, strived to serve and meet the aspirations of Indigenous peoples according to its own Mandate and NCCA's objective *'to encourage and enable the member Churches in the light of the Gospel to give prophetic leadership to each other and the community by acting in solidarity with Aboriginal and Islander people'*.

Some of NATSIEC's contributions over the past 3 years include:

Provide a forum for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to speak and take action on issues of faith, mission and evangelism; of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander spirituality and theology; of social justice and land rights.

NATSIEC has provided numerous opportunities for many Indigenous Australians to participate in forums organised by us as well as other organisations. For example the "Christ and Culture" Conference in Queensland in July, 2007. The "Hearts are Burning" Forums (as a lead up to the 20th Anniversary of Pope John Paul II's talk to Indigenous Australia in 1986) run throughout 2005 in all States and Territories began raising the issues associated with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. It also allowed an opportunity for many to contribute to the discussion.

NATSIEC sends a representative to the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues each year held at the UN offices in New York. This provides a forum for the voice of our Indigenous Church to be heard on the International stage. It also allows us to stand in solidarity with other Indigenous Peoples like West Papua and Zimbabwe.

Mungandor Bi-Buya is the name given to the Indigenous Theology think tank we have established. Thanks to funding from the Glenburnie fund we held our inaugural retreat for leading Indigenous thinkers in this area. The retreat was held in December at Baulkham Hills with 10 people in attendance. It was a very inspiring and productive event. We spent the week reflecting on several aspects of scripture and the week culminated in the production of our first Mungandor Bi-Buya publication – Ker Ker.

Ker Ker, comes from the Torres Strait languages meaning "time". Containing short chapters by each of the participants we are confident that this volume will be a significant contribution to the further development of an Indigenous theological dialogue.

Ker Ker is currently at the printers and will be available to you at the Forum

NATSIEC has also developed and strengthened its networks. We liaise constantly with Church Justice organisations other justice groups to keep each other informed about what is happening in Indigenous affairs. This includes other areas of the NCCA.

Serve as a unified voice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as they relate to member Churches and international ecumenical bodies.

NATSIEC affirms the work of the Indigenous organisation of each member Church. We aim to encourage a free flow of information between these organisations. Whilst effective communication is already established, consideration is always underway to improve communication channels in the future.

The Commission is also a forum for the exchange of ideas and theological discussions on church as well as wider issues affecting Indigenous Communities. There is evidence that this promotion of Indigenous points of view has already been of benefit to Indigenous sections of member Churches when formulating their own policies eg Covenanting, Social Justice and structure.

NATSIEC began the “Make Indigenous Poverty History” campaign, in 2005, to again raise the issues of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. This campaign highlights the situation of Indigenous peoples here, in our own back yard. Quite often we see the poor as those people overseas and the campaign reminds us that here in Australia we have some work to do. The forums associated with the campaign have also helped in point one of our mandate.

NATSIEC continues its ongoing dialogue with the non member Indigenous Churches who are searching for a voice for themselves.

Help rebuild self-esteem, pride and dignity within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

NATSIEC strives at all times to build the self-esteem of Indigenous Communities. We encourage and support individuals and communities to participate in the mainstream life of the church as well as within society. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have a place in the Kingdom of God and it is their right to take up this place. NATSIEC Commissioners are also observers on other Commissions which allow Indigenous voices to be heard in mainstream church. NATSIEC continues to send Indigenous People to relevant forums - both National and International such as the World Council of Churches Assembly in Brazil and the United Nation’s Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

The NATSIEC Development Fund helps communities and organisations carry out their hopes and dreams through the provision of small grants. Projects that we fund are diverse and include supporting the establishment of youth groups and programmes that keep them in touch with their culture and community. All our projects are encouraging signs of the good that is happening out there.

Promote harmony, justice and understanding between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the wider community.

In 2006, NATSIEC and the Social Justice network focused on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander disadvantage; consequently the 2006 Social Justice Sunday theme was Make Indigenous Poverty History. A CD Rom was produced with educational material, power points, video vignettes, and prayer material for use in the community. It is a great resource and is still available through NATSIEC

NATSIEC also carries out many speaking engagements throughout the year. We address schools, parishes, churches, Universities, Reconciliation and community groups. We also produce or support the production of education packages. For example MIPH CD Rom, worksheets and an Indigenous theology booklet called Ker Ker.

NATSIEC also produces posters, cards, prayers and liturgies for use with groups. These have been free in the past; however it is necessary to charge to offset rising costs.

Provide a basis for further political action by church-related Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups, other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and the member Churches of the National Council of Churches in Australia.

NATSIEC held the Social Justice Sunday 2006 launch in the Federal Parliament House after three days of lobbying politicians to end Indigenous Poverty. Out of this event we were able to host a visit to the Torres Strait by Senator Andrew Bartlett where he heard directly from Torres Strait Islanders.

NATSIEC regularly speaks out on issues affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. It also urges member Churches to speak out more strongly on the injustices which are taking place here in Australia. For example, we joined with other groups prior to Christmas 2006 in a street demonstration concerning the processes which took place after the events on Palm Island in 2005. We regularly join in the marches on Sorry day and other events as they come to hand.

Administer all funds of the National Council of Churches in Australia relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

NATSIEC is a good steward of its funds. We have increased our involvement in many projects and have developed new ones and still kept within budget. We have increased our ability to raise funds for specific projects, helped in part by our efforts to be more visible in the wider community. Through careful planning and budgeting NATSIEC has a strong basis for the future in which to further develop and expand its projects in keeping with its Mandate. We do, however, have some concerns about the long term financial commitment of the churches to NATSIEC, and would encourage more equitable contributions from all member Churches, particularly those who our represented on our Commission.

Share in furthering the objectives and promoting the programmes of the National Council of Churches in Australia.

NATSIEC is frequently involved with other Commissions and Networks of the NCCA. For example: The 2006 Social Justice Sunday material; we have continued to work with Faith and Unity in producing the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity and the Week of Prayer for Reconciliation material, the Gender Commission in its support of women

Conclusion

NATSIEC is still concerned that the rights of Australia's Indigenous Peoples are increasingly being eroded. Practical Reconciliation has not worked and the future of Indigenous affairs is grim. The Commission notes that even within church, despite small shining lights, there is little passion for the rights of Indigenous peoples; where is the passion that saw 250,000 people walk across the Harbour Bridge in 2000?

We also note, with concern that Indigenous rights and cultures are under threat world wide. We must stand together, in solidarity, with our Indigenous brothers and sisters from all lands to fight for justice and equality. We support each other as we tackle issues of injustice and poverty; we must help each other to develop and take our responsibilities as leaders

within our communities and our churches. Finally, we take this opportunity to recommit to encouraging greater solidarity between Indigenous peoples and the churches.

Bishop James Leftwich	Anglican	Chair
Bishop Saibo Mabo	Anglican	Deputy Chair
Ernie Trevaskis	Catholic	
Elsie Heiss	Catholic	
Rev Max Wright	Churches of Christ	
Rev Len Wallum	Churches of Christ	
Peter Wallace	Lutheran	
Rachelle McIvor	Lutheran	
Lurleen Blackman	Uniting	
Rev Mawunydjil Garawirrtja	Uniting	
Envoy Denis Webb	Salvation Army Eastern Territory	

Graeme Mundine
Executive Secretary
NATSIEC

CWS Commission Report

Welcome to the 2007 NCCA Forum!

Overview of CWS

Christian World Service ('CWS') is the international humanitarian and development agency of the NCCA. It is governed by the CWS Commission made up of representatives of NCCA member Churches, who are appointed at the NCCA Forum.

CWS works to achieve *transformational development* – by firstly recognising the causes of poverty, oppression, injustice and division and then taking action, with affected communities, to address the causes.

The CWS Mission Statement is: “*Responding to the teachings of Jesus Christ, the member Churches of the NCCA, through their Commission for CWS come together to break down the structures which create poverty, oppression, injustice and division.*”

To achieve this, we believe there must be four levels to our work:

- Programs - on the ground;
- Partnerships - from the local to the global levels, mainly with churches and ecumenical bodies;
- Policy development and advocacy; and
- Public involvement in campaigns and initiatives.

CWS began as ‘*the Churches’ International Relief and Rehabilitation Committee*’ in 1948. In 1949, Reverend Frank Byatt of Melbourne began what is known as *the Christmas Bowl*. Frank placed a bowl on the dinner table on Christmas Day as an invitation for people to give the cost of their meal to people who were hungry, thirsty, strangers, poor, sick or in prison. Frank’s vision has grown over time and now the Christmas Bowl works on 44 AID programs:

- *Assistance in emergencies*: preparing for and responding to natural disasters and armed conflict;
- *Injustice response*: peace building, human security and refugee programs; and
- *Development and poverty reduction*: education, health, water and food security.

The overseas AID programs operate in 22 countries across Africa, Asia, the Middle East and the Pacific. We also support Refugee and Indigenous programs in Australia.

Thanks to our supporters, and including AusAID contracts, we have been able to provide the following:

3 year period	Overseas AID programs	Australian Refugee & Indigenous programs	Total
1998-2000	\$9,703,674	\$1,630,635	\$11,334,309
2001-2003	\$11,130,655	\$1,229,667	\$12,360,322
2004-2006	\$12,539,135	\$1,365,204	\$13,904,339

Copies of CWS Annual Reports will be available at the Forum and are available online at www.ncca.org.au/cws. The above figures have been converted into 2006 dollars.

The approach to all of the programs supported by CWS includes recognition of the importance of local participation, developing capacity, non-discrimination, gender equality, cultural and spiritual sensitivity, protection of human rights, advocacy, promotion of peace and reconciliation, effective communication and environmental sustainability. CWS has full accreditation and adheres to Australian and international humanitarian and development Codes of Conduct.

CWS is mandated by the NCCA to:

- a. *Respond to human need by providing direct relief to alleviate poverty and suffering through development programs and emergency relief programs, in partnership with Christian churches and other bodies or networks in Australia and overseas.*
- b. *Take a lead role in fulfilling the stated objectives of the NCCA to encourage and enable the member Churches in the light of the Gospel to give prophetic leadership to each other and the community by...*
 - i. *speaking out on behalf of oppressed people;*
 - ii. *acting in solidarity with Aboriginal and Islander people; and*
 - iii. *responding to human need and acting on issues of justice, peace and creation.*
- c. *Work alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Australia, particularly through supporting the work of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ecumenical Commission.*
- d. *Stand in solidarity with uprooted people through educational programs, advocacy and networking, and supporting appropriate aspects of resettlement in Australia.*
- e. *Engage in education for justice, development, and peace programs to help raise the awareness of the Australian community regarding poverty, injustice, and ecological damage affecting the developing world, especially by addressing their root causes.*
- f. *Undertake analysis, develop policies, and facilitate advocacy within Australia and internationally in relation to human rights and international affairs.*
- g. *Consult regularly with the overseas aid and development agencies of NCCA member Churches and act with or on behalf of those agencies in furtherance of these objects.*
- h. *Raise resources for the work of CWS through regular programmes such as the Christmas Bowl and appeals.*
- i. *Other incidental work related to the objects of CWS.*

Please visit our website www.ncca.org.au/cws to find out more about our programs, partners, policy work or public initiatives.

CWS Development since the 2004 Forum

We have been involved in some exciting initiatives since the 2004 NCCA Forum that we are keen for you to read about, though as those initiatives are explained in separate material which will be provided to you, this report outlines recent developments and the CWS aims through to 2010.

Much has changed in CWS and the CWS Commission since the 2004 NCCA Forum. These changes include:

- new CWS policies and accreditation;
- the new global ecumenical development alliance (ACT Development); and
- new CWS plans for the future.

❖ **New CWS policies and accreditation**

Participants at the 2004 NCCA Forum will recall the lengthy discussion regarding whether CWS should incorporate primarily in order to meet the new accreditation requirements with AusAID. On further investigation, it was clarified that incorporation was not necessary for accreditation and so CWS remains unincorporated. Much has changed though regarding the governance policies of CWS, with the CWS Commission becoming the governing body of CWS in mid 2005, rather than the NCCA Executive. The CWS Commission still provides detailed reports to the NCCA Executive and works closely with the NCCA Finance Committee. We believe that this new arrangement is working well.

As mentioned in the Overview, the basic role of the Commission is now to govern CWS on behalf of the 15 member Churches of the NCCA, including:

- set and monitor the strategic plan of CWS, including the scope and priorities of CWS programs;
- adoption of the annual budget and annual financial statements of CWS;
- approve and monitor the progress of major capital expenditure and acquisitions and divestitures;
- set and monitor CWS policies; and
- approve and monitor risk management policies (incl codes of conduct).

A range of other organisational policies have been developed and reviewed in the past three years. Copies of CWS policies are available on request. On-going work on these policies led to a favourable AusAID accreditation review in 2005/6. CWS now holds full accreditation for the next five years.

Further advice is being sought on whether CWS meets the requirements for endorsement as a Public Benevolent Institution (PBI). Depending on this advice, it may become appropriate for the CWS Commission and NCCA Executive to reconsider whether CWS ought to become a legal entity, as a wholly owned subsidiary of the NCCA, for PBI endorsement.

❖ **The new global ecumenical development alliance (ACT Development)**

After several years of planning, the new ACT (*Action by Churches Together*) alliance was officially launched in February 2007. CWS is a member and has been part of the development of the alliance.

ACT Development involves 55 church and church-based agencies with 14,223 staff working on 901 development programs in 157 countries (as at February 2007). The ACT Development alliance focuses primarily on the sustainable fight against poverty and injustice. Its members are required to adhere to a number of agreements regarding transparency, mutual responsibility and 'good practices'. ACT Development will work to ensure high quality within its development co-operation activities and will work closely with the ACT emergency preparation and response network (now 11 years old) to ensure a

better transition from humanitarian assistance to development work. We anticipate that the two ACT alliances will merge within two years and have been working to assist this move.

❖ **New CWS plans**

A series of reviews of CWS were conducted in 2005 and 2006 and a number of proposals were considered. After considering all options on how best to achieve the CWS Mission and fulfill the Mandate, in December 2006 the CWS Commission adopted the *CWS 2007-2010 Strategic Framework*. A copy of the Framework is below. The annexure to this report describes aspects which may be unfamiliar. In short, the Strategic Framework and annual plans focus on growing support for:

- the Christmas Bowl, Partners4Peace, Simply Sharing Week and Refugee & Migrant Sunday (our key *public involvement* initiatives);
- AID programs and partners, including facilitating greater collaboration with church agencies; and
- the two CWS campaigns:
 - *the Refugee & Responsibility to Protect initiative*; and
 - *achieving the Millennium Development Goals*.

To assist in achieving the goals in the 2007-2010 Strategic Framework, the CWS Commission recently adopted a new CWS staff structure.

The 2007-2010 Strategic Framework is to be implemented through annual plans - constituting annual goals and budgets. The 2007/8 plan was recently approved by the CWS Commission (an outline of the 2007/8 goals is below).

I, along with a number of CWS Commissioners and the CWS Director, will be at the 2007 NCCA Forum, and we look forward to seeing you there.

The Reverend John Gilmore
CWS Commission Chairperson
26 April 2007

Appendix CWS1

CWS 2007-2010 STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK			
1. Public involvement and agency effectiveness	<p>1.1 Growing funds for AID programs. 2010 targets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Partners4Peace: 5,000 partners = \$2m per year - through a concerted push and the new P4P Fundraising & Education Framework; ii. Christmas Bowl: \$3m per year – as part of an Australian Joint Christmas Appeal mechanism; iii. Emergency appeals: growing recognition of CWS/ACT emergency work – and part of an Australian Joint Emergencies Appeal mechanism ('AusDEC'); iv. CWS well positioned for a concerted education and fundraising push into broader society in the 2010-2015 strategic framework. <p>1.2 Enhancing effectiveness. Aim: CWS is able to demonstrate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. High program standards; ii. Good stewardship of funds and a strong supporter focus; iii. Enhanced communication, cooperation and collaboration with Australian churches / agencies through the emerging Church Agencies Network ('CAN'); iv. Greater program complementarity with Australian churches / agencies + reduced competition and duplication. <p>1.3 Enhancing public involvement and worship opportunities. Aim:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Additional campaign opportunities for supporters through CWS's Refugee/R2P and MDG campaigns; ii. Additional social justice theology resources regarding a growing range of social justice issues. 		
2a. Partnership & Programs:	Humanitarian Assistance		International Development
	Assistance in emergencies	Injustice response	Development & poverty reduction
	<p>2a.1 Support ACT International programs <i>CWS role:</i> Support ACT emergency appeals, wherever they occur.</p>	<p>2a.2 Support justice programs <i>CWS role:</i> support ecumenical justice programs in Africa, Asia, Middle East, the Pacific + domestic refugee programs + NATSIEC (in accordance with the 2007 comprehensive program review).</p>	<p>2a.3 Support development programs <i>CWS role:</i> support ecumenical development programs in Africa, Asia, Middle East, the Pacific + NATSIEC (in accordance with the 2007 comprehensive program review).</p>

.../cont'd:	Assistance in emergencies	Injustice response	Development & poverty reduction
<p>2b. Partnership & Programs: Church Agency Network (CAN)</p>	<p>2b.1 Disaster Risk Management Program <i>Aim:</i> Asia / Pacific partners better prepared for disasters. <i>CWS role:</i> Work with ACT Intl Pacific team and the DRMC team (incl Caritas & ADRA) to achieve the aim.</p>	<p>2b.2 Democratic Governance Program <i>Aim:</i> improvement in justice, stability and transparent governance across certain Pacific & Asian countries – starting with a focus on PNG, Fiji and Solomons. <i>CWS role:</i> work with partners, CAN and Transparency International to produce resources for partners, such as the Pacific Church Institute for Leadership and Management.</p>	<p>2b.3 Church Partnership Programs (CPPs) <i>Aim:</i> subject to partners' preference, develop more CPPs and progress the PNG CPP. <i>CWS role:</i> i. provide secretariat services for the PNG CPP and assist PNG to work towards self-governance of the CPP; and ii. coordinate the setting up of further CPPs (initially looking at Solomons, Vanuatu and Philippines).</p>
<p>3. Policy: providing leadership on 3 key AID issues</p>	<p>3.1 Effective Emergency Response Initiative <i>Aim:</i> agencies working more closely together in response and appeals. <i>CWS role:</i> i. work with ACFID Humanitarian Reference Group to enhance collaboration; and ii. assist in establishing mass Joint Emergency Appeals mechanism ('Aus-DEC').</p>	<p>3.2 Responsibility to Protect (R2P) - Refugee Initiative <i>Aim:</i> share our refugee work and work towards an increase in implementation of R2P obligations. <i>CWS role:</i> lead an R2P campaign, esp. focusing on 4 humanitarian crises: Sudan, Burma, Palestine / Israel & Sri Lanka and provide opportunities for churches and supporters to be involved (feature – <i>Refugee & Migrant Sunday</i>).</p>	<p>3.3 Millennium Development Goals (MDG) Initiative <i>Aim:</i> churches and supporters aware of MDG progress and challenges (esp. extreme poverty, education, AIDS, environment / climate change and trade) and have opportunities for involvement through P4P, Micah and MPH. <i>CWS role:</i> produce relevant Christian-based resources on the MDGs for promotion through CWS, Micah and the churches (Initiative feature – <i>Simply Sharing Week</i>. 2007 focus: Send My Friend to School, Goal 2).</p>

Appendix CWS2

CWS 2007/8 GOALS (Goals are in <i>italics</i> and are to be achieved by June 2008)			
1. Public involvement and agency effectiveness	1.1 Growing funds for AID programs. i. Partners4Peace: <i>June 2008 monthly income = \$50k = 1515 partners</i> ii. Christmas Bowl: <i>2007/8 CB income > \$2.4m; and in principle support from stakeholders for a December 2009 Joint Christmas Appeal</i> iii. Emergency appeals: <i>(see below)</i> iv. CWS 2010-2015 broader society: stage 1: <i>stewardship commitments met and CWS website improved</i>		
	1.2 Enhancing effectiveness. i. High program standards: <i>recommendations of 2007 program review implemented.</i> ii. Good stewardship of funds and a strong supporter focus: <i>2007/8 CB stewardship commitments met; 20% faster transacting of gifts and receipts.</i> iii. CAN: <i>enhanced communication, cooperation and collaboration: fulfillment of any CAN commitments at July 2007 meeting</i> iv. CAN: <i>greater program complementarity + reduced competition/duplication: fulfillment of any CAN commitments at July 2007 meeting</i>		
2a. Partnership & Programs:	1.3 Enhancing public involvement and worship opportunities. i. R2P/Refugee and MDG campaign opportunities for supporters: <i>opportunities provided through CB, P4P, Simply Sharing Week and Refugee & Migrant Sunday as well as joint activities organised by others (eg Micah, Church Agency Network).</i> ii. Additional social justice theology resources: <i>enhanced worship resources online with growing use.</i>		
	Humanitarian Assistance		International Development
	Assistance in emergencies	Injustice response	Development & poverty reduction
	2a.1 Support ACT International programs <i>Goal: Timely support of ACT appeals and timely online publication of reports.</i>	2a.2 Support justice programs <i>Goal: recommendations of the 2007 comprehensive program review implemented.</i>	2a.3 Support development programs <i>Goal: recommendations of the 2007 comprehensive program review implemented.</i>

.../cont'd:	Assistance in emergencies	Injustice response	Development & poverty reduction
2b. Partnership & Programs: Church Agency Network (CAN)	2b.1 Disaster Risk Management Program <i>Goal:</i> i. CWS working in 3 Pacific countries with ACT, Caritas & ADRA DRM teams; and ii. CWS working more closely with ACT Intl through participation in ACT Emergency Committee.	2b.2 Democratic Governance Program <i>Goal: Pacific Church Institute for Leadership and Management formed with detailed transparency and accountability in governance training programs.</i>	2b.3 Church Partnership Programs (CPPs) <i>Goals:</i> i. Active CWS partner in PNG providing services of benefit to the CPP; ii. Active involvement in developing a Solomons CPP with SICA & CAN; and iii. Meeting any commitments with CAN at July 07 meeting
3. Policy: providing leadership on 3 key AID issues of our time	3.1 Effective Emergency Response <i>Goals:</i> i. ACT part of an AusDEC (CWS to facilitate involvement) ii. CWS actively working with ACFID Humanitarian Reference Group to enhance collaboration.	3.2 Responsibility to Protect (R2P) / Refugee Initiative <i>Goals:</i> i. Effective CWS policy and advocacy re humanitarian crises in Sudan, Burma, Palestine / Israel & Sri Lanka; ii. A fairer Australian refugee policy – reform of on-shore & off-shore systems; iii. Australia and at least 1 of 5 target Asian countries commit to R2P initiatives; iv. ASEAN Charter adopts R2P policy; and v. Growing use of Refugee & Migrant Sunday material and awareness by supporters of R2P and refugee issues.	3.3 MDG Initiative <i>Goals:</i> i. Growing involvement in MDG activities by supporters ii. Simply Sharing Week: 40,000 ‘friends’ produced in 2007 with strong media coverage iii. Lead an effective APEC policy and advocacy team for Micah and MPH in 2007 – focusing on human security iv. Australia has committed to reach 0.7GNI in aid (minimum 0.5) – including a significant increase to education and HIV/AIDS programs

Appendix CWS3

ANNEXURE: Explanation of new concepts

'The emerging Church Agencies Network (CAN)' (see Aim 1.2iii)

One option that was considered in depth throughout 2006 was whether to reform CWS (the agency) to provide a range of services for the various church agencies. Many consultations were held, though in the end, it was decided by the agencies not to proceed with the proposed model at this stage. It is intended that as collaboration with the church agencies grows over the coming years, that further options may be considered in due course.

Some of the issues considered in the 2006 consultations were around the changes affecting the ecumenical aid scene in Australia, including:

- ❖ The increased number (and size) of denominational agencies in Australia, compared to when the predecessors to CWS were formed and served as the primary expression of overseas aid & resettlement on behalf of many Australian churches. Although CWS's role as the main implementing agency holds for a number of NCCA member Churches it is not the case for most and necessarily has implications for its future role. There are also two large church agencies that are related to non-NCCA member Churches, which have participated actively in joint church initiatives.
- ❖ The recent developments in collaboration between and led by church agencies has raised very clearly the question of the CWS role in the Australian ecumenical scene. The PNG Church Partnership Program, involving seven church agencies and their partner PNG churches, is especially noteworthy as this AusAID-funded program didn't include CWS.
- ❖ The opportunities and threats for church agencies in the Australian context, also impact on the future of CWS and its relationships with church agencies. The possible development of a Disaster and Emergency Committee in Australia could also be used to position church agencies as a significant player in emergency response in the public mind. In both cases it may be very difficult for the smaller church agencies to take advantage of these opportunities as stand-alone entities.
- ❖ There have also been significant changes in the international context over the past few years, including the emergence of ACT International, Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance and more recently ACT Development. An issue is that a few Australian church agencies have been able to give direct ecumenical expression to their work through membership of these entities and a question is how best to respond to these changes in the Australian context.
- ❖ That said, CWS's recent involvement in coordinating Church Agency Network meetings and taking a lead in advocacy initiatives (such as the Middle East conflict in 2006) – which has been supported by the church agencies - has illustrated the type of role CWS can play effectively.

The Church Agencies Network is now working on new initiatives such as considering further Church Partnership Programs, working more closely on disaster risk management and sharing program policy and procedure information. CWS has an important role in each

of these initiatives. We believe that the work of the Church Agencies Network will continue to grow as CWS and the church agencies identify more complementary roles for each other, rather than following an ineffective competitive-based model.

Growing the Christmas Bowl: the case for a joint Christmas appeal (see Aim 1.1ii)

There are now many church-based Christmas appeals in Australia. Competing with these church appeals is ineffective and investigation has begun into the potential benefits for the Christmas Bowl of being part of a joint Christmas appeal across Australia. Importantly, it is hoped that having a single, mass Christmas appeal should also help churches strengthen the Christian message at Christmas over the din of commercial and Santa advertising.

Joint appeal mechanisms already exist. In Australia there are local 'Community Chests'. In the UK, there is a *Disaster & Emergency Committee* appeal mechanism involving 14 UK agencies ('DEC'). DEC works because it has critical mass, it is 'the' UK emergency appeal. This means that the churches, media, government, banks, post offices, corporates – everyone – promotes and contributes to the appeal for a two week window after a major emergency. We believe that (after several years of development) a joint Christmas appeal is capable of reaching the same critical mass for a short period every Christmas time. Funds from the joint appeal are then split across agencies involved according to an agreed formula that is reviewed each year. The DEC experience is that every agency ends up with considerably more funds than any could achieve on their own. Agencies still conduct their Christmas appeal programs outside of the agreed window. An evaluation is being prepared.

The Responsibility to Protect ('R2P') (see Aim 3.2)

The churches in Australia and around the world have long been troubled by how best to prevent genocide and mass atrocities. In 1999, the UN General Secretary asked the WCC to contribute to the international debate on "humanitarian intervention" by bringing theological and ethical perspectives. A WCC report was then prepared over the next four years many consultations took place and the WCC produced: the *Responsibility to Protect - Ethical and Theological Reflections* which can be found at: <http://www2.wcc-coe.org/ccdocuments2003.nsf/>.

The Responsibility to Protect describes an evolving concept about the duties of governments and the international community to prevent and end unconscionable acts of violence, wherever they occur. It is a responsibility to prevent, react to and rebuild following such crises. When states manifestly fail to protect their populations, the international community shares a collective responsibility to respond. A detailed resolution affirming the Responsibility to Protect principle was then made at the 2006 WCC Assembly.

CWS has developed a specialised understanding of the concept and is working on, amongst other things, the following issues:

- ❖ *fostering prevention as the key tool and concern of the churches, in relation to the Responsibility to Protect;*

- ❖ *calling upon regional governments to strengthen their capability in preventive strategies, and violence-reducing intervention skills together with institutions of civil society, to contribute to the development of strategies that can address gross human rights violations;*
- ❖ *calling upon regional governments to invest much greater resources and training for non-violent intervention and accompaniment of vulnerable peoples; and*
- ❖ *urging the United Nations Security Council, in situations where prevention has failed and where national governments cannot or will not provide the protection to which people are entitled, to take timely and effective action, in cooperation with regional organisations as appropriate, to protect civilians in extreme peril and foster emergency responses designed to restore sustainable safety and well-being with rigorous respect for the rights, integrity and dignity of the local populations.*

