

ANNUAL REVIEW 2019-2020



National Council of
Churches in Australia



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"... that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. (John 17:21 NIV)

National Council of Churches in Australia (NCCA) was formed in 1994 as an unincorporated association, succeeding the Australian Council of Churches established in 1948.

NCCA was incorporated in June 2016 as a company limited by guarantee and it has 18 member churches:

Anglican Church, Antiochian Orthodox Church, Armenian Apostolic Church, Assyrian Church of the East, Chinese Methodist Church, Churches of Christ, Congregational Federation, Coptic Orthodox Church, Greek Orthodox Church, Indian Orthodox Church, Lutheran Church, Mar Thoma Church, Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), Roman Catholic Church, Romanian Orthodox Church, Syrian Orthodox Church, The Salvation Army, and the Uniting Church in Australia

NCCA PRAYER

*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 gathered 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*



Reflection:

FROM THE PRESIDENT

We all know it has been a year like no other.

As with every other organisation, NCCA has tried to provide a continuity of service whilst adapting to this changed setting.

We are probably too close in time to discern how well we have done this; what we might have done better, let alone what has been the effect upon us all.

What we do know is that the COVID19 Virus is infectious and lethal. Those of us doing pastoral work in Victoria this year know this vividly. As do many of our friends and contacts overseas.

Looking ahead, until there is a proven vaccine which is universally available, we will need to make plans with some continuity of current adaptations.

These adaptations include less of the once normal modes of communication through face to face meetings. More Zoom. Little travel. More emails.

Adaptations that only months ago, we might have thought likely for a short while, might be at least for the year ahead.

Of course, even this suggestion is uncertain. Such is this year which is like no other.

It may be that we will look back on this 2020 and realise that all the effort of those before us - their prayers and good works in the establishment and early decades of the NCCA - came together for a crucial task in this hour.

Assuming that our best and most important work still lies ahead, it is a blessing that we have the organisational vitality; the right staff, board and church leaders for our unifying responsibilities.

With gratitude to you all and with prayers,

Bishop Philip Huggins

PRESIDENT, NCCA

A PRAYER FOR THESE DAYS

Gracious God,

We give thanks anew for our call to unity. In Jesus prayer, may we all be one.

We seek your grace, aware as we are of the consequences of division, so we can better build unity.

Guide us to be more aware of whatever hinders true harmony.

Help us make our best contribution to national unity and care for one another, especially amidst the anxieties of the current Coronavirus.

We pray our NCCA can better fulfil our unifying purpose in these troubled times.

Fill us with your Holy Spirit so we listen well, deepen friendships and are truly helpful,

Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Bishop Philip Huggins President, National Council of Churches in Australia

NCCA LTD BOARD:



The NCCA Ltd Board met in Sydney in both July and October 2019. They then met virtually in April and June 2020.



As at 30 June 2020, NCCA Directors were:

- Chair, Bishop Philip Huggins,
- Mr Rob Floyd, Uniting Church in Australia,
- Reverend John Gilmore, Churches of Christ in Australia
- Ms Anne Hywood, Anglican Church of Australia,
- Very Rev Fr Abanoub Attalla, Melbourne Diocese of the Coptic Orthodox Church
- Bishop John Henderson, Lutheran Church of Australia,
- Mr Thomas Ling, Chinese Methodist Church
- Mr Geoff Officer, Catholic Church in Australia



APPOINTMENT OF NCCA GENERAL SECRETARY:

Ms Elizabeth Stone was appointed as General Secretary in May 2020. She has been serving as Interim General Secretary since early 2018. She is also the NCCA Company Secretary.



Reflection from the General Secretary

Oikoumene hope in 2020

When the Faith and Unity Commission met in late April 2020, we commenced with sharing on our living in a closed down world during a global pandemic. As a representative group from NCCA churches, we acknowledged the re-emergence of the 'household' (***oikoumene***) as an outpost of faith at this time of closed worship spaces. We spoke of the rapid creation of new online spaces and opportunities to come together, in addition to worship, to reflect in bible study and group prayer. We shared on the new openness to reach out and speak to our neighbours, even to ask "Who is our neighbour?"

Flowing from our months of bushfires, we witnessed our pastoral care developed in ***oikoumene*** on our frontlines. State and Territory-based Emergency Chaplains served alongside other essential health and medical services, accompanying the displaced, lonely, desperate and anxious.

There was an outpouring of compassion and material help for those that missed out on Government financial support, especially refugees and asylum-seekers, unable to meet accommodation, food and bill expenses for many months. Around the world, migrant workers bore the brunt of unemployment, discrimination and infection.

As we looked out on our natural world recovering from bushfire and unimpaired by human activity during the COVID lockdown, we saw God's Creation/***oikoumene*** flourishing in a non-polluted, multi-coloured world and started planning for NCCA dialogues on climate, energy and environmental justice. Our First Nations peoples began planning a meeting for churches to renew our mission of reconciliation in Australia and continue the healing ministry of Christ through ***oikoumene***.

We have a way to go yet but may we recognize our ***oikoumene*** anew as a strength in uncertain times.

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in your faith, so that in the power of the Holy Spirit you may be rich in hope." (Romans 15:13)

Elizabeth (Liz) Stone

GENERAL SECRETARY, NCCA

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS 2019 - 2022

BASIS

National Council of Churches in Australia gathers together in pilgrimage those Churches and Christian communities which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the Scriptures and commit themselves:

- (i) to deepen their relationship with each other in order to express more visibly the unity willed by Christ for his Church, and
- (ii) to work together toward the fulfilment of their mission of common witness, proclamation and service, to the glory of One God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.



A Encouraging relationships Building ecumenical trust - Ecumenical formation

Hebrews 10:24-25

And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together...but encouraging one another...(NIV)

B Connection and fellowship Promote relationships - Joint activities

Matthew 18:18-20

"For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them." (NIV)

C Witnessing together Prophetic voice - Public voice

Acts 1:8

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. (NIV)

D Enabling and resourcing Governance + Management - Financing

Corinthians 9: 7-8

Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. (NIV)

"... with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bear with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." (Ephesians 4: 2-3 NRSV)

NATIONAL CHURCH LEADERS

The NCCA General Secretary facilitates meetings of National Church Leaders. These meetings are for support, getting to know one another and topical discussion. In the past there were two meetings annually, however, in 2020 with the take up of online facilities, these have become more frequent.

The meeting in Sydney on 24 September 2019 was held at St James Parish Hall and included a discussion with Edward Santow, Australian Human Rights Commissioner.

The March 2020 meeting was cancelled due to COVID-19 restrictions. The National Church leaders met again online on 28 May and again on 25 June 2020.

Farewell



We have been blessed to work with:
Archbishop Philip Freier,
Primate, Anglican Church of Australia

Welcome



We look forward to working with:
Archbishop Geoffrey Smith,
Primate, Anglican Church of Australia



We acknowledge the important foundational work of Bishop John Henderson, Lutheran Church of Australia, who has completed his term of Director on the NCCA Ltd Board. His knowledge of our NCCA story has been so valuable as we have tried to find our way forward in this new era.

MEMBER ENGAGEMENT

The NCCA participated/attended:

Coptic Orthodox Diocese of Sydney and Affiliated Regions 50th Anniversary Celebration

Our Coptic brothers and sisters celebrated their golden jubilee at a formal dinner on Sunday 4 August 2019, in Parramatta, NSW. In attendance were Church leaders, the NSW Premier, state officials and parliamentarians along with many of the faithful Coptic congregation.

Coptic Orthodox Diocese of Melbourne and Affiliated Regions Golden Jubilee Gala

Our Coptic brothers and sisters celebrated their golden jubilee at a formal dinner on Sunday 3 November 2019 in Maidstone, VIC. In attendance were Church leaders along with many of the faithful Coptic congregation. Bishop Philip Huggins was especially honoured to be invited to join in the celebration.



OUR CHURCHES

Responding to crisis with prayer, liturgy, fundraising appeals & church resources

Anglican Church of Australia

- [*Archbishop Freier- Prayers for the bushfires*](#)
- [*Recommended National Guidelines – COVID-19*](#)

Catholic Church in Australia

- [*National Prayer Campaign for drought affected*](#)
- [*Statement from Archbishop - Response to bushfire crisis*](#)
- [*The Church and COVID-19*](#)

Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia

- [*Archbishop Makarios: statement on bushfires and Greek church response*](#)
- [*Archbishop Makarios: statement responding to coronavirus*](#)

Lutheran Church of Australia

- [*Liturgy, Prayers and Music in Response to Bushfires*](#)
- [*Bishop John Henderson's message- Response to COVID 19*](#)

The Salvation Army in Australia

- [*General calls for prayer for Australia*](#)
- [*Chief Secretary Col. Winsome Merrett - COVID 19 response*](#)

Uniting Church in Australia

- [*Uniting Earth - bushfire crisis prayers and liturgies*](#)
- [*President, Dr Deidre Palmer : A Pastoral Response to the Pandemic*](#)

Many other member Churches also made similar statements and prayers.



ASSEMBLY ROUNDTABLE

31 October 2019

Sydney, St James Parish Hall

Moral Discernment

The meeting was facilitated by the Faith and Unity Commission with discussion led by Rev Dr Gerard Kelly and Rev Dr Morag Logan.

The meeting provided an opportunity to reflect on how churches engage in moral discernment, especially when they make decisions about moral matters that are part of public discussion.

FRANC CONFERENCE 2019

30 and 31 October 2019

Financial Representatives of Australian National Churches (FRANC)

Melbourne, VIC.

Culture and Collaboration

This was an opportunity of learning, collaboration and networking for senior finance staff, with multiple events across differing venues.

CLIMATE & ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ROUNDTABLE

17 June, 2020.

Virtual planning meeting of NCCA in partnership with the Doing Justice Team of the Anglican Diocese of Southern Queensland (ASQ).

As Australia faced devastating and extreme drought, flood, and bushfires and consequential loss of biodiversity, concerns for urgent climate and environmental action have only compounded. It was timely to return to that conversation, and revitalise networking across our Christian Churches, mission and eco-groups nationally in this space. It was also an opportunity to network, exchange ideas, and create opportunities for collaboration on sustainability and climate.

Follow up meetings are planned for later in 2020 with funding assistance from a 2019 grant of the Glenburnie Program that is administered by NCCA.

EXTERNAL MEETINGS & DIALOGUE

Child Safety Sector Leadership Group

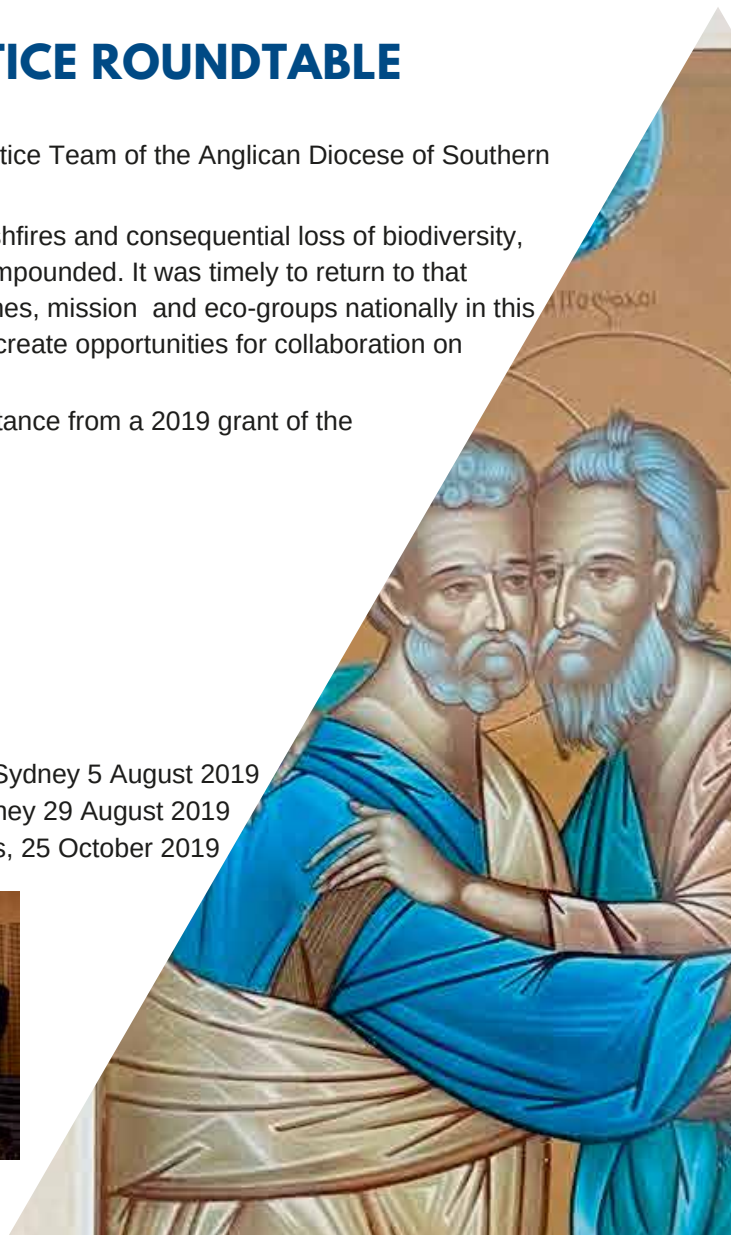
- 6 August 2019
- 20 November 2019
- 19 February 2020

Religious Freedom Discussions:

- Multifaith Consultation with the Prime Minister, Scott Morrison, Sydney 5 August 2019
- Attorney General, Hon. Christian Porter Great Synagogue, Sydney 29 August 2019
- Hon. Anthony Albanese, Faith leaders including Bishop Huggins, 25 October 2019



Above: Faith leaders with the Prime Minister, Scott Morrison, 5 August 2019





A state of emergency:

In 2019, large regions of Australia were impacted by bushfires. Many the result of a combination of long drought, soaring temperatures and strong winds. A state of emergency was declared in NSW and a state of disaster in Victoria. The significance and extent of protracted periods of low annual rainfall, chart topping average and maximum temperatures and the resulting fires were recognised around the globe. As 2020 began, fervent prayers for our nation were being said.

Prayers and messages of support for Australia

Nationally

God of life and death, our prayers today are where our hearts and minds have been during these last days; with those communities and individuals whose lives have been damaged in differing ways by the bushfires. We thank you for the volunteers responding. We pray for relief...

Simon Hansford, Moderator of the Uniting Church in NSW and ACT

"All things look to you, O Lord, to give them their food in due season. Look in Mercy on your people, and hear our prayer for those whose lives and possessions are threatened by fire. Give protection and wisdom to fire fighters and other emergency service personnel. Encourage our generosity to those who suffer loss. In your mercy restore creation and heal our land. So guide and bless your people, that we may enjoy the fruits of the earth and give you thanks with grateful hearts, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Anglican Diocese of Melbourne

Internationally

Bishop Philip Huggins, NCCA president and director of the Centre for Ecumenical Studies at the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture, said in a message to the WCC that many people of faith are involved in helping in all kinds of practical ways.

Australian church responses in the national bushfire crisis, World Council of Churches' media.



"Together with you, we lament the unimaginable losses already suffered – of precious human lives, of homes and livelihoods, of so many animals and so much bushland and forest, and of so many affected communities' sense of security."

General secretary Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, World Council of Churches

"In this time of great hardship caused by the ruthless bush fires, on behalf of Refugees in India Refugee Returnees in Sri Lanka and the OfERR family, we would like to convey our solidarity and pray for quick recovery from the effects of this disaster."

*Act for Peace international partners, OfERR - in India and Sri Lanka
who Act for Peace have been supporting for over 30 years*



May you find solace and reassurance in the promise of our Lord who strengthens us, "Do not fear, for I am with you, do not be afraid, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my victorious right hand." (Isaiah 41:10)

*Mathews George Chunakara General Secretary, CCA
CCA extends solidarity and prayers to the people of Australia*



Coronavirus

In late 2019 a new, global threatening virus emerged. By March 2020 it had reached Australia and as the virus devastated other nations the Australian Government, health officials and many others sought to contain the spread. We became concerned with sterile hygiene practices, social distancing and working from home. Meetings were cancelled. Borders, businesses and churches closed.

Unemployment queues grew and for some, mandatory lockdown and isolation was called. We learned to communicate with technology, to worship with creativity. Funding packages from the Government were offered in the form of JobSeeker and JobKeeper. However, there were still those who missed out.

Gracious God,
We give thanks anew for your providence and presence.
We prayerfully seek your grace, amidst COVID-19 here and overseas.
We pray for those in need of healing.
We pray for your peace with those who are anxious or grieving.
We pray you will continue to strengthen and sustain all those who are serving in response.
We pray for your Holy Spirit's discernment amidst the many choices and decisions facing our national, community and medical leaders.
We pray we each might see quickly what more we can do to help those who are vulnerable.
This prayer for our nation in the family of nations, with all that is on our hearts, we gather now and pray through Jesus Christ our Lord.
AMEN.

Daily Prayers and a National Day of Prayer Amidst COVID-19

On Tuesday 17 March the NCCA sent a letter to Australian Church Leaders inviting us into an opportunity to unite in prayer amidst rising rates of COVID-19 infection.

We encouraged all our Christian brothers, sisters and friends to take up this offer.

Media Statement 15 May 2020

In this time of uncertainty and increased anxiety the the NCCA joined together with organisations of many other faiths to share a united voice.

" Compassion is at the heart of our faiths. It is our unifying ethic."





Australian Churches Refugee Taskforce

COVID-19 has presented an extremely busy and important time.

The ACRT is located within the larger refugee and asylum seeker sector and has joined in a number of sector-wide advocacy initiatives as well as individual advocacy. This has involved writing letters to the Prime Minister, other ministers and a Senate inquiry into the government response to COVID-19. Communications sought to affirm the government for its response broadly as well as advocating on several key issues.

Issues have related to:

1. The risks faced by people in detention and suggesting they be released into community detention.
2. People on bridging visas or people whose visa status is in transition or for whom return to country of origin is not possible.
3. Income support and access to Medicare for people on temporary visas. This mainly focused on asylum seekers and refugees (those impacted by loss of employment and not eligible for support) but echoed the larger concerns for migrant workers and international students also impacted.
4. We are well served by members from ACRT and our churches more broadly who are working in agencies and organisations that have experienced a dramatic increase in people seeking assistance. This has included crisis housing, financial and rental assistance and food support.



Where possible, we included real-life examples gleaned from across our network.

With a more future focus, the ACRT has been actively part of the Community Refugee Sponsorship Initiative, a coalition of organisations seeking to encourage the Australian Government to develop a new and better mechanism for community groups to be able to sponsor and support refugees in our community.

Lastly, I would like to thank those Church Leaders and your organisations who have spoken out on these matters and provide support to the work of ACRT.

Rob Floyd
Chair, Australian Churches Refugee Taskforce



ACT FOR PEACE

Act for Peace is the international aid agency of the National Council of Churches in Australia and is a member of the ACT Alliance, one of the world's largest and most effective networks of grassroots aid organisations and workers with more than 140 member organisations working in over 100 countries.



This year more than ever we are grateful for our dedicated supporters who share our passion for justice, and the goal of seeing communities threatened by conflict and disaster increase their safety, with dignity.

Janet Cousens, Chief Executive Officer

The Financial Year 2019/20 showed the strength of Act for Peace and our partners in the face of an unanticipated significant challenge. As Australians battled drought, bushfires, and floods, a pandemic swept around the world, threatening lives, livelihoods and futures. This pandemic created a shared experience which linked us more closely than ever to our overseas partners. In addition, the #BlackLivesMatter movement brought into focus the horrific ongoing abuse perpetrated against individual human beings and their communities because of the colour of a person's skin.

The novel coronavirus took centre stage for the last four months of the year, Act for Peace continued to retain a focus on safeguarding; prioritising the safety and protection of vulnerable people through each stage of our work. Strategically we chose to support partners to respond to the pandemic while retaining our ongoing commitment to build resilience, and to put into place protection mechanisms which reduce the likelihood of harm from both conflict and disaster recognising that long-term needs, including primary health, job security, and recognition of the rights of people displaced, will remain for the longer term.

This approach helped our partners working in Jordan, Pakistan, Zimbabwe, and other countries, to be on the front foot when preparing for the pandemic. It also helped our partners in Vanuatu and Tonga to reduce the likely devastation caused by Tropical Cyclone Harold.

ACT FOR PEACE

As an ecumenical agency we prioritise collaboration. Act for Peace remained an active member of the international ACT Alliance, the Australian Church Agency Network and their Disaster Operations, our industry body the Australian Council for International Development, the Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network and in this year we renewed our membership with the Micah coalition and engaged formally with the new Emergency Action Alliance.

Act for Peace paused progress towards our next strategic plan in light of the pandemic and so created space for staff to respond to the changing situation facing our partners. Future planning also now responds to the long-term global disruption caused by the pandemic.



Children carry water home in a camp for internally displaced persons in South Sudan, supported by partner Norwegian Church Aid through the Christmas Bowl 2019. (Credit NECC/Act for Peace)

This year highlighted the strength of engagement Act for Peace has with our several institutional donors. This included the Australian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and Department of Home Affairs, who immediately recognised the need to alter some programming agreements to enable partners to respond to the pandemic.

We appreciate their willingness to work with us quickly and flexibly to prioritise the needs of the communities supported by their grants.

"In a year where the lives of many Australians were disrupted immeasurably, the solidarity shown by our supporters through giving and through prayer was immense, encouraging and invaluable."

Janet Cousens, Chief Executive Officer



Ecumenical Accompaniment
Program in Palestine and Israel



Visit: Act for Peace - <https://www.actforpeace.org.au/>



In Gaza, a health worker in a medical clinic run by our partner DSPR uses hand sanitizer to help prevent the spread of Covid-19 (Credit NECC/Act for Peace)

The Act for Peace Board and Staff Leadership Team made the significant decision to delay the Ration Challenge, one of our main events of the year. This decision was made in recognition that our supporters were facing uncertainty. As a result, Act for Peace ended the year with a financial deficit which was covered by reserves and ensured that the communities we serve were not disadvantaged. Thankfully, due to a history of good management Act for Peace's financial position remained strong at the end of the financial year.



ACT FOR PEACE
CONFRONTING INJUSTICE TOGETHER
THROUGH THE ACT ALLIANCE



SAFE CHURCH PROGRAM



The Safe Church Program (SCP) is an initiative of the NCCA. It is our core business to strengthen relationships across churches/Christian faith communities, government agencies and other bodies to create safer organisations.



We said goodbye to Vera DeVere (left) and welcomed Deb Duncan (right) to the role of Program Assistant in 2020. National Coordinator Laura Lindsay-Cregan is pictured, centre.

In the 2019-2020 period the Safe Church Program engaged the services of Child Wise — an organisation which has pioneered the use of child safety standards in Australia — to consult with NCCA Safe Church Program members to develop our National Framework for Child Safety. The resource will be launched in late 2020. The Framework will encompass the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Royal Commission recommendations and the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.



SAFER CHURCHES CONFERENCE 9

"Transforming Cultures: Listening, Reflecting, Acting"
17-18 September 2019

The Conference was held at the Mercure Hotel in Brisbane in September 2019. It was a wonderful conference that hosted some of Australia's leading experts across various sectors including the National Office for Child Safety, ACU, ICPS, University of Divinity, SAMASN and Blue Knot to name a few. The conference was sponsored by the University of Divinity, CPSL, Ansvar, Prolegis and CCI.

CPSL and NCCA partnership

A formal partnership agreement between the NCCA Safe Church Program and CPSL was confirmed in February 2020 for six months. This resulted in the delivery of some key joint initiatives which have strengthened ecumenical partnerships and developed safeguarding capacity across all our Churches.

The National Coordinator of the Program, Laura Lindsay-Cregan was seconded to work two days a week with CPSL on key safeguarding initiatives. Over the course of the secondment, NCCA and CPSL delivered five joint webinars (three in the series on Grooming Awareness, and two in the Managing High Risk Individuals series) reaching more than 450 participants from at least 18 different Christian groups. The partnership also resulted in the pilot delivery of an adapted Introductory Session for Leaders.



FAITH AND UNITY COMMISSION

The Commission met in Melbourne in November 2019. They met again via Zoom on 23 and 24 April 2020.

The Faith and Unity Commission focused on study documents produced by the World Council of Churches (WCC) and its departments - a prepared response to Moral Discernment in the Churches: A Study Document (Faith and Order paper no.125), and Together Towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes, a document of the WCC's Commission on World Mission and Evangelism.

The Commission facilitated the NCCA Member Assembly on 31 October 2019 on Moral Discernment - with presentations from Greek Orthodox Church of Australia, Catholic Church, Uniting Church in Australia and The Salvation Army.



Rev'd Dr Gerard Kelly (2nd left) is the chair for the Commission, with (L-R) Dr Philip Kariatlis, Rev Dr Morag Logan and Major Clayton Spence.

AVECA

AUSTRALIAN VOLUNTEER EMERGENCY CHAPLAINCY ALLIANCE

The Alliance allows for the practical engagement of the Churches with Federal and State governments and community and raises the value and importance of spiritual care in community recovery. AVECA supports capability and capacity building through coordinated and networked resources in the churches.

The alliance consists of the Victoria's VCCEM, the Tasmania's TCCEM, the New South Wales' DRCN, ACT's ACTDRCN, South Australia's D&DRMSA, and the emergency ministries in Queensland, Northern Territory and Western Australia.



2019- Naomi Paget Disaster and Emergency Care Response workshops

Sydney - 16,17 and 18 July | Melbourne - 22,23 and 24 July
Ministry can be stressful in ordinary times and extreme, even disabling, at others. We do well to understand the dynamics of how stress affects our life and relationships and build our capacity and resilience in terms of crisis management.



Emergency Chaplaincy in times of crisis

The summer season of drought and bushfires merged into a period of physical isolation and lock-down in the current pandemic.

"It was most rewarding to be able to provide some support under these circumstances"
Barbara VCCEM

"We expect the work of TCC Emergencies Ministry to continue and perhaps even increase over the coming months of our State's COVID-19 recovery" Gus Yearsley, TCCEM State Officer

NATIONAL



AUSTRALIAN ECUMENICAL OFFICERS NETWORK

The group met in Melbourne, on 11 and 12 March 2020 just prior to state borders being closed. Representatives from Tasmania, Queensland, Northern Territory, South Australian, Victoria and New South Wales (pictured) enjoyed the opportunity to share and exchange ideas.

INTERNATIONAL

"The human body has many parts, but the many parts make up one whole body. So it is with the body of Christ. But we have all been baptized into one body by one Spirit, and we all share the same Spirit. (1 Corinthians 12:12-13 NRSV)"

Christian Conference of Asia

The Conference also had a busy year:

- August 2019 General Secretary, Dr Mathews George Chunakara is re elected
- In April 2020 CCA began a series of webinars on migrant workers
- Bishop Huggins joined in prayer - 'God, Heal Us as We are Vulnerable'. Asia Sunday 24 May 2020
- CCA General Secretary says " Racism and inequality are threats to humanity" in response to the #blacklivesmatter movement
- Bishop Huggins joined in prayer again in webinar – 'COVID 19 – effects across Asia Migrant workers bear brunt'

World Council of Churches

The WCC saw the retirement of General Secretary Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit. Rev. Prof. Dr Ioan Sauca took on the role of Interim General Secretary in a year that was unlike any other.

- ["Statement on Racial Justice in the USA"](#)
- WCC blog - [Lamentation in a Pandemic](#)

NCCA joins WCC meetings in Brisbane, QLD

- Commission of Churches on International Affairs (CCIA) 19-21 February 2020
- CCIA workshop UPR – UNHRC 24-25 February 2020

WCC produced resources for churches

- [Psalms – Healing the World](#) bible study – COVID 19
- [Economy of Life in a Time of Pandemic](#)

PACIFIC CONFERENCE OF CHURCHES

A Climate Plea to Australia's Prime Minister

The Sydney Morning Herald 12 August 2019

"...show moral courage and decency by putting the needs of innocent people over those of big business and vested interests".

Rev James Bhagwan, General Secretary of the Pacific Conference of Churches

Pacific Church Leaders meet in Suva, Fiji

Cooperation needed to meet the challenges

Pacific Church Leaders gathered at the Pacific Theological College, in Suva, Fiji from Wednesday 6 November through to Sunday 10 November 2019. The meeting was convened by the Pacific Conference of Churches (PCC) to discuss major issues that are affecting the people of the Pacific Nations. It concluded with an Ecumenical Service on Sunday at which Bishop Huggins, NCCA President, was invited to preach.



Above: Bishop Philip Huggins shares NCCA Safe Churches' resources with Rev Bhagwan and a PCC staff.

"The impact of the coronavirus, while deeply tragic on the one hand, offers us a unique opportunity to envision life anew."

PCC Moderator Rev. Dr. Tevita Havea - The Story of our Pacific Household in the 'New Normal'

INTERFAITH ENGAGEMENT

Multifaith Leaders in Australia - Joint Statement

15 May 2020

Made in response to the Australian Government's Covid-19 initiatives, as an example of a multifaith stance in which compassionate, humble service becomes a national practice and which inspires and gives hope to others.

Australian National Dialogue of Christians, Muslims and Jews (ANDCMJ)

Discussion on consultation copy of prospective Religious Freedom Discrimination Bill (Cth).

9 September 2019, hosted by AFIC

Following breaking of the Ramadan fast and prayers, online sharing on Ramadan, Passover and Easter during the time of COVID-19.

18 May 2020, Online

NCCA Ecumenical funding:

RONALD WILSON ECUMENICAL LEADERSHIP FUND

The Ecumenical Leadership Fund assists young adults eager to enlarge their ecumenical experience and leadership skills. It helps those who have exhibited leadership potential to develop their gifts and focus their vision.

Visit: <https://www.ncca.org.au/about/ecumenical>

One application was received for attendance at the **Receptive Ecumenism Conference in Sigtuna, Sweden in June 2020**. The conference was cancelled due to COVID-19 restrictions. A new date has been announced for 2021 and the funding remains available for the applicant.

Hearts of Compassion: Australian Faith Communities Respond to COVID-19.

Bishop Philip Huggins was invited by Charter for Compassion to speak in a webinar held on Thursday 18 June 2020.

15 March – 1st anniversary Christchurch Massacre Prayer for Comfort, Strength and Recovery

O God of many names, O Lord of hope and resilience, Most merciful and compassionate God, As we remember the one-year anniversary of the Christchurch massacre and the devastation brought upon our Muslim neighbours in New Zealand by an Australian perpetrator....

As people of faith, in Your name of mercy and healing and compassion, we pray.

Prayer offered by Religions for Peace Australia, the Islamic Council of Victoria and members of other Australian Islamic groups

In the 2019-2020 financial year funding was given to:

GLENBURNIE PROGRAM



The funding program takes its name from a property in Western Australia. Funding from this program is intended to "provide resources for the churches and the community on issues relating to a **just, participatory and sustainable society**." For more information on the Program guidelines, closing date for applications and the application form see the NCCA website.

Visit: <https://www.ncca.org.au/about/ecumenical/item/178-glenburnie-programme>

St John's Anglican Cathedral, Brisbane

To enable the Doing Justice Team of the Anglican Diocese of Southern Queensland (ASQ) to develop and curate resources for Churches to enable them to better enter into dialogue, discernment and action on climate change. Including: how we think about it theologically; and how we might respond as Christian's communities.

This has four components:

- stakeholder mapping, engagement and consultation
- hosting a national forum on climate change
- creating an online repository / directory of the best Australian climate resources for Churches
- co-designing and creating some initial additional resources, which are identified to both fill a gap, and be of greatest use.

ABORIGINAL & TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER DEVELOPMENT FUND

A tax deductible fund set up to assist Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Peoples by giving small, usually one-off grants for community development projects. Visit: <https://www.ncca.org.au/about-us-1/development-fund>

Baabayan:

Attendance of First Nation people at the SNAICC Conference. In September 2019 two Aboriginal elders and two younger Aboriginal women from western Sydney attended the Conference held in Adelaide.



(Pictured above with Baabayan staff)

The Conference was aimed at empowering communities to determine their own future where the rights of children, young people and families are protected.

Blue Earth:

Developing Active Leaders - Centralian Middle School, Alice Springs NT.



Blue Earth ran a ten-week before school physical activity program aimed at improving school engagement.

71% of school visits by Blue Earth have resulted in above average school attendance of indigenous students.



Indigenous Member Church Representatives

Funding aided attendance and participation at the Safer Churches Conference, Mercure Hotel in Brisbane on the 17th -18th September 2019. (Left: Lucy Davis, The Salvation Army)

Breaking Silent Codes:

Assist one of a group of First Nation women to share their journey out of violence to empowerment. In March 2020 a group of Indigenous women from Australia, New Zealand, PNG and Pacific Islands travelled to the UN in New York to share knowledge on solutions for First Nations peoples in relation to the topic of sexual assault and family violence.

They were able to share their collective wisdom with US Indigenous women, at a forum held at the New York Baha'i Centre. They were able to meet with key organisations such as Barrier Free Living, Connect and key Native American Elders and representatives of Australian NGOs.





NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES IN AUSTRALIA

*"And this is his commandment, that we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us."
(1 John 3:23 NRSV)*



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NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES IN AUSTRALIA ANNUAL REVIEW 2019-2020