

ANNUAL REVIEW 2018 - 2019



National Council of
Churches in Australia



CONTENTS

FROM THE PRESIDENT BASIS	pg 3
NCCA Ltd BOARD OF DIRECTORS GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT NCCA STAFF	pg 4
COUNCIL OVERVIEW STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS GOVERNANCE AND WORKING STRUCTURE	pg 5
10TH NATIONAL FORUM	pg 6
MEMBER ENGAGEMENT NATIONAL CHURCH LEADERS MEMBER ENGAGEMENT YOUNG ADULT LEADERSHIP FORMATION ASSEMBLY ROUNDTABLES	pg 8
NCCA ROUNDTABLE MEETINGS ECO JUSTICE ROUNDTABLE FRANC DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE SUDANESE WOMEN LEADERS' GATHERING	pg 10
NCCA HOSTED MEETINGS BISHOP ANGAELOS REV HRANT TAHANIAN PALESTINIAN CHRISTIAN SPEAKING TOUR PACIFIC ISLANDER CHURCH LEADERS - ANTI SLAVERY DISCUSSION MODERN SLAVERY TALANOA	pg 11
NCCA ACTIVITIES ACT FOR PEACE - ECUMENICAL ACCOMPANIMENT PROGRAM IN PALESTINE & ISRAEL (EAPPI) - AUSTRALIAN CHURCHES REFUGEE TASKFORCE (ACRT)	pg 12
FAITH & UNITY COMMISSION SAFE CHURCH PROGRAM JUSTICE, PEACE & CARE OF CREATION - THURSDAYS IN BLACK - PROJECT OFFICER, EMILY EVANS	pg 13
NCCA FUNDS GLENBURNIE PROGRAM ABORIGINAL & TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER DEVELOPMENT FUND RONALD WILSON ECUMENICAL LEADERSHIP FUND	pg 14
ECUMENICAL NETWORKS NATIONAL PACIFIC INTERNATIONAL INTERFAITH RELATIONS	pg 15



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 with 19 member churches. As at 30 June 2019, NCCA had 18 member churches, of which 16 were financial members.

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

Front and back cover image: taken from "Invasion" by Munnari

FROM THE PRESIDENT

2019 FORUM REFLECTION

Living and Walking in the Holy Spirit, called to Transforming Discipleship

...here and now in Australia, through our NCCA, in ever deeper unity, receptive to one another's insights, is this a picture of what our Lord imagines for us?

Is it daunting? Yes!

Was it daunting when 12 or so were given the Great Commission? (Matt:28:16-20) Yes, no doubt! 'Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations'.

Yes, but well, here we are, in this amazing Australia, home to people from all nations, disciples ourselves. Made disciples. Making disciples. As we try to listen and be obedient to the Holy Spirit's promptings.

Paraphrasing a shared wisdom:

The problems seem huge. What we can do about them can seem insignificant. Nevertheless, it is essential that we do it!

That which we can do, we must do!

So, to reiterate, this is my personal reflection on our theme.

For me it means:

- Making the love of Jesus visible in the generous and imaginative way we relate to people in daily life;
- Making sure our churches in Australia are safe;
- Helping to eliminate all forms of slavery;
- Helping to prevent a climate crisis;
- Trying to be better peace-makers, amidst much violence;

Please give consideration to the two questions provided.

- Inspired by the Holy Spirit, following Jesus, what is your personal reflection on our calling now?
- What do you hope for from this NCCA 10th Forum?

With prayers and gratitude for you all,

Bishop Philip Huggins

PRESIDENT, NCCA



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.



NCCA LTD BOARD OF DIRECTORS

GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The NCCA Ltd Board met four times in 2018-2019, July, October, January and March .

As at 30 June 2019, Board Directors were:

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

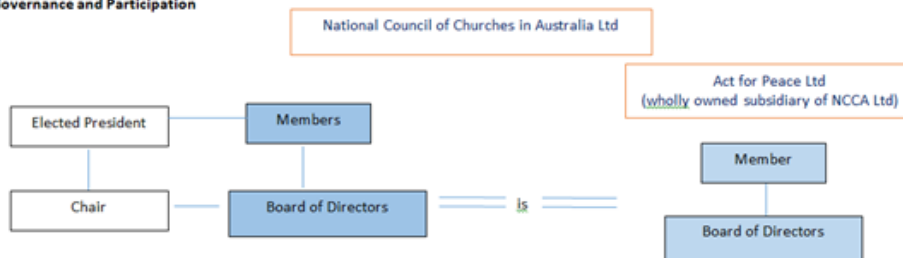


During the year, Fr Nabil Kachab of the Antiochian Orthodox Church, resigned from the NCCA Ltd Board and was thanked for his voluntary service.

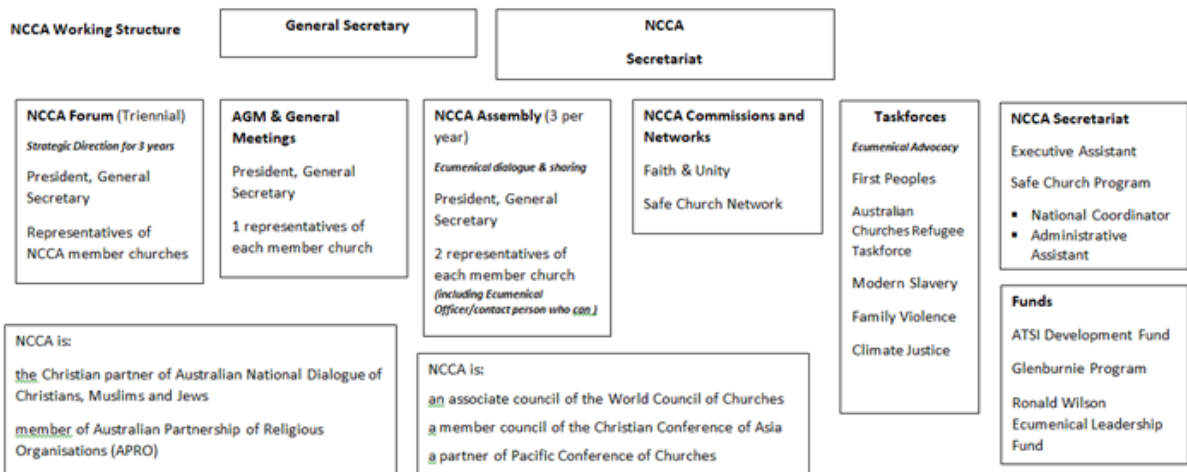
Ms Elizabeth Stone continues to serve as Interim General Secretary and will also take up the role of Company Secretary.

GOVERNANCE AND WORKING STRUCTURE 2019 - 2022

NCCA Governance and Participation



NCCA Working Structure



COUNCIL OVERVIEW

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS 2019 - 2022



Encouraging

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)

Witnessing

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.

Connecting

Promote relationships – Joint activities

Matthew 18:18-20

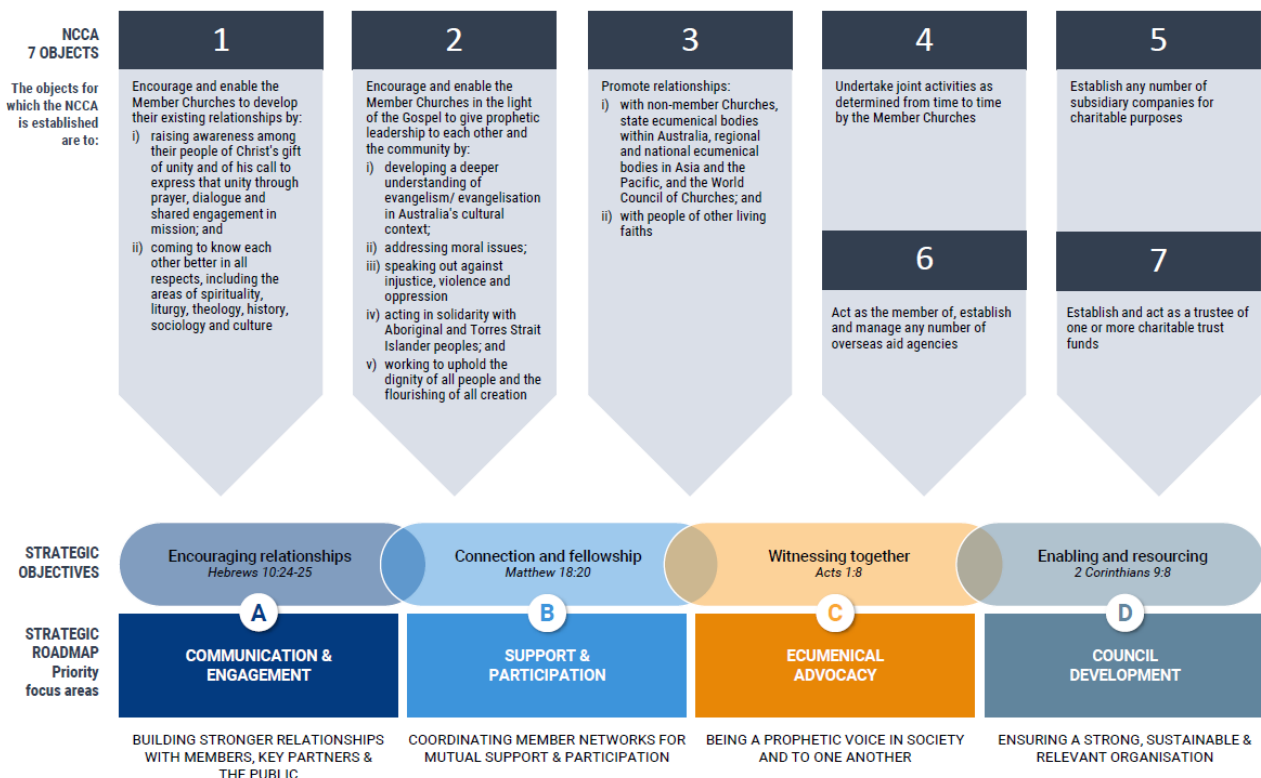
"For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them." (NIV)

Enabling

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)



10TH NATIONAL FORUM

LIVING AND WALKING IN THE HOLY SPIRIT:

Called to transforming discipleship



At the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture, Canberra approximately 60 people from 11 member churches came together for the 2019 Triennial Forum through prayer and reflection, dialogue and discernment.

We gathered to renew the purpose of the Council and provide direction on Council activities and issues of focus for the next three years.

The four day agenda included the following opportunities each day:

Fellowship: to encourage and enable the Member Churches to develop their existing relationships.

Business: to hear reports from the President, General Secretary, Commissions and Networks of the past three years and receive recommendations on action during the coming triennium, responding to the current issues in our society and act in solidarity with First Nations.

Encouraging: to reflect and discern together the fulfilment of their mission of common witness, proclamation and service.

Spiritual Life: to express more visible the unity willed by Christ for his Church to the glory of One God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.



The Great Commission

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." *Matthew 28:18-19 (NIV)*

On the theme of *Living and Walking in the Holy Spirit* we discussed ideas to deepen the relationships between our churches and Christian faith communities. We looked at common areas of witness, proclamation and service which need to be transformed in the power of the Holy Spirit.



10TH NATIONAL FORUM

LIVING AND WALKING IN THE HOLY SPIRIT:

Called to transforming discipleship

We heard from International Guest Speaker, Bishop George Coorilos on doing mission from the margins. Metropolitan Geevarghese Coorilos is Bishop of Niranam diocese of the Syrian Orthodox Church in India and Moderator of the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism, World Council of Churches (WCC)



Discipleship is one that is commitment to transforming the world that is so full of injustice pain and suffering.
WCC Arusha Mission Conference 2018

Gathering Prayer

God of Love,
You are the Creator of this land
and of all good things.
Our hope is in you
because you gave your Son Jesus
to reconcile the world to you.
We pray for your strength and grace
to forgive, accept and love one another,
as you love us
and forgive and accept us
in the sacrifice of your Son.
Amen!

On Sunday afternoon we walked through paths in the Parliamentary Triangle of Canberra on a pilgrimage of justice and peace with our First Nations. Stopping occasionally to pray and reflect as the sun set and turned the sky to dusk.



MEMBER ENGAGEMENT

NATIONAL CHURCH LEADERS

The NCCA General Secretary facilitates meetings of National Church Leaders. Currently there are two meetings annually. These meetings are for support, getting to know one another and topical discussion.

The meeting in Sydney in September 2018 was held at St James Parish Hall and was a time of reflection and fellowship.

In March 2019 the meeting was held in Sydney, at St Stephen's Uniting Church. This was a time of prayerful preparation for the NCCA Forum in Canberra, 21-24 June 2019.



We say goodbye to:

- ◆ Joe Goodall, Congregational Federation
- ◆ Jo Jordan, Religious Society of Friends
- ◆ Commissioner Floyd Tidd, The Salvation Army



We look forward to working with:

- ◆ Ann Zubrick, Religious Society of Friends
- ◆ Commissioners Robert & Janine Donaldson, The Salvation Army
- ◆ Metropolitan Archbishop Makarios Griniezakis, Greek Orthodox Church

MEMBER ENGAGEMENT

The NCCA participated/attended:

- [Quakers](#) - 2018 Religious Society of Friends Yearly meeting
- [Uniting Church](#)- 15th National Assembly- Worship Service, Melbourne, 8 July 2018
- [Lutheran](#) - Opening of General Synod Oct. 2018
- [Armenian Orthodox Church](#) - Australian visit of the Armenian Pope, His Holiness Karekin II, 1-11 February 2019
- [Assyrian Church of the East](#) - Episcopal Consecration of Bishop Narsai Youkhanis- 26 May 2019
- [Coptic Orthodox Church](#) - 50th Anniversary in Australia
- [Greek Orthodox](#) - 29 June 2019 - enthronement of Archbishop Makarios.



MEMBER ENGAGEMENT

YOUNG ADULT LEADERSHIP FORMATION ROUNDTABLE

5 July 2018

Sydney, St James Parish Hall

Attendance: 21

Attendees represented eight different churches and Christian organisations. Those present may go on to explore establishing a 'community of practice' to continue the sharing and learning from each other.



ASSEMBLY ROUNDTABLES

Responding to Royal Commission Recommendations

Professional Supervision for clergy and church workers

18 July 2018 St James Parish Hall Sydney

Attendance: 33

We discussed the opportunities and challenges of implementing Recommendation 16.45 of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse



Performance Appraisal Frameworks for clergy and church workers



31 Oct 2018 St James Parish Hall Sydney

Attendance: 45

We looked at current performance appraisal tools that incorporate recommendations of the Royal Commission relating to Child Safe Standard 5

Selection, training and screening for clergy and church workers

21 March 2019 St Stephen's UCA Sydney

Attendance: 40

On the topic, we looked at best practice in psychological testing for ordination candidates and lay workers. Recommendation 16.4,16.5



NCCA ROUNDTABLE MEETINGS

ECO JUSTICE ROUNDTABLE

27 July 2018

NCCA Offices Sydney

Attendance: 16

Brought together people that included members of the Justice Network, members of other faith based environmental groups including the Australian Religious Response to Climate Change (ARRCC), Pacific Calling Partnership, Caritas Australia for Catholic Earthcare Australia and Common Grace. They shared the advocacy campaigns and work that each group is engaged with and then discussed future ways of potential collaboration

FRANC

Financial Representatives of Australian National Churches

17-18 October 2018 - Melbourne

Attendance: 43

- ◆ Presentation on the banking Royal Commission and the possible implications for church funds.
- ◆ Allen Kupke from the Lutheran Laypeople's League presented a case study on how they achieved a banking licence (ADI).
- ◆ A panel gave short presentations around risk: social media risk, responding to reputational risks in the media and some issues impacting the church finance sector.
- ◆ Presentation on an IT shared services model for the Charitable Development Funds of various Catholic Diocese.



DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE ROUNDTABLE

2 May 2019

Chapter House, Anglican Diocese of Melbourne

Attendance: 25

Participants were church people who work at developing resources, implementing training or drafting policy on domestic and family violence.

Churches represented include: The Salvation Army, Anglican Church, Uniting Church, Religious Society of Friends, Lutheran Church, Coptic Orthodox Church, Churches of Christ, the Ecumenical State Councils of NSW and Victoria, Hillsong and Scott Holmes, Manager Practice Development from Our Watch.



SUDANESE WOMEN LEADERS' GATHERING

29-30 March 19

Canberra, Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture

Attendance: 20

Women leaders from four churches and five States and ACT were aware of the extent and intensity of trauma from the violence of war and the need for deep healing in families and communities living in Australia.

The women identified the following topics as key areas of concern within their communities:

- Women as Peacemakers within their community
- Inter-generational connections
- Women's health
- Women in Leadership and Ministry

Each topic was explored to identify how each could be addressed and good connections were made for sharing programs and activities that are addressing the common concerns.



NCCA HOSTED MEETINGS

BISHOP ANGAELOS



22 August 2018
NCCA Office, Sydney

Moderator of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, and Coptic Orthodox Archbishop of London

REV HRANT TAHANIAN



17 May 2019
NCCA Office,
Sydney

Armenian Church Catholicosate of Cilicia Antelias Lebanon. Rev Tahanian brought greetings from his church and the afternoon was spent in ecumenical sharing.

PALESTINIAN CHRISTIAN SPEAKING TOUR



17 May 2019
NCCA Office, Sydney

**“Any Hope for Palestine,
now or ever?”**

Areej Masoud is a Palestinian Christian with a passion to speak up on behalf of her people and introduce the world to her reality.

MODERN SLAVERY TALANOA

27 May 2019
NCCA office, Sydney

An ecumenical meeting which brought together Pacific Islander church leaders, representatives from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and Vanuatu Government and Vanuatu Christian Council Officials on a fact finding mission to see how community and church outreach to Vanuatu workers in Australia can be improved.

Pacific Islander church communities pledged to work together to support seasonal workers.

PACIFIC ISLANDER CHURCH LEADERS

ANTI SLAVERY DISCUSSION

6 May 2019
Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney

An ecumenical meeting brought together Pacific Islander congregational leaders and the General Secretary of the Pacific Conference of Churches, Rev James Bhagwan.

Rev Bhagwan called on Pacific and Australian churches to work together with regional governments to ensure the safety and security of islanders working offshore.



NCCA ACTIVITIES

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.



EAPPI Ecumenical Accompaniment Program in Palestine and Israel

By taking part in the Ecumenical Accompaniment Program in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI), dedicated volunteers spend three months being a protective presence for families living under occupation. Their work includes monitoring checkpoints, accompanying children to and from school, reporting any violence or harassment and supporting acts of nonviolent resistance alongside Palestinians and Israeli.

THE RATION CHALLENGE... Christmas Bowl

HOW WE WORK

ADVOCACY We're committed to amplifying the voices of the most vulnerable, empowering them to claim their own rights and hold their own governments to account. We also mobilise passionate Australians, like you, to demand change. When we come together to speak with one voice, it sends a clear message that people in power can't ignore.

HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE We respond fast to emergencies around the world - local or global, large or small - to reach people with life-saving assistance when they are at their most vulnerable. We also work with local people on how to identify risks and prepare for the next disaster, which saves lives when an emergency hits.

WORKING WITH PARTNERS We believe local people are best placed to respond to and solve problems in their own communities. By partnering with local organisations, we aim to build on and strengthen local knowledge, people and resources, to help find solutions to complex problems and create solutions that work.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT Lasting change takes time. We're committed to long-term development projects that help communities to tackle their own problems - whether that's through livelihoods and vocational training, health and hygiene programs or psychosocial and educational support.

Australian Churches Refugee Taskforce

Key areas:

- **Coordinate** and communicate with churches
- Offer a strong moral **voice**
- **Information** sharing across churches in Australia
- Lead Australian churches in coordinated **campaigning and advocacy**
- **Collaborate** with existing networks in the Australian refugee sector



DIGNITY NOT DESTITUTION

What does ACRT do?

- Monthly teleconference for members; Sharing among members actively involved in supporting refugees and asylum seekers; Sharing information from sector meetings; Monitoring the political and social context; Developing communications for sharing
- Participation in sector events; Palm Sunday ; Refugee Alternatives Conference
- Annual face-to-face meeting to review and plan for the next year



COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIP TO AUSTRALIA



IMMIGRATION DETENTION VISITOR EXPERIENCES

What has been happening?

- Campaigns: Let them Stay, No Business in Abuse, Dignity not Destitution, Kids off Nauru
- Churches Sanctuary Movement
- Numerous media releases and communications
- A resource guide for hosting asylum seekers and refugees
- Initiation of the Manus humanitarian program to support refugee men and local churches in Manus Island

AT A GLANCE

our 65,954 individual supporters gave over 92,400 gifts totalling \$7.65 MILLION

every \$1 SPENT on fundraising returned \$3.5 for programs

THANK YOU!

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

Visit: ACRT - <https://www.acrt.com.au/>

NCCA ACTIVITIES

FAITH AND UNITY COMMISSION

The Commission holds two meetings per year in Melbourne. They met twice during 2018-19: 14-15 November 2018 and 10-11 April 2019. Both meetings were held at the Centre for Theology and Ministry, Parkville. The Commission is grateful to the Uniting Church and the CTM for allowing us to meet there regularly.

Mid 2018 the Rt Rev'd Doug Stevens retired from the Commission and was replaced by The Rev'd Jacob Legarda, of the Anglican Church, from the beginning of 2019.

Rev'd Graham Perry (UCA) was chair of the Commission. After Graham's resignation, Rev'd Dr Gerard Kelly was elected as chair.

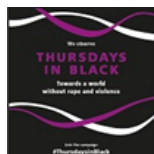


Energy was focused on study documents produced by the World Council of Churches (WCC) and its departments. Specifically, a prepared response to *Moral Discernment in the Churches: A Study Document* (Faith and Order paper no.125), and *Together Towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes*,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

Emily Evans assisted the Commission to take up the invitation from the WCC to engage with the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace. The Commission began theological reflection on the matters raised by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and it expects to continue this theological reflection in the next year.

Justice, Peace & Care of Creation

Thursdays in Black



Please pray with us 'towards a world without rape and violence'. Commitment to the Thursdays in Black campaign

To find out more about the campaign please visit the NCCA

Website: <https://www.ncca.org.au/departments/thursdays-in-black>

Facebook and Twitter: <https://www.facebook.com/NCCA.Au/>

Every Thursday, NCCA acknowledged Thursdays in Black

Additional resources for Thursdays in Black can be found on the World Council of Churches website:

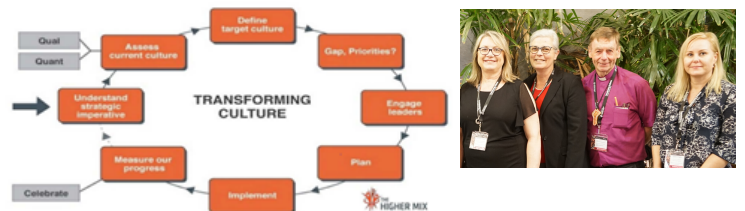
<https://www.oikoumene.org/en/get-involved/thursdays-in-black>

SAFE CHURCH PROGRAM

The Safe Church Program (SCP) is an initiative of the NCCA and consists of the following:

- ◆ **The Safe Church Training Agreement (SCTA)** facilitates quality, sustainable, accessible, safe church workshops for local church leaders. It is an initiative of the NCCA and both NCCA and non-NCCA churches participate in the agreement.
- ◆ **The Safe Church Network** is committed to leadership to ensure that Australian Churches are physically, emotionally and spiritually safe for children and vulnerable adults. They provide guidance in safeguarding for churches and respond to requests from the NCCA Board.
- ◆ **The Safer Churches conference** is a biennial conference that is run to provide professional development opportunities, support and network opportunities to those involved in safe church ministry. In 2019, the conference was held on 17 and 18 September 2019 at the Mecure Hotel, Brisbane.

The SCP was the successful recipient of the Collier Foundation Grant in 2018. The Grant enabled the National Coordinator to work closely with state based ecumenical officers, members and representatives from state and territory oversight bodies. The purpose was for education resourcing and capacity building to make our institutions child safe.



In the 2018-2019 period the Safe Church Program has been working with the NCCA Secretariat on Assembly and roundtable discussions around the Recommendations from the Royal Commission.

We have said goodbye to two staff members and welcome Vera DeVere into the role of Program Assistant in 2019.

Project officer - Emily Evans



Emily was based in Melbourne and provided administrative, research and implementation support to the Commissions, Networks and the overall work of the Council. Emily worked on:

- NCCA Forum 2019 & Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace
- Eco conference 8-10 March 2019 Galong NSW
- Thursdays in Black campaign
- Justice Network liaison
- Domestic and Family Violence Roundtable May 2019

NCCA FUNDS

In the financial year 2018–2019 funding was given to the following:

GLENBURNIE PROGRAM

◆ Youth PoWR 18

Funding for the salary of a Youth & Networking Coordinator for Youth PoWR 2018

◆ AfP EAPPI-PIEN

Assistance to Act for Peace for the Ecumenical Accompaniment Program in Palestine and Israel to work with the Palestine & Israel Ecumenical Network

◆ ARRCC

Assistance to the Australian Religious Response to Climate Change (ARRCC) for 'Stop Adani' advocacy work in North Queensland and capacity building workshops for faith communities



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.”

Closing date for applications: 30 April each year.

For more information on the the Program guidelines and to access the application form please visit the NCCA website: <https://www.ncca.org.au/about/ecumenical/item/178-glenburnie-programme>

ABORIGINAL & TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER DEVELOPMENT FUND

◆ January 26 Prayer Service 2019 - Common Grace - acknowledgement, lament and prayer.

Bringing Christians together in prayer and education about the true history of this country.

◆ Healing on Country - Gimwuy Gallery

A five day intensive week of art and Traditional Aboriginal healing practices.

◆ Kuku Yalanji Elders Empowerment - Mossman Gorge Community Church

A culturally significant exchange that brought elders and families together for a series of workshops with the Youth and Children of the Mossman Community. The age group ranged from - Children age 5-18, parents, guardians, community members and Elders.

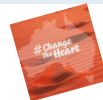
◆ Healthy Respectful Relationships - Cape York RAATSICC

This project aimed to teach children how to build healthy relationships, resilience and confidence. It focused on how to build personal strengths, positive coping, problem solving, stress management and positive gender relationships.

A tax deductible fund set up to assist Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Peoples by giving small, usually one-off grants for community development projects.

For more information visit the NCCA website page.

Visit: <https://www.ncca.org.au/about-us-1/development-fund>



RONALD WILSON ECUMENICAL LEADERSHIP FUND

The Ecumenical Leadership Fund assists young people 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. No applications were received to this fund during the year. Visit: <https://www.ncca.org.au/about/ecumenical>

ECUMENICAL NETWORKS

NATIONAL

- ◆ **South Australian Council of Churches** –
31 January 2019 – Farewell to Geraldine Hawkes after 13 years of ecumenical inspiration. Welcome to Rev Anne Hewitt.
- ◆ **Centre for Ecumenical Studies**
Ecumenical Roundtable 25 June 2019 – Canberra



PACIFIC

Pacific Conference of Churches – National Councils of Churches in the Pacific – Roundtable, 10-14 June 2019

Liz Stone, NCCA Interim General Secretary attended a meeting of General Secretaries of National Councils of Churches convened by the Pacific Conference of Churches (PCC) in Suva, Fiji.



INTERFAITH ENGAGEMENT

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

- 25 July 2018 – NCCA hosts at St Mary's Catholic Church
- 5 September 2018 – at Islamic Council of Vic., Melbourne
- 4 December 2018 – Channukah at Emanuel Synagogue, Sydney
- 18 January 2019 – Media Release – Australia Day Vision
- 1 May 2019 – The Uniting Church National Assembly, Sydney



INTERNATIONAL

The **10th Central Committee meeting of the World Council of Churches (WCC)** met in Switzerland from 15 – 22 June 2018. NCCA's Interim General Secretary, Liz Stone attended.



◆ Parliamentary IFTAR dinner – May 23 2019



◆ APRO

- Meeting 5th April 2019
- Media Statement – Attack on Muslim worshippers

◆ Solidarity with people of other faiths

- 15 March shooting disaster – New Zealand and related prayer vigils around Australia.



NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES IN AUSTRALIA



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NCCA's audited financial statements for 2018-2019 are available on request:
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