

NCCA STATEMENT

'Practising Peace' in our nation, region and world

In Australia and our region and in our world, we are currently focused on issues of peace and security.

The war in Ukraine has entered its second year while, simultaneously; there is escalating violence in Palestine, continuing military exercises on the Korean Peninsula and the South China Sea; state violence in Myanmar; a fragile situation in Ethiopia and Sudan; and war in several other parts of the world threaten peace.

As Australian Christians we are tasked to **"seek peace, and pursue it"** (**Psalm 34:14**) and there are live discussions about non-military ways to enhancing security and stability in the Asia-Pacific region.

Australia's churches have a long history of formal and informal relationships with communities across the Asia-Pacific region and Australia's multi-cultural communities retain strong ties to their homelands.

Building people to people relationships through diplomacy is a bedrock upon which peace and security is founded.

Our Pacific neighbours have pointed out that regional stability for them is survival of their homelands and its peoples. To this end they have requested Australia to stop new fossil fuels projects and genuinely reduce emissions from polluting companies.

Similarly Australia's overseas aid and development program in the Asia-Pacific region has been an important bridge for building stability and security over decades.

Many Australians are concerned that the budget for the official aid program is vulnerable to being cut given the fact that increased spending by Australia on weapons of war is being planned.

There cannot be peace without seeking justice, removing the causes of crisis and conflict and promoting the wellbeing of all people.

We are also reminded that the first greeting of Jesus Christ to his followers following his resurrection from the dead is **"Peace be with you. As the Father sent me, so am I sending you."** (John 20:21) Peace is both a gift and a task.

Called to be peacemakers, we Christians and churches aspire to put the principles of peace into practice in our day-to-day lives. We hope to build respectful and cooperative relationships with others in our multi-cultural and multi-faith nation.

We also call on the Australian Government at this time to:

- Focus less on arming ourselves with weapons of war and move to an important role of peace-making in the Asia-Pacific region.
- Be clear that the shift to Australia having nuclear powered submarines does not prevent the Australian Government signing the 2017 Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, otherwise known as the Nuclear Weapon Ban Treaty.
- Offer more support for the 100 million displaced people, over 1.2% of the global population, that UNHCR estimated in 2022 have been forced to leave their homes. (Among these people are over 32.5 million refugees and 72% of those refugees come from just six countries.)
- Respond generously to the invitation contained in the 2017 Uluru Statement from the Heart and work towards unity, reconciliation and the healing of our nation and take practical action to advance its core components: Voice, Treaty and Truth Telling.

ENDS – 14 June 2023