

1. Present:

(delegates) The Rev'd Theresa Angert-Quilter, The Most Rev'd Dr Phillip Aspinall, Ms Sonia Berberian, Rev Dr Merryl Blair, The Rev'd Dr Matthew Brain, Mr Craig Brown, Mr Michael Brown, Ms Lisa Buxton, Ms. Dorothy Carey, Rev Seferosa Carroll, Maxine Cooper, Rev Terence Corkin, Rev Tara Curlewis (General Secretary), Sr Elizabeth Delaney sgs, The Reverend Fr Michael Delaney, The Rev'd Josh Dinale, Mr Martin Drevikovsky, Lt Colonel Graham Durston, Mr Evan Ellis, The Revd Fr Youssef Fanous, Sr Giovanni Farquer rsj, Elizabeth Field, Georgy Parampil George, Ms Robyn Goodwin, Dr Marelle Harisun, Mr Josphe Haweil (Mon/Tues), Mrs Elsie Heiss, Rev Gregor Henderson, The Rt Rev'd Philip Huggins, The Venerable David Ingleson, Mr Jobu K Jacob, Rev Bruce Johnson, The Reverend Gerard Kelly, Major Paul Kinder, Rev Jason Kioa, The Revd Deacon Daniel Kochou (Mon/Tues), The Revd Fr John Kushaba (Mon/Tues), The Rt Rev'd James Leftwich, Rev Mark Lieschke, Rev Gloria Ling, The Rt Rev'd Saibo Mabo, Ms Tanna Mackenzie, Rev Alistair Macrae, The Very Revd Fr Shenouda Mansour, The Rev'd Dr Erica Mathieson, The Most Reverend Michael McKenna, Ms Joan McRae, Mr Richard Menteith (Treasurer), Fr Milan Milutinovic (Fri & Sun evenings only), Ms Margaret Naylor, Ms Maureen Postma, The Most Reverend Patrick Power, Ms Alison Preston, The Most Reverend Michael Putney, Major Susan Reese, Captain Kerryn Roberts, The Very Rev'd Phillip Saunders, Rev Cecil Schmalkuche, The Reverend Denis Stanley, Ms Roberta Stanley, Mrs Julie Staszyc, Rev Paul Swadling, Drew Thomas, Miss Siroun Tontian (Sun-Tues), Mr Paul Turley, Rev Blysu Varghese, Mr Vatche Vartanian (Mon-Tues), Fr Macarius Wahba, Mrs Loretta Wholley, The Most Reverend Philip Wilson, Lt Col Ray Wilson and The Rev'd Canon Emeritus Dr Robert Withycombe.

(observer Churches and observers from the state ecumenical councils) The Reverend Chris Bedding (CCWA), Ms Glenine Hamlyn (QCT), Mrs Geraldine Hawkes (SACC), Mr Theo Mackaay (VCC) and Pastor Ken Vogel (SDA).

(guest speaker) The Rev'd Dr John Gibaut.

(invited guests) Maryam Bell (Australian Baha'i Community, member), Hj Ikebal Patel (Australian Federation of Islamic Councils, President), Mr Allan Sauer (Australasian Religious Press Association, Executive Officer) and Anita Shroot (Executive Council of Australian Jewry, Vice President, and President ACT Jewish Community).

(staff and presenters) The Rev Peter Barnett (Audio Visual & SCTA), Mr Alistair Gee (Exec Director, AfP), Mr Graeme Mundine (NATSIEC), Ms Gabrielle Russell-Mundine (NATSIEC & Photographer), Ms Debra Porter (Asst to the General Secretary, Communications & EAPPI), Mr Paul Ryan (Director, Support Services).

(visitors) Mr Constantine Dabbagh (MECC DSPR), Mr Rifat Kassis (Kairos Palestine Coordinator) and Rev Marie Wilson (UCA).

(*volunteers*) Keith Billingham, Lorraine Billingham, Bev Crossman, Les Flack, Declan Ingham, Robert James, David Palmer, Helen Palmer and Len Thompson.

Apologies:

(*delegates*) The Revd Fr George Alkan, His Eminence Archbishop Aghan Baliozian, Hisham Daoud, Mr Darren May and His Eminence Archbishop Paul Saliba.

(*invited guests*) The Hon Tony Abbott (Leader of the Opposition), Prof Nihal Agar (Hindu Council of Australia, Chairman), Barbara Arnold (World Day of Prayer, National Liaison Officer), Ms Quentin Bryce (Governor General of Australia), Margaret Fint (Australian Church Women, President), The Hon Julia Gillard (Prime Minister of Australia), the Rev Dr Olav Fyske Tveit (World Council of Churches, General Secretary).

2. Welcome to Country:

Aunty Agnes Shay of the Ngunnawal elders welcomed the participants of the Forum to the land of her people. The Ngunnawal people are the owners of the land on which the Forum was held.

Aunty Agnes explained the reason for the Welcome to Country. Before entering another persons country visitors are greeted and do not enter until accepted by an owner. This is to protect the visitors' spirit.

“Good Afternoon All.

“Let me begin by reminding all present that this is NAIDOC Week and today is NAIDOC Day.

“The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander week unlike Reconciliation week is a time for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to come together with others to celebrate our life and culture and that we have survived. It is a time where we can highlight the import things that concern us and celebrate our unity as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. Many celebrations are happening around the country and this years spotlight will be on Melbourne where the National Ball and awards will take place. Some may recall that Mrs Elsie Heiss, a member of your Executive received the Elder of the year award at last year's celebration in Brisbane. Many will receive due recognition for the tremendous work they do.

“But the theme for this year is “Unsung Hero's”.

“This is a very important theme as it shines a light on many who have been struggling hard to bring about a better life for all of us. Many of us do this quietly in the background with little recognition. They are the teachers, coaches, doctors, Aunts, Uncles, parents and Grand parents to name a few.

“We like you want the best for our families and friends and work tirelessly in our communities to try and bring it about. If you know anything about our communities and the amount of outside influences that affect our lives, then you would know it is not always so easy. We do it because of love. Love of our brothers, sisters, parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles and all that have gone before us. Our strength we draw from our past and one another.

“This week then, it is important to stop and reflect upon those many unsung heroes who have gone before us and are around us now. It would be good if you yourselves take a short moment to think of some of those Aboriginals or Torres Strait Islanders who work tirelessly to make this community, this country a better a place for all.

“Many thanks for thinking of them and hopefully while you are here together pray for them for the strength and courage to continue.

“I warmly welcome you back to Ngunnawal Country some 16 years after your first Forum here and pray that your time here will be fruitful and, remember, whatever you do tread lightly across my Country as we have done for thousands of years.

“Thank you.”

3. Opening Welcome:

The President thanked Aunty Agnes for her warm welcome. The Forum is pleased that Aunty Agnes gave permission for participants to put their footprint on her country.

He welcomed the delegates and visitors. He emphasised that each Church’s voice must be heard. Veterans may need to step back to allow newcomers to work through this new experience of NCCA Forum.

Rifat Kassis (Kairos Palestine Coordinator) and Constantine Dabbagh (MECC DSPR) were especially welcomed. Visitors from Gaza and Palestine in Australia as part of a tour coordinated by several Australian groups and supported by the NCCA Act for Peace.

The General Secretary introduced the NCCA staff assisting with the 7th Forum.

4. Purpose of the Forum

The Forum is a process to aid the Churches as we discern where God is leading us. Public statements may be made. Two Churches will be presented to the Forum for inclusion as members.

A brief overview of the function and methods of the Forum was explained, including the use of various forms (notices, recommendations, amendments and questions).

5. Acceptance of New Member Churches

5.1 Indian Orthodox Church

Georgy George of the Sydney/Canberra Parish introduced the Indian Orthodox Church. Originally the Australian Church was comprised of a few members from Kerala, India. Today the Church is a strong, vibrant community with two Cathedrals (Sydney and Melbourne) and parishes in Adelaide, Brisbane and Perth.

10.07.01 **It was resolved that** the Indian Orthodox Church be accepted and embraced into the National Council of Churches in Australia by the delegates of this National Forum.

(accepted into membership by acclamation)

5.2 Serbian Orthodox Church

Fr Milan Milutinovic of the Canberra Parish introduced the Serbian Orthodox Church. He brought a greeting from the Australian head of Church, His Grace Bishop Irinej. As a result of historical events the Serbian Church has isolated itself for too long. Fr Milan commented that suffering in isolation is difficult. Dialogue and understanding are needed.

10.07.02 **It was resolved that** the Serbian Orthodox Church be accepted and embraced into the National Council of Churches in Australia by the delegates of this National Forum.

(accepted into membership by acclamation)

6. The Theme

Shaping Our Ecumenical Footprint brings about reflection upon positive and negative footprints. In preparation for this Forum much reflection has been cast on the recent Ecumenical Celebrations in Edinburgh marking 100 years since the first international ecumenical celebration held in that city. This Forum's morning worship celebrations are working from the Bible studies and Week of Prayer resources, also reflections of the 2010 Edinburgh celebration. It is hoped that this Forum will be another opportunity to create positive footprints.

7. Opening Actions

Appointment of Committees, Timetable, Procedures & Minutes

10.07.03 It was resolved that

- .01 the following persons be appointed as a Steering Committee for this National Forum: President (Convenor), General Secretary, Liz Field, Bruce Johnston, Fr Shenouda Mansour and Margaret Naylor. (staff: Paul Ryan)
- .02 the Steering Committee be asked to make any proposals it deems necessary regarding the ordering of business;
- .03 the following persons be appointed as a Nominations Committee for his National Forum: Sonia Berberian, Martin Drevikovsky, Kerryn Roberts and Loretta Wholley (Convenor). (staff: Alistair Gee & Graeme Mundine)
- .04 the Nominations Committee be asked to bring recommendations and nominations for membership of the commissions, committees and networks based on the recommendations of member Churches.
- .05 the deadline for recommendations moved and seconded by member Churches be submitted in writing to the President no later than 6:00pm on Sunday, July 11, 2010.
- .06 comment be sought from the Finance Committee representative 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.
- .07 the Executive be authorised to approve the Minutes of the 7th National Forum.
- .08 the proposed timetable and procedures be adopted, subject to such variations as may be approved in the course of this National Forum.

8. Explanation of Process

The General Secretary explained that the President will chair the Forum, proceeding with a relaxed flow through the business. Contentious matters may mean a return to more formal meeting procedures. The structure of the Forum will be divided into: Business Sessions; Information and Reporting Sessions; and Denominational Meetings. Sign up sheets will be provided for the Programme Reporting and Future Directions sessions.

All recommendations must be presented by a member Church and seconded by another member Church. Previously listed recommendations come from procedural actions and the committees, commissions, working groups and networks of the NCCA.

9. What Shape is your Ecumenical Footprint?

Questions discussed in small groups:

- How would you describe the shape of your footprint?
- How do you see it coming together?
- What is the shape of the footprint of the churches working together in your local area, state and nationally?

Reporting from groups noted:¹

- Footprint is really small due to resource restrictions.
- Generational differences – short term commitments from younger folk.
- Church leaders being less active and looking more at their own denominations.
- Not significant pick up of the covenant.
- Ecumenical journey is counter cultural.
- Things are happening in rural areas.
- Theological education is happening ecumenically in Vic and SA.
- NCCA focus is overseas – not domestic.
- NCCA is invisible.
- Covenant not embraced and acted upon whole-heartedly.
- Churches who are absent – evangelical.
- Cultural change.
- Need exceptional leadership which can only come from the churches together.
- Walking towards visible unity.

Groups asked to discuss (no reporting):

- Acknowledging that we all come from different places, what is the gift that you bring?
- What do you see that you are able to offer to this meeting?

10. Indigenous Right to Waters

It was recognised during the *What Shape is your Ecumenical Footprint* session and applauded that the Torres Strait Islanders have been given the rights to the oceans (waters) around their lands. Bishop Saibo Mabo was asked to lead the group in prayer.

11. Worship at Forum

11.1 Morning Worship – written and coordinated by the General Secretary utilising resources from Week of Prayer for Christian Unity over several years.

- Saturday – Victorian Council of Churches
- Monday – New South Wales Ecumenical Council
- Tuesday – South Australian Council of Churches and Council of Churches of Western Australia

11.2 Evening Worship – written and presented by Geraldine Hawkes

11.3 Opening and – written and coordinated by the General Secretary

Closing Worship – written by Chris Bedding coordinated by the General Secretary

- Opening – Queensland Churches Together
- Closing – Combined state ecumenical councils

11.4 Public Ecumenical Service (Sunday) – written and coordinated Gregor Henderson, Erica Mathieson and Ray Williamson assisted by members of the Wesley Uniting Church, Canberra, and the General Secretary

¹ Full feedback from this session is reported in Appendix C.

12. Bible Studies

Three Bible Studies were led by the Rev'd Dr John Gibaut.

These studies were developed for the 2010 Edinburgh Ecumenical Conference. The Commission on Faith and Order of the WCC and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity prepared the texts of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, with an original draft prepared by a local, ecumenical group.

The studies are based on Luke 24, Luke's account of the Resurrection. The text of the presentations can be found at <http://www.ncca.org.au/forums/7th-national-forum/562-bible-studies>.

The President gave a special thanks to John at the end of the final study.

13. Greetings

13.1 *Civil and other greetings delivered at the Forum*

Brian Pickering (Australian Prayer Network, President), Ikebal Patel (Australian Federation of Islamic Councils, President), Anita Shroot (Executive Council of Australian Jewry, Vice-President), Maryam Bell (Australian Baha'i Community, representative) and Allan Sauer (Australasian Religious Press Association, Executive Officer).

13.2 *Written greetings read out at the Forum*

Her Excellency (Governor General of Australia), The Hon Julia Gillard (Prime Minister of Australia), The Hon Tony Abbott (Leader of the Opposition, Australia), Margaret Flint Australian Church Women, President), Barbara Arnold (World Day of Prayer, President) and Nihal Agar (Hindu Council of Australia, President).

14. President's Address²

This meeting is an historic one, in the national capital "where we began". Canberra was the venue for the inaugural meeting of the NCCA. The President reflected on the history and achievements of the Council.

There have been many positive achievements. The signing of the Covenant at the 5th Forum was the beginning of a fruitful Covenant which hasn't yet fully taken root. The signing of the Memorandum of Understanding was a sign of the commitment of the Council to work in a more intentional way with the NATSIEC. The interfaith relationships developed through the Australian National Dialogue of Christians Muslims and Jews is something that the NCCA can do in a way that individual Churches cannot. These are just a few of the positive achievements accomplished by the NCCA.

What do we need to commit ourselves to in the future? Our national profile and our national clout are not as significant as we would hope. Politicians and our own Church representatives often do not see our agenda as significant enough to be motivated with any urgency to be present in its meetings all of the time. Is the NCCA bringing our Churches together?

We need each other? We do not exist just to do business. How do we express this need and create a truly ecumenical space? How do we engage politicians and community leaders?

We should become aware during this Forum that our Churches are growing closer together. Anything less is the beginning of the end of the Council.

² See Notes in Appendix F.

15. General Secretary's Address³

Shaping our Ecumenical Footprint – Hope without Wavering

Reflecting on verses from Hebrews the General Secretary gave an overview of her experience of past Forums, visiting member Churches and meeting new friends from those Churches and beyond.

A significant move forward since the last Forum has been the development of the Safe Church Training Agreement. It is bringing our collective Churches towards a Holistic Safe Church Ministry.

The NCCA is blessed by staff and volunteers who bring many projects to fruition. Many projects, however, lack sufficient ecumenical resource to enable the NCCA to engage them, financial and human.

Questions for Table Group Discussion

1. The pilgrimage of more visible Christian Unity is only achieved by the churches together taking one step at a time.
2. What steps do you see in your church?
3. What is perhaps the next step that needs to be taken?
4. What is the next step for the NCCA member Churches to take together?

16. President's Search Committee

Discussion held in camera.

10.07.04 It was resolved that Bishop Michael Putney be appointed President of the NCCA until the end of the 8th Forum in 2013.

17. Finance Committee (pages 33-36 Working Papers)

The Treasurer presented the Finance Report.

Highlights of the report included the sale of level 6 (\$1.4 million surplus to needs); sale of the Strathfield Home bed licences and operations (\$1.3 million); appointment of new internal auditor; new donor database; handover of NSW finances; changeover of the end of year from 31 Dec to 30 June; and the effect of the GFC (interest returns).

Concern was expressed at the increase in expenditure. The income is not growing at the same rate as the expenditure. This needs to be addressed. The NCCA cannot keep cutting staff and resources in order to meet income.

The NCCA is solvent.

Discussion regarding increasing income followed.⁴

10.07.05 It was resolved that the Finance Committee report be received.

18. Report Resolutions

18.1 General Secretary and NCCA Executive (pages 23-32 Working Papers)

10.07.06 It was resolved that

- .01 the General Secretary and Executive report be received.
- .02 the Safe Church Working Group be reformed and renamed as from this 7th Forum the Safe Church Network.

³ See Notes in Appendix G.

⁴ View Resolution 10.07.21.

- .03 the mandate of the Safe Church Network as per the Addendum of the Safe Church Working Group Report (*see page 77 Working Papers*) be approved as amended.⁵

18.2 *National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Ecumenical Commission (NATSIEC)*
(pages 37-49 Working Papers)

10.07.07 It was resolved that

- .01 the NATSIEC report be received.
- .02 the Churches represented on the NATSIEC Commission explore ways that they can contribute financially to the cost of participation.
- .03 the NATSIEC and the Churches continue to work together to ensure that Indigenous issues and concerns are kept at the forefront of their attention and not subsumed under a broader justice issue in Australia and within the wider International ecumenical movement.
- .04 the 7th Forum accepts the amendments⁶ to the *Memorandum of Understanding between the NATSIEC and the NCCA*.

18.3 *Christian World Service Commission (CWSC)* (pages 51-56 Working Papers)

10.07.08 It was resolved that the CWSC report be received.

18.4 *Faith & Unity Commission* (pages 57-69 Working Papers)

10.07.09 It was resolved that

- .01 the Faith and Unity Commission report be received.
NB. Report amended to include Ms Glenine Hamlyn into thanks for assistance with the WoPCU resources.
-
- .02 the resource document 'Further Study on Australian Churches Covenanting Together' be noted and received as an addendum to the Faith and Unity Commission report.
-
- .03 the resource document on 'Broadening the Theological Dialogue' be noted and received as an addendum to the Faith and Unity Commission report.
-
- .04 the principles in the resource document be adopted by the NCCA to guide its work in 'Broadening the Theological Dialogue'.
-
- .05 the Forum endorse the Faith and Unity Commission's intention to undertake further study of the WCC texts Nature and Mission of the Church and Called to be the One Church, mutual accountability, and receptive ecumenism.
-
- .06 in the light of the ending of secretarial support, the NCCA Executive, as a matter of urgency, provide the Faith and Unity Commission with a very clear indication of the core tasks for its work for the next three years in the light of feedback provided from the 7th Forum.
-
- .07 the accepted practice for new member Churches of the NCCA is that each Church be invited to sign the Australian Churches Covenanting together document.

⁵ See Appendix A for a copy of the final version of the Mandate for the Safe Church Network.

⁶ See Appendix B for a copy of the full version of the amended MOU.

- .08 the churches be encouraged to regularly evaluate their ecumenical relationships at all levels of church life in the light of their commitment to each other at a national level.
- .09 the Faith and Unity Commission be asked to monitor international agreements between churches with a view to helping Australian churches commit to equivalent agreements at the local level.
- .10 the various dimensions of Australian Churches Covenanting Together be reviewed at each Forum of the NCCA, with a view to broadening them when member churches can recognise new developments in their relationships.
- .11 the churches invite those at parish level to acknowledge what they are already doing and to bring this before God in a solemn act of covenanting.
- .12 local covenants or local agreements be renewed annually, perhaps at a time of the year that is significant for all the churches involved, or else during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.
- .13 covenanting be a topic for consideration at the next Forum on Bilateral Dialogues. The aim of such a consideration would be to help the churches recognise the agreements that have been reached with their dialogue partners and to prompt them to look for ways to bring the unity they already share to concrete expression.

18.5 Gender Commission (pages 71-74 Working Papers)

10.07.10 It was resolved that the Gender Commission report be received.

18.6 Safe Church Project Working Group (pages 75-77 Working Papers)

10.07.11 It was resolved that the Safe Church Project Working Group report be received.

18.7 Social Justice Network (pages 79-81 Working Papers)

10.07.12 It was resolved that the Social Justice Network report be received.

18.8 Communications Desk (pages 83-84 Working Papers)

10.07.13 It was resolved that the Communications Desk report be received.

18.9 Ronald Wilson Ecumenical Leadership Fund (pages 85-86 Working Papers)

10.07.14 It was resolved that the Ronald Wilson Ecumenical Leadership Fund report be received.

*18.10 Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI)
(pages 87-90 Working Papers)*

10.07.15 It was resolved that the NCCA EAPPI Desk report be received.

19. Challenges of Our Culture

Panel Discussion followed by Table Groups.

Leader: Chris Bedding

Panel: Elsie Heiss, Fr Yousef Fanous, Robin Goodwin, Craig Brown

1. How do we respond to a culture which is negative or even aggressive toward Christianity? (Where are Christians valued?)

2. Is the mood in our wider society to do with the perception of Christianity shifting one way or the other? (fundamentalism, narrow, judgemental)
3. How do you think Christians should engage with Government?
4. What is it that young people (under 30) need from the Church and the world today?
5. What is actually working in youth ministry? (Why do they come to church?)
6. What are the values that you need when you are doing cross-cultural ministry?

Questions for Table Groups:⁷

1. How can churches work together on engaging the many cultures in Australia – multi-ethnic, sub-cultures, the generations.
2. What should be the ecumenical message when it comes to:
 - The perception of aggressive/oppressive behaviour from Christians
 - Formation of just and compassionate public policy

20. Focus Sessions

The Faith and Unity Commission, National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ecumenical Commission, and Christian World Service Commission presented the actions and concerns of the respective Commissions.

21. Reporting Sessions

The Faith and Unity Commission, Christian World Service Commission, National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission, Social Justice Network and various NCCA bodies associated with the Secretariat held workshop sessions to update and respond to questions of the Forum participants with regard to activities of each body.

The feedback from these sessions is reported in Appendix D.

22. Future Directions

Workshop sessions were held under the topics of *Faith and Order*, *Mission* and *Social/Public Issues*. The report chair for each of the sessions was Erica Mathieson, Denis Stanley and Paul Kinder respectively.

The feedback from these sessions is reported in Appendix E.

23. Priorities

10.07.16⁸ It was resolved that

- this Forum requests the Executive, until the next Forum, to
- .01** Give priority in its meetings to matters of
 - .1.** Faith and Order / Unity and, in particular,
 - i.** developments in national and international dialogues,
 - ii.** obstacles to progress in dialogues and means to overcome them,
 - .2.** mission and, in particular,

⁷ Table Group responses from this session were not collected.

⁸ Moved by the Anglican Church. Seconded by the Catholic Church. Supported by the Uniting Church and the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers).

- i. strengthening member Churches as they go about mission in Australian society and globally,
 - ii. facilitating cooperation in mission among the Churches,
 - .3. significant public issues and the shape of Australian society in global context and, in particular,
 - i. promoting understanding of key issues through research, analysis and study,
 - ii. formulating joint statements to convey the views of member churches to the wider community,
 - iii. developing shared plans for advocacy and action,
 - .4. Indigenous issues and concerns as guided by the NATSIEC;
- .02 consider whether, and if so how, changes in NCCA structures, processes and resource allocation might better serve these priorities;
- .03 implement pilot changes where appropriate; and
- .04 report to the next Forum with any recommendations.

24. Member Churches

10.07.17⁹ It was resolved that

- .01 the Forum, rejoices as we receive Churches into membership of the NCCA; and
 - .1. recalling that the trust and friendship which mark relationships among the member Churches developed through intentional conversations in years gone by; and
 - .2. seeking similar bonds with those Churches which have more recently become members
- .02 therefore recommends that the NCCA Executive consider establishing a framework for conversation in areas such as our various Church structures, our worship life and the different gifts we can bring to the life of the NCCA.

25. Youth

10.07.18¹⁰ It was resolved that

- .01 member Churches be encouraged to include young people in their delegation.
- .02 future Forums have member Churches nominate two youth members as observers to accompany the church delegation so to encourage the preservation of the Ecumenical youth footprint.

⁹ Moved by the Anglican Church. Seconded by the Mar Thoma Church.

¹⁰ Moved by the Armenian Apostolic and Coptic Orthodox Churches. Seconded by the Indian Orthodox and Mar Thoma Churches.

- 10.07.19¹¹ **It was resolved that** future Forums have time allocated for the youth delegates and observers to discuss current issues facing the youth of the churches today.

26. Refugees & Asylum Seekers

- 10.07.20¹² **It was resolved that**

the NCCA, while affirming the Australian Government's right and responsibility to ensure legitimate border protection:

- .01 Request the major political parties
- .1. to stop engendering fear and anxiety in the Australian population by using asylum seekers, vulnerable people fleeing conflict and persecution, for political advantage;
 - .2. to work for a humane, bipartisan approach to this issue that fulfils our international obligations and enhances Australia's reputation as a just and humane global citizen; and
 - .3. to meet Australia's responsibilities by:
 - i. treating asylum seekers humanely,
 - ii. processing asylum applications expeditiously, and
 - iii. accommodating and processing in Australia asylum seekers who reach Australian territory.
- .02 In making this request we remind all political parties
- .1. that asylum seekers are not illegal immigrants and have rights under international law to seek protection from persecution; and
 - .2. that Australia has committed, as a signatory to the Refugee Convention, to assess each asylum seeker case according to agreed criteria.
- .03 the General Secretary be asked to send this proposal to all Federal Parliamentarians; and to issue a media release to this effect.

27. Finance

- 10.07.21¹³ **It was resolved that**

- .01 it be noted that article 22.02 of the Constitution states that "Each member Church shall make financial contributions to the NCCA according to guidelines approved by the Executive."
- .02 the Finance Committee be asked to bring appropriate guidelines to the next meeting of the Executive for approval.

¹¹ Moved by the Indian Orthodox and Mar Thoma Churches. Seconded by the Armenian Apostolic and Coptic Orthodox Churches.

¹² Moved by the Uniting Church. Seconded by the Churches of Christ.

¹³ Moved by the Roman Catholic Church. Seconded by the Uniting Church.

28. Rights of Indigenous People

10.07.22 It was resolved that

14

- .01 the NCCA notes the Australian Government has adopted the United Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (DRIP).
- .02 the Executive Committee be requested to consult with NATSIEC and bring to the next NCCA Forum for approval or, if possible introduce beforehand, proposals for an appropriate response to DRIP in the day to day work of the NCCA.

29. Palestine & Israel

10.07.23 It was resolved that

15

- the 7th National Forum
- .01 Reiterates the decisions of the NCCA Executive in March 2008 to “affirm the right of the state of Israel to exist, and to exist within secure internationally-recognised borders”¹⁶ and to “affirm the right of the people of Palestine to be freed from more than 40 years of military occupation by Israel, (and) to live within secure internationally-recognised borders”.
 - .02
 - .1. Welcomes the Kairos Palestine document of December 2009 prepared by Palestinian Christians and supported by the 13 Jerusalem Heads of Churches as the “Christian Palestinians’ word to the world about what is happening in Palestine”.¹⁷
 - .2. Notes that the Kairos Palestine document provides a serious theological reflection on the situation facing the Palestinian people, and on the basis of that reflection addresses requests to Christians and churches throughout the world, to the international community, to Jewish and Muslim religious leaders, and to Palestinians and Israelis; and concludes with a cry of hope, believing that “God’s goodness will finally triumph over the evil of hate and of death that still persist in our land”.
 - .03 In a spirit of repentance for past silence and indifference:
 - .1. adds the voice of the National Council of Churches in Australia to Christian voices throughout the world calling for an early end to the occupation of Palestine through a freely and peacefully negotiated solution in accordance with international law and United Nations resolutions; and

¹⁴ Moved by the Anglican Church. Seconded by the Catholic Church.

¹⁵ Moved by the Uniting Church. Seconded by the Anglican Church.

¹⁶ Minute 08.03.06.03 of the NCCA Executive.

¹⁷ Kairos Palestine document, “A Moment of Truth”, was presented in December 2009. It is a word to the world from Palestinian Christians. Developed by a committee of Palestinian Christians and endorsed by Christian Heads of Churches in Jerusalem it involves a theological message and a sincere cry to the world concerning the suffering of Palestinians. It is a request for thoughtful action towards a peaceful resolution to the problems experienced in the West Bank and Gaza. The document and accompanying material can be accessed at <http://www.kairospalestine.ps/>. The Document is available at <http://www.kairospalestine.ps/?q=content/document>.

- .2. adds the voice of the National Council of Churches in Australia to Christian voices throughout the world condemning all acts of terrorism.
- .04 In particular the National Council of Churches in Australia:
- .1. affirms the solidarity of the National Council of Churches in Australia with Palestinian Christians and assures Palestinians that the National Council of Churches in Australia will continue to advocate and act for an end to the occupation and for an end to the injustice and suffering borne by the Palestinian people;
 - .2. in response to the requests in the Kairos document, calls on the member Churches of the National Council of Churches in Australia and the wider Australian community to consider a boycott of goods produced by Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories;
 - .3. requests member Churches to advise the NCCA General Secretary of the outcome of their consideration;
 - .4. requests Act for Peace to provide regular information to the member Churches to assist ongoing actions on the boycott; and
 - .5. welcomes the easing of the Israeli blockade of Gaza in recent days and calls for an immediate end to the blockade.
- .05 Requests Christians involved in inter-faith conversations among Christians, Jews and/or Muslims to include the subject matter of these resolutions in those conversations.
- .06 Requests the General Secretary to convey these resolutions to the Prime Minister, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Leader of the Opposition, the Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs, all members of Federal Parliament, the Executive Council of Australian Jewry, the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils and other individuals and groups as the General Secretary and the President so decide
- .07 Requests the General Secretary to issue a media release relating to these decisions as soon as possible.

30. Nominations Committee Report

The Nominations Committee Report was presented by Loretta Wholley (Chair).

30.1 Executive

10.07.24 It was resolved that

Anglican Church of Australia

HoC - The Most Revd Dr Phillip Aspinall

Alt – Mr Martin Drevikovsky

Designated – The Rt Revd Philip Huggins

Armenian Apostolic Church

HoC - Archbishop Aghan Baliozian

Alt/Designated - Ms Sonia Berberian

Antiochian Orthodox Church

HoC - Archbishop Paul Saliba

Alt – *tba*

Designated - *tba*

Assyrian Church of the East

HoC - Bishop Mar Meelis Zaia

Alt – The Revd Fr John Kushaba

Designated - *tba*

Chinese Methodist Church in Australia

HoC - Bishop Albert Chiew

Alt/Designated – The Rev Gloria Ling

Congregational Federation of Australia & New Zealand

HoC - Pastor Alan Filipana

Alt/Designated - Mr Keith Lyons

Greek Orthodox Church

HoC - Archbishop Stylianos

Alt - Bishop Seraphim

Designated - *tba*Lutheran Church of Australia

HoC - The Rev Dr Mike Semmler

Alt – *tba*

Designated - The Rev Mark Lieschke

Religious Society of Friends

HoC – Maxine Cooper

Alt – Drew Thomas

Designated – Elizabeth Field

Romanian Orthodox Church

HoC – Bishop Mihail

Alt - *tba*

Designated – Vicentu Dumitru

Syrian Orthodox ChurchHoC - Archbishop Mor Malatius Malki
Malki

Alt - The Very Revd Fr Zeki Zitoun

Designated - The Very Revd Fr Malke
YousefUniting Church in Australia

HoC - The Revd Alistair Macrae

Alt - The Revd Terence Corkin

Designated - The Revd Dr Sandy Yule

be endorsed as members of the Executive.

Churches of Christ in Australia

HoC - Mr Craig Brown

Coptic Orthodox Church

HoC - Bishop Daniel

HoC - Bishop Suriel

Alt - The Revd Fr Youssef Fanous

Alt – The Revd Fr Macarius Wahba

Designated - The Very Revd Fr Shenouda
MansourIndian Orthodox Church

HoC – Bishop Yuhanon Mar Diascorus

Designated – Fr Thomas Varghese

Mar Thoma Church

HoC – Bishop Joseph Mar Barnabas

Alt/Designated – The Revd Blysu
VargheseRoman Catholic Church in Australia

HoC - Archbishop Philip Wilson

Alt – Bishop Michael McKenna

Designated - Ms Margaret Naylon

Serbian Orthodox Church

HoC – Bishop Irinej

Designated – Fr Branco Bosancic

The Salvation Army

HoC - Commissioner Linda Bond

HoC - Commissioner Raymond Finger

Alt – Major Paul Kinder

Designated – Lt Col Graham Durston

Designated – Captain Kerry Roberts

Members Nominated by NATSIEC

Bishop Saibo Mabo

Mrs Elsie Heiss

10.07.25 It was resolved that

The Rev'd James Leftwich	Anglican
The Rev'd Dr Erica Mathieson	Anglican
Sr Elizabeth Delaney	Roman Catholic
The Rev Fr Denis Stanley	Roman Catholic
The Rev Seferosa Carroll	Uniting
Ms Robyn Goodwin	Uniting

be elected members of the Executive until the next ordinary meeting of the National Forum.

*30.2 Directors of NCCA Limited***10.07.26 It was resolved that**

Mr Martin Drevikovsky	Anglican
Mr Danny Casey	Roman Catholic
Mr David Penny	Roman Catholic
Mr Ron Brown	Uniting
The Revd Glenda Blakefield	Uniting

be endorsed as Directors of NCCA Limited.

*30.3 Finance Committee***10.07.27 It was resolved that**

Mr David Cohen	Anglican
Mr Richard Menteith	Churches of Christ
Mr Simon Michael	Coptic Orthodox
Mr Dimitri Kepreotes	Greek Orthodox Church
Mr David Penny	Roman Catholic
Major Joy Goodacre	The Salvation Army
Mr Ron Brown	Uniting
The Rev Paul Swadling	Uniting

be endorsed as members of the Finance Committee.

*30.4 Christian World Service Commission (trading as Act for Peace)***10.07.28 It was resolved that**

The Rt Revd Philip Huggins	Anglican
The Revd Fr James Minchin	Anglican
The Rev John Gilmore	Churches of Christ
Mr Simon Michael	Coptic Orthodox
The Revd Fr Chris Dimolianis	Greek Orthodox

Ms Tahnia Mossman	Lutheran
Sieneke Martin	Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)
Lt Col Ray Wilson	The Salvation Army
Mr Bassam Shasha	Syrian Orthodox
Ms Elizabeth Stone	Roman Catholic
Mr Evan Ellis	Roman Catholic
The Rev Elenie Poulos	Uniting
<i>tba</i>	Uniting

be endorsed as members of the Christian World Service Commission.

30.5 Faith and Unity Commission

10.07.29 It was resolved that

Mr Andreas Lowe	Anglican
<i>tba</i>	Anglican
<i>tba</i>	Anglican
The Rev Dr Merryl Blair	Churches of Christ
The Revd Fr Athanaisus Attia	Coptic Orthodox
Dr Philip Kariatlis	Greek Orthodox
The Rev Cecil Schmalkuche	Lutheran
Gerry Guiton	Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)
Dr Ann Hunt	Roman Catholic
The Rev Fr Peter Matheson	Roman Catholic
The Rev Dr Gerard Kelly	Roman Catholic
Major Paul Kinder	The Salvation Army
Mr Chamoun Malki	Syrian Orthodox
The Rev Dr Chris Mostert	Uniting
The Rev Graham Perry	Uniting
Ms Maureen Postma	Uniting

be endorsed as members of the Commission on Faith and Unity.

30.6 Gender Commission

10.07.30 It was resolved that

<i>tba</i>	Anglican
Ms Mary Hilmi	Coptic Orthodox
Mrs Tanna MacKenzie	Lutheran
Barbara Lumley	Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)

Ms Sarah Lentem	Roman Catholic
Ms Anne-Marie Wenhman	Roman Catholic
Major Susan Reese	The Salvation Army

be endorsed as members of the Gender Commission

30.7 National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Ecumenical Commission (NATSIEC)

10.07.31 It was resolved that

The Rt Revd James Leftwich	Anglican
The Rt Revd Saibo Mabo	Anglican
The Revd Max Wright	Churches of Christ
Mr Darren Wrighton	Churches of Christ
Mrs Kerry O'Callaghan	Roman Catholic
Mr Adrian Kistan	The Salvation Army
Mrs Lurleen Blackman	Uniting
The Revd Sealin Garlett	Uniting
The Very Revd Fr Shenouda Mansour	Coptic Orthodox (<i>observer</i>)
The Revd Fr Stavros Karvelas	Greek Orthodox (<i>observer</i>)

be endorsed as members of the National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Ecumenical Commission.

30.8 Safe Church Network

10.07.32 It was resolved that

Mr Garth Blake	Anglican
The Revd Fr Yousef Fanous	Coptic Orthodox
Ronis Chapman	Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)
Br Philip Mulhall	Roman Catholic
Major Robyn Smart	The Salvation Army
Mr Joseph Bitar	Syrian Orthodox

be endorsed as members of the National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Ecumenical Commission.

30.9 Social Justice Network

10.07.33 It was resolved that

Mr Theo Mackaay	Anglican
Mr Craig Brown	Churches of Christ
Mr Heshmat Grace	Coptic Orthodox
Mr Anthony Picardi	Greek Orthodox
Wies Schuiringa	Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)

Mr John Ferguson	Roman Catholic
Miss Sarah Menassa	Roman Catholic
Major Cecil Woodward	The Salvation Army
Mr John Nehme	Syrian Orthodox
The Rev Elenie Poulos	Uniting
<i>tba</i>	Uniting

be endorsed as members of the Social Justice Network.

30.10 Follow Up

10.07.34 It was resolved that the Secretariat follows through on filling the vacant places on the various commissions, committees, networks and working groups.

31. Thank you

The President thanked all those who have worked hard over the past years.

At this Forum, gratitude was extended to members of the Nominations and Steering Committees, as well as the members who led our Focus, Reporting and Future Directions Sessions. These participants kept our Forum moving.

This Forum gave us the opportunity to view PowerPoint presentations as transitional items. These were made available by the NATSIEC and our state ecumenical partners, the Council of Churches of Western Australia, New South Wales Ecumenical Council, Queensland Churches Together, South Australian Council of Churches and Victorian Council of Churches. It was a creative and colourful way to share many experiences. The time and effort put into these presentations was appreciated.

A special thanks to Paul Ryan. Paul has worked for the NCCA for many years as Director, Support Services (current title). Today he leaves the NCCA to take on the role of Bursar of Tara School, North Parramatta. "He is not just a numbers man. He has been one of the staff and had a heart for what he was doing. We are very sad to see him go."

The President presented Paul with a gift, "a reminder of our respect, gratitude and affection".

Paul responded saying, "he took on the job in 2004 with the aim of working for 3 years, but has stayed on for 6, because of the friendship and support from those he worked with and for."

32. Closing

The amended Memorandum of Understanding was signed during the Closing Worship.

The Forum was closed at the end of Worship at approximately 11:45 am, Tuesday, July 13, 2010.

Rev'd Alistair Macrae on behalf of
Bishop Michael Putney, NCCA President

Date

Mandate for the Safe Church Network

The Safe Church Network is committed to leadership so as to ensure as far as possible that Australian Churches are physically, emotionally and spiritually safe by:

1. Supporting Safe Ministry workers in churches by providing training, professional development and networking opportunities.
2. Raising awareness and understanding in churches of issues relating to Safe Ministry and the prevention of abuse, including emerging issues.
3. Encouraging churches to develop and implement Safe Ministry policies and procedures.
4. Developing and sharing Safe Ministry resources and training for use by churches in the implementation of their policies and procedures.
5. Reflecting on and identifying the social, cultural and institutional factors that contribute to abuse in church communities and provide understanding on these issues.
6. Facilitating cooperation among Australian churches on Safe Ministry issues.
7. Providing Safe Ministry advice and responding to requests from the NCCA Executive.

The Safe Church Network works within the understanding of *Holistic Safe Church Ministry* as defined.

Holistic Safe Church Ministry - finds the balance in fulfilling the pastoral, legal, insurance, risk management, denominational and ethical responsibilities. This includes support for implementation of prevention and response policies, procedures and support for people in the areas of duty of care, vulnerable people, positions of power, codes of conduct, response to allegations of ministry misconduct and/or abuse, and incident reporting and responses, monitoring of practices, safe recruitment of leaders, safe supervision of leaders, preparation and conducting of church programs in safe physical and emotional environments.

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

Originally 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**

Amended 13 July 2010

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Preamble

1. The National Council of Churches in Australia (NCCA) 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 NCCA notes the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and affirms particularly its principles of equality, non-discrimination, consultation and cooperation when pursuing harmonious and respectful relationships with the First Peoples of this land.
3. The 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.
4. 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.
5. 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.”

6. 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 that 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 bodies¹⁸ 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 NATSIEC¹⁹ for endorsement.

2. Public Events

The NCCA, its Networks, Commissions and staff, are requested to include a 'Welcome to Country' or an 'Acknowledgement of Country'²⁰ 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

¹⁸ Such as NATSIAC (Anglican), NATSICC (Catholic), UAICC (Uniting), ACCIM (Churches of Christ), The Salvation Army Aboriginal Ministries (Southern Territory).

¹⁹ 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 issues.

²⁰ Please see the Appendix for an appropriate formulation.

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 NATSIEC²¹ of their intent and by producing a draft for endorsement by the NATSIEC **before** the article goes to print.

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 project.²²

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.

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

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

²¹ See footnote No. 2.

²² Where the project is targeting, or taking place within, a particular Indigenous community, consultation with NATSIEC **only** is **not** sufficient.

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

Amended at the 7th National Forum of the NCCA 12th July 2010

President of the NCCA, Bishop Michael Putney

General Secretary of the NCCA, Revd Tara Curlewis

Commissioner of the NATSIEC, Elsie Heiss

Executive Secretary of the NATSIEC, Graeme Mundine

Appendix to the MOU

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, didgeridu 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 speeches.²³

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.

Example 1: "I would like to acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land on which this event is taking place".

Example 2: "I acknowledge that we are standing on the land of the [Gadigal] people of the [Eora] nation who have been custodians of this area for thousands of years."

²³ To find out the name of the traditional custodians of the area you are in, contact your local Aboriginal Land Council.

What Shape is your Ecumenical Footprint?

- Absent churches
- Churches coming together
- Participation in transformation
- Council of representatives
- Exceptional leadership together
- Cultural change
- Visible unity that we may be one (John 17)
- Ease of belonging together
 - Is the ease at the expense of dealing with the hard issues?
- Growing process and desire to work in unity
- Is the impact of the reaching wider and deeper? Sense of support from state bodies and leaders but needs to get down to grassroots.
- Limits – Christian (ACL) Church Lobby vs. NCCA
- Challenge – how to speak out and take more initiative
- Things to consider – tension debate
- We need to examine policies, discuss church teachings, consider united responses especially in regards to social justice issues
- One foot well planted on the ground
- Ground larger because of more relationships and new NCCA members
- Not turning back but hesitancy because questions about next step arise due to familiarity with relationships; ambivalence about denominations, internal challenges
- Shape of our footprint?
 - Delicate – not big and heavy
 - Not withstanding large numbers of member churches
 - Unseen by many
 - More footprints in the future
 - Footprints will improve
 - Our footprint more important/known to church leadership than congregations
 - A limited footprint
 - Compared to other national bodies, an even smaller footprint
 - Grey footprint
 - Uneven footprint – make more of an imprint in some areas of Australia
 - Is the NCCA a representative footprint of ecumenism in Australia?
- Fuzzy, dispersed, local task oriented, not necessarily directed towards unity – but assumes shared faith.
- Doing together vs. making space for the other and don't dominated or gratify every wish
- Bring on the journey of ecumenism is counter cultural
- Ecumenism will grow in importance, given the emphasis on multi-faith dialogue.
- Dilemma of generational differences. Re: short / long term commitment and asking different questions
- Small footprint because of lack of resources

- Goals of one generation have been achieved and this style may no longer be appropriate to the current generations
- Church leaders reluctant re: ecumenical actions – concern for own denomination.
Conga line dance or tango dynamic dance
- Almost no implementation of covenant
- Nowhere near visible unity
- New divisions eg. Pentecostalism, evangelism, ecumenism. I.e. common interest / need; we are the same and can do things together rather than we are difference and can do things together.
- God is leading us on to our best possibilities
- Footprint:
 - Rural cooperation
 - Theological education
 - Perception: focus on overseas
 - NCCA – fairly invisible
 - Lack of national voice on justice issues
 - Could be more practical
 - Bilateral dialogues
 - Covenant – fairly invisible
 - Need to act so that community see
- This forum is a crucial part of our ecumenical footprint
- The state councils
- The national heads of churches
- The state heads of churches: e.g. premier asking what church leaders are doing
- Sharing of resources
- Schools: Cath/Anglican chaplains working together
- Dialogues around Peace
- Social justice issues
- Indigenous ecumenical group actions

Feedback from Reporting Sessions

CWS Commission – Act for Peace:

Affirmations:

- Increased funding/disbursements through attractive marketing
- Increasing accountability processes
- Clear and measurable goals for next five years
- Impressed with the quality of programs
- Progress in developing partners
- Clarity of information
- Inspiration of Act for Peace stories and work
- Encouragement to build network of Act for Peace representatives
- Programs have developed in useful areas
- Good management and increasing in areas we need
- Working = Act Alliance
- Frank and open responses from Elenie and Alistair
- Attempts to reduce admin/educational/advertising costs over past twelve months
- Range, variety, scope and philosophy of projects
- Thank you for the great ongoing effort and passion
- Doing some great work in Burma
- Informative: convincing us that we need to make greater commitment to advising our congregations on what CWS is doing
- Reinforced awareness of the need for production of CWS work and fellow parishioners on core agenda items

Questions:

- Concern as to development of partners. Need for Churches to be better informed for their greater involvement.
- How can the good news of CWSC be a better encouragement to the NCCA overall?
- Need clear description of special roles to differentiate from other Church Agencies and NGOs (e.g. Rotary) for funding to be given
- Is there a possibility of getting your message out effectively using less paper?!
- What makes Act for peace distinctively Christian as opposed to something like UNICEF?
- Interested in the development of the Act Alliance and I'd also be interested to see more
- How/Where to insert news of CWS invitation to share/include in our weekly liturgy?

Social Justice Network:

Affirmations:

- Commend the resources produced recently
- Importance of having a Social Justice Network to speak on these issues with a broad based Christian viewpoint which is not exclusively conservative
- Availability and quality of the SJS resources
- Efforts of SJN under difficult conditions

Questions:

- How are recourses being used? Are they being used? Is the recent structure serving its purpose? (Do we need to look at this, possibly even NCCA structure?) Can we engage with more conservative Christian groups (and perhaps broaden their vision)?
- Approach Catholic Church to explore reconnection of SJS resources, following a separation in the late 1980s. It is hoped that a shared resource could be produced in the future.
- There is a limited budget for distributing resources.

Secretariat:

Affirmations:

- The work and ministry of EAPPI
- Affirming the Social Justice focus
- The importance of good Communications about NCCA
- Tremendous breadth of issues that are handled by the Secretariat – with ever-reaching resources

Questions:

- Propensity to add new areas of work without adjusting the last
- Can we release the secretariat staff to be more strategic by taking advantage of staff of member Churches – perhaps using working groups
- Does the NCCA need to refocus on core vision for the next 3 years:
 - To ensure that we do not try to do too much and not as well as is needed
 - Also will focus on the product that we are marketing
- Importance of network building must be central and provision of resources secondary (so that our communications don't appear prescriptive)

Secretariat Priority One:

- Review of the ways of working and want to deliver
- Easing the burdens of the staff by strengthening the cooperation between the NCCA and state bodies. (Member Churches of NCCA are also member Churches of state bodies.)

Secretariat Priority Two:

- Faith and Unity Commission and their work. (Vital connection for faith and order).
- Easing the burden of staff by establishing project-specific working groups from a number of Churches

NATSIEC:

Affirmations:

- NATSIEC's action on the NT intervention forum – resource people from NT. Statement – Challenges for Church
- Christ in Culture conferences – extremely spiritual and workshop based
- Indigenous thinkers Munguddor Bi Buya retreat. Indigenous theology – reflection, conversation and rejuvenation.

- Christ Culture Conferences
- Work on the intervention in NT – good to have NATSIEC to speak out on the issue and provide a resource and information to the Churches
- Intervention – good resource documentation – social justice issues
- Encouragement of Indigenous Contextual Theology – good links with Churches
- Aboriginal and Islander people still stronger and NATSIEC important in bringing Christian groups together. Indigenous people coming together (face-to-face)

Questions:

- How do we widen our dissemination of information? NATSIEC funding Commission meetings is large drain on operating funds. Need Churches' support, especially with travel to get wide representation across our country which is vital to NATSIEC's on-going work. "True representation of our people"
- The change in the resolution of the 2007 Forum (in relation to scholarships in Church schools for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children). Its loss in the meantime, but not just for elite schools but more broadly in state schools, education needs to be encouraged, accessible, enhanced.
- Relationship with NATSICA – what is it?
- Needs more information with QLD
- Issues being raised:
 - Injustice, Palm Island, WA – Police death in custody, letters of support to help in those situations.
- Getting people together
- Authority comes from the Commission
- How do we encourage Churches to participate?

Faith and Unity Commission:

Affirmations:

- Bringing people together
- Social justice issues
- Helping Churches be inspired by (Covenanting Document) Working Together
- Affirming wider dialogue with evangelical/pentecostal communities
- Need to widen awareness that local initiatives be taken up into covenants
- Strategic work – quality
- 'Called to be One Church' – highlighted
- Funding F&U – very important (also to NCCA as a whole)
- All achievements
- The ongoing work and the covenanting document and its various manifestations
- The amount of work the Commission has performed
- The work on ecclesiology

Questions:

- Limited funding available:
 - Need a new secretary (volunteer work may do the job)
 - This is an integral part of Faith and Unity Commission's work
 - This person conducts the core business of NCCA
- Need to make sense about ecumenical formation
- Week of Prayer for Christian unity overlapping with week of reconciliation?
- Do we need the term covenant? Value of covenant?
- The issue of resourcing this Commission – absolute priority to be given to dealing with this

Priority One:

- Need funding – need new secretary/propose to put forward. (Secretary – integral part of Faith and Unity Commission)

Priority Two:

- Importance to move – covenanting process. Along with helping Churches to be inspired by covenanting document. (Sharing of information – NATSIEC/STATE/LOCAL. Highlight all important work being carried out by Churches throughout Australia).

Priority Three:

- Promotion of Week of Prayer. (awareness, publicity, promotion)

Feedback from Future Directions Session One

Mission

- Mission is broader than proclamation. NCCA is mission.
- Mission and culture – discover together doorways into culture
- What is mission – Witness to Jesus for discipleship: Matthew 28: 18-20
- NCCA – linking, celebrating, and identifying together witness ‘mission of those on the ground
- Growing Churches Together in the Australian Context – NCCA project that is sleeping – time to awaken it in some form
- Covenanting – start-up kit, local level and ‘high’
- Dialogues – national and international/WCC statements
- Ecclesiology, accountability, WCC statements
- Reception: inform executives and churches on bilateral/international agreements
- Identify blocks and obstacles to unity
- Monitor reception of covenanting and report new forms and examples
- Incorporate prayers, art, etc from A&TSI, people in liturgical material
- Implement covenant from congregational level up
- Communicated it – develop template/start-up kit
- Check the theological foundation for Act for Peace and its name, accountability to NCCA
- Continue to broaden the ecumenical dialogue
- Keep the Executive informed and engaged on bilateral dialogues
- Promote the reception of international dialogues in Australia
- Week of Prayer – quality of prayer, front window of church co-op
- WCC statement on mission: bring denominational participants together and park their differences
- Mutual accountability
- Work of NATSIEC
 - More participation
 - More well known
- Orthodox involvement
- Increasing focus on development relative to disaster relief
- Act for Peace – local communities engaged to create solutions to their issues
- Exploring new solution areas for mission cooperation
- A basis to work together in new areas
- Making of relationships between those working on the ground
- Parish system can reach unreached culture
- Proclamation and activities. Jesus – key to history
- NCCA – being Christ, witness to Jesus
- Helping churches make disciples – foundation

- Analysis: NCCA mission and maintenance
- NCCA – hot house for reflection/action mission
- GCAC: sleeping, resourcing
- Witness not mission – celebrating common mission
- Growing church vs witness – words important
- NCCA – who does it serve, bolder covenanting, locating people
- Doorways into culture
- Mission with our hearts first
- Gospel and culture: have we lost it?
- Jesus: proclamation
- Virtuous activities
- Act for Peace – name
- NCCA: mission at local level, how do NCCA support and celebrate this
- What is mission?
- Unity and mission
- Mission to youth

Faith and Order

1. Covenanting process: start-up kit, local and ‘high’ levels, monitor and report
2. Dialogues: Broaden participants, international / WCC statements.
3. Ecclesiology: WCC Statements, mutual accountability
4. Reception: inform Executive and Churches about bilaterals progress / international agreements. Identify blocks and obstacles to agreement / unity

How can churches work together on engaging the many cultures in Aust – multiethnic/subcultures/generations?

- Love neighbour as yourself
- State where we’re coming from
- Negative media interrelation: benefits bad publicity / negative press
- Perhaps our collaborative effort is to contribute to a context / culture around ‘church’, that provides for positive engagement by local churches with local communities
- Aggressive Christians – speak publically
- Advocate for the voiceless – engage with public policy
- Address particular issues / interests across not down denominations
- Recognise that interests may differ but problems may be similar
- Provide together some facilities for new arrivals or new concentrations of such groups in various transient areas
- Is the visible unity of the churches more important than speaking out and naming the extremes that exist?
- By this will all men know that you are my disciples (Jesus community)... that you love one another. Be a model.

Appendix E

- One way would be to take on a major issue (secular but with ethical/moral aspects) such as climate change
- We need to be more visible when major concerns are being aired or discussed
- Language : authentic community
- Have subcultures in each come together / talk together about ministry within specific cultures
- Come together for public debate on important issues / to meet need of specific communities. E.g. in response to needs of Indian students has involved youth in a meaningful way.
- Revive youth network / youth think tank
- Could also be multicultural / multigenerational, etc.
- To help the church interpret the age in which we live
- Engaging the culture:
 - Voices that are not divided are more readily heard
 - Underlying values behind diverse stances need to be presented
 - Don't try to be other than who we are and move from there
- Ecumenical message: perception of aggressive
- Formation of just and compassionate

Public/Social Issues**Education & Resources**

- Communication – need resources to be relevant and available accessibly
- Promoting education around the various issues of concern – stirring people to action
- Educating church members and leaders about issues
- Available resources

Communication Promotion

- Liaison between NCCA agencies and sharing of resources, e.g. Act for Peace, Simply Sharing Week and Social Justice Sunday – united view of Churches
- Strengthen communication and networks among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups within Churches
- Needs to be discussion between those who produce the Social Justice Sunday resources and the ACBC Social Justice Statement
- Reconnect with the Roman Catholic Church on shared production of Social Justice Sunday resources
- Ensure that advertising material indicates the unique nature of your sources (areas where you are not one of many NGOs). This is an attractive incentive to donors.

Structure & Membership

- Social Justice Network explore opportunities to utilise skills and knowledge in church-based agencies
- Appointments matter – representatives need to be authorised representatives of their Church

Specific Issues

- Gender equity
- Addressing root causes of poverty

Appendix E

- Programmes that make a difference
- Promoting peace and reconciliation
- Act for Peace engagement in Palestine Peace initiatives – level of Act for Peace support (NCCA priorities)
- Workshop by NATSIEC for welfare agencies working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to help lessen paternalism, etc

*Notes from the Forum Table Groups:***Address of President:****Significant Aspects:**

- Is the NCCA really a council that is making an impact on the lives of the Churches?
- Australian People of Faith as at the World Parliament of Religions, need to attend to intra-faith strengths for the future in order to have a more prominent public face. Make sure the Churches are establishing an agenda, that we are interacting creatively & vitally with member Churches. We need to pull together NCCA and all the Churches and wider community with a voice hoping to speak as one. Younger people and the more evangelical Churches taking on the ‘great commission’.
- NCCA having a public footprint as the National Council of Churches in Australia, and being a national body for each other – and reclaiming the enthusiasm of the start of NCCA.
- NCCA needs to address issues relevant to the Churches and the wider community – to give people proper witness. Where some issues are problematic for some member Churches – provide a safe environment for dialogue on these.
- A clear eyed assessment of the issues.
- Capacity of NCCA to engage with Australian life and society.
- Disclose in participation of members in Executive meetings.
- Real participation in the NCCA by member Churches.
- Good clear honest President’s address!
- Apparent lack of recognition of the NCCA from both external bodies and from the member Churches internally.
- We think the NCCA should consider:
 - Asking its member Churches how the NCCA could ‘value-add’ to the member Church’s mission – i.e. addressing the question ‘what’s in it for us?’.
 - The under representation of the orthodox and the evangelicals in the NCCA.
 - Assisting the member Churches to articulate their priorities for mission to one another. Without understanding what other Churches want to achieve it is difficult for real partnerships to develop.
 - President’s comment that NCCA represents an ‘institutional’ model of ecumenical engagement is worth thinking about and unappealing to young people and mission focussed Churches.
 - Increase advocacy with other Churches and faith community.
 - Youth. Establish stronger relationships with the youth.
 - Legacy. What am I going to leave?
 - Social activity.
 - Keep the covenanting relationship with Indigenous people of the nation. More interaction across the nation.
 - Build up the national profile in the public and secular arena.
 - The NCCA was founded on mission! Macro-level emphasis and mission and evangelism. Forward mission.
 - Network. Jesus all About Life. The Jesus people – back to scripture about Jesus, not about our denominations. People even secular people seek values. The interest in Culture Studies at University is a modern expression of interest in religion – we need to dialogue with issues that are of interest. Another answer is Cathedrals and the Arts – the fine arts and popular arts.

Appendix F

- o Be servants of each other – our ‘hearts’ should be burning. Leaders/exec members need to give more leadership by living it first.
- o Defying discouragement. Keep the vision alive.
- o For small Churches NCCA can help them to see the broader vision of Church life in Australia.
- o Lack of engagement with Pentecostal and Evangelical bodies needs to be addressed. Need to recognise that these groups will not be interested in issues but in proclamation of the Gospel.
- o How can we come to the situation where our Churches can say that they cannot operate efficiently without the NCCA?
- o Acknowledging that the NCCA is not recognised by the secular leadership in Australia as being important enough to engage with.
- o Recognising that there are large groups in engagement with Christian Churches in Australia.
- o What is the value of ecumenical engagement for Christians and Christian communities on the ground?
 - Why do people want to belong?
 - Why governments would want to engage with?
- o The nature – purpose of a Council and how to adequately resource it.
- o The whole question of communications in modern Australia.
- o Capacity of NCCA to engage with its members and the agenda.
- o Asking the heads of Churches to discuss their agenda and how the NCCA can facilitate and engage with it.
- o Asking Churches to give serious consideration to appointments to NCCA – to gather best people!
- o Young people being appointed at local parish level.
- o A reality check: the size of our footprint.
- o Should consider a deeper committee of Orthodox communities.
- o Evangelical/Pentecostals a continuous challenge to NCCA structures.
- o The venture into the political arena.
- o Making the meetings participatory, engaging and productive. Deal the reports electronically except where it can be presented in proposal/recommendation form.
- o The waning sense among member Churches of NCCA being their council.
- o Whether its structure and pattern of life meet the needs of the churches in 21st century.
- o Make more work about the NCCA and what its doing.
- o Push for more participation.
- o Look for political relevance, sometimes linked to more public statements.
- o A broader view of Christian witness that encompasses both evangelism and justice issues. How can the NCCA speak on common issues from such a diverse membership?
- o A public statement from the 7th Forum that focuses on key Gospel principles.

Notes from the Forum Table Groups:**Address of the General Secretary****Significant Aspects:**

- Safe Church – significant that churches are coming together for training.
- Resources: Capacity to fund paid staff networks.
- Relationships with heads of Churches.
- Establishing/promoting relevance/meaning to member organisations.
- Safe Church Training is working well. Need to regain earlier enthusiasm.
- Focus on outcomes, not process.
- Be prepared to restructure/redirect finances.
- Recognise depth of will and energy and goodwill in Churches.
- How to make the work of NCCA relevant and impacting on local communities (parish/congregations).
- Some positive steps have been taken to go forward ecumenically.
- There are already significant aspects of the work of NCCA that has had to be stopped due to lack of resources.

The NCCA Should Consider:

- Promoting Safe Church – do we have resources to make a contribution to their healing – letting wider community know?
- The assumptions behind achieving outcomes through networks, and how do they still hold true?
- Creating effective communication/meeting processes that enable NCCA to be national in its working.
- The reactive application of multifaith over the messy bits of ecumenism.
- Whether we move from faith and order (basis of expressing unity) to common mission, e.g. Safe Churches solidarity & Copts.
- Building personal as well as formal/bilateral relationships.
- Re-establish (note concern) of disbanding of youth office.
- Insert/foster social justice activities that has cross-generational support.
- Encouraging joint mission.
- HoC facilitate invitations to heads of theological colleges to discuss and launch joint action on secularism and public atheism. NCCA could facilitate the conversation and support a core action group established during the meeting. Heads of colleges would be asked to commit some time by relevant staff to this core group. Note: this could be considered under Faith & Unity.
Outcome: Focused, comprehensive ecumenical action on secularism and public atheism.
Review: 8th Forum.
Resources: Can NCCA restructure to support this?
- HoC facilitate invitations to CEO's of domestic inclusion – with a specific intention to engage the incoming government/election process. Over the next 3 years. CEO's would commit some time by key policy staff.
Resources: Can NCCA restructure to support this?
Social inclusion: refugees, Indigenous, disabilities, mental health, homelessness.
- Ran out of time. However discussion acknowledged the existence of SECs and the local connection they have within the member Churches at diocesan/district office/ synod etc level and through to parishes etc.

Appendix G

- Engaging younger generations. Is the NCCA facilitating youth and younger generations to get involved in the NCCA? Is there a different structure to the NCCA that will help?
- Mandating that 20% of all forum attendees are youth/young adults, with some involved in planning to cater for a younger demographic.
- The NCCA Exec to continue to review the purposes of the NCCA and to cast a fresh vision.
- A serious risk management analysis in regard to resources.
- Discern where the spirit is calling the churches in our mission at this time.
- Ecumenism – a pilgrimage – we join in the will and prayer of Jesus.