



7th Forum
National Council of Churches in Australia

9-13 July

Canberra ACT

RESOLUTIONS¹

Brought by the Churches

Priorities

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

It was resolved that

this Forum requests the Executive, until the next Forum, to

1. Give priority in its meetings to matters of
 - a) 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
 - b) Mission, and in particular
 - i. strengthening member churches as they go about mission in Australian society and globally
 - ii. facilitating cooperation in mission among the churches
 - c) 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
 - d) Indigenous issues and concerns as guided by NATSIEC.
2. Consider whether, and if so how, changes in NCCA structures, processes and resource allocation might better serve these priorities;
3. Implement pilot changes where appropriate; and
4. Report to the next Forum with any recommendations

Member Churches

*Moved by the Anglican Church
Seconded by the Mar Thoma Church*

It was resolved that

the Forum, rejoices as we receive Churches into membership of the NCCA; and

¹ Numbering of Resolutions will be finalised when the full 7th Forum Minutes are completed. The Resolutions only form a part of the Minutes.

- recalling that the trust and friendship which mark relationships among the member Churches developed through intentional conversations in years gone by; and
- seeking similar bonds with those Churches which have more recently become members;

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.

Youth

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

It was resolved that

- member Churches be encouraged to include young people in their delegation.
- 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.

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

It was resolved that

future Forums have time allocated for the youth delegates and observers to discuss current issues facing the youth of churches today.

Refugees & Asylum Seekers

*Moved by the Uniting Church
Seconded by the Churches of Christ*

It was resolved that

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

1. Request the major political parties
 - a) to stop engendering fear and anxiety in the Australian population by using asylum seekers, vulnerable people fleeing conflict and persecution, for political advantage;
 - b) 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
 - c) to meet Australia's responsibilities by:
 - o treating asylum seekers humanely,
 - o processing asylum applications expeditiously, and
 - o accommodating and processing in Australia asylum seekers who reach Australian territory .
2. In making this request we remind all political parties

- a) that asylum seekers are not illegal immigrants and have rights under international law to seek protection from persecution; and
 - b) that Australia has committed, as a signatory to the Refugee Convention, to assess each asylum seeker case according to agreed criteria
3. the General Secretary be asked to send this proposal to all Federal Parliamentarians; and to issue a media release to this effect.

Finance

*Moved by the Roman Catholic Church
Seconded by the Uniting Church*

It was resolved that

1. 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.”
2. the Finance Committee be asked to bring appropriate guidelines to the next meeting of the Executive for approval.

Rights of Indigenous People

*Moved by the Anglican Church
Seconded by the Catholic Church*

It was resolved that

1. the NCCA notes the Australian Government has adopted the United Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (DRIP).
2. 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.

Palestine & Israel

*Moved by the Uniting Church
Seconded by the Anglican Church*

It was resolved that

the 7th National Forum

1. 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”² 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”.³
- 2.

² Minute 08.03.06.03 of the Executive of the National Council of Churches in Australia.

³ Minute 08.03.06.04 of the Executive of the National Council of Churches in Australia.

- a) 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”.⁴
 - b) 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”.⁵
3. In a spirit of repentance for past silence and indifference:
 - a) 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
 - b) adds the voice of the National Council of Churches in Australia to Christian voices throughout the world condemning all acts of terrorism.
 4. In particular the National Council of Churches in Australia:
 - a) 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;
 - b) 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;
 - c) requests member Churches to advise the NCCA General Secretary of the outcome of their consideration;
 - d) requests Act for Peace to provide regular information to the member Churches to assist ongoing actions on the boycott; and
 - e) welcomes the easing of the Israeli blockade of Gaza in recent days and calls for an immediate end to the blockade.
 5. Requests Christians involved in inter-faith conversations among Christians, Jews and/or Muslims to include the subject matter of these resolutions in those conversations.
 6. 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.
 7. Requests the General Secretary to issue a media release relating to these decisions as soon as possible.

⁴ *A Moment of Truth, a word of faith, hope, and love from the heart of Palestinian suffering*, Kairos Palestine, first print 2009, first distributed: 11 December 2009, p. 3.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 16.