



24-27 June 2016  
Mary MacKillop Place  
80 William Street  
North Sydney

**Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI)  
Report to 2016 National Forum of the National Council of Churches in Australia**

**Snapshot: EAPPI 2013-2016**

<b>Highlights</b>	<p>Since 2013, some highlights for the EAPPI program have been:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The recruitment, training, and deployment of 6 more Australia Ecumenical Accompaniers (EAs) to serve on ground in occupied Palestine</li> <li>• The development and implementation of a new fit-for-purpose training program for Australian EAs that has run in 2014 and 2015</li> <li>• The continued passion, enthusiasm and hard work of the EAPPI-Australia Committee that has enabled the ongoing operations and growth of the program</li> </ul>	
<b>Challenges</b>	<p>Since 2013, key challenges for the EAPPI program have been:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finding ways to better engage across the NCCA – including with Member Churches, their agencies, congregations, and networks – to increase involvement, ownership, and support for the program</li> <li>• Lack of dedicated staff capacity to undertake the work required for EAPPI to function effectively</li> <li>• Insufficient funding to support program activities, or enable growth of the program <b><i>NB - the lack of funds for EAPPI-Australia has led the Committee to temporarily pause further training and recruitment of new EAs, until such time as we have sufficient funds to manage the program effectively and safely. EAPPI-Australia continues to request urgent support from the NCCA and Member Churches for our fundraising activities.</i></b></li> </ul>	
<b>Ecumenical Accompaniers (EAs) deployed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sally Masters, Vic, 2013, served in South Hebron Hills</li> <li>• Craig Neilsen, SA, 2014-2015, served in Jayyus</li> <li>• Liam Grant, SA, 2015, served in Yanoun</li> <li>• Rev Joan Fisher, Vic, 2015, served in Jerusalem</li> <li>• Peter Morgan, NSW, 2015-16, served in Bethlehem</li> <li>• Gillian Kerr-Sheppard, NSW, 2015-16, served in Yanoun</li> </ul>	
<b>EAPPI-Australia Committee members</b>	<p><b>Current:</b> Dr Bek Christensen Ms Jessica Morrison Rev Aimee Kent Rev Sandy Boyce</p>	<p><b>Past:</b> Ms Cynthia Gunn Rev Rod Benson Ms Debra Porter</p>
<b>National Coordinators of EAPPI-Australia</b>	<p>Ms Debra Porter (2013) Rev Rod Benson (2014) Dr Bek Christensen (Nov 2014-present)</p>	

## About EAPPI

The EAPPI is an international program coordinated by the World Council of Churches (WCC). It was established by the WCC in 2002 in response to a call from the local Heads of Churches in Jerusalem requesting support and solidarity for vulnerable communities suffering under occupation. The NCCA formally joined the EAPPI program in 2006 as the sending organisation for Australian EAs, taking responsibility for managing the program's Australian operations, and the recruitment and deployment of Australian EAs.

**EAPPI's vision** is a future in which the occupation of Palestine has ended and both Palestinians and Israelis enjoy a just peace with freedom and security based on international law.

**EAPPI's mission** is to witness life under occupation, engage with local Palestinians and Israelis pursuing a just peace, to change the international community's involvement in the conflict, urging them to act against injustice in the region.

The program brings Ecumenical Accompaniers (EAs) from around the world to live in occupied Palestine for 3 months at a time. During this time, the EAs offer protective presence to vulnerable communities, and monitor and report human rights abuses. These EAs join Palestinians and Israelis who work in nonviolent ways for peace, and they also support local churches.

Upon their return home, EAs continue their protective accompaniment by undertaking advocacy work using their first-hand experiences. EAs raise awareness of the realities of the occupation, and campaign for a just and peaceful resolution the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that is based on international law and respect for human rights.

Over 1500 people from more than 25 countries have served as EAs. Australia deployed its first Australian EA in 2010, and since that time an additional 11 Australian EAs have served in the program.

## Program updates

### *Deployment of EAs*

Six new Australian EAs have been deployed since 2013:



*Sally Masters, Victoria, 2013, served in South Hebron Hills*



*Craig Neilsen (back row, centre), SA, 2014-2015, served in Jayyus*



*Liam Grant, SA, 2015, served in Yanoun*



*Rev Joan Fisher, Victoria, 2015, served in Jerusalem*



*Peter Morgan and Gillian Kerr-Sheppard, 2015-2016, served in Bethlehem and Yanoun*

There is one more Australian EA scheduled to serve in the second half of 2016, and we continue to receive new enquiries and applications from people wishing to serve as EAs.

### ***Selection, training, and support of EAs***

Since 2014, EAPPI-Australia has made significant progress in the processes used to recruit, select, train, and support Australian EAs.

The EAPPI-Australia Committee has prepared a role description for EAs, which gives applicants appropriate information about the role and provides a framework for the Committee to assess the competency of applicants for the EA role. The Committee has also designed and implemented a residential 4-day training course for Australian EAs, which has now been run in 2014 and 2015. There were seven potential EAs at training in 2014, and three of these went on to deployment in 2014-2015. There were ten potential EAs at training in 2015; two of these have gone on to deployment in 2015-16, with four others assessed as competent for the EA role, but not yet deployed.

The training program covers topics recommended by the WCC EAPPI program coordinators, including: history and theory of non-violent resistance, history of the Israel-Palestine conflict, relevant human rights and humanitarian law, cultural norms and practical tips for life onground, team work and personal work styles, coping with stress, safety and security protocols, and a significant role-play activity as a learning opportunity for the EAs. Feedback from the EAs that have undertaken this training is that they found it an invaluable part of their preparation for service in Palestine, and that they applied many of the lessons from the training through their work as EAs.

Alongside these improvements, the Committee has also put in place formal processes for the pastoral and psychosocial support of our EAs. This includes a professional psychosocial screening before their deployment, which provides an opportunity for EAs to discuss their concerns before they are deployed, and develop coping strategies and other tactics to help them in their work as EAs. There is also professional psychosocial support offered for debriefing upon their return from service in Palestine. The community of our returned EAs is slowly growing in number and they also participate in offering support and advice to each other. An email network has been established to enable communication among the returned EAs.

### ***Advocacy***

Central to the EAPPI is the advocacy work undertaken by EAs while they are in-country, and

especially once they return to their home countries. Advocacy is seen as an extension of the protective accompaniment that EAPPI offers to vulnerable communities onground, by sharing the stories of those communities and raising awareness of the conflict through wider networks of people. This awareness raising and advocacy for a just peace is vital if there is to be a just and peaceful resolution to the conflict.

All Australian EAs have been active and effective advocates upon their return home, particularly in their local communities. Ideally, EAPPI-Australia would have a coordinated and strategic advocacy plan at a national level, and would also be able to provide support to EAs in planning and undertaking their advocacy. Unfortunately, this ideal has been elusive to date due to the financial and human resource limitations of EAPPI-Australia. The Committee continues to seek opportunities to improve and expand the advocacy work of EAPPI-Australia, and we hope with greater and more-sustainable funding in future we can achieve this.

### ***National Coordinator role***

Each country that participates in the EAPPI has a designated National Coordinator that is the main point of contact for the program, coordinates program activities, and liaises with other National Coordinators and WCC program staff around the world to enable EAPPI's work. In most countries that participate in EAPPI, one or more dedicated paid staff members of the sending organisation in that country fill this role.

In Australia, volunteers have fulfilled this role for many years. From July 2015 – January 2016 the EAPPI-Australia Committee decided to trial a part-time paid staff role of National Coordinator. It was clear that resourcing this staff time helped the program immeasurably, and that EAPPI-Australia requires this properly resourced staff capacity to move forward. Unfortunately EAPPI-Australia has been unable to sustain this paid role beyond January 2016 due to insufficient funding. The volunteer Committee and volunteer National Coordinator have resumed the workload, and continue to give significant time and effort to the management of EAPPI-Australia.

While the volunteer Committee and National Coordinator have done a wonderful job in managing EAPPI to date, we can no longer rely on a small band of volunteers if we are to appropriately and effectively manage the program, as well as fulfil its potential.

### ***Funding***

Insufficient funding continues to limit the operation and success of EAPPI in Australia. While EAs put significant effort into fundraising for the program on top of their commitment to serve as volunteers overseas for 3 months, the funds they raise do not cover all program costs. The program has been supported consistently by Act for Peace, and over the years has drawn ad-hoc funding from some Member Churches, but usually this has been to support individual EAs only.

Over the last 12 months the Committee have put renewed effort into fundraising, seeking new opportunities to raise funds including applying for philanthropic grants. We are also grateful to Act for Peace staff who have worked with us to develop fundraising ideas and offer support and advice for our fundraising activities.

Unfortunately, the lack of funds for EAPPI-Australia has led the Committee to temporarily pause further training and recruitment of new EAs, until such time as we have sufficient funds to manage the program effectively and safely. EAPPI-Australia continues to request urgent support from the NCCA and Member Churches for our fundraising activities – either by

providing advice or support to assist us in fundraising, or through direct donations for the program.

## **Administration and Governance**

### ***EAPPI-Australia Committee***

A volunteer committee of the NCCA oversees the EAPPI program. Currently, the Committee is made up of four people: Bek Christensen, Jessica Morrison, Aimee Kent, and Sandy Boyce, and we are in discussions with two new members who we hope will join the Committee soon.

At the moment the Committee shoulders all responsibility and workload for the management and implementation of EAPPI in Australia. The Committee, NCCA General Secretary, NCCA Associate General Secretary, and some Act for Peace program staff discussed the role of the Committee in August 2015, and identified that a larger membership of the Committee was needed to encompass the skills and experience required for the program, as well as to ensure a greater diversity of involvement from Member Churches. A revised Terms of Reference for the Committee has since been prepared to better reflect the roles and responsibilities of the Committee as well as its desired membership composition (Attachment 1).

### ***Governance***

Since the NCCA decided to join EAPPI in 2006, EAPPI has operated as a direct program or activity of the NCCA. It has received financial and in-kind support from Act for Peace, but has operated directly through the NCCA secretariat. Increasingly, a number of parties from within the NCCA, Act for Peace, and Member Churches have questioned this arrangement and whether or not EAPPI would be better served by being a direct program of Act for Peace.

Most recently this was raised at the NCCA Executive Meeting in March 2016, and so the EAPPI Committee have initiated discussions with the NCCA and Act for Peace to discuss the options and explore where EAPPI is best 'housed' within the broader NCCA structures. These discussions are ongoing, but need to be resolved as a matter of urgency to provide certainty for the program moving forwards.

### ***Closing***

The NCCA should be proud of its involvement in EAPPI to date, and for the real impact that the program has made in promoting justice and peace in our world. EAPPI-Australia is now at a critical juncture in its development in which there is a real opportunity to build upon the successes of recent years to establish a professional program, running effectively and sustainably, that enables the NCCA and Australia to have ongoing involvement in EAPPI. Despite the challenges outlined in this report, the Committee remains hopeful for the future of EAPPI in Australia and has confidence that with the support and assistance of Member Churches the program can flourish.

We are grateful for the ongoing efforts of the NCCA and Member Churches that supports and enables all of the work of the NCCA, and we look forward to continuing to build EAPPI-Australia with you.

On behalf of the EAPPI-Australia Committee:

Bek Christensen, Jessica Morrison, Aimee Kent, Sandy Boyce.

## Recommendations and Resolutions

It is recommended that the Forum note the report of the EAPPI-Australia Committee, and adopt the following resolution:

“That the NCCA Forum:

1. Recognises the work of EAPPI as a response to the Palestinian churches’ request for practical support from the international Christian community, and celebrates the work done by EAPPI through the World Council of Churches;
2. Is honoured to have been the Australian sending organisation for EAPPI since 2006;
3. Gratefully acknowledges the service of the 12 Australians who have served three months in occupied Palestine as Ecumenical Accompaniers, and the voluntary committee that has sustained the program to date;
4. Receives the report from the EAPPI-Australia Committee, and notes:
  - a. the successes of the program thus far which have been achieved with limited resources and voluntary labour; and
  - b. that further human and financial resources are required for the program to ensure the program is able to flourish, engage the churches, and ensure we meet our pastoral and practical responsibilities to our Ecumenical Accompaniers;
5. Endorses the Terms of Reference for the EAPPI-Australia Committee (included as Attachment 1 to the report);
6. Asks the Standing Committee
  - a. to find five appropriate Members for the EAPPI-Australia Committee to resource the work;
  - b. as a matter of priority, to work with the EAPPI-Australia Committee to resolve whether EAPPI is best served as a direct program of the NCCA Secretariat or within Act for Peace in order to support it to flourish;
7. Urges Member Churches
  - a. to consider whether they can contribute funds, or funding ideas for EAPPI-Australia to ensure its future success and growth;
  - b. to commit to promoting EAPPI amongst their congregations including considering forums within their churches where returned EAs can speak.”

## **EAPPI-Australia Committee Terms of Reference**

### **Terms**

These terms of reference form the basis for the establishment and operation of the EAPPI-Australia Committee. At a minimum, they will be reviewed by the Committee and the NCCA Executive every 3 years from January 2016, but may also be reviewed at any time should circumstances require it.

In the absence of a review or amendments to these Terms of Reference, they remain in place.

### **Purpose and overview**

The purpose of the EAPPI-Australia Committee is to provide strategic oversight and actively manage the operations of the EAPPI program in Australia, on behalf of the NCCA.

### **Values**

EAPPI is a nonviolent, non-partisan, grassroots initiative. We are hopeful, compassionate, honest, courageous, cooperative, enthusiastic, and dedicated in our work.

We believe that ending the occupation and promoting peace in Palestine and Israel requires a commitment to a core set of values. These values are integrally related to universally accepted human rights and the Biblical values of love, truth, justice, peace and reconciliation.

### ***Inclusivity***

EAPPI is a response of the global Church to the call of the local Church in Palestine and Israel. We, however, intentionally work together as people of all faiths and no faith, in the conviction that the God, whom Christians have come to know through Jesus Christ, is God of all creation and the source of all human effort towards love, justice, and peace. Inclusivity is at the heart of our theology and structure and is embodied in the ideological diversity of our teams.

### ***Humanity***

All humans share a common humanity and are equal in their rights to live with dignity, security, and the opportunities to live up to their fullest potential. In the spirit of our common humanity, we are dedicated to alleviating human suffering and practicing nonviolence.

### ***Nonviolence***

We are committed to living in a way that rejects the use of violence. Rather, we seek to bring change by engaging individuals and groups in peaceful strategies. We believe nonviolence is the only way to a true and lasting solution to conflict. Not only are our actions nonviolent, but we also support all people working nonviolently for peace in Israel and Palestine.

### ***Just peace***

The current situation in Palestine and Israel is harmful to both Palestinians and Israelis. Only through resisting injustice and ensuring equal rights for all, can we achieve true peace and reconciliation. A just peace is contingent on ending the Israeli occupation of Palestine, in accordance with international law and UN resolutions.

### **Principled impartiality**

We are not pro-Israeli or pro-Palestinian and we do not take sides in the conflict. We are pro-human rights and international humanitarian law. We do not discriminate against anyone and

stand faithfully with the poor, the oppressed, and the marginalized.

### **Cooperation**

Genuine transformation is only possible with the participation of those most affected by conflict. Therefore, we uphold the vision of the local church for a just peace and reconciliation, walk side by side with local Israeli and Palestinian peacemakers, live directly with the local community, and work with local and international organisations. Together we can raise our voice against injustice.

### **Membership composition**

The Committee will be made up of a minimum of 7 and a maximum of 11 people, including at least one returned Ecumenical Accompanier and the General Secretary of the NCCA.

This group will include people:

- from a range of church-related, ecumenical, faith-based or civil society networks
- with strong networks in church-related, ecumenical, faith-based or civil society networks
- who have interest in and knowledge of the Middle East region and the conflict in Palestine/Israel
- with experience in program planning and management
- with experience of developing advocacy strategy and undertaking public advocacy work
- with experience and interest in fundraising for humanitarian and volunteer programs
- with experience in volunteer recruitment, support and management
- who are committed and able to give of their time and energy to advance the work of EAPPI-Australia

### **Roles and responsibilities**

The Committee will work on the following activities:

- Developing overall strategy and plans for EAPPI-Australia, including fundraising, marketing and advocacy strategies
- Raising awareness of EAPPI and its work through church-related, ecumenical, faith-based or civil society networks
- Building relationships with like-minded organisations in Australia and Palestine/Israel
- Undertaking activities to raise funds to support the work of EAPPI-Australia
- Recruitment, training, and support of volunteers to be Ecumenical Accompaniers (EAs) including:
  - Advertising EAPPI in order to recruit new EAs
  - Running the application, interview and screening process for prospective EAs
  - Designing and implementing the EAPPI-Australia training program for new EAs
  - Offering personal support for EAs during their deployment
  - Arranging appropriate debriefing of EAs upon their return to Australia
  - Supporting and encouraging EAs in their advocacy work in Australia
- Advocating for a just peace in Palestine/Israel based on international law
- Working with and providing direction to the EAPPI-Australia National Coordinator
- Regular communication and liaison with the NCCA Executive, NCCA staff and other relevant committees or groups within the NCCA to enable the smooth operations of the EAPPI and ensure the NCCA has opportunity to express its ownership and desires for the program.



It is not expected that all Committee members will undertake all roles and responsibilities. The Committee can divide responsibilities across the group as they deem appropriate, and will also work in cooperation with the National Coordinator to deliver responsibilities.

### **Meetings**

As a base, the Committee will meet monthly however meeting frequency may change at the discretion of the Committee. Usually meetings will be via teleconference, Skype, or other virtual meeting technology, however the Committee will aim to have at least one face-to-face meeting per year.

Decision-making of the group will be by consensus, however the group may choose to delegate a smaller number of members to make urgent or day-to-day decisions.

### **Length of member terms**

Members are requested to commit a minimum of 18 months, to enable continuity in programming and activities. Members may serve for more than one term. Where possible, 3 months' notice is requested if a member chooses to resign from the Committee, to enable sufficient time to arrange a replacement member and reduce any possible impact on the program's operation.

### **Selection of members**

Call for nominations or expressions of interest to fill vacant places on the Committee will be invited whenever sitting members announce their resignation, or each 6 months if membership does not include a full complement of 11 people.

The incumbent Committee will review nominations received, and if more nominations are received than vacant places are available, will select new members with consideration to the required skills and experience needed across the Committee. They will provide a written recommendation to the NCCA Executive with an explanation of their deliberations, and the NCCA Executive can then confirm new members.

The Committee may co-opt members at any time if suitable persons express their interest in joining the Committee and vacancies are open.