



# National Council of Churches in Australia

**MEDIA RELEASE – 19 January 2021**

## **Renew January 26 as a day of thankfulness and national unity, Bishop says**

Writing to the Prime Minister, Hon Scott Morrison, to thank him for the announcement to change the words of the National Anthem to ‘We are one and free’, President of the National Council of Churches in Australia (NCCA), Bishop Philip Huggins has suggested “that for this January 26, you might announce a reconsideration of the Uluru Statement from the Heart.”

“The change to ‘We are one and free’ is certainly for the common good and a step on our continuing journey of reconciliation” Bishop Huggins wrote.

Quoting the NCCA Board member, who is an Indigenous elder, Bishop Huggins says that “We must be the Reconciliation we seek.”

“Another helpful step on our journey of reconciliation, after the Prime Minister’s announcement about us being ‘one and free’, would be to renew January 26 as a day of thankfulness and national unity” said Bishop Huggins.

“To do this we need to focus on genuine partnership with our Indigenous Australians and the broader community to acknowledge the importance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and heritage in the history of Australia” he says.

As NCCA President, Bishop Philip Huggins has also re-affirmed the support of the Council for an Indigenous voice so that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples can have a decisive voice in matters that affect them.

“We are committed to mutual understanding between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Australia; to celebrating, learning from and working side by side with, and especially as we move toward public consultation on the voice options and models” says Bishop Huggins.

Listening to and strengthening the aspirations and choices of Indigenous people and communities are a vital part of the reconciliation activities of the Council’s member churches as is supporting the move towards constitutional recognition.

Working with all faith groups in Australia, the NCCA has an emphasis on eliminating racism in all its forms and promoting social cohesion.

“Building national respect and pride for Indigenous culture and heritage is important for reconciliation in Australia” Bishop Huggins says.

**Media comment:** Bishop Huggins 0418 799 515

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Antiochian  
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Assyrian Church  
of the East

Chinese Methodist  
Church

Churches of Christ

Congregational  
Federation

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Orthodox Church

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Orthodox Church

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Orthodox Church

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