



**National Council of Churches in Australia
Triennial Forum
24-27 June 2016**

The Triennial Forum of the National Council of Churches in Australia was held at Mary MacKillop Centre in North Sydney from Friday 24 June to Monday 27 June. In total 64 participants from 13 member churches and five state councils.

Worship Service

The highlight of the Forum was the Worship service held on Sunday evening. Bishop Philip Huggins was installed as the 8th President, following Dr Mike Semmler's completing his three year term. Recognizing the Covenanting document is a living document, the Uniting Church in Australia and the Congregational Federation of Australia signed an additional clause in *Australian Churches Covenanting Together*:

We agree together

To invite and welcome members of each other's church to share in the Eucharist according to pastoral need.

On behalf of their churches each person committed anew to the Covenanting document:

As Member Churches of the National Council of Churches in Australia,

We RE-AFFIRM our commitment to one another as partners on the ecumenical journey;

We BELIEVE that we are being blessed in our generation to witness the action of the Spirit in drawing the Churches in a common search for a fuller expression of unity;

We REJOICE in all we have in common and GIVE THANKS for the richness of our diversity, though recognising that our disunity is a hindrance to the Church's mission;

We RECOGNISE ONE ANOTHER as Communities of Faith, Hope and Love, committed to following Christ and pledged to serve God's kingdom;

We therefore MAKE A COMMITMENT TO EACH OTHER to engage in an ongoing process of growing together (covenanting), not knowing what visible form unity, which is God's will and gift, may take, but believing that, by taking the steps to which we now commit ourselves, we shall be led to grow ever more deeply into that unity.

We PLEDGE ourselves

To continue to discuss and articulate within our churches the meaning and significance of our involvement in the quest for a more visible expression of unity and possibilities for further engagement in ecumenical partnership

To explore such further steps as will be necessary to make more clearly visible the unity of all Christian people in this country

Forum Sessions

Bible Study on the Woman at the Well (John 4: 1-39) was led in a way that inspired all delegates by Rev Dr Chris Walker and V Rev Denis Stanley.

Importantly, the Forum affirmed the decision of the Directors to adopt the revised Constitution and to change the name of the company from NCCA Ltd to National Council of Churches in Australia Ltd. In accordance with Clause 24 of the National Council of Churches in Australia Constitution and Article 9 of the Memorandum of Association. This was a great occasion following the many months of discernment,

consultation and discussion on the constitution. Immediately following this resolution, the Member Nominees met for a Special General Meeting of National Council of Churches in Australia Ltd. In this meeting they elected as directors of the company:

Mr David Penny – Catholic Church
Mr Artin Jebejian – Armenian Orthodox Church
Rt Rev Nabil Kachab – Antiochian Orthodox Church
Mr Thomas Ling – Chinese Methodist Church
Bishop John Henderson – Lutheran Church of Australia
Sieneke Martin – Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)

The Constitution provides for the Members to appoint up to nine Directors, however only six nominations had been received from the member churches. The Directors may appoint up to three Directors. The President, Bishop Philip Huggins, is the Chair of Directors.

A representative of each of the NCCA Commissions and networks presented a report from their commission/network. In presenting the report, the representatives were encouraged to engage the Forum delegates in strategic thinking and setting goals for the next triennium. Some were able to receive a number of constructive ideas from Forum delegates.

Delegates present on Saturday evening engaged with a draft statement of theological affirmations that the NCCA Executive had considered at meetings held in 2015 and 2016. This document may be the subject of further discernment by the member churches during the next triennium.

Strategic Thinking

Bishop Philip Huggins led a session on strategic thinking based on three 'Amens':

1. Saying 'Amen' to those matters which are obvious, and just must be continued or just need to be done.
2. Saying 'Amen' to those matters which involve change, are complex, require hard choices after discerning conversations.
3. Saying 'Amen' to those matters we discern on the horizon, coming towards us, promptings of the Holy Spirit, perhaps still taking shape.

Through this process delegates affirmed the ongoing work of

- Commissions and Networks:
 - Act for Peace – NCCA Commission
 - Faith and Unity Commission
 - Safe Churches Network and Safe Church Program
 - Social Justice Network
 - Prioritising the integration of resources
- Receptive Ecumenism
- Interfaith dialogues

Delegates recommended specific areas of action:

- NCCA Membership
 - Promoting action and speaking as a council of churches
 - Emphasising sharing and willingness to be transformed by encounter
 - Growing the membership
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples
 - Discerning ways of developing ministry
 - Ensuring that the voice of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is heard.
 - Accompanying Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (EAPPI model)

- Media and communications
 - Discerning processes to enable the churches to speak with one voice on key issues
 - Enhancing NCCA's presence on and use of social media
 - Specific topics: Opposition to the death penalty
- Support for persecuted Christians
- Support for refugees and asylum seekers
 - Supporting projects and programs for integration
 - Reviewing Australian Churches Refugee Taskforce
- Safe Church Program and Network
 - Addressing issues arising from the Royal Commission
- Faith and Unity Commission
 - Promoting churches' understanding of complex issues: different ecclesiologies, sacramental/ordination theology; moral issues
- Receptive ecumenism
- NCCA Conference
 - Contemporary Christian theology: points of convergence and divergence
 - Emerging shape of the Australian Churches; sustainable models; Australian missiology; Lund principle in 21st century; WCC, *The Church Towards a Common Vision* in an Australian context
 - The Human Person
- Palestine- Israel
- West Papua

Delegates identified matters in which the Holy Spirit may be urging action:

- Climate change action
 - Investment in renewable energy
- Ecumenical delegations to rural and regional communities that are struggling
- Engagement with young people including formation for ecumenical leaders

Looking at the NCCA as an entity in itself, delegates urged

- Member churches to
 - Strengthen the financial viability through member contributions
 - Broadening the ethnic/cultural diversity at NCCA gatherings
- NCCA to
 - Review decision-making process to ensure that all voices are heard
 - Ensure sufficient resources/support

Forum Resolutions

The Forum passed a number of resolutions. (Appendix A).

Review of Forum

Delegates reflected positively about many aspects of the Forum. They also made positive suggestions that the Secretariat needs to implement. Some suggestions can only be acted upon by the member churches:

- Need to open the forum to wider participation
- Denominational meetings – perhaps early into the meeting –Possibly Friday night and at the end of the Forum

- Emphasize the importance of being present for the whole Forum
- Encourage churches to include a young person in their delegates.

Resolutions

Appointment of the President

The 9th National Forum:

Appointed Bishop Philip Huggins as President of the National Council of Churches until the end of the 10th National Forum in 2019.

Governance

In accordance with Article 5 of the Articles of Association of NCCA Ltd, elected to membership of the National Council of Churches in Australia Ltd, the churches from whom a form of consent has been received:

Anglican Church of Australia
 Antiochian Orthodox Church
 Diocese of the Armenian Church of Australia and New Zealand
 Apostolic Assyrian Church of the East
 Chinese Methodist Church in Australia
 Churches of Christ in Australia
 Congregational Federation of Australia and New Zealand
 Coptic Orthodox Diocese of Sydney and Affiliated Regions
 Coptic Orthodox Diocese of Melbourne and Affiliated Regions
 Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia
 Indian Orthodox Church Incorporated
 Lutheran Church of Australia Incorporated
 Mar Thoma Church, Australia
 Syrian Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia and New Zealand
 The Catholic Church
 The Religious Society of Friends in Australia (Quakers)
 The Salvation Army
 The Uniting Church in Australia

The 9th National Forum approved the adoption of the Constitution of National Council of Churches in Australia Ltd and the change of name of the company from NCCA Ltd to National Council of Churches in Australia Ltd by the Directors on 5 April 2016.

The 9th National Forum recognized the following as Member Nominees:

Anglican Church of Australia	Most Rev Dr Philip Freier
Antiochian Orthodox Church	Rt Rev Nabil Kachab
Armenian Apostolic Church	Dr Artin Jebejian
Assyrian Church of the East	Archbishop Mar Meelis Zaia
Chinese Methodist Church	Thomas Ling
Churches of Christ	Janet Woodlock
Congregational Federation	Dr Joseph Goodall
Coptic Orthodox – Sydney	Fr Youssef Fanous
Coptic Orthodox – Melbourne	V Rev Fr Macarius Wahba
Greek Orthodox Church	V Rev Dr Doru Costache
Indian Orthodox Church	Mr Vino Kurian
Lutheran Church of Australia	Bishop John Henderson
Mar Thoma Church	Fr Thomas Koshy
Religious Society of Friends	Josephina Jordan
Roman Catholic Church	Archbishop Christopher Prowse
Romanian Orthodox Church	-----
Serbian Orthodox Church	Fr Dalibor Pavlovic*
Syrian Orthodox Church	Archbishop Mor Malatius Malki
The Salvation Army	Colonel Mark Campbell
Uniting Church in Australia	Ms Colleen Geyer

** Denotes that nomination was received after the Forum*

The National Forum received the member churches' appointments to the Assembly:

Anglican Church of Australia	Archbishop Philip Aspinall Ms Alison Preston
Antiochian Orthodox Church	Rt Rev Nabil Kachab
Armenian Apostolic Church	Bishop Haigazoun Najarian Dr Artin Jebejian (alt) Dr Armik Kocharians
Assyrian Church of the East	Archbishop Mar Meelis Zaia Mr Joseph Haweil Rev Fr Narsai Youkhanis (alt)
Chinese Methodist Church	Bishop James Kwang Rev Samuel Chiu Thomas Ling
Churches of Christ	Janet Woodlock
Congregational Federation	Dr Joseph Goodall
Coptic Orthodox – Sydney	Bishop Daniel V Rev Fr Shenouda Mansour Fr Youssef Fanous (alt)
Coptic Orthodox – Melbourne	Fr Macarius Wahba*
Greek Orthodox Church	Fr Doru Costache*
Indian Orthodox Church	---
Lutheran Church of Australia	Bishop John Henderson Rev Mark Lieschke Rev Robert Bartholomaeus (alt)
Mar Thoma Church	---
Religious Society of Friends	Josephina Jordan Rae Litting
Roman Catholic Church	Archbishop Christopher Prowse Rev Dr Gerard Kelly V Rev Fr Denis Stanley (alt)

Romanian Orthodox Church	-----
Serbian Orthodox Church	Rev Fr Nemanja Mrdjenovic
Syrian Orthodox Church	Archbishop Mor Malatius Malki
The Salvation Army	Commissioner Mark Campbell
	Lt Col Graham Durston
	Lt Col Samuel Pho (alt)
Uniting Church in Australia	Mr Stuart McMillan
	Ms Colleen Geyer
	Dr Chris Walker (alt)

** Denotes that nomination was received after the Forum*

Nominations

The National Forum recommends to the Board of NCCA the following appointments:

Act for Peace Commission

Anglican Church of Australia	Ms Alison Preston# Bishop Cameron Venables
Antiochian Orthodox Church	---
Armenian Apostolic Church	---
Assyrian Church of the East	Mr Oliver D. Silwo Sol
Chinese Methodist Church	---
Churches of Christ	Rev John Gilmore#
Congregational Federation	---
Coptic Orthodox – Sydney	Rev Fr Joshua Tadros Rev Fr Matthew Attia
Coptic Orthodox – Melbourne	---
Greek Orthodox Church	---
Indian Orthodox Church	---
Lutheran Church of Australia	Mr Chey Mattner#
Mar Thoma Church	---
Religious Society of Friends	Heather Saville#
Roman Catholic Church	Ms Elizabeth Stone# Ms Tricia Ryan
Romanian Orthodox Church	---
Serbian Orthodox Church	---
Syrian Orthodox Church	
The Salvation Army	Lt Col Simone Robertson
Uniting Church in Australia	Hannah Ireland Juliana Nkrumah

(Those marked # were appointed by the Directors of NCCA to the Act for Peace Commission.)

NATSIEC

Anglican Church of Australia	Rev'd Gloria Shipp Rev'd Victor Blanco
Antiochian Orthodox Church	---
Armenian Apostolic Church	---
Assyrian Church of the East	---
Chinese Methodist Church	---
Churches of Christ	---
Congregational Federation	---
Coptic Orthodox – Sydney	V Rev Shenouda Mansour
Coptic Orthodox – Melbourne	---
Greek Orthodox Church	---

Indian Orthodox Church	---
Lutheran Church of Australia	---
Mar Thoma Church	---
Religious Society of Friends	---
Roman Catholic Church	to be advised
Romanian Orthodox Church	---
Serbian Orthodox Church	---
Syrian Orthodox Church	---
The Salvation Army	---
Uniting Church in Australia	---

*In the following commissions and networks, names marked * were received after the Forum and appointed by the Directors of NCCA Ltd.*

Faith and Unity Commission

Anglican Church of Australia	Bishop Doug Stevens Rev'd Dr Jane Lee Barker Rev'd Dr Cathy Thomson
Antiochian Orthodox Church	---
Armenian Apostolic Church	---
Assyrian Church of the East	Rev Fr Ninos Elya Rev Fr Narsai Youkhanis
Chinese Methodist Church	---
Churches of Christ	Rev Dr Meryl Blair Dr Maggie Kappelhoff
Congregational Federation	---
Coptic Orthodox – Sydney	---
Coptic Orthodox – Melbourne	---
Greek Orthodox Church	---
Indian Orthodox Church	Fr Pradeep Ponnachen Mr Reggi K George
Lutheran Church of Australia	Rev Andrew Brook
Mar Thoma Church	---
Religious Society of Friends	Bev Polzin
Roman Catholic Church	Rev Dr Gerard Kelly Dr Janette Gray RSM
Romanian Orthodox Church	---
Serbian Orthodox Church	---
Syrian Orthodox Church	---
The Salvation Army	Dr Allan Harley*
Uniting Church in Australia	Rev Dr Morag Logan Rev Graham Perry Damian Palmer

Social Justice Network

Anglican Church of Australia	V Rev'd Dr Peter Catt
Antiochian Orthodox Church	---
Armenian Apostolic Church	---
Assyrian Church of the East	Ms Caroline Sellanes
Chinese Methodist Church	---
Churches of Christ	Natalie Oakes (Provisional)
Congregational Federation	---
Coptic Orthodox – Sydney	Rev Fr Thomas Dos

Coptic Orthodox – Melbourne	Fr Abanoub Attalla*
Greek Orthodox Church	---
Indian Orthodox Church	---
Lutheran Church of Australia	---
Mar Thoma Church	---
Religious Society of Friends	Wies Schuiringa
Roman Catholic Church	Mr John Ferguson Sr Louise McKeogh FMA
Romanian Orthodox Church	---
Serbian Orthodox Church	---
Syrian Orthodox Church	---
The Salvation Army	Ms Casey O’Brien Machado*
Uniting Church in Australia	Rev’d Elenie Poulos Ms Jill Ruzbacky

Safe Church Network

Anglican Church of Australia	Mr Garth Blake
Antiochian Orthodox Church	---
Armenian Apostolic Church	---
Assyrian Church of the East	Mr Sargis Makko
Chinese Methodist Church	---
Churches of Christ	---
Congregational Federation	---
Coptic Orthodox – Sydney	Rev Fr Youssef Fanous
Coptic Orthodox – Melbourne	---
Greek Orthodox Church	---
Indian Orthodox Church	---
Lutheran Church of Australia	Tim Ross*
Mar Thoma Church	---
Religious Society of Friends	Ronis Chapman
Roman Catholic Church	Mrs Narelle McMahon
Romanian Orthodox Church	---
Serbian Orthodox Church	---
Syrian Orthodox Church	---
The Salvation Army	Major Ian Henry*
Uniting Church in Australia	Rev Jane Fry

Eco Mission Network

Anglican Church of Australia	---
Antiochian Orthodox Church	---
Armenian Apostolic Church	---
Assyrian Church of the East	---
Chinese Methodist Church	---
Churches of Christ	---
Congregational Federation	---
Coptic Orthodox – Sydney	Fr Joseph Ghattas
Coptic Orthodox – Melbourne	---
Greek Orthodox Church	---
Indian Orthodox Church	Mr Bobby Philips
Lutheran Church of Australia	Rev Andrew Ruddell
Mar Thoma Church	---

Religious Society of Friends	<i>to be advised</i>
Roman Catholic Church	Ms Jacqui Remond
Romanian Orthodox Church	---
Serbian Orthodox Church	---
Syrian Orthodox Church	---
The Salvation Army	Captain Melanie-Anne Holland*
Uniting Church in Australia	Rev Clive Ayre

	EAPPI
Coptic Orthodox – Sydney	Rev Fr Anthony Morgan

Palestine-Israel

The 9th National Forum:

received the request from the Uniting Church to respond to its resolutions of July 2015 on Palestine, and responded as follows.

1. Note the resolutions of the NCCA Forum of July 2010 (minute 10.07.23) and of the NCCA Executive of November 2010 (minute 10.11.06) and that these resolutions remain in force.
2. Plan for a visit of Australian Church Leaders to Palestine-Israel in 2017, with the program to be co-ordinated by the Jerusalem Inter-Church Center and at least one day's program to be arranged by the Executive Council of Australian Jewry.
3. Following the Australian Church Leaders Visit in 2017:
 - a) invite a Palestinian church leader to visit Australia in 2018 to undertake a speaking tour of 2-3 weeks throughout Australia;
 - b) arrange for ecumenical Lenten studies on Palestine, with input from Palestinian church leaders, for use throughout churches in Australia in 2019 or 2020.
4. Note the decision of the Uniting Church to "establish an awareness-raising campaign throughout the Church on the plight of Palestinian Christians and the Palestinian people" and invite the Uniting Church to send information to all member churches.

Genocide of Assyrian and other ethno-religious minorities in Iraq and Syria

The 9th National Forum:

1. Recognised that the Assyrian people, who are Christian by religion, are an original and Indigenous people of Iraq and Syria;
2. is concerned by the ethnic, religious and cultural cleansing of the Assyrian people and other minorities by the so-called Islamic State, the systematic killings of Christian people and destruction of ancient Assyrian cities, churches and artefacts;
3. acknowledged the targeted killings and kidnappings of Christian clergy and people throughout Iraq and Syria;
4. acknowledged the forced displacement of hundreds of thousands of Assyrians, Chaldean and Syriacs since the invasion by IS in Iraq and Syria, notably in Mosul and the Nineveh Plains in Iraq and the Khabour region in Syria (Hassaka province);
5. noted with despair that Iraq's 1.5 million Christians in 2003, now number an estimated to less than 350,000 persons;
6. recognised and condemned the:

- a) ongoing genocidal conduct of ISIL against Indigenous minorities in Iraq, on religious, cultural and ethnic grounds;
 - b) forced displacement of hundreds of thousands of Assyrians, Chaldeans, Syriacs, Yazidis and other minority communities following the IS takeover of north-western Iraq;
 - c) systematic killing, taking of hostages and human trafficking of minorities; and
 - d) destruction of ancient Assyrian archaeological cities, and churches.
7. urges the Australian Government to raise the aforementioned matters in all international fora in which it plays a diplomatic role as a matter of priority.
8. directed the Executive and General Secretary of the NCCA to make urgent representations in the form of a delegation to the Australian Government and Federal Opposition with respect to the plight of the Assyrians, Chaldeans, Syriacs, Yazidis and other ethno-religious minorities in Iraq and Syria.

West Papua

The Forum recommends to the directors of National Council of Churches in Australia Ltd that a delegation of NCCA representatives together with members of the Pacific Council of Churches visit West Papua in February 2017.

Gender Issues

The 9th NCCA Forum asked the NCCA General Secretary:

to record and report to the member churches the gender breakdown at each of the meetings of the Assembly. This is to be done with a view to assisting member churches in redressing the gender imbalance that may occur with the changes to the membership of the Assembly under the new NCCA Constitution.

to inform the member churches of the gender balance on the Board of NCCA with a view to member churches redressing any gender imbalance in future nominations of directors.

Governance

The 9th National Forum:

Expressed the gratitude of all member churches for the work of the Directors of NCCA Ltd for their generous and committed service of the National Council of Churches in Australia

Elected churches from whom a consent form has been as members of National Council of Churches in Australia Ltd

Approved the adoption of the Constitution of the National Council of Churches in Australia Ltd.

Requested that the Board consider as a matter of priority the incorporation of Act for Peace as a subsidiary company of National Council of Churches in Australia and that a recommendation be prepared for the Members of NCCA Ltd.

NATSIEC

The 9th National Forum:

Strongly encouraged NATSIEC and the churches to 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.

Strongly encouraged the Churches as Council to explore ways of supporting the life and ministry of Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander peoples.

Faith and unity Commission

The 9th National Forum:

Supports the decision of the Faith and Unity Commission to explore Moral Discernment in the Churches (WCC Faith and Order Paper No. 25).

Social Justice Network

The 9th National Forum:

recommends to the Board to approve the revised Terms of Reference of the Social Justice Network.

Social Justice Network Proposed Revised Terms of Reference

The Social Justice Network gives expression to the NCCA's commitment to "encourage and enable the member churches, in the light of the gospel, to give prophetic leadership to each other and to the community" by

- speaking out against injustice, violence and oppression; and
- working to uphold the dignity of all people and the flourishing of all creation.

The Social Justice Network is a forum for NCCA member churches to:

- communicate about issues of justice, peace and creation;
- reflect theologically on the implications of the gospel for social justice in Australia;
- facilitate co-operation between the churches on matters of justice, peace and the integrity of creation; and
- advise and support the NCCA on actions which might appropriately be taken by the Council and/or by a group of the member churches.

Eco Mission Network

The 9th National Forum:

recommends to the Board that the Eco Mission Project become the Eco Mission Network

recommends to the Board to approve the Mandate for the Eco Mission Network.

Mandate of Eco Mission Network

The Eco Mission Network exists to assist the National Council of Churches in Australia in its commitment to encourage and enable the member churches, in the light of the gospel, to give prophetic leadership to each other and to the community in caring for God's creation.

The Eco Mission Network assists the member churches to uphold the dignity of all people and the flourishing of all creation.

The Eco Mission Network is mandated to:

1. provide a means of communication between member churches on issues of ecological importance;
2. share resources that will assist our member churches to deepen understanding of the ecological implications of our Sacred Scripture;
3. facilitate cooperation and joint action between churches to care for our common home.
4. advise the National Council of Churches in Australia on resources and actions which might appropriately be taken by the Council and/or severally by member churches.
5. propose issues and occasions when either the NCCA or its members might advocate on behalf of God's Creation.

Ecumenical Accompaniment Program in Palestine -Israel

The 9th National 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 success of the program thus far which has been achieved with limited resources and voluntary labour
 - 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. Recommends to the NCCA board for EAPPI Australia to become a program of the NCCA through Act for Peace and looks forward to EAPPI expanding its contribution for and with the Australian churches;
7. Asks 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.