

NCCA Ecumenical Report for DIA 2024

The National Council of Churches in Australia (NCCA) continues to offer church representatives opportunities to meet and to circulate relevant information and inspirational material.

The 11th National Forum of the NCCA will be in June 2024 after five years, under the theme “Messages of hope in a complex world”. It will also be the 30th Anniversary of the NCCA. The main speaker will be Jerry Pillay, WCC General Secretary, and he will also have visits and meetings in Sydney and Melbourne.

The Forum is an opportunity to reaffirm the purpose of the NCCA, and will address the questions

- What is the role of the NCCA in carrying ‘Messages of Hope’?
- What is it that the NCCA can uniquely undertake with the churches in Australia?

Through the Forum, the NCCA seeks to develop effective strategies for living out our Ecumenical life so that member churches are working together to inspire positive change and convey messages of hope.

Quakers Australia will be represented at the conference by Ann Zubrick and Jenny Stock.

In February, John Gilmore, President of NCCA, attended the conference *‘Raising Our Tribal Voice for Justice: An indigenous Theological Revolution’*. (Jane Hope, Sharee Harper and Catherine Heywood also attended for Quakers)

He reflected: “Listening is not always easy.....Indigenous theologians led us and spoke out of their commitment to Christ in honouring their culture and spirituality at the same time. It is uncomfortable, helpful and reassuring when there is an opportunity to sit with other peoples of faith who bring different cultural lenses to the exploration of our common faith”.

Ann Zubrick is a member of the Board of NCCA.

Bruce Henry is a member of the NCCA Assembly and attends Church Leaders’ meetings. David O’Halloran is the alternate.

Janet Duke appreciates being a member of the Faith and Unity Commission of NCCA. She notes the diversity of both faith and practice amongst the member churches, and that sharing matters of faith increases understanding. For non-credal Quakers, neither baptism nor the eucharist are relevant but Quakers’ participation is valued.

In July 2023 the Commission produced a discussion document [The Churches in Australia and the Care of Creation](#).

The Commission is also to consider issues relating to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

NCCA supported the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, May 12-18 with a range of resources.

Wies Shuringa has been attending the meetings of the new Australian Churches Ecological Taskforce (ACET).

In January 2024, the Taskforce wrote to Minister Bowen urging a rapid transition to a net zero greenhouse gas emissions future and development of an Australian solar panel manufacturing industry, free from forced labour.

Wies has provided more information about ACET at [Australian Ecological Task Group](#)

Act for Peace, the overseas development arm of NCCA stands with their long-term partners, the Near East Council of Churches (NECC) and Department of Service to Palestinian Refugees (DSPR), who, despite their own individual losses, continue to provide primary health care, dental care, pharmacy, mother and child health support, psychosocial support and essential medicines and hygiene kits in Gaza.

NCCA seeks agreement from its member churches on many issues of public importance. It has produced statements and written letters on such matters as

- The Statement from the Heart and the Voice Referendum
- A humanitarian ceasefire in the Middle East and a peaceful and permanent resolution to the conflict
- NCCA and Quakers Australia have both endorsed the joint interfaith statement to the Second Meeting of States Parties of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW)

We value the work of other Friends who represent their Regional Meetings on State Councils of Churches or on interfaith bodies such as Religions for Peace and Australian Religious Responses for Climate Change

Bruce Henry, Presiding Clerk