



Victorian
Council of Churches

Victorian Council of Churches
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Ph: 03 9650 4511

Council News

March 2019



Reflection

Wherever we stand in the midst of the Christian world, we are all preparing or refocusing our thoughts to the events that lead up to Easter; the steadfast journey, the teachings about living without the physical presence, the upper room and the redefining of the symbols, the rigged trials, the walk to Golgotha and ultimately to stand with the women at an empty tomb... wondering!

For many, this period called Lent, is the preparation of the believer for Easter through prayer, doing penance, repentance of sins, almsgiving, and self-denial. ...For others it's a commitment to fasting, or giving up certain luxuries in order to replicate the sacrifice of Jesus Christ...

However we spend these days, the prayer of the Council is that each is again touched by the wonder, mystery and Grace that this most Holy of seasons evokes and commit ourselves to again being a follower of the one called Christ.

- Ian

I am currently establishing my diary for second half of 2019 and would welcome opportunities to come and share stories of the Council activities with your Church or organization – you can contact me on 03 9650 4511 or email at ian.smith@vcc.org.au

News from the Council

Council continues to work towards enabling the churches to fulfil their calling to be living witnesses to the wonder, love and Grace of our God.

Council continues to work with the Leaders of Churches acting as secretariat

Council is reviewing the previous year in preparation for the upcoming AGM - - date to be confirmed.

Council is working with member churches and hopes to announce shortly the incoming President to the VCC. The Incoming President will be inducted at the conclusion of the AGM

The new Office

The temporary office of the VCC is now housed in the IBM building in Southbank. We are on the 18th floor sharing with Plan International.

Access to the building is via the Plaza which joins the IBM building to the Southbank shopping facilities.

If you wish to visit please ring 9412 8487 and arrange with Nicholas Tsigos

VCC new Contact details

- phone: 03 9650 4511 or 9412 8487
- email vcc@vcc.org.au
- Web www.vcc.org.au
- Facebook www.facebook.com/viccouncilchurches
- postal address PO Box 561 Flinders Lane Melbourne 8009

Reception for Archbishop Comensoli

On Friday March 1st some fifteen senior leaders of Churches from across Victoria gathered at Bishopscourt in Melbourne to welcome Archbishop Comensoli.

Thanks was extended to Archbishop Philip Freier for hosting the event. This was the first such gathering in a number of years and brought together both regional and metropolitan leaders.



Present are from left to right Fr Shenouda Boutros (Copts), Rev Ian Smith (VCC) Bishop Gary Weatherill (Ang Ballarat), Archbishop Philip Freier (Ang Melbourne), Bishop Richard Treloar (Ang Gippsland), Lt Col Debra Stevens (S.A.), Rev Sharon Hollis (UCA), Archbishop Peter Comensoli (Cath Melbourne), Bishop Peter Danaher (VCC), Lt Col Bruce Stevens (S.A.), Dr Rob Nyhuis (Church of Christ), Bishop Paul Bird (Cath Ballarat), Very Rev Fr Georges Tahan (Antiochian Orthodox), Bishop Matt Brain (Ang Bendigo)

At the conclusion of the Reception the leaders discussed a desire to meet regularly to share matters of concern and to offer mutual support.

The group has decided to meet three times of year with the Victorian Council of Churches acting as Secretariat.

The Commission for Children and Young People

From 1 January 2018, religious and faith-based organisations have been required to comply with the **Reportable Conduct Scheme** and respond to allegations of reportable conduct made against their workers and volunteers, by investigating those allegations and reporting to the Commission for Children and Young People.

Additionally, from 1 January 2017, religious organisations that provide services for children have been required to comply with the **Child Safe Standards**. These standards aim to drive cultural change in organisations so that protecting children from abuse is embedded in everyday thinking and practice. The standards are compulsory but not prescriptive. This allows religious organisations flexibility in how they implement the standards to meet the requirements.

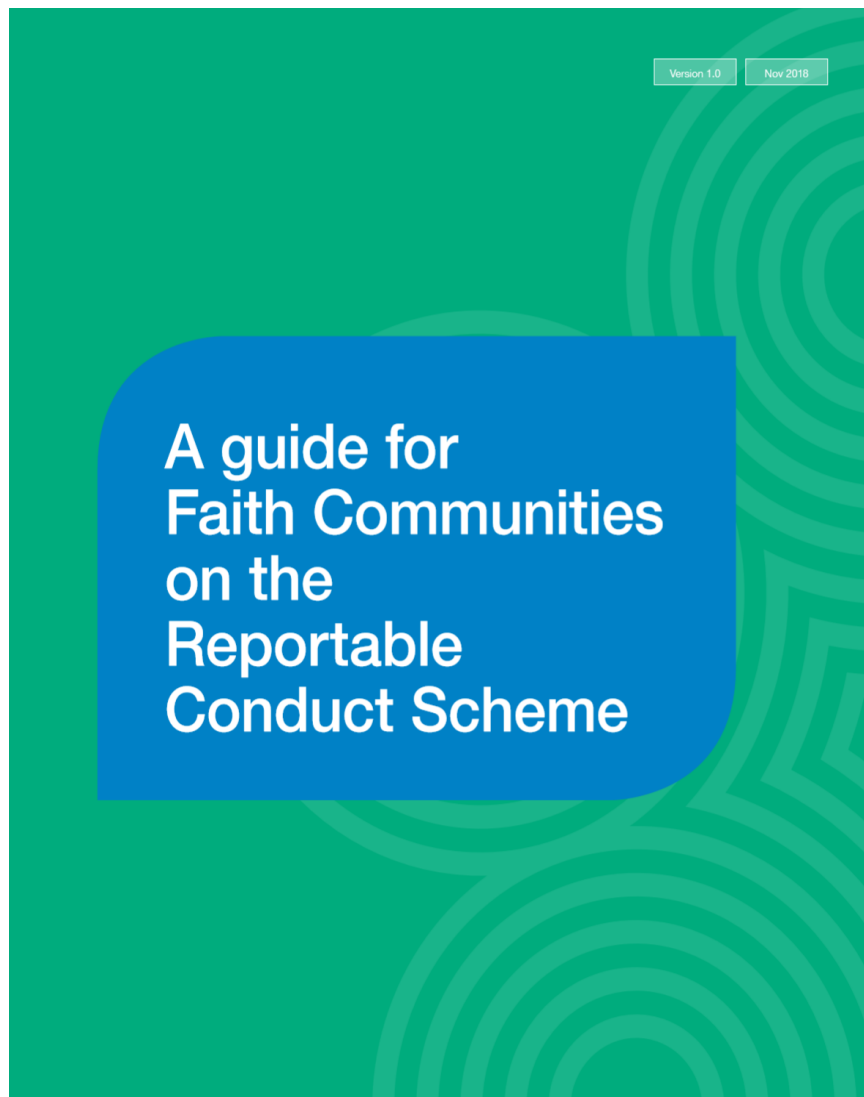
The Commission for Children and Young People, in collaboration with the Faith Communities Council of Victoria, has produced a short, easy to follow booklet to familiarise faith communities and religious organisations with their obligations under the Reportable Conduct Scheme.

If you are part of a religious and faith-based organisation that is required by law to be compliant with the Reportable Conduct Scheme, this booklet is for you. It has been prepared with Culturally and Linguistically Diverse organisations in mind to assist them with implementation of the Reportable Conduct Scheme.

To download a copy go to: <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safety/resources/guides-and-information-sheets> (select guidance for religious organisations on the Reportable Conduct Scheme)

To register for free information sessions offered by the Commission for Children and Young People on Child Safe Standards and the Reportable Conduct Scheme go to: <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safety/resources/information-sessions>

The Victorian Council of Churches through its Executive Officer, Rev Ian Smith, played a major role in the development, writing and delivery of this document. The VCC recommends all churches and church agencies familiarise themselves with their obligations under the Legislation.



Please click on the image above for a downloadable pdf document of the Reportable Conduct Scheme

World Council of Churches



Ecumenism is a sense of belonging

Under the headline "Free to change" hundreds of Swedes gathered in the sacred cathedral in Gothenburg on 2 February to learn more about international advocacy from a faith and human rights perspective. A full-day programme arranged by the dioceses of Skara and Gothenburg in cooperation with Church of Sweden's youth organisation, covered a wide spectrum of pertinent issues facing the ecumenical movement.



Green Reformation: Eco-Theology, Education and the Future of the Church

12 - 15 May 2019 Ecumenical Institute, Bossey

Held at the Ecumenical Institute Bossey, the consultation on "Green Reformation: Eco-Theology, Education and the Future of the Church" takes place from 12 to 15 May 2019.



Thursdays in Black: sharing support, transforming lives

Social media was awash with messages of love on Valentine's Day, but from Thursdays in Black supporters, the flowers came with strong messages that love is not violent.





National Council of
Churches in Australia

From the NCCA Newsletter

Churches call for humane treatment

Media Statement released 15th February 2019

The National Council of Churches in Australia (NCCA) together with the Australian Churches' Refugee Taskforce (ACRT) call for an end to the demonising of refugees and asylum seekers and a humane approach to their care and support. [Read more »](#)



Choir of King's College Cambridge

Hear the world's most famous choir in 2019

2019 International Concert Season - Australian Tour



Founded in the fifteenth century, the Choir of King's College, Cambridge is the pre-eminent representative of the British church music tradition. [Read more »](#)

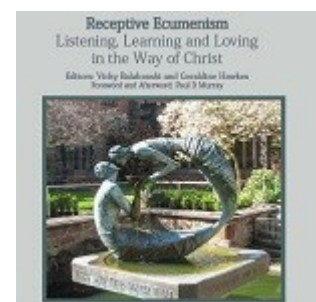
Ecumenical Resource

Recently launched and on sale now.

Receptive Ecumenism: Listening, Learning and Loving in the Way of Christ

Editors: Vicky Balabanski and Geraldine Hawkes

Foreword and Afterword: Paul D Murray. [Read more »](#)



WALK for

2019

JUSTICE for REFUGEES

For a Fair & Welcoming Society
Close Manus & Nauru - Bring Them Here



Palm Sunday, April 14

2pm State Library cnr Swanston & La Trobe Sts Melbourne

music from 1.30pm

Organised by the Refugee Advocacy Network, endorsed by:



call Marie Hapke 0409 252 673 or Chris Breen 0403 013 183 or visit www.refugeeadvocacynetwork.org.au or www.facebook.com/palmsundaywalk for more info

From Intergen:

Highlighted National Event

Jun 11-14 [Leaders to Go](#)

Australia's premier conference for leaders of leaders of ministry with children and their families! Please save the dates and keep an eye out for more info.

Featuring: Facilitated in-put, Workshops, Market place and expo, live-in community, individual retreat, creativity, small groups, worship and reflection, prayer and networking and more!

Venue: The Tops Conference Centre, Stanwell Tops, NSW

Dates: 11-14 June 2019

Times: 2.30pm Tuesday – 1.30pm Friday

Details: leaderstogo.org.au

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/leaderstogoconference/>

Great Opportunities for Families/Households

UCA Synod Family Camp Mar 8-11 (Creswick)

The choices we make about how we live often reflect what is going on in our inner lives. What does Jesus have to say in the Beatitudes about this? Come and have a fun weekend with other families as we explore the realms of inside out. More information and registration: [2019 Synod Family Camp](#)

Surrender 2019 Mar 21-24 (Belgrave Heights)

The Surrender19 Conference is a gathering of Christians from across Australia to share ideas, stories and hope on justice, discipleship and mission. It is for people from all walks of life - with workshops for first-timers, amazing keynote speakers and performing artists and, fantastic activities for all ages, and heaps more! More information and registration: [Surrender 2019](#)

Sacrededge May 3-5 (Queenscliff)

Sacrededge is our response to a sometimes harsh and fearful world. It is an opportunity to connect with people from diverse backgrounds. Rather than debate and argue about issues Q&A style, this unique festival listens to people from the edge...their stories, music, poetry. More information and registration: [Sacrededge 2019](#)



Indonesia Emergency Appeal

Help the people of Sulawesi, Indonesia!

The sheer scale of this disaster is overwhelming, and still growing. Nearly 17,000 have been displaced, and over 1.5 million people have been affected. [Read more »](#)



Dignity not Destitution: Changes to Support Services for People Seeking Asylum

The foundational principle of the campaign Dignity NOT Destitution is the belief that **no person lawfully residing in Australia should be forced into destitution through the removal of access to financial and housing supports.**

Up to 12,000 people seeking asylum in Australia may be at risk of losing core services and financial support due to Government changes in the Status Resolution Support Services (SRSS). Charities are already struggling to support destitute asylum seekers, but this level of destitution will be unprecedented.

Read about why this is a deep concern for people seeking asylum as well as Churches and Charities. You CAN take action to support.

[How you can help: click here for a list of organisations helping people seeking asylum.](#)

[Background information on this issue can be found here, from the Australian Churches Refugee Taskforce](#)
[Click here for a downloadable brochure with actions to take.](#)

From Reconciliation Victoria

Save the Date!

This year's metropolitan **Statewide Reconciliation Forum** will be on Saturday 6 April, at the **Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place**, Ringwood East. All welcome. More details to follow.

2019 International Year of Indigenous Languages

Over 250 Indigenous Australian language groups covered the continent at the time of European settlement in 1788. Today only around 120 of those languages are still spoken and many are at risk of being lost as Elders pass away.

Indigenous languages matter for social, economic and political development, peaceful coexistence and reconciliation in our societies.

The United Nations has declared 2019 the Year of Indigenous Languages in order to encourage urgent action to preserve, revitalise and promote them. [Check out this website](#) dedicated to the 2019 Year of Indigenous Languages. For more information about First Peoples languages in Australia visit the [AIATSIS website](#)

Jewish Christian Muslim Association

Donations

JCMA is a not-for-profit organisation and donations go directly towards delivery of our many events, forums and conferences and to support our workshop programs in primary and secondary schools. As a listed harm prevention charity we have DGR (Deductible Gift Receipt) status. Your donations are tax-deductible (donations over \$2 are tax-deductible). If you would like to make a donation to help support the work of JCMA please go to our website <http://jcma.org.au/donation>.

JCMA Membership

JCMA is a membership based organisation for Jewish, Christian and Muslim people of faith. If you would like to find out about joining JCMA as a member you can go to our website at <http://jcma.org.au/jcma-membership> or call Ginette Everest on (03) 9287 5590 or email to: memberships@jcma.org.au.



Bakhtar Cultural Association in partnership with
the Centre for Culture, Ethnicity & Health presents:

A NIGHT OF POETRY & MUSIC

Celebrate International Women's Day in the
Afghan community
with special guest **Tahmina Arsalan**

6pm, Friday 8 March, 2019
Amberlee Reception,
1451 South Gippsland Highway
Cranbourne, Victoria
Book your **free ticket here**

For more information, contact Bassir Qadiri on 0435 945 591 or bassir.qadiri@gmail.com



Booking link: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/poetry-and-music-for-gender-equality-tickets-55680065575>

From JIM Unit

THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES IN AUSTRALIA (NCCA) INVITES YOU TO: DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE (DFV) ROUNDTABLE

If you are someone within your church who works at developing resources, implementing training or drafting policy on domestic and family violence, we want to have you present! This roundtable will gather together representatives across the churches and from all around the country.

The objectives of the roundtable will be:

- To bring together people who work in the domestic and family violence area of their church;
- To provide a space where people can share, learn and build networks with others working within the domestic and family violence space within churches; and
- To encourage member churches to actively promote the international ecumenical Thursdays in Black Campaign throughout their networks.

Round table details:

10:00 – 3:30 Thursday 2 May, 2019

Barbara Dowling Room, Chapter House

209 Flinders Lane, Melbourne

Anglican Diocese of Melbourne

RSVP: Friday 26 April, 2019

For information and registration contact Emily Evans, NCCA Project Officer

02 8259 0886 | eevans@ncca.org.au

SPC FORUM WITH SR PAT FOX: INCREASING RESISTANCE TO CHURCH & SOCIAL JUSTICE MOVEMENTS IN THE PHILIPPINES

Tuesday 5 March 7:30-9pm

Yarra Theological Union Study Centre

34 Bedford Street Box Hill

Light refreshments served at 9pm

Admission free. Donations welcome.

Sr Pat Fox grew up in Box Hill, and joined the Sisters of Sion in 1969. She began by working with street kids and women in housing commission flats. After studying law in the early 1980s, she worked in legal aid centres in Victoria, before volunteering for the Philippines in 1990. There, she worked in rural areas, and was later elected National Coordinator of the Rural Missionaries of the Philippines. More recently, she has worked with an Agricultural Workers Union.

Her support for people struggling for human rights and social justice antagonised powerful figures in the Philippines, and she was forced by President Duterte to leave in November 2018.

Peace Education Symposium

Teaching the Theology and Practice of nonviolence

Wednesday 14th to Friday 16th August 2019
Melbourne

“To reach peace, teach peace”
Pope John Paul II (1st Jan 1979)

“To be true followers of Jesus today also includes embracing his teaching about nonviolence”
Pope Francis (1st Jan 2017)

“Nonviolence is the answer to the crucial political and moral questions of our time: the need for [humanity] to overcome oppression and violence without resorting to oppression and violence”
Martin Luther King Jr.

Purpose of the Gathering

“promote and provide gospel-based Peace and Nonviolence resources to all Christian educational systems and secondary schools in Australia and New Zealand by 2021”

At this gathering participants will be invited to...

- learn about peace and nonviolence education
- reflect on how the Gospel inspires the work for nonviolence
- network with other educators/teachers
- explore and share resources and experiences to assist with embedding nonviolence principles in curriculum and practice
- contribute to the overall purpose described above

Background

During 2018 a group of keen educators and peace-practitioners from Australia and New Zealand, mainly from the Anglican and Catholic traditions, met to discuss, develop resources and teach the ‘theology and practice of peace and nonviolence’ in Christian schools. This included the development of a pilot senior-school Religious Education unit by the Anglican Schools Commission (WA) and the incorporation of nonviolence principles, and content, in a number of Catholic education systems and schools.

The feedback from students and staff has been very positive, with teachers observing the helpful holistic nature of the material, which can engage students at intellectual/theological, spiritual/prayerful, and practical (nonviolent peacemaking) levels.

The Gathering

Wednesday 14th August (9am – 4.30pm) – a professional learning day to....

- explore the theological principles and Gospel-based practices that underpin the teaching of nonviolence and peace
- identify and reflect on connections between the inner (life) and the outer (practices) of nonviolence
- learn a range of introductory skills in nonviolent conflict transformation
- consider how to integrate peace education within their teaching roles

This day can be missed if a participant did it on another occasion. This day can also be done as a 'stand-alone' for teachers who would like to know more about Jesus and Nonviolence, but who cannot attend the full three-day gathering.

Thursday 15th August (9am – 4.30pm) – a day of sharing ideas, resources and stories from teachers/practitioners who have been experimenting with the curriculum resources during 2018. This is likely to include content/resource sharing on:

- the Theology of Nonviolence, particularly focussing on the work of Rene Girard and his other Christian interpreters
- the Practice of Prayer as a way of supporting nonviolent peace-making
- stories about how students are beginning to engage in practical ways

Friday 16th August (9am to 2pm) – A self-organising Open Space day for participants to engage with what has been emerging during the preceding two days, share resources, and plan practical next steps in their respective contexts.

Location:

St Joseph's Conference Centre, Edmund Rice Education Australia, Richmond (Melbourne)

Expressions of interest

The event will be formally advertised early in 2019 with more details on costs. In the meantime, if you would like to be included on the mailing list, please Michael Wood, spacemaker62@gmail.com.
Phone: 0435 065326

Gathering sponsored by:

**Edmund Rice Education Australia
Catholic Education South Australia
The Anglican Schools Commission (Inc.)
Pace e Bene (Australia)**



AMAFHH FEDERATION
australian charity organisation

Multicultural Fair Diversity festival 2019

Supported by Darebin City Council

**Connect 2gether 4 Harmony,
Grab a cuppa and Let's talk; Multiculturalism.**

Fun for all ages

Food Stalls

Single-use
plastic-free event

17 March
12pm to 5pm

2019

**Free
Entry**

Venue: Preston Shire Hall & Preston City Hall
286 Gower Street, Preston VIC 3072

Visitors will enjoy:

Free different cultural tea
Kids' activities
Face painting
Zoo Reptiles

Stalls from different culture, faith,
food and service providers.
Live cultural performances
Cultural attire displays, and much more!

Come and celebrate the diversity of our society and promote respect, understanding, peace and harmony among all!

Invite your family, friends and people from a different culture or faith!

Contact Us:

Phone: 0422 851 536 or 0435 285187

Email: secretary@amafhh.org.au batul@amafhh.org.au Web: www.amafhh.org.au

VICTORIAN
multicultural
commission
strengthening our community



SPIRITUAL ECOLOGY LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

February - August 2019

Immerse yourself in the principles of Spiritual Ecology.
Explore leadership skills and reflective practices.
Develop authentic relationships and improve collaboration.
Be mentored by experienced spiritual and ecological leaders.
Learn Human Centred Design and develop local community projects.

Program Outline

1. Immersion into Spiritual Ecology principles:

Participate in a 4-day Spiritual Ecology retreat in the Otways National Park
February 14th - 17th 2019

2. Toolkit Development Workshop Series (Saturdays):

March 16th at CERES

April 13th at IofCA

May 18th at CERES

June 15th at IofCA

3. Mentoring: Runs continuously from March to July

4. Public Presentation & Open Dialogue Forum:

Saturday July 27th

APPLY NOW



Seeking people aged 18 - 35 with a faith or spiritual practice who are passionate about ecology and environment. 10 places available.

More information: ceres.org.au/spiritualecology



Initiatives of Change
Australia

This program is run by CERES Environment Park in conjunction with Initiatives of Change Australia and funded by the Victorian Government Community Harmony Program

Earth @ Peace is a landmark conference that will connect global dialogue on how we can address the ethical imperative of our time:
A Just & Ecologically Sustainable Peace

A Just & Ecologically Sustainable Peace
the ethical imperative of our time

PUBLIC EVENTS

Each evening of the conference concludes with an event open to the public.

EARTH @ PEACE PUBLIC FORUM

A public forum featuring international speakers Professor Heather Eaton and Professor Chaiwat Satha-Anand.

WHEN: Tuesday 23 April 2019, 7:30pm
COST: \$20 General Admission / \$15 Concession
BOOK: No bookings. Payment with cash on the night.
(No charge for daily conference participants)

CULTURAL EVENT

An evening of Poetry, Music and Art for ANZAC EVE.

WHEN: Tuesday 24 April 2019, 7:30pm
COST: \$20 General Admission
BOOK: No bookings. Payment with cash on the night.
(No charge for conference ticket holders)

THE CONFERENCE IS HOSTED BY



Read more on the conference website:

[VOX.DIVINITY.EDU.AU/EVENT/EAP](http://vox.divinity.edu.au/event/eap)

A large graphic on the right side of the poster. It features a circular clock face with Roman numerals. The clock is split vertically: the left half is red and the right half is blue. Overlaid on the clock is a white peace symbol. The text 'EARTH @ PEACE' is written in large white capital letters across the middle of the graphic.

EARTH @ PEACE

At no stage during the 200,000 years of human evolution, have the Earth's species experienced existential threats of the scale and intensity posed by climate change and nuclear weapons. **Until now.**

23-24 APRIL 2019
MELBOURNE CONFERENCE

Link: <http://vox.divinity.edu.au/event/earth-peace-conference/>



[Earth@Peace: Help make our world a little safer | StartSomeGood](#)

startsomegood.com Humanity and the Earth's other species are under threat as never before. Earth@Peace is a unique project that will inspire and empower new ways of approaching the future.

I know some of you have indicated you're planning to make a contribution, and others have not yet had a chance to look at the project in any detail. And there's something I should have explained a more clearly in my early email. Funds raised through this appeal will be used mainly to offer scholarships to enable Indigenous Australians and Pacific Islanders (but also students and other young people) to participate in the project, including the landmark Conference in April next year.

You may ask: Why Indigenous Australians? Because it is they who have suffered so horribly - and are still suffering today - from the devastating effects of nuclear testing which we as a nation inflicted on them on the very land from which they were dispossessed. Similarly with Pacific Islanders who have borne the brunt of US, UK and French nuclear tests in the Pacific.

Why student and young people? Because they are our future.

So, please do what you can: whatever contribution you can make, large or small, and importantly a word with friends, family members, colleagues, and members of your communities and networks. You never know, a well chosen word here or there can often open new doors.

In sincere appreciation of the support you've given in the past and continue to give.

From the Safe Church Program Newsletter

Posters For Children And Youth Ministry

The Safe Church Unit of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria has produced a number of resources that are available to download. In particular they have created a variety of child focussed posters for children. You can download the posters and other resources from [here](#).

A Guide To Sharing Photos, Videos And Social Media

As we roll into the new year, it's a good idea to reassess your organisation's policies for online activities such as social media, photographing, filming and fundraising. Check out the advice from the Office of the eSafety Commissioner [here](#).

More from the JIM Unit

FILM NIGHTS!

FUNDRAISING support for PALM SUNDAY WALK FOR JUSTICE FOR REFUGEES
3 nights – 3 FILMS - [7pm](#) at ANMF auditorium, [535 Elizabeth Street](#), CITY

[Thursday 28 Feb](#) – Border Politics - Q&A with Julian Burnside

[Thursday 14 March](#) - the Merger

[Thursday 4 April](#) Island of Hungry ghosts (Christmas Island)

Bring your friends! Bookings on TryBooking very soon – or
email info@refugeeadvocacynetwork.org.au

From Commission for Children and Young People



Child Safe Standards and Reportable Conduct Scheme Information Sessions

COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN
AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Certain early years providers are coming into scope for the Reportable Conduct Scheme from 1 January 2019. To register your interest for an **Early Years Reportable Conduct Scheme Information Session**, please complete the [expression of interest form](#).

To find out about new information sessions, you can [subscribe for updates](#) or [contact us](#)

You can also find more information on the Commission's website: www.ccyp.vic.gov.au

To download a copy of 'A Guide for Creating a Child Safe Organisation' to assist organisations to create a culture of child safety, [click here](#).

If you need an interpreter, please call the Translating and Interpreting Service on 13 14 50 and ask them to contact the Commission for Children and Young People on 03 8601 5281.

Council News is the official newsletter
of the Victorian Council of Churches

Editor Rev. Ian Smith Executive Officer

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Tel: 9650 4511

We're on the web!
www.vcc.org.au



Victorian
Council of Churches

The Victorian Council of Churches is a fellowship of churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the Scriptures and seek to fulfil together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

*** If you have an event that you want others to know about then contact at vcc@vcc.org.au excluding January we plan to publish a Council News each month ***

Contact us: web. www.vcc.org.au

Email. vcc@vcc.org.au

Facebook www.facebook.com/viccouncilchurches/

Child Safe Standards

A Reminder

As of January 1st 2017 the Victorian Child Safe Standards became mandatory for all Churches and Faith organisations.

For more details visit:

www.childsafestandards.org.au

How to implement the Victorian Child Safe Standards in your faith community that come into place on 1 January 2017.

The Victorian Council of Churches in partnership with the National Council of Churches in Australia – Safe Church Program has collaborated together to provide a toolkit and Training Portal to ensure that all Faith Communities in Victoria have the opportunity to ensure that they are prepared to implement the Child Safe Standards in their faith community.

We are pleased to partner with the Commission for Children and Young People (www.ccyp.vic.gov.au) in assisting faith based organisations to meet the Child Safe Standards by providing a range of faith-generic resources, tools and supports.
