



Victorian
Council of Churches

Council News

May 2019

Victorian Council of Churches 18/60 City Road
President: Bishop Peter Danaher Southbank VIC 3006
Executive Officer: Rev Ian Smith ABN 51 350 238 724
Ph: 03 9650 4511



Reflection

In this period post Easter, I wonder if in some ways we're like the disciples pictured in the story Luke conveys... the disciples walking to Emmaus.

Like them, we've just witnessed the Easter moments, a raucous entry, an upper room, the poignant moments in the garden where all seems in flux, a rigged judiciary, a weak Governor, then the death, and not just any death but outside the wall, as a criminal, definitely no hope...

And then the women, the women .. what to make of their remarkable news...

What are we to make of the news? .. How will we then live?

May it be that like those early disciples, recognition and some dawning understanding comes as we gather, share our resources with others and dare to believe that in the breaking of bread he is made known to us ... calling us to continue to share the story.

- 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

The Council has been active getting ready for the AGM which will be held on June 1st

- Council is pleased to announce that the Coptic Church has agreed to lead the Council for the next two years— Fr Shenouda Boutros will be installed as President on the 1st June at the AGM

- Council is also pleased to announce that we will have a key note speaker at the AGM

The Rev Glen Loughrey, from St Oswald's Anglican Church, who will reflect on Ecumenism through the eyes and experiences of our First Peoples

- Council reminds all readers that the AGM is open to everyone to attend but only delegates from member churches can participate in voting

- Council is seeking someone who could become the Treasurer of VCC - term is for two years.

If you have the time and skills please contact the Executive Officer at ian.smith@vcc.org.au

The new Office

The temporary office of the VCC is 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

Palm Sunday saw some 12,000 people gather at the State Library of Victoria to hear reflections and then walk urging our politicians to respond more humanely to those seeking asylum within our Country



Highlights were; speeches by Richard Flanagan and David Manne, a personal story by a Sudanese refugee Nyadol Nyuon who having come to Australia has now qualified as a lawyer and a recorded message from Behrouz Boochani from Manus Island.

Also the crowd were led by a number of Melbourne musicians including the West Papuan drummers .



The walk began with an acknowledgement of Land and First People followed by statements by Faith leaders—shown is Rev Roberta Hamilton, Rev Ian Smith (EO VCC) and Mr Mohamed Mohideen President Islamic Council of Victoria.



IBM Centre (18th Floor), 60 City Road, Southbank Victoria 3004
Telephone (03) 9650 4511 E-mail vcc@vcc.org.au
President: Bishop Peter Danaher Executive Officer: Rev Ian Smith

Notice of Annual General Meeting

Heads of Member Churches and Delegates of the Victorian Council of Churches are advised that there will be the Annual General Meeting of the Council.

When: Saturday 1st June, 2019

Registration from 9.00am – Worship from 9.30am

The day will include

***Reflection from special guest Rev Glenn Loughrey
'Ecumenism through First Peoples experiences'***

The receiving of reports

***Installation of new President of Council
Fr Shenouda Boutros***

**Where: St Verena and St Bishoy Coptic Church,
285 LaTrobe St. Melbourne
Melway Reference: 1A, 1B
Train –Melbourne Central Station**

Cost of Registration \$30.00 (\$20.00 for Concession)

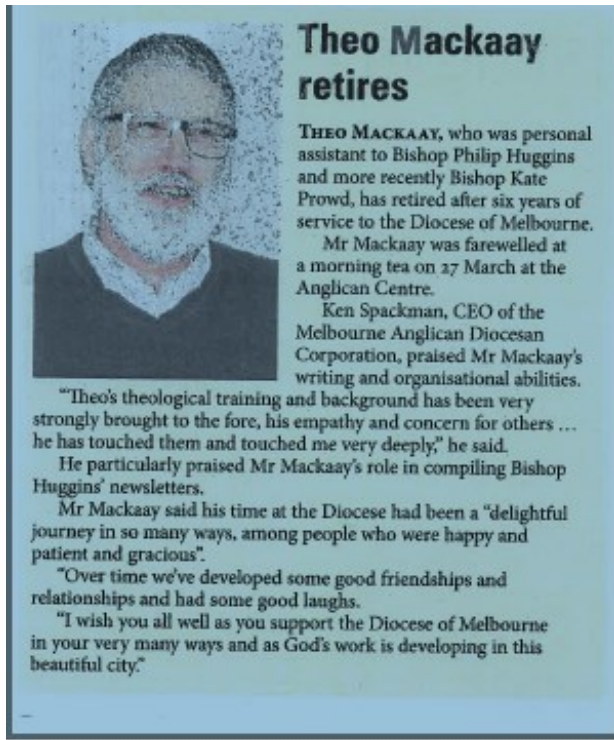
Cost includes lunch

PLEASE Register your intent by Friday 17th May 2019

Either via email vcc@vcc.org.au

Or Victorian Council of Churches

Po box 561 Flinders Lane 8009



Picture and story courtesy of The Melbourne Anglican

Past General Secretary of VCC retires

The Victorian Council of Churches acknowledges the retirement of Mr Theo Mackaay. Prior to joining the staff at the Melbourne Anglican Diocese, Theo was the General Secretary for the Council for 4.5 years.

During his leadership VCC began the task and journey of modernising by improving its governance, adopting an updated Constitution and beginning to think about how the Council serves both the member churches and the wider community in which it finds itself.

Theo also brought leadership to the emerging Victorian Council of Churches Emergencies Ministry program, overseeing its development.



Conversations with the Archbishop

Loneliness: Australia's next health crisis?

An Australian psychological journal last year suggested loneliness could be Australia's next public health crisis. Loneliness is defined as being disconnected from others and seeing one's relationships negatively, so one can be lonely while surrounded by people.

The horrifying rate of youth suicide is partly connected to loneliness.

What can the churches do to help, or what can we all do as individuals? Join Melbourne Anglican Archbishop **Philip Freier** in discussion with **Patrick McGorry**, Professor of Youth Mental Health at Melbourne University, co-founder of headspace and former Australian of the Year, and **Helen Page**, head of Community Aged Care for the Brotherhood of St Laurence. The discussion will be moderated by former ABC host **John Cleary**.

When: Wednesday 12 June 2019 at 7.30am (morning please note)

Where: Deakin Edge, Federation Square

Admission is free and bookings are not necessary. All welcome!

For more information please contact Anglican Media Melbourne at AnglicanMediaMelbourne@melbourneanglican.org.au

World Council of Churches



[“Human chain” to commemorate Panmunjom Declaration anniversary](#)

The National Council of Churches in Korea will join civil society organizations to create a “human chain” on 27 April alongside the Korean Demilitarized Zone to celebrate the first anniversary of the Panmunjom Declaration, as well as to break the current deadlock since the Hanoi Summit.



[WCC committee renews call for release of archbishops of Aleppo](#)

The WCC Permanent Committee on Consensus and Collaboration issued a communique on 9 April calling for the release of two metropolitans of Aleppo, His Eminence Boulos (Yazigi), from the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East, and His Eminence Mor Youhanna Gregorios (Ibrahim) from the Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East.



[WCC moderator “A call for equality in God’s house”](#)

In a special greeting from the World Council of Churches (WCC) moderator Dr Agnes Abuom expressed her thankfulness to the Church of Sweden and its members, for everything they have done for ecumenism.



[South Sudan Council of Churches presents new website for peace](#)

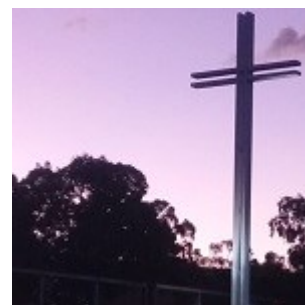
On 5 April, the South Sudan Council of Churches officially presented its new website through a slideshow featuring photos from the site reflecting the idea of embracing peace. Several heads of churches attended to express their support for the council and its latest mode of strengthening communication with its members and with peace supporters across the globe.



Easter Messages from Leaders of Christian Churches in Australia 2019

May your Holy Week and Easter be a time of beautiful renewal

A musical friend told me last week of a conversation with his 7 year old daughter. They were having breakfast. Out of nowhere, she said: "My life is going to be more difficult than yours, isn't it"?... [Read more »](#)



Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

2 – 9 June 2019

"Justice and only justice, you shall pursue"

(cf. Deuteronomy 16:18-20)

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in Australia will be observed from 2 - 9 June 2019 in the week between Ascension and Pentecost. [Read more »](#)



Roundtable event May 2019

Domestic and Family Violence (DFV) Roundtable

When: 2 May 2019

Where: Barbara Dowling Room, Chapter House, 209 Flinders Lane Melbourne, Anglican Diocese of Melbourne

Churches need to be equipped with appropriate and effective ways to identify, prevent and respond to domestic and family violence. [Read more »](#)



Farmyard Friends

Not only are these gifts cute but animals are an amazing gift for families in Zimbabwe. This range of gifts will mean that households will have a source of healthy, nutrient rich foods – especially important for growing children. New this year are baby turkeys - a fun and quirky gift that can give flight to the dreams of a family in rural Zimbabwe. Each gift comes with a card and matching magnet as a lasting keepsake.



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.](#)

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.

Up-coming Events

i. Winter Conference - July 21st and 22nd

this year the Winter conference is being held at St Paul's Retreat Center,

Wantirna Sth. - for details go to www.jcma.org.au

ii. Friendship walks -

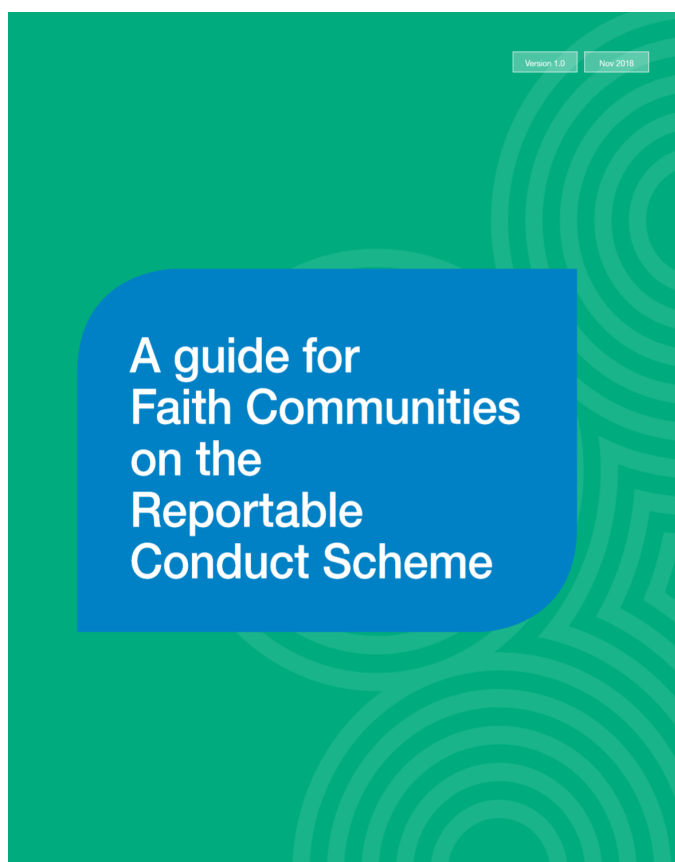
JCMA are planning two friendship walks this year :

i. Melbourne walking between Mosque in Nth Carlton, a Church in Carlton and a Synagogue - this will be held in October

ii. Ballarat - again walking between Church, Mosque and Synagogue. This will be held In November

For more information and details on any events see website: www.jcma.org.au

The Commission for Children and Young People



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

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.

Training portal at www.childsafestandards.org.au

Downloadable resource kit available on website

From the JIM Unit

CHAMPIONS FOR CHANGE

Training Opportunity: Champions for Change 2019 Application

Overview

Champions for Change is a 6-month community organising, advocacy & campaigns fellowship. It is about equipping Refugee Council members, supporters and refugee community members with important advocacy and campaigning skills and set up structures that enable for strong communication, planning and implementation of effective movement-wide campaigns that span the country.

To Apply please follow the link below:

https://action.refugeecouncil.org.au/c4c_application_2019

WILLIAM KELLY: JUST ART EXHIBITION

23 April – 10 June, 2019

Centre for Theology and Ministry
29 College Crescent, Parkville.

Artist, pacifist and social activist, William Kelly OAM presents an exhibition of artworks which provoke reflection on themes of peace and justice in association with the Earth@Peace conference. Some works are accompanied by poems written in response to an artwork. Poets included are Anne Elvey, Alex Skovron, Andy Jackson, Susan Fealy, Bella Li.



Image: William Kelly, *Francis in Australia*, limited ed. 12

Interview with a Refugee

Manningham Uniting Church and the Synod of Victoria and Tasmania recently funded Pacifique Ndayisaba, a civil rights activist and refugee from Burundi who is connected with the Mildura Uniting Church, to attend the Refugees Alternatives Conference in Adelaide in February. He was interviewed by SBS radio while at the conference. Mark Zirnsak, who also attended the conference, interviewed Pacifique about the conference. > [Full Interview Here](#) <



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)**

From Intergen:

Highlighted National Event

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

Australia's premier conference for 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

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](#)

Children & Families Ministry: Core Issues – Jul 11-13, 15-17

PARKVILLE

Offered in **Parkville** for the **FIRST** time, this University of Divinity [intensive unit \(Jul 11-13, 15-17\)](#) is an excellent professional development opportunity for ministers, pastors, chaplains *and* those employed or deeply engaged in ministry with children and their families. Areas explored include the theological, developmental and methodological resources for contextual children and families ministries across the spectrum of Australian church based, community based and para-church expressions. Addressing the theology, spirituality and sociology of the child in relation to family, church, faith, culture, technology, history and philosophical discourse, the unit develops critical skills for evaluating and designing robust, contextual processes for discipleship, pastoral care, safe practice, mission and leadership with families. For more information e-mail chris.barnett@ctm.uca.edu.au.

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

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.

From Commission for Children and Young People

Child Safe Standards and Reportable Conduct Scheme Information Sessions

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.



COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN
AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Victorian Council of Churches
President: Bishop Peter Danaher
Executive Officer: Rev Ian Smith

18/60 City Road

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

Editor Rev. Ian Smith Executive Officer

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Website: <http://www.vcc.org.au/>

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 ***

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



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

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