



Victorian
Council of Churches



Council News

August 2020

Victorian Council of
Churches President:
Rev Fr Shenouda Boutros
Executive Officer:
Rev Ian Smith

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Reflection

There seems to be a sense of despair or uncertainty around us here in Victoria. With the number of deaths and large numbers of cases of Covid 19 it's easy to sense that life as we've known it and grown accustomed to has gone and what lies before us is uncharted waters.

Reflecting on this community sentiment, I recalled a poem by a woman cited by the King of England in the darkest days of World War II ... It went ' I asked the man at the gate of the new year for a light that I may tread safely, his reply was... Go out into the darkness and put your hand in the hand of God, that to you shall be better than a light and safer than a known way.... Minnie Louise Haskin (1875 —1957)

The affirmation that God is the one who holds history ought to be a point of encouragement for us. May it be for us who follow the Christ, that we heed this wisdom and practice it daily.

- Ian

I am currently establishing my diary for July —Dec 2020 and would welcome opportunities to 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

Whilst the Council offices remain shut the VCC is busy participating in a number of events and projects.

- The VCC is helping to facilitate activities designed to enable the churches of Victoria to fully participate in Child protection week, Sept. 6—13th (more details next edition)
- Working with the State Government to ensure understanding, resources and Clear information is sent to churches during this time of restrictions
- The Standing Committee of VCC is undertaking a discernment phase as it seeks to shape it's response to the needs of our churches and our wider community
- Council is continuing to plan for a AGM for 2019—currently it appears that the AGM will need to be a online event. Details and date will be announced shortly.

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

NOTE: The Victorian Office now has a new PO Box number.

- postal address PO Box 6804 509 St Kilda Rd, Melbourne 3004

News from VCC Emergencies Ministry



Online Training Pilot

Due to the impacts of COVID-19 and the challenges with meeting Face to Face to conduct training two weeks ago we made the decision to trial online delivery.

Last Saturday (25th July) we successfully ran our second online training pilot. Over the Friday and Saturday we have trained close to 40 new volunteers mostly from the Wangaratta and Wodonga regions. All those who attended felt it was a suitable way to attend training and felt they learnt a lot. We are looking forward to finalising their training and having them all on board.

We will now spend some time reviewing what needs to be tweaked and IF we can't offer face to face training in the foreseeable hopefully we can utilise this.

If you would like to register for training please check out the training tab and register for a location near you and we will be in touch as we are able.

We are hopeful of being able to recommence training soon so if you would like to join us please go to www.vccem.org.au and click on the training tab.

MESSY CHURCH CONFERENCE

Make it Messy! On-line Conference Saturday August 22 3.30pm – 5pm

[Make it Messy!](#) will assist those already engaged in Messy Church, churches contemplating beginning a Messy Church and people genuinely curious about the Messy Church phenomenon, take the next step in their Messy Journey.

During our time together via Zoom there will be ample opportunity to share your *hopes, fears* and *ideas* around Messy Church in our current, ever-changing, context. There will also be opportunity to engage with, learn from and be encouraged by a range of experienced Messy Church leaders. **It's FREE**, but [registration](#) is required!

WCC executive committee addresses global concerns, sets vision for unity, justice and peace

24 July 2020

In a meeting with a format and focus dictated by the COVID-19 pandemic, the executive committee of the World Council of Churches (WCC) this week addressed vital international developments and situations.

In its 20-24 July online meeting, the committee expressed concern and apprehension at multiple concurrent crises and pledged support and solidarity with churches across the world,

the committee also approved new dates for the WCC 11th Assembly, discussed plans for a transversal on overcoming racism, and developed plans for 2021 in light of the effect of COVID-19 on budget and programmes.

A brief update from the executive committee

Hagia Sophia

The executive committee acknowledged with deep sadness that on the concluding day of the executive committee meeting, 24 July 2020, the reconversion of Hagia Sophia as a mosque took place, and invited prayerful solidarity and support by WCC member churches around the world for the Ecumenical Patriarchate in its efforts to challenge and reverse this gravely regressive decision.

The WCC 11th Assembly 2022

The executive committee approved new dates for the WCC 11th Assembly, to be held in Karlsruhe, Germany, 31 August – 8 September 2022.

Jerusalem Inter-Church Centre

The executive committee received and discussed the “Evaluation Report of the Jerusalem Inter-Church Centre and the WCC Management Response.” They addressed the need to consolidate the work of the different WCC initiatives in the Middle East region, to secure their sustainability and to increase their ownership by local member churches.

Impact of COVID-19

In light of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the way WCC governing bodies make decisions and the experience of the executive committee in using electronic communications (Rule XVIII.8), some of the recommendations made by the working group on constitution and rules may need to be reconsidered. The executive committee appointed a group to review the report on constitution and rules; the relevant recommendations of the permanent committee on consensus and collaboration; and further considerations regarding the use of electronic communications for consultation and decision (Rule XVIII.8); and to report to the executive committee in November for further consideration with recommendations on how to proceed in reporting to the central committee for decision.

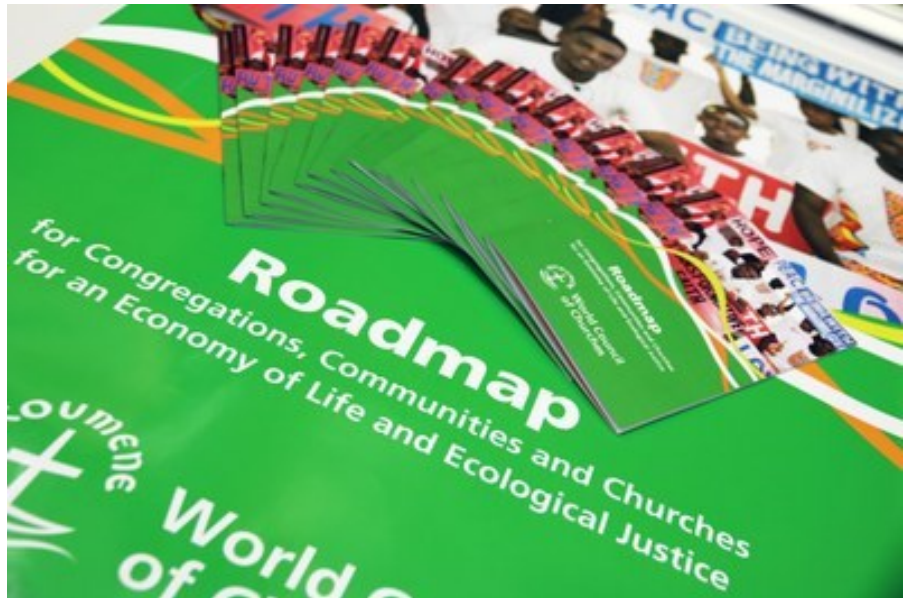
The finance sub-committee discussed the financial overview, which presented the results to May 2020 compared to budget; the actions taken in relation to prior recommendations; and a report of progress against indicators set in the WCC financial strategy 2018-2021. The executive committee required that the financial strategy be updated in draft to include the year 2022, for discussion at the executive committee meeting in November 2020, before submission to central committee in June 2021.

WCC webinar series to focus on good practices of ecological justice and economy of life

23 July 2020

A four-step webinar series promoted by the World Council of Churches (WCC) titled “Churches on the Road to an Economy of Life and Ecological Justice” will feature concrete examples of churches and faith communities engaged in efforts for transforming their local context.

The activities are inspired by the WCC’s “Roadmap for Congregations, Communities and Churches for an Economy of Life and Ecological Justice,” a resource rooted to the congregational level of churches’ engagement in ecological and economic justice. Launched in 2019, the roadmap addresses the question of how churches can ‘walk the talk’ on economic and ecological justice in their everyday activities and operations.



Starting on 28 July, the webinar series will bring together diverse experts and practitioners as well as encourage interactive discussion in the following areas:

28 July: “Reconnecting in faith with Creation, land and water”

4 August: “Confessing for just and sustainable consumption”

11 August: “For life, not profit – Churches as alternative economic actors and spaces”

18 August: “Powered by faith – Churches promoting renewable energy and climate protection”

Live streaming: www.facebook.com/worldcouncilofchurches

The webinar inputs and discussions are expected to lead to the development of user-friendly tool kits.

The webinar series is a joint undertaking between the WCC’s economic and ecological justice project, WCC’s Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance - Food for life and the Ecumenical Water Network.

[Learn more about this event](#)

[Download the “Roadmap for Congregations, Communities and Churches for an Economy of Life and Ecological Justice”](#)

WCC– Con't

Weekly Summaries

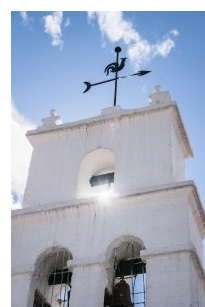
[WCC plans to deepen regional communication on water justice](#)

The International Reference Group of the World Council of Churches (WCC) Ecumenical Water Network is planning to deepen its regional communication on water justice. During a meeting on 21 July, the group discerned ways to move forward in lifting up authentic experiences that reflect the insights and values of communities, particularly amid the COVID-19 pandemic.



[Bells to toll in mourning in Greece and in Greek Orthodox Church of America for Hagia Sophia](#)

As Hagia Sophia opens for prayer on 24 July, Archbishop Ieronymos of Athens and All Greece has announced that on this date will be a day of mourning for Christians and Greek people everywhere. He will perform the customary Good Friday liturgy and hymns at the Metropolitan Church of Athens Evangelismos Theotokou and is inviting everyone to join in prayers for aid and support to the nation.



[Muslim leaders in solidarity with WCC's urgent calls to keep Hagia Sophia a place of openness](#)

On 11 July, World Council of Churches (WCC) interim general secretary Rev. Prof. Dr Ioan Sauca sent a letter to the Turkish president expressing “grief and dismay,” noting that since 1934, “Hagia Sophia has been a place of openness, encounter and inspiration for people from all nations and religions.” The letter generated widespread reactions from churches and the media—and also from Muslim leaders. Sauca met online with H.E. Judge Mohamad Abdel Salam, general secretary of the Higher Committee of Human Fraternity (HCHF), special adviser of the Grand Imam of al Azhar Cheikh Ahmad al Tayeb, and special adviser of the Muslim Council of Elders.



[WCC COVID-19 support team answers most-asked questions](#)

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have faced new challenges worldwide. Our life situation has changed drastically and in many places and regions of the world it has even become an existential challenge. We do face many ambiguities and uncertainties, which raise many questions. In such a life situation, it is good to rely on the experiences and practices of others, and to be part of a wider fellowship of voices of reason and support.



[WCC calls for urgent de-escalation of confrontation on Azerbaijan-Armenia border](#)

World Council of Churches (WCC) interim general secretary Rev. Prof. Dr Ioan Sauca called for urgent de-escalation of the confrontation on the Azerbaijan-Armenia border, where renewed fighting since 12 July has cost the lives of at least 16 people and resulted in destabilization and increased threats of wider conflict.



[Colombia: Human rights being abused under cover of COVID-19](#)

Within the context of confinement to prevent the spread of COVID-19, multifaceted violence persists in Colombia, as well as violations of the rights of social leaders, Indigenous, Afro-Colombian and peasant populations.



[WCC stands with United Church of Christ in the Philippines in defending human rights of arrested pastor](#)

As Rev. Dan San Andres Sr, known as a defender of human rights, was arrested a week after the controversial Anti-Terrorism Act was passed in the Philippines, the World Council of Churches (WCC) joined with the bishops of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP) in calling for justice.



[South African Council of Churches hosts webinar: “Conversation on Annexation with Christians in the Holy Land”](#)

With four panelists and a lively discussion, the South African Council of Churches hosted a webinar entitled “Conversation on Annexation with Christians in the Holy Land” on 2 July.



[Orthodox bishop takes to organic farming during COVID-19 lockdown](#)

The Malankara (Indian) Orthodox Syrian Church Bangalore Diocesan headquarters on the outskirts of the city of Bengaluru in India has been transformed into a farmhouse during recent weeks due to a COVID-19 lockdown.





Liturgy for Sunday 26 July 2020

"nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." Romans 8:38-39.

[Read More >>](#)



NCCA ACRT Media Release

Churches Taskforce seeks assurances to reduce detention health risks

In an urgent letter to the Acting Chief Medical Officer Professor Paul Kelly and the Minister for Health, Mr Greg Hunt, the Australian Churches Refugee Taskforce (ACRT) has sought urgent assurances from the responsible government public health authorities that the people at detention centres have safe accommodation during the continuing COVID-19 pandemic.

[Read More >>](#)



#End COVID for All campaign

It's not over until it's over for everyone

Raise your voice for the most vulnerable at this time. Micah Australia is asking sign the "Pledge to End COVID For ALL" as part of their #End COVID for All campaign



NCCA Safe Church Program

COVID Resources

During this uncertain time of COVID-19, we have created a place on our NCCA website for COVID-19 resources. On this [page](#) you will find information from across a broad range of organisations such as the National Office for Child Safety, eSafety Commission, Office of the Children's Guardian and other faith based organisations.

We will continue to add to this page of Resources. If you have any information that you would like to share via our web page, around creating a safe environment in faith and church settings during COVID-19, we would love to hear from you and share your resources.



Responding to Problematic Sexual Behaviours in Children

In August and September CPSL will present a new webinar series. This series is designed to help members of faith communities gain awareness of and understand and manage problematic sexual behaviours in children.

Dates: 19 and 26 August and 3 September 2020

[Read more >>](#)



Latest News

This newsletter comes out once per month. Follow us on Twitter

[@NCCA_SafeChurch](#) to keep up with the latest news, links and resources from the Safe Church team.

NCCA Safe Church Newsletter

Do you enjoy reading this newsletter? Do you know others who might enjoy reading it? Please pass on the newsletter and ask them to subscribe. Click [here](#) and enter your details to subscribe.

Commission for Children and Young People

The Commission wants to hear from children and young people

We want to hear children and young people's experiences of changes during COVID-19.

The world has changed recently due to COVID-19 and we want to understand more about some of the challenges and difficulties children and young people may be facing. Our online survey is one of the ways that we are trying to get a real understanding of what it's like for young people, so that we can talk to government and other service providers about how they can improve things for them.

Please consider sharing this with the young people in your organisation.

Find out more about the online survey below or by contacting us on 1300 78 29 or at engage@ccyp.vic.gov.au.

<https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/news/the-commission-wants-to-hear-children-and-young-peoples-experiences-of-changes-during-covid19/>

KORUS CONNECT - ACCESS Ministries



Dear Friends

It is with great sadness that I inform you of the passing of Rev Canon Dr Evonne Paddison – CEO of **ACCESS ministries** from 2005 – 2014.

Evonne's earthly life ended in the early hours of Tuesday 14th July 2020, in palliative care NSW, surrounded by close family and friends.

I thought you would like to know that I have passed on our prayers to Di – her companion and friend of 52 years and arranged flowers to be sent from the Korus Connect family.

Key to Evonne's leadership was her vision to see children and young people understand the Christian faith through SRI and Chaplaincy and for that to have remained the focus of the organisation for over 8.5 years despite the push so often in Christian not for profits to water down its founding purposes for the sake of an easier journey.

Some of the many milestone achievements under Evonne's leadership, were:

- The rebranding of CCES to ACCESS ministries and the launch of new directions for the ministry
- Addressing key events including synods, various Christian ministries, leading a workshop on change management at CMA conference Brisbane, speaking and lecturing at Ridley College always with a view of promoting ACCESS ministries
- Published a book entitled Sisters of the Son
- Initiating EPIQ and other key resources for SRI including the strategy and framework for developing a new SRI program – EXPLORE Christianity
- Initiating and conducting independent reviews of CRE and Chaplaincy through Social Compass – especially around the 2009 bush fires
- Instrumental in securing Federal Government funding for school chaplaincy with Peter Rawlings (current Board Member) which saw Chaplaincy grow from 53 positions to 268 positions.

We worked together closely through both good and very challenging times and Evonne's trust and faithfulness in God was unquestionable even when the focus was at personal cost.

I will always remember Evonne personally, for her friendship, generous spirit, fun, dedicated service, passion and commitment to ACCESS ministries.

Due to Evonne's faithfulness and her personal devotion to Christ, she was able to serve and lead our organisation with integrity, with Godly wisdom and selfless devotion.

God will be celebrating saying as he welcomes her home; 'well done you good and faithful servant – you have served me well'.

Blessings

DAWN PENNEY
Chief Executive Officer

Palestine Israel Ecumenical Network



Membership Renewal Reminder!

If you are not already a paying member of PIEN then PLEASE consider joining us and supporting the work we do.

Annual membership only \$25 for individuals or \$50 for churches/organisations.



Memberships are from July-June

To all our wonderful supporters who have enabled us to do the work we do, *we thank you*. It is heartening to know that people throughout Australia are concerned like we are about seeing a peace with justice recognised in Palestine and Israel. To that end, as you are able, we invite you to consider ways that you can continue assisting us as.

Other ways you can support PIEN:

Contribute a one-off donation. Click [here](#). Please note, people donating over \$100 pa in any form will receive free membership unless they would prefer not to.

Become one of our circle of 30 people who commits to donating \$30 each month so we can continue the work we do. Click [here](#) to find out how.

Remember, when making any direct deposits, to please write your surname as a reference.

Palestine Israel Ecumenical Network—Con't

In the Holy Land, like other places in the world, including Victoria, a second wave of Coronavirus has hit hard. So this edition of PIEN Update will take a brief look at the current situation facing our sisters and brothers in Palestine and Israel. Statistics are given below as well as articles that flesh out the human and personal impact of this insidious virus aided by the illegal occupation that exacerbates a pandemic such as this.

Since the beginning of the outbreak earlier in the year until yesterday the 20th July, according to the World Health Organisation (WHO), there have been 10,000 confirmed cases in the West Bank (including East Jerusalem), resulting in 65 deaths. In the last 24 hours there were 468 new cases. In Gaza there have been 72 confirmed cases and 1 death. No new cases have been reported in Gaza for a number of weeks, which is a relief. Telling and alarming, however, is that of the 10,000 West Bank cases only 2027 people have recovered, to date. No doubt the weakened health system brought on by an ongoing crippling occupation has been a factor. Also of note, in comparison to Australia, is that the highest infection rates occurred between the ages of 18-29, with the lowest between the ages of 50-59. As one of the articles points out, a lot of Palestinians have contracted the virus whilst working in Israel and then returning to the West Bank, which could account for the high levels in the younger age bracket.

Within Israel the infection rates are even higher with 49,481 confirmed cases as of yesterday, resulting in 403 deaths. Ongoing daily protests have been occurring in Israel with a dissatisfied population over the government's handling of the crisis.

COVID-19 and the Occupied Palestinian Territories (oPt):

UNOCHA - "In response to sudden-onset, large-scale emergencies, OCHA prepares [Situation Reports](#) that capture the overall scale of the disaster and humanitarian needs". Their latest report on July 14th can be viewed [here](#).

The World Health Organisation oPt database with statistics can be seen [here](#). To stay up to date regularly visit this [page](#).

['Israel halts construction of West Bank COVID-19 field hospital, threatens demolition'](#). In this second wave, Hebron is now the epicentre in the West Bank. Local Palestinians, in an attempt to curb this wave, built a field testing facility but within days of its opening Israel has issued a stop-work order and indicated it would demolish the structure. This is a blatant disregard for the welfare of people suffering a humanitarian health crisis.

[West Bank coronavirus cases soar](#). "A nighttime curfew has also been imposed and movement prohibited between West Bank regions until 27 July".

COVID-19 in Israel:

The World Health Organisation Israel database with statistics can be seen [here](#).

[Adalah](#) ("Justice" in Arabic) is the legal centre for Arab minority rights in Israel. To stay up-to-date on Adalah's COVID-19 legal work click [here](#).

[Physicians for Human Rights Israel](#) do great work assisting Palestinians in the territories, as well as migrants, refugees and prisoners. Check out this article related to COVID-19. ['Human Rights Organizations: Proposed legislation to prevent coronavirus outbreak may violate prisoners' rights'](#). Obtaining permits from Israel to travel for medical purposes is difficult enough but has been exacerbated due to the virus. Also with the Palestinian Authority suspending coordination with Israeli authorities back in May as a direct consequence of Israel's proposed plans to annex large swathes of the occupied West Bank, this has seriously impacted the ability of Palestinians to procure medical treatment and made it more difficult for Physicians for Human Rights to go into the territories.

For Coronavirus Israel Live updates follow Haaretz [here](#).

['Israelis were told to 'have fun' after lockdowns eased. Now they're facing a coronavirus COVID-19 second wave'](#), by Middle East correspondents for the ABC.

['Israelis protest against Netanyahu, gov't handling of COVID-19'](#), by Al Jazeera

INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE MISSION AUSTRALIA

It is with great pleasure and excitement that I announce our appointment of IJM Australia's new CEO, Mr Steve Baird.

The Board undertook a rigorous recruitment process and selected Steve from a highly competitive field of candidates. We believe he has the talent and the collaborative approach to leadership and partnerships that the organisation requires at this time.

Steve comes to us most recently from Velocity Frequent Flyer, where he was the Head of Marketing and grew the loyalty program to over 10 million members. He has also served on a number of non-profit Boards.



Steve's knowledge and experience of corporations and government are an ideal match for IJM's approach of partnering with local and national governments, and the business and community sectors, to combat slavery, human trafficking and other forms of violence against the poor.

Steve first heard about IJM's work 15 years ago through his wife Anne-Marie, a lawyer who spent time in Washington, D.C., where IJM's global headquarters are located. Since then, they have held our work and mission close to their hearts.

Steve's predecessor, Caroly Houmes, observed on her departure that Australia is currently at a tipping point in the fight to end modern slavery. With Mr Baird leading the IJM Australia team, the Board and I believe there is a new season at hand – one that brings all of our nation's big players together: governments, corporations and at mass, the citizens of this great country.

Ending slavery requires efforts from every nation. When "developed" countries like Australia generate demand for goods and services produced at the hands of people suffering from slavery, a strong Australian response to slavery is essential. It is for this reason that legislation such as the Modern Slavery Act 2018 has been enacted here in Australia and Mr Baird, along with the IJM team, will continue to work with government, law enforcement officials, corporations, survivors, faith communities, IJM's incredible supporters and Australians at large to bring our country's contribution to a new era of freedom for all around the world.

You'll soon hear more from him, but these are some words from Steve:

"I was shocked to learn that right now there are more people trapped in slavery than ever before in human history. Australians are courageous and generous people – people who stand up for the underdog. We want to be good global citizens, and this is our season and decade to do so. Slavery simply cannot continue."

Australians are now poised to be one of the global leaders in the fight to end slavery and I am excited to spearhead IJM Australia in inviting Australians to join the movement."

We believe Steve is the right man to lead IJM Australia at this time as we seek to scale this movement for justice. I hope you will join us in welcoming Steve to the helm.

On behalf of the Board of IJM Australia,

Dr Lindsay McMillan OAM
Board Chair

INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE MISSION AUSTRALIA

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.

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



SCANLON
FOUNDATION
RESEARCH
INSTITUTE

We're all in the same boat'

Stories of adaption and resilience from Australia's religious communities in the time of COVID-19

On 29 March 2020, places of religious worship in Australia were effectively closed.

What does it mean for people to lose their place of worship? Places that are the centre of people's social and spiritual lives?

For religious communities around Australia, lockdown has required new ways of doing things. It's meant changing practices that are essential in providing a sense of community and shared identity, and altering traditions that give meaning to day-to-day life.

In this essay for the Scanlon Foundation Research Institute, Trish Prentice explores the ramifications of these closures, and considers the potential long-term effects. She shares stories from religious communities around the country, asking the question: how have they changed in the wake of the pandemic?

[Read the full essay here.](#)

Click here or email tprentice@scanlonfoundation.org.au to share your religious community's

Australian Church Women

AN INVITATION IS EXTENDED to any Christian woman who would like to join the fellowship of Australian Church Women Inc to contact the Secretary (details below). We have 6 meetings a year on the fourth Friday of Feb, Apr, June, Aug, Oct and November commencing at 10.15 am at the offices of the Welsh Church, La Trobe Street, Melbourne. The Welsh Church is on the Elizabeth Street tram routes and very close to Melbourne Central Station. The office is next door to the Church.

Associated churches: Roman Catholic, Anglican, Uniting Church, Baptist Union, The Salvation Army, Churches of Christ, Lutheran, Presbyterian.

Please write to VCC at vcc@vcc.org.au to obtain contact details.



Reshaping our response to sexual harassment at work

At first glance, the stories about sexual harassment that emerged from the High Court earlier this week seem depressingly familiar: a powerful man, a man of influence in a respected institution, abuses his status and sexually harasses his staff in what appears to be a pattern of behaviour.

What is perhaps less familiar is the public discussion of the court's investigation and its findings. Too often, instances like this are buried, with employers putting all their energy into protecting both their reputation and their high-value employees – leaders, decision-makers and public figures – at the expense of employees who've experienced harm.

Find out more

[Sexual harassment](#)

[Improving workplace equality during COVID-19](#)

[Raise it! Conversations about sexual harassment and workplace equality](#)

[Get help](#)

[Education and consultancy services](#)

Contact

Level 3, 204 Lygon Street

Carlton Victoria 3053

enquiries@veohrc.vic.gov.au

humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au

Enquiry Line:

1300 292 153

New South Wales Ecumenical Council



Be part of a book: Exploring multilingualism, religion and spirituality in Australia

What are **your** experiences in the connections between your languages, religion and spirituality? What does learning and using the language mean to you? How do you use it? What extra understandings come from knowing the language? Is there a religious or spiritual dimension to the language? Does that change your life? What is the future of the language?

We want to include your voice, your language and your community in a new book. This is the first book to explore the relationships between languages, religions and spirituality in the Australian landscape, through community contributions. We welcome stories of both community and liturgical languages, accounts of language teaching and learning connected to a spiritual

context, and stories of the relationship between the teaching of Indigenous languages and Indigenous spirituality.

How to participate

Stage 1. Please send us a short description of your contribution, length approximately 300 words (2-3 paragraphs). Due Date: **15 September 2020**. We will use these paragraphs to compile a book proposal and secure a contract with a publisher. robyn.moloney@mq.edu.au
smansour@nswec.org.au

Stage 2. We will then ask you to write your extended submission, ideally 2000+ words, due in February 2021. We also welcome shorter pieces, say 1-2 pages. We will make collections of shorter pieces into chapters of different voices.

The questions below may provide further ideas for your writing. Choose relevant topics.

Suggested questions

1. What language(s) do you use or understand, in your religious practice / spirituality? What role(s) does that language have? Please give some short examples of the language, with translation, and why these are significant. How has it shaped your identity or sense of belonging to that community? Images can be included if desired
2. How would you describe the relationship between your languages, your religious practice/ spirituality, and your everyday life?
3. Has your community made choices in language use? Is this a source of tension?
4. What are the goals of teaching or learning a language connected to a spiritual context?
5. In your community, are there connections between language and contribution to social justice issues, and/or social harmony?



Dr Robyn Moloney (Macquarie University) Very Rev Fr Dr Shenouda Mansour (NSW Ecumenical Council, robyn.moloney@mq.edu.au smansour@nswec.org.au)

UCA CHILDREN & FAMILIES MINISTRY – August Update

Highlighted Opportunities

New and Updated Resources

Covid Corner - Articles

[Synchronous hybrid virtual worship \(UCA\)](#)

[The new Sunday morning \(Barna Research\)](#)

[The post-Covid Church? \(Ministry Matters\)](#)

[Overcoming mission paralysis \(Ministry Matters\)](#)

[Impact of lockdown on youth engagement \(All Churches UK\)](#)

Covid Corner - Storybooks

[On-line stories \(Mountain Masala\)](#)

[Story Box Library \(Story Box\)](#)

[Windows \(Patrick Guest\)](#)

[Birdie and the virus \(Queensland Health\)](#)

[Time to come in, bear \(Kim St. Lawrence\)](#)

Covid-19 – Some Further Thinking

[Seeking a more just post-pandemic path \(UCA\)](#)

[Corona virus, creation and the Creator \(ABC Religion\)](#)

[How we can use what we've learned in lockdown \(UCA\)](#)

[Re-opening churches: fundamentals, rather than practicalities \(Irish Times\)](#)

[It's not just the Corona virus: bad theology is killing us \(Faith & Leadership\)](#)

NEW Faith at Home resources

[Faith at Home: Resources from Messy Church \(UCA\)](#)

[Faith at Home: Six Spiritual Traditions series \(UCA\)](#)

[Encouraging faith at home ideas \(CRCNA\)](#)

[Inspire session \(Kitchen Table Project\)](#)

[Church at Home 4 \(Grow Ministries\)](#)

Special Days & Seasons

The [Children & Families website](#) now contains a section of resources for *Special Days and Seasons*. Scroll to the *Special Days and Seasons* button to check out ideas for...

- **Aug 4** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day
- **Sep 6** Father's Day
- **Oct 31** Halloween/All Hallows' Eve
- **Nov 11** Remembrance Day

From Cultural Infusion

“Moving Beyond CALD”

On the [Diversity Atlas blog](#), our CEO Peter Mousaferiadis has continued his exploration of alternatives to the label of "cultural and linguistically diverse" or CALD. The term has often been criticised for being divisive - but what principles should guide us as we develop new terminologies for discussing cultural difference? [Read Peter's thoughts here.](#)



Do you need translated
information
about COVID-19?



including in audio or video format?

Health Translations brings together translated resources produced by government & community agencies Australia-wide, from posters, flyers, video & audio files.

Looking for a specific language?

[Click here](#)

Do you want to see ALL the
COVID-19 resources?

[Click here](#)

Do you want to see VIDEOS only?

[Click here](#)

Please share as widely as possible throughout your networks to help Victoria's multicultural communities & service providers stay safe & informed.

Thank you for sharing these resources, your efforts are making a positive difference.

For more information, please contact:

[SabinaTresise](#) or [Anni Tillack-Benton](#).

Stay safe. Stay connected.

Stay informed.

Warm regards,
Centre for Culture, Ethnicity & Health (CEH)

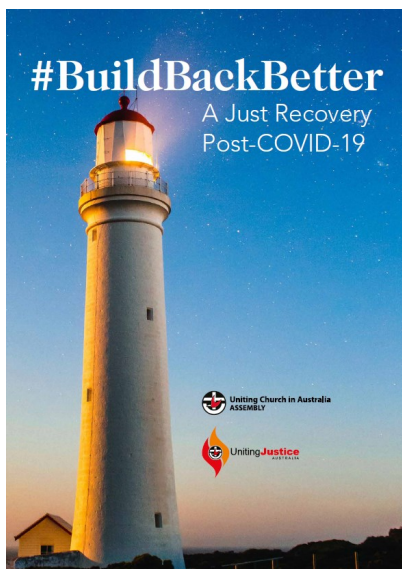
Justice and International Mission Cluster

Have your say on Open Government

The Australian Government is part of the international Open Government Partnership. The Open Government Partnership aims to make governments more transparent and responsive to the community. The Uniting Church is part of the consultation group with the Australian Government on the Open Government Partnership. The Government is developing its third action plan under the Partnership and is seeking comments from the public on the initiatives that are under consideration. Comments can be provided up until 27 July. The proposed actions to comment on can be found at:

<https://ogpau.pmc.gov.au/consultations/phase-2b-deliberation-drafting>

A Just Recovery Post Covid-19



The Uniting Church in Australia has outlined a [set of principles and key actions](#) that will guide the way to a better future as Australia recovers from the corona virus pandemic. There is much we have learned through this pandemic about who we are as a nation, our vulnerabilities and our strengths. Drawing upon these learnings and the values articulated in our vision, we believe we have an opportunity to create a better future where all people and all creation can flourish.

Victorian Council of
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Executive Officer:
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Council News is the official newsletter of
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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



Victorian
Council of Churches

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

Email. vcc@vcc.org.au

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www.facebook.com/viccouncilchurches/

VCC new Contact details

- phone: 03 9650 4511 or 9412 8487

- email vcc@vcc.org.au

- Web www.vcc.org.au

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NOTE: The Victorian Office now has a new PO Box number.

- postal address PO Box 6804 509 St Kilda Rd, Melbourne 3004