



Victorian
Council of Churches



Council News

November / December 2020

Victorian Council of Churches

President:

Rev Fr Shenouda Boutros

Executive Officer:

Rev Ian Smith

Ph: 03 9412 8487 //9650 4511

facebook :

www.facebook.com/viccouncilchurches/

Web Site: www.vcc.org.au

address: level 6,

West Tower ,

608 St Kilda Rd Melbourne

3004

ABN 51 350 238 724



Reflections

For many of us we are in the season of Advent, an exciting time of the Christian year.

As we gather, physically or virtually and participate in the lighting of the Advent candles, singing of the carols or sharing in the reading set for each Sunday, there's a growing sense of anticipation.. A sense of something coming that's very significant and important!

With 2020 being such an unprecedented year that has thrown plans and caused concern and fear, our liturgies, readings, services, carols and preparations all call us to reflect again on the greatest gift our world has seen or experienced.

It's the prayer of the Council that as each of us journey this road to the Christ event that we are again struck by the wonder and awe of the love and hope so freely offered

- Ian

I am beginning to accept invitations to come and share stories of the Council activities with your Church or group – I'm also happy to appear online or pre recorded

you can contact me on 03 9412 8487 or email at ian.smith@vcc.org.au

News from the Council

Since the VCC AGM on October 7th the Council has been extremely busy in a number of ways :

- with the aid of the input from participants at the AGM and those who filled in the Survey, Council is discerning the priorities for 2021
- Council has continued to work with faith leaders and the State Government to enable our Communities to open up again as the Covid 19 restrictions ease.
- Council has also sought to be a conduit of information and resources for member churches as they have sought to continue to engage with and minister to their communities of members through these times of being unable to gather physically
- Council is currently developing it's budget for 2021 conscious that member churches have been affected by this year of uncertainty.

VCC—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

This Advent Season Remember the Christmas Bowl Appeal

Over 70 years ago a young Methodist Minister place a bowl on the table on Christmas day and invited his guests to make a gift towards others ... we can continue Rev Frank Byatt's legacy and participate in alleviating the suffering of others around the world by being part of this years appeal.

www.actforpeace.org.au for more details



2020 Advent Resource

Share God's love through the Christmas Bowl

The Christmas Bowl is the Christmas appeal of Act for Peace, the international aid agency of the NCCA.

The 2020 Advent resource contains Bible readings from the Lectionary, Prayer points and information about each of the areas that Act for Peace are working in and the projects that will be funded by your Christmas Bowl donations.

[pdfDownload the 2020 Advent Study Guide \(3.01 MB\)](#) PDF



Recent Events

HOLDING THE LIGHT **AN ECUMENICAL SERVICE** **REMEMBERING VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS** **OF FAMILY DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**



SUNDAY 29TH NOVEMBER 2020, 2.30pm

You are warmly invited to this time of remembering victims and survivors of family domestic violence.

to be held at

ST PETER'S EASTERN HILL

15 GISBORNE STREET, EAST MELBOURNE, VIC 3002

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the numbers allowed to gather in person may be restricted, so please register your interest with TryBooking, and we will let you know more details nearer the time:

<https://www.trybooking.com/BMCME>

The service will also be live-streamed and recorded on the St Peter's FaceBook page and St Peter's YouTube Channel, if you would like to join us in this way:

- <https://www.facebook.com/stpeters-easternhill>
- <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCivSIL2aOOC9elzNK6zX0Tw>

The Victorian Council of Churches proudly supported this important day in our calendars.

As part of the global 16 days of action to

Eradicate violence from our societies—

This service is a lament and call to arms to ensure that our places of worship and communities of faith are safe places for all—irrespective of age, gender or race.

The service was live streamed to offer it to all—it can be viewed on Youtube.

Act for Peace

Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Isaiah 40:1

6 December 2020 is the second Sunday of Advent.

Dr Mehindi Hassan and his fellow doctors treat thousands of Rohingya refugees everyday, helping to shape peaceful futures,

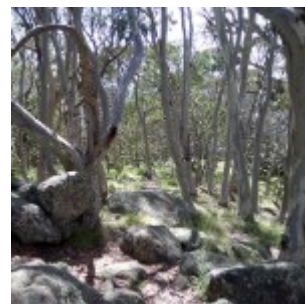


[Read More >>](#)



Advent Reflection

On the Second Sunday of Advent, the Gospel reading (Mark 1:1-8) commences with... "prepare a way of the Lord and make his paths straight". We are reminded that the Advent journey is a journey of faith not just a journey to Bethlehem.



[Read More >>](#)

Australian Churches Refugee Taskforce



In the Media

- Temporary visa holders in financial distress
- Families being moved from detention

[Read More >>](#)

NCCA Ltd new Board members

But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased. 1 Corinthians 12:18

The NCCA Annual General Meeting on Wednesday 28 October 2020 elected two new Board members (Directors) to join a Board-appointed Director for a three year term from 2020.

We warmly welcome Ann Zubrick; the Very Rev Fr Anastasios Bozikis and

Felicity McCallum

[Read More >>](#)



Department of Health - COVID-19 translated materials: Turkish, Arabic, Assyrian, Greek, Italian and Mandarin

The Department of Health has provided the following resource packages to support multicultural communities during the pandemic. We hope you can share these with community members.

These packages include audio files, factsheets and posters, social media tiles and videos in the following languages:

[Arabic](#): 26 resources

[Turkish](#): 12 resources

[Assyrian](#): 12 resources

[Greek](#): 35 resources

[Italian](#): 18 resources

[Mandarin](#): 27 resources

If you are unable to access Google Drive, you can access the same resources from the Department of Health [website](#).





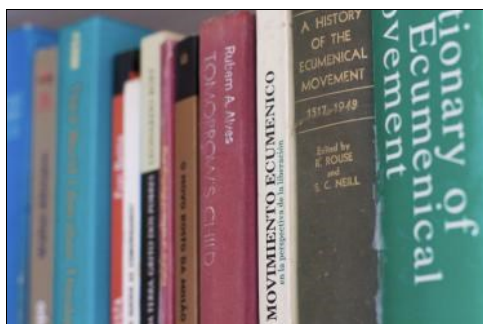
[Germany's Protestant and Catholic churches launch campaign against antisemitism](#)

Germany's main Protestant and Roman Catholic churches have announced plans for a campaign to be launched in January 2021 to encourage Christians to take a clear stand against increasing antisemitism, recognizing it also has Christian roots.



[New Facebook frame brings momentum to "16 Days against Gender-Based Violence"](#)

A new Facebook profile frame developed by the WCC is helping people express their support for the upcoming "16 Days against Gender-Based Violence."



[Steps begin toward reopening historical Latin American theological library](#)

Five churches in Argentina have signed a letter of intent with the National Pedagogical University in Buenos Aires, marking the first step toward potentially reopening a theological library that includes the largest university-level Protestant documentary collection in Latin America.



WCC moderator reflects on role of churches during “profound economic and societal crisis”

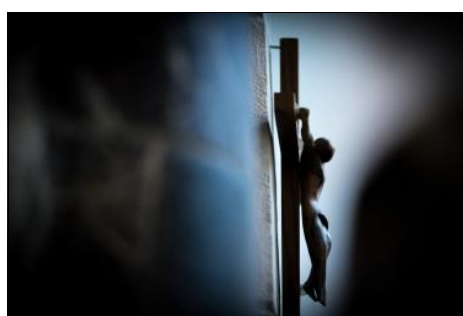
During a World Council of Churches (WCC) executive committee meeting that is convening online from 9-13 November, WCC moderator Dr Agnes Abuom and WCC interim general secretary Rev. Prof. Dr Ioan Sauca shared highlights on the WCC's role in a world facing great challenges.



16 Days against Sexual and Gender-Based Violence

25 November - 10 December 2020

The 16 Days Against Gender-Based Violence is an annual international campaign that begins on 25 November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women and ends on 10 December, Human Rights Day. This year, the World Council of Churches is highlighting the links between the household of God, and the fundamental need to make our homes safe and loving spaces.



Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

18 - 25 January 2021

Preparing the Week of Prayer 2021, the Community of Grandchamp in Switzerland chose the theme “Abide in my love and you shall bear much fruit” (cf. Jn 15:5-9). It expresses their community's vocation to prayer, reconciliation and unity in the church and the human family.



Teaching Ecumenism – International Conference

02 - 05 June 2021

From 2-5 June 2021, the World Council of Churches Ecumenical Institute at Bossey hosts an international conference on ‘Teaching Ecumenism in the Context of World Christianity’.

From the JIM Cluster

NAIDOC Documentary List

NAIDOC 2020 invites everyone to see, hear and learn from Australia's Indigenous history. These stories highlight just some of the ongoing battles Indigenous Australian's face today – providing us with a unique opportunity to listen and learn. To see the list of documentaries, click [HERE](#)

Everything in Common - Gifts that fight poverty

Make a difference through your Christmas gift giving! Shop online for gifts that fight poverty through health, education, leadership and income opportunities. Each gift card represents a project helping people lead lives of dignity and hope. Everything in Common is endorsed by UnitingWorld.

Visit <https://everythingincommon.com.au/>

Self-Care During Covid

For anyone feeling anxious or vulnerable during this difficult time, there are resources available. The following link could be helpful:

[Coping with isolation and being at home](#)

[Working from home self care workshops](#)

Climate Justice with and for Children and Youth in Churches Get

Informed, Get Inspired, Take Action

This toolkit provides resources for churches, church-run schools, and summer camps to support inter-generational climate and environmental justice and promote care for children by stopping further global warming.

All churches are encouraged to promote education and action to address climate change, reduce CO2 emissions, and protect the environment in their activities for and with children and youth.

The toolkit can be downloaded [HERE](#)

Scanlon Institute New Intercultural Marriage Essay

I am writing to you from the [Scanlon Foundation Research Institute](https://scanloninstitute.org.au/). We are an independent research organisation created by the Scanlon Foundation with the very simple intention of studying the dynamics of social cohesion in Australia and making the voices of migrants more prominent in Australian society.

Acknowledging our shared interest in fostering authentic multiculturalism in Australia I thought it would be fitting to draw your attention to our latest **Essay** titled Intercultural Marriage and the Changing Face of Australian Families’.

Today, about **one in three registered marriages** in Australia are intermarriages. This essay tells the story of what it is like to grow up in an intermarried family in Australia and how these families are changing the cultural worldview of the next generation of Australians.

Our Institute would be delighted if you felt comfortable in passing it on to those within your networks, broader community and social media channels. Although we know that there are many of these stories out there and we have only been able to tell a few, we would certainly appreciate if you shared with us others experience of intercultural marriage. You can share the essay using this link: <https://scanloninstitute.org.au/publication/intercultural-marriage-and-changing-face-australian-families>

Please don’t hesitate to drop us a note if you would like to introduce us to any stories, people or thoughts. If you would like to be kept in the loop on our activities feel free to connect with us on:

Twitter: [@scanlon_inst](https://twitter.com/scanlon_inst)

Linkedin: [@Scanlon Institute](https://www.linkedin.com/company/scanlon-institute)

Email: info@scanloninstitute.org.au

Many thanks for your time.

Faysal

About our Institute

The Scanlon Foundation Research Institute was created by the Scanlon Foundation with the very simple intention of making the voices of migrants more prominent. The Institute translates research and resources relevant to social cohesion into practical insights. I invite you to visit our website to have a look at what we have undertaken in the past 12 months - <https://scanloninstitute.org.au/>

NCCA Safe Church Program

Resources: Child Safety Framework Resource Hub

The NCCA Safe Church Program's Child Safety Framework Resource Hub has been developed to assist you with the NCCA Child Safety Framework documents and provide you with practical examples of how to implement the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations in your Church and Christian ministry.

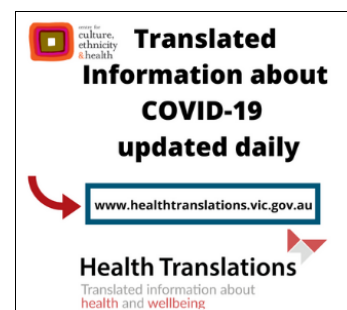
Access the Resource Hub [here](#).

Resources from the Centre for Culture, Ethnicity & Health (CEH)

RESOURCES IN OVER 100 LANGUAGES

Health Translations November newsletter includes the latest multilingual resources on COVID-19, information for seasonal workers, children mental health, refugees & new arrivals, cervical screening, liver health, multicultural parent easy guides, sexually transmitted infections, Dementia, men's health, Diabetes, Thunderstorm Asthma & much more.

(please click on the picture to be directed to the resources)



ANTaR Victoria

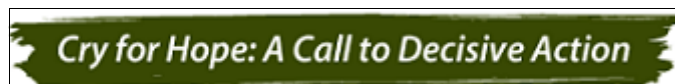
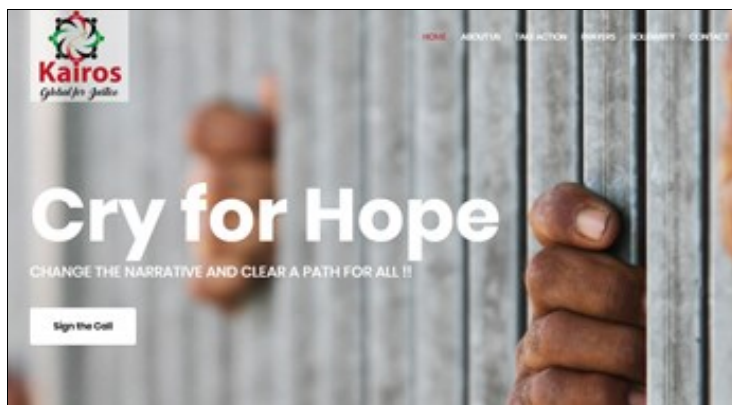
Christmas Ornaments supporting Aboriginal education

Opening The Doors Foundation is selling **Christmas Ornaments** to raise funds for Aboriginal educational costs around Victoria. The Foundation supports educational costs for Aboriginal students around Victoria and have found that more than ever, Aboriginal families need the support.

Each ornament is lightweight and made from sustainable Australian timbers.

The Foundation is also selling **Christmas Packs** which contain 12 ornaments to sell at school or work or gift to loved ones.





PIEN is part of the Global Kairos for Justice movement, who, along with Kairos Palestine have issued 'Cry for Hope'.

Please join the Global Coalition of Christians and Partners as we call for Palestinian Justice... Join Palestinian #Cry4Hope

"A critical point has been reached in the struggle to end Israel's oppression of the Palestinian people. As the State of Israel threatens to annex even more Palestinian land, it will effectively accomplish its goal to colonize and control all of Palestine.

Kairos Palestine and Global Kairos for Justice have issued "[Cry for Hope: a Call to Decisive Action](#)". Please add your name to this call to decisive action. *Cry for Hope* is available in multiple languages at www.cryforhope.org.

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



Image credit: Ben Littlejohn/Act for Peace

I am writing to you as we are currently looking for someone who might be interested in taking up a 12 month contract to manage the Christmas Bowl for churches. It's a 3 day a week position and the person will have a real hand in shaping the Christmas Bowl for next year.

While our office is located in Sydney, but we are open to having someone working remotely. We all are doing this at the moment and it seems to be working.

If you can please share this opportunity with anyone you know who might be interested and through your networks, I'd really appreciate it.

You can find out more about the position at <https://www.actforpeace.org.au/Take-action/Work-at-Act-for-Peace> and by clicking the **Marketing Coordinator - Church Giving** link. Alternatively, you can also give me a call.

UCA CHILDREN & FAMILIES MINISTRY –

Welcome to the **DECEMBER** Children & Families Update!

Especially for those who follow the liturgical calendar, with Advent beginning it is time to say “Happy New Year”! Also let me highlight *The Merchant’s Talents* in Item 3 (possibly the best storytelling I’ve seen in years) and the [UPCOMING Intergenerational Church webinar \(Dec 2 AEDT\)](#).

As always, feel free to share the links below amongst your congregation, region and networks (and please encourage individuals to like/follow the [Children and Families Ministry fb page](#) to see the great resources being posted daily throughout December).

Advent Resources

[Advent Faith at Home \(UCA\)](#)

[Advent Outdoor Worship \(UCA\)](#)

[Christmas Family Faith Trail \(UCA\)](#)

[Advent 2020 Engage Together \(UCA\)](#)

[2020 Multi-Age Advent Resource for Households \(UCA\)](#)

More Advent/Christmas Resources

[Roots Advent Material \(Roots\)](#)

[Advent Calendars fb \(or website\)](#)

[Road to Bethlehem fb \(or website\)](#)

[2020 Advent Series \(Common Grace\)](#)

[2020 Christmas Bowl resources \(Act for Peace\)](#)

[2020 Covid-safe Christmas activities for Playgroups \(CPN\)](#)

Nb. More Advent/Christmas resources can be found in [previous Updates](#) and via the [Children and Families Ministry fb page](#).

Advent Resources (from New Zealand)

[Advent & Christmas \(Strandz\)](#)

[Christmas on the Move \(Strandz\)](#)

[Certainty of Christmas resources \(SUNZ\)](#)

[The Advent Story Tree \(At Church and Home\)](#)

[Christmas Resources – scroll down \(Baptist Church NZ\)](#)

Advent Resources (from Great Britain)

[A Messy Christingle \(BRF\)](#)

[Advent Resources \(Going for Growth\)](#)

[Advent and Christmas Ideas Hub \(BRF\)](#)

[Christmas Resources via Messy Church \(BRF\)](#)

[Advent and Christmas in a Pandemic: webinar \(Christian Aid\)](#)

Recently Highlighted Resources

[Lord's Supper/Communion Multi-age Storycine \(UCA\)](#)
[Chat Matters Resource for Homes \(Here 2 Stay\)](#)
[Introducing Faith Practices for All Ages \(CRCNA\)](#)
[Generational Differences Infographic \(McCrindle\)](#)
[There's a Happy Moon in my Side by Richard Black \(book\)](#)

Five Ways Resources (CRCNA)

[Five ways to grow grateful kids \(CRCNA\)](#)
[Five ways to pray with children \(CRCNA\)](#)
[Five ways to help children worship \(CRCNA\)](#)
[Five ways to practice Sabbath with children \(CRCNA\)](#)
[Five ways to re-tell a Bible story with children \(CRCNA\)](#)

Exploring Labyrinths

[Praying with a finger labyrinth \(Upper Room\)](#)
[How to draw a labyrinth \(Gloucester Anglican\)](#)
[Finger labyrinth and prayer guide \(Sheffield Anglican\)](#)
[Lost in wonder: an on-line labyrinth \(Methodist Church\)](#)
[Labyrinths: a three part journey \(Gloucester Anglican\)](#)

Covid Corner

[Understanding how Covid-19 has shaped our society \(McCrindle\)](#)
[Impact of Covid for Children and Young People \(CCYP\)](#)
[Windows by Patrick Guest \(book\)](#)
[Zoom Games for Youth Groups \(Download Youth Ministry\)](#)
[Child Wellbeing in a Pandemic: webinar \(Faithfull Generation\)](#)

Yours Faithfully,

Chris.

Reconciliation Victoria

Bass Coast / South Gippsland Reconciliation Group

NAIDOC WEEK

Celebration of Indigenous Artists

ArtSpace Wonthaggi

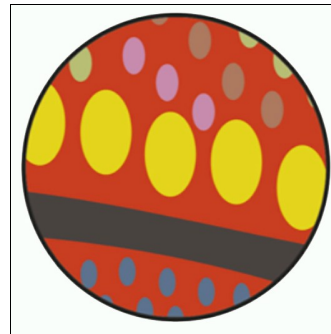
Paintings on display from **Tuesday 3 November – Sunday 13**

December. Opening hours: Daily 10am - 4pm.

The Centennial Centre, 1 Bent Street, Wonthaggi.

Visit to see the virtual exhibition online in the event of COVID restrictions, or if you just can't make it. From 8 November.

Further information: Mary Mutsaers. **Email.** Phone 0478 255 803.



Introduction to Reconciliation resources for Victorian Educators



Are you a Victorian educator working in a school or early learning service? Would you like to learn more about reconciliation? Looking for resources and activities for your classroom? Want to start a Reconciliation Action Plan?

Join us for this **free webinar on 9 December** as we explore these features and more on the Narragunnawali platform.

Wednesday 9 December

4 - 5.00pm

Information and Tickets.

Pax Christi International

Nuclear Weapons Banned:

50th ratification of United Nations treaty

For decades Pax Christi International has been working toward a nuclear weapon-free world with members and partners from every corner of the world. Today, Honduras, ratified the United Nations Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, agreeing with 84 other signatories and 49 other states parties to “never under any circumstance . . . develop, test, produce, manufacture, otherwise acquire, possess or stockpile nuclear weapons.”



The treaty brings the force of international law to nuclear disarmament efforts.

Pax Christi International celebrates this historic achievement, including the efforts of the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize winning International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, of which we are a member. More than 80 countries have shown moral leadership through early signings and ratifications, and we urge remaining UN Member States to follow in their lead.

The new treaty reinforces legal, diplomatic, and financial pressure in addition to public advocacy for the total eradication of nuclear weapons. The treaty enters into force in three months.

Nuclear devices are weapons of mass destruction, with radiation disproportionately affecting women and girls. Indigenous people are especially vulnerable as their lands are exploited for resource extraction and testing in the development of nuclear technologies.

The UN treaty obliges states parties to help with victim assistance and environmental remediation, within and beyond their own jurisdictions. An estimated 200,000 people died as a direct result of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, with many survivors—hibakusha—still struggling with discrimination, trauma, and extensive health problems.

Pax Christi International and through members in all regions will continue to advocate for further signatures, ratifications, and full implementation of this treaty. Our work will continue with church leaders, governments, and at the United Nations. As the Catholic peace movement, we look especially to the Vatican for leadership, encouraged by Pope Francis' words, "[The common destiny of humankind demands a world without nuclear weapons.](#)"

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons is the first legally binding international agreement to comprehensively prohibit nuclear weapons. There are nine nuclear-armed states in the world, none of which have signed the treaty. It was adopted at the United Nations on 7 July 2017. For the full text of the treaty, please visit [the United Nations website](#). For more information on the ongoing efforts to build a world without nuclear weapons, visit the [ICAN website](#).

Child Protection Unit, Department of Health and Human Services

Reporting to protect children

Mandatory reporting is about protecting children. Children can carry the trauma of abuse for years, unless they get help. They need the adults around them to report child abuse and neglect.

You might have noticed some media attention in September this year about new laws passed by the Victorian parliament to do with reporting child abuse. The media focussed on priests, but actually the law will cover people in religious ministry in the various faiths across Victoria.

If you are ordained, appointed or recognised as a religious or spiritual leader a religious organisation, this new law will apply to you. You will become a mandatory reporter to Child Protection in early 2020.

If a mandatory reporter believes a child might be at risk of physical injury or sexual abuse and their parents are not protecting them, they have to report what they believe to Child Protection as soon as they can, even if information came through religious confession.

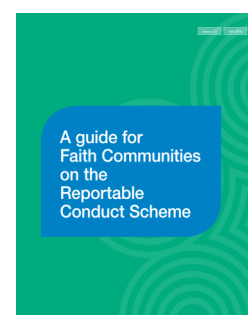
To make a report you do not need to be sure or have any proof. You just need to be genuinely worried the child might be at risk. It is up to Child Protection to decide what to do. Your identity will be confidential, and the law protects you from any liability if the report is made in good faith.

Child Protection workers are trained to assess risk to children from child abuse and neglect. They will decide what to do about what they are told. They might give you some information and advice. They might refer the family for support. They might investigate the report. They can do what is needed to protect the child. Often, Child Protection can arrange the help parents need to keep their children safe. Sometimes children might need Child Protection to step in to protect them.

Find out more on the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) website <https://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/mandatory-reporting> - or search 'mandatory reporting victoria'

There will be free information sessions about mandatory reporting for people in religious ministry early next year. Bookings will open soon. Keep an eye on the mandatory reporting website.

Please click on the image, right, 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

Victorian Council of Churches
President:
Rev Fr Shenouda Boutros
Executive Officer:
Rev Ian Smith
Ph: 03 9412 8487 // 9650 4511

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 ***

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

Editor Rev. Ian Smith Executive Officer

Email (as well as to unsubscribe): vcc@vcc.org.au

Tel: 9412 8487 / 9650 4511

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

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

Facebook www.facebook.com/viccouncilchurches/

The new Office

The office of the VCC is now level 6, West Tower, 608 St Kilda Rd.

Access to the building is via the right hand drive to the rear double glass doors.

If you wish to visit please ring 9412 8487 or 0408 313 610 and arrange at time.