



Victorian
Council of Churches

Council News

July 2021

Victorian Council of Churches

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Executive Officer:

Rev Ian Smith

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Reflections

As I write this reflection, Melbourne is entering into it's 6th lockdown in 18 months.. The world as we knew it seems irrevocably gone.

The freedom of movement, the sense that there was a rhythm to life all seems to have been quashed by these experiences of needing to lockdown ... many are wondering what the 'new norm' might be like..

Our Biblical texts have such stories contained within.. Stories of people finding themselves in strange places or times and sensing that the known rhythms are jarring ... these same stories convey that in these new times the people discovered both a old truth and a new expression of it.

The Old Truth was that God was already there in the new place, the new expressions formed as the people both affirmed, celebrated and live out this reality...

As we experience these unprecedented times may we too discover these two aspects of faith... That our God is already in this new place engaging with creation in all its dimensions and may we continue to find expressions both old and new that enable us to affirm, celebrate and live out of this reality.

- Ian

I am open to accepting invitations to come and share stories of the Council 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

- Victorian Council of Churches held its AGM on the 24th July. For the second year running the VCC AGM had to be on line. The VCC is grateful for the 50 plus delegates who joined the online gathering and for the rich dialogue, discussion and fellowship.
- Council announced that **Dr Graeme L Blackman AO** would be the next President of the Victorian Council of Churches, taking office following the 2021 AGM.
(See announcement on opposite page.)
- Council continues to work on its priorities and activities going into 2022 as it seeks to be a voice amongst the Churches and an influence within society.
- Council has welcomed three new Bishops to our area in these past two months. .. The three are pictured on page 10

VCC—Contact details

- phone: 03 9412 8487

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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

Recent Events

New President for Victorian Council of Churches



The Victorian Council of Churches is pleased to announce

Dr Graeme L Blackman AO has been elected the new President of the Victorian Council of Churches at its Recent Annual General Meeting.

Dr Graeme L Blackman AO FTSE FAICD

Dr Blackman brings to the role extensive leadership skills and wisdom from his many years in both business and church governance.

He is currently the Chancellor of the University of Divinity and holds positions on a number of Boards, both commercial and charitable.

The Victorian Council of Churches is looking forward to Dr Blackman's leadership over the next two years.

Thank you



The Victorian Council of Churches acknowledges the great leadership and stewardship of Fr Shenouda Boutros who has led the Council through these unprecedented times of pandemic.

We give thanks to our God for his time as President



President's reflection

Forgive - The Way Forward

Further insights and resources for local conversations as we of the NCCA family encourage a more loving, forgiving and understanding culture: Our Conversations continues.

[Read More >>](#)



Australian Churches Refugee Taskforce

8 Years of incarceration

19 July: the anniversary of the start of the policy of diverting all refugee boats away from Australian territory.

[Read More >>](#)



Group Mentorship Program

Australian Community Sponsorship

Community Refugee Sponsorship Australia (CRSA), are looking for groups for their Mentorship Program. There will be an intake of new mentor groups and refugee mentees in August 2021 under the 'Group Mentorship Program'.

[Read More >>](#)



[NCCA \(con't\)](#)

First Nations

Bell ringing

Looking at the next steps in connection & solidarity with our First Nation people in the wake of the most recent "death in custody", the 480th since the Royal Commission of 1987.

The NCCA are encouraging churches to 'ring out' their bells for any further deaths in custody.

[Read More >>](#)



Act for Peace

Updates on AfP activities

- Report on an Agenda for a Dignified and Sustainable Rohingya Refugee Response in Bangladesh
- That's a wrap: Act for Peace Ration Challenge 2021

[Read More >>](#)



Ecumenical Conference

Ancient Futures: the Renewal of Religious Life in the Australian Church - A three day event hosted by the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture (ACC&C) in Canberra.

When: Thursday 4 - Saturday 6 November 2021

Registrations close: 25 October 2021

[Read More >>](#)



Uniting Church in Australia

UCA 16th Assembly

The Rev Sharon Hollis, from Victoria, was installed as the President at the Assembly meeting of The Uniting Church in Australia which took place online for the first time. The Assembly meeting was livestreamed from Brisbane on 17 and 18 July.

The NCCA welcomes Rev Hollis and looks forward to working with her during her term over next three years, 2021-2024.

[Read More >>](#)





National Council of Churches in Australia

Safe Church Program

Safer Churches: Sharing Resources, Sharing Wisdom

Welcome to the July Safe Church Newsletter!

It is so encouraging to see the ongoing development of new resources in the safeguarding and safe church spaces.

Below you'll find a collection of these to explore and as always you're encouraged to share back to us any new wisdom and resources you come across!

It is when we share and work together to be safer churches, we see even more glimpses of God's renewed creation coming to fruition.

Grace and Peace to you,

Emma Parr

National Safe Church Program Coordinator (Interim)

scpadmin@ncca.org.au

<https://mailchi.mp/ba92104badec/safe-churches-program-monthly-newsletter-7975141?e=e7ff2dcf55>

Do you know others who might appreciate this newsletter and it's articles and resource links?

Please pass on the newsletter and ask them to subscribe.

Click [here](#) and enter your details to subscribe.

For all program enquiries, please email: scpadmin@ncca.org.au

'Reframing climate and creation care communications and conversations for Christians'



The August Calendar 2021

- Na-
- 1-7 [Homelessness Week](#)
 - 4 [National Aboriginal and Islander Children's Day](#) (NATICD)
 - 9 [International Day of the World's Indigenous People](#)
 - 19 [World Humanitarian Day](#)

[Read More >>](#)



Republic of Congo, Gabon, Sao

Tome and Principe

01 August 2021 - 07 August 2021

Pray for these countries as they seek to be stable politically and secure for all residents

From all parts of Indonesia, WCC member churches Zoom in to discuss pandemic and Assembly

They came from every part of Indonesia for the online consultation of member churches of the World Council of Churches (WCC) in Indonesia, with COVID-19 weighing heavily on those representing 27 traditions from a nation with more than 3.3 million cases reported.

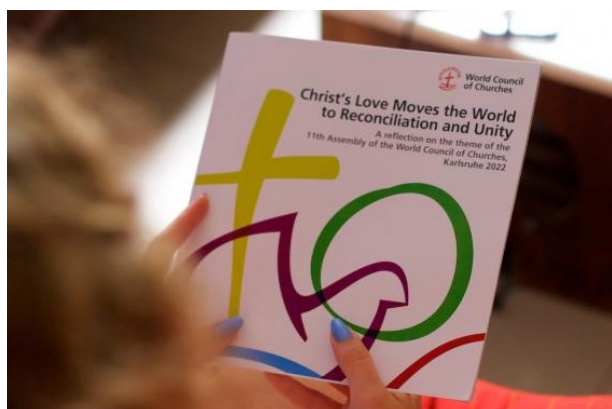
[Read more](#)



Ecumenical Review focuses on WCC 11th Assembly theme: "Christ's love moves the world to reconciliation and unity"

Looking toward the 11th Assembly of the World Council of Churches (WCC) to take place in 2022, the July issue of The Ecumenical Review, the WCC's quarterly journal, contains a set of articles that focus on the assembly theme, "Christ's love moves the world to reconciliation and unity."

[Read more](#)





[Kenyan works with Bible to support churches and community on HIV and AIDS](#)

Esther Linda Kwamboka works with the Bible when she counsels sex workers and long-distance truck drivers, and those with HIV and AIDS. She also offers support to those of different faiths.

[Read more](#)

[Youth in Africa strive to build a peaceful, thriving continent](#)

"If youth in Africa are united and reconcile with our past, we will be able to confront the stumbling blocks of the continent. If we are patriotic, if we have a passion for Africa, we can transform the continent to be a home and a future for all," said Collins Shava, youth executive secretary for the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC), as he reflected on the Africa: My Home. My Future. campaign being undertaken by AACC to inspire young people to be patriotic to their countries and Africa at large by utilizing their talents towards building a thriving continent.

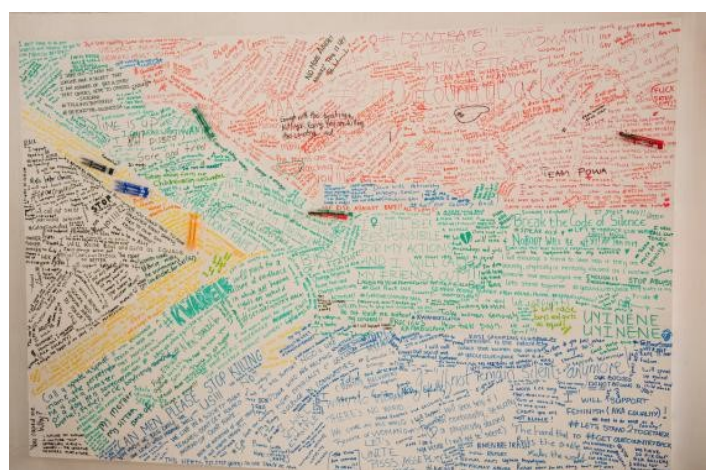
[Read more](#)



[Thursdays in Black launches bible study series](#)

Thursdays in Black ambassadors are organizing a series of Bible studies, beginning 5 August, that will help people reflect on and respond to gender-based violence. The first series of 6 reflections is being launched to recognize National Women's Month in South Africa, and particularly Women's Day in the country – August 9.

[Read more](#)



[Bi-](#)



World Council of Churches



[One year after Beirut blast, churches are accompanying survivors seeking justice](#)

The World Council of Churches (WCC) expressed solidarity with the people and churches of Lebanon on the anniversary of the explosion in Beirut that killed more than 200 people, injured thousands, and has left the whole nation still coping with the trauma and economic fallout.

[Read more](#)

[Church leaders in southern Africa participate in child safeguarding workshops](#)

Church leaders in South Africa and Zimbabwe are participating in online workshops on “Churches and Child Safeguarding” on 3 and 5 August. Part of the World Council of Churches (WCC) partnership program with UNICEF, “Churches’ Commitments to Children,” the workshops are designed to nurture churches where children feel welcome and safe.

[Read more](#)



[Communication for Social Justice in a Digital Age](#)

Dates : 13 September 2021 - 15 September 2021 This symposium will focus on the impact of digital transformation on communities and societies, and the actions needed to secure a just and inclusive digital future. Bringing together research, experiences from different regions and communities, expert input, and ethical and theological reflection, it will identify opportunities for action as a contribution to the 11th assembly of the World Council of

[Read more](#)



New Bishops for Melbourne and Victoria

Catholic Archdiocese



Pictured with Archbishop Peter Comensoli are newly installed Bishops Monsignor Antony Ireland on left and Fr Martin Ashe on right.

The Service was conducted at St Patrick's Cathedral on July 30th

Ukrainian Catholic church of Australia, New Zealand and Oceania



Pope Francis has appointed Redemptorist Fr Mykola Bychok CSsR the third Eparch of Sts Peter and Paul of Melbourne for the Ukrainian Catholic Church in Australia, New Zealand and Oceania. The election by the Synod of Bishops of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church and the confirmation by the Holy Father was a great surprise not only for Fr Mykola but for the church in this area.

It's been a big few months in the fight for freedom and fairness for refugees and people seeking asylum, with a big few months ahead.

In this Supporter Bulletin we'll give you an update on what's been happening and how you can take further actions to support our work as the ASRC heads into our 20th year of operation.

We're planning some exciting events and activities to help us celebrate the incredible strength and resilience of people seeking asylum and recognise the decades of support from our community of compassion and the impact of the work you have made possible.

Feast for Freedom wrap up



The official Feast weekend has come to a close and we are excited to announce that Feast for Freedom 2021 has been a delicious success!

An incredible 6,000 compassionate people came together to participate in this year's Feast for Freedom - celebrating good food, great company and the things that unite us all.

Feasts were held all across Australia; from Magnetic Island to Margaret River, and Alice Springs to Adelaide and together Feasters raised more than \$600,000 to help support people seeking asylum.

Hosts cooked delicious meals for their guests from recipes gifted by our 2021 Cooks Aheda and Niro and shared their stories far and wide. Thank you to everyone who took part in a Feast for Freedom - every conversation and meal shared as part of Feast takes us one step closer to our shared vision of a kinder, more welcoming and compassionate Australia for everyone.

If you'd like to join us and host your own Feast next year you can [register your interest here](#).

ASRC (Con't) -

The end of the rental moratorium



For those people seeking asylum with no income and no access to JobSeeker payments, the pandemic continues to create a perfect storm of disadvantage, putting people's safety and wellbeing at risk.

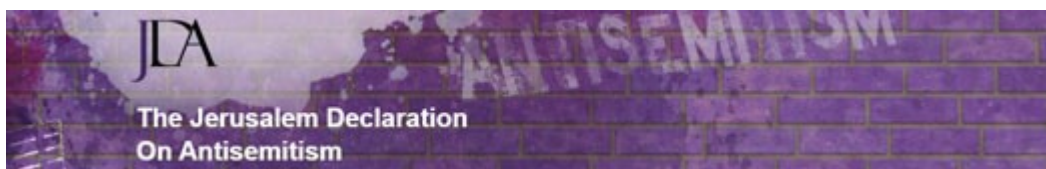
Already facing financial stress and unable to pay their accumulated rental debts, the end of the rental moratorium is now putting entire families at risk of becoming homeless.

[Find out more about how we're helping people seeking asylum during this time.](#)



PALESTINE ISRAEL
ECUMENICAL NETWORK

The Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism



This important new document has emerged that aims to present a comprehensive description and understanding of what antisemitism is and is not. The Jerusalem Declaration is largely in response to the inadequacies and misuse of the [Working Definition of anti-semitism](#) of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA), which has been adopted by many countries as the standard definition.

As this new declaration points out however, *"The IHRA Definition" (including its "examples") is neither clear nor coherent. Whatever the intentions of its proponents, it blurs the difference between antisemitic speech and legitimate criticism of Israel and Zionism. This causes confusion, while delegitimizing the voices of Palestinians and others, including Jews, who hold views that are sharply critical of Israel and Zionism."*

Read [The Jerusalem Declaration](#).

*"The **Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism** is a tool to identify, confront and raise awareness about antisemitism as it manifests in countries around the world today. It includes a [preamble](#), [definition](#), and a set of 15 [guidelines](#) that provide detailed guidance for those seeking to recognize antisemitism in order to craft responses. It was developed by a group of scholars in the fields of Holocaust history, Jewish studies, and Middle East studies to meet what has become a growing challenge: providing clear guidance to identify and fight antisemitism while protecting free expression"*

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



**LEARN WITH US & register @ Eventbrite
for our upcoming FREE Webinars:**

August 16 - 10:00 am- Hep B Made Easy

October 13 - 10:00 am - Hep B Made Easy

[Register here.](#)

UCA CHILDREN & FAMILIES MINISTRY –

2021 Make it Messy!: Next Steps in Discipleship August 7 On-Line 2.30pm AEST

This year's *Make it Messy!* gathering will be a unique opportunity for Messy (*and other*) Church leaders from across Australia, New Zealand and anywhere else to gather for a time of *mutual encouragement, sharing of stories* and *celebration* of what God has been doing through Messy (*and inherited*) Church. There will also be the chance to continue *deepening* our thinking and practice around *Hospitality & Creativity* (facilitated by Jocelyn Czerwonka and Sandy Brodine, both who contributed to the [Messy Discipleship](#) book).

More information & FREE Registration (as an individual or team): [2021 Make it Messy!](#)

Olympics & Sport

[Olympic mini-stories \(Lost Sheep\)](#)

[Kids Games guide \(Max7\)](#)

[Family Fit activities \(Family Fit\)](#)

[Praying for Japan \(Japan 1 Million\)](#)

[Faster, Higher, Stronger program \(Max7\)](#)

Faith & Wonder for All Ages

[Fresh Ideas for Family Faith \(CRCNA\)](#)

[5 Ways to Wonder with Kids \(CRCNA\)](#)

[10 Ways for Families to Grow in Faith \(CRCNA\)](#)

[Practicing Wonder Together as a Family \(CRCNA\)](#)

[Faith Practices Project: Wonder for All-Ages \(CRCNA\)](#)

Bible & Lectionary Resources

[Pray the Story \(Sarah Agnew\)](#)

[Weekly Worship \(Church of Scotland\)](#)

[Lectionary Liturgies \(Lectionary Liturgies\)](#)

[Bible Explore: worship resources \(Strandz\)](#)

[Weekly Lectionary songs \(Together to Celebrate\)](#)

Intergenerational Focus

[What is intergenerational ministry? \(Grow Ministries\)](#)

[More than worship, more than Sunday resource \(UCA\)](#)

*=repeated from last month

[Practical steps to increasing intergenerationality \(Building Faith\)](#)

[July 27, 28 InterGenerate AUS/NZ Conference](#)

[Aug 5 Intergenerational Pathways: a special on-line training event](#)

Let's Talk New Ways of Mission (clips to watch)

[Sacred Edge \(Queenscliff UCA\)](#)

[Pub, Poetry & People \(Heathcote UCA\)](#)

[Play in the Park \(Sydney South West UCA\)](#)

[Community Walking Groups \(Lane Cove UCA\)](#)

[Listening, Action, Reflection \(Armstrong Creek UCA\)](#)

via Methodist Church UK

[Back of the Net: faith and soccer event resource \(SU\)](#)

[Higher Football \(soccer\): a sport-based program resource \(SU\)](#)

[Faith in the Nexus: supporting children's spiritual development \(NICER\)](#)

[Journeing Together: a resource for Playgroup ministry \(Care for the Family\)](#)

[Youth Ministry in a Pandemic: the challenges and opportunities \(Youthscape\)](#)

2021 Leaders to Go September 11

Australia's premier event for leaders of leaders in ministry with children and their families, [Leaders to Go](#) seeks to provide an open learning development space created to enrich, empower and equip. In 2021 *Leaders to Go* will consist of a 1-day event in different hubs around the country. The content will be a mix of shared content streamed into each hub and locally provided material. The key presenter will be Susy Lee, author of [Raising Kids Who Care](#).

Click here for [More information](#) and/or here regarding [Registration](#). For more information about the *Victorian Hub*, e-mail chris.barnett@victas.uca.org.au.

Highlighted 2021 Events (for your diary, watch out for more)

Jul 27, 28 [InterGenerate AUS](#) (Sydney, Brisbane, Christchurch + On-line)

Aug 5 [Intergenerational Pathways: a special on-line training event](#) *NEW

Aug 7 [Make it Messy!](#) (Parkville, Melbourne)

Sep 3 Prayer Day for Schools (Online)

Sep 11 [Leaders to Go](#) (Hub model, multiple venues)

Victorian Council of Churches
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Dr Graeme L Blackman AO
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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

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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.