

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

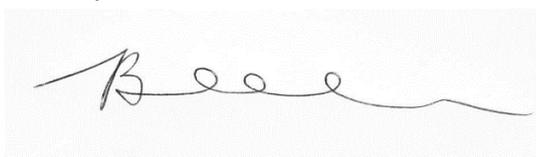
Since my appointment as President of the Victorian Council of Churches in 2021, it has been my privilege to work closely with the members of our Standing Committee, members of the Victorian Church Leaders Network, members of our Commissions, our Executive Officer and many others who contribute to the life and work of the VCC. The Covid19 challenges to our life and mission, outlined by my esteemed predecessor Fr Shenouda Boutros in his Report to the last VCC Annual General Meeting, have continued relentlessly. As I write, we discern a sense of gradual return to normality, but our world and our churches have been irrevocably changed in the way we operate as community.

During the year under review the Standing Committee has completed its development of the new Strategic Plan for VCC, we have been involved in a number of ecumenical gatherings including the Holding the Light Lament held in November at St Peter's Anglican Church Melbourne, the annual Palm Sunday march and connections with Christian and other faith leaders. More recently we have joined in the #Setthemfree initiative in support of and advocacy for refugees held in detention in Australia and participated in a ceremony acknowledging the eight hours movement. Our Executive Officer has represented the VCC on a number of advisory boards and committees and the VCC has continued to provide support to our member churches in an environment of constantly changing Covid regulations.

Our VCC Emergencies Ministry continues its fine work at times of disaster and major challenge, providing unparalleled support to communities and individuals in crisis. I warmly thank the team at VCCEM, so ably led by CEO Kellie Shewring. Indeed, it was my pleasure during a recent conversation with our State Attorney General and Emergency Services Minister, Jaclyn Symes, to hear some very positive comments about the work of VCCEM following their deployment to Northern NSW during the recent floods.

Our Executive Officer Rev Ian Smith completed his time with VCC at the end of 2021. In recent months, Ian has graciously assisted VCC in a consulting capacity during the period of recruitment of our new Executive Officer. On behalf of the Council, I wish to place on record our thanks to Ian for his long period of service to VCC as a former President, as a long serving member of our Executive and Standing Committee, and as our Executive Officer. I wish him all the very best for the future.

It is my very great pleasure at this Annual General Meeting to introduce our newly appointed Executive Officer. Rev Sandy Boyce comes to us from Adelaide where she has been in ministry in a city church for the last twelve years. She comes with a wide ministry experience, including a deep appreciation of ecumenical matters and considerable pastoral experience. We welcome Sandy to this significant area of ministry.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Blackman', written on a light-colored background.

Dr Graeme L Blackman AO