



Victorian Council of Churches Conference

Annual General Meeting

9.30am, 13th May 2023

St Peter's Eastern Hill

Reporting year: 2022

*Compilation of all documents for the AGM
(Also available on Dropbox and the VCC website as a compilation and individual documents)
Page numbers are referenced in the agenda.*

“They all shall be one, just as you, my Father, are in me, and I am in you,
so that they also shall be one in us”. (John 17.21)

Zoom information and protocols

The meeting will be hybrid – in person and on Zoom. The Constitution allows voting delegates to attend virtually.

Zoom link

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87356096539?pwd=eGlEUWRCWHp0ckhaQmhNaFNTZ0NCUT09>

Meeting ID: 873 5609 6539

Passcode:068004

Zoom will be open from 9.15am.

When you enter the meeting via Zoom, please ensure you are on mute. Please remain on mute unless invited to speak. The 'chat' function will be monitored for those on Zoom and comments and questions relayed to the Chair for any action that may be needed. Please use the 'raise the hand' icon if you want to to speak or make a comment. Please feel free to use the responses button eg thumbs up to agree, clap hands etc.

Please send any questions or comments you wish to submit **prior** to the meeting to the Executive Officer, Rev Sandy Boyce, sandy.boyce@vcc.org.au, 0499 726 213.

Please make sure your name is displayed to enable your attendance to be recorded. (To set your name, click on the '3 dots' on the right hand side of your image on screen and select the rename option)

Please select 'speaker' in the viewing option rather than gallery (showing everyone on Zoom for the meeting) so that the live feed video will be the main image. You can find the option of 'speaker' and 'gallery' in the top right hand of the Zoom screen.

The meeting will be recorded for the purpose of accuracy of the Minutes of the AGM, and will be deleted when the Minutes are finalised.

AGENDA

- 9am The meeting will begin with light refreshments and fellowship
9.15am Zoom open
- 9.30am Welcome, opening remarks and formalities by VCC President, Dr Graeme Blackman
- Acknowledgement of country Rev Canon Glenn Loughrey
Referendum (and Referendum Ecumenical Network)
- Opening worship led by Fr Jacob Joseph, *St George Jacobite Syrian Orthodox Church*
- Minutes of 2022 AGM for approval (pages 4-9)
(contact the VCC EO **prior** to the meeting for changes to be noted in the minutes)
- Voting delegates – a list will be available on the day of the AGM
(If you are a voting delegate and unable to attend, please send a proxy and notify the VCC EO in writing of the name of your proxy)
- President's report (p. 10)
Executive Officer's report (pages 11-15)
- Elections (see nominations) (p. 16)
- VCCEM – Emergencies Ministry (Michael Downing & Edmund Murphy) (pages 20-21)
- Announcement of election results and thanks to those concluding roles
(followed by blessing prayer led by Rev Shoji Varghese)
- Financials
Treasurer's Report (p 17)
Financial Statement 2022 (31-41), Standing Committee minute (P.17)
Financial Report and Management Representation letter (pages 42-44)
Budget 2023 (pages 18-19)
- Commissions (pages 23-24)
Constitution – notice of intention to update the Constitution
- Affiliate organisations (pages 25-29)
- Travel Fund (p. 29)
World Parliament of Religions – travel scholarship for younger adults
- New Member Church – German Lutheran Trinity Church (p. 29)
- Schools Ministry – a brief report
- 11.20am President – concluding comments
- 11.25am Closing prayer and benediction



VICTORIAN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
14th May 2022
MINUTES

The meeting was held on Zoom. Documents were circulated via email and on the website portal. Dr Graeme Blackman AO, VCC President, led the meeting.

GATHERING

The President offered a general introduction and welcome, and noted the requirement in the Constitution to hold an Annual General Meeting within 5 months of the end of the calendar year. The President acknowledged the outgoing Executive Officer, Rev Ian Smith, and welcomed the new Executive Officer, Rev Sandy Boyce.

The President made an Acknowledgement of country, and invited Rev Sandy Boyce to offer a prayer.

BUSINESS

1. Attendance

Present: Graeme Blackman AO (Chair), (Rev Sandy Boyce (Executive Officer), Bruce Charles (Anglican), Dr Astrid Notarangelo (Catholic Diocese of Sandhurst), Ray Brindle (RSoF Quakers), Kelvin Merrett (Salvation Army), Caesar D'Mello (Catholic), Barbara Shying, Max Stephens (Roman Catholic Melbourne), Lisa Carey (UCA), Sienneke Martin (SoF Quakers), Joan McRae (UCA), Isabel Thomas Dobson (UCA), Ian Smith (ex-EO, VCC), Ian Cayzer (UCA), Nasir Butrous, Fr Jacob Joseph, Shane Mackinlay, Rob Nyhuis (Cof C), Alan Ray, Kurian Peter, Ashok Jacob, Roxanne Addley, Sandy Yule (UCA), Ginette Everest (JCMA), Abideh Abdo-Attia Attia, David Schütz, Paul Barker, Julia Nutting, Denise Liersch (Moderator, UCA Vic/Tas), Fr Isac, C.A.
Apologies: Kellie Shewring (CEO, VCCM), Rachel McDougall (Anglican), Archbishop Comensoli, Fr Shenouda Boutros, Gavin Faichney (UCA), Deacon Joe Leach (Catholic), Janina Hiebel (Catholic), Elissa Roper (Catholic), Bishop Richard Treloar, Bishop Clarence Bester, Pastor Tom Hoffman (on LSL - member of F& O Commission).

2. Minutes from the 2021 AGM

Subject to minor amendments, the minutes were adopted as a true record of the meeting.
Moved: Sieneke Martin, Seconded: Joan McRae

4.1 President's report

Dr Graeme Blackman AO

The report was received and noted.

4.2 Executive Officer's report

Rev Ian Smith

Ian highlighted 4 talking points:

1. Changeover of President. Acknowledged Fr Shenouda's role as President, and the challenging circumstances during his term with COVID limiting face to face meetings.
2. The hard work of Standing Committee regarding the Strategic Plan, and the focus on Communication, Engagement, Witness.
3. Pivoting VCC to become the conduit of information, and supporting smaller and often less resourced churches.
4. The opportunity for renewed engagement with State Government.

The report was received and noted.

Thanks were expressed to Ian by Ashok Jacob, who spoke about Ian's long and steadfast service for many years, in many areas. He currently serves as Chair of VCC EM, and was involved right from the start. Under his leadership VCCEM became a separate entity. Ian joined with other Abrahamic faiths to organise faith tours to Jerusalem. Ian's contribution is many and varied. Ashok noted Ian is extremely good with relationships; he values people, makes people comfortable, is a good networker, offers warm friendship, and is available to people at all times. He is humble and approachable, including with small diaspora churches. Ian is extremely passionate about gospel of justice and peace. On behalf of the Council, Ashok thanked Ian for his great contribution to VCC, and highlighted the gift Ian has been to the churches in Victoria. Ashok also thanked Ian for his friendship.

In response, Ian said he was deeply humbled. He acknowledged Robert Gribben who was a mentor to him in the ecumenical movement.

Sandy Boyce offered a prayer for Ian.

Ian and Karen have moved to a rural property in Gippsland where Ian has accepted a supply ministry in a UCA parish. There may be more further opportunities for Ian to engage with ecumenical activities.

4.3 Commission reports

4.3.1 Faith and Order Commission FOC

The Faith and Order Commission met regularly in 2021, with a focus on responding to the NCCA document 'Australian Churches Covenanting Together' which they had been asked to review. A workshop in July 2021 was organised to get responses to the document and to question what is being done ecumenically. The timing of the workshop was held in a brief window where it was possible meet together in person as well as on Zoom. The Workshop was called "Covenanting Together in a Covid World" and sought to provide participants with an opportunity for listening, learning and sharing and exploring new ways of covenanting together as churches, of being the Body of Christ in new ways. The keynote speaker was Dr Antonia Pizzey who gave a lecture about "Deepening the Spiritual in the Ecumenical".

The workshop provided the template for NCCA to run other workshops. The Faith and Order Commission will be providing formal feedback to NCCA later in the year.

Rev Dr Kevin Lenehan, and Ian Smith, were thanked. The group looks forward to developing a strong relationship with Rev Sandy Boyce.

Ian noted that members of the Faith and Order Commission had rewritten the resource for Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, in an Australian context.

The report was received and noted.

4.3.2 Social Questions Commission SQC

The SQC has focussed primarily around First Peoples and anti-gaming/gambling (especially because of an unhealthy reliance by the Government on revenue - 85% of all gaming machines are in the lowest 10% of socio-economic communities). It is a major social Justice issue.

Say no to violence campaign - 16 days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence (UN). The 'Holding the Light' service of lament is held on the last Sunday in November. The bell is rung for the number of DV victims who have died at the hands of an intimate partner. In 2021 this number was 48.

Talking points for VCLN for upcoming network meeting might include gaming, affordable housing, economy. There are 180,000 adults excluded from earning an income because of exclusion re vaccine mandate.

Report was received and noted.

4.3.3 Living Faiths and Dialogue LFDC

Ian Fry has been the Chair of this Commission and stepped down a few months ago. Caesar invited to do the report. A few meetings have been held. LFDD is very conscious of the VCC mandate to connect with a multi-faith (and no faith) society.

A few issues were noted:

- Membership - recruitment needs to be a priority as well as stability in membership.
- A need for a better interface between the Commission and SC.
- A conversation with a Multi-faith Centre in England - a possibility that something might happen in Victoria.
- Need for visibility. LFDC is a conduit to link VCC into the community.
- Need to be more creative to join in this work. Younger adults not interested in joining meeting per se, but can respond in other ways to issues they are passionate about.

This Commission has a lot to offer VCC, and the Chair encouraged Member Churches to contribute members to the Commissions.

The Chair invited responses, noting that each of the Commissions would be open to welcoming new members, and also any reflections on the work being undertaken. There is a need to reinvigorate the Commissions and to pursue pressing issues of the day. A general encouragement for Commissions to work together on particular issues.

A question was asked about who is currently on each Commission. (Listed on VCC website) SC will be looking at the mandates in the light of emerging priorities.

The report was received and noted.

Motion to accept and note the reports of the Commissions.

Moved: Ian Weeks, Seconded: Lisa Carey.

10. Inter-faith report

Ginette Everest JCMA

The Chair acknowledged Ginette and invited her to reflect on the inter-faith report. Ginette acknowledged Ian's contribution and mentioned she and Sandy Boyce had been in touch and that she looked forward to working with her.

Chair assured Ginette that SC will want to work closely with JCMA as they wrestle with issues.

Ian noted that the VCC currently holds the domain for the Child Standards website for all the tertiary institutes. Funding was obtained to initially set up the website. Ian has tried to source funding to revamp the website. If this is not possible, it will be necessary to shut down the website by 30th June, as from July 1 it will no longer comply with the 11 standards.

<https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/assets/resources/New-CSS/New-Child-Safe-Standards-Information-Sheet.pdf>

The report was noted and received.

A long conversation followed including:

How effective is VCC in relationship with local government given that there is something of a disconnect with current Government and churches.

Ian Cayzer spoke about the consequence of disparate/unreconcilable views across the churches eg Dying with Dignity legislation, same gender marriage etc. VCC cannot represent one view.

Denise Liersch spoke about the historical dominance of Christian faith as the major faith in Australian society, and a growing awareness of diversity in culture, languages and country of origin, and of faith. A general mood/understanding of seeking to listen to minority voices, and listen less to the prevailing majority voices. The challenge for VCC is to find a voice amongst the diversity in order to be heard. The issue is how churches go about bringing a voice. Where there is really strong agreement, we need to speak out. Also, to acknowledge that a particular statement may not have unanimous support, thus making it a statement of integrity.

Denise - Clause 14 in VCC constitution addresses question about how to approach statements where there is a diversity of perspective. It would be worth the SC looking at that, and how well it now serves its purpose.

The Chair suggested that for VCC to get its voice reheard it must find some 'winners', to identify areas of common ground so we can present a unified voice, and to put energy into social justice issues (low hanging fruit) that will get traction and re-establish credibility. He noted the Attorney General/Emergency Services Minister Jaclyn Symes knew about and had applauded the work of VCC EM. There are already some things where we have unity of purpose and need to find a way to manage diversity constructively.

Sandy Yule noted the challenge of being ecumenical with each other and the need to be intentional at working with each other.

Rob Nyhuis spoke about a way to way the relative strength of speaking on a particular issue. He noted that sometimes the diversity stops us from commenting at all. VCC obviously needs to be prepared to speak on some issues with State Government.

David Schütz noted that in 2017 a large number of member churches wanted to say something regarding the Assisted Dying legislation. There was a multifaith statement given to the Deputy Premier, signed by VCC - even though it acknowledged that it did not have 100% support. Should not just be a question of 'majority', but respectful of the diversity in VCC. There is a degree that the dissenting voice must be the one to give permission, not the majority voice that can so easily overrule dissent.

Kevin Lenehan added that the WCC document *Churches and Moral Discernment* could be a useful resource on this matter of dialogue.

Action: The VCC Standing Committee would discuss and work through the issues and approaches, and collaborate with the Faith and Order Commission in the process.

4.4 VCCEM (a subsidiary company of VCC)

Ian Smith was invited to speak to the report provided by CEO Kellie Shewring, who is absent from the AGM because VCCEM is to be recognised at the MCG today for its work. It is a good news story in the community.

Ian noted that the 63 incidents in the report shows a significant divergence from where VCC EM used to be. Prior to 2015 the work predominantly focussed on disasters that were state wide. Now, more often, the context is local.

Ian noted the diversity of culture, language, etc among the volunteer chaplains.

Kellie has been a gift as the CEO, supported by a great staff team and good governance.

Financially quite stable. Investment strategy similar to VCC (through U Ethical). Ongoing triennial funding from Department of Health.

In the last few months, with the significant floods in northern NSW, VCC EM chaplaincy teams have been deployed at the request of Rev Stephen Robinson. Some enormously significant work undertaken. NSW people appreciative of competence and skills of the VCC EM teams, with 4 teams of 5 or 6 people deployed across a large area including Lismore, Ballina etc.

The competence of VCC EM work has become well known at State and municipal levels. Now, municipal organisations contact VCC EM requesting assistance.

VCC EM sits within the training programs of police, ambulance officers, local government etc, which also means these sectors now understand what VCC EM brings to the table.

Report received and noted.

5. 2021 Financial Report and 2022 budget

Ashok Jacob

Audited by external auditor.

P&L statement - a good year for VCC.

Received \$750K bequests last year (the bequests do not have any specific conditions regarding the disbursement of funds)

All member churches were generous with contributions. Soon a letter will be sent to all Member Churches and Member Churches requested to follow up.

Balance sheet presented.

The financial report and 2022 budget have already been approved by Finance Committee.

Budgetted for \$60k+ loss in 2022. Budget normally prepared in September of previous year. At that time, the thinking is that there might be administrative role, which isn't proceeding. This means the deficit will be significantly reduced.

Moved: Ashok Jacob. Seconded: Sienneke Martin.

It was noted that without bequests VCC would have had a substantial \$28K loss.

A question regarding an explanation as to why computer costs were so high. In response it was clarified that the costs were also for computers for VCC EM, with reimbursement now received from VCC EM. Shown as liability in 2021 accounts, and money shown in this year's account (ie in financial statement for 2022 AGM)

EM went to stand alone IT in October 2021, so have paid their share of the contract (\$11K) with CAM.

\$23K for office occupancy (made up of two components - \$11K for St Kilda Rd office, as well as \$12K for storage container, which was disposed of last year).

COVID has given opportunity to reconsider office occupancy. Memorandum of Understanding regarding office lease expires at end of June. After that VCC SC will be exploring options for office location, and even a virtual office. Sienneke has been exploring options for an office. Major discussion already with Sandy re options. Further discussion is on the agenda of the next SC meeting.

David Schutz wondered is there a point in the foreseeable future when we might meet face to face - or will Zoom continue? Recognised reticence by some people for face to face meetings.

Zoom meetings are great for those in remote situations. Can also encourage young people to be involved. Consider hybrid pattern of meeting.

Suggestion that we might explore an option to meet on a weekday, though it is a time when many people are unavailable due to work commitments. This will be an ongoing discussion.

SC is also considering ways of bringing VCC together for social/relational purposes.

Action: SC to pick up points in this discussion.

6. Associate members reports

6.1 KORUS Connect (see report)

6.2 ASCM

Rev Dr Sandy Yule

ASCM is at a very low ebb nationally, especially in Victoria. Strategy to use internet to connect with university students. Organised nationally. Will see where this initiative leads.

6.3 World Day of Prayer (see report)

Reports received and noted

7. Communication Strategy (see report by EO Sandy Boyce)

Sandy spoke about the imperative to raise the profile of VCC and outlined some of the initial strategies. Lisa commended Sandy on the number of Facebook posts that raise interest and can be easily shared. It was also noted that the Facebook feed appears on the VCC website home page.

Report received and noted.

The Chair made concluding remarks about the Standing Committee working hard, and how appreciative the SC is of the support of Member Churches. Encouraged Member Churches to engage with/become involved in the work of the Commissions.

The meeting concluded with a sending out prayer led by EO Sandy Boyce.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

DR GRAEME L BLACKMAN AO

It is a great pleasure to present my Report for the past year. In doing so, I wish to thank the members of the VCC Standing Committee who have provided considerable expertise and time to the running of our organisation. I also wish to especially thank a number of Heads of Churches whose counsel has been most valuable to me. I am most grateful for the hard work and commitment that our Executive Officer, Rev Sandy Boyce, contributes to the smooth running of VCC. For Sandy, in particular, there have been many challenges as she develops new and improved ways of providing services and support to our members and ecumenical partners. Finally I thank most warmly our VCC member churches who have also contributed time, effort and funds to assist the mission of the VCC in our ecumenical work.

Sandy's Report will outline the very wide range of activities that VCC has been engaged in this year but I wish to just highlight a few matters that have stood out for me personally.

It goes without saying that Covid has continued to have a telling impact on all of our members and on the work of the VCC generally. In the past year the secretariat has continued to provide information and support, especially for some of our smaller churches, as the changes in lockdown and operating environments for our churches have been rapidly and unpredictably changing. I know that many of our members have appreciated accurate and timely advice.

I have been delighted and honoured to attend a number of worship services offered by our members. It was a singular pleasure for me to attend an anniversary celebration of the Church of South India at the Anglican Parish of St Matthews Ashburton and to speak of my own connections to that parish. It was a particular pleasure subsequently when on the recommendation of the VCC Standing Committee, the Melbourne Church of South India, with support of VCC Members, became the newest members of the Victorian Council of Churches.

I was also deeply honoured to be the speaker at the annual Marthoma Christmas Carol ceremony, held in December last year at the North Blackburn Baptist Church in North Blackburn. What a joyful celebration of the incarnation in song and dance and reading.

Despite the various COVID constraints during the year under review, the VCC has managed to continue its wide range of activities, including engagement with local Christian communities through our affiliate membership process, through representation on the boards and advisory committees of numerous Christian and Multifaith organisations, through the significant and important work of our subsidiary organisation VCC Emergencies Ministry, through the work of our Commissions and through the tireless work of our Executive Officer.

The VCC is in a strong financial position with an investment portfolio placed with U Ethical Fund Managers. Its use is determined by the VCC Standing committee.

Former VCC Executive Officer Rev Ian Smith was in caretaker mode from January to mid-April. This report covers the period from mid-April to December 2022, when Rev Sandy Boyce began as the VCC Executive Officer.

Introduction

There is so much that could be included in the overview of a busy year in 2022 but the information that follows provides information about the breadth of some of the work undertaken in my role as Executive Officer. I am grateful for the wisdom and generosity of time offered by the VCC President Dr Graeme Blackman, and for the support and collective wisdom of the VCC Standing Committee in navigating our way through challenges in 2022.

Office

The decision to end the lease of the office space at 608 St Kilda Road meant a subsequent clearing of the VCC footprint in the office, including the ecumenical library books (about 7000 books), archival material in storage boxes, and boxes that had been in storage from a previous move. The Executive Officer now works from a home office, and meetings are arranged in various venues or on Zoom as need be. Some of the Ecumenical Library collection, previously catalogued by Martin Prest, will be rehomed in theological libraries with the rest made available to interested individuals and groups.

Some archival material will be sent to 'Special Collections' at Deakin University, Geelong. The VCC history needs to be preserved in hard and soft copies of key records and documents, in an ordered way for retrieval in the future.

Invitations

It was a privilege to be invited to meet visiting dignitaries and church leaders, including Catholicos-Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East, Patriarch Mar Awa III Royel. As well, it has been a pleasure to be invited to be part of sharing in worship and other church events.

Raising the Profile

This is one of the key pillars in the Strategic Plan. This has been demonstrated by the redevelopment of the website as a key platform for communication and information, through regular posts on Facebook with information and events, regular posts and news on the website, and a fortnightly VCC e-news. The VCC has a Youtube presence and attention will be given to populating content in 2023. Other social media will also be explored in 2023, as well as building working relationships with Comms teams in Member Churches, and in media outlets.

STANDING COMMITTEE

The VCC Standing Committee met monthly in 2022, mainly via Zoom and a few times in person. President Graeme Blackman has led the meetings with a focus on good governance, outcomes, risk management, and clarity on strategic planning and future directions. The Standing Committee membership: Sienke Martin (RSOF), Deacon Joseph Leach (Catholic),

Ashok Jacob (Mar Thoma), Fr Shenouda Boutros (Coptic Church), Rev Denise Liersch (Uniting), Fr Dr Jacob Joseph. Health matters prevented Rev Rachel McDougall (Anglican) from attending meetings.

Decisions were made regarding the office space on St Kilda Road, and the future of the ecumenical library. Consideration has been given to revising the Constitution. There is ongoing work to update the Strategic Plan. Risk management was also a priority.

The VCC Finance Committee meets monthly, or as necessary. Treasurer Ashok Jacob, along with Wilson Business, keeps track of the finance, with the EO managing day to day finances.

A VCC Conference/meeting was held in November 2022. It is hoped to give attention to organising regional meetings in 2023.

The VCC acknowledges the significant and important work of our subsidiary organisation VCC Emergencies Ministry. Rev Ian Smith chairs the VCC EM Board, which includes the VCC EO and Rev Sion Gough Hughes (Melbourne Welsh Church). (In 2023, Dr Nasir Butrous was also appointed to the Board.

COMMISSIONS (see pages 22-24)

EVENTS

Partnering and collaborating

The basic scaffolding for ecumenical work requires a commitment to collaboration and partnership, with Member Churches, church agencies, in the wider community and with inter-faith networks. The fundamental question is, what can we do better together than on our own? When planning events and activities, VCC will seek to endeavour to work with others who are engaged with a similar focus. This means less 'solo' events and more collaborative events and activities. A fundamental question when arranging events is, who is the audience - beyond our own church/es?

The following are some examples of collaborative events:

Holding the Light service

VCC is part of the ecumenical planning team, which includes Anglican Mother's Union Melbourne, Catholic Social Services Victoria, Australian Catholic Religious Against Trafficking in Humans (ACRATH), the Uniting Church (Vic/Tas) Culture of Safety Unit. The 7th *Holding the Light* service was held in November 2022, hosted by St Peter's Eastern Hill Anglican Church. *Holding the Light* is an ecumenical service to remember and stand in solidarity with victims and survivors of domestic violence, and to remember those who have been killed as a result of domestic violence in Australia. It is held during the *16 days of activism against gender-based violence* (25th November - the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, until 10 December - UN Human Rights Day).
=> *The 2023 service will be held on Thursday 30th November at 5pm, at Wesley Uniting Church, Lonsdale St.*

ANZAC Day Service (St Paul's Cathedral)

Victorian Council of Churches has been a planning partner with Pax Christi and St Paul's Cathedral.

8 hour day

Celebrating the origins of the 8 hour day movement. A group led by Canon Stephen Ames planned the event, and a small group gathered at the Memorial in March 2022, including the UCA Moderator Rev Denise Liersch and the Anglican Archbishop, Philip Freier. A team worked for several months planning for the 2023 event.

Mental Health and Disability Conference – planned for October 2022, postponed until July 2023. A collaboration with UCA Social Justice Unit, VCC, Salvation Army and others.

NETWORKS

Making connections and networking

The Victorian Council of Churches has an extensive range of networks, and a priority has been making connections. The following is a quick overview of some specific networks:

Referendum

A new ecumenical network was established in 2022, specifically to draw together people who are resourcing their churches and agencies in the lead up to the Referendum, in collaboration with ANTaR, and cognisant of other groups providing resources.

Interfaith (see pages 22-23 under Commissions for Living Faiths and Dialogue)

The VCC EO is on MAG (Multicultural Advisory Board), JCMA Board (Jewish Christian Muslim Association), FCCV Board (Faith Communities Council of Victoria). The VCC EO is also invited to meetings of Religions for Peace Australia.

The VCC EO receives invitations to Iftar dinners and other interfaith events.

Professional Standards

A network of people employed in their denominational head office to provide training and resources to churches regarding Safe Church, Family and Domestic Violence, etc. VCC has been invited to be part of this network.

Refugees

The VCC is part of the planning team for the annual Palm Sunday Walk for Refugees. VCC was also a collaborating partner to organise a forum at St Paul's Cathedral on 'Compassionate resettlement of Refugees' (September 2022).

Liz Stone, NCCA General Secretary, invited the VCC EO to join ACRT (Australian Churches Refugee Taskforce), an ecumenical and national group focussed on resourcing and connecting churches with refugee matters. Several Victorian church groups and agencies were successful in receiving NCCA funding in 2022 for their work with refugees. Major Karen Elkington (Salvation Army) and Rev Sandy Boyce (VCC EO) co-chair ACRT. As well, VCC is regularly invited to engage with networks advocating for refugees.

AEON (Australian Ecumenical Officers Network)

Ecumenical Officers in each State and Territory meet online a couple of times a year, and in person once a year. It is a great time of sharing of joys and concerns, and mutual support.

Interchurch Councils

Local ecumenism is an essential embodiment of the ecumenical movement, as churches seek to witness together to their common faith in God, and to act together in matters of common interest in and for their communities. Churches, located in the context of community, are well placed to, know the history and current needs of their community. Rather than acting in silo/solo ways or duplicating events and activities, local ecumenism uses collective resources. This is supported by a strong commitment to building relationships of mutual trust and understanding, and to sharing together in prayer and in worship. While some local ecumenism is collaborating on events, there are also examples of local missional ecumenism which may include a focus on outward activities such as social justice, evangelism, and serving in the local community in a myriad of ways. Winter shelters, provision of food to the needy, and hospitality to migrant workers are a few examples. Local ecumenism is more focussed on 'practical' and 'missional' opportunities to work together, rather than what may be called 'institutional' ecumenism (characterised by dialogues and more formal church to church relationships). 'Institutional' ecumenism remains necessary and important, alongside local ecumenism. Both provide a visible sign of the unity for which Jesus prayed (John 17.21).

A number of the ICC's have spoken about a diminishing number of people with the energy to engage in local ecumenical activities. VCC places a priority on supporting, engaging with and promoting the work of ICCs (and related networks). As well, a considerable amount of work is needed to maintain accurate records, and manage logistics, to ensure up to date records are available for the renewal of the Certificate of Currency.

VCLN (Victorian Church Leaders Network) – Secretariat support provided by VCC

VCLN met 4 times in 2022, hosted by different Member Churches. It is an invaluable time of fellowship when church leaders are able to share news and concerns, and engage with the issues and challenges of the day. All leaders of Member Churches are invited and encouraged to attend.

Government

A work in progress is renewing the relationship with Government, and for VCC to be recognised as a peak body and the VCLN as a key network of Church Leaders.

WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

The NCCA Faith and Unity Commission invited members of the VCC Faith and Order Commission to work on the 2022 resource for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, and again for the 2023 resources. The latter was prepared by a team in Minneapolis, with the need to contextualise for use in Australia. The VCC Executive Officer oversaw the completion of the task in liaison with the NCCA Faith and Unity Commission.

NEW MEMBER CHURCH

At the November 2022 VCC meeting, voting delegates affirmed the VCC SC recommendation that the **Melbourne Church of South India (MCSI)** become a Member Church of the Victorian Council of Churches.

The Melbourne CSI Church was initiated in 2011 as an answer to several decades of prayerful waiting of members of the Church of South India who came to Australia and settled. While they worshipped in the nearby congregations they kept desiring for a Malayalam service. The first Vicar was appointed on 2012. The church was registered as a Charity and sought and received approval of the CSI Synod as a recognised church overseas in 2015. The Anglican Diocese of Melbourne and the St. Matthews Congregation of Ashburton have an agreement to share ministry and space with the Melbourne CSI Church. [Rev Kurian Peter returned to Kerala at the end of April 2023, and the congregation is waiting for the arrival of the new pastor from Kerala].

CHILD SAFE STANDARDS

The Child Safe Standards require organisations involving children to have policies, procedures and practices to keep them safe, and prevent harm and abuse from happening. The 7 Standards introduced in Victoria several years ago have been replaced with 11 new Standards, effective from 1 July 2022. Most organisations that work or volunteer with children and young people, including religious bodies and churches, have moral and legal responsibilities to meet the Standards. The new Standards place a greater focus on the safety of Aboriginal children and young people and about managing the risk of child abuse in online environments. From January 2023, the Commission for Children and Young People will expect organisations to have implemented the new Standards. The Commission has a range of tools and templates to help organisations develop key policies, practices and procedures. These are available in the resources section of the CCYP website. It is pleasing to see churches reference Child Safe Standards and Child Safe Church on the homepage of their website, and to provide details of the implementation of each of the Child Safe Standards as required.

The Victorian Council of Churches has previously played an important role in supporting congregations with resourcing and online training. Many denominations now have staff in place who manage 'Safe Church' responsibilities, who provide online and print resources and training opportunities. Smaller Member Churches are encouraged to contact larger denominations with staff working in 'Safe Church' to access resources and training. A network of key providers from various denominations meet from time to time to discuss issues including safe church, professional standards, and family and domestic violence. There is also opportunity to share resources, training opportunities, as well as issues and concerns. The Victorian Council of Churches, through the Executive Officer, has a seat at the table at these meetings.

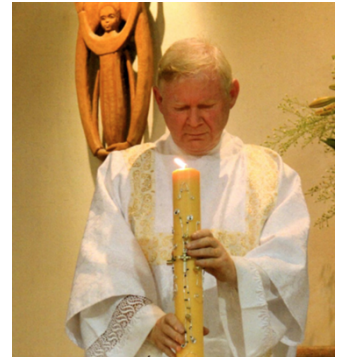
The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; God's mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is God's faithfulness. Lamentations 3:22-23

NOMINATIONS

President: Deacon Joseph (Joe) Leach

Nominated by Archbishop Comensoli, Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne

Deacon Joseph Leach is a permanent Deacon in the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne. He studied science at university, gaining a PhD in planetary geology and worked in a variety of fields, including as a lecturer at the University of Melbourne for 21 years, finally retiring in 2015. He continued to study, gaining a MA(Theol) from the Australian Catholic University and was accepted into the diaconal formation program at the Melbourne College of Divinity, leading to a Bachelor of Theology degree. He was ordained in 2012 as a Deacon, and has served in two parishes. He has co-authored two books on the theology of the eastern church.



Deputy President: Rev Fr Jacob Joseph

Nominated by Fr Praveen Kuryakose, St George Jacobite Syrian Orthodox Church

Fr Dr Jacob Joseph was appointed as the Deputy President of the VCC in 2022. He is an ordained priest of the Syrian Orthodox Church. Before joining his theological teaching, he served the church both in India and abroad in various capacities as a National Youth Director (the USA and Australia), Director of the Holy Cross College of Management and Technology, Editor of Vision Journal, and Mission Director. After completing his theological degrees, he joined St Athanasius College as a lecturer in 2020. Currently, he teaches Patristic Theology and Orthodox Mission Theology at Agora University and at Malankara Syrian Orthodox Theological Seminary, Ernakulam, India, in Ecumenical and Mission Theology. His doctoral thesis is titled *The Christ Who Embraces: An Orthodox Theology of Margins in India*.



Dr Graeme Blackman (VCC President 2021-2023) will remain on the Standing Committee as immediate past-President

Standing Committee nominations (7 places)

Sieneke Martin	RSOF (Quakers)
Ashok Jacob	Mar Thoma
Rev David Fotheringham	Uniting Church Vic/Tas Synod
Fr Shenouda Boutros	Coptic Orthodox Church
To be advised	Catholic Church
To be advised	Anglican
Vacancy	

Co-options (up to 4 places) at discretion of Standing Committee to meet particular skills set.

Rev Sandy Boyce, Executive Officer (ex officio on Standing Committee)

The positions of incoming President and Deputy President, along with the Standing Committee, will commence at the conclusion of the AGM.

At the end of the reporting period, VCC's financial position was sound with a strong Balance Sheet. Operationally VCC had surplus in the year and this was due to the generous contributions from member churches and diligent management of the finances. On behalf of the Finance Committee, I would like to thank all the member churches for the generous financial contributions in 2022. We request your continued support in the future years.

As per VCC's investment policy, the surplus funds are invested ethically with a reputed fund manager in investment portfolios that take a 5-7 year investment perspective. The Finance Committee monitors the performance of the investments regularly. The reporting period of 2022 had been a challenging year for fund managers due to the many economic challenges faced by the Australian and world markets. The market value of our investments suffered a reduction in 2022. We are hopeful to recover this in the coming years.

I would like to thank our book-keeping service provider Wilson Business Services and our Auditors DFK Kidsons for their professional services and support.

Ashok Jacob, Treasurer (for the Finance Committee)

2022 Financial Report and Management Representation letter – see pages 31-44

VICTORIAN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES INC.

STANDING COMMITTEE DECLARATION

In the opinion of the Standing Committee the financial report as set out on pages 3 to 11:

1. Presents a true and fair view of the financial position of Victorian Council of Churches Inc. as at 31 December 2022 and its performance for the financial year ended on that date in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards – Simplified Disclosures, the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 (Victoria), the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 and other mandatory professional reporting requirements; and
2. At the date of this declaration, there are reasonable grounds to believe that Victorian Council of Churches Inc. will be able to pay its debts as and when they become due and payable.

This declaration is made in accordance with a resolution of the Standing Committee and is signed for and on behalf of the Standing Committee by:



Dr Graeme Blackman
President



Ashok Jacob
Treasurer

1 March 2023

BUDGET 2023

2023
VICTORIAN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES INC
January 2023 to December 2023

Account	Total
Income	
Affiliate Contributions (41300)	\$2,400.00
Distributions from investments(42400)	\$30,000.00
Member Churches' Contributions (41100)	\$160,000.00
Other Miscellaneous Income (46900)	\$2,000.00
Total Income	\$194,400.00
Other Income	
Gain/(Loss) on revaluation of investments (8300)	\$65,000.00
Total Other Income	\$65,000.00
Less Operating Expenses	
Audit expense (61005)	\$2,500.00
Bank fees (61020)	\$200.00
Bookkeeping Fees (61010)	\$4,000.00
Casual Staff Expenses (61024)	\$5,000.00
Catering (65020)	\$500.00
Computers - Supply (61025)	\$3,000.00
Conference Fees (61030)	\$500.00
Conferences & Special Events (65040)	\$500.00
Consultancy Costs (62820)	\$10,000.00
Contingencies (61999)	\$4,000.00
Contract Worker (61037)	\$12,000.00
Donations Made (61045)	\$600.00
Dues & Subscriptions (61050)	\$600.00
Equipment Maintenance (61070)	\$600.00
General Admin Costs (61100)	\$5,000.00
General Occupancy Costs (66900)	\$5,000.00
EO mobile phone (68900)	\$600.00
Honoraria (62830)	\$1,200.00
Hospitality (61810)	\$1,200.00
Insurance (61300)	\$6,000.00
Professional Supervision for EO (62840)	\$2,000.00
Legal & Accounting (61500)	\$2,000.00
Postage (61700)	\$800.00
Printing & Copying (61750)	\$2,000.00
Rent (66100)	\$15,000.00
Software Charges (61817)	\$3,000.00
Staff Training & Development (62930)	\$1,750.00
Stationery (61900)	\$500.00
Telephone & Fax (68100)	\$500.00
Travel (64100)	\$3,000.00
UCA Salary Payment - Admin Fee (62103)	\$720.00
EO Salary Payments (62101)	\$85,000.00
EO Salary Payments - Super Component (62102)	\$8,925.00
VCC Commissions Cost (92700)	\$1,200.00
Venue hire (65010)	\$500.00
Website & Domains (68300)	\$500.00

Workers Compensation (62720)	\$1,300.00
Total Operating Expenses	\$191,695.00
<hr/>	
Total Expenses	\$191,695.00
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Net Profit	\$2,705.00
<hr/>	

Member Church financial contributions 2023

The ecumenical work of the Victorian Council of Churches is enabled through the financial support of Member Churches. We are extremely grateful to those Member Churches that arrange payment either at scheduled intervals, or with a single payment according to their means. Thank you for your generosity and support for the work of ecumenism in Victoria.

Here are the banking details for those Member Churches yet to arrange their annual financial contribution for 2023. Our preference is online banking. Please ensure you add the name of the Member Church in the reference section when doing online banking so we can track who has arranged the transfer of funds and also send an email to confirm a bank transfer to vcc@vcc.org.au.

National Australia Bank (NAB)

Victorian Council of Churches BSB 083 419 Account: 515107413

Alternatively, a cheque may be sent to VCC, PO Box 211, Flinders Lane, Melbourne 8009

Affiliate organisations and Certificate of Currency (commencing 30th September 2023)

Affiliate organisations and ICCs eligible for Certificate of Currency 2023/4 insurance for ecumenical events are reminded that a contribution of \$100 is required by the end of August, in order to provide up to date details for the insurer. Note that this is a contribution to the overall cost of the insurance, the balance being met by VCC. Payment details as above.

Also, please confirm/update names of office bearers.

The insurer has asked for a summary of any events and activities that need insurance cover. A brief return email of your ICC is adequate so a compilation can be provided to the insurer.

Email: vcc@vcc.org.au



VCCEM Report for Victorian Council of Churches AGM 2023

VCCEM continues to provide excellent support and service to disaster and emergency affected communities across Victoria, Emergency Management Agencies, Local Government municipalities (LGA) and the Department of Families, Fairness & Housing (DFFH) with the start of 2023 marking a significant milestone for VCCEM with additional funding provided to support 12 LGA's affected by the severe flooding events in October and November last year in partnership with Australian Red Cross (ARC) to provide psychosocial support services, foster community connection through outreach and community recovery committee activities and events. This report has been created to align to our Strategic Plan and identified priority areas as below:

Our Strategic Plan to 2025



Our Sustainability

VCCEM continues to operate on a financial-year accrual basis for its accounting standard with no significant variations or events to our approved plan and budget for the Financial Year 2021/22 and is expected to return a net profit for the current Financial Year ending on 30 June 2023. We have continued to focus on income diversification strategies to reduce our reliance on core Government funding.

We have also welcomed 4 new Directors to our Board including 2 VCC representatives in Rev Sandy Boyce and Dr Nasir Butrous as well as Senior Volunteer Reverend Sion Gough-Hughes and multi-cultural community advocate Mr Thuch Ajak.

Other notable activities during this period have included:

- Financial Year 2021/22 Audit completed, and all required submissions completed, including our ACNC Annual Information Statement and DFFH certifications.
- Ongoing financial stability with VCCEM in Year 3 of 5-year funding from DFFH (to FY2024/25)
- A new 3-year Service Level Agreement with Ambulance Victoria to provide Volunteer Chaplains
- A Grant from Emergency Management Victoria (EMV-VESEP) to fund new volunteer uniforms and our office renovation to provide better use, flexibility, and accessibility.
- A sustainability/cost of living payment from DFFH in addition to the new Recover Project funding
- Increases in fee for service income streams and ongoing development of each of our Training Programs that are being adapted to wider audiences by our Education Advisory Committee
- A complete review of our core training for Volunteers in our Psychological First Aid (PFA) and emotional spiritual care utilizing evidence-based interventions and Trauma Informed Care models.
- Development of 5 new online training modules hosted in EMV's Learning Management System (LMS)

Our Engagement

VCCEM Staff and Volunteers participate and are proudly members of the below:

Emergency Services Foundation (ESF) Stakeholder Council	DFFH Psychosocial Reference Group	Emergency Management Victoria (EMV) State relief and recovery team (SRRT)
Multicultural Emergency Management Partnership (MEMP)	Emergency Management Volunteer Consultative Forum (VCF)	Emergency Services Foundation (ESF) Learning Network
Shared Responsibility Framework for People Most at Risk in Emergencies	Australian Volunteer Emergency Chaplaincy Association (AVECA)	Victorian Emergency Workers & Mental Health Community of Practice (COP)
Australian Institute for Disaster Recovery (AIDR) Possibility Lab Network	Communicating with people most at risk in emergencies – (COP)	Emergency Recovery Victoria (ERV) Community Recovery Advisory Group

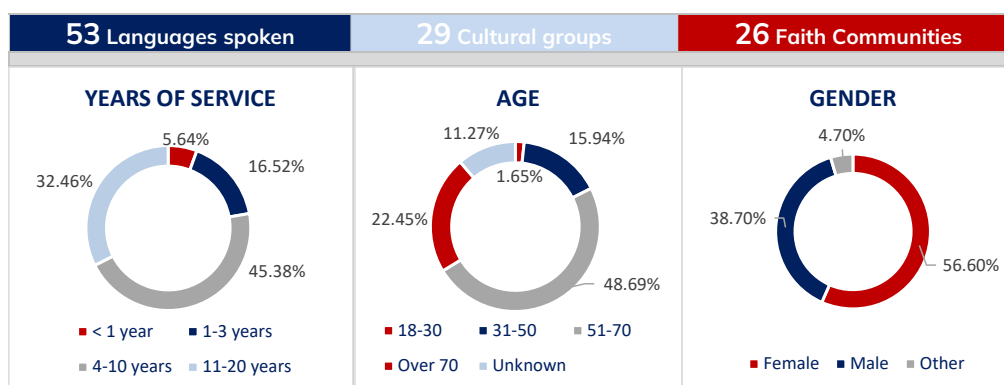
Our Services

VCCEM has been deployed to 41 separate incident activations from January 2022 to April 2023, which represents over 705 volunteer days of service with more than 3,000 properties visited for outreach and thousands of conversations via our phone outreach services and in emergency relief centres. In addition to the deployments listed below, VCCEM has continued to participate in both Agency and LGA exercises, Regional, Municipal Emergency Management and Recovery Committees and a number of Community Service organisation and faith community events and conferences.

Warburton Murder / Suicide Incident Outreach	VCC EM Deployment to Northern NSW 2022 Floods (4 teams)	Coburg Stabbing, Murder, Community Outreach
Aircraft Crash - Mt Disappointment	Macedon Ranges Storm Recovery Community Workshop	Mooroolbark Fatal House Fire - Outreach
Point Cook fatal car accident-Outreach	Single incident House Fire Carlsruhe	Single incident Unit Fire Geelong West
Maidstone Fatal House Fire	October Flood Events (17 locations)	Housefire Fatality – Werribee
Airlie Ivanhoe (Retirement Living) Fatality	Geelong Outreach – Weather Event	Wyndham Vale Shooting Outreach
Woodend House Fire	Maribyrnong Flood Outreach	Maribyrnong Community Recovery Meetings
Seymour Community Expo	Barmah Family Fun Day	Mount Alexander Phone Outreach

Our People

Our volunteer numbers have returned to over 1,000 post the COVID-19 Pandemic and we are very pleased to welcome over 100 new volunteer Chaplains and Personal Support workers in the last 12 months. Our Directors, staff team and volunteers are all amazing and we couldn't deliver our 'Ministry of Presence' without each and every one of them and with close to one-third delivering compassion in times of crisis as part of VCCEM for over 10 years! Our people represent:



Unfortunately, I will be overseas at the time of the VCC AGM so won't be able to get to finally meet you all face-to-face, but I will leave you in the great hands of our Chief Operating Officer, Edmund Murphy and Workforce Manager, Michael Downing. Please feel free to reach out to me separately via email if you would like to discuss any aspect of VCCEM or if you would like to volunteer!

Yours in service



Kellie Shewring CEO – VCC Emergencies Ministry Ltd

Kellie.Shewring@vccem.org.au

26 April 2023

COMMISSIONS

In the long life of the Victorian Council of Churches there have been a number of Commissions established such as Commission for Youth and Commission for Women. At various times there have been up to 10 Commissions each with 10 or so elected members. At the same time, the various Commissions have been set aside when the time seemed right. In 2022, three Commissions remained - Faith and Order Commission, Living Faiths and Dialogue Commission, and Social Questions Commission.

The VCC Standing Committee has had opportunity to consider the work, vitality and viability of the Commissions, and has made the decision to 'de-commission' the 3 Commissions.

It does not in any way diminish the worth of the work undertaken by the Commissions over the years, nor the faithful work of the members of Commissions over the years. It does recognise the difficulty of recruiting people willing to serve on the Commissions, and a lack of energy to sustain the work of the Commissions. It also recognises the challenge of discerning and responding to specific priorities and foci in our current time and place.

Mindful of limited resources, it is also important to see what is happening nationally through the National Council of Churches eg Faith and Unity Commission, and other Councils of Churches in Australia, and to note the particular contribution that the VCC may offer. It is important to consider what structures might be the most helpful to undertake particular priorities. The Constitution already identifies some of these – working groups, task forces etc. Any such groups will have established Terms of Reference, and specific timelines. An example of one such ecumenical working group is the Referendum Ecumenical Network established with representatives from Member Churches (and wider), and actively collaborating with ANTAR and other groups working on resourcing for the Referendum. It has a specific timeframe and focus.

Faith and Order Commission 2022 Report

Members: Rev Roxanne Addley (Chair), Rev Dr Sandy Yule, Rev Dr Kevin Lenehan, Tania Rose, Ian Weeks, Wayne Muschamp, Tom Hoffman (resigned).

Ex officio: Sandy Boyce (Secretariat support)

This report is written in the knowledge of the decision by the VCC Standing Committee to disband the three remaining VCC Commissions. The Faith and Order Commission has continued to meet on a regular basis since our last report, though with reduced numbers.

Perhaps the most important item to report is that, after Sandy Boyce uploaded our collection of documents from member churches in response to the Victorian 'Voluntary Assisted Dying' legislation, it has been 'visited' 1,266 times, on recent count.

The members of the VCC Faith and Order Commission would like to record that they have found significant value in the open dialogue of the Commission on the issues discussed. We have found it valuable to engage with each other on the basis of our respective traditions

and understandings of the Christian Faith and wish for others to have similar opportunities in the future.

We have had ongoing conversation about ideas for making progress in Christian Unity, such as receptive ecumenism and spiritual ecumenism. We have begun a conversation about 'synodality', in response to the work on this topic in the Roman Catholic Church. We have been comparing notes with each other about the impact of Covid lockdowns on our church life, good as well as bad. We have continued to monitor church responses to the Victorian 'Voluntary Assisted Dying' legislation.

We cannot ignore the lack of energy in these conversations, due to our uncertainties about 'who is listening'. Nevertheless, we wish to pose the question that if there is to be no Commission for Faith and Order, will the churches be finding other ways for these important long term background conversations to happen?

Living Faiths and Dialogue Commission 2022 report

There is no doubt that this Commission has done excellent work in the past, in response to interfaith relationships and dialogue. However, it has not met in several years. The work of Caesar d'Mello in championing this area of work should be acknowledged, along with others who have formerly been members of the Commission.

In recent years, there have been a growing number of networks and organisations active in this area. The VCC has been engaged mainly through its Executive Officer, including:

Multicultural Advisory Group (MAG)

The MAG was established in 2008 in response to recommendations from the 2007 Premier's Multifaith Leaders Forum. The MAG currently consists of approximately 30 senior representatives from Victoria's diverse faith communities including Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh, Hindu, Buddhist and Baha'i communities. It is an advisory body which:

- * represents the voices of Victoria's faith leaders to the Victorian Government through the Victorian Multicultural Commission (VMC)
- * seeks to provide a forum for interfaith discussions that will inform the development and implementation of Victorian Government policy relating to religion, social cohesion and community harmony in Victoria
- * aims to ensure ongoing dialogue between the Victorian Government and Victoria's faith leaders and communities
- * assists the Government to understand and appropriately respond to situations which arise in diverse faith and multicultural communities around Victoria.

Faith Communities Council of Victoria (FCCV)

Established in 2010, the Faith Communities Council of Victoria (FCCV) is Victoria's umbrella multifaith body. It is the successor to the *Leaders of Faith Communities Forum*, founded in 1995. FCCV was created to contribute to the harmony of the Victorian community by promoting positive relations between people of different faiths and greater public knowledge and mutual understanding of the teachings, customs and practices of Victoria's diverse faith traditions.

Jewish Christian Muslim Association (JCMA)

JCMA aims to create and provide a forum for interfaith dialogue and shared experience through meeting and discussion in a modern Australian and international context by fostering relationships between people of different faiths in order to reduce racism, bigotry and violence and to promote the prevention of emotional and physical abuse arising from religious intolerance and cultural discrimination.

Faith Leaders

An informal network of multifaith leaders in Victoria who meet to discuss matters of mutual interest and concern.

Religions for Peace Australia

Religions for Peace (Australia) is Australia's largest community-based organization working for inter-religious harmony and social cohesion.

As well, regular invitations are received from other faith traditions to attend events, festivals, and services, in turn building relationships and mutual understanding.

Social Questions Commission

In 2022, the membership was Dr Mark Zirnsak (Senior Social Justice Advocate, Justice and International Mission Unit, Uniting Church in Australia Vic/Tas Synod), Rev Dr Gordon Preece (Director of Ethos Centre for Christianity and Society and Chair of the Melbourne Anglican Social Responsibilities Committee, and formerly Senior Policy Adviser, Catholic Social Services), and Major Scott Smallacombe (relocated to Shepparton). The VCC EO provided Secretariat support.

Mark and Gordon support the 'decommissioning' of the Social Questions Commission. They remain in touch through their work and various networks, and are committed to collaborative work where appropriate, and drawing in others to work on particular projects.

We give thanks to all those who have served on the various Commissions over the years.

AFFILIATE ORGANISATIONS

Australian Student Christian Movement

The Australian Student Christian Movement and the World Student Christian Federation continue to provide an international network of ecumenical engagement for students. While ASCM work was severely impacted by Covid, there has been a significant increase in conversation via Zoom with the Indonesian SCM and other branches of the WSCF. The ASCM is also publishing 'Jubilee Grapevine', an on-line magazine of Christian opinion and analysis.

In Victoria, we held a Universal Day of Prayer for Students service in March, that allowed us to gather physically after three years of absence. Twenty two people participated in this service. This service also focused on prayers for national reconciliation in Australia, in response to the 'Statement from the Heart', published by representatives of Australia's First Nations, gathered at Uluru in 2017.

(Rev. Dr.) Sandy Yule for the Victorian SCM, April 2023

MINISTRY RENEWAL RETREATS VICTORIA (MRRV)

MRRV has gotten off to a slow but steady pace these past 12 months. New groups have commenced their retreats, some under a new model which allows for a greater flexibility fitting in with busy life schedules. There are still a couple more groups to commence mid to late 2023 which is exciting. All up we are encouraged and are continually exploring ways in which we can grow the ministry so that many more people, engaged in ministry, have the opportunity to be strengthened and encouraged in the work they do. *Craig Semple*

INTERGEN

Tracing its history back to 1871, Intergen is arguably Australia's oldest organisation committed to the resourcing of ministry with children and families. At the same time, it is one of the newest having taken on the name Intergen as part of a governance re-structure in 2017. For 2023 and beyond, Intergen aspires to influence the culture and practice of ministry and mission with children and their families through strategic relationships, resourcing and specific ministry development.

Looking back, the last three years have been unique and challenging for all of us and have had profound impacts. Whilst in 2022 we saw a gradual emergence from the restrictions of the previous two years, the church landscape is markedly different from what it was before. One of the many areas of church life dramatically impacted has been ministry with children and families, with many churches currently in a rebuilding phase.

In the midst of this challenging and demanding time, it has been a year of significant progress in the life of Intergen. Under the leadership of a new chairperson, Bishop Stephen Hale, Intergen has both maintained a significant degree of activity and developed a revised strategic intent. Particular highlights of the past 12 months have included...

- continued development and dissemination of new resources, with a particular focus on creation of lectionary-aligned resources

- provision of the free *Refresh. Recharge. Renew.* event for the blessing of ministers, pastors and practitioners with a heart for ministry with children a gift to the church as part of the celebration of InterGen's 150th + 1 Anniversary.
- maintenance of intentionally strategic relationships with entities such as the Australian Intergenerational Roundtable (AIR), Children's Ministry Network (CMN), InterGenerate (Aus & US), Lost Sheep, Messy Church, Surrender and, of course, the VCC.

Looking ahead, InterGen eagerly anticipates the implementation of its revised strategic intent at the direction of its Board and with the enthusiastic leadership of its recently appointed Executive General Manager, Chris Barnett. The key elements of the revised intent are a commitment to...

- Consulting and Coaching
- Communities of Learning
- Collaborative Resourcing
- Catalysing Specific Ministries
- Creative Partnerships & Networking

InterGen is at the threshold of a potentially exciting new phase in its long and storied commitment to the resourcing of ministry with children and families. It is grateful for the existing relationship with the VCC and looks forward to exploring new opportunities for collaboration in 2023. *Chris Barnett, InterGen - Executive General Manager.*

Palestine Israel Ecumenical Network report 2022

In 2022 PIEN has continued to be *a voice from the churches* and to fulfil our PIEN mission of: Solidarity - with Palestinian Christians and all Palestinians and Israelis who seek a just peace Advocacy - speaking out within Australia to the churches, politicians, and others Awareness - presenting facts and issues within the recent history of and current situation in Palestine (Gaza and the OPT) and Israel.

Here are some 2022 highlights.:

The exciting Lenten series [Hear our Voices](#) brought Lenten reflections from Palestinian Christians, in Palestine, Israel and Australia, to an online audience over three weeks. PIEN partnered with [Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Centre](#) in Jerusalem and Nazareth; [Sabeel Australia](#); [Palestinian Christians in Australia](#) (PCIA); and with [Australia Palestine Advocacy Network](#) (APAN) in Australia.

View the series:

- Salwa Duaibis - Theme: [Children in Israeli military detention](#)
- Daniel Munayer - Theme: [The lived experience of Palestinians within Israeli society](#)
- Jason Damouni & Faten Qunqar – Theme: [Young Palestinian Australians' perspective on Palestine and the Diaspora](#)

The fourth segment in the series was an online Ecumenical Service held the day before Palm Sunday, titled [Voices of Hope](#), Journeying towards Easter, with participants from Australia and the Holy Land. A wonderful time of prayer and reflection and truth-telling.

On three occasions in 2022, PIEN was invited to meet either face to face or online, with various MPs, Senators, government officials and staff in response to a letter or submission

written. Letters were written to the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister in the Coalition Government and after May 2022, to the new Prime Minister and Foreign Minister and to several other entities. Topics included the Amnesty International Report on Apartheid in Israel, the IHRA definition of antisemitism, Israeli Government's designation of six Palestinian human rights and humanitarian organisations as "terrorist organisations", the imprisonment of the Gazan former World Vision worker, Mohammed El Halabi, the takeover of the Petra Hotel in East Jerusalem by an Israeli settler group and the proposed Free Trade Agreement with Israel.

The World Week for Peace in Palestine and Israel in September gave us an opportunity through the Uniting Church in Australia, to write a series of articles on the theme – 'Faith, Hope and Love in Action: Towards Justice in Palestine/Israel'. Four articles were published and can be read [here](#).

Canon Don Binder from St George's Cathedral East Jerusalem, along with his wife, Chris, gave an excellent presentation at the PIEN AGM in November.

Nell Potter, PIEN Officer

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER AUSTRALIA Victorian Committee

Report to Victorian Council of Churches 2023

World Day of Prayer (WDP) is a worldwide movement of Christians of all traditions. They come together each year, on or near the first Friday of March, to observe a common time of prayer to which all people are welcome. In many countries they have a continuing relationship under the motto "informed prayer, prayerful action".

World Day of Prayer focuses attention on one country each year with the Christian women of that country writing a prayer service which reflects on their country, their lives and challenges. More than three million people in over 170 countries join in services or prayer events, many contributing to a project to aid the country for which we are praying. The program for World of Prayer 2023 was written by the World Day of Prayer Committee of Taiwan. The WDP 2023 theme "Have Heard About Your Faith" focused on God's promise in the letter to the Ephesians, which is an invitation to active listening, which is the ground of our prayers. Following the example of the letter (Ephesians 1:15-19), where Saint Paul praises the church for their faith in Jesus and love toward all the saints, the worship service contextualizes the witness of the saints with the life stories of Taiwanese Christian women.

This year the Bible Society Taiwan partnered with World Day of Prayer to promote the wellbeing of brides immigrating to Taiwan and their families. The team plans to engage with these families directly, helping them assimilate and extending to them God's offer of reconciliation in Christ. They will also act as a positive influence within the cultural and economic challenges of Taiwan. All offerings received at the 2023 WDP services held cross Victoria will go directly to this Bible Society Taiwanese Project.

We would like to thank the Victorian Council of Churches for their prayerful support for World Day of Prayer in these challenging times so **"Let your hope make you glad. Be patient in time of trouble and never stop praying."** Romans 12:12

Ann Robinson, Secretary, World Day of Prayer Victorian Committee

[note: the 2024 World Day of Prayer will be prepared by Palestinian women]

Australian Church Library Association, Victorian Chapter

The meeting of ACLA Victorian Chapter planned for October 2022 was washed out completely - remember the floods all over the State! The postponed October meeting was held on 4th February, at The Beaconsfield Baptist Church. Naomi Reed gave an excellent presentation about her books and her life in Nepal as a missionary. Despite the stormy weather 20 people attended and we were all captivated with Naomi's presentation. Thank you to Ann Taylor for organising the meeting at her church and Pastor Duncan for his warm welcome. In the afternoon we had a tour of The Beaconsfield Baptist Church Library, followed by our AGM. Our Committee members are basically the same. President: Jocelyn Formby; Treasurer/Secretary: Warren Glover. Committee members: Pat Barnden, Jessie Glover and Kathy Andrewartha. Our next meeting will be on the 3 June, 2023 at St Paul's, Ringwood with guest speaker Tony Rinaudo, author of "The Forest Underground" which was the Australian Christian Book of the year, 2022. I would like to wish all of our members a belated Happy New Year and I look forward to meeting you at our future Chapter Meetings.
Jocelyn Formby, Vic. Chapter President

KORUS CONNECT: PARTNERING FOR COMMUNITY

Korus Connect is a Christian ecumenical organisation making a positive difference in communities. During 2022, 460 paid and volunteer workers continued their commitment to serve individuals and local communities, helping to connect people with their purpose and full potential and to build communities that are connected, supported and whole.

Korus Connect was set up by the churches to provide religious instruction (SRI) to students in government schools. Instructors were delighted to be able to provide some face-to-face classes where COVID-related restrictions allowed this, in the 13 schools that offered SRI programs in 2022. These students were offered a different way of looking at the world, themselves and the challenges they faced. SRI is a visible reminder that spiritual wellbeing matters.

More than 240 schools benefitted from a chaplain as part of their wellbeing team. Chaplains support the students as well as staff and families, with a weekly average of more than 7000 conversations. Each term, more than 5000 students are also engaged with chaplain-led programs.

'[The chaplain's]... manner is always calm, friendly, and welcoming and the students are always thrilled to see her and work with her [in the classroom]. Her lunch clubs allow for students to have a smaller, settled environment to participate in activities that lets them have a rest from the larger (sometimes chaotic) environment that can be play time.'
(Classroom teacher)

Korus Connect pastoral care is not restricted to the school setting. During 2022 it was also offered at Melbourne Airport and in and around three shopping precincts. These workers provide practical, spiritual and emotional support to many in the course of their work. Community connector Jenny has set up a safe space in the centre where she works.

'Pete was sitting in our new community space alone. I walked past a few times and noticed he was there most of the day so I went in to speak with him. For the next few weeks Pete

would show up at the same location but what I loved most is this once rough, angry and grumpy man is now a very friendly man that greets me with a smile.'

Korus Connect workers continue to make a difference in their communities, undergirded by the support of people such as the VCC community. Thank you for ongoing prayers and interest in this wider Christian work.

Dawn Penney, Chief Executive Officer, Korus Connect

For noting: Faith Values and GRE (General Religious Education)

This is a work in progress, as conversations take place between a number of interested groups including Faith Values, Faith Communities Council of Victoria, and the Victorian Education Department to resource primary teachers to teach GRE, focussed on a number of faith traditions (Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist etc).

JCMA is also engaged in schools ministry through the Intercultural Understanding Program.

TRAVEL FUND

The VCC Standing Committee has agreed to set aside funds to support people attending events specifically related to ecumenical and interfaith activities. Criteria and documentation will be available on the VCC website.

It was also agreed that the VCC would support two younger adults (under 35) who meet the criteria to attend the Parliament of World Religions in Chicago in August 2023. Co-funding with the National Council of Churches in Australia to support this initiative is also acknowledged. Promotion, selection and recruitment will happen in May/June 2023.

NEW MEMBER CHURCH - STANDING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

The VCC Standing Committee brings a recommendation to receive a new member church – the German Lutheran Trinity Church (Deutsche Evangelisch-Lutherische Dreifaltigkeitskirche).

The church is independent but in collegial relationship with the LCANZ. The head organisation is the EKD, the Protestant Church of Germany. The EKD is a member of the World Council of Churches as well as Lutheran World Federation, and other international and interfaith organisations. The EKD sends a pastor from Germany for a placement on a cycle of every 6-9 years. The current pastor is Pastorin Kim Kiessling (2022 -)

The German Lutheran Trinity Church is part of Melbourne City Churches in Action (MCCIA), and will host the MCCIA 2023 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity service on May 21st).

The German Lutheran Trinity Church congregation is 170 years old, and the church building at 22 Parliament Place will be 150 years old in 2024. Services are mainly in German but also rostered for English services.

History <https://en.kirche.org.au/about-us-2/history/>

WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES ASSEMBLY 2022 (Germany)

The WCC Assembly met with the theme, *'Christ's love moves the world to reconciliation and unity'*. In a world crying out for justice and peace, the theme addressed a hope for a future in which resources are shared, inequalities are addressed and all can enjoy dignity. The purpose of God's love incarnated in Jesus Christ is for the reconciliation and unity of all, of the whole cosmos (Col. 1:19; Eph. 1:10). This opens new horizons and possibilities for churches and for Christian unity - to confront together the many challenges of the world we live in and on witnessing to our common Gospel values, but does not stop there, as the purpose of God's love in Christ is for the whole world. It means openness and care for the whole world, and dialogue and cooperation with people of other faiths or of no faith but who share the same values". (Rev. Prof. Dr Ioan Sauca, WCC's interim General Secretary). "The assembly theme invites us in this turbulent period for our world, to reorientate our existence toward the one God in Trinity; toward the very source of life, who so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. With this faith, guided by the work of the Holy Spirit, and in Jesus Christ our Lord to whom we see the Father we are called to testify our witness today in a wounded and suffering world," (Prof. Dr Marina Kolovopoulou, theme group moderator). "This reflection on the theme of the WCC assembly is intended to encourage church leaders and local congregations to meditate and discuss the timely significance of Christ's compassion in a world marked by the climate emergency, systemic economic injustice, the digital revolution, and national populisms nurtured by the fear of the other. As Christians and churches come together to respond these global challenges, they grow in the love of Christ and manifest his gift of unity" (Rev. Dr Odair Pedroso Mateus, interim WCC deputy general secretary and director of the WCC's Commission on Faith and Order)

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed and highlighted both the vulnerabilities of humankind and the world's profound inequalities and divisions. "We are convinced that the assembly's theme has never been more necessary in a world that longs for peace, justice, health, unity and solidarity". It is the first time that the word "love" has been the focus of a theme for one of the WCC's assemblies. "Love as the language of our faith can actively and prophetically engage the world as we see and experience it today in a way that will make a difference for a shared tomorrow. At the same time, the focus on love "does not only unite us together as Christians but also draws us to a deeper relationship with all people of faith and all people of good will." (Dr Verena Hammes, GS of the Council of Churches in Germany). "This love which is first received from God through Christ grows as it is shared with the neighbour through the enabling power of the Holy Spirit. It shapes the internal relationships of the faith communities but must also be manifested powerfully in the public sphere to invite for reconciliation and judging with justice. (Rev. Dr Kenneth Mtata, GS of the Zimbabwe Council of Churches)

The theme reflection underlines the need for an "**ecumenism of the heart**," noting that many people are urging that the search for unity should not be only "intellectual, institutional, and formal, but also based in relationship, in common prayer, and above all, in mutual affection and love." A world that is "crying out for profound love, for community, for justice and hope needs churches that are visibly in communion, longing for oneness where there is division, and finding a new future for humankind and all creation."

The World Council of Churches reflections may be a catalyst for fresh thinking about ecumenism – local ecumenism, and VCC priorities.

VICTORIAN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES INC.

Registration Number A0036552E

FINANCIAL REPORT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2022

VICTORIAN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES INC.

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General information

The financial statements cover Victorian Council of Churches Inc. as an individual entity. The financial statements are presented in Australian dollars, which is Victorian Council of Churches Inc.'s functional and presentation currency.

Victorian Council of Churches Inc. is a not-for-profit incorporated association, incorporated and domiciled in Australia. Its registered office and principal place of business are:

Registered office

Level 6
608 St Kilda Road
Melbourne VIC 3004

Principal place of business

Level 6
608 St Kilda Road
Melbourne VIC 3004

VICTORIAN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES INC.

**STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2022**

	Note	2022 \$	2021 \$
Revenue	5	193,980	905,674
Expenses			
Audit Fees and Related Services	12	6,000	2,750
Bank Charges		112	129
Bookkeeping Fees		2,580	2,838
Casual Staff Expenses		350	4,895
Conferences & Special Events		247	82
Consultancy		18,330	625
Contractors		–	15,511
Donations		–	10
Dues & Subscriptions		473	618
Equipment < \$1,000		545	–
Equipment < \$6,501		2,670	–
Hospitality		655	1,899
Insurance		4,600	6,888
IT Services		391	12,600
General Expenses		767	11,921
Photocopying & Printing		2,057	3,019
Postage		–	553
Promotion & Advertising		–	72
Recruitment		4,242	–
Rent		10,365	10,952
Salary Admin Fee		495	330
Salary & Wages		55,418	92,875
Superannuation		5,715	9,264
Employee Annual Leave		5,023	–
Software Costs		938	2,995
Stationery		–	570
Travel		1,280	586
Website & Telecommunications		823	1,008
Work Cover Premiums		874	1,294
Total operating expenses		124,950	184,284
Operating profit for the year		69,030	721,390
Other Comprehensive Income:			
(Loss)/gain on the revaluation of investment portfolio		(163,439)	109,710
Total comprehensive (loss)/profit for the year		(94,409)	831,100

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

VICTORIAN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES INC.

**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2022**

	Note	2022 \$	2021 \$
CURRENT ASSETS			
Cash and cash equivalents	6	20,124	8,890
Trade and other receivables	7	1,702	1,489
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS		21,826	10,379
NON-CURRENT ASSETS			
Other financial assets	8	1,337,405	1,414,048
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS		1,337,405	1,414,048
TOTAL ASSETS		1,359,231	1,424,427
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Trade and other payables	9	10,438	3,748
Provisions – annual leave		5,023	–
Advance contributions received		17,500	–
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES		32,961	3,748
TOTAL LIABILITIES		32,961	3,748
NET ASSETS		1,326,270	1,420,679
EQUITY			
Asset revaluation reserve		–	137,556
Retained Earnings		1,326,270	1,283,123
TOTAL EQUITY		1,326,270	1,420,679

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

VICTORIAN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES INC.

**STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2022**

2021

	Asset Revaluation Reserve \$	Retained Earnings \$	Total Equity \$
At 1 January 2021	27,846	561,733	589,579
Net profit for the year	–	721,390	721,390
Other comprehensive income	109,710	–	109,710
At 31 December 2021	137,556	1,283,123	1,420,679

2022

	Asset Revaluation Reserve \$	Retained Earnings \$	Total Equity \$
At 1 January 2022	137,556	1,283,123	1,420,679
Net profit for the year	–	69,030	69,030
Other comprehensive income	(137,556)	(25,883)	(163,439)
At 31 December 2022	–	1,326,270	1,326,270

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

VICTORIAN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES INC.

**STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2022**

	Note	2022 \$	2021 \$
CASH FLOW FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES			
Cash receipts in the course of operations		159,570	881,131
Interest and distributions received		34,411	24,543
Cash payments in the course of operations		(95,950)	(181,305)
Net cash flow (used in) / from operating activities	10	98,031	724,369
CASH FLOW FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES			
Payments for investments		(65,000)	–
Transfers to investments		(21,797)	(1,026,492)
Net cash flow from / (used in) investing activities		(86,797)	(1,026,492)
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents held		11,234	(302,123)
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of financial year		8,890	311,013
Cash and cash equivalents at end of financial year	6	20,124	8,890

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

VICTORIAN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES INC.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2022

NOTE 1: REPORTING ENTITY

This general purpose financial report is prepared in order to satisfy the financial reporting requirements of the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 (Victoria) and the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012. The Standing Committee has determined that the Victorian Council of Churches Inc. ("Council") is a reporting entity.

The Council gathers together in pilgrimage Churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the Scriptures; seeks to fulfil together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit; and commit themselves:

- (a) to deepen their relationship with each other in order to express more visibly the unity willed by Christ for his Church; and
- (b) to work together towards the fulfilment of their common mission of witness, proclamation and service.

NOTE 2: BASIS OF PREPARATION

(a) Statement of compliance

The financial report is a general purpose financial report which has been prepared in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards ("AASB's") – Simplified Disclosures including Australian Interpretations adopted by the Australian Accounting Standards Board ("AASB").

(b) Basis of measurement

The financial report has been prepared on an accruals basis and is based on historical cost convention and does not take into account changing money values, or except where specifically stated, current valuations of non-current assets.

(c) Use of estimates and judgements

The preparation of financial statements requires management to make judgements, estimates and assumptions that affect the application of accounting policies and the reported amounts of assets, liabilities, income and expenses. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

Estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised and in any future periods affected.

(d) New or amended Accounting Standards and Interpretations adopted

The Council has adopted all of the new or amended Accounting Standards and Interpretations issued by the Australian Accounting Standards Board ('AASB') that are mandatory for the current reporting period.

Any new or amended Accounting Standards or Interpretations that are not yet mandatory have not been early adopted. The adoption of these Accounting Standards and Interpretations did not have any significant impact on the financial performance or position of the Council. The following Accounting Standards and Interpretations are most relevant to the Council:

Conceptual Framework for Financial Reporting (Conceptual Framework)

The Council has adopted the revised Conceptual Framework from 1 January 2022. The Conceptual Framework contains new definition and recognition criteria as well as new guidance on measurement that affects several Accounting Standards.

AASB 1060 General Purpose Financial Statements - Simplified Disclosures for For-Profit and Not-for-Profit Tier 2 Entities

The Council has adopted AASB 1060 from 1 January 2022. The standard provides a new Tier 2 reporting framework with simplified disclosures that are based on the requirements of IFRS for SMEs.

VICTORIAN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES INC.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2022

NOTE 3: SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (continued)

The principal accounting policies adopted in the preparation of the financial statements are set out below. These policies have been consistently applied to all the years presented, unless otherwise stated.

(a) Revenue

Revenue from voluntary donations and bequests is recognised when received.

If Government grants are received with conditions attached, that must be satisfied before the Association is eligible to the contribution, the recognition of the grant is deferred until those conditions are satisfied.

(b) Income Tax

The Council is a tax-exempt entity for the purposes of Division 50 of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997. In addition, the Council is a rebateable employer for the purposes of section 65J of the Fringe Benefits Assessment Act 1986.

(c) Cash and Cash Equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents includes cash on hand, deposits held at call with financial institutions, other short-term, highly liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less that are readily convertible to known amounts of cash and which are subject to an insignificant risk of changes in value.

(d) Trade and Other Receivables

Other receivables are recognised at amortised cost, less any allowance for expected credit losses.

(e) Property, Plant and Equipment

Property, plant and equipment are only recognised where the Council holds ownership of the asset or has legal rights to control the asset's future use. Each class of asset is stated at historical cost less depreciation at a rate of 25.00%. Historical cost includes expenditure that is directly attributable to the acquisition of the asset. The residual values, useful lives and depreciation methods are reviewed, and adjusted if appropriate, at each balance date.

An item of property, plant and equipment is derecognised upon disposal or when there is no future economic benefit to the Council. Gains and losses between the carrying amount and the disposal proceeds are taken to profit or loss.

(f) Impairment

At each reporting date the Council assesses whether there is objective evidence that a financial instrument has been impaired. If any such indication exists, the recoverable amount of the asset, being the higher of the asset's fair value less costs to sell and value in use, is compared to the asset's carrying value. Any excess of the asset's carrying value over its recoverable amount is expensed to the income statement.

(g) Trade and Other Payables

These amounts represent liabilities for goods and services provided to the Council prior to the end of the financial year and which are unpaid. Due to their short-term nature they are measured at amortised cost and are not discounted. The amounts are unsecured and are usually paid within 30 days of recognition.

(h) Trusts & Projects

Liabilities are recognised for amounts received in anticipation of expenses relating to specific projects; where such expenses have not yet been fully committed. The expectation being that, were amounts not to be fully committed, they would be liable for return to the remitter.

VICTORIAN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES INC.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2022

NOTE 3: SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (continued)

(i) Provisions

Annual leave

Liabilities for wages and salaries, including non-monetary benefits, annual leave and long service leave expected to be settled wholly within 12 months of the reporting date are measured at the amounts expected to be paid when the liabilities are settled.

Long service leave

The liability for annual leave and long service leave not expected to be settled within 12 months of the reporting date are measured at the present value of expected future payments to be made in respect of services provided by employees up to the reporting date using the projected unit credit method. Consideration is given to expected future wage and salary levels, experience of employee departures and periods of service. Expected future payments are discounted using market yields at the reporting date on national government bonds with terms to maturity and currency that match, as closely as possible, the estimated future cash outflows.

(j) Goods and Services Tax (GST)

Revenue, expenses and assets are recognised net of the amount of goods and services tax (GST), except where the amount of GST incurred is not recoverable from the taxation authority. In these circumstances, the GST is recognised as part of the cost of acquisition of the asset or as part of the expense.

Receivables and payables are stated inclusive of the amount of GST receivable or payable. The net amount of GST recoverable from, or payable to, the tax authority is included in other receivables or other payables in the statement of financial position.

Cash flows are presented on a gross basis. The GST components of cash flows arising from investing or financing activities which are recoverable from, or payable to the tax authority, are presented as operating cash flows.

Commitments and contingencies are disclosed net of the amount of GST recoverable from, or payable to, the tax authority.

NOTE 4: CRITICAL ACCOUNTING JUDGEMENTS, ESTIMATES AND ASSUMPTIONS

The preparation of the financial statements requires management to make judgements, estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts in the financial statements. Management continually evaluates its judgements and estimates in relation to assets, liabilities, contingent liabilities, revenue and expenses. Management bases its judgements, estimates and assumptions on historical experience and on other various factors, including expectations of future events, management believes to be reasonable under the circumstances. The resulting accounting judgements and estimates will seldom equal the related actual results. The judgements, estimates and assumptions that have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities (refer to the respective notes) within the next financial year are discussed below.

Estimation of useful lives of assets

The Council determines the estimated useful lives and related depreciation and amortisation charges for its property, plant and equipment and finite life intangible assets. The useful lives could change significantly as a result of technical innovations or some other event. The depreciation and amortisation charge will increase where the useful lives are less than previously estimated lives, or technically obsolete or non-strategic assets that have been abandoned or sold will be written off or written down.

VICTORIAN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES INC.

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2022**

	2022	2021
	\$	\$
NOTE 5: REVENUE		
Member Contributions	155,652	117,660
Affiliation Fees	3,000	2,600
Bequests Received	–	750,000
JobKeeper Subsidy	–	9,600
Donations	500	730
Distributions from Investments	34,412	25,004
Other income	416	80
	193,980	905,674
NOTE 6: CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS		
Cash at bank	20,124	8,890
	20,124	8,890
NOTE 7: TRADE AND OTHER RECEIVABLES		
GST Receivable	1,489	1,489
Sundry Receivable	213	–
	1,702	1,489
NOTE 8: OTHER FINANCIAL ASSETS		
Investment – Enhanced Income Trust	9,782	9,964
Investment – Growth Portfolio	656,410	682,134
Investment – International Equities Trust	671,213	721,950
	1,337,405	1,414,048
NOTE 9: TRADE AND OTHER PAYABLES		
Trade Creditors	7,938	–
Credit Card	–	1,248
Accrued Expenses	2,500	2,500
	10,438	3,748

VICTORIAN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES INC.

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2022**

	2022 \$	2021 \$
NOTE 10: CASH FLOW INFORMATION		
Reconciliation of operating result to net cash from operating activities		
Net surplus	69,030	721,390
Changes in assets and liabilities:		
(Increase)/decrease in receivables	(213)	17,889
(Increase)/decrease in prepayments	–	3,381
Increase/(decrease) in payables	24,191	1,858
Increase/(decrease) in provisions	5,023	(20,149)
Net cash (used in) / from operating activities	98,031	724,369

NOTE 11: KEY MANAGEMENT PERSONNEL DISCLOSURES

Compensation

The aggregate compensation made to officers and other members of key management personnel of the Council is set out below:

Aggregated compensation	66,157	102,469
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NOTE 12: REMUNERATION OF AUDITORS

During the financial year the following fees were paid or payable for services provided by DFK Kidsons Partnership, the auditor of the Council:

Review of the financial statements	2,000	2,000
Preparation of financial statements	1,500	–
Additional professional services	2,500	750
	6,000	2,750

NOTE 13: CONTINGENT LIABILITIES AND CONTINGENT ASSETS

The Council had no contingent liabilities and contingent assets as at 31 December 2022 and 31 December 2021.

NOTE 14: EVENTS AFTER THE REPORTING PERIOD

No matter or circumstance has arisen since 31 December 2022 that has significantly affected, or may significantly affect the Council's operations, the results of those operations, or the Council's state of affairs in future financial years.



VCC STANDING COMMITTEE

1 March 2023

Mr Michael Port
DFK Kidsons Partnership
Level 6
30 Collins Street
MELBOURNE VIC 3000

Dear Mr Port

MANAGEMENT REPRESENTATION LETTER

This representation letter is provided in connection with your review of the financial report of the Victorian Council of Churches Inc. for the year ended 31 December 2022, for the purpose of you expressing an opinion as to whether the financial report is, in all material respects, presented fairly in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards (including the Australian Accounting Interpretations), the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* and complies with the requirements of *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 (Victoria)*.

We acknowledge our responsibility for ensuring that the financial report is in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards – Simplified Disclosures (including the Australian Accounting Interpretations), the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* and complies with the requirements of *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 (Victoria)*.

We confirm that the financial report is free of material misstatements, including omissions.

We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, the following representations made to you during your review.

1. We have made available to you:
 - (a) all financial records and related data, other information, explanations and assistance necessary for the conduct of the review
 - (b) minutes of all meetings of boards, directors and committees
 - (c) details of any off-balance sheet agreements or instruments, or confirmation that no such agreements or instruments exist.
2. Proper accounts and records of the transactions and affairs of the organisation and such other records as sufficiently explain the financial operations and financial position of the organisation have been kept.

3. We believe the effects of those uncorrected financial report misstatements aggregated by the auditor during the review are immaterial, both individually and in the aggregate, to the financial report taken as a whole.
4. We have prepared the financial report in accordance with the designation as a not for-profit entity for the purpose of reporting under Australian Accounting Standards.
5. We acknowledge responsibility for the design and implementation of internal controls designed to prevent and detect fraud.
6. We have disclosed to the auditor the results of our assessment of the risk that the financial report may be materially misstated as a result of fraud.
7. There:
 - (a) has been no fraud, error, or non-compliance with laws and regulations involving management or employees who have a significant role in the internal control structure;
 - (b) has been no fraud, error, or non-compliance with laws and regulations that could have a material effect on the financial report; and
 - (c) have been no communications from regulatory agencies concerning non-compliance with, or deficiencies in, financial reporting practices that could have a material effect on the financial report.
8. We acknowledge responsibility for the design and implementation of internal control to prevent and detect error. We have established and maintained an adequate internal control structure to facilitate the preparation of a reliable financial report, and adequate financial records have been maintained. There are no material transactions that have not been properly recorded in the accounting records underlying the financial report.
9. We have no plans or intentions that may materially affect the carrying values, or classification, of assets and liabilities.
10. We consider the measurement methods, including related assumptions, used to determine fair values relating to assets and liabilities to be appropriate and consistently applied.
11. We have considered the requirements of AASB 136 *Impairment of Assets* when assessing the impairment of assets and in ensuring that no assets are stated in excess of their recoverable amount.
12. The following have been properly recorded or disclosed in the financial report:
 - (a) related party transactions and related amounts receivable or payable, including revenue, purchases, loans, transfers, leasing arrangements and guarantees (written or verbal)
 - (b) arrangements involving restrictions on cash balances, compensating balances and line-of-credit or similar arrangements
 - (c) agreements to repurchase assets previously sold
 - (d) material liabilities or contingent liabilities or assets including those arising under derivative financial instruments
 - (e) unasserted claims or assessments that our lawyer has advised us are probable of assertion
 - (f) losses arising from the fulfilment of, or an inability to fulfil, any sale commitments or as a result of purchase commitments in excess of normal requirements or at prices in excess of prevailing market prices.

13. There are no violations or possible violations of laws or regulations whose effects should be considered for disclosure in the financial report or as a basis for recording an expense.
14. The entity has satisfactory title to all assets and there are no liens or encumbrances on such assets nor has any asset been pledged as collateral. Allowances for depreciation have been adjusted for all important items of property, plant and equipment that have been abandoned or are otherwise unusable.
15. The entity has complied with all aspects of contractual agreements that would have a material effect on the financial report in the event of non-compliance.
16. There were no material commitments for construction or acquisition of property, plant and equipment or to acquire other non-current assets, such as investments or intangibles, other than those disclosed in the financial report.
17. We are satisfied that the remuneration of the accountable officers and all executives has been properly reported in financial reports and includes all components of executive remuneration including wages and salaries, leave accruals, performance and other bonuses, superannuation, motor vehicles, any other allowances.
18. The names of all known related parties have been made known to the auditor. All related party relationships and transactions have been adequately disclosed in the financial report.
19. No events have occurred subsequent to the balance sheet date that would require adjustment to, or disclosure in, the financial report.
20. We confirm the reasonableness of significant assumptions used in making accounting estimates for inclusion in the financial report.

We understand that your examination was made in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards and was, therefore, designed primarily for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the financial report of the entity taken as a whole, and that your tests of the financial records and other auditing procedures were limited to those which you considered necessary for that purpose.

Yours sincerely



Rev. Sandy Boyce
Executive Officer
Victorian Council of Churches Inc.