

ECUMENICAL RELATIONS COMMISSION

The Commission met in April 2017. Prior to this the Commission was inactive for a time, with individual members maintaining their ongoing commitments to bilateral dialogue groups and other activities.

ERC MEMBERSHIP

Archbishop Phillip Aspinall (Chair from May 2016), Bishop Tim Harris, The Reverend Dr Jane Lee Barker, Bishop John Parkes, Ms Alison Preston, Bishop Doug Stevens, The Reverend Canon Richard Tutin.

ERC Membership changes: Archbishop Roger Herft was appointed as Chair of the ERC in November 2014 but resigned in early 2015. He was succeeded as Interim Chair by the Primate until Archbishop Aspinall was appointed as Chair in May 2016.

There were two resignations from the ERC received prior to its April 2017 meeting. These were from The Reverend Dr Erica Mathieson and The Reverend Dr Cathy Thomson.

This report summarises developments in ecumenical endeavours and bilateral dialogues since the General Synod in 2014.

1. CHURCH AGENCIES NETWORK DISASTER OPERATIONS (CAN DO) – 'CHURCHES COLLABORATING TO ENHANCE COMMUNITY RESILIENCE TO DISASTER AND CONFLICT'

In May 2016, eight Australian church-based overseas aid and development agencies established the Church Agencies Network Disaster Operations (CAN DO) consortium, with agreement to work together to strengthen communities facing humanitarian crises.

The Consortium includes Caritas (lead agency), Act for Peace (NCCA), Australian Lutheran World Service, Transform Aid International (Baptist World Aid), Uniting World, and ADRA (Adventist Development & Relief Agency), as well as Anglican Board of Mission and Anglican Overseas Aid.

This exciting, innovative commitment to ecumenical collaboration is underpinned by a formal memorandum of understanding, a five year strategy (*Roadmap to Resilient Communities*), and an agreement for each agency to contribute financial resources to joint programs.

CAN DO builds on significant ecumenical collaboration by these agencies over more than a decade through the Church Agencies Network, which includes a broader membership of eleven denominational agencies (including the Salvation Army, Quakers and Churches of Christ – Global Mission Partners).

CAN DO also builds on effective collaboration by church-based agencies through community development programs in Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu. These partnerships were funded by the Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (previously AusAID). CAN DO also draws on the example of effective ecumenical emergency response programs through the global ACT Alliance.

The CAN DO Mission Statement outlines a commitment to: empowering local communities as leaders in their context; responding quickly and efficiently to humanitarian crises; strengthening preparedness and resilience; and developing disaster risk management strategies to plan ahead for the future. The consortium also has a stated commitment to our faith-based values, exploring theology and missiology of climate change, natural disaster, human conflict and peace, and how to integrate quality, accountability, protection and inclusion principles in programs.

Anglicans and CAN DO:

Both Anglican Board of Mission (ABM) and Anglican Overseas Aid (AOA) are active members of CAN DO, with a commitment to support Anglican partners across the Pacific, Asia, Middle East, and Africa to respond more effectively to disasters and crises, and in disaster risk reduction.

ABM and AOA place particular emphasis on supporting the Anglican Church of Melanesia (Solomon Islands and Vanuatu), the Anglican Church of Polynesia (Fiji, Samoa, Tonga, Cook Islands) and the Anglican Church of Papua New Guinea, through CAN DO. Close cooperation with the Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia will be a priority.

ABM and AOA bring considerable expertise to CAN DO, including in areas of faith-based community development, theology, gender, disaster risk reduction, as well a long standing church partnerships in the Pacific and elsewhere, and collaboration with diverse partners.

Further information

CAN DO Road Map and CAN DO Memorandum of Understanding can be found at www.churchagenciesnetwork.org.au

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2. INTERNATIONAL ANGLICAN - ROMAN CATHOLIC COMMISSION FOR UNITY AND MISSION (IARCCUM)

For those of us who grew up in the 60's the winds of change blew hard around us. Nowhere is this more apparent than in Anglican/Roman Catholic relations. A series of events in the 60's gave substance to the converging journey of our two churches. First, was the informal meeting when Archbishop of Canterbury Geoffrey Fisher was received in the Vatican by Pope John XXIII. This was the first meeting between a Pope and Archbishop of Canterbury since the English Reformation of the 16th Century.

Second, the Second Vatican Council issued the Decree on Ecumenism **UNITATIS REDINTEGRATIO**, which begins: 'The restoration of unity among all Christians is one of the principal concerns of the Second Vatican Council.' The Decree acknowledges that despite the separations caused by the Reformation, '(a)mong those in which Catholic traditions and institutions in part continue to exist, the Anglican Communion occupies a special place.'

The third major step was a formal visit by Archbishop Michael Ramsey to Pope Paul VI in 1966. The landmark meeting was marked with a joint declaration issued at St Paul's Outside the Walls which has established the groundwork for the ecumenical journey between the Roman Catholic Church and the churches of the Anglican Communion. As they left the Basilica the Pope took off his episcopal ring and placed it on Ramsey's finger. This gesture spoke more loudly than words about their relation as brothers in Christ.

During this visit, Archbishop Ramsey dedicated the Anglican Centre in Rome as the permanent Anglican Communion presence in Rome. It is a living reality of our Communion's commitment to the unity of the Church, working collaboratively with all Christians for justice and peace in the world.

Further, and as a consequence of the Joint Declaration, the Anglican - Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC) was established in 1967. The first phase of work was completed with the publication of the Final Report in 1981, dealing with three topics: **The Eucharist, Ministry and Authority**. The second phase covered a more diverse range of topics including: Salvation and the Church, 1986; The Church as Communion, 1991; Life in Christ: Morals, Communion and the Church, 1993; The Gift of Authority, 1999, and culminating in the publication of Mary: Grace and Hope in Christ in 2005. The collected works of ARCIC II in the volume **Looking Towards a Church Fully Reconciled** was launched in Australia on 31 May 2017. The third phase of ARCIC is working on the theme of the Church local and universal, and how the Church comes to discern right ethical teaching.

In 2000, then Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey and Cardinal Edward Cassidy, then President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, convoked a conference of Anglican and Roman Catholic bishops at Mississauga in Canada to discern the progress made in theological conversations, and whether closer co-operation could be developed between the two traditions. The result was the International Anglican - Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission (IARCCUM), which has been meeting since 2001.

Under the joint chairs Archbishop John Bathersby RC Archbishop of Brisbane and Bishop David Beetge Anglican Bishop of the Highveld, IARCCUM issued an Agreed Statement **GROWING TOGETHER IN UNITY AND MISSION Building on 40 years of Anglican – Roman Catholic Dialogue** (Feast of Saint Francis, 4 October 2006). The statement is in two parts. Part 1 records the substantial areas of agreement reached through the ARCIC process, and indicates areas which need further work. Part 2 offers a framework for closer cooperation between our two communions.

The areas identified for joint collaboration are: visible expressions of our shared faith; joint study of our faith; co-operation wherever possible in lay and ordained ministries; and shared witness in the world.

The period after the publication of this Joint Statement marked a cooling in enthusiasm for this ecumenical endeavour. The deep divisions within the Anglican Communion following the consecration of Gene Robinson as Bishop of New Hampshire in ECUSA in 2003, and the sanctioning of same sex blessings in the Diocese of New Westminster in the Anglican Church of Canada in 2003 together with the ordination of women to the three orders of ministry in various parts of the Anglican Communion led to a slow down.

It was the 50th anniversary of the Ramsey visit to Paul VI which rekindled a desire to pursue our bilateral dialogue. 19 pairs of bishops from around the world, under the co-chairing of Bishop David Hamid (Anglican) and Archbishop Donald Bolen (RC) were invited to a Pilgrimage in Canterbury and Rome between 30 September and 7 October 2016. John Parkes, the Bishop of Wangaratta, was the Australian Anglican bishop, Archbishop Christopher Prowse of Canberra Goulburn his Catholic counterpart.

The bishops prayed together in Canterbury Cathedral, at the Parish of St Thomas of Canterbury, at St Peter's Basilica, St Paul's Outside the Walls, San Grigorio al Celio and Caravita, as well as in the chapel at the bishops' lodging. As relationships deepened, the pain of the inability to share in the Holy Communion reminded them both of the obstacles to full unity as well as the urgent need to work together to overcome them.

The bishops shared deeply from their own contexts. These included environmental degradation; mass migration; war and persecution resulting in refugees, displaced populations, and post-conflict trauma; societal decisions eroding the dignity of human life from beginning until natural end; human trafficking and modern slavery. This 'ecumenism of the Cross' unites us as we bear together the plight of our people who face the challenges of our troubled world. The bishops reflected on an 'ecumenism of humiliation' lamenting our failures and sharing the brokenness of our church communities. We have failed to protect vulnerable people: children from sexual abuse, women from violence, and indigenous peoples from exploitation.

While the bishops were in Rome, Pope Francis and Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby signed a common declaration which affirmed and emphasized that differences in our respective Churches "cannot prevent us from recognizing one another as brothers and sisters in Christ", nor should they lead us to a lessening of our ecumenical endeavours. They encouraged us to continue to walk together as bishops on our pilgrimage.

His Holiness and The Archbishop of Canterbury commissioned the bishops to return to their respective contexts with a mission to enthuse and educate about the process of growing together in faith between our churches.

The symbolism of Paul's gift of his ring continued. The Pope presented Archbishop Justin with a copy of the head of the crozier of Gregory the Great, in the place from which he, Gregory, sent Augustine to evangelise Britain. Justin took off his Coventry Cross that powerful sign of reconciliation and resurrection and gave it to His Holiness. The warmth of their personal relations is powerful testimony to the value of the work both of ARCIC, IARCCUM and in our context AUSTARC.

The various agreed documents can be found at <https://iarccum.org/>.

3. AUSTRALIAN ANGLICAN ROMAN CATHOLIC DIALOGUE GROUP (AUSTARC)

AUSTARC was commissioned in June 1993 by the overseeing bodies, the Anglican General Synod and the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference. Its initial mandate was and still is:

- a) the promotion of the international ARCIC discussions;
- b) the development of contacts with ARC's in other countries;
- c) the consideration of matters of particular ecumenical concern within Australia.

From 2000 a subsidiary activity for AUSTARC has been the search for connection with the wider Anglican Roman Catholic cooperation through IARCCUM.

The Australian dialogue convenes twice each year in Melbourne. In 2014 and 2015 we met at St James Old Cathedral, West Melbourne and in 2016 and 2017 at Corpus Christi College Carlton.

Since its inception AUSTARC has examined the implications of the various ARCIC statements and has published several commentary booklets on the subjects of *Ministry* (1996), *The Saints and Prayer* (1997), *Gospel Authority* (2004), and *Why The Church* (2007).

The primary activity for 2012-2014 was an examination of the theme of holiness in the Australian context, inspired by the canonisation of Mary McKillop. This resulted in the booklet title *Called To Holiness In Australia* which was launched in September 2015 at the combined meeting of the Anglican ERC and Roman Catholic Bishop's Commission for Ecumenical Relations.

During 2015 we engaged in a shared reading of Pope Francis' apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*. In 2016 we discussed evangelism and evangelisation from the perspectives of our two churches. It became apparent that there was a noticeable difference of understanding regarding both terminology and content that was further complicated by the intra-Anglican differences of emphasis between those from Anglo-Catholic and Evangelical traditions. Following more discussion we agreed to examine the theme of the heart or core of the Gospel as a theme emerging from *Evangelii Gaudium*. This work will be completed at the next meeting in September 2017.

At our first meeting in 2017 we discussed possibilities for ongoing work beyond the current project and it was suggested that we prepare a shared theological reflection on issues raised by the current *Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse*. Following a prolonged and energized discussion it was unanimously agreed that the bulk of our time at the September 2017 meeting will be given over to planning for this. It is the hope of the group to do this work with some co-opted expertise and to offer the eventual results to the bishops of both Churches.

The dialogue membership from both churches has been quite stable for some time. We endeavour to have Dr Charles Sherlock attend one of our meetings each year to report on

ARCIC, as he is a consultant to that international dialogue. Present members of the dialogue are

	Roman Catholic	Anglican
Co-chairs	Bishop Terry Curtin	Bishop Doug Stevens
Secretaries	Very Reverend Denis Stanley EV	Venerable Philip Newman
Members	Reverend Dr Denis Edwards	Reverend Coleen Arnold-Moore
	Dr Catherine Playoust	Reverend Canon Scott Lowrey
	Vacancy	Venerable Dr Craig D'Alton
	Vacancy	Reverend Prof Dorothy Lee

4. ANGLICAN-LUTHERAN DIALOGUES

The national Anglican-Lutheran Dialogue Group has been focussed on both supplementing and building upon the significant points of agreement and mutual recognition reflected in *Common Ground* (2001). The supplementary aspect concerns our respective understanding and ways of articulating 'mission'. A brief supplementary document has been drafted for feedback and wider discussion within our respective churches.

Common Ground (2001) provides the basis for more local or context-specific agreements, and it would be fair to say this remains largely underutilised. The Dialogue Group is developing a number of resources to assist with this, by way of templates for possible local covenants, and educational material to assist local churches to better understand the distinctive character, convictions and identity of both Anglican and Lutheran traditions.

One development by the Lutheran Church of Australia and New Zealand, in part stimulated by earlier stages of the Anglican-Lutheran Dialogue, has been the introduction of the title 'bishop' (replacing 'president') to designate the pastoral office of oversight of specific geographical regions. From our Anglican perspective, this does more readily facilitate the development of local agreements or covenants within areas of co-existing oversight.

The Anglican-Lutheran International Coordinating Committee (ALICC) held its fourth and final meeting in Adelaide, Australia, 25 to 31 May 2016, under the leadership of co-chairs Bishop Michael Pryse of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada and Bishop Tim Harris of the Anglican Church of Australia. The primary task of this cycle of meetings has been to create material (liturgical, educational and devotional) to mark our common heritage within the European reformation. Taking up the Lutheran World Federation Reformation 500 theme, 'Liberated by God's Grace', ALICC has published a book *Liberated by God's Grace: Anglican-Lutheran Reflections* (2017).

The book (also available as a pdf at <http://www.anglicancommunion.org/media/287200/dtpw-anglican-lutheran-reflections-2017-en.pdf>) is intended to assist Lutherans and Anglicans to commemorate together the 500th anniversary of the beginning of the Reformation. This material illustrates the constant need for all churches be open to reform and renewal by the Holy Spirit. This is a six-week daily devotional resource, with contributions by Anglicans and Lutherans; men and women; lay and ordained from around the world. The themes are:

- God's mission in the world (Mission Dei)
- Liberated by God's Grace
- Salvation – not for sale
- Human beings – not for sale
- Creation – not for sale
- Freed to serve (Diakonia)

Bishop Tim Harris and Bishop Michael Pryse, co-chairs of ALIC explain, "It is the hope of ALICC that such common reflections, drawing on a range of contributors and experiences, may in our common experience of God's grace draw our two families of churches closer together in this extraordinary year."

5. ANGLICAN CONSULTATIVE COUNCIL

ACC 16 was held in Lusaka, Zambia between 8-19 April 2016. Resolutions from the meeting concerning ecumenical relations included:

- Resolution 16/13: Anglican-Methodist Relations;
- Resolution 16/14: Anglican-Oriental Relations;
- Resolution 16/15: Anglican-Orthodox Relations;
- Resolution 16/16: The Five-Hundred Anniversary of the Reformation;
- Resolution 16/17: Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification;
- Resolution 16/18: Anglican-Lutheran Relations.

The resolutions were presented at the meeting of the Ecumenical Relations Commission on 21 April 2017 and will be further discussed at future meetings. (For details see the Appendix to this Report).

6. NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES AUSTRALIA ("NCCA")

At the 9th National Forum held 24-27 June 2016 the National Council of Churches in Australia agreed to change its structure and governance. This was the culmination of an extensive review process.

NCCA previously consisted of both a non-incorporated entity and an incorporated entity. The Forum agreed with the recommendation that the two entities should merge to become NCCA Ltd that would be responsible for the governance of NCCA.

The NCCA structures now consist of:

The Forum: Meets every 3 years. Members of the Forum include Heads of Churches, Representatives of member Churches and Directors nominated by member churches.

Assembly: Meets 3 times per year for one day. It includes Heads of Churches and invited delegates. The Assembly replaces the NCCA Executive.

Commissions: unchanged from the previous structure.

Networks: unchanged from the previous structure.

NCCA Ltd: Member churches represented by member nominee; Directors nominated by churches: 9 elected by Member nominees and 3 appointed by Directors.

The offices of President, General Secretary and Treasurer remain unchanged. A new Constitution was also approved by the Forum as part of the changes to the governance structure.

The Right Reverend Philip Huggins was elected as President of NCCA at the 2016 Forum. The Representatives of the Anglican Church of Australia on NCCA bodies are:

Member Nominee

The Most Reverend Dr Philip Freier

Director NCCA Ltd

Ms Anne Hywood

Assembly Delegates

The Most Reverend Dr Phillip Aspinall

Ms Alison Preston

Act for Peace Commission

The Rt Rev'd Cameron Venables

Faith and Unity Commission

The Rt Rev'd Doug Stevens

The Rev'd Dr Jane Lee Barker

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ecumenical Commission

The Rev'd Gloria Shipp

The Rev'd Victor Blanco

Safe Church Network

Mr Garth Blake SC

Social Justice Network

The Very Rev'd Dr Peter Catt

The Most Reverend Dr Phillip Aspinall

Chair

Ecumenical Relations Commission

2 May 2017

APPENDIX – resolutions of Anglican Consultative Council 2016 in Lusaka

Resolution 16.13: Anglican-Methodist relations

The Anglican Consultative Council

1. welcomes the report of the Anglican-Methodist International Commission for Unity and Mission—Into All the World: Being and Becoming Apostolic Churches (2014); and
2. commends the report to the Churches of the Anglican Communion for study, action and response; and
3. endorses the following four recommendations of AMICUM:
 - Requests the World Methodist Council and the Anglican Consultative Council to commend this report to their member churches for study, action and response.
 - In particular, requests the Councils to invite those churches which are considering moving into a relationship of communion to study and learn from the examples and precedents noted in Section 10 of this report, and to invite all churches to make use of the suggestions in the Toolkits of this report.
 - Requests the World Methodist Council and the Anglican Consultative Council to establish an Anglican-Methodist International Coordinating Committee to oversee and foster relationships between Methodist and Anglican member churches, with the following mandate:
 - a. To monitor and advise upon the development of Anglican-Methodist relations around the world, giving attention to their consistency with each other and with the self-understanding of the two communions,
 - b. To act as a catalyst for the development of Methodist and Anglican relations, and in particular for agreements of communion where these do not yet exist,
 - c. To encourage the growth of joint life and mission, especially where there are established agreements,
 - d. To arrange theological consultation as appropriate,
 - e. To reflect on the responses to this report received from the member churches of the two communions, and
 - f. To report on a regular basis to the two Councils.
 - Requests each Council to appoint five members representing the breadth of their respective Communions, with appropriate expertise, and to invite ecumenical participation in the committee as appropriate.

Resolution 16.14: Anglican-Oriental Orthodox relations

The Anglican Consultative Council

1. rejoices in the work of the Anglican-Oriental Orthodox International Commission in producing an Agreed Statement on Christology; and
2. recognizes it as a significant step of reconciliation across ancient divides; and
3. commends the Agreed Statement on Christology to the Churches of the Communion as a means to deepen faith in our Incarnate Lord, and as an opportunity to reflect on this faith together with members of the Oriental Orthodox Churches, and with other Christians, as part of an ongoing process of reception.

Resolution 16.15: Anglican-Orthodox relations

The Anglican Consultative Council

1. welcomes the Buffalo Statement of the International Commission for Anglican-Orthodox Theological Dialogue, *In the Image and Likeness of God: A Hope-Filled Anthropology*; and
2. gives thanks for this profound exploration of what it means that God has become human not only that we may share in the divine life, but also that we may become fully human; and
3. commends it to the provinces of the Anglican Communion as a resource for study, reflection and reception.

Resolution 16.16: The Five-Hundredth Anniversary of the Reformation

The Anglican Consultative Council

1. recognizes the significance of the five-hundredth anniversary of the Reformation, which will be marked in 2017; and
2. encourages Anglicans across the Communion to be a part of the commemorations by joining in shared services, undertaking study with Lutherans and other ecumenical partners, and engaging with them in mission activities; and
3. recommends that Anglicans engage with the Lutheran World Federation's focus: *Liberated by God's Grace*.

Resolution 16.17: Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification

The Anglican Consultative Council

1. welcomes and affirms the substance of the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification (JDDJ), signed by Lutherans and Roman Catholics in 1999; and
2. recognizes that Anglicans have explored the doctrine of justification with both Lutherans and Roman Catholics; and
3. recognizes that Anglicans and Lutherans share a common understanding of God's justifying grace, as the Helsinki Report stated that we are accounted righteous and are made righteous before God only by grace through faith because of the merits of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and not on account of our works or merits; and
4. recognizes that in 1986 the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC) produced a statement *Salvation and the Church*, which observed that our two Communion are agreed on the essential aspects of the doctrine of salvation and on the Church's role within it.

Resolution 16.18: Anglican-Lutheran relations

The Anglican Consultative Council

1. recognizes the relationships that already exist between Anglicans and Lutherans globally; and
2. commends the steps being taken by North American, British and Irish Anglican churches, to bring the three regional agreements of Communion into relationship with each other; and
3. encourages Anglican Churches in other regions to explore deepening relationships with churches of the Lutheran World Federation in a formal theological way following the guidelines offered in the 2012 Anglican-Lutheran International Commission report *To Love and Serve the Lord*.