

NATIONAL ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER ANGLICAN COUNCIL – (NATSIAC)



PURPOSE

At its core NATSIAC is about the promotion of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We seek to be a voice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians within and without the church. We give an Indigenous perspective to the Anglican Church forum, especially those issues that involve support and social justice for Indigenous communities and ministries. Above all our members minister to, with and alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians.

NATSIAC'S Vision is to be the primary voice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Anglicans, promoting Gospel mission, encouraging ministry and generating resources so we may walk together with God and the wider church.

MEMBERS

Mrs Pauline Ah Wang
 The Rev'd Phyllis Andy
 Mrs Salu Blanco
 The Rev'd Victor Blanco
 The Rev'd Canon Bruce Boase
 Mrs Ivy Bon
 Mr Cameron Burr
 The Rev'd Robyn Davis
 The Rev'd Dr Garry Deverell
 Dr Rose Elu
 Mrs Elizabeth Hayden
 Miss Jaqueline Hill
 Mr Jojo Huddleston
 Mrs Beverley Jacob
 Mr Michael Jacob
 The Ven Gael Johannsen
 The Rev'd Canon Victor Joseph
 The Ven Karen Kime
 Mr Edward King
 The Ven Brian Kirk

Mr Moses Kudub
 The Rev'd Di Langham
 The Rev'd Glenn Loughrey
 The Rt Rev'd Arthur Malcolm
 The Rev'd Colleen Mamarika
 The Rev'd Daryl McCullough
 The Rt Rev'd Chris McLeod
 Mr Lindsay Murcha
 The Rev'd Neville Naden
 Ms Alice Namoj
 The Rev'd Yulki Nungumajbarr
 Mr William Oates
 Pastor Michael Paduch-Duckett
 The Rev'd Lenore Parker
 Ms Belinda Roberts
 Mrs Mandy Sammy
 The Rev'd Gloria Shipp
 Mrs Dixie Skuthorpe
 The Rev'd Graeme Weaver
 Mr Milton Walit

OFFICE BEARERS

National Aboriginal Bishop	The Rt Rev'd Chris McLeod
Chairperson	The Ven Brian Kirk – resigned 7/11/20
Vice Chair	The Rev'd Victor Blanco – Acting Chair
Treasurer/Secretary	The Rev'd Gloria Shipp
Executive members	Mr Cameron Burr
	Dr Rose Elu
	Mr Jojo Huddleston
	The Rev'd Canon Victor Joseph
	Mr Milton Walit
Non-Executive Minute Secretary	The Rev'd Daryl McCullough

ACTIVITIES SINCE THE LAST GENERAL SYNOD

Members supported the Uluru Statement from the Heart and have expressed their great disappointment in the Federal Government's decision to ignore the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

At the 2019 Gathering members passed the following motion:

'That this NATSIAC re-affirms the Statement from the Heart and calls on the Australian Government for constitutional recognition and a treaty between the First Nations Peoples of Australia and the Federal Government. This agreement will recognise the First Nation People's history and prior occupation of this land, as well as the injustices many have endured and enshrine an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice to Parliament in the constitution. Further, the contents of this motion be forwarded to the Prime Minister of Australia and the Federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs by the NATSIAC Secretary.'

Conversations were held with the Public Affairs Commission about the Constitution and asked for advice on recognition in the Australian Constitution:

NATSIAC gave thanks for the Anglican Alliance and supports moving toward a closer relationship with them by sharing information and resources on common issues.

A letter was sent to The Hon Scott Morrison MP, Prime Minister of Australia in 2018 regarding Aboriginal deaths in custody. Members expressed their dismay that 339 recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody almost three decades ago lay largely unimplemented while people are still dying at a rate of one per month.

At the 2019 Gathering members shared stories about suicides in their communities and the Indigenous population. The following motion was passed:

'NATSIAC is continually mourning as we see the deaths of our people caused through drug use and suicide. We call on Health Departments to adequately fund and resource programs designed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to address mental health issues in our communities through wholistic family approaches to these issues. The contents of this motion to be sent to state Ministers for Health the Commonwealth Minister of Indigenous Affairs.'

As a result of this motion letters were sent to all Ministers and NATSIAC received responses from all except for South Australia and Victoria.

Discussions at the 2019 Gathering about incarceration rates resulted in the following motion being passed:

‘NATSIAC is appalled at the incarceration rates of our people and the over representation of our young people in the justice system. We call on state governments to investigate pathways that include non-custodial and pre-judgement options for our people. NATSIAC notes that the vast sums of money spent on incarcerating our people could be re-directed into preventative programs that both heal and rehabilitate our people. The contents of this motion are to be sent to the Premiers and Justice Ministers of each state and territory.’

Letters were sent to all Premiers and Justice Ministers and responses were received from all States and Territories detailing current and proposed initiatives to address the matter.

The Anglican Board of Mission – Australia (ABM) launched a funding program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mission Grants. The grants are designed to assist mission activities which benefit Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. ABM raises the funds and administers the grant scheme, and the successful applications are chosen by NATSIAC. To date NATSIAC has endorsed 17 grant applications. Of these 14 applications totalling more than \$100,000 were selected at the 2019 Gathering. NATSIAC gives thanks to God for the work of ABM and especially for its ongoing support of NATSIAC.

NATSIAC wrote a letter of congratulations to The Most Rev'd Mark MacDonald and all Indigenous Anglicans in Canada on the forming of a self-determining Indigenous Church within the Anglican Church of Canada and on Bishop Mark's elevation to the role of Archbishop. This is a momentous occasion, not only in the lives of faithful Indigenous Anglicans in Canada, but for Indigenous Anglicans around the world.

After reading through material and discussions, the Executive endorsed ABM's Statement of the Heart study guide. NATSIAC endorses this study as a fantastic tool to focus on the issues facing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities around Australia. It is a powerful document which is engaging and thought provoking. We encourage all Christians to engage with the material with an open heart and an open mind.

Discussions were held with The Rev'd Neville Naden from Bush Church Aid, with NATSIAC endorsing its Reconciliation Action Plan as the outcome of these discussions.

In March 2018 NATSIAC employed Jen Powe as the Secretariat on a part time basis, to assist with the administration side of NATSIAC.

Bishop Chris McLeod, National Aboriginal Bishop issued a statement about smoking ceremonies which is available at <https://www.natsiac.com/news.html>. Bishop Chris was asked by Eternity News if he wished to respond to Pastor Mark Powell's article which suggested Christian Churches should not use Welcome or Acknowledgement of Country. Both Bishop Chris McLeod and the Rev'd Daryl McCullough wrote separate responses to the article. Bishop Chris has been asked to comment on the one word change in the national anthem, he is still formulating his response in consultation with NATSIAC members. Bishop Chris continues to be continually active in his own community and across the nation.

NATSIAC held discussions at the 2019 Gathering on the same-sex marriage debate. The motion passed about this is further down.

Bishop Chris McLeod, the Rev'd Daryl McCullough and Dr Rose Elu were NATSIAC representatives at the Anglican Indigenous Network (AIN) conference in Hawaii in 2019 and engaged in many workshops and discussions during the conference. NATSIAC gives thanks to God for AIN and rejoices in the news that the AIN had been invited to attend the Lambeth Conference in 2020 to lead a seminar and resources booth. NATSIAC endorsed AIN's decision to nominate Rose and Daryl to attend the Lambeth conference as representatives of both NATSIAC and the AIN. Another NATSIAC member Mr Lindsay Murgha informed the 2019 Gathering he had been chosen to represent Australia at Lambeth as a steward.

The Executive and members have held discussions with Southern Cross Ministries about A National Act of Recognition. This will continue to be an ongoing conversation.

Beside the day to day involvement in ministry, NATSIAC members have:

- held conversations that have led to the establishment of the Aboriginal Council of the Anglican Province of Victoria
- participated at the Abundant Justice Conference in Brisbane
- attended Diocesan Indigenous Ministry Training Weekends and been involved in working parties to establish Reconciliation Action Plans at Diocesan levels, to encourage Indigenous ministry and the incorporation of Indigenous culture in the life of the church
- assisted and supported Bamaga Youth Group on a cultural trip to Dubbo NSW, where they shared their culture and faith with a broad cross section of the community at church, school and community events
- assisted with the establishment of new churches (Pondee Church)
- attended ecumenical services and participated in community events and conferences as participants and guest speakers
- held discussions on climate change, which continues to be an ongoing concern particularly for the Torres Strait Islands
- been involved with the repatriation of Indigenous bones from overseas
- continued translating the second edition of the Kriol Bible and prayer book
- travelled to Hawaii to represent NATSIAC at the funeral of former Secretary General of AIN Malcolm Nāeu Chun.

The Gathering set for 2020 was cancelled due to COVID-19 and travel restrictions. Some of our members live and work in remote communities which were subject to extensive lockdowns to prevent the spread of the virus into the communities. The year proved to be challenging to all with restrictions and finding new ways of connecting with congregations/ communities.

NATSIAC Chair Archdeacon Brian Kirk resigned from the position of Chairperson and full-time ministry. Brian was a member of NATSIAC for almost 20 years and was instrumental in guiding NATSIAC through the process of adopting a new NATSIAC Canon and served in the national review of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ministry in the Anglican Church of Australia. Bishop Chris gave thanks Brian for his wisdom, care for detail, and strong Biblically grounded faith and leadership.

NATSIAC also congratulates Dr Rose Elu on being named as the QLD Senior Australian of the Year 2021 for her advocacy for Torres Strait communities and climate change.

NATSIAC's goal is to continue with its vision but to also promote growth and leadership, particularly amongst the younger generations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. NATSIAC has been fortunate to have some younger members join in the last year. Many of the members agreed with the words of the Rev'd Yulki Nunggumajbarr at the 2019 Gathering 'Before I retire, I want to see my people in a strong church.'

MOTIONS

The following resolutions were made at the 2019 NATSIAC Gathering:

Motion 2 – NATSIAC calls on the church to work with us in the establishment pre-amble and a formal covenant relationship in the constitution of the ACA between the Anglican Church of Australia and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Anglicans of this nation. Further that NATSIAC accepts the offer of Rev Dr Garry Deverell to draft a covenant document for consideration and discussion.

Moved Fr Daryl, Second Fr Victor.

Carried.

Motion 3 – That the content of Motion 2 be submitted to the next GSSC meeting by the secretary.

Moved from the chair.

Carried.

Motion 18 – That NATSIAC ask General Synod to increase the General Synod grant to NATSIAC in accordance with the CPI over the next triennium and the Secretary of NATSIAC inform the General Secretary of this request.

Motion 22 – That NATSIAC ask the executive to submit a motion to General Synod that General Synod Fully fund and resource a National Aboriginal Bishop and a National Torres Strait Islander Bishop, both of whom would be licensed by the Primate.

Motion 23 – That NATSIAC writes to General Synod Standing Committee and the Principals of the two Anglican Theological Colleges in Melbourne to encourage them to support the Indigenous Theological programmes offered through the University of Divinity in Melbourne.

Motion 27 – That this NATSIAC:

- a. acknowledges that the current doctrine of the Anglican Church of Australia is that marriage is a life-long union between one man and one woman
- b. welcomes the efforts of General Synod to facilitate an informed discussion on the doctrine of marriage
- c. encourages all parties in the discussion on the doctrine of marriage to engage in a manner of mutual respect and genuine listening
- d. requests that the Anglican Church of Australia and commits NATSIAC to fostering churches and fellowships where compassion and grace abound and where the love of God is expressed to all, so that our churches and ministries are welcoming, safe and respectful of all people, including those who identify as LGBTQI+ and
- e. requests the NATSIAC Secretary to send this motion to the meeting of the General Synod Standing Committee in November 2019.

Motion 30 – That NATSIAC ask General Synod for a change in the NATSIAC Canon 2014 to reduce the quorum of a meeting of the council to 20 or 1/3 of current members, excluding life members.

Moved Fr Victor, Seconded Rev Graeme.

Carried.

Motion 31 – That NATSIAC writes to General Synod Standing Committee acknowledging that the Diocese of Adelaide did *not* ask for funding from the Indigenous Endowment Fund, but from General Synod. While NATSIAC is prepared to endorse the provision of funding from the endowment fund to support our bishop, we do so with the expectation that General Synod will fund any short fall in recognition that Bishop Chris is a National Bishop, and serves communities in every diocese of this church.

Moved Fr Daryl, Seconded Rev Dr Garry.

Carried.