

# South Australian Council of Churches Inc



Annual Report July 2015 – June 2016  
Ecumenical Facilitator - Executive Officer

**Healing our Broken Life:** *Living More Fully our Love and Unity in Christ  
- in, with, and for our world*

## 1. Overview

SA Council of Churches has been in existence for nearly 70 years and is formed by the commitment, membership and active participation of eleven different denominations across South Australia. SACC is the Churches' council, and not an entity separate from the Churches: its primary focus is as a place of gathering where the Churches together nurture and nourish their **understanding, spiritual growth, disposition and practice** of ecumenism, so that all may be drawn into **deeper expressions of love and more visible expressions of Christian unity**, from within as well as across.

## 2. Relationships

The nurturing and nourishing occurs through various standing relationships, such as General Council, Committees, Leaders of Christian Churches SA, and project groups. Additionally, many individuals, agencies, local congregations, councils, committees and ecumenical bodies across the churches have direct contact with SACC, their ecumenical council.

In order to assist the Churches as conversation partners, SACC appoints an Ecumenical Facilitator/Executive Officer [EF]. The role of the EF is to assist, facilitate and guide in the development of processes, resources and opportunities for ecumenism across the churches. On occasion, especially in relation to social justice, or as a point of contact, or a representative of the Christian community, relationships are developed with state and local government leadership/departments, NGOs, community organisations, other faiths and religions, and the wider public.

## 3. Summary of Key Activities and Outcomes During the Past Twelve Months

- i. **Formation and Education for Leadership in Ecumenism in the Spirit of Christ** is considered to be an essential aspect in the journey towards more visible signs of our unity in Christ. During 2015, SACC invited the Member Churches to describe how their church is shaping and developing ecumenical consciousness and leadership. As well as areas of strength, some recommendations emerged. SACC has written to each Church, encouraging their further action in order to deepen their commitment to unity in Christ, alongside their brothers and sisters in Christ. SACC looks forward to hearing more from the Churches during 2016/17. See [http://www.sacc.asn.au/ data/Formation and Education Letter April 2016.pdf](http://www.sacc.asn.au/data/Formation_and_Education_Letter_April_2016.pdf)
- ii. **General Council, Standing Committees for Ecumenical Learning, Local Ecumenism & Christian World Service/Ecumenical Partners for Justice & Peace**  
Since being [re]formed in 2008, General Council and the Standing Committees have continued to evolve. During the early part of 2016, each was invited to consider the direction/possibilities of their responsibility, with reference to the document *2015 Onwards*, which was a key focus last year.  
The result is a fresh description for action during 2016-2018, some name changes, and in particular the potential for deeper collaboration, collegiality and flourishing for the work of ecumenism. For detail see [www.sacc.asn.au](http://www.sacc.asn.au) or contact [sacc1@picknowl.com.au](mailto:sacc1@picknowl.com.au)

- iii. **Receptive Ecumenism** continues to be a key focus, and various individuals, committees and agencies have sought assistance and support with workshops, resources, and development of processes and projects.

Preparations by Community for Ecumenical Learning are in train for an event early 2017.

In addition, SACC has a pivotal role in the planning, coordination and programme development of the Fourth International Receptive Ecumenism Conference [RE IV], to be held on 6-9 November 2017 in Canberra. It is hoped that many from SA will participate in RE IV.

- iv. **Developing and providing resources** to assist SACC Appointees and others across the churches in **ecumenical communication, partnerships and action** with their church at whatever level.

This is achieved in various ways including through one-to-one or small group consultation, in conversations, development of resources eg *Healing Gifts for Wounded Hands*, the Ecumenical Lenten Resource for 2016 *Return to God: Divine Grace and Human Struggle*, the hosting by SACC of regular Emmaus Meals with exchange of stories/insights, general enquiry/advice, gathering people when an activity can be best done together rather than separately, weekly E-News, SACC website, and also through provision of regular summaries, formal minutes and annual reports.

- v. **Finances**

Each Member Church is dependent both on the people and on the financial contribution that each makes so that their journey towards Christian unity through their ecumenical council may continue. Together the eleven Member Churches contribute a total of around \$75,000 each year.

The additional costs of running SACC are generated through SACC sharing of administrative staff and office space with ecumenical partners, return from investments, and occasional trusts/grants.

The Annual Budget, prepared in consultation with the Executive Committee, and each Budget, together with the externally Audited Statements, are distributed to each Member Church and their Appointees for consideration and approval by General Council.

#### 4. **The Journey Ahead**

If unity in Christ is to continue to grow and flourish, the gracious and generous commitment of each Member Church towards the other continues to be vital. The selection, appointment, support of people by the Member Churches to SACC is one sign to others of this commitment. It is further extended when each church has a recognised group of people with responsibility for ecumenical relations and for ensuring that unity in Christ is permeating its life and mission.

SA Council of Churches hopes that, as SACC approaches its 70<sup>th</sup> Birthday [to be celebrated on 29 April 2017] the Churches will continue to deepen their engagement with and accountability to one another.

Especially, we hope that each community of faith – whether church council, parish, office, leadership team, agency, or committee - will grow in its openness to ask, not ‘what do we have to tell the other’, but rather, ‘what do we have to learn from the other’, so that each church at all levels may be drawn into deeper expressions of love and more visible expressions of Christian unity from within as well as across the life and mission of each.

**For more information** on any aspect and other activities during 2015-2016, including Peace in the Middle East, Journeying with People who are seeking Asylum, meeting with the Premier/Treasurer of SA, ecumenical services:

- a. **Contact** the ecumenical relations committee/group or similar in your Church office, or a member of SACC Executive Committee (June 2016):
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| Ms Amy Mikhail: Coptic Orthodox                         | Mr Neil Traeger: Treasurer                              |
| Mr Gilbert Materne: Lutheran                            | Ms Ngaire Llewellyn: Churches of Christ, Vice-President |
| Ms Jill Gallio: Catholic, President                     | Mr Peter Burke: Anglican, Vice-President                |
| The Rev'd John Littleton: Ecumenical Delegate/ Anglican | Rev Rob Williams: Ecumenical Delegate/ Uniting          |
| Rev John Psalios: Greek Orthodox                        |   |
- b. **Contribute/Subscribe** to *Ecumenism: Reflection & News* (weekly e-news): [sacc@picknowl.com.au](mailto:sacc@picknowl.com.au)
- c. **See Q&A** [http://www.sacc.asn.au/ data/Review of GC June 2016 Q A for website.pdf](http://www.sacc.asn.au/data/Review_of_GC_June_2016_Q_A_for_website.pdf)
- d. **Visit** [www.sacc.asn.au](http://www.sacc.asn.au) for news, activities and resources as above, or contact Geraldine Hawkes.

Geraldine Hawkes  
 Ecumenical Facilitator  
 E: [sacc1@picknowl.com.au](mailto:sacc1@picknowl.com.au) / Ph: 8215 0300

31 August 2016

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**Members of South Australian Council of Churches**

Anglican Church of Australia - Diocese of Adelaide, The Murray and Willochra; Catholic Archdiocese of Adelaide and Catholic Diocese of Port Pirie; Churches of Christ in SA/NT; Coptic Orthodox Church-Diocese of Melbourne and Affiliated Regions; Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia – District of SA & NT; Lutheran Church of Australia - SA/NT District; Religious Society of Friends SA/NT Regional Meeting; Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of Australia/New Zealand – SA Parish; Salvation Army SA Division; St Urael Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahdo Church in SA Inc; Uniting Church in SA