

# AFFIRMATION OF COMMITMENT

On behalf of our churches,  
we affirm our commitment  
to this covenanting process.

At this point in our journey towards visible unity,  
we confirm those places in this document  
where the name of our own church appears,  
as a sign of what we can covenant to do together.

Anglican Church of Australia • Antiochian Orthodox Church • Armenian Apostolic Church • Assyrian Church of the East • Chinese Methodist Church in Australia<sup>13</sup> • Churches of Christ in Australia • Congregational Federation of Australia • Coptic Orthodox Church • Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia • Indian Orthodox Church<sup>14</sup> • Lutheran Church of Australia • Mar Thoma Church<sup>15</sup> • Religious Society of Friends • Roman Catholic Church in Australia • Romanian Orthodox Church • Serbian Orthodox Church<sup>14</sup> • Syrian Orthodox Church • The Salvation Army • Uniting Church in Australia

<sup>13</sup> Signed the covenanting Document at NCCA 6<sup>th</sup> Forum July 2007

<sup>14</sup> Signed the covenanting Document at NCCA 7<sup>th</sup> Forum July 2010

<sup>15</sup> Signed to include this dimension at NCCA 7<sup>th</sup> Forum July 2010

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## Steps Taken in Covenanting Together

- 1996** – NCCA member churches consider steps towards more visible unity.
- 1998** – NCCA National Forum invites churches to examine their own structures and dialogue with one another about entering into a multi-dimensional covenant at the 2001 National Forum.
- 2001** – The Declaration of Intent - which currently forms Part A of the redrafted Multi-dimensional Covenant - was read together by representatives of all member churches at an ecumenical service during 2001 NCCA Forum on the evening of Sunday 8 July.
- 2004** – Covenant signed by 15 member churches of NCCA at its fifth National Forum in Adelaide
- 2007** – Covenant signed by 2 new member churches at sixth National Forum in Alexander Headland
- 2010** – Covenant signed by 2 new member churches at seventh National Forum in Canberra

**Note** This document contains a Preamble which includes an explanation of Covenanting in Australia as well as offering a Biblical Basis of Covenant and Implications of Covenant. This may be found at [http://www.ncca.org.au/files/Departments/Faith\\_and\\_Unity/Covenanting/2010\\_July\\_Australian\\_Churches\\_Covenanting\\_Together.pdf](http://www.ncca.org.au/files/Departments/Faith_and_Unity/Covenanting/2010_July_Australian_Churches_Covenanting_Together.pdf)

This document is the 2010 version and must not be altered or changed in anyway.



# AUSTRALIAN CHURCHES COVENANTING TOGETHER

## A COMMITMENT TO A COVENANTING PROCESS

### **The Basis of the National Council of Churches in Australia:**

*The NCCA gathers together in pilgrimage those churches and Christian communities, which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the Scriptures and commit themselves*

- [i] to deepen their relationship with each other in order to express more visibly the unity willed by Christ for his Church, and*
- [ii] to work together towards the fulfilment of their mission of common witness, proclamation and service, to the glory of the One God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.*

Given the commitment we have made to each other by becoming members of the National Council of Churches in Australia, we are prepared to renew our commitment through this act of covenanting.

## THE COVENANT DOCUMENT

### **Part A: DECLARATION OF INTENT**

As member churches of the National Council of Churches in Australia,

We RE-AFFIRM our commitment to one another as partners on the ecumenical journey;

We BELIEVE that we are being blessed in our generation to witness the action of the Spirit in drawing the Churches in a common search for a fuller expression of unity;

We REJOICE in all we have in common and GIVE THANKS for the richness of our diversity, though recognizing our disunity is a hindrance to the Church's mission;

We RECOGNISE each other as Communities of Faith, Hope and Love, committed to following Christ and pledged to serve God's kingdom;

We therefore MAKE A COMMITMENT TO EACH OTHER to engage in an ongoing process of growing together (covenanting), not knowing what visible form unity, which is God's will and gift may take, but believing that, by taking the steps to which we now commit ourselves, we shall be led to grow ever more deeply into that unity.

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<sup>1</sup> Signed the covenanting Document at NCCA 6<sup>th</sup> Forum July 2007

<sup>2</sup> Signed the covenanting Document at NCCA 7<sup>th</sup> Forum July 2010

## Part B: THE PROPOSED COMMITMENT

### Dimension 1: General

We agree together

- To join in common prayer with one another
- To intercede and care for one another
- To explore with one another our Christian convictions and their present application

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<sup>3</sup> Signed the covenanting Document at NCCA 7<sup>th</sup> Forum July 2010

<sup>4</sup> Signed to include this dimension at NCCA 7<sup>th</sup> Forum July 2010

### Dimension 2: Shared Use of Physical Resources

We agree together

- To support initiatives for sharing physical resources, such as buildings, and to encourage consultation between the appropriate governing bodies of our churches before new major developments are undertaken.

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<sup>5</sup> Signed to include this dimension at NCCA 7<sup>th</sup> Forum July 2010

### Dimension 3: Common Mission and Ministry

We agree together

- To explore with one another issues and strategies for mission, so that the possibility of common mission is recognised as a priority, information is shared, issues of mission are discussed, and strategies for evangelisation are planned in consultation.
- To seek to develop clear and sensitive guidelines dealing with how our churches together can best meet the needs of people in local (especially rural) situations.

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<sup>6</sup> Signed the covenanting Document at NCCA 7<sup>th</sup> Forum July 2010

<sup>7</sup> Signed to include this dimension at NCCA 7<sup>th</sup> Forum July 2010

## Dimension 4: Common Sacraments

I. We agree together

To recognise the Sacrament of Baptism administered in each other's church and to promote the use of the common Certificate of Baptism

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<sup>8</sup> While acknowledging the Certificate of Baptism (© 1988, Australian Consultation on Liturgy) is evidence of Christian Baptism, the Archdiocese uses a baptismal certificate that specifies that the Sacrament was performed "according to the rites of the Eastern Orthodox Church".

<sup>9</sup> Signed to include this dimension at NCCA 7<sup>th</sup> Forum July 2010

<sup>10</sup> Signed the covenanting Document at NCCA 7<sup>th</sup> Forum July 2010. While acknowledging the Certificate of Baptism (© 1988, Australian Consultation on Liturgy) is evidence of Christian Baptism, the Archdiocese uses a baptismal certificate that specifies that the Sacrament was performed "according to the rites of the Eastern Orthodox Church".

II. We agree together

To invite and welcome members of each other's church to share in the Eucharist according to pastoral need.

*Churches of Christ with the Uniting Church in Australia*

## Dimension 5: Shared Ordained Ministries

We agree together

To continue to work towards the goal of sharing with each other a mutually recognised ordained ministry.

*Anglican Church of Australia with the Lutheran Church of Australia,  
Anglican Church of Australia with the Uniting Church in Australia,  
Churches of Christ in Australia with the Uniting Church in Australia,  
Lutheran Church of Australia with the Uniting Church in Australia*

## Part C: THE FUTURE PLEDGE

To continue to discuss and articulate within our churches

the meaning and significance of our involvement in the quest for a more visible expression of unity and the possibilities for further engagement in ecumenical partnership.

To explore such further steps as will be necessary to make more clearly visible the unity of all Christian people in this country.

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