

MEDIA STATEMENT – 14 December 2023

### **Permanent Ceasefire urgently needed to ease suffering in Gaza**

The National Council of Churches in Australia (NCCA) has renewed its call for there to be peace in Gaza and supports the Australian Government’s call for urgent international efforts to bring about an immediate and sustainable ceasefire.

“We are praying for all affected by this violence, Israelis and Palestinians alike, and for an urgent peaceful and permanent resolution to this conflict through renewed international effort,” NCCA President Rev John Gilmore says.

“Innocent Palestinian and Israeli civilians cannot and must not be the casualties of the ongoing war”.

Rev Gilmore reiterated the call made in the October 20 statement from NCCA, on behalf of 13 national churches, to ‘end the armed conflict, protect civilians, free the hostages.’

“All protagonists must lay down arms” says Rev Gilmore. “The humanitarian crisis in Gaza requires an immediate response to prevent disease and widespread suffering from lack of food, safe water, medicines and shelter, especially as the wet and cold winter season has commenced.”

“There needs to be safe and increased humanitarian access to Gaza. Our local partner, the Near East Council of Churches runs three health clinics and other community services in Gaza, and are ready to bring in relief supplies that are urgently needed” says Rev Gilmore.

Act for Peace, NCCA’s international aid agency, has worked with the Near East Council of Churches in Gaza for over 15 years.

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Link to NCCA Public Statement of 20 October 2023:

<https://www.ncca.org.au/news/media-releases/item/3220-ncca-public-statement-20231020>

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