



# National Council of Churches in Australia

13 December 2018

## **MEDIA RELEASE – Two peoples and three faiths call Jerusalem, City of God**

We are soon to remember Jesus born in a Bethlehem stable, there being no other place.

In profound compassion, Jesus is always with those for whom there is no room.

Those excluded by whoever has the temporary power to exclude, as nations rise and fall.

The relations between Israel and Palestine are so tragic. There has been so much suffering.

The negative stereotypes of each other are not so much untrue as incomplete. No single story is the whole story.

When we look at baby Jesus in the Manger this Christmas, we can but think of Israeli and Palestinian children growing up with a fear of violence, robbed of childhood's enchantment and wonder in the "Holy Land".

Surely the adult world of the one human family can give them a better future!

But for real peace- making, each next step needs to be undertaken after careful dialogue and with a humble spirit.

In this context, it is as obvious as the star which guided the Magi, that every step towards a just peace must be undertaken with sensitivity and attentiveness.

We urge, we plead with our Australian Government to listen carefully before adding to the complexity with hasty decisions about moving an embassy.

Every step must be helpful for all, as we pray afresh for "the peace of Jerusalem", (Psalm 122:6) in these holy days.

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