



Australian Religious Response to Climate Change

# ARRCC

# ANNUAL REPORT

## 2017



### **Acknowledgments:**

ARRCC would like to especially thank all those volunteers who contributed to ARRCC during 2017.

In producing this report, ARRCC is very grateful for the *pro bono* services of Sharon France, Looking Glass Press (Publication Design).

The report covers the period of 1 Jan 2017 to 31 Dec 2017.

Front cover: *L to R: Ordained Buddhist Tejopala Rawls, Rev. Alex Sangster and Rabbi Jonathan Keren-Black at a candle-lit Stop Adani Prayer Vigil. Photo by Julian Meehan*

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# ABOUT ARRCC

**ARRCC is a multi-faith, member-based network committed to taking action on climate change. As an organisation we engage with faith communities, run campaigns, produce resources, and undertake research and advocacy to fulfil our mission and realise our vision.**

## Vision, Mission and Values

### OUR VISION

**We envisage our nation embracing a sustainable future, one which is based on a more ethical understanding of human prosperity and the flourishing of all.**

To help achieve this vision, ARRCC hopes to see religious communities of all kinds, and all across Australia, actively reflecting religious values in their lifestyle choices.

### OUR MISSION

- 1. To promote ethical, sustainable, healthy and contented lifestyles which respect the Earth's precious natural resources.**
- 2. To advocate from a faith perspective for public policies which contribute to climate justice.**

### OUR VALUES

#### Compassion

We are challenged by our compassion towards the other people and beings with whom we share this Earth.

#### Respect

We show respect for people regardless of their views —treating them with kindness and gentleness.

#### Truth-telling

Though we recognise that people find it difficult to hear our messages, we maintain a commitment to truth-telling.

#### A focus on what really matters

We believe happiness comes from a focus on those aspects of life that really matter: relationships and mutual caring, a sense of purpose, and connectedness with the natural environment.

## President's Message



**I look on 2017 with immense gratitude as well as pride in what we were able to achieve. ARRCC can rightly claim to be a contributor to a series of significant wins in protecting the Galilee Basin from coal-mining; the truth is that this has been made possible by the combined efforts of literally hundreds of people and communities. In building our capacity to mobilise people of faith, we are grateful to our friends with expertise in the broader environmental movement, to our donors and to our many generous supporters.**

Over the last ten years, ARRCC has matured as a faith-based environmental organisation. From the outset we have been committed to truth-telling; we have also learned a great deal from that body of knowledge which is about community organising and actually achieving environmental gains. We have more to learn. We have long aspired to creating a more equitable, sustainable, caring and safe global order; we have come to appreciate more deeply that, to be successful, love and fairness need to guide all our relationships—with each other, with our partner organisations and even with our opponents. We aspire to become more inclusive, more caring and more just, to become more fully what our various spiritual traditions challenge us to be.

This is the spirit in which ARRCC has travelled in 2017. Grounded in our spiritual values, we have learned from the broader climate movement the importance of inspiring, energising and empowering people to participate in strategic, collective action towards achievable goals. It was exciting to see around 50 people in Brisbane, Melbourne and Sydney attending nonviolence workshops and participating in Stop Adani actions. With the help of our two talented Community Organisers, and a new team in Queensland, ARRCC held ten separate peaceful faith-based public protest actions at strategic times and locations, two of which included arrestable roles.

ARRCC supporters were prominent in the success of the Community Climate Petition, gathering thousands of signatures and organising many of the meetings with MP's. Ben Thurley (now on the ARRCC Committee) was with Micah Australia when he

set up the project. Caritas coordinated the project when institutional support foundered, and ARRCC volunteers Gill King and Philippa Rowland also provided excellent leadership.

What became evident during the Petition project and the Stop Adani work was the active interest in ARRCC expressed by whole communities. It was exciting to see engagement from, for example, the new Queensland ARRCC group, the Sydney Buddhist Centre, social justice groups in Kiama, North Sydney and the Sunshine Coast.

The ARRCC Committee is enormously grateful for the involvement of so many people, groups and organisations, too many to mention by name. Others may not have been able to spare much time, but have given financial support. Altogether, people have shown their moral support of ARRCC to the tune of around \$31,000 in donations!

So, we look forward to building further momentum in 2018. We want to continue on the path of civil resistance, as championed by Martin Luther King, Gandhi and others, and to continue learning and growing in this direction.

ARRCC will also enable individuals and locally-based communities to embrace climate action, including lifestyle changes. We have always done this, but we aim to do it more effectively. Our spiritual traditions all understand that human flourishing is consistent with voluntary simplicity. A safe climate will not be achieved unless, along with structural shifts, this challenge is fully embraced by the world's wealthy. There's so much to do, so I hope you will continue to join us!



**Thea Ormerod**  
**ARRCC President**

# WHO WE ARE

## Our Structure

ARRCC is a not-for-profit Association, incorporated in NSW under the Associations Incorporation Act, and an Australian Registered Body under the Corporations Act. ARRCC is also a registered Charity with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission. Our Constitution and Statement of Objects are available on our website, under **About ARRCC**. We are officially co-located with Pitt Street Uniting Church, 264 Pitt St, Sydney.

ARRCC has both individual and organisational members from across Australia. It is guided by a Board/ Management Committee which is responsible for ARRCC's broad strategic direction and supporting initiatives. Work is carried out by various working groups which comprise Committee members, ARRCC members and other supporters/volunteers. Greenfaith/ARRCC is a regional working group of ARRCC based in Melbourne and there is now a Queensland ARRCC based in Brisbane.





## Management Committee

There was some continuity but also change on the Management Committee in 2017. Jonathan Keren-Black, Susy Selvarajan, Gill King and Thea Ormerod were the constants. After a mammoth contribution during 2017, Gill stepped down from the Management Committee at the end of the year. The Committee is very grateful for Gill's major contributions to social media, our latest Strategic Plan, the Community Climate Petition and the systematising of information sharing. We look forward to her continuing in roles such as helping to organise a Canberra Regional meeting.

Certain people stepped down earlier, at the AGM.

Apart from his participation on the Committee, we thank John Carroll for keeping up some support for the Gomeroi Traditional Custodians of the Maules Creek area and facilitating workshops. We had to farewell Cassandra after many months of much appreciated help with NationBuilder and graphic design work, among other things. Because of his other commitments, we also had to sadly farewell Usman Iftikhar and thank him for his wisdom as part of the Committee.

The Committee warmly welcomed Gillian Reffell from the Sydney Buddhist Centre, Syed Saif Mansoor from the Muslim community, Ben Thurley from his long experience in with Christian Aid and Advocacy agencies and Stephen Kelly, a Catholic who has long experience in the Union Movement. Their contributions to the ARRCC Committee have already been invaluable.

Work on the Committee can be dry and testing sometimes, so remarkable dedication is shown by those who do volunteer for these roles.



*L to R (top row): Usman Iftikhar, Stephen Kelly, Susy Selvarajan, Jonathan Keren-Black, Cassandra Daw, Gill King, Nadia Ilahee (guest); (bottom row): Murray Lobley, Thea Ormerod, John Carroll*

## Patrons

ARRCC now has the generous support of patrons, Julian Burnside AO QC, Bishop Philip Huggins and Rabbi Jeffrey Kamins OAM. Julian Burnside is an Australian barrister, a renowned human rights and refugee advocate and author. He featured in the video for our first crowdfunding campaign, to which our wonderful supporters responded heartily with donations totalling over \$18,000.

Among other roles, Bishop Philip Huggins is the bishop of the Oodthenong Episcopate of Victoria, the President of the National Council of Churches in Australia and Chair of Board of Brotherhood of St Laurence. Bishop Huggins has been an active contributor to ARRCC for some years.

Rabbi Jeffrey Kamins OAM has been the Senior Rabbi at the Emanuel Synagogue for 29 years, is a Director of the animal welfare organisation known as "Voiceless", a member of the Council of Masorti Rabbis of Australia and an active contributor to ARRCC since its establishment. We are now honoured to have him as a patron.



*L to R: Rev. Alex Sangster, Angela Merriam, Bishop Philip Huggins, Tejopala Rawls, Sr Barbara Daniels pbvm, before a visit to Minister Josh Frydenberg*

## Working Groups

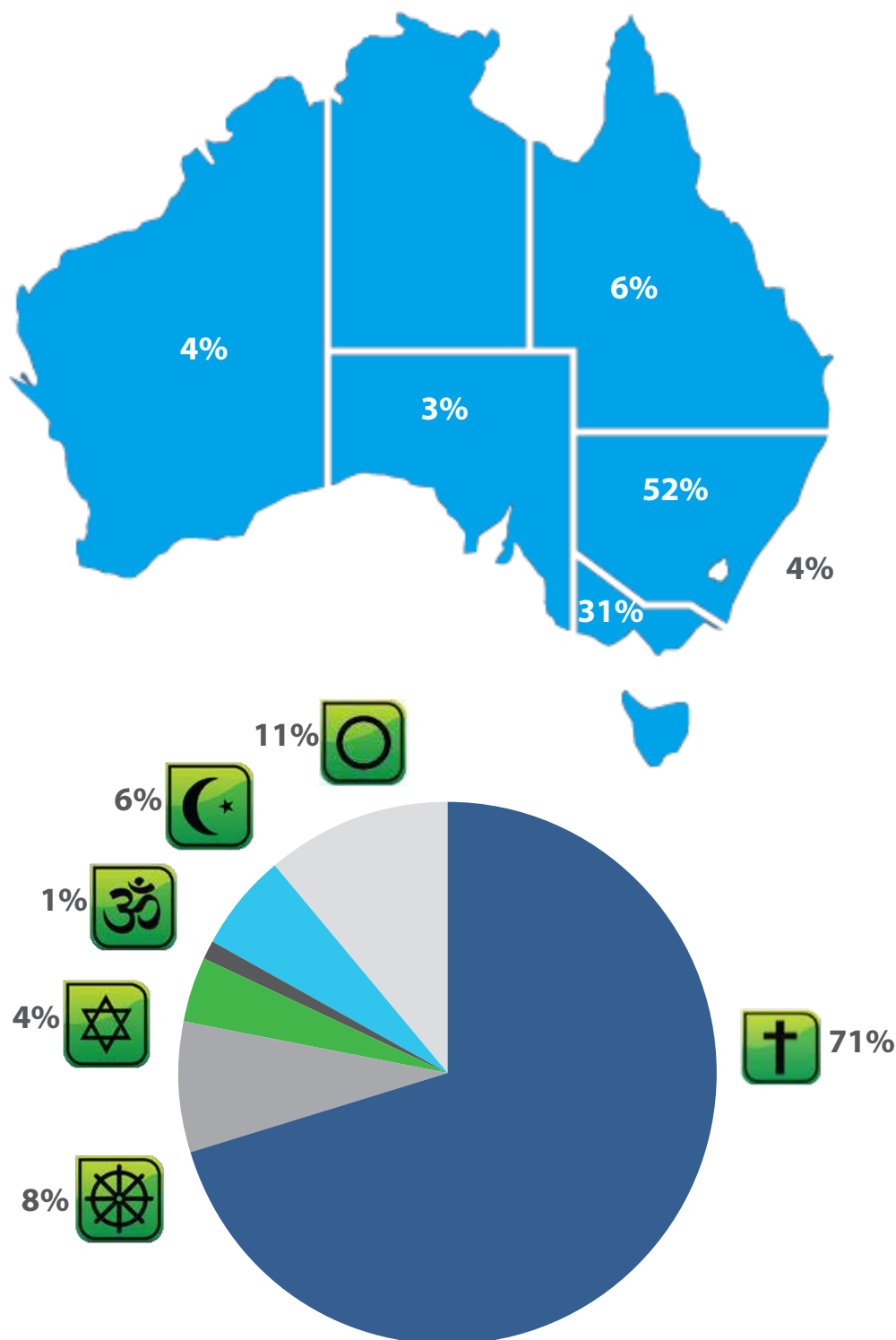
ARRCC continues to have working groups, although the nature of these have changed over the years. The Committee is especially delighted to see groups in Melbourne and Brisbane so proactively engaged, as you can see from their separate reports. Current working groups are:

- » Queensland ARRCC
- » GreenFaith/ARRCC
- » Eat Less Meat
- » Policy and Advocacy

## Our Members

Donations from supporters were more generous than ever in 2017, and ARRCC has benefited greatly from having a steady financial base in membership subscriptions. This includes 37 organisations. The number of subscribers to our e-newsletter is now at 1,650.

### SUMMARY OF INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS









# Organisational Members



## NATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

- |  |   |
|--|---|
|  Anglican EcoCare Commission                  |  Hindu Council of Australia                          |
|  Australian Christian Meditation Community    |  Islamic Sciences and Research Academy               |
|  Australian Federation of Islamic Councils    |  Jewish Ecological Coalition (JECO)                  |
|  Australian Jesuits                           |  Marist Sisters                                      |
|  Brahma Kumaris Australia                     |  Religious Society of Friends in Australia (Quakers) |
|  Caritas Australia                            |  Sisters of Charity Australia                        |
|  Catholic Earthcare Australia                 |  Sisters of St John of God                           |
|  Catholic Religious Australia                 |  Sisters of St Joseph                                |
|  Columban Mission Institute                   |  Sisters of the Good Samaritan                       |
|  Earthsong                                    |  Union for Progressive Judaism                       |
|  Edmund Rice Centre                          |  Mercy Health*                                      |
|  Federation of Australian Buddhist Councils |  Uniting Mission and Education                     |
|  Franciscan Friars                          |   |

## STATE-BASED ORGANISATIONS

- |   |  |
|---|--|
|  Multi-Faith Association of South Australia                  |  Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) Victoria Regional Meeting |
|  Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) NSW Regional Meeting |  UnitingCare NSW.ACT  |

## LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

- |   |   |
|---|---|
|  A GRAND STAND for the Environment |  Ss Peter and Paul parish, Kiama*              |
|  Anglican Media Melbourne          |  Rahamim Ecological Learning Community         |
|  Sydney Buddhist Centre*           |  SeekersHub Sydney                             |
|  Pitt Street Uniting Church        |  St Barnabas Anglican Church, West Leederville |

\* New in 2017

## Our Management Committee



**Thea Ormerod**  
(President)



**Jonathan Keren-Black**



**Murray Lobley\***



**Ben Thurley**



**Gill King\***



**Syed Saif Mansoor**



**Cassandra Daw\***



**Stephen Kelly**



**Susy Selvarajan**



**Usman Iftikhar\***



**John Carroll\***



**Gillian Reffell**



\*Stepped down during 2017

# Our Volunteers and Consultants

ARRCC would not be nearly as effective without the help of many members and supporters who volunteered throughout the year.

## GENERAL VOLUNTEERS

**Shize Zhou, Fatima Syeda**—IT help

**Gill King, Harry Creamer, Jonathan Keren-Black, Thea Ormerod**—policy and advocacy working group

**Terry Sussmilch**—Tasmania contact person

**Sue Taylor**—WA contact person

**Gill King**—ACT contact person

**Renee Hills**—convener of Queensland ARRCC

**Andrea Mayes**—key contact in Victoria

**Philippa Rowland**—key contact in SA

**Amy Griffiths, Wai Shan Fong (Sana), Tegan Park, Adrien Lalchere, Vijai Singhal, Dawnita Dong (Wan), Thanh Hoang, Vani Ganesh, Fatima Syeda Zaidi, Madeleine Hill, Rose Walton**—Eat Less Meat working group

## CONSULTANTS

**Angela Merriam**—Community Organiser

**Tejopala Rawls**—Community Organiser

**Paul Boundy**—Administrative Assistant

**Brami Jegan**—Holdfast Communications

**Jocelyn Edge**—Accountant

**Corey McCann**—Website

**Sharon France**—Looking Glass Press (Publication design)

## PARTNERS

**Pace e Bene**

**Sunrise Project**

**Front Line Action on Coal**

**Greenpeace Australia**

**Queensland Churches Environmental Network**

**National Council of Churches in Australia**

**Holdfast Communications,**

**350.org**

**Sydney Stop Adani**

**CounterAct**

# WHAT WE DO

## Our Objectives

The objects of the Australian Religious Response to Climate Change (ARRCC) Incorporated are:

**1**

**To assist faith communities to make the link between their faith and caring for the Earth.**

**2**

**To raise awareness specifically about climate change issues within faith communities.**

**3**

**To assist and inspire faith communities to be respectful of the Earth's natural resources by transforming their consumption practices and reducing wastage.**

**4**

**To advocate for public policies which protect the Earth's biodiversity and promote justice, especially towards people most adversely impacted by climate change, including future generations.**

**5**

**To facilitate interfaith dialogue and collaboration in relation to climate change.**

**6**

**To work co-operatively with others in the broader community who are active in meeting the above objectives.**

## Our Campaigns

Curbing climate change requires transformation at every level of society—from individuals, to communities, institutions and businesses.

### GREENFAITH/ARRCC

Greenfaith Australia formed as a grass-roots interfaith organisation in Melbourne with broad representation across different religious, age, gender, geographic and cultural groups in Melbourne. After working in partnership with ARRCC for some time, in 2013 Greenfaith merged with ARRCC to become a Victorian-based local chapter. With ARRCC's headquarters in Sydney and GreenFaith's in Melbourne, ARRCC is now better equipped to reach out to faith communities across Australia.





## POLICY AND ADVOCACY

ARRCC believes that individuals, faith communities and religious leaders have the power to speak out publically for government and business policies and practices that care for the Earth. We also recognise that people can make a significant impact by simply sharing about climate change with family, friends and their local communities.

This campaign conducts faith-based political advocacy on climate change through direct engagement with politicians, and supports individuals and faith-based organisations to speak out.



## GO FOSSIL FUEL FREE

ARRCC believes that to protect life on earth, Australia must leave most of our coal, oil and gas in the ground. Individuals and faith communities can play a powerful role in moving Australia's economy out of fossil fuels and into clean and renewable energy.

This campaign encourages and provides the tools to individuals and communities to take action in their role as members, beneficiaries and customers of institutional investors including banks, super funds and insurance companies to divest from fossil fuels.



## FAITH COMMUNITY FOOTPRINTS

ARRCC believes in empowering individuals and faith communities to take practical steps to reduce their environmental footprint and protect and nurture our planet.

This campaign develops resources such as Steps2Sustainability and the Climate Action Kits to provide guidance to individuals and faith communities, and then works with communities to make lasting changing and celebrate their achievements.



## EAT LESS MEAT / MEAT FREE DAY

All of the world religions, from their various perspectives, encourage protection of the environment, serving the needs of the poor, kindness towards animals and healthy living.

In addition to being a large contribution to climate change, meat consumption connects with issues concerning global justice in relation to food, the compassionate treatment of animals, nonviolence, and health.

ARRCC believes that our religious values call us to consciously consider the amount of meat we eat, how much we actually need, and what the effects of our meat consumption are. This would, ARRCC believes, lead to a desire to eat less meat.



## Activity Reports

### Policy and Advocacy Work

This area of work was by far the one which engaged most of ARRCC supporters' energy, and literally hundreds of us were engaged with it. The two main dimensions of this were the Community Climate Petition and the campaign to Stop Adani's proposed Carmichael coal mine. A HUGE thank you to all those many supporters who contributed time or money.

ARRCC is maturing as an organisation such that there are more decentralised hubs of activity around Australia, so less of the campaigning is concentrated at one central point. The fact that we are member-based was showcased in 2017 more than ever before.

The excellent advocacy done in Queensland and Melbourne, and work on the Community Climate Petition, will be covered in separate reports. So, the following overview of the Stop Adani campaign, with particular interest in Sydney and North Queensland, may touch on issues covered elsewhere.

The whole-hearted engagement in the Stop Adani campaign was based on our learning that, if we want to be effective in creating change, we need to get behind strategically chosen goals where there's a chance of winning.

We are now able to enjoy some wins, alongside our friends in the broader environment movement. ARRCC added an important voice to the public discourse on Adani, based on our long-revered religious traditions. We aim to imbue the work of others with a greater legitimacy, as well as attempting to influence decision-makers in our own right.

### KEY ACHIEVEMENTS OF ARRCC COLLECTIVE STOP ADANI ACTIONS

- » Helped precipitate the withdrawal of Westpac and CommBank and, to a lesser extent, the Chinese Banks from the possibility of providing finance for Adani's mine.
- » Engaged a base of over 50 supporters from faith communities who would be prepared to be involved in peaceful direct action, and a further 20 who have shown interest in the work.
- » Gave a public profile to faith-based reasons for opposing Adani's Carmichael mine and rail project, with three TV evening news appearances, in the last week before the Queensland State election.
- » ARRCC repeatedly challenged Australian faith constituencies to consider Adani as a moral issue.

### ACTIVITIES

- » Apart from the three nonviolence training workshops conducted specifically for people of faith in Melbourne and Brisbane, there was also one organized for Sydney participants.
- » Hundreds of supporters joined an ARRCC letter-writing campaign targeting the NAIF Board.
- » ARRCC community organisers managed to get significant media coverage of ARRCC opposition to Adani. With the support of the Sunrise Project and Holdfast Communications, ARRCC managed to get into mainstream media sixteen times with a Stop Adani message, as well as getting a couple of mentions. This does not include social media.



ARRCC at CommBank protest, Sydney  
Photo by Andrew Flakelar





*CommBank sit-in, World Environment Day. Photo by Andrew Flakelar*

- » ARRCC supporters participated in Climate Summits in various parts of the country, letter-writing campaigns and Stop Adani actions across Australia.
- » ARRCC appeared on the topic in religious media ten times.
- » After a letter to Westpac from the ARRCC Committee, around 20 ARRCC supporters joined a March from Westpac to CommBank in Sydney.
- » Having unsuccessfully requested an interview with CommBank's CEO, Ian Narev, we held a sit-in of 10 ARRCC supporters in the foyer of the CommBank building in Darling Harbour, with 50 holding a Meditation Vigil outside.
- » Around 30 ARRCC supporters joined a Sydney Stop Adani peaceful "game-in" action at CommBank.
- » There were candlelit Vigils held in North Sydney and Melbourne, and a Prayer Circle in Kiama as part of the Stop Adani Day of Action in October.
- » Just prior to the Queensland election, we engaged with two key Bishops and conducted some community organizing in Townsville and then an action at the site of the proposed rail line. Five ARRCC supporters were arrested.



*CommBank game-in. L to R: Byron, Justin, Sue, Thea, Maryanne, Geoff, with Gillian in foreground*

## MEDIA COVERAGE

(See other reports for coverage of *Petition*, *Queensland ARRCC* and *GreenFaith/ARRCC's* work)

**The Melbourne Anglican** article on "Christians learn the art of nonviolent protest" which also put a case for campaigning against Adani coalmine.

ABC radio: **Buddhists and Climate Change on RN**

## OPINION PIECES

**ABC Religion and Ethics online** article on the ARRCC open letter to Josh Frydenberg, with opinion piece "Support for Adani's Giant Coalmine is Scientifically and Morally Unjustifiable".

Gill King article on the Climate Emergency, "Be bold for change to renew our world", published in the *Canberra and Goulburn Anglican Community newsletter*

"How the religious right stall climate action", in *The Saturday Paper*, Aug 26th

"The Adani coal mine will hasten a climate catastrophe. As faith leaders we must act", *The Guardian*, Aug 23rd

"We are Facing a Climate Emergency: the time has come for civil resistance" **ABC Religion and Ethics online**



Coverage of NvDA workshop in *The Melbourne Anglican*

## STOP ADANI ACTION, WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY

"NSW religious leaders join Adani protests" *Sky News*

"Religious leaders demand no Adani loan" *The Wire*

## STOP ADANI DAY OF ACTION

Stop Adani Prayer Vigil at Kiama Lighthouse *Kiama Independent*

Coverage of the three Vigils *Eternity News*, *Sight Magazine*, *Cath News*



Candle-lit Vigil in Melbourne  
Photo by Julian Meehan



Group photo before Sydney Candle-lit Meditation Vigil  
Photo by Clayton Hairs



## TOWNSVILLE

While the statement in late October was entirely their own, Catholic Most Rev Timothy Harris and Anglican Right Rev Bill Ray were initially prompted by ARRCC to take a stand on coal mining in the Galilee Basin. The statement itself looks more broadly at environmental issues in Queensland:

**Joint Statement** on Catholic Diocesan website; *Sydney Morning Herald*; *Cath News*—includes ARRCC press release; *Sight Magazine*.



*Peaceful blockade of work on proposed rail line at Balyando, North Queensland. Photo by Front Line Action on Coal*

## BLOCKADE AT SITE OF PROPOSED RAIL LINE

*Crosslight; Catholic Leader; Cath News; The Melbourne Anglican*

*Channel 7 TV evening news* in North Queensland:

10-minute interview with Thea on 4MK local radio in Queensland

ARRCC's action was mentioned in *The Guardian* on 22 November, and unfavourably in the *Townsville Bulletin*.

## STAND ON CIVIL RESISTANCE

We have reached a point where we accept that civil resistance should openly have a place in our work. This means that we will be willing to break the law for a higher purpose, for example, by remaining when asked to leave by police, trespass or other minor nonviolent actions. Since 2008 ARRCC has done everything we can within the law to prompt our leaders to take action to move Australia away from dependency on coal, oil and gas. All our efforts have had very little effect. In fact, things are getting worse.

All the while, those people who have contributed least to climate change and are least able to cope, are already losing their lives and livelihoods because of climate disruption. We are now in an emergency for life as we know it. Yet Australia's governments are actively working to silence people who speak out for action befitting the unfolding climate emergency. Environmental organisations face threats to their tax deductibility or Charity status. Mining companies are protected over and above Aboriginal land rights, aquifers, ecosystems, the health of local populations and even farmlands.

Nonviolence is at the heart of all the major faiths. For example, the Israelite prophets warned the people and their rulers, at the risk of losing liberty or life. From the Hindu tradition, Mohandas Gandhi taught his followers in the Indian Independence movement "Satyagraha", which informed other liberation movements such as the US Civil Rights movement.

ARRCC will continue to take all legal options open to us to convince our leaders to act for climate justice. However, henceforward if and where necessary, ARRCC will not stand back from civil resistance, and not only as a strategic choice but also as a spiritual discipline. Always with compassion. Always peaceful. Always respectful. We will stand up for climate justice if and when necessary.

If anyone reading this would like to participate, or simply wants to learn more, please contact us at [info@arrcc.org.au](mailto:info@arrcc.org.au)



*Rev. Alex Sangster at blockade of proposed Adani rail line, North Queensland. Photo by Front Line Action on Coal*

# Queensland ARRCC

The story of Queensland ARRCC's first year is one of a small group, with few resources, creating amazing outcomes.

## GETTING OFF THE GROUND

In November 2016, at the Centre for Inter-Cultural Dialogue, Griffith University, Thea Ormerod and Gill King presented information about ARRCC and climate change. A group of more than 20 people attended from a diverse range of faith traditions including Christian, Buddhist, Jewish, Salvation Army, Unitarian Universalist and Muslim.



*Participants in first meeting, September 2016*

A second meeting was later held on ways forward for a Queensland-based multi-faith climate initiative. This second meeting was attended by the Very Reverend Peter Catt, Dean of St John's Cathedral, and other Anglican activists, as well as people from various spiritual traditions. The group voted on the possibility of three actions:

- » participation in the Community Climate Petition;
- » open letter to Qld Government;
- » a public vigil.

There was widespread support for the public vigil; some support for the mega-petition as it was already under way; and it was thought the open letter would prove very challenging, especially collection of signatures from well-respected faith leaders.

Renee Hills offered to convene subsequent meetings, and by late March had circulated the first draft of an open letter and launched a Facebook page for the group. In the meantime, various members of the Queensland ARRCC network collected signatures for the Community Climate Petition.

ARRCC Queensland hosted the successful NvDA training on 8th April, presented by Jason McLeod and Penny Barrington from Pace e Bene. Participants came from Buddhist, Muslim and Christian and other backgrounds. Some of them later enthusiastically took part in various actions.



At Wendy Flannery's suggestion, the April meeting moved to Justice Place, Woolloongabba, where booking and access were more convenient. Nonetheless, attendance was limited to a small, dedicated group. Peter Catt said he and Jen Basham could continue working on the open letter, and Peter offered to collect signatures. Planning continued for the prayer vigil, which was renamed a Multi-Faith Gathering.

## QUEENSLAND ARRCC'S FIRST PUBLIC EVENT

Queensland ARRCC's first public event was this Multi-Faith Gathering, held on 27th June, at the Speakers Corner, Parliament House. Peter Catt opened by speaking on Christian motivations for environmental action. Speakers from Jewish, Baha'i, Hare Krishna, Buddhist, Quaker and Catholic traditions shared the microphone on their own perspectives, interspersed with Dermot Dorgan's songs. Around 50 people attended, including representatives from the QCEN (Queensland Churches Environmental Network).



Queensland ARRCC gathering 27 June. Photo by Peter Branjerdporn

The slogan, "Energy Innovation, Not Earth Desecration", was noticed here:

### Green Left and Environment Guru

In September, the focus was on the Stop Adani Summit 10th September where activist groups were invited to make up a table; and the Stop Adani National Day of Action 7th October. Individuals from the group attended both events.

Around this time, the group also discussed possible future workshop/conference topics, including:

- » Earth stewardship—Muslim, Christian and other perspectives
- » consumerism and minimalism
- » Jewish Tu BiShvat seder, ritual of the Trees
- » topics for an Anglican conference July 13–17, 2018, "Abundant Justice"
- » holding a retreat.



## CLIMATE CHANGE STATEMENT

By October, the Climate Change Statement (previously described as open letter) had 10 signatures, with others considering signing. It was strongly but carefully worded, for example, "the development of the mine is unacceptable, as are all forms of government support, direct or indirect, for the mining, transport and shipping of fossil fuels. We urge both governments to instead invest in renewable energy technology which will create far more employment opportunities than the proposed mine."

A handover date of 15 November was initially decided, but this became the day on which the outcome of the Marriage Equality Plebiscite would be released. The date for the handover and press conference was set instead for Monday, 20th November, five days before the State Election. The site chosen was St John's Cathedral. Media support was provided by the Sunrise Project, which also resulted in Queensland ARRCC acquiring a current media mailing list ready for future events.



*Auntie Rose Elu speaks at the hand-over of the Climate Change Statement, 21st November. Photo by Peter Branjerdporn*

The Multi-Faith Statement was released on 20th November, and Queensland ARRCC held a very successful press conference. It was favourably reported on Channel 10 evening news:

Ten News Facebook video

Further coverage can be seen here: [Sight Magazine](#); [United Religions Initiative website](#) and [Live streaming on Twitter](#)

Dean Peter Catt was also interviewed on commercial radio 4BC.

Jen Basham and Erin Kennedy are organising a fresh round of meetings from mid-January, 2018. If you like what they do, why not come along and be part of the action?

**Renee Hills**  
**Convener of Queensland ARRCC Group**

## Victoria's Greenfaith/ARRCC group

*From little things, big things grow*



*Josh Frydenberg's office: Funeral for coal. Photo by Simon Grosser*

Every month for nearly eight years now, a group of dedicated people have been meeting in the library at Borderlands Cooperative, in Hawthorn, Victoria. We noticed that our numbers had been dropping off for various reasons, so we decided to shake things up a bit, assisted by our talented new, one day/week Community Worker Angela Merriam.

In the past year we have been experimenting with a lot of things at Greenfaith/ARRCC (the Victorian branch of ARRCC). Ours is an experiment in democracy, in purpose, even an existential experiment.

In February 2017 we began by inviting all of our members to a Strategy Meeting. We told people that we would trust the group to determine our priorities for this year, including as many voices as we could about what we would do and how we would operate. We were pleased to welcome about 25 people to this first meeting.

We gave three questions to the group and broke up into small groups, with each group discussing one of the major questions we wanted to deal with. We came up with the following plans regarding the questions below:

» *How to encourage people to use the ARRCC faith-based toolkits?*

We decided to plan a 'Train the Trainer' day where we would empower people to use the toolkits to create meaningful change in their own lives, their worship communities, and beyond.



» *Should we participate in Stop Adani campaign?*

As a group, we heard about the Traditional Custodians of the land, the Wangan and Jagalingou people, and their protracted legal battle against the mine. We heard about how it would threaten the health of the Great Barrier Reef, the climate as well as water and farming. We heard about allegations of corruption against the Adani Corporation who want to build the reef-busting mega-mine. At this meeting, we decided to officially register as a Stop Adani group so that we could participate effectively in the campaign.

» *How to hold ongoing ARRCC meetings?*

The group noted that some people wanted to organise to take action and others were more interested in learning more and community building. We accepted the proposal to hold a more action-focused meeting the following month, where we focused on the Stop Adani campaign and organising the 'Train the Trainer' workshop. We agreed that continuing to hold a pot-luck vegetarian meal during the meeting was a meaningful way to build community but that outside of that we should ensure that meetings were an effective use of people's time.

Since that first strategy meeting, we have continued to do our best to make decisions by consensus, ensure that everyone's voice is heard, and orient our meetings toward action.

Overall, the group has achieved a number of exciting things in 2017:

- » Continued monthly meetings, with around 6–12 participants.
- » Organised two 'Funerals for coal' outside Environment Minister Josh Frydenberg's electorate office.
- » This led to a newspaper article and a full Op Ed in *The Guardian*—and a 40-minute meeting between six faith leaders from ARRCC and the Minister—we told him to leave coal in the ground, it's a dead industry, the future is in renewables!
- » Organised a #StopAdani vigil in Melbourne's CBD.



Melbourne Stop Adani candle-lit Vigil. Photo by Julian Meehan

- » Organised a fundraiser performance of *Music for a Warming World*, to raise awareness about climate change through music and a visual presentation
- » Organised a Faith and Environment Workshop with 40 participants. We first held a panel discussion where Muslim, Jewish, Buddhist, Hindu, and Christian leaders spoke about the relationship between environment and their faith. We also developed skills in meeting facilitation, telling your story and more, so that we could more effectively use the faith and environment toolkits.



Rev. Alex Sangster leads a group at the Melbourne workshop

But the intangible benefits of our work may be most important of all. The friends we've made, the connections with new people, and the skills we have developed, are priceless.

As we enter 2018, we're excited to continue building our group and engage in meaningful work to care for creation. We will continue to explore ways to include new and different voices in the conversation, clarify our purpose and way of working, and empower people to take action in their own communities.

If you're interested in getting involved with Greenfaith/ARRCC Victoria, we would love for you to come along to one of our monthly meetings. Please send an email to Angela at [amerriam@arrcc.org.au](mailto:amerriam@arrcc.org.au) and she will hook you up with details.

## MEDIA

Protest on 25 July outside Josh Frydenberg's office on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#)

Reported in [Tasmanian Times](#); [The Guardian](#); and [National Herald India](#)

Rabbi Jonathan Keren-Black on community radio

**Angela Merriam and Rabbi Jonathan Keren-Black**  
GreenFaith/ARRCC



# Community Climate Petition

A huge thank you to the dozens of ARRCC supporters who energetically got behind this, along with supporters of Caritas, Common Grace, TEAR, the Uniting Church, Catholic Earthcare and the Pacific Calling Partnership. People of faith worked together in their own electorates and collectively gathered over 30,000 signatures, on paper, across 110 electorates. They organised 46 visits to their MP's, and 30 of these MP's agreed to make a speech in Parliament about the petition. By Christmas, 11 of the MP's made good on their commitments.

The fact that people of faith were the driving force behind this initiative delivered a strong message to their elected representatives that climate action is a moral issue of major concern for mainstream Australia.

## MESSAGE IN THE PETITION

The House of Representatives was asked to do all in its power to protect communities in Australia, and our region, from the harmful impacts of climate change by:

- » Committing to deeper and more urgent reductions of our greenhouse emissions .
- » Developing a plan to ensure Australia achieves zero net greenhouse emissions before 2050, and supporting families and communities affected by the transition towards renewable energy and more sustainable land use.
- » Providing additional assistance to help our poorest neighbours adapt to the harmful impacts of climate change.



*Dawn Wilson and Bob Cullen, gathering signatures on the Sunshine Coast*

## THE PEOPLE WHO MADE IT HAPPEN

With institutional resourcing always at a minimum, this was truly a grassroots effort. For Principal Petitioners in particular, even a couple of hundred signatures could mean many hours of talking with people at community gatherings, standing at stalls at markets at church entrances or approaching individual people with clip-board in hand. Around 24 of the Principal Petitioners were ARRCC supporters.

Ben Thurley was working for Micah Australia when he skilfully organised the extensive web-based resources and initial volunteer training that made the project possible. Ben is now on the ARRCC Committee. When Micah unexpectedly lost its donor support, Caritas staff were heroic in ensuring the



*L to R: Lee Milroy, Maxine Ross, Fr Ron Perrett, Hon. Barnaby Joyce, MP*



*Denis Quinn, Sister Beverley Caffery, Rev Robert Buchan, Sister Sue Barker and Wend Reid*

Petition project continued to get the coordination it needed. Jacqui Remond at Catholic Earthcare value added by bringing a number of Catholic schools on board.

Incredibly dedicated ARRCC volunteer organisers, Gill King and Philippa Rowland, played key roles too, organising signature gathering across numerous electorates. They are now seeing the project through to its conclusions. ARRCC volunteer Principal Petitioners, Tony Borger, Bob Cullen, Denis Quinn, Maxine Ross and Alan Clayton, deserve special acknowledgement for the very large numbers of signatures they gathered in each of their electorates. Three of the largest seven signature counts (each with over 1000) had ARRCC members as Principal Petitioners.

## MEDIA EVENT SEPTEMBER 6TH

ARRCC supporters joined a media event on Wednesday, September 6th, on the grass out the front of Parliament House, Canberra.

Jody Lightfoot at Australian Aid organised this [video clip](#)

<https://www.facebook.com/campaignforaustralianaid/videos/1489766011101566/>

The following went on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0pWDVFK-Slw>

### Media release from Caritas

There was some coverage in mainstream and religious media: [Westender](#); [Medianet](#); [Crosslight](#); [Insights](#); The Melbourne Anglican; and [Hope 103.2](#).



*Press Conference on Parliament lawns, Canberra. Photo by Caritas Australia*



## MORE MEDIA COVERAGE

July 6th, *Cath News*

*Crosslight*

*The Southern Cross*

*The Tablet!* (UK)

Andrew Wilkie's website

Tim Wilson's speech in Parliament after visit by Gill King and Jean Corbett

Carol Bartlett, July 10th, *Bega District News*

Denis Quinn & Kiama Social Justice group, July 31st *Kiama Independent*

Sr Marie O'Shea sgs, July 26th *Port Pirie Recorder*

Maxine Ross, Lee Milroy, Fr Ron Perrett, July 21st *Northern Daily Leader*

and video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H25Q286vgUU>

Bob Cullen & Sunshine Coast group, August 8th *Sunshine Coast Daily*

Carol Bartlett, September 4th *Bega District News*



Hon Anthony Byrne MP has committed to speaking in Parliament, after prompting from Andrea Mayes



Doug Hewitt, John Hayes, Sabina Islam meet Hon Sharon Claydon, MP for Newcastle



Presenting the petition to Gai Brodtmann. L to R: Gill King, Rev. Pamela Phillips, Hon. Gai Brodtmann and Ven. Dr Brian Douglas

## Eat Less Meat

Time flies! The new Eat Less Meat group has been established for more than one year and the team is growing with the help of more like-minded volunteers.

Eat Less Meat, aka ELM, advocates limiting meat consumption for the sake of keeping the Earth healthy and saving our planet for the next generations. We all know that this is a lifelong battle and we may not see the positive outcomes immediately, but we are committed to it!

As dinkum Australians, we can all enjoy swimming and surfing in the breathtakingly beautiful beaches and chill out with our family and friends. Unfortunately, inconsiderate human activities could mean that our grandchildren and great-grandchildren may only learn the beautiful side of Australia from history books and old photo albums.

In order to save the treasures of Australia's natural environment, we should start improving our carbon footprint on a daily basis by reducing our meat consumption and changing our lifestyles today. ELM provides you with handy tips on how to eat less meat healthily and effortlessly. Here are some of our achievements over the past twelve months:



*L to R top row: Amy, Sushma, Thanh, Dawnita, Maddie, Vijai, Kate;  
bottom row: Catherine and Sana*

### 1. WE ENCOURAGE...

We encourage Australians to change their eating habits from young age. Three of our team mates, Amy Griffiths, Sana Fong and Tegan Park hosted a stall at the Live Well Fair which was held at a Seven Hill's school on June 3rd. In order to raise young participants' awareness of environmental issues, they created a map quiz game and prepared vegan meringue cookies for them, so that they could explain to the kids the concept of "carbon footprint". They hoped to also change their misconceptions and stereotypes about vegan food.

### 2. WE ENGAGE...

We engage the community with a digital presence. The ELM team makes good use of social media, including Facebook and Instagram, to post health- and environment-related posts nearly every day.



*At Live Well Fair, L to R: Tegan Park, Amy Griffiths,  
Sana Fong*

### 3. WE EMBRACE...

We embrace like-minded people. Our team is small, but we are strong and the team is growing! This year, we welcomed more young and energetic volunteers. If you want to be part of this group, please do not hesitate to contact us at [info@arrcc.org.au](mailto:info@arrcc.org.au).

If you want know more about ELM, you are most welcome to visit our Facebook fan-page: <http://www.arrcc.org.au/> [https://www.facebook.com/pg/mfwelm/about/?ref=page\\_internal](https://www.facebook.com/pg/mfwelm/about/?ref=page_internal). Don't forget to give us likes and thumbs up's to support our great work!

**Sana Fong**

## Faith Community Footprints

In March, ARRCC joined forces with the Sydney Buddhist Centre to launch the Buddhist Climate Change Action Kit in Sydney. Buddhists from many traditions across Sydney attended the launch. Speakers at the launch were from The Climate Institute and from two Buddhist traditions: Triratna and Zen.

The launch of the Kit was accompanied by the commencement of a new register of Sydney Buddhists to allow concerned Buddhists to come together quickly and take meaningful action. As the year progressed, this register was used a number of times to call on Buddhists to take action.



*Launch of the Buddhist Climate Change Action Kit, Sydney Buddhist Centre, Newtown*

During the year, ARRCC contracted with Sharon France of Looking Glass Press to up-date the kits. Catherine and David Rossiter up-dated the science section and a number of volunteers ensured the currency of the electronic links. We took the opportunity to maximise the commonality of facts and layout between the five faith traditions, and a section on fossil fuel divestment was added. Sharon did a fine job, partially pro-bono basis.

After completion of the graphic design work, Greenpeace kindly agreed to print a total of 70 Kits for distribution. This saved ARRCC a significant expense.

It remains an important objective to encourage faith communities to actually use the Kits in building commitment to action, as Caloundra Catholic Parish has done. It was with this intention that GreenFaith/ARRCC organised a "Train the trainer workshop" in July for people wanting to introduce a Kit to their faith communities.

**Gillian Reffell**



## Summary of Achievements in 2017

With the help of two talented Community Organisers, 2017 saw literally hundreds of ARRCC supporters actively engaged in strategic work.

It was exciting to see so many people in Brisbane, Melbourne and Sydney prepared to attend nonviolence workshops and participate in Stop Adani actions. Together with others in the climate movement, we first helped persuade Westpac and CommBank to rule out financing Adani's proposed Carmichael mine and rail project, then later the Chinese Banks.

ARRCC organised three Stop Adani prayer and meditation vigils on the Day of Action in October. With Queensland ARRCC speaking out publicly twice and two peaceful public protests just before the Queensland election, we were part of the groundswell which had the Palaszczuk Government veto the potential \$1bn loan from the Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility.

ARRCC supporters were prominent in the success of the faith-based Community Climate Petition, collecting a sizeable proportion of the 30,000 signatures gathered in 2017, and organising a large number of the 46 meetings with MPs.

The growing Eat Less Meat group continues their creative work via Facebook, encouraging their followers to replace meat in their diets with plant-based proteins.

The five Climate Action Kits in Hindu, Islamic, Christian, Buddhist and Jewish traditions were up-dated, with a section on divestment included. They now have links that successfully take the reader to fruitful sites. With the science and other sections up-to-date, we can be proud of these latest versions.

ARRCC now has the generous support of patrons, Julian Burnside AO QC, Bishop Philip Huggins (President of the National Council of Churches) and Rabbi Jeffrey Kamins OAM. Julian Burnside featured in the video for our first crowdfunding campaign, to which our wonderful supporters responded heartily with donations totalling over \$18,000.

Well done all!



*The ARRCC website is a great resource for statements from leaders in various traditions, ideas for practical action, steps for animating faith communities, current campaigns and avenues for contributing to ARRCC's work*

# Looking Ahead—Plans for 2018

## TO STOP THE RAIL PROJECT TO ABBOT POINT

Together with our partners in the Stop Adani movement, we plan to continue various forms of action to prevent coal mines from being opened up in the Galilee Basin. To do this, our focus will be on the rail project from the Galilee Basin to Abbot Point. ARRCC will keep up pressure on MPs who are strategically important in the Stop Adani campaign.

If this campaign is successful, we will seek to remain a relevant part of the climate movement as it evolves during 2018. ARRCC is determined to remain active, respected and influential as a faith-based ethical voice in Australia's climate movement.

## TO EMPOWER ARRCC CLIMATE ACTION GROUPS IN VARIOUS PARTS OF AUSTRALIA

### 1. Regional gathering in Canberra

To strengthen relationships between supporters in the ACT, build skills and confidence and lay the foundations for some effective action together, we plan a one-day gathering in Canberra.

### 2. Queensland ARRCC

To build on the wonderful work done this year.

### 3. GreenFaith/ARRCC

To grow, and to deepen the engagement of people of faith and communities in Victoria in climate action.

### 4. Other locally based ARRCC-affiliated groups

To nurture and empower decentralised faith-based action.

## TO SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCE THE CARBON FOOTPRINTS OF PEOPLE OF FAITH

Through participating in the global Sustainable Living Initiative, ARRCC will encourage faith leaders to promote lifestyle changes such as:

- » Up-take of renewable energy and energy efficiency measures
- » Reducing meat consumption
- » Reducing car and plane use

This hinges on research which shows that “if the world's top 10 percent of carbon dioxide emitters were to cut their emissions to the level of the average European Union citizen, global emissions would decline by 33 percent.”<sup>1</sup>

Significant reductions in carbon footprints will be supported and measured as registered participants make specific lifestyle changes. Their collective achievements will be celebrated.

To grow our capacity to make a difference we aim to make our funding base more stable, and to increase our reach via social media and e-mail to 5,000 people.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.carbonneutraluniversity.org/delivering-on-2-degrees---kevin-anderson.html> and <http://www.truth-out.org/news/item/40237-mitigating-climate-disaster-will-require-both-systemic-and-lifestyle-changes>

# FINANCIALS

## Financial Policies

We are committed to continuing to encourage faith communities to take action against climate change, and to undertake truth-telling to the government and business sector on policies that are needed for climate justice.

For the first few years, ARRCC was reliant on seed funding provided by The Climate Institute and has since relied on membership fees, large one-off donations and grants. We are committed to expanding our sources of generating income.

Helped by a crowdfunding campaign in 2017, ARRCC was the grateful recipient of a total of an exceptional \$32,000 in donations, more than we have ever previously received in one year! This obviously expands our capacity to make a difference, especially via the employment of professional community organisers.

## PRINCIPLES

While we are committed to continuing our work, we do not believe that “survival at all costs” is a justifiable position. We therefore premise our financing strategy on the following principles:

- » We will not undertake any work which compromises our independence, the quality of our work or our integrity and commitment to truth-telling;
- » We believe we are accountable to the wider community of people in our country and on our continent for the responsible use of all resources which are put at our disposal;
- » We respect donor relationships, but are prepared to challenge and be challenged on important issues.

Ideally, our fixed costs will be met by members’ annual subscriptions. We will seek donations and grant funding for projects and current campaigns, and will aim for cost-neutrality with respect to events and other activities.



# Financial Statements:

## income and expenditure statements

### PROFIT AND LOSS

#### ARRCC Incorporated 1 January 2017 to 31 December 2017

|                                 | 31 Dec 17     | 31 Dec 16      |
|---------------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| <b>Income</b>                   |               |                |
| BANK INTEREST                   | 412           | 424            |
| Campaign Donations              | -             | 23             |
| DONATIONS                       | 39,797        | 2,503          |
| MEMBERSHIP                      | 4,097         | 6,075          |
| <b>Total Income</b>             | <b>44,306</b> | <b>9,024</b>   |
| <b>Gross Profit</b>             | <b>44,306</b> | <b>9,024</b>   |
| <b>Less Operating Expenses</b>  |               |                |
| Accounting Fees                 | 1,353         | 1,881          |
| Advertising                     | 879           | 261            |
| Bank Fees                       | 399           | 320            |
| Consulting Fees                 | 5,805         | 3,508          |
| Equipment                       | 368           | -              |
| Event Costs                     | 450           | 323            |
| General Expenses                | 215           | 445            |
| Insurance                       | 847           | 846            |
| Legal expenses                  | 44            | -              |
| Office Expenses                 | -             | 212            |
| Postage                         | 181           | 184            |
| Printing & Stationery           | 4,019         | 704            |
| Rent                            | 350           | 300            |
| Sub-Contractor fees             | 15,040        | -              |
| Subscriptions                   | 1,943         | 3,049          |
| Superannuation                  | 1,504         | -              |
| Telephone & Internet            | -             | 70             |
| Training                        | 2,240         | 115            |
| Travel Costs                    | 5,404         | 3,834          |
| Volunteer Expenses              | -             | 350            |
| <b>Total Operating Expenses</b> | <b>41,040</b> | <b>16,402</b>  |
| <b>Net Profit</b>               | <b>3,267</b>  | <b>(7,378)</b> |

## BALANCE SHEET

### ARRCC Incorporated As at 31 December 2017

|                                  | 31 Dec 2017        | 31 Dec 2016        |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Assets</b>                    |                    |                    |
| <b>Bank</b>                      |                    |                    |
| ARRCC Bank Australia (MECU)      | \$20,022.62        | \$9,239.99         |
| ARRCC Paypal Account             | \$998.16           | \$2,048.18         |
| ARRCC Term Deposit 1             | \$5,451.72         | \$5,322.81         |
| ARRCC Term Deposit 2             | \$5,458.62         | \$5,317.70         |
| ARRCC Term Deposit 3             | \$0.00             | \$5,317.70         |
| <b>Total Bank</b>                | <b>\$31,931.12</b> | <b>\$27,246.38</b> |
| <b>Total Assets</b>              | <b>\$31,931.12</b> | <b>\$27,246.38</b> |
| <b>Liabilities</b>               |                    |                    |
| Current Liabilities              |                    |                    |
| Accounts Payable                 | \$0.00             | \$114.38           |
| Credit Card                      | \$898.94           | \$0.00             |
| Superannuation Payable           | \$633.60           | \$0.00             |
| <b>Total Current Liabilities</b> | <b>\$1,532.54</b>  | <b>\$114.38</b>    |
| <b>Total Liabilities</b>         | <b>\$1,532.54</b>  | <b>\$114.38</b>    |
| <b>Net Assets</b>                | <b>\$30,398.58</b> | <b>\$27,132.00</b> |
| <b>Equity</b>                    |                    |                    |
| Current Year Earnings            | \$3,266.58         | -\$7,377.97        |
| Retained Earnings                | \$27,132.00        | \$34,509.97        |
| <b>Total Equity</b>              | <b>\$30,398.58</b> | <b>\$27,132.00</b> |



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