



Uniting Church in Australia Assembly

MEDIA STATEMENT 14 October 2023

Post-Referendum Statement: Let's make sure we care for one another

The Uniting Church in Australia and the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (UAICC) acknowledge the deep disappointment for many at the referendum result, especially for First Nations people who supported a Voice.

“We recognise this will be an extremely difficult day for many First Nations people, compounded by what has been a long and divisive conversation leading into the referendum,” said Uniting Church President Rev Sharon Hollis.

“I encourage Uniting Church members, and all Australians, in our conversations and our actions, to do whatever we can to show support and care for First Nations people right now.”

“The increase in racism and vitriol against First Nations people over the past six months has been incredibly damaging. Indigenous people have had their cultural identity scrutinised constantly throughout this campaign.”

“We must ensure this result does not give way to further harm. We must be emboldened to call out racism wherever it occurs.”

The President said Australia must do some deep soul searching before it can move forward.

“Unless we confront the truth of colonisation and its ongoing effects, we won't find freedom.”

“We as Second Peoples cannot seek forgiveness without some honesty and deep soul searching that promotes an understanding of our nation's history and the hopes and dreams of First Nations people and a deeper commitment to reconciliation.”

“Let us ask ourselves, how will we stand with First Nations people in their sorrow? Where can we show up next alongside First Nations people? How will support Indigenous people's desire for self-determination and justice? How will we engage in seeking God's reconciling love?”

Rev Hollis said the Uniting Church remained committed to the full implementation of the Uluru Statement.

“Our support for the Voice is grounded in our Covenant commitment with UAICC. There is much work to be done and inspired by this national conversation, we must be ready to listen to First Nations voices within the Church.”

UAICC National Interim Chair Rev Mark Kickett expressed his profound disappointment at the result on behalf of Congress members.

“This is a missed opportunity in our nation's history,” said Rev Kickett. “We may never get an opportunity like this again for generations to come.”

“This will be a hard day for many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We long for reconciliation and healing.”



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“As Christians, we draw comfort knowing that Jesus understands our pain and walks with us at this time. We will continue the fight and struggle for recognition and justice.”

Revs Kickett and Hollis thanked the many UAICC and Uniting Church people and communities who were part of the campaign, visibly showing support, having conversations and joining in actions.