



Uniting Church in Australia

ASSEMBLY

PUBLIC STATEMENT

Anniversary of apology to Survivors of Institutional Child Sexual Abuse

22 October 2024

October 22 marks the sixth anniversary of the National Apology to Survivors of Institutional Child Sexual Abuse.

“Every survivor. Every child. Every vulnerable person. The anniversary gives us the opportunity to reflect and restate our commitment to listening, learning and doing better,” says UCA President Rev Charissa Suli. “I am always humbled in this space – a student to the lessons of the past. We can never, we must never forget.”

“We continue to strive for churches that are safe for children and all people,” says Rev Suli. “The Uniting Church in Australia is united in its commitment to safeguarding.”

A liturgy of lament is available for all congregations to mark the anniversary. It is a reminder not only of the wrongs of the past, but also of the need to remain vigilant. The liturgy reflects the sorrow of the Church and the harm it has been involved in, and laments the abuse of children.

This time of reflection is a reminder to all congregations of our need to ensure we are compliant with regulation but also that we are driving cultures where the safety of children is a priority.

“Compliance is bare minimum. And bare minimum is not a high enough standard when it comes to protecting children,” says Rev Suli.

The liturgy material also includes resources to support congregations to be trauma informed in the delivery of the liturgy.

“This can be confronting,” says Rev Suli, “but this does not mean we can turn away. These terrible things must be brought into the light so we never forget.”

Resources to support a liturgy of lament are available at <https://uniting.church/fifth-anniversary-national-apology/>