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For immediate release

## SORRY DAY: UNITING CHURCH ACKNOWLEDGES CONTINUING STRUGGLE

On the Tenth Anniversary of the *Bringing them Home Report*, the Uniting Church in Australia expressed sadness at the continuing suffering of Indigenous people and communities throughout the country.

Ten years ago, moved by the findings of the *Bringing them Home Report* into the plight of the Stolen Generations, the National Assembly of the Uniting Church in Australia issued its 'Invitation to the Nation'. This national statement invited all Australians to recognise that genuine justice and reconciliation can only come from an understanding of our shared history and acknowledgement of the realities of our present.

Reflecting on this statement, the President of the Uniting Church in Australia, Rev. Gregor Henderson, expressed his shame that life for Indigenous Australians is still marked by racism and dispossession.

"It is an indictment of our shared failures that forty years after the referendum that finally recognised Indigenous people count in this country, Indigenous Australians still suffer enormous disadvantages in health, education and employment. In a country of such wealth, it is shameful that the life expectancy of Indigenous Australians is seventeen years below the national average.

"We acknowledge that the Uniting Church has more to do in supporting true reconciliation. We are committed to standing in solidarity with Indigenous Australians within the Church and across the nation, working together to overcome racism and prejudice and achieve justice."

Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress National Administrator, Rev. Shayne Blackman, said that the Tenth Anniversary of the *Bringing them Home Report* marks an important and significant milestone.

"This Tenth Anniversary serves as a timely reminder of the gross violation of Indigenous human rights in our nation and how these violations continue to affect those Indigenous people today as evidenced by the distressing array of national Indigenous socio-economic outcomes", Rev. Blackman said.

"We must never forget that our traumatic history is part of the fabric of this nation but also see in it a valuable lesson for today's policy makers to not repeat the mistakes of the past and to now constructively devise sound policy that fully respects the rights and responsibilities of Indigenous people."



Both leaders urged all Australians to use this day as an opportunity to reflect upon the distress and trauma caused by the forced separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families.

“We must all be working toward creating appropriate social, cultural and economic pathways for those Indigenous people who hold a generation of hurt and trauma as a consequence of these tragic past colonial practices so that they can experience healing, justice and ultimately equality”, Rev. Blackman said.

Rev. Henderson added, “This is one day when we hope the media spotlight will remind people that our Indigenous people are suffering. What we really need is for everyone to remember every day, and for us all to work together in solidarity with Indigenous communities towards reconciliation and a better future for all Australians.”

- Ends –