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For immediate release

UNITING CHURCH HEAD AGREES: THERE'S MORE TO BE DONE

The President of the Uniting Church in Australia, Rev. Gregor Henderson, today agreed there is much more to be done in the area of reconciliation for Australia's Indigenous people.

Speaking in response to comments made by Aboriginal leader, Lowitja O'Donoghue, Rev. Henderson said Australia's churches were playing a significant role in the reconciliation process.

"The Uniting Church has been actively committed to reconciliation and healing, particularly in the decade since our apology to the Stolen Generations," Rev. Henderson said.

But he acknowledged that there was much more to do in the way of justice and healing, saying that good intentions by Australia's religious bodies would not be enough.

"Churches in Australia have contributed to the deep distress felt by our Indigenous brothers and sisters; the predecessor churches to the Uniting Church were involved with the Stolen Generations at missions in the Northern Territory and Western Australia.

"In 1997 the Uniting Church asked the Federal Government to establish a national compensation fund, to which we would contribute, but it seems our voice has not been heard on this issue.

"We also agreed to take a range of practical steps, including increasing Indigenous employment within the Church and its agencies; reviewing property arrangements; and deepening fellowship with Indigenous people in our communities.

"Our partnership and covenanting agreement with the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress has demonstrated our resolve to walk alongside our Indigenous brothers and sisters; to seek forgiveness and to redress past injustices.

Responding to Ms O'Donoghue's call for compensation, Rev. Henderson said the Church would back the call.

"The Uniting Church in Australia is willing to press the Federal Government again on establishing a national compensation fund, and stands ready to make a contribution to that fund."



Uniting Church in Australia National Assembly

Media Release

We have not abandoned some communities

Particularly in South Australia and Northern Territory, we are very active. Frontier Services works in some communities.

However, we have not carried out an audit on our participation.