



The Uniting Church in Australia
QUEENSLAND SYNOD

Pastoral letter: Uniting Church before the Royal Commission

3rd March 2017

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

On Friday 10 March the Uniting Church in Australia will appear at a public hearing for

Case Study 56 of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

Queensland Synod general secretary Rev Heather den Houting will appear before the commission along with Assembly president Stuart McMillan and general secretary Colleen Geyer to answer questions about current policies and procedures of the Uniting Church in relation to child-protection and child-safety standards, including responding to allegations of child sexual abuse.

Assembly president Stuart McMillan has released a **pastoral statement** that includes prayers for us individually or by congregations that I commend to you.

The Church has been working with the Royal Commission at every level and we fully support this important work. First and foremost, the Uniting church acknowledges the pain and suffering of all those who have experienced sexual abuse at the hand of institutions, especially our own. We will not hide from the truth, however painful that may be, and will seek to address issues and challenges with compassion and humility.

The Uniting Church in Queensland has a **'report abuse'** process as part of the **Safe Ministry with Children** resources. We also have an **interim redress procedure** that is available to survivors of child sexual abuse. More information is available on the **Synod website**.

Please remember all people who have been impacted by child sexual abuse in your prayers and in particular, this week, those who are involved in the important work of the Royal Commission.

Rev David Baker
Moderator Queensland Synod

Queensland Synod: <https://ucaqld.com.au>



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Pastoral letter: Royal Commission hearing

10th March 2017

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Today the Uniting Church in Australia appeared at a public hearing of the **Royal Commission** into Institutional

Responses to Child Sexual Abuse

Queensland Synod general secretary Rev Heather den Houting spoke, as did Assembly president Stuart McMillan and general secretary Colleen Geyer.

Assembly president Stuart McMillan made the following **closing remarks** that I encourage you to read and consider sharing in your church contexts.

We, as the church, must acknowledge the pain and suffering of people who have experienced sexual abuse in our institutions and address these issues with compassion and humility.

To be faithful to the vision of humanity which we see in Jesus is to build communities where vulnerable people are not only safe, but able to grow and bring their gifts and influence to our life together.

Grace and peace,

Rev David Baker

Moderator, Queensland Synod

Queensland Synod: <https://ucaqld.com.au>

Assembly President Stuart McMillan made the following [closing remarks](#):

On behalf of the Uniting Church in Australia I sincerely apologise to all children in our care who suffered sexual abuse, of any kind, in our Church, whether it happened since union of 1977 or before that in our predecessor Churches.

We are, and I am, deeply sorry that we didn't protect and care in accordance with our Christian values for those children.

I want to acknowledge the impact that it's had in the lives of those young people and to say I am truly sorry.

Our commitment to you, is that we will seek to make amends and to ensure that others don't suffer in the same way you have.

As church leaders, we pledge that we will continue to understand and to implement the lessons that we've learnt through this Royal Commission and remain open to the insights of survivors and professionals.

We pledge to continuously seek improvement; to regularly renew our policies and our practices in all parts of our Church, and to ensure that they reflect the best quality for care, service and support of children.

We pledge to ensure that these priorities are integrated into our organisational culture and practises.

This is our commitment to you.