



# Uniting Church in Australia Assembly

**MEDIA RELEASE 29 September 2023**

## **Uniting Church in Australia welcomes Disability Royal Commission final report**

The Uniting Church in Australia welcomes the final report of the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability, affirming its vision for a more inclusive Australian society.

“We welcome the final report of the Disability Royal Commission today and commit to taking seriously its calls for change to transform our society into one that is more inclusive and which respects and protects the rights of people living with a disability,” said Uniting Church President Rev Sharon Hollis.

The final report has called for significant change to end violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation of people with a disability and to build a society in which the rights of people with a disability are protected and fulfilled.

Specifically, the report refers to the rights to individual autonomy, full and effective participation in society, non-discrimination, equality of opportunity, accessibility and respect of persons with disability as part of human diversity.

“We affirm this vision set out by the report. Our own response to the Royal Commission has been guided by a commitment to uphold the dignity and equality of people with a disability,” said Rev Hollis.

“Our values are grounded in Jesus’ witness to the love of God for all people. We seek to be a Church in which the gifts, hopes and dreams of all people are valued and honoured.”

“We acknowledge the calls for change and commit to continuing this work.”

The final report includes 222 recommendations.

Jade Strongman, a member of the Uniting Church National Disability Task Group and Senior Project Officer for Uniting (NSW/ACT), applauded the report’s call for reform.

“Like most people who live with disability, I applaud the calls within the final report for an end to segregation,” he said.

“We must commit to an inclusive model of people with disability living in a safe society that respects and values freedom for all.”

“Ensuring people with disability are included in all areas of daily life will go a long way to stop the appalling treatment they’ve been subjected to.”

“After all the harrowing evidence that’s been presented and the experiences people with disability have continued to endure, all levels of Government and society must ensure this never happens again. Now is the time for action.”

Assembly General Secretary Colleen Geyer, who chairs the Task Group, said the Uniting Church and its agencies are committed to carefully considering the recommendations in the final report.



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“We look forward to the Government’s response to the report. We will carefully consider the recommendations of the report as we continue the work of ensuring safe and inclusive communities in all our spaces across the Uniting Church.”

“Today we give thanks to all those who have been a part of the inquiry, those who advocated for it and especially to all those people with disabilities who shared their stories.”

ENDS

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