



Uniting Church in Australia Assembly

**Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian
Congress**



Media Release

National Reconciliation Week 2018

The Presidents of the Uniting Church in Australia and the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress have urged congregations to find out more about the history of Indigenous people in their area during Reconciliation Week.

“Reaching out to local First Peoples and listening to their stories is the first step towards reconciliation,” said UCA President Stuart McMillan.

“Acknowledgement of country is a widely accepted practice in Australian public life, so I’m shocked at the number of people who are unaware or sometimes even deny basic facts about First Peoples.”

Research by Reconciliation Australia suggests that almost one in three Australians refuse to accept historical truths about the treatment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, including the fact that they were subject to mass killings, incarceration, forced removal from land, restricted movement and prevented from using their languages.

The theme of this week’s Reconciliation Week is “Don’t Keep History a Mystery. Learn. Share. Grow.”

UAICC President Rev. Garry Dronfield said Second Peoples had a crucial part to play in the healing process for First Peoples.

“The reconciliation that God expects of us all can only be possible when we confess our sins and commit to loving one another in word and deed,” said Rev. Dronfield.

“In 1994, the Uniting Church committed to walking together with First Peoples in a covenanting relationship. Yet many congregations aren’t actively engaged in Covenanting.”

“The invitation of Pastor Bill Hollingsworth from the Covenant Agreement in 1994 still stands today - because it is pleasing to God to love one another, and it is our commitment to do so, we invite you on behalf of Congress members to develop a new relationship.”

Congregations which provide the name of their local Indigenous people can order a Covenanting pull-up banner from the Assembly office. Covenanting posters are also available on request free of charge. Please email comms@nat.uca.org.au for more details.

Later this year the 15th Assembly meeting in July will discuss a proposal to [affirm Australia's First Peoples as sovereign peoples](#).

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