



## Statement to the Uniting Church in Australia from the Uniting Network Australia's 13th Daring Conference Brisbane 10 June 2018

Greetings to the Uniting Church in Australia from the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer (LGBTIQ) members, their friends, family and allies.

We reaffirm our belief in the church as an inclusive Gospel community in which all may participate fully using their gifts and talents. We expressed our concern at the way LGBTIQ people, our families and our relationships are so often caught in the middle of political struggles in society, and theological and cultural struggles in the church.

One of our keynote speakers Rev. Dr. Jo Inkpin addressing the theme of this year's conference "Daring for Full Equality", stated that we are "fearfully awesome and that our painfully challenging stories and experiences are our gift to the Uniting Church."

From our conference, there were crucial learnings for ourselves and the church. Our conference theme of "Daring for Full Equality" encouraged LGBTIQ people:

1. to be visible and true to who we are in the churches, along with our partners and families.
2. to seek to have our stories and experience acknowledged, received and valued.
3. to offer our gifts generously to the church, with the hope that they will be joyously received.

We call upon all Councils and Congregations of the Church to:

1. acknowledge the grace of the LGBTIQ community in supporting option four of the Doctrine Working Group Report, noting that it falls short of full equality, but recognising that some in the Church are still on a journey toward accepting marriage equality and affirming LGBTIQ relationships.
2. reflect on the pain and anguish caused by the historical treatment of LGBTIQ people by religious organisations and the broader community; and the pain caused by lack of support for the LGBTIQ community during the recent Marriage Equality Postal Survey.

3. make option four of the Assembly's paper on same-gender marriage more inclusive of our community, particularly intersex and transgender people, to change the language from same gender to two people.
4. actively consider the pathway developed by Uniting Network for congregations to become formally recognised as "Open and Affirming Congregations", safe places for LGBTIQ and other diverse people, including ways to make this evident to the community outside the congregation.
5. improve policies and procedures for the better inclusion of Transgender and Intersex people, including the acceptance of their gifts in all roles and ministries within the Church.
6. affirm the place of rainbow families (children of LGBTIQ parents and guardians) and LGBTIQ children and youth in our congregations and our schools and creating a safe space for them.
7. address the segregation of multiple communities in the church (such as Indigenous people, people with disabilities, CALD communities, etc) and to recognise the gifts offered by LGBTIQ people to the process of integrating diversity into the whole body of Christ; gifts grounded in our experience of diversity and intersectionality.
8. ensure that all Uniting Church theological programs and courses include theological resources and appropriate pastoral care education for ministers/chaplains/pastors and lay pastoral carers of LGBTIQ people.

As LGBTIQ people within the Uniting Church, we understand the power of transformation and the ongoing call for transformation as a pilgrim people. When we allow ourselves to let go of who we thought we might be, and allow ourselves to be who we are, we provide healing for the whole body within Christ so that we may all become as Jesus calls us to be. When we are released to be free and flourishing, we can fully exercise the great commissioning that Jesus calls us to enact; to reach out and participate as his evangelists.