



MEDIA STATEMENT

welcoming LGBTIQ people, same-sex couples and families,
in all areas of the Church's life, ministry and leadership

UNITING NETWORK EXPRESSES CONCERN IN RELATION TO PRIME MINISTER MORRISONS COMMENTS AROUND CRICKET AUSTRALIA'S TRANSGENDER POLICY

9 AUGUST 2019

Uniting Network, the LGBTIQ network within the Uniting Church in Australia expresses its concern around the commentary attributed to Australia's Prime Minister Morrison concerning the release earlier this week by Cricket Australia of its policy for transgender athletes local to elite levels.

Co-convenor Hannah Reeves commented that "the Prime Minister, since coming to office, has made some negative comments concerning transgender people, a community who have some of the highest suicide rates in our society."

Hannah further commented, "Uniting Network welcomed the policy position of Cricket Australia as a fair and balanced approach to ensure the inclusion of transgender people in their sporting code."

Secretary of Uniting Network, Jason Masters, added "We know from the global sporting study "Out on the Field"ⁱ that LGBTIQ people leave sport due to the way they perceive being treated as an LGBTIQ sports person. Eighty percent of the Australian study participants stated experiencing or witnessing homophobia in sport. We also know that one of the mechanisms to improve people's mental health is engaging in sporting activities. On the one hand, the Prime Minister is very concerned, appropriately, around mental health issues across Australia, and we are thankful the Prime Minister in his election promised to increase funding for LGBTIQ mental health services. It is disappointing that the Prime Minister on the other hand is effectively adding to the mental health issues of transgender people by making, what we at Uniting Network believe, are not fully informed and inappropriate comments."

Jason Masters stated that "Cricket Australia is not the trailblazer in this space, and many other sporting codes already have transgender inclusion policies with sports as an example as Volleyball Australia having policies for addressing transgender people at elite levels dating before 2012"ⁱⁱ

Jason Masters concluded "part of our disappointment is that earlier this year the Australian Human Rights Commission, Sports Australia and The Coalition of Major Professional and Participation Sports issued the "Guidelines for Inclusions of transgender and Gender Diverse People in Sport". I call on Mr Morrison to be aware of where the sporting sector is moving in this area, and more generally around the inclusion of transgender people in all aspects of our society."

Finally, Hannah stated "As a community of Christian LGBTIQ people we call on all to be respectful and inclusive of transgender people. We would be delighted to meet with the Prime Minister to further discuss our concerns with him."

**** END STATEMENT ***

OTHER BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR MEDIA:

Contact Jason Masters Secretary – 0407780110, jasonmasters@me.com

Resources for Open and Affirming Congregations.

The Uniting Church LGBTIQ network has launched a new suite of educational resources for congregations, study groups and individuals. The resources cover a range of topics from how to become “open and affirming” to queer young people, children, language, gender identity, sexuality and the Scriptures. All can be downloaded from <http://www.unitingnetworkaustralia.org.au/open-and-affirming-project/>

ⁱ <http://www.outonthefields.com>

ⁱⁱ http://nswvolleyball.com/images/members/MPP_27_July_2012.pdf