



Endorsed by



## UCA Redress Ltd

### Reconciliation Statement

As part of the Uniting Church, UCA Redress Ltd acknowledges the Covenant between the Church and its Indigenous members.

The Covenanting Statement, read by the President of the Uniting Church in 1994, states in part:

*"We lament that our people took your land from you as if it were land belonging to nobody, and often responded with great violence to the resistance of your people; our people took from you your means of livelihood, and desecrated many sacred places."*

*"By providing foster-homes for Aboriginal children, our churches in reality lent their support to the government practice of taking children from their mothers and families, causing great suffering and loss of cultural identity."*

*"We seek to journey together in the true spirit of Christ as we discover what it means to be bound to one another in a covenant."*

The generous response from the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress to this statement, reads in part:

*"We come to this covenanting table with our gifts of Aboriginal spirituality, our culture, our Aboriginal way of loving and caring, our instinctive concern and a willingness to share and teach our history and every good aspect about being Aboriginal and Islander."*

*"We pray that God will guide you, together with us, in developing a covenant to walk together practically so that the words of your statement may become a tangible expression of His justice and love for all creation. We ask you to remember this covenant by remembering that our land is now sustaining your people by God's grace."*



UCA Redress Ltd

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UCA Redress Ltd acknowledges the observations and findings of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse that are particularly relevant to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, including:<sup>1</sup>

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were and continue to be overrepresented in out of home care and youth justice environments where there is a higher risk of abuse
- Racism and a lack of cultural safety prevent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from speaking out about abuse
- Removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from community and culture took away protective factors
- The trauma of abuse was compounded by the trauma of removal from family, community, country and culture
- The stigma of abuse caused disconnection between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families and communities
- Language barriers made disclosure of abuse more difficult

The Uniting Church acknowledges its role in the harm of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, including those who experienced abuse whilst in the care of the Church. The Uniting Church is committed to reconciliation with First Australians and part of this is redress for those who experienced abuse.

**UCA Redress Ltd is committed to supporting survivors of abuse in a culturally safe and informed way, that acknowledges particular vulnerabilities, the ongoing impact of abuse on people's lives and the deep pain that comes from those experiences for survivors, families and communities. We will:**

- **Seek out the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in decision making about redress**
- **Pursue diverse pathways and options for people to access redress, and have a range of responses available**
- **Seek out opportunities to engage with the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress on matters relating to redress**
- **Take an active learning approach to the analysis of data and what it is telling us**
- **Proactively seek out opportunities for reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander survivors of abuse, their families and communities, and support a journey of healing and restoration of relationship.**

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<sup>1</sup> The Royal Commission made many observations and findings on the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in care throughout its research and reports. These are well-summarised here: [https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/sites/default/files/a\\_brief\\_guide\\_to\\_the\\_final\\_report\\_-\\_aboriginal\\_and\\_torres\\_strait\\_islander\\_communities.pdf](https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/sites/default/files/a_brief_guide_to_the_final_report_-_aboriginal_and_torres_strait_islander_communities.pdf)

