



# Uniting Church in Australia

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## Western Australia



Uniting Church Centre  
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18 October 2016

To Bev Port-Louis, Yuet Elder

I am pleased to offer the encouragement of the Uniting Church in Australia, Synod of Western Australia for the Yuet people who have indicated a desire to restore or find new use for the mission site at Mogumber as a place of healing. We are aware of the mixed emotions that will be present in some people as they consider Mogumber.

In its apology to the Aboriginal Community the National Assembly Standing Committee of the Uniting Church in 1996 acknowledged:

- the trauma and on-going harm caused to individuals, families, the Aboriginal community as a whole and the entire Australian community by the practice of separating Aboriginal children from their parents and raising them in institutions, foster homes or adoptive homes;
- that the church thought it was acting in a loving way by providing them with homes, but was blind to the racist assumptions that underlay the policy and practice;

In 1997 we were more explicit as the Assembly resolved:

- to express its appreciation to the President of the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, Sir Ronald Wilson, and Commissioner Michael Dodson for the Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children, the Report - "Bringing them Home" - and its recommendations. The report exposes aspects of Australian history in which large numbers of Aboriginal children and their parents suffered appalling deprivation and despair, facts which have not been understood or known about the majority of Australians. This disclosure of truth provides an essential basis for the achievement of reconciliation and healing between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians;
- to commit itself and encourage the whole Church to support the recommendations of the Inquiry wherever possible;
- to affirm the apology made by the Standing Committee in September 1996; convey the apology to the associations of people who passed through Croker Island, Mogumber and Sister Kate's; make copies of the apology available to the Aboriginal press; and encourage synods and individuals to make apologies where appropriate in local situations;

The Uniting Church Synod of WA through the Justice and Mission Unit, continues to provide support for the Bringing Them Home Committee WA. We have noted that this committee has been able to move into the premises once used as offices by AO Neville who was the Chief Protector of Aborigines

for many years, during which time many children were removed from their families by government policy. The offices, which remain a symbol of hurt, are now being used by the committee to forge a new story of healing, truth and justice. We hope that this may also be the case for the Mogumber mission site.

It would be a good thing for Mogumber if the story of sadness could be remembered whilst a new and positive future was created for this land.

Yours sincerely



Rev Sealin Garlett  
Chair  
Uniting Aboriginal & Islander Christian Congress



Rev Steve Francis  
Moderator  
Uniting Church Synod of Western Australia