



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

c/o Pitt Street Uniting Church, Sydney NSW 2000

Media Release 5 February 2021

Celebrate the passing of the Victorian Conversion Practices Prohibition Legislation.

The Uniting Church's national network for LGBTUQ+ people celebrate with survivors, allies and advocates that the **Victorian Change and Suppression (Conversion) Practices Prohibition Bill** will become law. It was passed late on Thursday night (4/2/2021) through the Legislative Council without amendments in a vote 27 for vs 9 against.

"Survivors and advocates are pleased that the Victorian Parliament and broader community have rejected the misinformation spread and the myth that the bill was too vague and an overreach and have instead overwhelmingly come out in support of the lives of LGBTIQ+ people", says Uniting Network executive member Nicole Mugford.

Nicole Mugford is a survivor-advocate who was present in Melbourne in a COVID-safe gathering of survivors and advocates during the debate and passing of legislation.

Ms Mugford said that "This is world leading legislation and has been hard-won by survivors and advocates who have been involved in consultation processes, sharing their personal stories and experiences and campaigning for this life saving legislation."

The Uniting Church's LGBTIQ+ Network is confident that the Victorian legislation will lead the way in other parts of Australia to implement similar legislation that will be equally effective in banning conversion practices.

Ms Mugford said that Uniting Network members know that many LGBTIQ+ people have subjected themselves to both formal and informal conversion practices in the past. "They are striving to be accepted by the communities they grew up in. Those same communities reject people and their natural sexual orientation / gender identity which cannot be changed and therefore ultimately reject LGBTIQ+ people. The consequences of this rejection can be devastating".

"What we know is that God loves all people, as they are. This legislation bans conversion practices in any form and send a strong message to LGBTIQ+ people that they are not broken and don't need fixing" Ms Mugford said.

The Uniting Church's LGBTIQ+ Network welcomes the opportunity to engage with the wider Uniting Church congregations and agencies on education, training and pastoral care matters which relate to LGBTIQ+ people and especially to ensure conversion practices no longer occur in any Uniting Church setting. The Network welcomes the chance to consult and develop how we interact with our faith and ministry as it relates to LGBTIQ+ people.

Uniting Network expressed its gratitude to Brave Network and SOGICE Survivors for the immense amount of research, survivor support, work and advocacy they have done, and with the support of other community advocates and LGBTIQ+ organisations, to ensure the safe passage of this legislation.

Media release authorised by the Revd. Leanne Jenksi & Jason Masters (Co-Convenors)

For further information, please contact Jason Masters, National Co-Convenor on 0407780110 jasonmasters@me.com or Nicole Mugford Victorian Representative on 0412 317 075 Or nicole.mugford@hotmail.com

Note to Editors

The Uniting Church LGBTIQ+ Network (hereafter 'Uniting Network') is the national network for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, and queer (LGBTIQ+) people, our families, friends, and allies within the Uniting Church in Australia (UCA). We are an independent national network in the UCA. We are officially recognised within the UCA and work within the structures and various Councils of the Church, but we do not represent or speak for the UCA.

Our ministry and advocacy for LGBTIQ+ people and communities are based on our Christian faith. This is summarised in a 2006 statement from the UCA's national assembly, that *...the Uniting Church believes that every person is precious and entitled to live with dignity because they are God's children, and that each person's life and rights need to be protected or the human community (and its reflection of God) and all people are diminished.*