

PRESS RELEASE

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Uniting Church Members Seek Legislative Reform

In an unprecedented action on Thursday November 10, the National Spokesman for Evangelical Members within the Uniting Church; Reverend Stephen Estherby hand-delivered a letter to the Moderator inviting the N.S.W. Synod to join Evangelical Members within the Uniting Church in legislative reform to ensure that congregations departing the UCA receive property justice.

Rev. Stephen Estherby said: "Our research indicates that over 6500 attendees have left, 109 congregations have experienced splits with an average loss of 50 people. There have been 41 new congregations formed outside the UCA. All this is the direct result of dissatisfaction with the national Assembly's decisions with respect to sexuality and leadership."

Despite attempts by EMU and Reforming Alliance within the Uniting Church to encourage a spirit of generosity and justice; so far the official response has been to deny the level of dissatisfaction and the accuracy of reported departures. Statements have been made in official publications which say; "Congregations can't leave - only individuals" and that "the UCA has a moral and legal right to the property."

Rev. Estherby said; "We have asked for property justice and have been informed by Synod officials that they would legally be unable to fulfill our request. That is why we have chosen to invite the Synod to join us in seeking to amend The Uniting Church in Australia Act N.S.W. 1977."

The amendment which will be brought through a Private Member's Bill in the N.S.W. Parliament will ensure that the moral and legal rights of a congregation's property are properly recognized, acknowledged and protected.

Reverend Stephen Estherby
EMU National Spokesperson

