



UnitingCare Agencies Move Motions of No Confidence in Forced Amalgamation Process

Three significant UnitingCare community welfare agencies have declared a loss of confidence in the process intended to reform the network's operations throughout Victoria and Tasmania.

The Boards of Kildonan UnitingCare, UnitingCare ReGen and UnitingCare Ballarat have unanimously passed resolutions declaring the current path will jeopardise the mission of the Church and put services to the community and our most vulnerable clients at risk.

The move comes just days before the UnitingCare Victoria and Tasmania Network's Project Control Group (PCG) is expected to confirm its intentions to effectively force the amalgamation of 26 agencies under one Board.

It is understood the PCG is also expected to reveal the top level operational structure that will sit beneath the revised governance model, at a meeting with all agency CEO's on Tuesday.

However, Kildonan UnitingCare, Re-Gen and UnitingCare Ballarat are united in their belief the process to date has been fundamentally flawed and therefore cannot deliver a sound outcome. They have issued the below shared statement of concern:

'We believe we are at a fork in the road. The path we take in these coming days and weeks will determine, without doubt, the future strength and viability of the UnitingCare network in Victoria and Tasmania.

'We are not trying to derail the process. We understand the drivers for change. However, we firmly believe there is a way to deliver on key objectives of the Church without engaging in a high risk change process, and that can better ensure the future success of our network.

'We are committed to working constructively to develop sustainable reform of the agencies engaged in the church mission.

'We now intend to exercise our rights under the Synod Standing Committee by-laws to take our concerns direct to the next Standing Committee to ensure they receive proper consideration.

'We call on the Synod Standing Committee to make no further decisions until a revised process in which all agencies can truly engage is enacted.' ...Ends.

Spokesperson available for comment: Sandy Ross, Chair UnitingCare ReGen



Background Context:

The UnitingCare Victoria and Tasmania Network conducted a major strategic review into its community welfare operations across both states in 2014/15.

Its recommendation to remove overall governance of the UnitingCare network from the Commission for Mission and form a single board of governance accountable directly to the Synod (via its Standing Committee) was announced in July last year.

At the time of its announcement, it stated the changes would be implemented progressively over the next 12 to 18 months.

The concerned agencies say these original timelines confirm their now evident suspicions that true consultation and input was never desired or going to be appropriately considered.

The majority of the 26 agencies involved in the proposed amalgamation are currently self-governed with strong community connections and well-regarded for their agile responses to local and emerging needs.

They have a combined annual budget of \$185 million with services including children, youth and families, emergency relief, financial counselling, housing, alcohol and other drugs, disability and aged care services.

Kildonan UnitingCare supports more than 20,000 Victorians annually from metropolitan Melbourne through to northern regional Victoria. UnitingCare ReGen provides award-winning alcohol and other drug treatment and education services for over 5,000 people each year in Melbourne's North and West and is a leading provider of workforce training for Australian health and community services. UnitingCare Ballarat is the only UC agency in this significant region and delivers a broad cross-section of services to Ballarat and surrounds.