

The President of the Uniting Church in Australia Stuart McMillan has appealed to Church members to continue their respectful considerations on marriage, in the wake of the Australian Parliament's changes to the marriage laws.

In a Pastoral Statement to the Church, Mr McMillan said:

“Some members of our Church will greet this legislative change with great joy whilst others will be deeply concerned about what they see as the consequences of the change.”

“We recognise there will be frustration and disappointment for some same gender couples who will still be unable to be married in our Church because our policy on marriage remains unchanged.”

The Uniting Church has been discussing the theology of marriage since the 13th Assembly meeting in 2012. The 14<sup>th</sup> Assembly in 2015 committed to further discussions about marriage and same gender relationships in culturally appropriate ways, also affirming the Church's embrace of LGBTIQ people as full members of its community.

“In line with the resolutions of the 14<sup>th</sup> Assembly, General Secretary Colleen Geyer has today written to all ministers and authorised marriage celebrants of the Uniting Church in Australia to explain what this means for each of them legally,” said Mr McMillan.

“During the triennium we have had formal and informal conversations, and we will have further opportunity at the Assembly to discuss marriage in a respectful way. “

“At the 15th Assembly in July 2018 we will again consider marriage, including a report being prepared by the Assembly Working Group on Doctrine and recommendations from the Assembly Standing Committee.”

“At that time I pray that God will enable us to truly hear one another and most importantly the leading of the Holy Spirit.”

“I appeal to you in the time between now and the rising of the 15th Assembly to please pray for wisdom and discernment for the members of Assembly who will gather as the body of Christ.”

Mr McMillan said that during his term as President from 2015 he had often spoken from Romans 12 verse 5: “We belong to one another”.

“The writer of Romans continues speaking about sincere love as: ‘Honouring one another above yourselves’ (verse 10).”

“In all we say and do, I appeal to you all, let us follow these encouragements to be Christ-like.

“Whatever your personal response is to these changes of Australian civil law, the Church's call remains unchanged to be a ‘fellowship of reconciliation’.

“We are the body of Christ. Let us be witnesses to the transforming power of God’s love in Jesus Christ at work in and amongst us,” said Mr McMillan.

[https://assembly.uca.org.au/news/item/2762-changes-to-australian-marriage-laws?utm\\_source=National+Update&utm\\_campaign=b8779dab44-EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN\\_2017\\_12\\_06&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_0949be2046-b8779dab44-9223997](https://assembly.uca.org.au/news/item/2762-changes-to-australian-marriage-laws?utm_source=National+Update&utm_campaign=b8779dab44-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2017_12_06&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_0949be2046-b8779dab44-9223997)