



UNITING CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA
ASSEMBLY

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32:CG:JB

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Dear Ministers of the Uniting Church

The Fifteenth Assembly when it met in July this year resolved to honour the diversity of Christian belief among our members by holding two equal and distinct statements of belief on marriage.

The Uniting Church Constitution, Part D, Section 39(b) sets out the process where a decision made by the Assembly can be suspended if “*at least half the Presbyteries within the bounds of each of at least half the Synods, or at least half the Synods, notify the President that they have determined that in their opinion a decision includes a matter vital to the life of the Church; and there was inadequate consultation prior to the decision.*”

If the threshold set out in Section 39(b) is reached, the President notifies the Church that the decision of the Assembly is suspended until further consultation is undertaken; and following this consultation the Assembly determines whether to affirm, vary or revoke the original decision and report its decision and reasons to the Church.

I write to inform you that there is a possibility that this section of the Uniting Church Constitution will be invoked within the timeframe allowed, with respect to the decision on marriage made at the Fifteenth Assembly. This possibility could occur as early as November 2018.

If this does happen, from the time the President notifies the Church that the decision is suspended, no same-gender marriages will be able to be performed by Uniting Church celebrants, nor can the newly approved marriage rite or statement on marriage be used, until further consultation occurs and the Assembly meets again to determine whether to affirm, vary or revoke the original decision. All same-gender marriages that have taken place prior to the President notifying the Church that the decision has been suspended would be valid.

As this is a time of uncertainty for our Church, please be assured that any information with respect to this issue will be communicated to you and the Church with clarity and expediency.

Grace and Peace

Colleen Geyer
Assembly General Secretary