

# MEDIA RELEASE



To: News Editor  
From: Uniting Church Synod of WA,  
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Tuesday 11 September 2018

## **Uniting Church WA calls to reinstate 'SRSS Safety Net' support program**

The 42nd Annual Synod of the Uniting Church Western Australia, held over the weekend, committed to taking the next step in advocacy for people seeking asylum, calling on Australia's leaders to restore dignity to people seeking humanitarian protection.

The Synod agreed to write to the Federal Government expressing concerns at the restriction of access to the Status Resolution Support Service (SRSS). Removing the service leaves families at risk of destitution and homelessness, and the church is calling for full access to be reinstated.

Recognising that the impacts of the cuts to SRSS will be felt on a local level, the Synod also agreed to write to the WA State Government requesting the provision of financial and in-kind support to agencies working with people in our community vulnerable to destitution due to these cuts to vital services.

The Synod also re-committed its support for CARAD (Coalition of Asylum Seekers, Refugees and Detainees) by running a donation drive at the annual Synod meeting, and encouraging Uniting Church congregations, schools and agencies to provide practical and financial support to CARAD, the Australian Churches Refugee Taskforce (ACRT) and other organisations supporting people at risk of removal from this basic safety net support.

Rev Steve Francis, Moderator of the Uniting Church WA said that, "here in WA we are seeing the devastating impacts of the Australian government's harsh immigration policies on the lives of people in our communities. People deserve just and fair treatment while awaiting the outcome of their claim for protection, including the ability to keep a roof over their heads and food on the table. Restoring access to this basic safety net is a small step that can be taken immediately to support people seeking our protection."

The Uniting Church in Australia and the Synod of Western Australia has long expressed their concerns about policies surrounding the treatment of refugees and asylum seekers in Australia. For a full account of the federal policy requests from the Uniting Church in Australia, read *Shelter from the Storm*, downloadable at:

<http://www.unitingjustice.org.au/refugees-and-asylum-seekers/uca-statements/item/1105-shelter-from-the-storm>.

***For media enquiries and interviews,  
please contact Media and Communications Manager, Maggie Johns on 0419 831 576.***

From Friday 7 to Sunday 9 September 2018, more than 150 Uniting Church members from around Western Australia came together to discuss issues of importance in the life of the Uniting Church in Australia, Synod of Western Australia at the 42<sup>nd</sup> Annual Meeting. Synod includes members from the congregations and faith communities of the Presbytery of Western Australia; MLC; Penrhos College; PLC; Scotch College; St Stephen's School; Tranby College; Wesley College; Trinity Residential College and Conference Centre; Good Samaritan Industries; Juniper; UnitingCare West; Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress WA Regional Committee and Beanangirng Kwuurt Institute.