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For immediate release

WHITE RIBBON DAY: A CALL FOR AN END TO VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Uniting Church President, the Reverend Dr. Dean Drayton, has urged Australians to wear a white ribbon this Friday in support of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women (IDEVAW).

“Domestic and sexual violence devastates the lives of women in Australia and in countries around the world. White Ribbon Day provides a unique opportunity for all of us to show that we believe violence against women is unacceptable and that we stand with those women who have suffered physical, sexual and psychological abuse.”

Rev. Drayton expressed his deep concern at the devastating social and psychological cost of violence against women and their children.

“Violence against women is at epidemic levels in Australia. More than half of all Australian women will experience an incident of physical or sexual violence in their lifetimes and one quarter of Australian women have experienced physical or sexual violence from a partner.

“This is a shameful statistic that should be of grave concern to all Australians. The personal cost to women, children and their families is incalculable. Violence against women also inflicts long-term damage on the social fabric of communities and diminishes our common humanity. It is time to say, ‘No more!’”

Rev. Drayton said the Uniting Church has made public statements speaking out against violence against women, including the 1991 Assembly resolution opposing sexual violence.

“As Christians, we are called to strive for the reconciliation of humanity and an end to violent and cruel behaviour. The Uniting Church will continue to support the elimination of violence in all its forms. Sexual violence is a sin against God and against humanity and at its root is the practise of inequality between the sexes. We must ensure that a concerted community effort is made to address this endemic violence against women. Wearing a White Ribbon is a public and practical way for all Australians to make this commitment.”

ENDS