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For immediate release

**UNITING CHURCH CALLS FOR COMPASSION AND BALANCE IN
ABORTION DEBATE**

The Uniting Church believes that human life is God given from the beginning. We believe that all human beings are made in the image of God and that we are called to respect the sacredness of life.

We also believe Christians are called to respond to life with compassion and generosity.

When abortion is practised indiscriminately it damages respect for human life. However, we live in a broken world where people face difficult decisions. Respect for the sacredness of life means advocating for the needs of women as well as the unborn child.

We reject two extreme positions: that abortion should never be available; and that abortion should be regarded as simply another medical procedure.

It is not possible to hold one position that can be applied in every case because people's circumstances will always be unique.

It is important that women have the space they need to make an appropriate decision after careful consideration. The current abortion laws allow women to do this in whatever circumstances they face.

Women must be free to discuss their situation before they make a decision. The Church needs to be a place where such discussion can happen. We can offer spiritual, moral and pastoral support to a woman at this time.

Whilst we encourage our Ministers to remind people of the sacredness of life, the Church's role should be to offer care and support leading up to and following a decision, not stand in judgement.

The Uniting Church is disturbed that recent comments could imply that women make the decision to have an abortion without proper consideration. Most women who have abortions do so only after a great deal of searching and anguish. There are a range of well informed spiritual, medical and emotional support services available to women and it is offensive to imply that these decisions are made lightly or without access to suitable consultation.

The decision to have an abortion is not just a moral issue but a social one. While the current debate attempts to pass moral judgement on the act itself, it ignores the many emotional, physical, financial and social issues that often create a situation where a woman is forced to consider an abortion.

The Uniting Church hopes that those engaged in this debate do not lose sight of the complexity of the issues.

Rev. Dr Dean Drayton
President



UNITING CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA
NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

MEDIA RELEASE

Communications Unit
Level 8 222 Pitt Street SYDNEY
PO Box A2266 Sydney South NSW 1235

Uniting Church in Australia National Assembly

Ends

Rev. Drayton is available for interview on request.