



A Crucial Inquiry into the Abuse of Young People in Prison

The President of the Uniting Church in Australia Mr Stuart McMillan has welcomed today's announcement of a Royal Commission into a youth detention centre in the Northern Territory.

The Royal Commission was announced by Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull following the broadcast of shocking footage obtained by the ABC's Four Corners program of the abuse and torture of detainees in Darwin's Don Dale Youth Detention Centre.

"The treatment of these young people in detention is unspeakably appalling and a national disgrace. Such abuse is inexcusable. It must end now," said Mr McMillan.

"I thank the Prime Minister for his swift response. I also urge him to set terms of reference that will allow a comprehensive examination of juvenile detention, not just limited to the Northern Territory, and including the policies and practices that lead to so many young indigenous people ending up behind bars."

"The tragedy of the incarceration rates and treatment of First Peoples in detention has never been adequately addressed, despite the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody and many other inquiries and reports. The culture and the systems of detention in our country are broken and can no longer be ignored."

Moderator of the Northern Synod Rev. Thresi Mauboy also welcomed the Royal Commission announcement.

"The images in the Four Corners report were horrifying. It's offensive that anyone should be treated this way in detention, let alone our precious young people," said Rev. Mauboy.

"The Northern Territory Government must immediately act to ensure that the shameful treatment of our young people stops. Appropriate care and support must be offered to all young people in juvenile detention.

"The Northern Synod of the Uniting Church will engage with the Royal Commission in presenting the case for a corrections system based on rehabilitation rather than cruel punishment."

Chairman of the Northern Regional Council of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress Rev. Djawanydjawany Gondarra has also called for immediate action.

"First Peoples have been telling stories of abuse and mistreatment for many, many years. It's outrageous that it has taken so long and these shocking images for people to listen."

"Now people are awake, we want to see action," said Rev. Gondarra.

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