

**Statement from the Uniting Aboriginal & Islander Christian Congress WA regarding the site known as the Beanang Kwuurt Institute.**

We are the WA representatives of the Uniting Aboriginal & Islander Christian Congress (UAICC), an autonomous, Indigenous collective that operates in a covenant relationship with the Uniting Church in Australia.

We are not powerful or perfect but we are trying to be faithful to the calling God has on our lives to serve our community and support those in need, and to do so in a way that honours our Culture and our Old People.

This is why our predecessors set up Beanang Kwuurt Institute (BKI) and ran it for many years – to be an Indigenous led and run place of support and healing for our people. This remains our vision and we are committed to seeing BKI restored to its full potential.

We know, deep in our spirit, the importance of this place. It is a special place culturally. It is also a site of significance to many Stolen Generations survivors and their families as it used to be Sister Kate's where so many of our kids were taken.

We feel privileged to be custodians of this place and have felt great sorrow to see it slip from our oversight. We feel entrusted with the BKI legacy but were increasingly troubled to see BKI taken in a direction that did not align with that legacy or even its constitution. For these reasons and others, we made the difficult decision, after years of attempts to find another way, to request the Uniting Church to not renew the lease for the previous managers.

We want to make clear that we hold no ill-will towards any of the people who have attended or run any of the activities at BKI. We all share the knowledge of the importance of this place and have experienced its healing potential. Once we have conducted a thorough review to: update the governance structures; source a sustainable funding base and; restore the safety of the premises we hope that you and many more families in our community will again be able to access the services of BKI.

We do, however, have to express our hurt and deep sadness at the false accusations, mischaracterisations, and abuse that has been directed at us and our families, some of whom have passed. This has been very painful and we now no longer feel safe to dialogue with the former management. We tried, in good faith, to have constructive discussions, including a three day, independently facilitated mediation, but sadly that was unsuccessful.

We want to again be clear that we have no intention for the property to be sold. There is no personal benefit for any of us to take on this project and there never was. There is only hard work ahead of us and hopefully a brighter future for our people.

We have a vision for BKI to once again become a place of healing and hope. We have a process we need to work through to enable that to happen in a sustainable way which includes discussions with community members and organisations who may be able to assist us in achieving that vision when the time is right.

With love and respect,

UAICC-WA