



STATEMENT FROM THE BOARD OF THE BEANANGING KWUURT INSTITUTE (BKI)

14 March 2025

This statement has been issued by the Board of Beanangng Kwuurt Institute (BKI) in response to **the misinformation and misrepresentations** being circulated by supporters of the group currently occupying the property on Treasure Rd, Queens Park, formerly known as Sister Kate's. **Now is the time to speak the truth and set the record straight.**

The **Bringing Them Home Report** recommended that "...churches and other nongovernment agencies review their land holdings to identify land acquired or granted for the purpose of accommodating Indigenous children forcibly removed from their families and, in consultation with Indigenous people and their land councils, return that land."

The Uniting Church responded to this recommendation by transferring ownership of half of the parcel of land at Sister Kate's to BKI and **the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (UAICC)** back in 2007. The other half went to the Aboriginal Land and Sea Council. This was the result of intense negotiations with all the Aboriginal stakeholders at the time and was the finalised consensus decision. Since that time, this land has been under Aboriginal control.

The **Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (UAICC)** was established in 1985 as the Indigenous arm of the Uniting Church in Australia. **Congress** is an independent body within the Uniting Church, determining its own goals, objectives, policies, and priorities. It is dedicated to the spiritual, physical, social, mental, and emotional wellbeing of Indigenous Australians.

BKI was established by the WA Regional Committee of UAICC to be an Indigenous-led and run **place of support, healing, and empowerment** for our people. BKI is a separately incorporated entity with its own constitution and is an Aboriginal-controlled organisation, with the requirement that all Board members be First Nations people **nominated by UAICC**.

UAICC has been distressed that in recent years, BKI has **drifted away** from the oversight of UAICC and been managed by a Board **not elected in accordance with its Constitution**. We were disturbed to see BKI taken in directions that did not align with the original vision for the Institute. For this reason, UAICC requested the Uniting Church Synod of WA to rectify this situation, a situation in large part caused by the Church for which the Church has since apologised. The BKI Board members who were members of UAICC had been subject to relentless bullying as a result of their efforts to bring BKI back to its original direction, and

had already resigned, rendering the Board immediately unconstitutional. The remaining members of the Board were then dismissed and a new BKI Board, **nominated by the UAICC, the owners of the land**, were reinstated. BKI operations are now back in the hands of the Aboriginal owners of the land.

We remain committed to the original vision of BKI as a **healing and support** centre for our people, especially the Stolen Generations, and are dedicated to restoring BKI to its full potential. This was always our vision and as part of this, the BKI Board has entered into a partnership with the **Western Australian Stolen Generations Aboriginal Corporation (WASGAC)**, trading as Yokai Healing our Spirit, to establish a Healing Centre on the site.

We bear **no ill will** toward the people currently occupying the property most of whom are well-meaning but deeply misguided non-Aboriginal people, some of whom are connected to the Renters and Housing Union WA. These misguided individuals have no comprehension of the significance of this site, nor the correct people with the authority to speak for the site from a Cultural and Stolen Generation perspective and no effort has been made by the non-Aboriginal people to speak with the Aboriginal owners. Unfortunately, there has been significant misinformation and the mobilisation of a group of Aboriginal women referred to as the “Sister Kates Yorgas” by individuals who are previous BKI Board staff and Board members plus those that administer the page @land back for stolen generations. Those individuals who are misinforming and taking advantage of those Yorgas to push their false agenda, causing further trauma and hurt, should be held to account by the Aboriginal community.

Those currently occupying the site are an independent small group who are **not under the oversight of either UAICC or BKI**, the legal owners of the land and **nor do they have any cultural authority. Therefore, there was no obligation to include them in the negotiations with Yokai.** The negotiations between Rev Sealin Garlett AM (RIP) and highly respected Elder Dr Jim Morrison to establish a joint Healing Centre on the site go as far back as 2012 and but for the premature passing of Rev Sealin would have been realised years ago. **That time has now come but is being actively prevented by the group occupying our land.**

Months of discussions and mediation were attempted with the occupiers of the land regarding UAICC’s intention to restore BKI to its original vision. However, the occupiers have shown no willingness to engage respectfully, either with UAICC or BKI. We have been **deeply hurt and saddened** by the false accusations, mischaracterisations, and abuse directed at us and our families—some of whom have passed, and this relentless campaign continues. What we have consistently heard from the occupiers is that they will not stop their public campaign until we meet their demand for the ownership of the land to be transferred from us to them. **In essence, they seek to dispossess the Aboriginal people (UAICC and BKI) who currently own the land.**

What we now ask is for the occupiers to **vacate the premises immediately**, so that BKI can regain control of the site and the new Healing Centre can be established. **The longer they remain, the greater the delay in providing essential healing services.** We are open to respectful discussions about the services that may be provided on the site, but cannot and will not engage in these discussions until the occupiers vacate the premises and

demonstrate a willingness to participate in discussions in a respectful and truthful manner. Discussions can only occur with people who can demonstrate Healing Hearts and we will not be having those discussions with non-Aboriginal people.

We know, deep in our spirits, the **cultural significance** of this place. It is a site of great importance, especially to many Stolen Generations survivors and their families, as it was once **Sister Kate's**, where so many of our children were taken. Our **only desire** is to restore this place as one of healing and support for all our people.

Again, we are the Aboriginal owners of this land, legally and morally. We will not have it stolen from us.