



Uniting Church in Australia  
SYNOD OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA

## Media release

11 December, 2013

### Uniting Church concludes divestment auctions

The Uniting Church Synod of Victoria and Tasmania has concluded its boardroom auction prior to the sale of all properties, after the Church's financial target was met.

A number of other listed properties, which have yet to exchange contracts or be auctioned, will no longer be offered for sale under the provisions of 'special circumstances'.

Synod General Secretary Rev Dr Mark Lawrence said the buoyant property market enabled the Church to reach its target funds while minimising the impact on a number of congregations.

"Today the auction began with vacant land, tennis courts and vacant churches, and placed the active worship centres further down the list," Dr Lawrence said.

The property sales process began three weeks ago. In that time a number of residential properties have been sold at auction, six properties have been sold as part of a portfolio sale and four others have been privately negotiated.

Twenty-one properties from Melbourne, Ballarat, Echuca and Bendigo were due to go under the hammer in today's boardroom auction at Leonda By The Yarra, in Hawthorn. The Uniting Church stopped the auction after reaching the net \$56 million, as per the resolution of the May 2013 Synod meeting.

"The decision to end the auction early does not remove the pain and uncertainty this divestment program has caused the people of the Uniting Church," Dr Lawrence explained.

"Clearly, many people have been disrupted by this and some congregations and agencies will still have to move as a result of successful sales. I want to thank the people of the Uniting Church for walking together through these very hard few months."

"There are still challenging times ahead as congregations prepare to leave their beloved places of worship and agencies pack up staff and relocate programs. I want to take this opportunity to also acknowledge the staff and committee members who have worked tirelessly on this project to achieve this outcome, and to also acknowledge that the Church is only part way through this journey in relation to the changes that will occur as a result of the property that has been divested," Dr Lawrence said.

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