

President's Message

Media release re: Bali Bombing October 12

The leader of the Uniting Church in Australia and long time Indonesian resident/commentator, Rev Professor James Haire, today expressed his concern and sympathy after the bombing in Bali.

Professor Haire:

- Condemned totally, on behalf of the Uniting Church, terrorist acts of all kinds and in all places; “they are an evil before God and humanity.”
- Expressed the church’s sympathy and concern for all those who are bereaved and injured.
- Warned against ‘pre-emptive judgement’ about who is responsible – best evidence based on past experience would suggest this is not local Indonesian groups acting alone as the coordinated timing and devices are too sophisticated.
- Suggested this is an extremist Islamic organisation from outside Indonesia;
- Said he believes that the aim of such an act is to destabilise the Indonesian Government of Megawati Sukarnoputri by creating tensions with the West, and to draw Balinese Hindus into inter-ethnic and inter-religious conflict to further destabilise Indonesia.

Professor Haire said, “It is important for Australians to understand that Indonesia has been living with the reality of terrorism for many years.

“While we condemn this particular act of violence, we express our concern for the whole of the Indonesian people where fear and terror are daily realities.

“One of the greatest dangers is an extremist response to this extremist act. That will only produce the kind of instability the perpetrators are trying to provoke.

“In the Uniting Church we will be praying for peace. We will be urging our political leaders to continue to use peaceful means to achieve justice: that includes working through the United Nations, to using diplomatic resources, and following international law.

Professor Haire encouraged Uniting Church members to pray for all victims and their families of the Bali massacre.

The national UnitingCare network has asked its counselling and family based care agencies to be available, as they are able, for people who require counselling or ‘someone to talk to’ due to the Bali massacre.