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For immediate release

### UNITING CHURCH WELCOMES ACTION FOR NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT

The Uniting Church in Australia has today commended the Federal Government for its latest efforts towards banning nuclear weapons.

The commendation comes in the wake of Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's announcement of the formation of the new Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Commission.

National Director of UnitingJustice Australia, Rev. Elenie Poulos, said the Uniting Church had long been committed to the elimination of all nuclear weapons, most recently lending its voice to the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN).

"The Uniting Church has been consistent in its calls on successive Australian Governments to take a strong stand on nuclear disarmament and to advocate for the complete elimination of all nuclear weapons," Rev. Poulos said.

"We have been particularly concerned by the most recent threats to the integrity of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Many countries, including the US and Russia, both signatories to the Treaty, are continuing to invest in the development of nuclear weapons technology, and more than 5000 nuclear weapons around the world remain on high-alert.

"The establishment of a new international commission will hopefully reinvigorate the commitment to nuclear disarmament through renewed support for the NPT and the proposed Nuclear Weapons Convention."

Rev. Poulos said that the Commission should also focus its work on gaining a commitment from all nuclear weapons states to immediately lower the operational status of their weapons and commit to a comprehensive ban on nuclear testing, as well as raising the level of support for the work of Mohamed El-Baradei and the International Atomic Energy Agency.

"We believe there is no greater threat to the peace of God in this world than that posed by weapons of mass destruction," she said.

"The Uniting Church in Australia welcomes the Prime Minister's initiative and looks forward to working with the Government to end the threat of nuclear weapons once and for all."