

# Media Release

## Marist Brothers' Province of Australia



### Statement from Marist Brothers Australia: Release of Report of Case Study 43

20 October 2020

As leader of the Marist Brothers, I welcome the release of the Final Report of the Royal Commission's Case Study 43. I hope this is another step in the healing process for those in the Hunter community so badly affected by criminal child sexual abuse in our and other Institutions. We will now carefully consider the Report, its findings and recommendations and evaluate our current practices in their light. At this time, I would like to make the following comments.

Over the last seven years, since I became involved in the Royal Commission, I have had ample time to reflect upon the enormous damage caused by the sexual abuse of young people by Brothers, Priests and others within the Church. The grave consequences of these crimes continue in the lives of survivors, their families and loved ones in the Hunter.

During my 2017 testimony for this Case Study, I offered an apology to the Survivors and people of the Hunter. That apology, and my other comments given under oath, are just as valid today. I reiterated those same sentiments at the [opening of the memorial to the survivors](#) in March 2019.

What I said on those two occasions holds true with the release of this report. We openly acknowledge our past failures. We accept that the damage done continues today.

I also accept that there is nothing in any person's power to change the past and make whole what has been broken apart. For some there has simply been too much pain, too much sorrow and too much trauma.

My focus, and that of the Marist Brothers, is to work on what little is in our power, which is responding to those who have experienced abuse with practical steps to acknowledge the damage through counselling, compensation and apology – be it through the National Redress Scheme, through direct approach to the Marist Brothers or through the Civil litigation system.

There are other initiatives which I hope those who need support may be able to access:

- We have established a Healing and Support Office which provides a direct and supportive response to those who have experienced abuse by any of our personnel or others, as well as for those affected by such abuse including families, children, siblings and partners. They can be contacted [here](#).
- We helped fund the establishment of the [Memorial in Newcastle](#) to all those who have experienced abuse as children within Catholic institutions, including the Marist Brothers' ones. This is a tribute to those who have suffered so grievously.
- We have joined the [National Redress Scheme](#) and provide redress through this independent channel, as well as through civil litigation and direct approaches.

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None of this changes what happened and it is right that the past is not forgotten – I spoke about this at the Memorial in 2019.

*“And as years pass, and few of us are still living, this memorial will still stand, and silently witness your painful experiences. It will be a place of stillness, of solace and, possibly at some point, a place of serenity. And on a day like this, perhaps many decades from now, others will do what we do this evening. Unlike us, they will gather here with no personal knowledge or experience of what happened – but because of this Memorial, they will take with them the lessons it offers.”*

And like the Memorial, this Report, and the work of the Royal Commission, will stand as a potent reminder to us and generations to follow of the tragic consequences of the betrayal of children, their families and their communities.

**Brother Peter Carroll FMS**

Provincial

Marist Brothers Province of Australia