

Media Release

Marist Brothers' Province of Australia



Statement to Fassifern Guardian and Tribune Weekender

11 March 2021

“The Marist Brothers openly acknowledge that children have been failed at our institutions and these matters were the subject of exhaustive inquiry by the Royal Commission.

“Its work to understand what enabled the sexual abuse of children in institutions to occur – as well as understanding why such abuse was not properly responded to at the time – is a matter of public record.

“As advised to the Royal Commission, there was no record of complaint against Brother O’Sullivan received by the leadership of the Marist Brothers until the mid 1990s.

“Brother O’Sullivan has been convicted of crimes committed elsewhere and is in custody.

“The Marist Brothers have and continue to settle claims with those who have experienced abuse in our facilities including the provision of counselling, compensation and apology and the details of these are confidential.

“I said to the Royal Commission at the time and reiterate today:

“We cannot deny the unpalatable truths that have been revealed about the Marist Brothers' responses to child sexual abuse, vulnerable young people were sexually abused by Brothers, criminal activity took place, our response was entirely inadequate, the serious effects of sexual abuse were unrecognised, leaders failed to take strong decisive action, victims were offended against by means of aggressive legal processes. Our responses were naive, uninformed, even callous at times. What happened in the past should not have occurred. Children should not have been abused by those into whose trust they were willingly placed.”

“The apology of Marist Brothers to those who experienced abuse is unreserved, enduring and a matter of public record. That a single child could be so harmed and failed when in the care of the Marist Brothers is a matter of profound sorrow.

“Today our mission is supported by mandated and voluntary policies and procedures to protect children. Central to this are the provisions of mandatory reporting legislation which applies to all individuals, religious and lay alike.

“To any person who may have experienced abuse at any Marist Brothers’ facility – no matter how long ago – I reiterate our consistent message for them to come forward at the timing and in the manner of their own choosing including through the civil litigation process, the National Redress Scheme or engaging directly with the Professional Standards Office of the Marist Brothers.

“I also reiterate our consistent message that any person with any evidence of criminal conduct to take that to the police for the proper investigation.” – **Brother Peter Carroll fms, Provincial, Marist Brothers’ Australia.**

Ends

MARIST CENTRE, SYDNEY
PO Box 1247, Mascot NSW 1460
p + 61 2 9218 4000

Support, Reporting and Healing Information

The Marist Brothers fully accept that some religious and lay people in our facilities committed abuse against children and for that we are deeply sorry and unreserved in our apology.

We are unable to change the past however we will continue our work to provide healing to those who have suffered abuse in our institutions

Justice for those who have experienced abuse is fundamental to the healing process and we urge any person with evidence of criminal conduct to report that to their local police.

For those who have experienced abuse in any of our facilities, there are a number of ways in which they can access support.

Information on the services provided by the Marist Brothers, including our healing and support officers, can be found on our website at www.maristbrothers.org.au

Our Professional Standards Office can also assist any person wishing to come forward and is contactable on 02 9218 4000.

The Marist Brothers' Province of Australia is also a participating institution in the National Redress Scheme. Applications to the NRS must be made directly by contacting 1800 737 177 or www.nationalredress.gov.au