

Media Release

Marist Brothers' Province of Australia



Marist Brothers resolve to adopt Catholic Church's guidelines on civil claims

2 December 2015

The Marist Brothers' Province of Australia has adopted the recently released guidelines on how Catholic Church authorities should respond to civil claims of child sexual abuse.

The guidelines, which have been endorsed by the Catholic Church leadership, come into effect in January 2016 and provide a framework within which claims and litigation should be conducted.

"The Marist Brothers are committed to repairing the damage caused by past abuse in a way that reduces the potential for further trauma", said Provincial Peter Carroll.

"These guidelines recognise that lodging a civil claim can be a difficult experience for a complainant and as such, they provide a clear and consistent approach aimed at reducing any trauma.

"Importantly the guidelines support the existing position of the Marist Brothers in that we will assist any complainant or their representative to determine the correct defendant to sue.

"Further, the Marist Brothers and its advisors will generally not rely on time limitation defences in civil claims, unless there are prejudicial circumstances.

"Released by the Truth Justice and Healing Council, the guidelines also:

- *Provide consistency in the way claims are handled*
- *Require religious orders to identify the correct defendant to sue*
- *Recommend a framework for litigation that eases trauma*
- *Cover issues including keeping legal costs and paying legitimate claims without litigation*

"The Marist Brothers welcome this 'complainant focused approach' and believe it will deliver better outcomes for those who have suffered past abuse.

"As such, our Provincial Council has now adopted the guidelines as our formal policy to govern the actions of the Brothers and our legal and other representatives in the management of civil claims", said Brother Carroll.

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