

UPDATE 48

Royal Commission Marist Brothers

Sydney



Monday 30 June 2014 – Day 9

Day nine of the Royal Commission hearing into the way in which the Marist Brothers responded to child sexual abuse perpetrated by two teaching brothers from the early 1960s through to the late 1980s continued in Sydney today after being adjourned for two weeks.

Today's hearing commenced with retired provincial of the Marist Brothers, **Br Alexis Turton** continuing to give evidence about his response to a complaint made by Damian De Marco of abuse by Kostka Chute at Marist College Canberra.

Br Alexis was vice-provincial of the Marist Brothers from 1983 to June 1989 and provincial from June 1989 to June 1995.

Under cross examination from Mr O'Brien representing Mr DeMarco, Br Alexis gave evidence as to the details about his meeting with Mr DeMarco at Canberra Airport, the subsequent meeting with Fr Brian Lucas and steps he took to enquire into Chute's conduct.

Br Alexis also gave evidence today about communications with the Church insurer, CCI, about indemnity for the Marists Brothers in cases of alleged child sexual abuse. Br Alexis gave evidence in relation to decisions by CCI to cover claims stemming from Chute's criminal behaviour.

Br Alexis was asked about steps he took following disclosures by Chute of inappropriate behaviour against two boys during the meeting he had with Fr Brian Lucas in 1993. He gave evidence as to the inquiries undertaken as to the well-being of the men, and said that he had followed advice as to the approach to take to such inquiries in those circumstances.

Late in the afternoon the current Provincial, **Br Jeff Crowe**, began giving evidence. He was asked about the Marist Brothers' schools in Australia, and questioned about the history of policy development.

Br Crowe recounted the emerging awareness in the Church of the issue of child sexual abuse by priests and religious, saying the Marist Brothers had initially learned of the issue through publicity from the USA and later locally in Australia.

He said this had generated discussion about the development of a child protection policy, but the Marist Brothers had not initiated inquiries to discover the extent of any issue within their ranks.

He said the Marist Brothers had instead responded to complainants as they came forward.

The hearing will continue in Sydney tomorrow.

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