

PROVINCE OF AUSTRALIA

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Dear Brothers, colleagues and friends,

Every day of the Royal Commission Hearing I have sat and listened to the evidence about the way in which the Marist Brothers dealt with the sexual abuse crimes of Brothers John Chute and Gregory Sutton in the 1960s, 70s and 80s.

On behalf of all Marist Brothers I acknowledge and apologise to their victims for the abuse and very real damage done to young people by their criminal actions.

I re-affirm our genuine apology to the brave men and women who have given evidence during this public hearing, to all victims of sexual abuse by Brothers and former Brothers, and to the families of victims.

It has become clear that some victims of these two men were abused after the ineffective responses and inaction of Marist Brothers and others in leadership positions. This is unacceptable and we acknowledge and deeply regret this failing.

I fully understand that many victims and survivors of abuse require continuing support and care. I restate our commitment to deal compassionately and justly with all victims of abuse, and our willingness to review past settlements to ensure they are fair, reasonable and compassionate.

I await the conclusion of this current Hearing and, with so many others, I look forward to the recommendations of the Royal Commission in the hope they will promote justice and healing for victims, and ensure greater safety for young people today.

I again make a firm commitment that we, Brothers and Marist ministries, will uphold the highest standards of behaviour, have clear child protection policies and procedures, and take decisive action in the event of any suspicions of abuse.

Marist schools and programs today provide truly safe and nurturing environments for the children and young people in our care.

PROVINCE CENTRES

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I acknowledge that some have lost confidence in the Marist Brothers, the Catholic Church and the Christian Faith because of the abuse and the way it has been handled. For this we are profoundly sorry.

I know this hearing has been a traumatic experience for everyone involved. It has significantly shaken our Province. It has brought to light very real failings in past understanding, systems, and approaches to dealing with child sexual abuse in our schools.

While I am confident our approach to child sexual abuse and all its complications is now very different, I fully acknowledge this may be of little comfort to the people who should have been cared for and protected.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Br Jeffrey Crowe'.

Br Jeffrey Crowe FMS
Provincial

2 July 2014

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