

UPDATE 12

Royal Commission *Towards Healing* Hearing



24 January 2014

The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse continued hearing public evidence today from Br Jeffrey Crowe, current Provincial of the Australian Province of the Marist Brothers, as part of Case Study No 4: *Towards Healing*.

Br Crowe provided a broad profile of the 1046 Marist Brothers who have joined the order in Australia since 1948.

He also provided evidence regarding the historic number of abuse cases, including the number of claims for redress, the number of active investigations, the average age of perpetrators and how perpetrators are dealt with by the order. Br Crowe also provided details of current abuse claims.

In response to questions from Commissioner McClellan, Br Crowe discussed his thinking as to why the abuse could have occurred, including inappropriate screening and preparation of young brothers. Br Crowe also said that prior to 1970 there was a culture of restriction of contact with family and developing friendships. He also talked about the rigid discipline in religious houses prior to the 1960s.

Details of today's hearing also went to the details of the Brothers' understanding in the past of what constituted a criminal act, and whether or not that attitude has now changed.

Br Crowe took the opportunity to provide a public apology to DK on behalf of the Marist Brothers and committed to meeting with him soon.

Michael Salmon, Director of the Professional Standards Office NSW ACT, returned to the witness box to provide further details of the *Towards Healing* facilitation process for DK who was abused by Br Ross Murrin at St Augustine's College in Cairns in 1981.

The hearing for Case Study 4: *Towards Healing* concluded today.

The next hearing involving the Catholic Church, Case Study 6, is due to commence in Brisbane on 17 February.

For more information on the Truth Justice and Healing Council go to: www.tjhcouncil.org.au

For information on the Royal Commission go to: <http://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/>

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