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Marist Brother

STATES:

1. I am a member of the Institute of Marist Brothers (hereinafter called the Order) and hold a doctorate in Philosophy from the University of London. I was born on the 14 September, 1931 and have been a Marist Brother since 1948.
2. Since entering the Order my appointments have included postings at Marist Brothers establishments at Parramata, Hamilton, Hunters Hill, Eastwood, Ashgrove and Rosalie. At the present time I am professor of education at the Notre Dame University, Fremantle and have held that position for approximately six years.
3. For the purpose of administration the Order in Australia is divided into two Provinces, the Sydney Province which includes most of New South Wales and all of Queensland; and the Melbourne Province which has responsibility for Victoria, part of New South Wales and the western portion of Australia.
4. The management of the Sydney Province is in the hands of the Brother Provincial, (which at this time is Brother Michael Hill) who is assisted by the Provincial Council, which comprises up to seven members of the Order, who

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meet with the Provincial on a regular basis. The Brother Provincial is nominated by the members of the Order in the Province and is appointed to the position by the Superior General in Rome. The Brother Provincial is responsible for managing the affairs of the Order, within his Province, for the term of his appointment. The Provincial Council members provide him with advice on any question he might refer to them as a body or as individuals.

5. The Marist Brothers in the Sydney Province is essentially a teaching Order and in that capacity it is involved in providing Brothers, who teach at primary and secondary schools and colleges at various towns and centres. Some of these establishments are directly managed by the Order while others are either jointly managed by the Order or are administered by the local Catholic Education Office or alternatively by the Parish Authorities.
6. A Superior is appointed at each of the Marist Brothers Communities; that Brother is responsible for the daily running of the community to which he was appointed and is accountable to the Provincial. Principals are also appointed within these communities to take responsibility for the education provided by the Marist Brothers at the schools where they are required to teach, albeit if directly managed by the Order or administered otherwise.
7. Between May, 1983 and June, 1989. I was the Provincial for the Sydney Region. I replaced Brother Kieran Geaney (now retired at Cairns - afflicted by a stroke), who had been the Provincial since June, 1976. I was also a member of the Provincial Council for a period of twenty five years. I was a Vice Provincial for a period of twelve years, that was prior to becoming Provincial.

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8. I am aware that a former Marist Brother, Gregory Sutton is now serving a term of imprisonment in New South Wales. after having been convicted of committing sexual offences against a number of students, whom he taught in New South Wales, between 1976 and 1987. I am told that several former students have now brought civil actions against the Order, as a result of Gregory Sutton's behaviour. I have been asked to provide my knowledge of this former Brother and whether anything of a detrimental nature surfaced about him, during my term of office as Provincial.
9. I accept the Provincial records as being correct, in that, Gregory Joseph Sutton was professed as a Marist Brother in 1970. He trained as a teacher at the Champagnat College from 1971 to 1972. He subsequently served as a teaching Brother at the following establishments:-
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| 1/73 - 12/75 | REDACTED |
| 1/76 - 12/77 | Sacred Heart Primary School, Mosman. |
| 1/78 - 12/79 | Marist Brothers Primary, Eastwood. |
| 1/80 - 12/82 | Marist Brothers Primary, Canberra. |
| 1/83 - 12/84 | St Thomas More School, Ruse. |
| 1/85 - 10/86 | St Carthage's Primary School, Lismore. |
| 11/86 - 12/86 | Marcellin Hall, New Zealand [Personal Renewal Course]. |
| 1/87 - 4/87 | St Carthage's Primary School, Lismore. |
10. My contact with Gregory Sutton would have been remote early on, but I would have seen him two or three times per year when he was at Eastwood, Canberra, Ruse and Lismore. That would have been in my capacity at Vice Provincial and Provincial. He was always pleasant and polite with me. I found him almost totally inaccessible,

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he kept his own life very much to himself. He was regarded as being quite troublesome in school staffs. The image was being conveyed to me from feedback I received from other Brothers at that time. My concern with him was to know that he trusted me, which I think he did. I was concerned that he had some happiness in his life, as he seemed to constantly to have 'a chip on his shoulder'. It was hard to have any extended conversation with him, so that his private life would have been a mystery to most of us.

11. It will be observed from Gregory Sutton's appointments that he did not stay anywhere for a lengthy period. The reason for this at Provincial Council level was that he was known to be difficult and the Council felt that he should be moved fairly frequently. The reason related to interpersonal problems and nothing else. There was never any suggestion at Provincial Council level of sexual impropriety.

12. In January, 1985 Gregory Sutton was appointed to St Carthage's Primary School at Lismore. In the 1980's, I cannot be more definite, after very extensive and rather difficult negotiations, the Presentation Sisters and the Marist Brothers agreed to combine primary and secondary schools to run as full co-educational schools in Lismore. As a consequence we were always very sensitive to see that leadership, staff cohesion, and good sense of community prevailed. This meant authority sharing and an understanding of tolerance and good sense between the two Orders. Any glitches in terms of interpersonal relationships were looked at keenly. I had discussions with Sister Julianne Murphy who was the General of the Presentation Sisters about the difficulties Gregory was giving to Sister Julia.

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13. I had been advised by Brother Alexis Turton, the Vice Provincial, either 1985 or 86, I cannot be more precise, that Sister Julia had expressed some concerns about Brother Sutton. These concerns were related to his poor relations with other members of the teaching staff. Reference had also been made to him having favourites and giving special attention to several of the children, which caused Sister Julia some apprehension. There was never any direct allegation of sexual impropriety. The major factor appeared to be his interpersonal problems. I did not have any personal discussion with Gregory Sutton, but I am aware that he was interviewed by Brother Alexis and I had in turn been advised by that Brother of the content of the conversation. Brother Alexis had confronted Gregory Sutton on the aspect of sexual impropriety and it had been emphatically denied by that person. There was no evidence to support otherwise.
14. It will be noted that Gregory Sutton undertook a Renewal Course at the Macellin Hall Auckland at the end of 1986 and returned to Lismore in 1987. This was a kind of spiritual reflective refurbishment for people in young mid life. There was no correlation with him undertaking that course to sexual behaviour. However, if a Brother was having sexual problems the course gave him time to reflect. He was never directed to participate, but the invitation was extended to him along with a number of other Brothers.
15. At this stage there was a Lay person in charge of the school. Either Sister Julia had died or was in hospital. Early in 1987 I spoke with John Kelly, Director of Catholic Education, Lismore Diocese, about the problems that Greg was causing at Lismore. I thought at the time

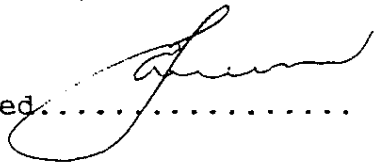
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that the best solution was to bring him out of there and I had him come and live at Drummoyne where I resided. Gregory was happy to come out. Little did I know he may have been happy to get out of a personally destructive situation. That decision was taken by myself on his interpersonal problems and out of my sense of pastoral obligation. At the same time was concerned about what Brother Alexis had confided to me, but neither Brother Alexis nor I had any proof of sexual impropriety other than what had been told to Brother Alexis by Sister Julia; that fell well short. Sister Julia had not been a motivating factor in respect to his removal from the school; Nor had Sister Julianne, the General of the Order, asked for his removal. It was a decision I made myself essentially based on his interpersonal problems with staff and worry that there may have been friction with the Lay person, who had been appointed in charge.

15. After his removal from Lismore Brother Sutton worked in the library at the Catholic Theological Seminary at Hunters Hill. The complaint of sexual impropriety by Gregory Sutton did not surface until early 1989 and this came about from a discussion Mrs Kay Rolfe had with the Superior of the Community, Brother Anthony Hunt. Meanwhile Brother Alexis and I had been trying to provide some sound counselling for Gregory in a number of ways. He was a reluctant participant, but some ground was made with Brother Vincent Ryan in Melbourne. Information provided by Mrs Kay Rolfe in 1989 caused me to come to the conclusion that Gregory had interfered with children at Lismore.
16. I completed my appointment as Provincial in May, 1989 and left in June to undertake my doctorate at the University of London. Prior to my leaving Brother Alexis had made

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strenuous efforts to find some suitable counselling course for Gregory. He was accepted by the Therapy Centre, "Southdown" Ontario, Canada and he left Australia in August, 1989, to participate in a course at that Centre. I had no further contact with him and was later to learn that Police had charged him with a series of offences against children he had taught at a number of schools. This came as a complete shock to myself and other members of the Order as there had been no suggestion of misbehaviour whilst he had been at those venues.

Witnessed.....


Signed.....
 Br. Almar Dwyer

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