

RESEARCH PROJECT

Factors Accounting for the Sexual Abuse of Children and Young People by Marist Brothers in Australia, 1960 to 1995

1. BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

Over the last four years, the work of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Abuse, has challenged the Catholic Church and other Organisations to address the issue of why some of their members have sexually abused children and young people in their care. It is a vitally important issue and one which needs to be addressed carefully. An understanding of this issue may assist to ensure such offences do not recur in Institutions and provide a safer environment for children and young people in the care of Institutions.

This particular research project is designed to investigate why some Marist Brothers, given their individual and corporate commitments, have sexually abused children and young people.

Data prepared for the Royal Commission by the Marist Professional Standards Office indicates that a higher percentage of Brothers, than the societal average, have offended. The data indicates that the 1970s seem to be a period when more offences occurred.

2. AUDIENCE AND USE OF FINDINGS

The research is to be undertaken for the Provincial and Council of the Marist Brothers Province of Australia. It will assist them to understand the forces that have led to the tragedy of child sexual abuse by their own members. It is anticipated that the findings will be shared with other members of the Institute, including the General Council and the leaders of other Marist Brothers' Provinces.

It may be that the Research findings will be more generally available, or even form part of a response to the Royal Commission.

3. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

In essence, the research is to identify why Brothers have offended, and to apportion some degree of priority to the various factors which emerge, including the competing roles of psychological, cultural, societal and situational factors.

4. RESEARCH OUTCOMES

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| 1. | To understand the profile of Brothers who sexually abused children and young people. |
| 2. | To investigate the impact of historical formation processes on the psycho-sexual development of Brothers. |
| 3. | To interrogate the culture within Marist Institutions that allowed the extent of abuse during the 1960s and 1970s to occur. |

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| 4. | To interrogate the culture within the Religious Institute of the Marist Brothers that allowed the extent of the abuse to occur. |
| 5. | To identify other societal and wider Church factors, if any, that may have contributed to child sexual abuse within Marist institutions. |

5. SUGGESTED RESEARCH METHODS

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| 1. | Review of relevant research literature. |
| 2. | Review of the files of offending Brothers. |
| 3. | Review of the psychological reports prepared about offending Brothers. |
| 4. | Interviews with offending Brothers. |
| 5. | Engagement in a series of professionally supported round table conversations with those impacted by the child sexual abuse of Marist Brothers. The conversations will be facilitated by external research academics; victims, their families, Marist Brothers and professionals in the area will be asked to participate. |
| 6. | Analysis of documentation of historical formation practices - initial and ongoing - and interviews with Brothers from different eras, including non-offending Brothers. |

6. ETHICS AND RISKS

Confidentiality and Privacy is a key issue. In any Report, pseudonyms will be used when referring to offenders or victims.

Consent forms will be obtained prior to interviews with offenders and victims.

The research team will need to sign a confidentiality agreement that will not permit any individual or unauthorised use of material obtained during the course of the project.

7. KEY SOURCES AND PEOPLE TO BE CONSULTED

While not an exhaustive list, some of the sources of valuable material will be:

- Data prepared for the Royal Commission on Brothers who have offended.
- Professional Standards' files on Brothers who have offended.
- Materials prepared for Case Studies 4, 13 and 43 of the Royal Commission which have featured Marist Brothers.
- Transcripts from the Royal Commission.
- Marist Formation Documents.
- Interviews with members of the Marist Brothers' Professional Standards Office Team, past and present.

- Interviews with Dr Tony Robinson and Dr Gerardine Taylor, who were involved in Encompass and have led treatment programmes for offending Clergy and Religious.
- Interviews with offending Brothers and non-offending Brothers.
- Interviews with Victims-Survivors (if deemed helpful or appropriate).

8. STYLE AND LENGTH OF REPORT / RESEARCH PRODUCTS

The Report should provide an overview of the methodology and key findings with sufficient material to act as valid evidence to support the findings.

9. TIMETABLE

| | OUTPUTS | DATE DUE (all TBC) |
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| 1. | Initial Meeting of the Research Advisory Group | 10 August 2016 |
| 2. | Identify researcher, overview of Methodology, tasks and stages | September 2016 |
| 3. | Interim Report | November 2016 |
| 4. | Final Report | January 2017 |

10. RESEARCH ADVISORY TEAM

Janiene Wilson - Clinical Psychologist and Psychotherapist,
 Deborah Swain – Assistant Professional Standards Officer, Marist Brothers Australia
 Br Bryan Davis – Counsellor and Formator
 Br Ken McDonald – Vice Provincial and Counsellor (Convenor of the Team)