



Oceania Council - Executive Summary

Meeting at Varroville

30 - 31 March 2015

The meetings of the Oceania Council and College of Leaders of Oceania are held three times each year. The recent meetings were held at Easter at the Mount Carmel Monastery at Varroville.

In 1993, the 19th General Chapter invited all Provinces, Districts and Mission Sectors around the world to engage in dialogue about future restructuring and regionalisation in order to strengthen the vitality and viability of our Marist mission.

In Oceania, some areas of collaboration were already in place from the early 70s – the shared novitiate at Lomeri, the new inter-Province Executive for Melbourne, Sydney and Melanesia, and the mutual hospitality provided at courses and programs over the years and now the amalgamation of the two Provinces. Understandably the new call from the General Chapter could only develop slowly because of the nine nations involved, including French-speaking New Caledonia and Vanuatu. The number and variety of cultures and local traditions to be respected and integrated was even greater.

The Oceania Council and College of Leaders have grown and developed since that time. The challenge for these bodies is to work with Brothers and Lay Marists from this mix of cultures and history to develop ways of working and cooperating together while maintaining individual and regional expressions of Marist life and at the same time develop a dependence on each other for the good of the whole Region.

At the Varroville meetings, in the context of the above, the items below were the main issues for consideration.

Gathering of Brothers 11-13 January 2016

The Oceania Council will host a gathering of Brothers from the Region at Ashgrove, 11-13 January 2016 titled, *Mystics and Prophets as Brothers in Communion*. Brothers under 60 years will be invited to attend the gathering. One of its aims will be to explore our future together as Brothers in the Region. Participants will consider questions such as: “How do we see our Region in the next 10 years?” and “How do we put in place structures that will enable us to realise this vision across the Institute?”.

New Models Animation, Governance and Management (AGM)

In preparation for the next General Chapter, the *New Models: Animation, Governance and Management Commission (AGM)* has been established to take on the task of preparing material for consideration at the Chapter. The AGM project is tasked to ensure the development and sustainability of Marist life and mission by proposing and implementing principles, guidelines and possible models for the Institute and the Administrative Units for the future. The objectives, proposals, guidelines and principles are being discussed in various forums at Provincial and District levels for comment.

The Oceania Council and College of Leaders have been involved in these discussions. The recently released proposals from the AGM Commission provided a framework for much of the discussions during the meetings at Varroville.

In July a *New Models* Assembly will be convened in Rome to discuss the outcomes and receive feedback from these bodies to develop an ongoing strategy in preparation for the General Chapter.

Oceania Partnership Commission (OPC)

The OPC will be conducting a course for 21 lay animators from across the Districts of Melanesia, the Pacific and the Province of Australia in November. This course titled, *Tomorrow will be our Eyes*, aims to provide formation for lay people in a position of leadership, or those identified as potential leaders, to develop their capacity to grow a deeper sense of Marist life in the various administrative units.

Time was also taken to examine the draft Global Framework of a Marist Vocational Process for the Laity. With a view to future cooperation between the Regions of Asia and Oceania, the OPC was asked to actively network with the Lay/Brothers Commission in Asia.

Formation of Networks across the Oceania Region

It is proposed to form a number of networks to link those with similar interests and responsibilities across the Region. The first two of these networks deal with Spirituality and Child Rights.

Spirituality

Expressions of interest will be sought from Brothers and Lay who are interested in being active participants in the Oceania Region Spirituality Network (ORSN). The Spirituality Network will aim to provide resources to support Champagnat Marist Spirituality. These will be made available in digital format and in print medium. Sub groups may be formed for specific resources, for example the Religious Calendar and the proposed Oceania Prayer Book.

Child Rights

The Oceania Child Rights Network (OCRN) will invite Brothers and Lay who may be interested in this issue to form a network to communicate information that will assist FMSI and to provide resources to educate the wider Marist community.

If you are interested in participating in either of these projects, please contact the Oceania Regional Coordinator, Kevin Wanden at kevin.wanden@xtra.co.nz.

The next meeting of the Oceania Council will be at Auckland, 9-11 August 2015