



Marist Brothers Oceania Council

Province of Melbourne
Province of Sydney

Province of New Zealand
District of Melanesia

Volume 7 Issue 1 - 31 January 2012

With Mary go in haste to a new land!
**A new relationship between brothers and lay Marists, based on communion,
searching together for a greater vitality of the Marist charism for our world.**
Now is the Time – New Marists for a New Land.
Imagining a common future in Oceania.

The above quotes from the General Chapter and our own Council of Major Superiors (COMS) will shape our Marist future throughout Oceania.

It has been a year since the momentous decisions were taken by the Provinces and District gathered in Sydney. It was about creating a vision and structure for the Oceania Region that will best serve Marist Life and Mission in our part of the world.

Those decisions asked for three self-governing, inter-dependent Administrative Units (Provinces / Districts). The *Oceania Principles* also agreed to at the Sydney gathering will shape the District and Oceania Statutes that will set out how the decisions will be implemented.

Very recently we received a “Decision of the General Council” it stated that the requested new province has been juridically erected by a decree of the Superior General. It will take the name Australia and begin on December 8, 2012. The “Decision” also stated that the District of Melanesia will continue and it makes provision for New Zealand to become a District in due course.

But it is not just about documents and guidelines. It is about people and the Marist mission - to make Jesus Christ known and loved.

How do we work inter-dependently? What are the questions and issues that need to be dealt with

regionally? How do we work together - Brothers and Lay as partners and co-responsible?

The months since the 2010 December gathering have been spent by our Leaders discussing, discerning and reaching a common understanding about what was intended and hoped for in those deceptively simple phrases ‘self-governing’ and ‘inter-dependent’. There have been no Oceania Newsletters because the thinking and understanding took time to evolve. But now there is a clear position to present.

Understandably, much of this is not directly affecting our daily lives and ministries at this stage. But in time it will be shaping the Marist environment in this part of the world and that will impact on how we see ourselves and how we live, pray and work together. So keeping all the Marists of Oceania informed as things progress is a priority for 2012. Your comments and participation are welcomed.

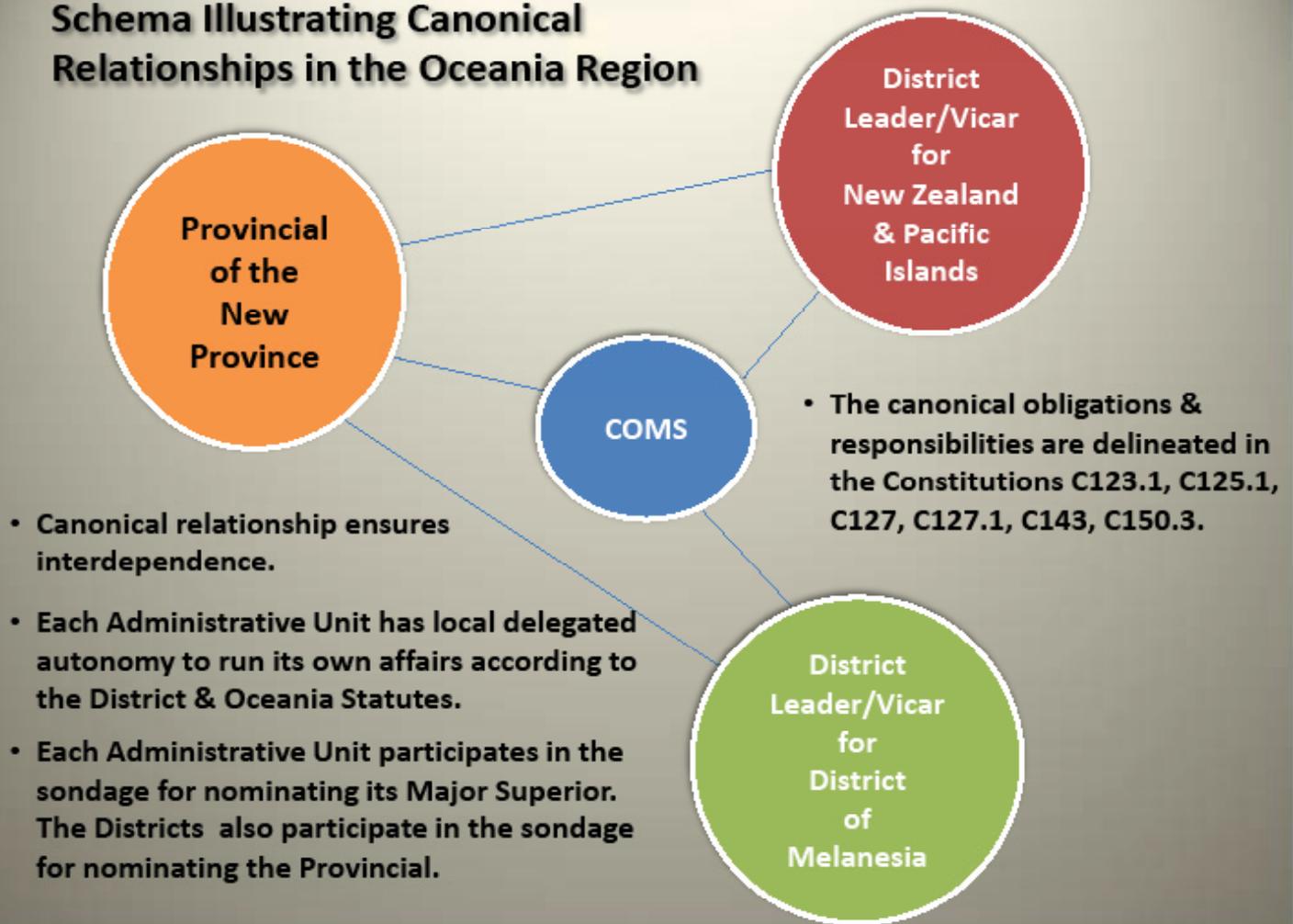
Br Anthony Robinson
Oceania Regional Co-ordinator



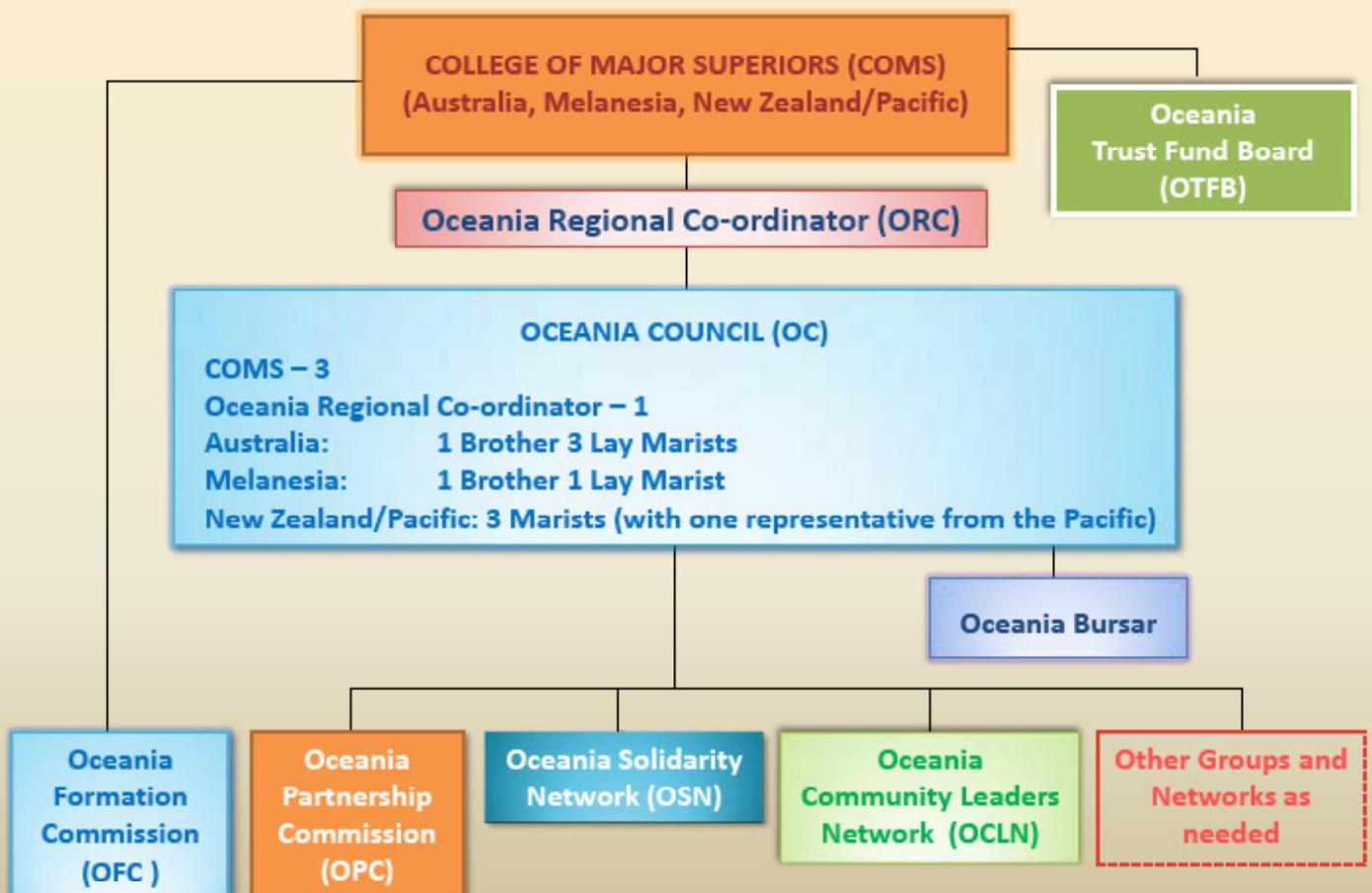
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Schema Illustrating Canonical Relationships in the Oceania Region



Organisation Structure For The Oceania Region



CANONICAL RELATIONSHIPS

In establishing the canonical relationships that are to exist in the Region between the Administrative Units, our Constitutions provide two options in relation to the Districts - they are 'dependent' on either the Superior General or a Provincial (C127). The strong position of COMS is to keep the administrative arrangements within Oceania as far as possible.

The Statutes for each District will ensure that each Administrative Unit is 'self-governing' as requested at the combined Chapters. COMS with the assistance of the Oceania Council will be responsible for establishing the 'inter-dependence' that is also being sought. How that will work in practice will be spelt out in the Oceania Statutes that are now being developed.

OCEANIA COUNCIL - ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

The Oceania Council is made up of Marists (Brothers and Lay) and its responsibilities will be set out in the Oceania Statutes to be approved by the Superior General. The responsibilities will include:

- i. Establish a vision for the Region.
- ii. To foster Marist mission in the Oceania Region and determine priorities in consultations with the Administrative Units (Province and Districts).
- iii. Develop a Five Year Strategic Plan.
- iv. Matters that have been deemed Regional.
- v. Ensure the interdependence of the Administrative Units.
- vi. To facilitate the sharing of resources across the region.

The aim is not to establish another layer of bureaucracy but rather to network and support what is already happening within the respective Administrative Units. But the Administrative Units do not operate in isolation - that is the new reality. We are setting up networks as an alternative to a new series of Commissions. Clearly some Commissions need to continue.

Mission will remain with the Oceania Council.

The Commission will meet three times each year. For 2012 the dates are:

April 11 & 12 (Melbourne); August 23 & 24 (Auckland); and November 1 & 2 (Sydney)

OCEANIA COUNCIL MEMBERS

The Members of the new Oceania Council are:

Ex-officio members

COMS: Julian Casey fms; Jeffrey Crowe fms; David McDonald fms; Ken McDonald fms

Oceania Regional Co-ordinator: Anthony Robinson fms (Chair of COMS & The Oceania Council)

Appointed members (2 years)

Australia: Simone Boyd, Catherine Hannon, Peter McNamara, Graham Neist fms

Melanesia: John Tukana fms, Abraham Hihine

New Zealand: Terry Costello fms, Siaosi Ioane fms, Alan Parker

Around The Region

Brothers in Formation

In recent weeks the Oceania Region has been blessed with young men making their commitment as Marist Brothers. On January 14 in Fiji, Br **Luke Fong** took Final Vows in a prayerful, colourful and joyful gathering of Brothers, family and friends.



Prior to that, in November 2011 Brothers **Andrew Litanga** and **Joseph Wabi** of Papua New Guinea, and **David Molsul** of Vanuatu took First Vows. At the same ceremony in Lomeri (Fiji) Brothers **Jude Pradeep** of India and **Zubair Yaqub** of Pakistan also took First Vows.

We have set in place the Oceania Formation Commission to continue to oversee the initial formation of Marist Brothers across the Region.

Oceania Finances

Some years ago the three Provinces (New Zealand, Melbourne and Sydney) established the Oceania Trust Fund. The interest earned by the Fund is divided: a small percentage is returned to the Provinces; the bulk of the interest earned is available to finance the Oceania Budget. Under the new arrangements, the Oceania Regional Coordinator will prepare the Oceania Budget and once it has been endorsed by the Oceania Council and approved by COMS, the necessary funds are released. The 2012 Oceania Budget will be tabled at the first meeting of the Oceania Council in April. Normally approval will be sought in the previous year.

Oceania Regional Coordinator (ORC)

The emphasis in the role is co-ordination. One of the key tasks for the ORC in 2012 is to become more familiar with the region – the people; the way Marist mission is being conducted in the countries that make up the region; the strengths and challenges that Marist groups are dealing with and the hopes for Marist mission into the future in this part of the world. This in turn will inform the agenda of the Oceania Council as it begins its work.

International Mission Council

Peter McNamara is the Regional Director (Brisbane) for Marist Schools Australia. He has been appointed by the General Council to this Council. Having Peter also as a member of the Oceania Council will allow the region to have input into the workings of the Council and to be kept up to date with what is emerging. Congratulations Peter.

Marist Partnership

While some have questions about the best name for this new energy and direction that is emerging in response to the call of the General Chapter, we all know what it means. Marists (Brothers and Lay) working together in a co-responsible way and exploring the Lay Marist identity. 2011 has been very significant in this regard:

- The Marist Assemblies in Fiji and Port Moresby have been written about in other publications. Both gatherings have released a new understanding and agreement about what is being called for and have shown a readiness to move forward - Brothers and Lay together - in the areas of Marist life and mission.
- In New Zealand a strategic road map has been developed to drive the Province for the next five years. Here too, Marists working together, have set the vision, named the objectives and challenges, and identified the indicators for success. In 2016 they hope to be able to say “We have gone with Mary in haste to a new land”.
- In Australia, the two Provinces have set up a number of working parties made up of Brothers and Lay Marists to prepare the way for the new Province that is to be established on December 8 of this year. A key part of that preparation will be the Mission Assembly later in 2012. Its purpose is to name and celebrate who we are as Marists in Australia today and to establish the priorities for our Marist mission.

What 2011 has begun, will now be bedded down in the months ahead. A lot is happening.

The Teaching Brother To-day

Eight of the international teaching congregations are having a meeting in Rome in September to reflect on the identity and mission of the teaching Brother in the Church to-day. Each congregation will have five representatives. We were asked by the General Council to name an Oceania representative. **John Hazelman fms** from the Pacific area has generously accepted the invitation to represent us.

The Pacific

Recently **David McDonald fms** appointed **Siaosi Ioane fms** as Assistant Provincial with specific responsibilities for the Pacific. His presence on the Oceania Council will be invaluable as we try to develop and implement a regional perspective. We look forward to his input.