

SALESIANS OF DON BOSCO



Summary statement – Salesians of Don Bosco

29 April 2013

Fr Greg Chambers

Provincial of the Australia-Pacific Province of the Salesians of Don Bosco

I express my most sincere apology to all those victims who have suffered any form of abuse at the hands of members of the Salesian Congregation in our Province. On behalf of all my fellow Salesians, I offer my most profound and heartfelt sympathy and regret for what has taken place.

Any abuse or exploitation of the young is totally repugnant and absolutely contrary to all our ideals and principles. We have great respect and compassion for all those victims of abuse who have come forward and we have sought to assist them.

We have introduced measures to ensure that the wrongs of the past are not repeated in the future, including full implementation of the *Towards Healing* policy and procedures since they came into effect in 1997.

We are deeply sorry for the damage inflicted on students by several of our members at Salesian College 'Rupertswood' in Sunbury from 1960 to the 1980s. As the current Provincial, I acknowledge the manifest crimes of these Salesians and unconditionally apologise to all the victims of their abuse and their families.

Many changes have occurred at 'Rupertswood' since then. It is now a vibrant and modern Catholic Secondary College, is no longer a boarding school and has been co-educational since 1992.

The school is bound by and accountable to the policies, procedures and protocols of the Catholic Education Office in Melbourne, which ensure the ongoing education, welfare, pastoral care and protection of all students.

The Salesian Province is continually reviewing and enhancing the ongoing education and formation of its members in the proper care of young people and the avoidance of any form of abuse of minors in the future. We again addressed the issue of emotional and affective maturity with young priests in 2012, and this year in August we will address the issue of sexual abuse with newly ordained priests and younger brothers. Additionally, our novices and young seminarians based in Fiji will continue to study a comprehensive program dealing with human sexuality, sexual maturity and responsibility, and the management of addictive behaviour at the Pacific Regional Seminary in Suva.

The Salesian Province encompasses Australia, New Zealand, Fiji and Samoa. Members are regularly posted to different countries throughout the Pacific region. It has been repeatedly alleged that we sent three priests, Fr John Ayers, Fr Frank Klep and Fr Julian Fox, into the Pacific to avoid prosecution. These allegations are not correct.

I wish to acknowledge the efforts of the former Salesian Provincials, Fr Frank Moloney and the late Fr Ian Murdoch, in their efforts to support victims, eradicate the abuse of minors, and bring perpetrators to justice.

We have always cooperated with law enforcement and legal authorities in bringing accused members to justice, and we continue to do so.

We have given the Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry our full support and welcome this opportunity to appear before the Inquiry.