



**Marist Association of  
Saint Marcellin Champagnat**

**National  
Assembly  
Report**

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## Introduction

Since the last Association Assembly in 2019, there have been important developments in governance for the Marist Association of Saint Marcellin Champagnat and subsequently for Marist Schools Australia. In this report a brief overview is provided for Association Assembly participants and all Association members.

## Formation and Coresponsibility

The Association evolved at grass roots after three decades of the Marist Brothers prioritising sustained, strategic, and well-resourced formation among lay Marists, particularly those who worked in Marist schools. Today the Association is a contemporary expression of the Marist spiritual family and a true exercise in co-responsibility for the many and varied Marist ministries. The Marist Association is now approximately 1000 people strong and has the formal support of the Australian Catholic Bishops.

## Formalising shared governance responsibilities – the Association Council

With the establishment of the Marist Association in 2015, the Provincial Council delegated the Association’s governing Council with leadership responsibilities for all Marist schools and ministries. From its inception, the Association Council committed to two goals concerning governance. First was to gain Canonical recognition for the Association, as a new Marist entity in the Church. Second was to gain civil recognition in Australia by becoming a company under the Australian Corporations Act. After much work here in Australia and in Rome, the quest for Canonical recognition continues. In 2021 the creation of the new company, Marist Association of Saint Marcellin Champagnat Limited (MASMC Ltd) was realised.

The Councillors for MASMC Ltd are “Directors” in the language of the Corporations Act. The Councillors are responsible for the life of the broader Association with emphasis on nurturing the spiritual family that is the heart of the Association. *Marist Association of St Marcellin Champagnat Limited* continues to lead and steward the core mission of the Marists of *making Jesus Christ known and loved, in the way of Mary*, through evangelisation, education, and other apostolic works. The members of this company are the Provincial, three Provincial Council members, and two Marist lay people. Canonical oversight is exercised and facilitated through this structure.

## MASMC Ltd Members/Trustees



MASMC Ltd Members/Trustees: Brother Peter Carroll FMS (Chair), Brother Darren Burge FMS, Brother Graham Neist FMS, Brother Dennis Cooper FMS, Ms Gail Coates, Ms Carole Wark

### MASMC Ltd Constitution

The preamble to the MASMC Ltd is instructive. This is a public document, available on the relevant regulatory authorities' websites, the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC), and Australian Charities and Not for Profits Commission (ACNC). Consistent with the founding principles of the Association, the Constitution states:

***The Marist Association is a faith-based community whose members identify as Marists, provide spiritual support for one another and desire to share responsibility for the vitality and integrity of Marist life and mission. They take their inspiration from St Marcellin Champagnat as they continue the work that was begun by the Marist Brothers in Australia and take on new responsibilities. The Company is formed to continue many of the works of the Trustees of the Marist Brothers and the Association and, in particular, to assume the governance, management and conduct of the Association and other apostolic work.***



MASMC Ltd Council Members: Brother Peter Carroll FMS (Chair), Ms Jennifer Elvery, Ms Jasmine Brown, Ms Madeline Forde, Brother Michael Green FMS, Professor Brother David Hall FMS, Ms Julia Lederwasch, Mr Daniel Lynch, Ms Donna McLaughlin, Ms Marcelle Moggs

### *The evolution of Marist Schools Australia*

In 2011 the Marist Brothers established Marist Schools Australia. This new entity was designed to provide appropriate expertise in governance, leadership, professional learning, spiritual formation and youth ministry for Marist schools governed by the Province and those Marist schools governed by various Catholic education offices in 19 different Dioceses across Australia. An important role of Marist Schools Australia has been to foster the important relationship and partnership the Marists have enjoyed with each Diocese and Archdiocese in which the Marists are present.

In 2019 the Association Council established a new Committee, named the *Marist National Schools Council*. Chaired by Professor Brother David Hall FMS, the National Schools Council comprised of leading Australian Catholic educators with backgrounds in school, system, and tertiary leadership. The creation of the National Schools Council provided additional capacity for the Association Council in regard to school governance, whilst also positioning a strategic contingency in the dynamic school regulatory environment in jurisdictions across Australia.

In light of developments in regard to the incorporation of MASMC Ltd during the first 6 months of 2021, important issues associated with education regulators were identified and discussed by the Association and Provincial Councils. With appropriate legal counsel, both Councils supported the creation of MSA Ltd, with MASMC Ltd as the sole member, in order to strengthen, and make more robust, a governance structure suited to the new and emerging regulatory environment for schools in Australia. These two Companies became operational on 1 January 2022.

With the creation of MSA Ltd, the majority of the members of the National Schools Council were appointed by the Association Council as Directors of MSA Ltd. The incorporation of Marist Schools Australia has been widely recognised as a natural evolution consistent with best practice in Catholic school governance as evident throughout the country in recent times.

### *The Constitution of MSA Ltd*

The preamble to the MSA Ltd briefly describes the evolution of Marist governance before incorporation and is a public document, available on the relevant regulatory authorities' websites, the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC), and Australian Charities and Not for Profits Commission (ACNC). The Constitution states:

***The Company is formed to continue the Education Ministry previously conducted by the Trustees of the Marist Brothers ... The Company will continue the work of the office of Marist Schools Australia, previously conducted by Trustees of the Marist Brothers, in providing support to the Colleges (of the Trustees) and services to the Marist member schools.***

***Prior to the incorporation of the Company, Marist Association of St Marcellin Champagnat Limited (MASMC Ltd) was formed by the Association and Trustees of the Marist Brothers to continue many of the apostolic works, activities and operations of the Association and Trustees of the Marist Brothers ... MASMC Ltd has as its primary object and purpose the continuance of the core mission of the Province of making Jesus Christ known and loved, in the way of Mary, through evangelisation and education.***



#### **MSA Ltd Board of Directors:**

Professor Brother David Hall FMS (Chair), Emeritus Professor Tania Aspland, Dr Michael Bezzina, Ms Elizabeth Denny, Mr Peter Grace, Ms Sandra Harvey, Brother Daniel Hollamby FMS, Mr Noel Kennedy, Mr Ross Tarlinton, Mr Peter Turner



## *Organisational considerations for the Association and Marist Schools Australia*

### *i. Dual roles - the Executive Officer of the Association and the National Director of Marist Schools Australia*

The dual role of the EO of the Association Council and National Director of Marist Schools Australia was instituted due to the size of the education ministry for the Marists in Australia as well as the natural synergies evident with associated ministries. The dual role is to continue in these initial iterations of MASM Ltd and MSA Ltd with a clear timeframe established for review. This strategy allows the new companies to be consolidated in an establishment phase. Discernment and decisions in regard to restructuring are to be undertaken at a future stage.

### *ii. The MSA Leadership team's demonstrable capacity as the Executive of MSA Ltd*

Discerned in the decision to create MSA Ltd, was the emerging exacting education governance requirements by government regulators. In order for MSA Ltd to exercise its responsibilities, the MSA Executive (the Leadership Team) is required to be appropriately resourced professionally in key areas such as educational leadership, business and finance management, as well as child safety and compliance. The size of the schools' ministry with 16,000 students in the governed schools, close to \$400 million turnover per annum, and managing assets worth many hundreds of millions of dollars, illustrates in some basic terms the importance of an appropriately resourced MSA Executive. In addition to this are the 34,000 students in our Marist schools currently governed by Diocesan education offices.

### *iii. Shared roles across the Association and Marist Schools Australia*

Currently, the employees in the positions of Association/MSA Head of Business and Child Safeguarding and Compliance have been identified, appointed and employed with the necessary skill sets for work directly associated with the schools. Importantly both positions report to the MSA National Director in this regard. It is estimated approximately 80% of the Business Manager's time is devoted to MSA.

The Child Safeguarding and Compliance Officer's work similarly is designed to support the schools first and foremost. The fact that the current employee assists the Association in the role of Company Secretary has been a more recent development. It is estimated 80% of the Child Safeguarding and Compliance Officer's time is normally devoted to MSA.

The Association and MSA senior executive structure, including existing lines of reporting and accountability to the Association EO and MSA National Director, remain unchanged with the creation of MASM Ltd and MSA Ltd.

### *iv. Formation*

A key issue for the Province, the Association and MSA is formation. Placing the MLF most appropriately in the organisational structure has been vital. Historically the MLF predates MSA and reported to the leadership of the Province's education ministry. When MSA was formed, naturally the MLF moved to that same line of reporting. As the Association evolved, the brief for the MLF expanded to other Marist ministries and then with the integration of the Association Pastoral Team in 2020, the brief of the MLF broadened further to include the life of the Association, and the formation of all members. In the midst of these developments, the lines of reporting gradually changed. The Director of the MLF formally reported to the position of Association EO for the non school areas of activity and to the position of National Director, MSA for school related areas of activity. It is an important distinction when explaining ourselves to various government regulatory authorities, particularly in light of expenditure of government funding for education purposes.

The current reporting and accountability structure for the Director of the MLF to the Association EO/MSA National Director is maintained with the establishment of the new companies.

*v. Income and expenditure MASMC Ltd and MSA Ltd*

The education regulators have focussed carefully on the constitutions of the two companies. The directors of the companies, as well as the real business of the companies and their respective board activities must be clearly represented in the agendas, minutes, and financial records. Income and expenditure of MSA Ltd are important considerations.

MSA income is derived from funding by the Province through the Association, service fees from the governed schools, and membership fees of the Diocesan governed MSA schools for which a host of services are provided, most importantly formation. The MSA membership fees and the benefits of membership are carefully spelt out in current MSA agreements with Diocesan Directors of Catholic Education and in some cases directly with the Provincial and local Bishop.

Expenditure is for the most part on salaries and hence the place of different employees within the company structures is important to delineate for regulators. As the major service provider through MSA to the schools, the MLF Team is best placed at this point in time as employees.

*MSA Ltd Strategic documents*

Our Mission

We exist to support the Catholic Church's evangelising mission to make Jesus Christ known and loved and to ensure quality education in the Marist tradition through our schools.

Our Vision

Our vision is that our schools are faith filled communities of high quality, contemporary evangelisation in the way of Mary, with proven excellence in achievement for all young people.

MSA Ltd Strategic Priorities 2021 – 2024

1. Catholic Identity and Marist Spirituality
2. Learning and Teaching in the Marist Way
3. Governance and Strategic Leadership
4. Student and Staff Wellbeing

[MSA Ltd Strategic Plan 2021-2024](#)

The MSA Ltd Vision and Strategic Plan was developed in collaboration with Principals, MSA Executive and the MSA Board of Directors. Each year an annual plan is derived from this document and a subsequent report presented to the Board on the work achieved.