

The Oceania Regional Council - A Brief History

The Oceania Council has its origins in the Council established in 2004 following a meeting involving the Brother Superior General and his Council; the Leaders of the Oceania Provinces and their Councils and a representative from Melanesia.

In 2008 at a meeting of the Provincial and District Councils with the Superior General and his Council the following commitments were made:

- A common vision for Marists in Oceania.
- Missioning together.
- The full involvement of Lay Marists.
- Shared responsibility for the vitality and viability of the whole of Marist Oceania.
- International communities.
- Self-reliance and leadership for Melanesia and the Pacific Islands.
- Appropriate forms of governance and structures that will evolve.

In December 2010, the Provincial Chapters of Melbourne, New Zealand and Sydney and the District Council of Melanesia petitioned the Superior General to restructure to form the Region of Oceania. The following statement was adopted:

We, the delegates of our Brothers, in a spirit of mutual respect and concern for the wellbeing of each other and the future of Marist life and mission in Oceania, commit ourselves to the establishment of a new governance and canonical structure that will

Oceania Council

The first meeting of the Oceania Council (est. 2010) occurred in April 2012. The mandate of the Oceania Council was to promote greater collaboration for “vitality and viability for mission” across Oceania.

To give effect to this new responsibility, the Oceania Council set up a number of Oceania Commissions to develop practical collaboration in the areas of Brotherhood, Ministry, Formation, Finance, and Solidarity. From the outset, committed Lay Marists were appointed to participate as equal members of the various Commissions.

Memorandum of Understanding between the Administrative Units of Australia, Melanesia and the Pacific was approved by the Superior General and his Council on June 17, 2013.

With the implementation of the New Models project in 2015 discussions were focused on reconfiguring the Oceania Region. Following the meeting of the Extended General Council at Mittagong in October 2016 it was agreed that the councils of the three administrative units (Australia, Melanesia and Pacific) would meet together in April and August 2017. These discussions proposed that a single administrative unit be formed in Oceania.

During 2018-19, the College of Leaders engaged a Change Management Consultant, Mr. Peter Cranko, to assist in the process of determining a pathway forward for Oceania. This process resulted in a workshop of representatives from Australia, Melanesia, and the Pacific in March 2020.

At the conclusion of that workshop, it was unanimously agreed to recommend to the respective Councils of the administrative units that one new Province in Oceania be established. The Councils of the Province of Australia and the Districts of Melanesia and the Pacific unanimously accepted this

recommendation and petitioned General Council on 20 July 2020 to form a single administrative unit. The General Council on 12 September 2020, approved the request and endorsed the plan to move to a single administrative unit for Oceania by the end of 2022.