

Why do we have a Marist Association?

This is a genuine response to a call for coresponsibility for the life & mission of the wider Australian Marist Community. It will provide a formal Church structure for leadership and governance of Marist ministries into the future. In many ways it formalises what already exists to better provide for Marist life and ministry. Marcellin Champagnat's particular gift was to found the Marist Brothers to teach and evangelise young people, particularly those on the margins of society. The Marist Association aims to provide the necessary structure to keep Marcellin's dream alive! It is a body of people, who share responsibility for the leadership, governance and animation of Marist ministries. The four main Marist ministries are schools (Marist Schools Australia), youth ministry (Marist Youth Ministry), youth care (Marist180) and solidarity (Australian Marist Solidarity).

What is its main purpose?

The two main purposes are growing the Marist spiritual family and ensuring the future vitality & viability of Marist ministries. It nurtures the vocation of all Marists by building a sense of community and belonging between all those who choose to share in Marist life and mission. People who join the Association ensure that the Marist charism remains a living tradition by continually returning to the question: "What is God asking of Marists in Australia today?" The Association seeks to provide and bear witness to an experience of Church community that is Marian, Eucharistic, faith focused, mission driven and inclusive.

To whom is the Association responsible?

The members are largely responsible to each other. The Association Council are appointed by the Trustees, following a discernment process where they may invite Members to vote for candidates. The Marist Association of St Marcellin Champagnat Limited (MASMC Ltd, a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee) was formed by the Trustees of the Marist Brothers to provide governance as well as spiritual leadership and formation for those engaged in the apostolic works, activities and operations of the Marists in Australia.

Who can belong?

The Association is open to anyone with a Marist heart. It formally brings together the Marist Brothers in Australia with other people who are passionate about, and committed to Marist spirituality, life and mission. Members, most likely, are people who currently work in, or have worked

in, a Marist school or other Marist ministry for a time. For some, their interest may be a result of personal friendship with a Marist Brother or Marist community, or through their experience of Marist life in other ways. Marist Brothers also choose to join the Association. For some people, the Association may be something they are looking to commit to and be a part of for the rest of their lives. For others, it may be a year by year prospect, or only makes sense to them whilst they are working in a Marist ministry.

The purpose of the Local Group is to:

- create a space to bring interested and like-minded people together to foster community and Marial spirit.
- respond to the local needs and discern with other group members about how to nurture, grow and strengthen their group as a faith filled and spiritual Marist community.
- foster a safe and inclusive environment where all people feel comfortable and affirmed.
- empower members, bringing their gifts and talents, to a shared responsibility for the life and vitality of the group.
- invite and accompany new people who are interested and curious in the Marist way of life to explore what it means and how they can become involved.
- offer diverse opportunities for contemplation, formation, prayer, friendship, and fun.
- connect with other local groups, Marist ministries and the wider Marist family creating relationships that support, care for and grow with one another.

The 'As Marists' document provides the following guiding principles for Local Groups:

- engaging in faith formation for mission
- nourishing our spiritual life and personal relationship with Jesus
- evangelising through education
- favouring children and young people most in need
- responding to the most urgent needs of children
- nurturing relationships with the global Marist family and Church
- embracing our shared responsibility for the Association's mission
- strengthening and growing our Marist family as a gift for the Church