

# MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday 5 February 2018

## **STATEMENT BY BISHOP PETER INGHAM, APOSTOLIC ADMINISTRATOR DIOCESE OF WOLLONGONG**

I have been made aware that Mr Philip Slattery—a former Marist Brother and principal at Mary Immaculate Catholic Parish Primary School, Eagle Vale [then called St Mary’s], between 1986 and 1992—was convicted in the NSW District Court on 18 December 2017 after pleading guilty in relation to four counts of indecent assault against persons under the age of 16 years and he is now serving a prison sentence for those crimes committed.

It is my understanding that the offences were committed between 1989 and 1992 against two students whilst Mr Slattery, then known as Brother Philip, was the principal of the school. I offer my sincere apology to the victims and survivors of these crimes and to their family and friends. They have shown great courage and resilience in speaking the truth and seeking justice. Since becoming aware of the conviction, the Diocese has been in contact with them to offer our support. They endorse the Diocese’s approach in providing this information to you and would like to acknowledge the support of, and recommendations made by, the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. The trauma and pain endured by victims and survivors of child sexual abuse and their families is real and is acknowledged. I further offer a heartfelt apology to all those who have suffered abuse by any person who was associated with the Diocese of Wollongong.

I wish to assure all that the Diocese, including Catholic Education Diocese of Wollongong and our Catholic schools, are totally committed to the protection of children and young people above all else, and in remaining transparent and open in our communications to ensure that the safety of children and young people remains paramount. We are resolute in ensuring that concerns or allegations brought forward are responded to with sensitivity and determination. We have well-developed child protection policies and rigorous processes in place for dealing with complaints of abuse, and we give full cooperation to all police investigations and child protection authorities.

I strongly urge any person with a complaint of mistreatment or abuse to come forward to the appropriate authority. They can contact the police through the Police Assistance Line on 131 444 or contact the director of Professional Standards and Safeguarding for the Diocese of Wollongong, Anna Tydd, on (02) 4222 2405. The Diocese also wishes to offer support to anyone who is affected, and we ask that they contact Anna so that arrangements can be made for the appropriate support.

—ends—

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A statement from the Marist Brothers on this matter is available on their website [here](#).