

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Australian Marist Brother Noel Hickey Celebrates 100th Birthday

Perth, February 7, 2024

Tomorrow, February 8, Br Noel Hickey will celebrate an extraordinary milestone - his 100th birthday. As he reaches this remarkable century, he becomes only the second Marist Brother in the Star of the Province to do so, following in the footsteps of Br Vincent Shekleton.

Br Noel's life is a testament to resilience, humility, and unwavering dedication to faith and education. Born in 1925 in Western Australia, he grew up during the Great Depression, a time that shaped his pragmatic yet good-humoured outlook on life. At just 17, he felt the call to serve and joined the Marist Brothers in 1942, setting out on a journey that would take him across Australia and beyond.

For more than 80 years, Br Noel has been a teacher, mentor, and guide, educating generations of students in Victoria, Western Australia, and later in the Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea. His early years were spent in the classroom, teaching science, mathematics, and even French.

But perhaps his most challenging and rewarding years were spent in the Pacific, where he witnessed firsthand the impact of ethnic tensions and civil unrest. In both Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands, Br Noel continued his mission, ensuring that young people had access to education even in the most turbulent times. His ability to adapt and serve where he was needed most became the hallmark of his long career.

After nearly two decades abroad, Br Noel returned to Australia, continuing his service in quieter ways. He took on volunteer work at the Head Trauma Unit in Perth, offering companionship to patients recovering from life-altering injuries. Later, he turned his sharp mind to archival work, meticulously preserving the history of the Marist Brothers and the stories of those who came before him.

Now in his retirement, Br Noel enjoys the simple pleasures of life - solving crosswords, chatting with visitors, and spending time with his large extended family, including 20 grandnieces and grandnephews.

Reflecting on a century of life, Br Noel remains as humble as ever. "I always tried to give my best," he says simply. When asked about his advice to young Brothers and educators, he emphasises honesty and open communication, "Discuss everything openly - don't hide anything. Everyone faces difficulties, but it's important to talk about them."

As he reaches this extraordinary milestone, Br Noel's legacy is evident in the thousands of lives he has touched. His century-long journey is one of faith, service, and quiet but

profound influence. His journey is a reminder that a life of purpose, lived in service to others, is a life truly well lived.

For more information, contact

Gayatri Nair

Province Communications Officer

Star of the Sea Province

+61 418780959