

Mother suing over sons' past abuse

A MOTHER is suing a Christian Brother who sexually abused her two sons for psychological damage she suffered when she learned of the attacks 20 years later.

It is believed to be the first case of its type in Australia.

The woman is suing Edward Vernon Dowlan and the principal of Ballarat's St Patrick's College in the 1970s.

The woman's solicitor, Lee Flanagan, [REDACTED]

By JASON SILVERII

[REDACTED] told the *Herald Sun* yesterday the case was the first in a second wave of litigation against Christian Brothers by the relatives of victims.

He said he believed it was also the first case in Australia involving the parent of a child sexually abused by Christian Brothers to sue for nervous shock.

The writ, to be lodged in the

County Court today, also names as defendants the Trustees of Christian Brothers, the provincial of St Patrick's congregation and the Roman Catholic Trust Corporation.

The writ says the woman, identified only as 'PP', had sent her two sons in the 1970s to board at St Patrick's, where they were both sexually assaulted by Dowlan over two years.

The woman, 63, claims the assaults resulted in the younger

of the two boys later becoming involved in "anti-social and illegal behavior" and her elder son's suicide in 1991. She finally learned of the assaults in 1993 from her surviving son.

Dowlan was jailed in 1996 for almost 10 years, later reduced to 6½ years after pleading guilty in the County Court to 16 counts of sexual assault against 11 victims.

A spokesman for the Christian Brothers said yesterday he was not in a position to comment.