

# MERCY ADMINISTRATION CENTRE

**SISTERS OF MERCY**  
**ROCKHAMPTON CONGREGATION**



**COPY  
 FOR YOUR  
 INFORMATION**

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Your Ref.: PAK:CAM:DK1:

20 September 1995

Mr. Peter Karp,  
 McCabe Brown, Lawyers,  
 GPO Box 235,  
 SYDNEY, N.S.W. 2001

Dear Mr. Karp,

**re MR. DAVID OWEN**

I acknowledge your letter of 12th September 1995 which has been forwarded to me from the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of Australia. Any correspondence on a matter relating to the Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy, Rockhampton should be directed to the above address as I advised by telephone earlier today.

So far as your letter relates to allegations against the late Father Anderson, we can only say that the Congregation has no responsibility for the actions of a Priest appointed to a Parish of the Diocese in which we are serving.

So far as the allegations regarding actions of Sisters of our Congregation are concerned, I must say, as Congregational Leader, I am very distressed to hear that any member of our Congregation would act toward your client in the way he has suggested. The events your client describes are inconsistent with practices and rules of conduct established for the operation of any institute maintained by the Congregation.

If it would be helpful to Mr. Owen, I am certainly prepared to offer pastoral support and am available to discuss this matter. However, I am unsure of what you have in mind as a way to proceed. As he has elected to take recourse to legal representation, you may consider such communication inappropriate.

I look forward to your response.

Yours faithfully,

Sr. Berneice Loch, R.S.M.  
**CONGREGATIONAL LEADER.**

DRAFT PRESS RELEASE REVISED 20/9/1995

For over ninety years the Sisters of Mercy at St. Joseph's Home (Neerkol) cared for children who were orphaned, abandoned, or otherwise unable to live in their families. For thousands the home provided an opportunity to make something of a life that was otherwise deprived. Conditions were difficult and resources were scarce. Strict discipline reflected the thinking of the day. The Sisters did their best to care for the children who had nowhere else to go. Several Sisters regard their years at Neerkol as particularly happy ones even though the work was hard and the circumstances demanding. While being saddened by a knowledge of the tragic life histories of some of the former children, they rejoice in the achievements of many others.

The Sisters of Mercy can well understand that for some children their time in the Home was distressing and unhappy. This is hardly surprising since they were deprived of a normal home life. It is only natural that a legacy of parental deprivation would leave some former residents bitter and resentful. Where the actions of a Sister or any other responsible person associated with Neerkol has caused harm to the children there is particularly deep regret on the part of the Sisters. The Sisters' ministry of care did not stop when children left the home and they continue to do all that is reasonably possible to help such people now or at any stage in the future.

Allegations have been made of abuse at the hands of a Priest who was appointed to the Neerkol Parish, and of subsequent willful neglect by those in authority to afford protection. The Sisters of Mercy are aware of their duty and responsibility when the actions of members of the Institute are challenged. They will do all they can to ensure justice to all concerned.

For further information contact Sister Berneice Loch, Congregational Leader, on 079-271866.

*Any comment you may have  
is welcome.*

*Berneice*

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