

Mercy Administration Centre

ROCKHAMPTON CONGREGATION
OF THE SISTERS OF MERCY
OF AUSTRALIA



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Dear Sisters,

I am pleased to advise that the Rockhampton Diocese have agreed to participate equally in a joint out of court settlement offer to the former residents of St Joseph's Home, Neerkol who have taken legal action against both the Diocese and ourselves. Having the Diocese contribute an equal share to the settlement offer allows for a just and reasonable offer to be made to the plaintiffs by our solicitors.

Although the amount of the joint offer is strictly confidential, I am pleased to let you know that the amount we will be contributing is well under the maximum figure agreed to at the meeting in December as being available, if necessary, to fund the settlement offer. The offer is subject to terms and conditions stipulated by our lawyers and I know you will have great confidence that Geoff Hancock of Deacons Graham and James will see that our best interests are protected.

As Phillip wrote in his Report presented to you last week at the Congregational Day, the stipulation of a confidentiality clause cannot guarantee that the offer will not be made public by someone who is not happy with the offer and who wishes to derail the settlement process. Finding the source of the public disclosure of the offer and excluding that party from the settlement would be virtually impossible so, in reality, we must be prepared for the offer to appear in the media and be subject to comment.

If such unauthorised disclosure occurs, we will deal with the media interest in the settlement offer in the best possible way that we can. The right to privacy of all parties involved will be our prime concern. Hence we will not be confirming the accuracy or otherwise of confidential information that may be disclosed by people who have chosen to breach the confidentiality provisions of the settlement offer.

We do not know if the joint settlement offer will be accepted or rejected. We can only pray for a speedy and peaceful resolution to this litigation. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have additional queries. Thanks for your ongoing prayers and support. It helps us all so much.

Regards,

Di Anne

Celebrating 125 years in 1998