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Kevin Lingard
Minister for Families, Youth and
Community Care

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1.

KEV LINGARD, MLA

MINISTER FOR FAMILIES, YOUTH AND COMMUNITY CARE

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

13TH SEPTEMBER 1996

"Neerkol Children's Orphanage"

Mr Speaker, I seek leave to make a Ministerial Statement...

Mr Speaker, until about 15 years ago, the Sisters of Mercy conducted a Children's Orphanage at Neerkol, near Rockhampton. Today, however, Neerkol provides conference and accommodation facilities to the public.

Residents of Neerkol included migrant children from England and children whose parents paid for them to receive their education whilst boarding at Neerkol, as well as some children in the care of the State.

2.

To date six calls have been received from these former residents on the Child Sexual Abuse Hotline within my Department. Further allegations continue to be received about abuse to both male and female children.

Callers to the Hotline allege a pattern of incidents of physical and, in some cases, sexual abuse by the priests and nuns at the orphanage.

In all but one case, the alleged perpetrators are deceased. Upon their receipt, the allegations against the living person were referred to the Queensland Police Service which is conducting appropriate investigations.

All callers to the Hotline reporting abuse have individually requested that there be an inquiry into Neerkol.

Following the completion of the present police investigation, I will refer all matters to the Children's Commissioner when that position is created.