



CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF ROCKHAMPTON

Bishop's Office



27 February 1998

Confidential

Dear Father

I enclose a copy of the letter of apology I have issued to some of the former residents of Neerkol, who suffered abuse of various kinds. Meetings with the Neerkol Action Support Group, private meetings with some of the former residents, careful discussion with Sister Di-Anne Rowan and legal advice, have been the background to my response.

I enclose also the original letter I wrote in September 1996, and the Press Release that came from the Childrens' Commissioner last Wednesday. The apology is two fold; for any abuse suffered by some of the former residents; for wording in some parts of my original letter which I issued to uphold the overall reputation of Neerkol, and the Sisters of Mercy.

In the letter of apology, I have undertaken to print the letter in the Catholic Leader (that will be next weekend 08<sup>th</sup> March) and to have it read out, or printed on the Newsletter / Bulletin of every parish in the Diocese. I ask you to honour my commitment, by reading it or publishing it next weekend 07<sup>th</sup> - 08<sup>th</sup> March, if possible, and I regret any inconvenience this may cause you.

On the recommendation of the Diocesan Professional Standards' Resource Group, I am also enclosing a brochure, which outlines the normal procedure for anyone who may have a complaint to raise in matters of physical and sexual abuse. You may mention this brochure over the weekend. Later, we will forward copies that can be made available for people to collect.

I look forward to seeing you at Emu Park.

Yours sincerely

Brian Heenan  
Bishop of Rockhampton