

A black rectangular redaction box covering several lines of text. The word "REDACTED" is printed in white capital letters at the top left of the box.

23rd March, 1999

Rockhampton Congregation  
Of the Institute of the  
Sisters of Mercy of Australia  
And The Catholic Church

Dear Sir/ Madam,

All my life I have done my utmost to help people including the Sisters of Mercy and the Catholic Church. I was placed into St Joseph's Home, Neerkol when I was six weeks old in 1939. As I grew up at Neerkol in the war years and things were very tough, I appreciated whatever anyone had done for me. As you know charges of rape, abuse and cruelty have been made against me when I was in the employ of the Sisters of Mercy at Neerkol.

I started to work there when I was 14 years of age and helped Sister Lucy in the bakehouse, I also attended to the flower garden in front of the convent, and then had to milk cows by hand in the afternoon for the milk supply for the home. I was paid thirty shillings a month, this is all I got until I was 18 years of age. If I was late back from milking and taking the cows to the night paddock Sister Madeline who was in charge of the kitchen would not leave any meal for me. This was whenever I was late, Tom Pattel would open tins of sheep tongues so I'd have something to eat. This caused an ulcer which I suffered for many years, and still have trouble with it every so often I have been on medication again since this Neerkol business has come up.

CTJH.202.01030.0005

When you and the Bishop apologised on T.V on Ash Wednesday last year on the Sisters of Mercy for abusing the residents, you admitted guilt, thereby implying my guilt, and in offering to pay their legal costs you are financing them to bring charges against me. I am completely innocent of these charges. None have been substantiated by any evidence and as time passes it becomes more clear that the Neerkol people are in a conspiracy and have told many, many lies as the Minister for Family Services has said.

I left Neerkol when I was 18 years of age in 1957 and started an apprenticeship with Blannings Bakery in Murry Street, Rockhampton. I stayed there until 1964. Mother Bymard was desperate for help to start the Lucerne farm at Neerkol in 1964. I left a good paying job in Rockhampton to go back to help at Neerkol in 1964. I dropped \$30 (15 pounds) a week to go and help at Neerkol. It was not an 8AM to 5PM job. I worked from 5.30AM in the morning with Sister Lucy in the Bakehouse making bread as well as working in the dairy and working the Lucerne farm until late at night. I not only

worked but gave my time freely whenever the children of the home were asked to go the pictures, picnics, police boys club, naval cadets and many other outings.

After some thirty years I have helped raise funds for Neerkol, Bethany, St Peters, the Range and Mater hospitals well as for the Christian Brothers and St Joseph's Wandol by way of selling tickets at the Rockhampton show, running dances, making bread and making cakes for fetes, hot dog stall at fetes etc. I not only helped prior to my wedding in 1974, but myself and family continued after I was married in 1974. The Sisters of Mercy gave me an award for my dedicated help in the 1990. I have never in my life asked for any assistance regarding money. If I could afford anything I went without.

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I read recently in the Courier Mail that former residents of Neerkol were receiving compensation of between \$10,000 and \$25,000. No one from the Sisters of Mercy has ever contacted me or my family to say a word or see how we are going or offer support. All the publicity has done me and my family a lot of harm and caused mental anguish.

My legal cost so far in trying to defend myself against these vicious charges is \$40,000 and I have lost my good name., you would realize the wrong that has been done to me and my family and in this letter I am asking you to meet my legal cost.

I work for the Sisters of Mercy for almost 14 years and never in that time betrayed their trust as Sister Geraldine and a lot of the Sisters would testify. Now as I have exhausted all my monetary resources and have no where else to turn, the court case with 12 complainants are coming up very soon and I need funds to get ready and defend the charges. I ask the Sisters of Mercy and the Catholic Church to assist me by paying the legal fees for the coming Court case.

Yours fathfully,

Kevin Baker