

PO Box 1576  
ROCKHAMPTON 4700 Q

12 August 1998

AYP

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Dear AYP

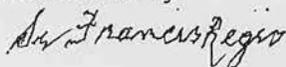
Firstly, I would like to apologise for the fact that I am unable to write to you in my own hand. A couple of years ago, I underwent an eye operation and as a result of the surgery being unsuccessful, I am now blind in one eye and have only very limited vision in the other eye. I am sad to hear that you have such painful memories of your life at Neerkol. I know that nothing can change what you experienced there but I want you to know that I am sorry for the pain and hurt you endured and for the suffering this has caused you throughout your life.

Sr Anne has told me how much physical, mental and emotional distress you have suffered over the past 30 years due to the removal of your teeth while you were at Neerkol. She has told me that you hold me responsible for this and that distresses me greatly. In all honesty, I have no recollection of the removal of your teeth but having listened to what Sr Anne has told me, I believe and understand the depth of the pain you must have experienced. I sorrow deeply for the hurt you suffered at the time and for the ongoing suffering you have experienced as a result of having your teeth removed. I am so pleased to hear from Sr Anne that through the Professional Standards Office, we have been able to assist you with dental work that will hopefully alleviate your physical distress.

Sr Di-Anne Rowan has issued an Apology to all the former residents of Neerkol on behalf of the Rockhampton Sisters of Mercy. AYP, to you personally, I would like to add my voice to that Apology in the hope that it will help you to cope with the trauma you are still experiencing as a result of your days at St Joseph's Home, Neerkol.

I know that how much you have suffered will make it difficult for you to understand but I truly believe that we did try to care for the children as well we were able in the circumstances that we faced at the time. I pray that there will come a time when true reconciliation will be possible between the Sisters and all the former Neerkol residents. If it is any comfort to you, please write to me care of Sr Anne and let me know how you feel at present and what else, I or any of the Sisters may be able to do to help you into the future. The past cannot be changed but the future can be what we make it. AYP, I pray that God's blessing will be upon you and sustain you as you travel further on our journey of healing and reconciliation. My prayers and thoughts will be with you.

Yours sincerely



**Sr Francis Regis**