

17 November 2008

Redress Services  
Department of Communities  
GPO Box 806  
Brisbane Qld 4001

Dear Sir/Madam

I am very pleased to write this letter in support of the application by former Neerkol resident, [AYD] to the Redress Scheme established by the Government to assist former residents of institutions in Queensland.

In my work over the past 12 years as a member of the Professional Standards Committee of the Rockhampton Sisters of Mercy, I have had the opportunity to walk a journey of reconciliation with many former residents of Neerkol. I have been fortunate to get to know some of the former residents quite well and I have been privileged to have had the chance to listen to their life experiences at Neerkol.

One such former resident who I have had the good fortune to know for some 11 years is [AYD]. From the first time I met [AYD], I could tell he was a man of great integrity and as I had the chance to talk with [AYD], I was deeply moved by his recounting of the physical and sexual abuse that he suffered during his time at Neerkol.

The hurt that [AYD] was still suffering as a result of his experiences at Neerkol was palpably evident and you only needed to talk with [AYD] once to be absolutely convinced of the reality of his pain and the truth of the abusive experiences he described.

In all the years I have known him, [AYD] has been absolutely consistent in describing the sexual and physical abuse he suffered at Neerkol and it speaks so highly of [AYD]'s character that he has been able to confront the pain he suffered and move forward with his life in a spirit of healing and reconciliation.

Despite the pain caused by reliving his time at Neerkol, [AYD] played a significant leadership role in the journey the former residents walked with the Sisters of Mercy through his Chairmanship of the Neerkol Action Support Group and I am sure the courage he showed in telling his life experiences at Neerkol assisted others to also come forward and tell their story.

I understand that there are some apparent inconsistencies in the dates that [AYD] has supplied with respect to his time at Neerkol and what our records show. Whilst we believe our records are as accurate as they can ~~they~~ be having regard for the era when they were written and the time that has since elapsed, we cannot absolutely guarantee that they are one hundred percent accurate.

It is always possible that some children came in as private admissions and then returned as State wards at a later date and also our past experience is that some former residents, due to their age at the time they were at Neerkol and the passage of time, actually believe they were there for longer than our records show.

In supporting [AYD]'s application to the Redress Scheme, I would point out that [AYD] has been in very poor health in recent times and his difficult life experiences at Neerkol certainly make him deserving of as much assistance as is possible.

I am sure those who served with me on the Professional Standards Committee at the time when we had a great deal of contact with [AYD] would also endorse [AYD]'s application as I know they too found [AYD] to be an honest, straight forward gentleman of great integrity and high principles. Similar to me, they also never doubted the truth of the pain [AYD] shared with us from his time at Neerkol

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require further information to support [AYD]'s application.

Yours sincerely

Phillip Bauman  
Member  
Professional Standards Office  
Rockhampton Sisters of Mercy