

Mercy Administration Centre

ROCKHAMPTON CONGREGATION
OF THE SISTERS OF MERCY
OF AUSTRALIA



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19 February 1998

AYN

c/- The Secretary NASG, Mary Eather,
P O Box 350
PARADISE POINT Q 4216

Dear AYN,

Thank you for writing to Mary Eather and sharing your experiences of your time at Neerkol. I understand that your original request was for apologies from Sr M Emilian, Sr Clare, Sr Anselm, Sr Assumpta, Sr James, Sr Madeline and Fr Anderson but unfortunately all these people are deceased. I was not sure if the "Sister Pious" in your list referred to Sr Pius or to Sr M St Pius, both of whom were at Neerkol. Sr M St Pius would be willing to meet with you if she is the Sister you referred to.

To enable your request to be taken forward, I consulted Mr John Briton, the mediator who has chaired meetings between the Neerkol Action Support Group Committee and representatives from the Rockhampton Sisters of Mercy. He recommended that we contact Mr Peter Condliffe at the Alternative Dispute Resolution Branch of the Department of Justice at North Quay, to discuss the possibility of a meeting between you and Sr M St Pius. During the discussion, Peter emphasised that such face to face meetings must be carefully prepared for and if the meetings were not going to be beneficial to the participants then it would not be a good idea to proceed with them. Peter believes he has a project officer, Marianne Dredge, who might be able to assist us to arrange a meeting between yourself as a former resident of St Joseph's and with Sr M St Pius.

We asked John Briton to contact two residents who had also made similar requests and to give them the information about Peter Condliffe but I did not think you had ever met John so I decided to give you Peter's phone number so you could contact him directly if you still wanted to meet with Sr M St Pius. It is (07) 3239 6278.

I expect that you are aware of the Professional Standards Office that we established as a response to the pain and suffering still being experienced today by so many former residents of Neerkol. The Response Co-ordinator for the Office, Jo Mensinga, can be contacted on FREECALL 1800 652 080. If there is some need that you have at this particular time, please contact Jo and I know she will do all that she can to help you.

The Neerkol Action Support Group have accomplished a great deal in the short time they have been working together and it has been good for the former residents to obtain support and advice. It would be tragic for suicide to claim any more lives.

It seemed important to record the information you shared about Sr Anselm and Sr Assumpta in their congregational files which I have done.

AYN, I shall always regret what happened to so many children at Neerkol and I am indebted to people like yourself who showed us how such abuses happened. As I cannot change the past, I shall keep working to make the present and hopefully the future better for all the former residents of St Joseph's. If there is anything I can do for you please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



Di-Anne Rowan
Congregational Leader