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**ROCKHAMPTON CONGREGATION
OF THE SISTERS OF MERCY
OF AUSTRALIA**

Media Release issued 14 December 2000 by Sr Di-Anne Rowan, Congregational Leader of the Rockhampton Sisters of Mercy pertaining to the release of the Neerkol Chapter in the Forde Inquiry Report.

Having read the Neerkol Chapter in the Forde Inquiry Report, Sr Di-Anne believes that many of the past residents of Neerkol would be grateful that their experiences had been heard and acknowledged in the Report.

“Having had the opportunity over the past few years to get to know many of the former residents I know how important it is for them to be able to recount their life experiences and for these experiences to be documented, acknowledged and published” Sr Di-Anne said.

“A reading of the Report makes it very clear how difficult and distressing life was for the children of Neerkol. We apologised some four years ago for the hurt that they suffered and on behalf of the Sisters of Mercy I offer my heartfelt apologies to them once again” Sr Di-Anne said.

Sr Di-Anne said that the Sisters were endeavouring to assist the former residents with their lives today.

“ Four years ago we established a Professional Standards Office to assist them in a practical way with the provision of counselling, ongoing support and other professional services. We also negotiated out of court settlements with some 80 former residents” Sr Di-Anne said.

Sr Di-Anne thanked the Queensland Government and Mrs Forde and her commissioners for giving the former residents and Sisters the opportunity to appear before the Inquiry and to have their experiences documented.

“The Neerkol Chapter also acknowledged the great difficulties that the Sisters faced in caring for the children of Neerkol” Sr Di-Anne said.

Sr Di-Anne said it would be her hope that the publication of the Neerkol Chapter will be of assistance today to all who lived and worked at Neerkol.

For further information regarding this Media Release, please contact Phillip Bauman at the Mercy Admin Centre on 49271866