

REDACTED

29.4.97

Neerkol Support Group Committee
 C/- Anne Louise Nilsson
 Children's Commission of Qld
 G.P.O Box 259
 Bris. Qld 4001

Dear -----

We, the past residents of St Joseph's Home Neerkol, would like to organise a meeting amongst ourselves so we can discuss our grievances and needs for redress and to elect a Committee to take the fight forward to the Roman Catholic Church, The Sisters of Mercy and The State Family Services Department.

It will be a meeting amongst ourselves unless it is agreed to have Anne-Louise Nilsson (Children's Commission Manager Reviewer and fully qualified Social Worker Consultant) as an adviser to us. The Children's Commissioner, Norm Alford, may consider to sit in as adviser also.

Those that cannot attend the forthcoming meeting are to notify us by letter. The letter should also accompany a separate statement ie----

Formal complaint addressed to : " Neerkol Support Group Committee", stating in point form the abuse you 'Experienced', 'Saw', and 'Who' did what. The abuse outlined will entail 'Psychological', 'Physical', 'Spiritual' and 'Educational'. 'How' it was done ie beltings or whatever, by 'Whom' ie Sr Mary ---- and approximate age. It should also state the years you spent in the home. Also whether you were employed by the State Department in the home or Services out side the home, how long and whether you got your wages at time of discharge.

Whether you contacted or informed the Church, Heads of Department about your abuse at the time or any time after leaving the home and what year?

In your letter to us notifying your attendance or not, we would also wish to be advised if you agree to pass on phone number or address or prefer to keep details confidential.

You are now able to obtain your files from the Freedom of Information act and should you wish to have copies please request in your reply to us for application form to be sent or contact Susan Horton, Manager of F.I.O Branch on toll free 1800- 809 078 for further queries. State your a past resident of Neerkol.

No financial commitment is required from you, all we are asking for is to support each other by coming forward and telling your experiences either by what happened to you or by what you saw going on.

The Nuns are stating that we ex-orphans are exaggerating our claims of abuse, that we don't remember happenings properly and what we are doing is a vendetta against the Church. Yet all we are endeavouring to achieve is 'Justice'.

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It is shameful that the Catholic Church is trying to silence us about their misdeeds (sins of commission or omission) as they have managed to do so in the past, robbing us of our dignity and self-esteem; do they find comfort in denying us of these rights?

They say they can stand by their reputation as having "Lovingly cared for those thousands who have been educated by them". Why should they worry about a mere number of disgruntle orphans whom they abused!! We are, as they say just a "Passing shadow" (Catholic Leader). ----- Saying in essence, we are of no consequence ----- well this shadow can turn into a very dark stormy cloud !!! Hence the essential need for your support and moreover your personal need to have your grievances addressed inorder to look to the future and put the past behind.

Should you choose to contact the Sisters of Mercy Committee as advised on television by them, have a witness present and take notes.

Should Compensation by class action be possible we will need strength in numbers so do consider your support.

If you require further details from us please contact Anne-Louise Nilsson on (07) 32475510. Reverse charges for non-metropolitan and interstate callers.

Your response to this letter would be advisable and appreciated as early as possible.

"We stand United."

Yours faithfully

Ms Mary Eather.

(On behalf of the Committee for past Neerkol Residents)