

DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES
FORTITUDE VALLEY

FILE NUMBER	90I/1/0	FOLIO	107
DATE	28/11/78	BY	

File
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Subject:

Alkira Boys Home

APPOINTMENT OF NEW HOUSEPARENTS

RECORD NUMBER

MINUTE RMcL:DW

90I/1/0

On 20th June, 1978 new houseparents - Mr. and Mrs. Lester were appointed to Alkira, replacing Captain and Mrs. Daley who had been transferred to Sydney. Mr. and Mrs. Lester had had previous experience in houseparenting at Boys Town, Beaudesert but resigned because of conflictual demands made by their own children. As the children are now older, Mr. and Mrs. Lester applied for the vacancy at Alkira and were appointed.

Discipline in the unit to which they were appointed had been allowed to deteriorate by the previous houseparents, and Mr. and Mrs. Lester were determined to increase the quality of the general behaviour of the boys. From the beginning, it was clear that their general conception of discipline was inappropriate for the specific boys at Alkira. Some physical punishment was used, resulting in some measure of tension and ill-feeling among the boys, subsequently spreading to the other units. The superintendent, Major Hall, became aware of the situation within a few days, and spent much time discussing the issue with the houseparents.

From my contact with the boys, I was also aware of the damaging implications, and Major Hall approached me and discussed with me the entire situation. Both Major Hall and I counselled the houseparents concerning their approach to the boys, specifically mentioning the use of physical punishment. It became obvious after two weeks that the entire situation was unsuitable; and as Major Hall was very much aware of the damaging effects on the boys, he made the decision to ask the houseparents to leave. Mr. and Mrs. Lester will be leaving Alkira during the school holidays in August.

Throughout the last four weeks, Major Hall has been aware of the difficulties experienced in this unit, and it is because of his perception and openness in discussions that the situation did not escalate. His primary concern was, and is, the welfare of the boys at Alkira, and it became clear that their welfare was not best served by the present houseparents. It was in the light of this concern for the boys that he made the decision to replace the houseparents.

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I consider that all possible efforts were made to counsel and advise Mr. and Mrs. Lester, but they are basically psychologically unsuitable for houseparenting, and that Major Hall's decision was the only appropriate one under those circumstances.

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R. J. McLary,
Child Care Officer,
Residential Care "A".
26th July, 1978.