

To The Senate Committee, ✓

Well I was only 7 yrs old when my dad died on the 4th January 1953 he was 56 yrs old. my mother was 39 yrs old and was left with us 8 children the youngest 2 mths old & the eldest 10 yrs old. A week after my dad had died we were sent to Saint Joseph's Home, Needham in Rockhampton. A few weeks there our abuse began. The most kids some of us wet the bed nearly every night. We got melted naked every day, and had to go without our breakfast and stand behind our chair while everyone ate their breakfast. We had freezing cold baths in the winter and came on our cold hands every day we wet the bed. After a few days of wetting our beds they took our mattresses away and we had to sleep on our hard spring bed. If you kept on wetting the bed. You were made to sleep on the bare floor under your bed. I don't know how many days we went without food. Our mother took us home on & off, but we would have been better off if she just left us there as we went without lunch at school and the nuns use to give us food from their convent at St. Marys. Every time we went back to the orphanage we use to get melted. no one came out from the Children Services to talk to the kids as we were all dressed up when visitors came and get back in our yard clothes again as soon as they left. I went to work in the nursery looking after the babies when I was fourteen. Every now and

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then the nun in the nursery use to belt us walko with the handle of a straw broom. (The pat stick). I still to this day don't know why she get stuck into us. Then when I was sixteen she get stuck into me with the pat stick & had all bruise over me for a week on my arms neck and leg. I hid under the kitchen for 2 days and one of the girls in the kitchen use to bring me food. I covered myself up at night with the potato sacks that were under the building. I came out after a couple of days and never went back to the nursery for 50 days. The nun left for 6 mths as she had a break down. nobody asked me or came to see me to tell them what happened. my mother came to see me on the Saturday as my bruises were fading them. I left netherhall when I turned eighteen. I have had night mares at night. I have to take anti-depressoin tablets every day. Sending these papers out of my files to let you see I'm not telling lies. It was a living hell in that place as all the kids were scared of the nuns. Thanking you.

Colleen Richards (nee Woods)



EH.TS.

4th January,

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Dear Madam,

I wish to advise that the Director has approved that your two children, Kathleen and Darryl, be discharged from State control to your care, and that Kevin be transferred from St. Joseph's Home to board with you. This means that you will receive monetary assistance from this Department towards the support of Kevin only. 15/1/62.

The Mother Superior, St. Joseph's Home, Neerkoll, has advised me that the three children will probably return from vacation on or about the 22nd instant, and I suggest that you contact the Mother Superior at that time to ascertain the date on which you will be able to take custody of the children. Please advise me of this date so that we may commence paying you for Kevin.

Yours faithfully,

E.J. HOLBECK,
District Officer.

Mrs. R.M. Woods,
NERIMBERA.

B/c The Mother Superior,
St. Joseph's Home,
NEERKOLL.

Forwarded for your information.

Mrs. Woods alleges that Colleen received corporal punishment towards the end of November or early December, and the Director requests that I obtain from you a report concerning this allegation.

District Officer.
4.1.62.

23rd January, 1962.

TS.

The Director,
State Children Department,
BRISBANE.

Dear Sir,

With reference to your letter of the 22nd ultimo, it has now been ascertained that the boy, Kevin Woods, returned from vacation at Innuark and was transferred to board with his mother on the 15th instant. Arrangements for Kevin from this date will therefore be added to Mrs. Woods' allowance for the fortnight ending 10th proximo.

Kathleen and Darryl have not yet been returned from holidays, but we shall further advise you in this regard at a later date.

The required report concerning Colleen has not yet been received from the Mother Superior, St. Joseph's Home, Neerkoli, but as soon as this comes to hand, it will be forwarded to you.

Yours faithfully,

District Officer.

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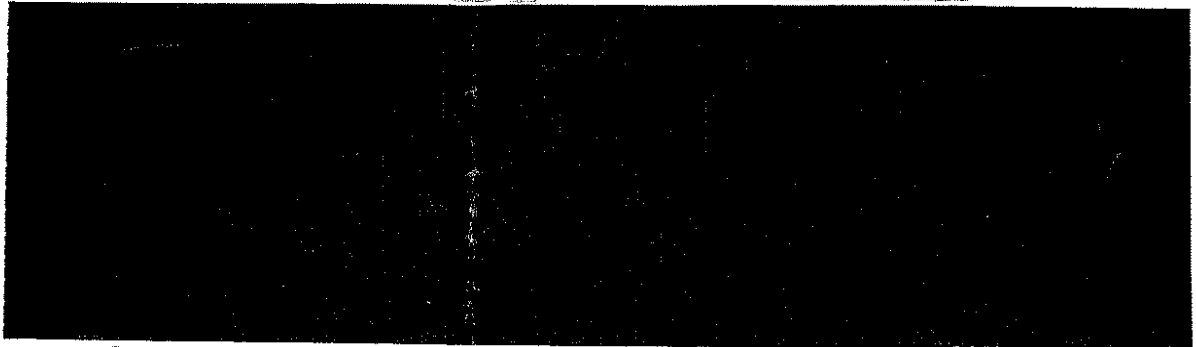
EH/JM

12th December, 1961. (310)

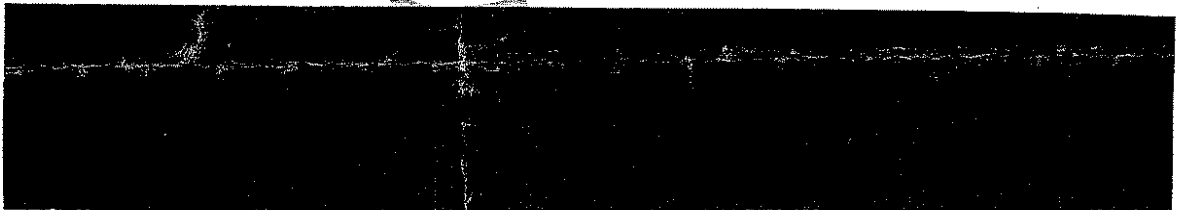
The Director,
State Children Department,
BRISBANE.

Dear Sir,

Re Mrs. R.M. Woods, Assisted Case - Nerimbera.



Over the years, Mrs. Woods has visited her children regularly, and has resented the fact that they are in a Home, as she has always stated that she is perfectly able to provide for them, if she receives assistance from this Department. There has never been any question of the home surroundings of Mrs. Woods, and in fact, on one occasion when Mr. Harris was in this Office, he visited Mrs. Woods' home and was very satisfied with the manner in which it is kept.



The Department has been responsible for maintaining all of Mrs. Woods' children, and these are disposed of as follows:-

Neville - former St. Joseph's Home, [redacted] at present living at home and unemployed.
Noel - 18 years of age this month. He is a good type of lad and remained with his employer, with whom he has been since leaving St. Joseph's Home.
Colleen - At present employed at St. Joseph's Home.
Gloria - passed the last Scholarship Examination and boarded at St. Patrick's College, Mackay.
Kathleen,
Darryl and - Boarded at St. Joseph's Home.
Kevin.
Lorraine,
Mervyn,
Beverley and - Living with Mrs. Woods and receiving assistance from this Department.
Graham

As Mrs. Woods wishes to have her children home with her, it is recommended that Kathleen, Darryl and Kevin be transferred from board at St. Joseph's Home, Neerkoll to board with their mother at the end of the present school vacation, as it is probable that arrangements have already been completed for the children to spend the vacation in private homes. In this regard, my letter of the 5th instant shows that the house in which this family reside, is large and providing extra beds are bought, there will be ample accommodation for the additional three children.

When Mrs. Woods called at the Office yesterday, she alleged that Colleen, who is employed at St. Joseph's Home, Neerkoll, received a severe belting approximately two weeks ago, as a result of which she

and I asked her whether any bruises were visible at that time, but she stated that there was no sign of them.

It would be appreciated if you will advise whether the three children may be transferred to board with their mother as recommended, and also whether I should make further enquiries into the allegation that Colleen has been ill-treated.

Yours faithfully,

District Officer.

FOI RELEASED



STATE CHILDREN DEPARTMENT
27 DEC 1961
NO. 32.0471

State Children Department

344

"Harris Court" ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~
"Rockhampton" George & ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~
Margaret Sts., ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~

All communications should be
addressed to the Director.
TELEPHONE: ~~XXXX~~ 32.0471.
If telephoning or calling
ask for Mr. Dunbar.

Brisbane, B. 7. 22nd December, 1961.

Dear Sir,

Re: Mrs. R.M. Woods - Assisted Case - Nerimbera.

I wish to acknowledge receipt of yours of 12th instant concerning the abovenamed's case and to advise that it has been approved that her two children, Kathleen and Darryl be discharged from State Control to her care and that Kevin be transferred from St. Joseph's Home, Neerkoll to board with her. *> at home park*

If the children have already been placed in private homes, for the holidays, the action may take place after they are returned from those homes.

Please to kind enough to inform me in due course of the dates when the discharge and transfer take place.

With regard to Mrs. Wood's allegations concerning her daughter, Colleen, please obtain from the Sister in Charge a report concerning the information given to you by her mother.

Yours faithfully,

Geor. Dunbar

for Director.

Kathleen & Colleen

The District Officer,
State Children Department,
ROCKHAMPTON.