

Statement to Police 11 June 1999

I was informed by Fr John Grace that he received, through Fr Walter Black of Perth, allegations of sexual abuse committed against AYP [redacted] of Perth. The allegations were against Fr Reg Durham who was Chaplain at St Joseph's Orphanage, Neerkol Queensland, while AYP [redacted] was a child resident of the Orphanage.

I was in Sydney when Fr Black contacted Fr Grace on about 19th April 1996. The allegation was that in December 1968, AYP [redacted] was walking past the presbytery of Fr Durham, when he came out and invited her into his presbytery. First he had her sit on his lap, then picked her up bodily and took her to his bedroom where he raped her.

As the bishop of the Diocese of Rockhampton it was my responsibility to inform such a priest who was accused, of the allegation made against him. I was of the opinion that after receiving the message of Fr Black, through Fr Grace, that the police would be contacted.

I cannot recall when I informed Fr Durham. I believe it was at the presbytery at Neerkol and it was prior to the visit of the Rockhampton police to Fr Durham on 10th September 1996. I am confident that I would have passed on to him, all the details of the allegation as I had received them.

When Fr Durham rang me on September 10th 1996, to say that the police had come to the presbytery asking him to accompany them to the Police Station, I was not surprised as I was of the opinion I had informed him and I was waiting for some development. I remember being surprised that the police had not contacted me before going unannounced to confront him.

I went out almost immediately and suggested he contact a solicitor immediately which he said he would do.

- I was told by Fr John Grace
- It was my duty to contact Fr Durham and I believe I did
- I cannot recall the time or the place
- I was not surprised when the police visited him in relation to the charges.
- I went immediately to see him, after his phone call
- There was no astonishment or embarrassment in telling me. He knew that I was aware of the allegations and had told him.

