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

**Media Release Issued 1 October 1999 by Sr Di-Anne Rowan, Congregational Leader of the Rockhampton Sisters of Mercy pertaining to the court case of Fr Reginald Durham.**

Sr Di-Anne said that with further criminal cases pending it was not possible for her to comment in any detail on the court verdict.

However, Sr Di-Anne said that she felt deep sympathy for the woman who had been sexually abused in her childhood and for the devastation it has caused her and her family.

“In September 1997, the Rockhampton Sisters of Mercy issued an unreserved public apology to all the former residents of Neerkol who suffered abuse as children and we stand by that apology today” Sr Di-Anne said.

Sr Di-Anne said that the Sisters had tried to respond with compassion to the pain of all former Neerkol residents by resourcing a Professional Standards Office to provide them with counselling and other related services that would help them in their present difficulties.

“We also recently negotiated an out of court settlement with some 70 former Neerkol residents. From our experience we believe any discussion of compensation is best handled with input from people with legal expertise” Sr Di-Anne said.

Sr Di-Anne said that to her knowledge the Rockhampton Sisters of Mercy had never been involved in any cover up of information pertaining to this case and have co-operated fully with all police inquiries.

With regard to the testimony given by Sr Francis Regis, Sr Di-Anne said that Sister Francis appreciated the seriousness of giving evidence under oath and her testimony was consistent with her memory of events.