

Catholic Church Not Paid Bail for Accused Priest

*Katrina Lee, Director, Catholic Communications
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News reports today have claimed that the Catholic Church has paid bail for Fr Robert Fuller. This is not the case.

It is the consistent policy of the Archdiocese of Sydney that priests accused of any criminal offence are responsible for their own legal costs. The Archdiocese does not contribute to these costs or provide sureties for bail, and Fr Fuller's case is no exception.

The Archdiocese of Sydney was not a party to the proceedings at the Parramatta Local Court today, did not have legal representatives in attendance, and has not seen a copy of Fr Fuller's bail conditions.

Fr Fuller's legal representatives have advised lawyers for the Archdiocese that the bail conditions set for Fr Fuller today nominated Fr Terry Bell, a family friend and parish priest of Fairfield, as an "acceptable person" under the Bail Act to provide the surety for Fr Fuller. The Archdiocese understands that Fr Bell has taken out a personal loan to pay Fr Fuller's bail personally.

Reports have also made reference to the Church providing Fr Fuller with accommodation in a church-owned unit in Terrigal while on bail. The Archdiocese will fulfil its responsibilities to ensure basic care for Fr Fuller by providing accommodation and supervision.

The charges against Fr Fuller are most serious, and the court process must be allowed to take its course. In the meantime the Archdiocese will provide basic care strictly in accordance with Fr Fuller's bail conditions.

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