



Media Release

19 March 2015

The Salvation Army Royal Commission Findings (Case Study 5)

The Salvation Army (Australia Eastern Territory) accepts all the Royal Commission findings presented regarding Case Study 5 and acknowledges past practices and procedures led to the abuse of children.

To confirm, The Salvation Army no longer runs any children's homes as outlined in Case Study 5 and has implemented significant changes to ensure priority focus for its child protection policies and procedures

The Salvation Army would again like to offer its unreserved, deepest and sincerest apologies to survivors and their families for the trauma and effect this abuse has caused all throughout their lives.

Commissioner James Condon, leader of The Salvation Army (Australia Eastern Territory) said, "The Salvation Army openly admits to serious past failures, accepts responsibility for these failures and apologises to all who were harmed including the families of survivors."

"The Salvation Army has a no tolerance approach to any form of abuse. As an organisation, The Salvation Army is committed to ensuring no harm ever occurs again and has no tolerance for abuse of any kind. We understand that in the past we have breached the trust placed in us and we must seek to rebuild that broken trust.

"We cannot change the past and undo the wrongs committed by people in our name. However, we remain committed to acknowledging these wrongs, and ensuring we today have adequate child-protection processes and procedures to protect all children who we come into contact with.

"The Salvation Army today has best-practice child protection policies in place to ensure those policies reflect that the protection of children remains one of our most serious obligations," said Commissioner Condon.

Prior to the release of this report by the Royal Commission and ahead of the findings of Case Study 10, The Salvation Army has already enacted a number of significant changes to ensure policies and procedures remain best-practice. With the assistance of independent, external experts, these changes include:

- Executing a deeply detailed review into its child protection policies and procedures in order to bolster the protection of all vulnerable people in our care;
- Increasing the training provided to child protection staff and all officers to ensure they are equipped with best practice child protection policies;
- Ensuring all child protection policies have been made retrospective so that any officer or person pursuing officership, involved in any form of abuse, will never be allowed to serve as an Officer in The Salvation Army;

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- Restructuring and renaming the Professional Standards Office – now known as the Centre for Restoration - to ensure all allegations of abuse brought to the attention of The Salvation Army are investigated in a timely, professional, objective and independent manner, by external investigators, and are free from any perceived conflicts of interest;
- Working with relevant law enforcement authorities and independent experts to ensure complaints handling policies are best practice and independent external investigations are carried out in a timely manner;
- Thoroughly reviewing record-keeping practices to ensure appropriate archiving of records are in place;
- Reviewing in detail personnel (officers and employees) files and disciplinary procedures;
- Re-examining and auditing every past claim to ensure sufficient financial redress was provided and reviewing and auditing all cases of abuse ever brought to the attention of The Salvation Army to ensure due process was followed;
- Undertaking decisive disciplinary action against all former personnel who have been involved in abuse, dismissing them from service and reporting their behaviour to police investigators;
- Expanding the geographical reach of the Centre for Restoration, with a new position created and based in Queensland, supporting survivors in that state;
- Convening a round table of independent experts to examine the question of why child abuse occurred; and
- Our international headquarters has issued new regulations that state no officer ever found to have committed criminal sexual activities can be accepted or reinstated into officership.

All these measures include specific steps to ensure ongoing accountability to improve child protection processes so children will never be placed in situations of harm again.

The Salvation Army is committed to working with survivors in order for their healing process to begin and encourages anyone who was abused in any way to contact our Centre for Restoration directly on (02) 9266 9781 or centreforrestoration@aue.salvationarmy.org.

For more information about The Salvation Army and the Royal Commission, please visit <http://salvos.org.au/royal-commission/> and <http://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/public-hearings/case-studies>.

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For further information or media comment please contact:

The Salvation Army Media Office – (02) 9266 9820 (diverts after hours).