



Media Release

4 August 2015

Statement on Royal Commission Case Study 10 Findings

The Salvation Army (Australia Eastern Territory) accepts all the Royal Commission findings regarding Case Study 10 handed down this week and acknowledges our past practices and procedures led in some cases to the failure of the protection of children.

The Salvation Army is profoundly sorry for the harm which the survivors have suffered.

Since the Royal Commission, The Salvation Army has implemented significant changes to child protection policies and procedures to ensure the safety of children remains our highest priority.

The Salvation Army again offers its deepest, unconditional and sincerest apologies to survivors and their families for the trauma this abuse has caused throughout their lives.

Leader of The Salvation Army (Australia Eastern Territory), Commissioner James Condon, says, "The Salvation Army admits at times our past failures led to the harm and abuse of children. We fully accept responsibility for these failures and sincerely apologise to all who have been hurt.

"Today's Salvation Army has a no tolerance approach to any form of abuse. We, as The Salvation Army, are deeply committed to ensuring that no harm ever occurs again. We simply will not tolerate abuse of any kind.

"As I have told the Royal Commission, I want to express our unreserved apology to all who were harmed in any way at all. We are so sorry, deeply sorry, for every instance when children were sexually abused by our personnel while in our care. We are so sorry for each instance, where they felt unable to complain or for when they did, they were not believed.

"The Salvation Army understands we have breached the trust placed in us by survivors and the Australian public. We must seek to rebuild that broken trust.

"We remain committed to acknowledging the wrong that has occurred in our name and ensuring we have adequate child-protection processes and procedures to protect all children who we come into contact with.

"For many years now, The Salvation Army has worked tirelessly to ensure best-practice child protection policies are in place. These policies reflect that the protection of children will remain one of our greatest obligations," said Commissioner Condon.

Prior to the release of this report by the Royal Commission and as outlined at the release of Case Study 5, The Salvation Army has proactively 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;

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- 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;
- 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 or real 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;
- 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.

These measures have been designed to ensure accountability and child protection processes are continuously adhered to so children will never be harmed 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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