

The Salvation Army – Royal Commission Recommendations

Summary

Introduction

The Salvation Army acknowledges, and is grateful for, the work of the Royal Commission of Inquiry. We appreciate the depth and thoroughness of the Inquiry and the recommendations as they guide us to improve our treatment of all people we meet and address the wrongs of the past.

The Salvation Army has for many years strived to improve our processes to keep vulnerable people safe and support survivors. The Royal Commission of Inquiry's recommendations set a best practice benchmark that will assist us in taking a more strategic approach to the development of our services.

The Salvation Army is committed to, and prioritising, its change journey and has made good progress so far. We are keen to progress further and delivering on the recommendations that we have agreed to, is a key focus area for The Salvation Army; one that we intend to deliver to a high standard.

First priority – establishment of a Safeguarding team

Our priority is to enhance our safeguarding practices by the establishment of a Safeguarding team who will be responsible for developing and implementing the workplan as well as engagement across The Salvation Army to ensure that all recommendations are fully embedded. While The Salvation Army has been engaged in safeguarding activity over the past three years, this team will bring expert skillsets and the capacity to focus solely on safeguarding and fulfilment of the recommendations. The team will include a Team leader as well as roles in Development, Training and Quality Control, and Policy. Recruitment for this team has started, and the aim is that the team will be in place by the end of the first quarter of 2025. We have processes/policies in place regarding people protection, however these need to be streamlined and reviewed.

More work needs to be done

We have developed competence in many of the Royal Commission's recommendations, however we recognise there is more work to be done. For example, we have a robust recruitment system that has enabled us to ensure that we are employing candidates for all roles that are well trained and safe people. We have an excellent training system in place for child and people safety and we look forward to developing this further with the National Care Standards.

Dependent on Government legislation

Some of our responses to the recommendations are dependent on Government processes and their responses to the recommendations, such as the puretumu torowhānui redress system and the National Care Safety Agency. We are committed to working with these programmes as they are developed. Until then, we will continue to work with survivors who approach us to go through our redress system, and we will support them in whatever ways we can.

Request for more detail

We believe that some of the recommendations need further detail for us to be able to make an informed decision; for example, Recommendation 66 — does this speak to mandatory reporting requirements? We want to consider this further and ensure we have the best evidence in this area to support us accepting this recommendation fully.

Recommendation 66:

Where a complaint has been substantiated, State and faith-based entities providing care directly or indirectly and relevant professional bodies should take steps to ensure the person or people responsible are held accountable, including:

- a. professional disciplinary action
- b. reporting to the relevant professional registration body or bodies
- c. reporting to the Care Safe Agency
- d. reporting to NZ Police
- e. reporting in accordance with any other applicable information sharing or mandatory reporting obligations.

Accepted in Principle 21

Tūtohi | Recommendation 21

Whānau payments for whānau of survivors of abuse and neglect in care.

Recognising the intergenerational damage caused by abuse in care, the Inquiry recommends that a whānau harm payment be provided for members of whānau who have been cared for by survivors and thereby potentially impacted by their tūkino, to help prevent further intergenerational harm. The Inquiry recommends this is set at \$10,000.

In the case of Recommendation 21, our redress system already includes whānau payments. The Army has always aimed to build into redress, support for the wider family of a survivor. We know there is often wider whānau and intergenerational impact following the abuse of a family member.

Rather than taking a prescriptive approach which might mean some whānau are disadvantaged, we look at the circumstances an individual survivor has encountered, the impact on whānau, and make our redress payments accordingly.

Conclusion

The Salvation Army is fully committed to developing new processes and strengthening what we already have in place, in implementing the recommendations established by the Royal Commission. We see this as a necessary process in enhancing the work we have started over the last few years and embedding changes that will result in a safe and life-giving process for all people within our services. We will cooperate fully with the Crown Response Unit in providing reports and review our processes as advised by them. We have been encouraged by the recommendations in that we have seen what we have developed and put into practice over these last years. We realise there is still work to be done and will have this focus in our plans as we strengthen our safeguarding practice.

