

DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

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Subject: Information for the Honourable the Minister
Concerning the Salvation Army

TO THE DIRECTOR

RECORD NUMBER	MINUTE
	<p>With reference to our telephone conversation concerning Brigadier Beasy's appointment to see the Honourable the Minister on Friday, 11 July concerning a proposal to close Alkira as a licenced institution and to replace that function with a programme for handicapped children and a second proposal to take over The Outlook at Boonah, the following is advised.</p> <p>The Salvation Army has operated a number of residential facilities in Queensland for a long period of time without marked success. The following are comments on some of the programmes that have been operated.</p> <p><u>Riverview Boys Home</u></p> <p>Riverview catered for some twenty adolescent boys and was generally used for children who were of lower than average intelligence. The programme consisted primarily of farm work and attendance at a special school conducted by the Department of Education. Conflict arose between the Department of Education staff and officers of the Salvation Army because of the harsh treatment that boys were meted out by the home staff and this affected the programme at the school. <u>The school staff was withdrawn and then the home was closed because the regime was antiquated, inadequate, inappropriate and indefensible, not only in terms of the methods used in handling the children but also because of the buildings which were run down, in a poor state of repair and altogether quite unsuitable.</u></p> <p><u>Kalimna</u></p> <p>This facility located in Jephson Street, Toowong was a vocational training centre for girls committed to Care and Control and also had an internal school staffed by teachers from the Department of Education. This facility was also closed in 1977 because of the poor management which was evident in the operation of the programme. The Salvation Army staff showed an inflexible attitude in their approach. This was true, particularly in relation to length of stay for girls. It was stipulated that girls should stay at least ten months, at a minimum, although this was later reduced to six months. In fact almost no children stayed for the minimum period since in order to be judged ready to leave, children had to remain three months in "the third grade". Decisions on passing from one grade to another ^{were made by staff} in a subjective and ill-defined manner focused upon the institution's needs rather than the child's. Departmental officers were unable to have the staff alter the programme to cater for specific needs of particular children and the programme was repressive and regimented. Children were punished by restricting their access to families. Regimentation had grown up from a philosophy based upon a belief that therapy was achieved through hard work. This is an out-dated concept which was ^{in vogue} invoked some 50 years ago. The</p> <p style="text-align: right;">.../2</p>

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<p>✓</p> <p>→</p> <p>✓</p>	<p>most attractive feature of the programme was the internal school and once this was withdrawn for similar reasons to the withdrawal of the school from the Riverview Programme, the residential programme was inadequate, inappropriate and indefensible.</p> <p>Departmental officers proposed changes so that the facility would cater for the changing needs of the community and in line with current trends in the practice of social welfare. As a response to discussions, the Salvation Army submitted lengthy proposals which in fact displayed very little difference from what had existed. The submission received from the Salvation Army referred to girls in care as being "committed" to the Salvation Army's care, which is an inaccurate perception. It concentrated upon the importance of limit setting and discipline, which was quite concerning in view of the harsh discipline, making extensive use of detention rooms which had been in use, and made very little concession in relation to the major concern with regard to a period of stay and how that was determined.</p> <p>[The Department had been whole-hearted in its endeavour to support this programme by consultation and by additional funds. A Cabinet Decision was obtained early in 1977 to increase by fifty percent the amount of subsidy paid to the Salvation Army in order to help the organization manage Kalimpa.] [However, when it became apparent that the programme would ^{need to} be revised and that a different staffing model would ^{not} be employed in order to make the facility operate satisfactorily, a further request for funds was submitted. The first request was for \$135,400 of which \$105,000 was to come from this Department. Even the Salvation Army realised this was unrealistic and this ^{figure} number was later reduced to \$65,000 for basically the same service.] Finally, the programme of family support was instituted and since this is staffed by a number of professional people from outside the Salvation Army, that programme has functioned fairly well, I understand.</p> <p><u>Horton Village</u></p> <p>Horton Village has three cottages in the one complex, capable of providing accommodation for some 24 children. Since 1978 the facility has been under used and at present only two of the cottages are used. <u>This state of affairs has come about primarily because the Salvation Army has been unable to modify its concept of caring for children in response to the changing needs of the society in which it operates.</u> Departmental officers have been involved in discussions with officers of the Salvation Army with the view of instituting an adolescent hostel on the premises, but that proposal was not acceptable to the Salvation Army for reasons that I am not clear about.</p> <p><i>about well</i></p> <p>.../3</p>

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	<p><u>Family Group Home, Gladstone</u></p> <p>This Family Group Home has been staffed by one female Salvation Army member since its opening towards the end of 1979. This lady has formed inappropriate special relationships with some of the children in her care and this has been to the detriment of the other children resident at the home. This problem was discussed with Brigadier Beasy and he advised Mr Smith that he would take steps to have the officer transferred.</p> <p>[Apparently Brigadier Beasy telephoned her and advised her that she was to be relieved of duties there, and his subsequent communication to Mr Smith was that the communication had been well received.] Subsequently Brigadier Beasy visited Gladstone and was so blunt in his handling of the officer that she became extremely upset and wanted to leave the home immediately, taking the two children with whom she had a close relationship, with her. The situation was only saved by the skillful action of Mr Daniels, Acting District Officer, Rockhampton and Mr Barlow, Supervising Child Care Officer, Gladstone.]</p> <p><u>Alkira</u></p> <p>[The Department's liaison with the Salvation Army concerning the operation of Alkira has been problematic for a lengthy period of time but especially since May 1979. On 28 May 1979 Brigadier Beasy wrote to you concerning, among other things, Alkira and a proposal to change its function. At that time the proposal was to move towards a family group home concept and to accommodate both boys and girls. This proposal was examined by officers of the Department and then Mr Smith wrote to Brigadier Beasy on 4 September 1979 advising that, bearing in mind the variety of residential care services available, we would not like to see Alkira changed as it was operating very well and fulfilling an important need for children in care.</p> <p>In fact, the proposal to change Alkira's function was quite unrealistic because of the function it was providing and the restrictions that the buildings would place upon the proposed programme. It is hard to understand why the Salvation Army should have wanted to change the function at that stage since there were few problems and the general operation of the facility was very satisfactory.</p> <p>Brigadier Beasy's response to Mr Smith's letter was to write requesting additional funds for the continued operation of that facility. No conclusion was reached on the question of increased funding but before those negotiations were completed, the Salvation Army saw fit to change the management of Alkira without first consulting the Department.] The first we knew of the change was when Major Hall who was then the Superintendent, wrote to you on 27 December 1979 advising that he had been transferred by the Salvation Army to parish work in Orange, New South Wales.]</p> <p>.../4</p>

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	<p>Major Hall expressed satisfaction with the work of Alkira and with the liaison support which he had received from officers of the Department. Major Hall was replaced by Captain Woodwood who is a social work graduate and whose particular interest was in working with the aged, in fact his last preference for work was Alkira. Since Captain Woodwood's appointment, Alkira has never functioned well and is now completely in disaray and unable to care for children. Although the facility is licenced and the approved number of funded beds is 22, there are only four children in residence. This situation has come about partly because of Captain Woodwood's inability to take control and his lack of interest, both of which have contributed to a role confusion between houseparents and superintendent and subsequent insecurity being conveyed to the children. There has also been a lack of planning and proper procedure with regard to the appointment of houseparents.</p> <p>As a result of this situation, discussions between Mr Smith and the Senior Child Care Officer, Residential Care Services and Brigadier Beasy have taken place. Subsequently Mr Smith wrote to Brigadier Beasy upon his request, stating that the present officer in charge was not suitable and should be replaced, that Alkira is a needed facility for boys and we have appreciated its service in the recent past and offering the assistance of staff from this Department in the selection of a new superintendent.</p> <p>The major factor, it would seem, in the deterioration of the programme at Alkira has been the haphazard management by the Salvation Army. There has always been some impulsive and ill-thought out plan to change Alkira even when it was functioning well and change was neither warranted nor desireable. The Salvation Army chose, for reasons known only to members of that organization, to replace a satisfactory superintendent with an incompetent one. Again the Salvation Army wants to embark on a new course of action which is different from one recently agreed to by Brigadier Beasy in discussions with senior officers of the Department. It is quite unrealistic to expect the Salvation Army to display sufficient skill in management to be able to make effective use of the facility available at The Outlook in view of their recent history in the management of Alkira.</p> <p><u>Alkira is not structurally suited to caring for handicapped children. It is built on the side of a hill with a centrally located kitchen and dining room and has the appearance of a fairly large institution. Current thinking in the care for handicapped is to provide them with experiences which approximate normal living situations in small groups within the community. Alkira does not lend itself to that purpose, in fact it is best suited to the purpose for which it has functioned well, that is caring</u></p> <p style="text-align: right;">.../5</p>

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	<p>for adolescent boys who are generally more difficult to handle than those placed in family group homes. <i>Amel</i></p> <p>Attached is a copy of a report by Mr Smith concerning The Outlook at Boonah.</p> <p><i>L Burgess</i></p> <p>L Burgess Senior Child Care Officer <u>Resource and Development</u></p> <p>10 July 1980</p>