



AUSTRALIA EASTERN TERRITORY
OFFICIAL MINUTE

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SEXUAL ABUSE INVOLVING SALVATION ARMY OFFICERS

Situations that have arisen in recent years involving charges being laid against Salvation Army officers for alleged sexual abuse have given rise to the issuing of this Minute.

1 THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

It is intended to confirm and reinforce a number of fundamental principles in relation to expected behaviour.

The Salvation Army confirms that:

- 1.1 The status of an officer is one of sacred trust.
- 1.2 The sexualising of any ministry relationship is:
 - * An abuse of power.
 - * A failure to meet an implicit commitment to care for the good of others.
 - * A failure to provide an arena of security and safety for all who come under their influence.
- 1.3 This is a public and not a private issue.
- 1.4 Consent is in no way a justification for a sexual relationship.
- 1.5 Although the behaviour may not be criminal in nature, and the relationship may not seem to be damaging to anyone, it is a betrayal and abuse of the trust and privilege of officership.

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2 WORKPLACE ENVIRONMENT

It is intended that The Salvation Army works towards creating an environment through its Corps, Centres and Services that is safe and secure from any inappropriate sexual behaviour by developing:

- 2.1 A culture of awareness of abuse.
- 2.2 An arena of safety from such abuse.
- 2.3 A program to assist with reporting mechanisms.

3 DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS

The Salvation Army in dealing with complaints of abuse places its emphasis on:

- 3.1 Listening to the alleged victim which must be the first priority.
 - 3.2 The care and support of all those involved.
 - 3.3 The pursuit of the truth and righteous outcome, not on damage control for the organisation or protection of the offender.
 - 3.4 The need to act justly in investigating and dealing with all complaints of a sexual nature.
- 4 The Salvation Army maintains appropriate structures and procedures for dealing with complaints of abuse. These are available when required as situations develop. Access to these when required will be through the Secretary for Personnel.
 - 5 The Salvation Army upholds a code of ethical behaviour, with associated sanctions for violations of that code. This will be applicable to all officers, employees and volunteers.
 - 6 The Salvation Army will review and maintain its screening and selection procedures for all positions - officer, employee and volunteer.
 - 7 The Salvation Army maintains a supervisory code that all officers, employees and volunteers receive adequate supervision and support.

THQ Sydney
8 September 1998

Ivan B Lang
Colonel
CHIEF SECRETARY