



MEDIA RELEASE

14 March 2014

The Salvation Army responds to Fairfax allegations

Mark Isaacs was engaged by The Salvation Army in a role that required him to fulfill unskilled duties in support of the provision of basic needs for transferees. By their very description, support worker roles typically do not require individuals to have particular skills or experience. The Salvation Army maintains that support workers who were engaged in this role were, at all times, adequate to discharge the duties required.

The allegation that Mark Isaacs and others were engaged without interviews or background information provided regarding the work is untrue. In the early stages of recruitment for work on Nauru and Manus Island in 2012, an online application process was used as the first stage of applications and this was followed by a telephone interview. Staff were also required to undertake a formal induction process at the commencement of their employment.

In the early days of The Salvation Army's work on Nauru and Manus Island, prior to the formalisation of the contract, the Department of Immigration and Border Protection required an incredibly rapid start-up, which meant that a formal induction was not developed prior to The Salvation Army getting its first people on the ground. However, at all times (including from the first deployment) staff were briefed by The Salvation Army either prior to departure or immediately upon arrival at the Offshore Processing Centre.

In regard to staff training, The Salvation Army has received no evidence from staff or from the Department of Immigration and Border Protection (through any of its quality control mechanisms) to support an allegation that staff were not sufficiently trained.

The incredibly fast paced start up required of The Salvation Army meant that in the early days the Department was still formalising its own processes and requirements at the Centres, which were needed to adequately inform Salvation Army practices. Once properly established on the islands, The Salvation Army's staff were receiving detailed position descriptions and specific support regarding the requirements and expectations of their roles. At all times, staff were fully supported by a comprehensive Employee Assistance Program provided on-island by an external clinical psychology firm, in addition to Salvation Army supports and debriefing.

The Salvation Army's contract with the federal government for services on Manus Island and Nauru expired in February 2014 and has not been renewed.

Without knowing what is specifically written in Mark Isaacs book, The Salvation Army is unable respond any more fully than above.

ENDS

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