

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Questions by ABC reporter Sarah Dingle to Major Bruce Harmer, Public Relations, Salvation Army (23 and 24 November 2014)

Pseudonyms have been inserted by Background Briefing to protect identities.

Has the Salvation Army gone to the police to report the actions of Major A, given that it accepts he sexually abused Bronte as a child?

Yes. The Salvation Army reported Major A to the police and continues to assist the relevant authorities with their investigation. A full brief of evidence in the possession of The Salvation Army has been provided. The Salvation Army Professional Standards Office has assisted the Police investigation through the provision of information and records, so that the Police can do their important work in the interests of justice.

Why does Chris Reid's letter not mention that Bronte will be offered, or is entitled to, any financial compensation beyond the costs of counselling?

The survivor has advised The Salvation Army that she is not seeking financial redress at this time. If circumstances change, financial redress through an established process is accessible for anyone who wishes to bring a claim against The Salvation Army.

Will Bronte receive any offer of financial compensation?

Again, TSA understands that financial compensation is not being sought. However, if circumstances have changed, TSA would certainly be willing to review the case.

Why has it taken the Salvation Army almost 20 years to formally respond to Bronte's reports of being sexually abused as a child by a Salvation Army major?

Our records indicate first contact was made in 2014. The Salvation Army does not have any record or knowledge of any reports being made by the survivor from 1995. When The Salvation Army became aware of the survivor's complaints in 2014, it took all necessary steps to investigate and then bring the matter to the attention of the Police, as well as to suspend and then dismiss Major A from Salvation Army Officership.

Does Major A continue to receive a Salvation Army pension, any payments, or housing after being stripped of Officership?

Major A has appealed his dismissal as a Salvation Army Officer. Under the Orders & Regulations for Salvation Army Officers, anyone who is dismissed in such circumstances where there has been no trial and conviction by a Court, has a right to a Commission of Inquiry (a disciplinary appeals hearing). Major A's Commission of Inquiry is scheduled to be heard in January 2015. Major A does not live in Salvation Army accommodation. Any future entitlement to a Salvation Army pension will be determined following the outcome of the Commission of Inquiry.

Is his demotion permanent?

Yes. However, to clarify, Major A has not been demoted, he has been dismissed from Officership. This means that he has been stripped of all rank and title and is no longer a Salvation Army Officer. He is no longer a member of The Salvation Army in any way. The only way this would ever change in the future is if the Commission of Inquiry in January 2015 was to make a decision different to that of the Officers Review Board, which made the original order for dismissal. So yes, the decision is permanent unless it is overturned by the

Commission of Inquiry.

Is the Salvation Army aware of any other complaints made against Major A?

Since the original complaint was brought to the attention of The Salvation Army, The Salvation Army has been made aware of other allegations which have also been investigated. No matters have yet been brought before the courts but we are aware that the Police are investigating fully and have been doing so with the full assistance of The Salvation Army, in the provision of records and information. Due to privacy reasons and the ongoing Police investigation, it is not appropriate that details on these matters be released at this time. If you wish to make further inquiries, then the best person to talk with would be the officer in charge of the Police investigation.

Background Briefing sought further clarification on the following issues:

1. Can you please clarify whether Major A is receiving a pension right now while his dismissal is on appeal.

Major A is currently receiving a TSA pension while his dismissal is under appeal. This will be reviewed following the Commission of Inquiry.

2. Also, how many other people have made allegations of sexual assault against Major A to the Salvation Army?

Other complaints have been received, but we are unable to comment, given the current police investigation?