



# Policy Statements 2016-2017













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## Opening message

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The Salvation Army is one of Australia's largest providers of homelessness services, and community and social support networks. It has operated in Australia for more than 130 years and has a long and proud history of working with the most disadvantaged and marginalised individuals and communities.

Of great concern to The Salvation Army are the results of systemic and ongoing disadvantage, which diminish the wellbeing and hope of individuals and communities. Disadvantage and poverty lead to deprivation, limited capabilities and a lack of opportunities that cause marginalisation for individuals within the community.

The Salvation Army is at the front line, responding to disadvantage on a daily basis, and it sees firsthand the devastating and long lasting effects of entrenched poverty. While it is evident that cost savings and efficiencies are required in a challenging fiscal environment, The Salvation Army continues to advocate for a fair and equitable approach. The needs of vulnerable and marginalised Australians require careful consideration by the Australian Government.

The Salvation Army repeats its cautionary appeal against any changes that will further disadvantage those already struggling to meet the basic needs of their everyday lives.

The Salvation Army maintains a strong commitment to advocate for vulnerable members of our community. Therefore, we urge the Australian Government to continue to invest in measures that provide opportunities for marginalised and disadvantaged Australians to contribute and participate fully in society.

In this year's policy statements The Salvation Army would like to highlight a number of key priority areas; these are:

- Poverty and disadvantage
- Alcohol and other drugs
- Family and domestic violence
- Homelessness
- People seeking refuge and asylum
- Employment
- Aged care
- Modern slavery
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples


The priority areas listed above have complex interrelationships that compound the deprivation and marginalisation of vulnerable members of the community.

The Salvation Army calls on all political parties to consider the recommendations listed in the following statements and to reflect upon the needs of the Australians represented within them. The Salvation Army welcomes further opportunities to discuss the experiences of those who seek our support with the Australian Government.



**Commissioner Floyd Tidd**  
Territorial Commander

Australia Southern Territory



**Commissioner James Condon**  
Territorial Commander

Australia Eastern Territory

## Background

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### About The Salvation Army

The Salvation Army is an international movement, recognised as part of the Christian Church, and one of the world's largest Christian social welfare organisations. It has more than 1,650,000 members, operates in 127 countries, and is supported by the efforts of many thousands of employees and volunteers.

Operating in Australia since 1880, The Salvation Army is one of Australia's largest providers of social services and programs for the most marginalised and socially excluded individuals in our community. Consistent with our foundational values of human dignity, justice, hope, compassion and community, The Salvation Army is committed to the promotion of social justice and the protection of the rights of disadvantaged and marginalised people.

The Salvation Army has a national annual operating budget in excess of \$700 million and provides more than 1,000 social programs and activities through networks of social support services, community centres and churches across the country. Key services include:

- Material aid and emergency relief
- Financial counselling and assistance
- Accommodation and homelessness services
- Personal counselling and support
- Family and domestic violence support services
- Drug and alcohol support and treatment services
- Out-of-home care
- Child, youth and family services
- Emergency disaster responses and chaplaincy support
- Education, training and employment support services
- Personal counselling and support
- Migrant and refugee services, and
- Aged care services, and NDIS services.

The Salvation Army in Australia has an established reputation for providing these services to disadvantaged individuals, families and communities impacted by poverty, hardship and deprivation from opportunities and other essentials considered part of everyday Australian life. The Salvation Army works with individuals who, due to life experiences and events, often have inadequate education and training, poor health or a sense of powerlessness that compromises their capabilities and opportunities to participate fully in the community.

The Salvation Army's national Service and Mission Information System (SAMIS) records data on client activities from funded and non-funded programs and provides information on service delivery, client presentation trends and variations. As a result, it has a unique opportunity to identify emerging trends and current issues facing the most marginalised members of the community. In addition, The Salvation Army's annual national Economic and Social Impact Survey (which recorded more than 1,640 responses in 2016) provides a unique insight into the lives and circumstances of struggling Australians.





## Summary of recommendations:

The Salvation Army calls on the Australian Government to consider the following:

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### Poverty and disadvantage

#### Recommendations:

1. Structural reform to the taxation system that balances revenue and expenditure measures through fairer taxing regimes, focusing on measures that support disadvantaged Australians.
2. A significant increase in income support allowances to enable recipients to engage in the economy and the community.
3. Indexation of income support allowances to average earnings, in line with other allowances such as the aged pension.
4. Continued support for programs that provide employment opportunities, emergency relief, financial counselling and social services in response to individuals and families experiencing poverty and disadvantage.
5. Additional support mechanisms to enable highly disadvantaged individuals to exercise their consumer choice.

### Alcohol and other drugs

#### Recommendations:

1. Improvement of the mechanisms to target funding allocations to well researched, evidence based models that results in a reduction of substance misuse within the community.
2. Improve the service capacity and adequacy of responses to individuals from vulnerable populations.
3. Introduce measures to limit advertising of alcohol in the media and at major public events, particularly sporting events.
4. Introduce volumetric taxing on alcohol.
5. Improve sustainability for service delivery by increasing funding contracts to five or seven year periods.

### Family and domestic violence

#### Recommendations:

1. Explore current funding and practice models to adequately resource family and domestic violence services and improve the capacity, flexibility and accessibility for women and children to access support services.
2. Provide additional resources for therapeutic responses to children who experience family and domestic violence.
3. Introduce additional victims of crime levies specifically to fund family and domestic violence services.
4. Invest in prevention, early intervention, advocacy campaigns and behavioural change programs in order to offer a wide spectrum of initiatives and responses to family violence.
5. Increase supply of adequate housing options and safe accommodation for women and their children escaping family violence.
6. Improve responses to family violence through increased investment in comprehensive specialist men's family violence services and research into successful intervention models.

## Homelessness

### Recommendations:

1. Establish an advisory mechanism to support government innovation in developing evidence based responses to the provision of homelessness services.
2. Increase funding for social and affordable housing stock.
3. Direct Australian Government investment through a new national affordable housing agreement.
4. Introduce market based incentives to encourage private investment.
5. Introduce tax reform to reduce inflationary pressure in the housing market, including negative gearing and capital gains treatment incentivising new rather than existing housing.
6. Increase revenue from housing tax reforms to be used to fund affordable housing.
7. Develop long-term funding arrangements that are indexed and commensurate with the real costs of providing homelessness services.

## People seeking refuge and asylum

### Recommendations:

1. Develop alternatives to the off-shore processing and detention of asylum seekers that results in all detainees being removed from this form of detention and treated in a compassionate and respectful manner.
2. Review the decision that denies asylum seekers, on bridging visas, work rights while their claims are being processed.
3. Provide additional emergency relief funding to meet the increased demand from people seeking refuge and asylum.
4. Reinstate family reunion policies as a priority.
5. Significantly increase Australia's humanitarian intake of people seeking refuge and asylum.

## Employment

### Recommendations:

1. Flexible funding of training and preparation programs in identified growth industries, which: equip job seekers to meet employer requirements in terms of specialised skills, work experience and general employability; and provide incentives to these businesses to actively consider people experiencing mid to long term unemployment (for example, industry development grants).
2. Targeted funding of specialist programs providing dedicated support and guidance to disadvantaged and marginalised job seeker groups (with consideration given to financial cost to jobactive providers of transitioning job seekers across programs).
3. Review and simplify employment service contract requirements to minimise the administrative burden and compliance costs for providers, particularly in the provision of recruitment services to employers and Work for the Dole hosts.



## Aged care

### Recommendations

1. Ensure that high quality services are assessable to disadvantaged and homeless individuals, providing appropriately flexible and specialised models of care and funding models.
2. Implement an appropriate strategic workforce training and recruitment plan to meet the changing needs of the aged care industry, including technological changes.
3. Develop a clear strategy to support residents and consumers with severe expressive behaviours and mental health problems within the aged care sector.
4. Develop a strategy to ensure ongoing viability of rural and remote aged care service provision.

## Modern slavery

### Recommendations:

1. Appropriate funding for an Independent Commissioner on Slavery and Trafficking, similar to that of the United Kingdom. The first task for the Commissioner should be to conduct an independent review of the anti-trafficking/slavery framework against international best practice.
2. Appropriate funding for the full implementation of the National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking and Slavery, with an emphasis on building local capacity across the country to identify and respond to victims and to effectively prosecute perpetrators.

## Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

### Recommendations:

1. Uphold the UN declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and in particular matters affecting forced removal from homelands and protection of sacred sites.
2. Continue the commitment towards the 'Close the Gap' pledge with adequate resourcing and action.
3. Continue to engage in Reconciliation activities.
4. Invest in culturally appropriate facilities and whenever possible Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled services for drug and alcohol rehabilitation and domestic and family violence.
5. Reduce the high rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander incarceration.
6. Review and implement the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody report.
7. Review and implement the recommendations of the Bringing them Home report and a new Royal Commission into the 'New Stolen Generation'.
8. Continue the report into the effectiveness of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suicide prevention programs.





## Poverty and disadvantage

**The Salvation Army is concerned that disadvantaged families are unable to fully participate in the community due to inadequate income support allowances, and calls on the Australian Government to increase these allowances to adequate levels.**

The Salvation Army provides support to individuals and families through an extensive range of emergency relief centres, social programs, corps (churches) and employment services. As one of the largest providers of Emergency Relief (ER) services in Australia, The Salvation Army is a last resort for many Australians unable to afford the 'basic necessities of life'. In 2015, The Salvation Army recorded more than 486,340 sessions of support for people in need, giving emergency relief and material aid to more than 136,000 individuals, and providing more than 100,000 meals. To help fund these support activities The Salvation Army contributed more than \$12.5 million<sup>1</sup> of internally generated funds to ER services.<sup>2</sup>

The Salvation Army's 2016 national Economic and Social Impact Survey (ESIS), continues to demonstrate the ongoing struggle for individuals and families attending Salvation Army emergency relief services. ESIS findings have conclusively demonstrated, over a number of years, that there is a group within the community for whom an adequate standard of living remains out of reach. The findings indicate that significant exclusion and disadvantage continues unabated for individuals and families attending Salvation Army ER services.

Key findings from ESIS 2016 demonstrated that:

- 85% indicated that they were receiving income support payments
- 89% reported not having access to up to \$500 savings if they experienced an emergency
- 66% went without basic necessities
- 52% went without meals due to financial hardship
- 53% delayed payment of utility bills.<sup>3</sup>

The Salvation Army continues to be concerned that children are experiencing high levels of exclusion and deprivation. Of particular concern were the 52% of single parent households that comprised a total of over 1,794 children experiencing disadvantage and poverty. In total, 58% of children experienced multiple deprivations and were without more than five of the essential items for life.<sup>4</sup> Children experiencing these levels of deprivation regularly missed out on school based activities and did not have up to date school books, uniforms or internet access. The Salvation Army remains alarmed that inadequate parental income continues to have a significant and direct causal impact on children, resulting in multiple deprivations.

The Salvation Army has repeatedly protested the inadequacy of current income support allowances.<sup>5</sup> This is particularly the case for single parent allowances, which trap children and their parents in a spiral of despair and deprivation. Typically this parent cohort comprises a majority of women who already experience gender disadvantage through lower life time earnings compared to their male counterparts.<sup>6</sup> Gendered disadvantage continues into older age for an increasing number of women for whom the lack of financial resources places them at increasing risk of homelessness as they age.<sup>7</sup>

1. Funds generated internally by The Salvation Army Australia.

2. The Salvation Army specific data is provided by The Salvation Army Service and Mission Information System (SAMIS). SAMIS is a customised, in-depth and unique client management, data collection, information and reporting system used by most Salvation Army social programs across Australia.

3. Findings of the national Economic and Social Impact Survey (2016). The Salvation Army.

4. Essential items for children are defined according to UNICEF Child Deprivation Index. UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre (2012). Measuring Child Deprivation: New league tables of child poverty in the world's rich countries. UNICEF, Italy. [http://www.google.com.au/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&frm=1&source=web&cd=1&ved=0CB0QFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.unicef-irc.org%2Fpublications%2Fpdf%2Frc10\\_eng.pdf&ei=d2\\_RVNXqNs7U8gXn-4KYAQ&usg=AFQjCNFI59LsVPxiK4bjEGZlhb0ML7-huw&bvm=bv.85076809,bs.1,d.dGY](http://www.google.com.au/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&frm=1&source=web&cd=1&ved=0CB0QFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.unicef-irc.org%2Fpublications%2Fpdf%2Frc10_eng.pdf&ei=d2_RVNXqNs7U8gXn-4KYAQ&usg=AFQjCNFI59LsVPxiK4bjEGZlhb0ML7-huw&bvm=bv.85076809,bs.1,d.dGY)

5. See Submissions: <http://www.salvationarmy.org.au/en/Who-We-Are/Publications-reports-submissions/Reports--Submissions/>

6. See Gender pay gap: <https://www.wgea.gov.au/media-releases/gender-pay-gap-171-employers-tackle-pay-inequity>

7. Sharam, A. (2011). No home at the end of the road. The Salvation Army: Melbourne.



Investment and capacity building for this cohort of disadvantaged Australians is an urgent priority to prevent their continuing disadvantage and to enable children trapped in deprivation to fulfil their future potential.

The Salvation Army strongly supports the increasing emphasis on consumer choice as an underlying principle for designing and developing social service systems. Most notably, the concept of consumer choice underpins the aged care reforms and the introduction of the National Disability Insurance Scheme. However, these systems do not appear to recognise the particular difficulties for individuals without families, supportive communities, and resources in exercising choice. The Salvation Army's current experience indicates that many of our clients are not able to exercise their choice to the same extent as other people in the community, either because their needs are too complex and expensive for mainstream services, or because they are not able to effectively negotiate the new systems.

The Salvation Army acknowledges the difficult task of governments in providing leadership in much needed structural reform of the Australian economy and encourages a rigorous debate within the community. However, the principles of fairness and support for those in need remain fundamental priorities for The Salvation Army. Any structural reform to the Australian economy must be carefully designed to prevent inadvertent and negative outcomes for disadvantaged members of the community. For these reasons, The Salvation Army does not support a regressive tax such as the GST given the disproportionate stress it places on those with the lowest incomes. Structural reform of the tax and transfer systems requires measures such as; an elimination of tax loop holes, reform of excessive superannuation concessions, scaling back and grandfathering negative gearing deductions, an increase in capital gains tax, and increases in income support allowances. Any savings achieved from these reforms should be used to assist disadvantaged Australians living in poverty.

The Salvation Army calls on the Australian Government to consider the following:

**Key issues:**

1. Structural reform of the taxation system to support equity and fairness.
2. Inadequate income support allowances that result in childhood deprivation, particularly for children in single parent families.
3. Investment and capacity building support services.
4. Employment opportunities that support disadvantaged families.

**Recommendations:**

1. Structural reform to the taxation system that balances revenue and expenditure measures through fairer taxing regimes focusing on revenue raising measures.
2. A significant increase in income support allowances to enable recipients to engage in the economy and the community.
3. Indexation of income support allowances to average earnings, in line with other allowances such as the aged pension.
4. Continued support for programs that provide employment opportunities, emergency relief, financial counselling and social services in response to individuals and families experiencing poverty and disadvantage.
5. Additional support mechanisms to enable highly disadvantaged individuals to exercise their consumer choice.

## Alcohol and other drugs

**The Salvation Army is concerned that the misuse of alcohol remains the most common principal drug of concern in reported drug treatment episodes, and calls on the Australian Government to target funding for public health measures and treatment programs to well researched evidence based models.**

In 2015, The Salvation Army provided more than 25,000 episodes of support for individuals affected by the debilitating effects of alcohol and other drug misuse. A Salvation Army network of more than 100 services across Australia responds to those with drug and alcohol addictions through detox and rehabilitation programs, counselling and outreach services. In addition, thousands more are assisted through other community support services.

The ongoing and long term damage of alcohol and drug misuse on individuals, families and communities is regularly seen in Salvation Army services. There are a number of complex contributing factors that may predispose individuals to increased risk of substance abuse. For example, negative childhood experiences or trauma, inadequate social supports, substandard housing, lack of employment opportunities, poverty and insufficient access to health services. Early intervention and support reduces the damage to individuals, families and communities, as well as reducing the financial burden on the health and social services system. The National Alcohol and Drug Research Centre's New Horizon Report, released in 2015, found that 'for every \$1 invested in alcohol and drug treatment society gains \$7 in health and social benefits'.<sup>8</sup>

The Salvation Army is committed to effective prevention and treatment programs that are based on rigorous evidence and research. The Salvation Army welcomes new funding resulting from the Australian Government's response to the National Ice Task Force Final Report, which will inject \$241.5 million into alcohol and other drug treatment. However, funding allocations to specific support and treatment programs requires further research to ensure that these resources are targeted at those programs that demonstrate the most effective evidence based outcomes. In particular, The Salvation Army supports increased innovation in harm reduction programs through research generated evidence.

The recent commissioning of alcohol and other drug services through the Primary Health Networks represents a significant shift in funding responsibilities that is reliant on their effectiveness and capacity to build partnerships. In some jurisdictions these network boundaries are problematic for large services that exceed the network boundaries and provide services that fall outside the primary health focus. The Salvation Army believes review and monitoring of this arrangement will be required to ensure it provides an adequate mechanism to deliver effective services.

In recent years a growing community concern with the use of ICE has focused welcome resources and community attention on reducing the harmful effects of this drug; however, alcohol remains the most prevalent drug of choice and continues to have a significant social and economic cost to the community. Australians consume daily levels of alcohol that place them at significant risk with 26% drinking alcohol at levels that lead to injury and serious harm.<sup>9</sup> In 2014, the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare reported an increase in drug treatment episodes over the last decade with 162,362 treatment episodes in 2012/13 (an increase of 6%). The most common principal drug of concern was alcohol (41%).<sup>10</sup>

8. Ritter, A., Berends, L., Chalmers, J., Hull, P., Lancaster, K. & M. Gomez (2014). New Horizons: The review of alcohol and other drug treatment services in Australia. National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre UNSW: Sydney.

9. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2014). National Drug Strategy Household Survey: Detailed Report 2013. Drug statistics series no 28. Cat. no. PHE183. Canberra: AIHW.

10. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2014). Alcohol and other drug treatment services in Australia 2012-13. Drug treatment series no 24. Cat. no. HSE150. Canberra: AIHW.



The Salvation Army remains extremely concerned about the impact of alcohol misuse on young people. Pervasive advertising and promotion of alcohol consumption through media campaigns and at public events expose vulnerable young people to unacceptable risk. Urgent measures are needed to redress the exposure of young people to alcohol advertising and marketing. The Salvation Army calls for evidence based drug treatment programs with options to support increasingly holistic approaches and family sensitive practice.

The Salvation Army continues to advocate for comprehensive, flexible and rigorous, evidence based approaches that provide specialist support for individuals seeking treatment.

The Salvation Army calls on the Australian Government to consider the following:

**Key issues:**

1. The links between funding allocations and evidence based programs.
2. The creation of sustainable long term funding approaches to enable vulnerable groups to access adequate basic services.
3. Public health education and prevention measures that promote evidence based harm minimisation approaches.

**Recommendations:**

1. Improvement of the mechanisms to target funding allocations to well researched, evidence based models that results in a reduction of substance misuse within the community.
2. Improve the service capacity and adequacy of responses to individuals from vulnerable populations.
3. Introduce measures to limit advertising of alcohol in the media and at major public events, particularly sporting events.
4. Introduce volumetric taxing on alcohol.
5. Improve sustainability for service delivery by increasing funding contracts to five or seven year periods.

## Family and domestic violence

**The Salvation Army is concerned that women and children escaping family and domestic violence may not receive adequate support, and calls on the Australian Government to increase funding for support programs, housing and therapeutic responses to children.**

The Salvation Army is a significant provider of Family and Domestic Violence (FDV) services in Australia. Our family and domestic violence services deliver emergency refuge and medium term accommodation, case management and outreach support, advocacy, counselling and therapeutic responses to women and their children. Across Australia In 2015, The Salvation Army supported more than 8,700 women and children who experienced family and domestic violence across our community support programs.

The Salvation Army is dedicated to supporting women and children who are and have experienced family and domestic violence and supports the government's ongoing commitment to inform policy direction, standards and consistency of practice. It supports therapeutic practice models to ensure quality program and service delivery responses and improved outcomes for women and their children.

More than one woman dies each week in Australia from family violence, which is a leading contributor to death, disability and illness.<sup>11</sup> These figures are overwhelming; specialist services require adequate financial resources and integrated systems to adequately address family and domestic violence within the community.

Family and domestic violence remains a critical social issue for individuals, families and communities. Family and domestic violence has a significant financial impact on the Australian economy, predicted to be \$15.6 billion by 2021–2211.<sup>12</sup> The Salvation Army witnesses firsthand the enormous economic and social costs of family violence across its community support services.

The issue impacts all levels of society; however, while a percentage of men experience this form of violence, women and children are overwhelmingly the groups most at risk. FDV is a significant factor for women who enter homelessness services (along with relationship breakdown, limited financial capital and comparatively limited superannuation).<sup>13</sup> Over one-third of adults and children using specialist homelessness services across Australia did so because of FDV; and almost half (48%) of all family and domestic violence clients were homeless when they sought assistance.<sup>14</sup> In addition, there is an increase in the number of older women seeking specialist homelessness services.

The Salvation Army is concerned about the capacity and sustainability of services to adequately respond to women and children given the significant increase in demand for support services. In addition to government funding, The Salvation Army supports an exploration of Victims of Crime compensation as a further source of funding for preventative family and domestic violence initiatives and activities across the community.

The Salvation Army supports Our Watch, the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth) and Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety's (ANROWS) shared framework in the prevention of violence against women and children. The framework identifies strategies to promote gender equality and address the causal issues to strengthen positive, equal and respectful relationships across our community.<sup>15</sup>

11. At 13 December, 2015 the deaths of 79 woman resulting from family and domestic violence was recorded by the 'Counting the dead women project'. Available: <https://www.facebook.com/DestroyTheJoint/notes>

12. The National Council to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children, The cost of violence against women and their children, Commonwealth of Australia, 2009, p 7.

13. Ibid., In the period from 2011–12 to 2013–14 the number of women aged 55 years and over accessing specialist homelessness services increased by 26% – almost 10,000 older women accessed these services in the last financial year.

14. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, (2015). Domestic and family violence and homelessness, 2011–12 to 2013–14. Available: <http://www.aihw.gov.au/homelessness/domestic-violence-and-homelessness/>

15. Our Watch, Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS) and VicHealth. (2015). Change the story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia. Our Watch: Melbourne, Australia. Available: <http://www.ourwatch.org.au/getmedia/0aa0109b-6b03-43f2-85fe-a9f5ec92ae4e/Change-the-story-framework-prevent-violence-women-children-AA-new.pdf.aspx>





There is an urgent need to continue to invest in a wide spectrum of family violence services, from prevention and early intervention strategies to crisis responses and reparative programs, in order to effectively address this deadly epidemic. Included in these responses is a need for specialist men's family services to change the behaviours and attitudes of perpetrators. The Salvation Army calls for additional emergency accommodation and housing options for women and children, along with improved access to therapeutic services for children who have experienced violence. Services supporting women and children struggle to meet the demand and to assist women and children to find safe accommodation where needed, thus exposing women to the risk of returning to a violent environment through the lack of alternative options.

The Salvation Army urges all levels of government to continue to develop strong unified policy and to provide leadership and sustained financial investment to eradicate family and domestic violence across all communities.

The Salvation Army calls on the Australian Government to consider the following:

**Key issues:**

1. The adequacy of financial resourcing for services that are responding to increased demand for assistance.
2. The growing need for appropriate housing options for women and their children escaping family and domestic violence.
3. Limited therapeutic support for children who experience family and domestic violence.

**Recommendations:**

1. Explore current funding and practice models to adequately resource family and domestic violence services and improve the capacity, flexibility and accessibility for women and children to access support services.
2. Provide additional resources for therapeutic responses to children who experience family and domestic violence.
3. Introduce additional victims of crime levies specifically to fund family and domestic violence services.
4. Invest in prevention, early intervention, advocacy campaigns and behavioural change programs in order to offer a wide spectrum of initiatives and responses to family violence.
5. Increase supply of adequate housing options and safe accommodation for women and their children escaping family violence.
6. Improve responses to family violence through increased investment in comprehensive specialist men's family violence services and research into successful intervention models.



## Homelessness

**The Salvation Army is one of the largest providers of homelessness support services across Australia, providing crisis accommodation, transitional housing, specialist services for youth and those experiencing family and domestic violence. In 2015 more than 57,000<sup>16</sup> individuals were supported through Salvation Army homelessness services. Many of those seeking support from homelessness services have a complex range of needs, which include physical and mental health issues, substance abuse, and isolation and exclusion.**

The Salvation Army understands that individuals and families who are currently experiencing or have experienced homelessness often have limited choice and find themselves without any other option. They are at risk of being disconnected from employment and education opportunities, and of being socially isolated from support networks such as family. As a result, they are more likely to experience poor physical and mental health. Similarly unemployment, poverty, health and mental health issues and social isolation can also lead to homelessness.

To address the growing needs of homeless Australians The Salvation Army commits substantial resources to providing services that operate from an holistic and community integration focus. The Salvation Army believes that building strong community based responses improves the outcomes in preventing the experience of homelessness from becoming an entrenched life trajectory. In addition to services that The Salvation Army provides, under government contract, it also contributes more than 32% of all income to its homelessness services. This does not include the additional provision of buildings and equipment that are also part of The Salvation Army's contribution to supporting those experiencing homelessness.

Of concern to The Salvation Army are growth estimates of homelessness, provided by the Australia Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW). On the 2011 Census night, more than 105,200 people were homeless. This is an increase from the ABS' estimate of more than 89,000 homeless Australians in 2006.<sup>17</sup> The growth in homeless numbers indicates an urgent need for more to be done by government and the Australian community to address this increase. Many of the individuals and families supported by The Salvation Army are also at risk of homelessness as they struggle to maintain housing. The Salvation Army's 2016 ESIS report found that, of those seeking assistance with emergency relief, 17% were homeless, and one in three of these had previously been in private rental accommodation.<sup>18</sup> These findings indicate that homelessness remains a significant risk for many more Australians and small changes in their personal and financial situation are likely to push them into homelessness.

Contributing to the risk of homelessness is a chronic shortage of affordable housing supply that is estimated to be over 500,000 rental dwellings for those on the lowest household incomes.<sup>19</sup> Disadvantaged Australians on very low incomes, who rely on income support, are at constant risk of homelessness as they struggle to find affordable housing. They do not have financial resources to withstand unexpected or irregular expenses (such as unforeseen health costs, accidents, utility increases and any increases in rental charges). Schemes to support low income households, such as the Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA), have failed to maintain parity with rental increases and costs.

The Salvation Army believes that there is an urgent need to address homelessness and advocates for a new advisory mechanism that brings together service providers, community representatives and government authorities to drive innovative and evidence based responses, to immediately reduce homelessness in Australia. Underlying issues need to be addressed through policy frameworks that connect the causal effects of unemployment, leaving state care or prison, mental health issues, intergenerational poverty, family breakdown and family violence, drug and alcohol misuse and discrimination, with the increasing risk of homelessness.

16. The Salvation Army Australia Southern Territory figures only.

17. Australian Bureau of Statistics (2011). Estimating homelessness 2011, p. 5.

18. Findings of the national Economic and Social Impact Survey (2016). The Salvation Army.

19. National Housing Supply Council (2013). State of supply report 2012.

The Salvation Army is concerned by the lack of adequate policy changes that support affordable housing through changes to negative gearing for existing properties and a concerted effort to substantially increase housing stock. Overdue structural adjustments in the housing sector to alleviate the housing crisis and make housing more affordable, therefore reducing the spread of homelessness, must be a key priority for the Australian Government. The Salvation Army is, therefore, particularly concerned that individuals and families experiencing the most disadvantage and enduring the worst housing outcomes have their basic housing and material needs met.

Homelessness remains a serious and urgent issue for the Australian community, which requires long term policy change and financial investment. The Salvation Army continues to develop homelessness services that can rapidly respond to the needs of those at risk of, or experiencing, homelessness.

The Salvation Army calls on the Australian Government to consider the following:

**Key issues:**

1. Advisory mechanisms to support the provision of homelessness services.
2. Increasing need for housing and homelessness support services.
3. Limited range of early intervention initiatives and approaches, and longer term supported accommodation programs, for young people leaving care and prisoners exiting detention.
4. Lack of affordable housing options to address homelessness.

**Recommendations:**

1. Establish an advisory mechanism to support innovation and evidence based responses to the provision of homelessness services.
2. Increase funding for social and affordable housing stock.
3. Direct Australian Government investment through a new national affordable housing agreement.
4. Introduce market based incentives to encourage private investment.
5. Introduce tax reform to reduce inflationary pressure in the housing market, including negative gearing and capital gains treatment incentivising new rather than existing housing.
6. Increase revenue from housing tax reforms to be used to fund affordable housing.
7. Develop long-term funding arrangements that are indexed and commensurate with the real costs of providing homelessness services.

## People seeking refuge and asylum

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**The Salvation Army is concerned by the fact that individuals and particularly children seeking refuge and asylum in Australia are still held in detention, and calls on the Australian Government to respond to the crisis by discontinuing this practice and increasing its humanitarian intake of refugees.**

The Salvation Army has worked with other churches, NGOs, advocacy bodies and community groups for more than 15 years, expressing grave concerns for the fate of those people fleeing from their countries of origin and seeking refuge and asylum in Australia.

Many of the issues and circumstances of people seeking refuge and asylum have become highly politicised and are complex and diverse. The Salvation Army believes that Australia must build and maintain strong partnerships with the UNHCR, neighbouring countries and regional organisations, as these partnerships are vital in addressing the increasingly desperate plight of refugees and asylum seekers.

The Salvation Army supports the Australian Government's commitment to an increased humanitarian intake and encourages continued work towards a regional solution.

The Salvation Army recognises the responsibility of the Australian Government to control its borders, while also recognising the responsibility of the Australian Government to ensure the safety and security of people seeking refuge and asylum. The Salvation Army believes alternative policies can be developed that achieve both objectives through a compassionate and bipartisan approach from Australia's major political parties.

The Salvation Army is deeply concerned about the welfare of men, women and children seeking asylum and refuge in detention centres within Australia, as well as those who have been placed in offshore processing centres. In light of the legal and financial framework within which the offshore processing centres operate (i.e. under Memorandums of Understanding negotiated with the host countries); The Salvation Army believes that the Australian Government must play a proactive role in assisting relevant host countries to meet their humanitarian responsibilities.

Many refugees and asylum seekers have survived and/or escaped torture and trauma. The impact of these experiences, combined with being detained for extended periods of time and/or living in the community on Bridging Visas without working rights, can significantly compound trauma and increase mental distress.

The Salvation Army has deep concern for children held in detention and does not support the detention, in any form, of children and unaccompanied minors. The Salvation Army believes that claims by people seeking refuge and asylum should be processed expediently, and that the integrity of family units should be maintained in an effort to limit the damage that detention causes to individuals, particularly children.

People seeking refuge and asylum require compassionate responses that deliver basic rights and services including legal representation and assistance, education and recreational facilities, interpretation services, health services and special protection and schooling for children.

In addition, The Salvation Army believes that the assessment process should include an independent review of negative decisions, regardless of the applicant's means of arrival in Australia.

The continued policy position that denies people seeking asylum the right to work and support themselves is generating an unnecessary cost burden on the Australian Government and welfare organisations, and produces great difficulties for people seeking refuge and asylum in accessing housing and meeting the cost of living. Many individuals and their dependents seeking asylum in the community have a strong desire to work and to pursue further education. The Salvation Army strongly advocates that they be allowed these opportunities, thus contributing to Australia's economy and society.





The Salvation Army remains deeply concerned by the re-introduction of Temporary Protection Visas (TPVs). TPVs allow individuals to:

- Stay in Australia for up to three years
- Work in Australia
- Enrol in the Medicare health system
- Receive social security payments
- If a minor, have the potential to access government-funded education.

Issuing these temporary visas, however, means that those seeking refuge must forgo the opportunity to secure a permanent visa or be reunited with their family members in Australia in future. The Salvation Army believes that Australia has the necessary resources to settle approved refugees and their families in a timely and compassionate manner, and advocates for family reunion as a priority.

The Salvation Army operates migrant and refugee assistance programs in every state. These programs offer a range of supports, including material aid, personal support, free English language classes, legal and migration advice and access to mainstream community networks. The Salvation Army urges the Australian Government to increase English language tuition from 550hrs to an amount dependant on need, improve systems for rental support for migrant families and improve access to education for children from diverse communities. Each year, thousands of asylum seekers, often deprived of the right to work and with reduced income support payments, seek assistance from our emergency relief and homelessness services.

The Salvation Army is experiencing increasing demand for services, from emergency relief and housing services to provide support and assistance to a growing number of asylum seekers. In the 2014/15 financial year more than 3,120 asylum seekers were assisted by The Salvation Army, an increase from 2012 when more than 2,000 asylum seekers sought assistance.

The Salvation Army remains committed to working with those seeking refuge and asylum, and will continue to advocate for the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual wellbeing of those located in all forms of detention—be it secure, onshore and offshore or community detention.

The Salvation Army calls on the Australian Government to consider the following:

**Key issues:**

1. Inadequacy of off-shore detention and potential harm to detainees.
2. Increased and prompt humanitarian intake of asylum seekers.
3. Levels of support that is adequate to fully assist refugees and asylum seekers.

**Recommendations:**

1. Develop alternatives to the off-shore processing and detention of asylum seekers that results in all detainees being removed from this form of detention and treated in a compassionate and respectful manner.
2. Review the decision that denies asylum seekers, on bridging visas, work rights while their claims are being processed.
3. Provide additional emergency relief funding to meet the increased demand from people seeking refuge and asylum.
4. Reinstate family reunion policies as a priority.
5. Significantly increase Australia's humanitarian intake of people seeking refuge and asylum.

## Employment

**The Salvation Army is concerned that many disadvantaged job seekers have complex needs, and calls on the Australian Government to improve funding for specialist employment support programs.**

Since 1998, The Salvation Army Employment Plus (EPlus) has provided vital support and guidance to more than 500,000 job seekers and 200,000 businesses across Australia. With 91 sites distributed across almost every state and territory, EPlus is the largest not-for-profit jobactive in Australia.

EPlus understands how the employment landscape in Australia is changing, and the need for both industry and service providers to keep pace and anticipate these changes. As Australia responds to global economic patterns and moves towards an innovative, knowledge-driven economy, it will be vital that government services such as jobactive invest in relevant and appropriate skills training, modern job matching and recruitment practices, and the use of technology to ensure Australian employees are ready to meet the demands of an emerging, competitive labour market.

For many Australians, access to employment and training opportunities in our growth industries can be readily achieved within the current employment service structure. The Salvation Army EPlus is committed to achieving a parity of opportunity for job seekers who experience disadvantage or marginalisation more acutely than others. These groups include: young people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, mature aged workers, people with a disability, refugees, migrants and people from a non-English speaking background, parents returning to work, and long term unemployed. These job seekers may require additional support, direction and investment, outside of mainstream jobactive services, in order to prepare them to meet the needs of the modern Australian labour market.

The Salvation Army EPlus recognises the efforts that the Australian Government has made to address these complex issues through targeted initiatives such as Transition to Work, Parents Next and Empowering YOUth, as well as proposed reforms to Disability Employment Services. EPlus encourages the government to continue to fund these specialised programs for job seekers with additional support needs, where evidence suggests a dedicated approach will produce better results for job seekers and employers than existing employment services.

A clear link has been established between sustained unemployment and mental health issues, homelessness, and alcohol and drug use, as well as various forms of social disadvantage and exclusion. People experiencing sustained unemployment often require additional support, investment and preparation to meet the needs of employers.

Employment in Australia has experienced above average trend growth over the past 12 months, with the national unemployment rate reducing from 6.2% to 5.8% to January 2016.<sup>20</sup> The Salvation Army EPlus recognises the significant investment in job creation that has been required to produce these results, and understands that these gains in employment are not replicated across all levels of Australian society, and a growing disparity exists between opportunities for priority groups and other Australians.<sup>21</sup> These gaps will be difficult to address in a prevailing economic climate that may favour growth in industries requiring experience, specialist skills training and higher qualifications over entry level or lower skilled positions. The Salvation Army EPlus recommends measures that support the complex training and support needs of marginalised or disadvantaged job seekers, to enable them to fully participate in those industries which are likely to experience the strongest growth in the new economy. EPlus understands the significant budget constraints and challenges facing the Australian government. It is important that investment in public services produce both a social and economic return for our nation. A carefully targeted funding approach, which prioritises outcomes for long term welfare recipients, will offer significant long term results in terms of both social and economic outcomes.

20. Australian Bureau of Statistics (Jan 2016) Labour Force, Australia. Cat No. 6202.2

21. For example, between young Indigenous Australians and other job seekers (Commonwealth of Australia, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Closing the Gap: Prime Minister's Report, 2016, pp.29-32).

As a jobactive provider, The Salvation Army Employment Plus notes that the efficiency of some employment service programs in Australia could be improved without major additional investment through:

- Simplification of approvals and reduction in compliance administration (e.g. employer required non-accredited training procedure)
- Ongoing review of service structures within targeted initiatives such as *Work for the Dole*, to improve clarity of provider responsibilities
- Improved communication with providers around planning needs to ensure financial sustainability, continuity and quality of service in the lead up to major contract or policy changes

The Salvation Army EPlus supports dedicated initiatives such as Transition to Work which improve outcomes for young job seekers. However, the introduction of new initiatives during existing contract periods have had an unforeseen financial impact on jobactive providers, causing caseload reductions and an increased cost of facilitating job seeker movements across programs.

The Salvation Army calls on the Australian Government to consider the following:

#### Key issues

1. Matching current job seeker skills and readiness with the emerging needs of modern Australian economy.
2. Particular challenges in creating parity of opportunity for longer term marginalised or disadvantaged job seekers, with compounding impact in terms of social and economic outcomes.
3. The present mainstream employment service structures produce some good results, but do not systemically address these challenges.
4. Complexity of contract structures and disruption to quality and continuity of services caused by procurement and compliance processes.

#### Recommendations

1. Flexible funding of training and preparation programs in identified growth industries, which:
  - equip job seekers to meet employer requirements in terms of specialised skills, work experience and general employability
  - provide incentives to these businesses to actively consider people experiencing mid to long term unemployment (for example, industry development grants).
2. Targeted funding of specialist programs providing dedicated support and guidance to disadvantaged and marginalised job seeker groups (with consideration given to financial cost to jobactive providers of transitioning job seekers across programs).
3. Review and simplify employment service contract requirements to minimise the administrative burden and compliance costs for providers, particularly in the provision of recruitment services to employers and Work for the Dole hosts.



## Modern slavery

**The Salvation Army is concerned that rates of identification of those experiencing modern slavery and prosecutions remains low, and calls on the Australian Government to appoint an independent Commissioner to review the National Action Plan.**

The Salvation Army has an international mandate to fight modern slavery. In Australia, The Salvation Army has been working directly with victims since establishing the first and only safe house for trafficked/enslaved women in 2008. The Salvation Army also provides case management, legal support and prevention services to men, women, youth and children impacted by or at risk of slavery. The Salvation Army is an active member of the National Roundtable on Trafficking and Slavery and various working groups.

The Salvation Army acknowledges Australian Governments, past and present, for establishing the foundation for a strong antislavery framework and for responding to calls for reforms to improve that framework. However, despite these efforts, rates of victim identification and prosecutions remain extremely low in Australia. The Salvation Army believes this is due to three key issues: low awareness, no framework for collaboration at the community level, and the unintended impacts of other policies. These issues are the symptoms of two core problems: lack of independent oversight of and adequate resourcing for the anti-slavery framework.

Modern slavery is a complex and hidden crime, which makes it difficult to identify and measure. While the number of known victims in Australia is not large in comparison with other crimes, slavery is likely to be under-reported.<sup>22</sup> Fear, shame, mistrust of authorities, and ignorance of rights are reasons why victims may not seek help. As a result, a robust anti-slavery framework must be proactive in raising awareness amongst first responders and the public. To date, awareness-raising activities have been concentrated in certain industries or in limited, urban areas. Government resources for outreach are also limited and/or concentrated at the federal level, which means that many individuals who are likely to encounter victims in community are unaware of the indicators and available services for victims.

Research indicates that proactive, multidisciplinary task forces are more likely to discover human trafficking and achieve successful prosecutions of offenders.<sup>23</sup> The United States has funded over 43 taskforces since 2005 and similar groups operate in Europe and Asia. The U.K. Crime Reduction Toolkit on trafficking in people states: 'Given the nature of the trafficking problem and the crimes it involves, the expertise required to address it effectively, and the multiple needs of its victims, it is essential that a multi-agency approach is taken in any initiative to combat it, to ensure that the needs of victims are met and law enforcement measures are supported.'<sup>24</sup>

In Australia, the National Roundtable provides one avenue for collaboration at the policy level; however, there is no formal framework at the operational level for collaboration amongst key stakeholders. While the National Action Plan to Combat Trafficking and Slavery articulates the importance of the states and territories, it does not provide a framework for accountability or action at the state level. As a result, state and territory government participation is voluntary and inconsistent. Engagement of civil society is ad hoc.

22. The UN Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children (Special Rapporteur) has stated: "The Special Rapporteur observes that the official numbers of identified victims may not be indicative of the true extent of the problem...For a variety of valid reasons, victims...may not make their cases known to the authorities, as highlighted by the trafficked persons with whom the Special Rapporteur met." (p12)

23. Northeastern University Institute on Race and Justice and Urban Institute Justice Policy Center (2012) Identifying Challenges to Improve the Investigation and Prosecution of State and Local Human Trafficking Cases <http://www.urban.org/uploadedpdf/412593-state-and-local-human-trafficking-cases.pdf>; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and United Nations Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking (UN.GIFT). (2009). Anti-human trafficking manual for criminal justice practitioners, p 77.

24. United Kingdom Home Office, Crime Reduction Toolkit on trafficking in people, available at: [www.crimereduction.gov.uk/toolkits/tp0507.htm](http://www.crimereduction.gov.uk/toolkits/tp0507.htm)

A third challenge to the anti-slavery framework is other related policies and practices that have not been properly considered for unintended negative impacts on the framework. Problems exist at the intersection of anti-slavery, immigration and workplace policy, where temporary lawful and unlawful workers are reluctant to complain about exploitative conditions for fear of losing the opportunity to work in Australia or, in severe cases, of retaliation by the employer. As labour exploitation and trafficking exist on the same spectrum, policies targeting the former will have an impact on the latter, for better or worse.<sup>25</sup>

Given that a significant proportion of cases of labour exploitation are discovered through worker complaints, it is problematic that the policy response has focused on deterrents rather than incentives. While creating a liability for unlawful conduct, penalties do not disrupt the power imbalance within exploitative employment arrangements, nor do they facilitate detection of that conduct. Thus, while well-intended to reduce exploitation, these policies could strengthen the leverage exploitative employers have over employees; consequently, it is less likely that workers, including trafficking victims, will complain to and cooperate with authorities for fear that they themselves will be seen as criminals.

The Salvation Army calls on the Australian Government to consider:

#### Key Issues:

1. While Australia has a strong foundational anti-slavery framework, there has been no independent analysis of whether the framework is appropriately structured and resourced, or whether other policies may be limiting or even undermining the framework.
2. The National Action Plan to Combat Trafficking and Slavery is not fully funded. Historically and moving forward, insufficient investment has been appropriated domestically to raise awareness and establish evidence-based structures for collaboration at the community level.

#### Recommendations:

1. Appropriate funding for an Independent Commissioner on Slavery and Trafficking, similar to that of the United Kingdom.<sup>26</sup> The first task for the Commissioner should be to conduct an independent review of the anti-trafficking/slavery framework against international best practice.
2. Appropriate funding for the full implementation of the National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking and Slavery, with an emphasis on building local capacity across the country to identify and respond to victims and to effectively prosecute perpetrators.

25. 'The areas of life and work where...unlawful conduct occurs are potential breeding grounds for more serious forms of exploitation. As such, a focus on unlawful conduct against migrant workers...can be considered a legitimate response to concerns about more serious forms of exploitation, including labour trafficking.' David, Fiona. (2010). Labour Trafficking. Research and Public Policy Series no. 108. Canberra: Australian Institute of Criminology.

26. The UK Anti-Slavery Commissioner is established in the Modern Slavery Act 2015 (UK) and must encourage good practice in the prevention, detection, investigation and prosecution of slavery and human trafficking offences; and the identification of victims of those offences (Modern Slavery Act 2015 (UK) s 41(1).) Public authorities, such as law enforcement and border security, must cooperate with the Commissioner to enable the Commissioner to perform his or her statutory function, which may include making recommendations to public authorities about the exercise of their functions. See Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner Strategic Plan: [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/468729/IASC\\_Strategic\\_Plan\\_2015.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/468729/IASC_Strategic_Plan_2015.pdf)

## Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

**The Salvation is concerned that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples experience high levels of marginalisation, racism and incarceration and calls on the Australian Government to fully implement previous report recommendations to address discrimination.**

The Salvation Army recognises that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are among the most marginalised groups of peoples in Australia. We acknowledge that this marginalisation has at times been caused by historical discrimination and oppression, as well as attitudes of racism entrenched within societal activities and policies that devalue the world's oldest living culture. The Salvation Army recognises that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are significantly over represented in the following priority areas previously discussed:

- Poverty and disadvantage
- Alcohol and other drugs
- Family and Domestic Violence
- Homelessness
- Employment
- Aged care (although Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples require access to aged care services at a much younger age than non-Indigenous peoples)

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples—especially women and children—experience a significantly higher rate of violence than non-Indigenous Australians, with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women being 34 times more likely to be hospitalised as a result of family violence.<sup>27</sup>

On Census night 2011, 1 in 20 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples were homeless; that is 14 times the rate for non-Indigenous people.<sup>28</sup>

The Salvation Army is alarmed by the overrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the prison system including juvenile detention, with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' rates of imprisonment 13 times higher than that of non-Indigenous people.<sup>29</sup> 2016 also marks 25 years since the tabling in Federal Parliament of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody report. Many of the original 339 recommendations were not implemented and we believe the 25th anniversary is an appropriate time for those original recommendations to be reviewed and implemented.

The Salvation Army also recognises the under resourcing and inequality in:

- Health
- Housing
- Education
- Employment
- Welfare

The Salvation Army is alarmed by the high rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suicide, including the high rates of child suicide. We encourage The Australian Government to continue its report into the effectiveness of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's suicide prevention programs.

27. Productivity Commission (2014), Commonwealth Government, Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage Report 2014.

28. 'Homelessness among Indigenous Australians' Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Canberra 2014. Cat no. IHW133ISBN 978-1-74249-597-2.

29. Australian Bureau of Statistics (2014), Prisoners in Australia, Cat. no. 4517.0. Canberra; Australian Bureau of Statistics (2014), Corrective Services Australia, December Quarter 2014, Cat no. 4512.0. Canberra.



#### Key issues

1. Lack of partnership, community engagement and consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, leading to limited active participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
2. Policies, strategies, programs and services and their integration with cultural competence and cultural safety.
3. Ongoing trauma from colonialism. The Stolen Generation and dispossession continue to impact Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
4. Ongoing discrimination and oppression results in the marginalisation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

#### Recommendations

1. Uphold the UN declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and in particular matters affecting forced removal from homelands and protection of sacred sites.
2. Continue the commitment towards the 'Close the Gap' pledge with adequate resourcing and action.
3. Continue to engage in Reconciliation activities.
4. Invest in culturally appropriate facilities and whenever possible Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled services for drug and alcohol rehabilitation and domestic and family violence.
5. Reduce the high rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander incarceration.
6. Review and implement the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody report.
7. Review and implement the recommendations of the Bringing them Home report and a new Royal Commission into the 'New Stolen Generation'.
8. Continue the report into the effectiveness of current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suicide prevention programs.

## Aged care

**The Salvation Army is concerned that older people who are homeless, disadvantaged and marginalised have traditionally had insufficient access to appropriate aged care, and calls on the Australian Government to partner with community organisations to provide flexible approaches and funding options for these individuals.**

The Salvation Army provides extensive support and assistance to older people through its many targeted social programs in aged care. These programs include: specific residential and community based aged care services, homelessness support for aged people, emergency relief and assertive outreach services to older people who are vulnerable, disadvantaged and marginalised—that is, those ‘hard to reach people’ who are not aware of or able to access aged care services.

Increasingly, The Salvation Army is providing services to older people who are dealing with chronic health and mental health issues and complex co-morbid presentations. These issues are complex and further compounded by the lack of affordable, accessible and appropriate accommodation, the lack of accessible aged care services, and personal issues that result from social isolation.

Aged Care is a multi-faceted and highly complex industry which requires significant reform, especially when considering the growth in the ‘baby boomer’ demographic and resultant increased demand for aged care services. As at 30 June 2015, 15% of Australia’s population were aged 65 years and over (3.6 million people) and 2% were aged 85 years and over (473,000 people). By 2025, it is estimated that 17% of the population will be aged 65 years and over (4.9 million people) and 2.2% (621,000) over the age of 85. In 2015, 342,800 people in Australia are estimated to be living with dementia.<sup>30</sup>

The Salvation Army is concerned that the current funding model does not provide adequate management for residents with expressive behaviours. In fact, the behavioural domain of the ACFI instrument has the smallest of all funding allocations. The abolition of the behaviour supplement, and commencement of the severe behaviour response teams, have not adequately met the challenges in the management of consumers with these needs. The Salvation Army urges the Australian Government to review funding models allowing for appropriate funding considerations for the management of the ever increasing complexities associated with dementia, disability and mental health issues in our ageing population.

The Salvation Army urges the Australian Government to continue the provision of significant refurbishment supplements to enable service providers to meet the specialised needs of the marginalised.

In 2014/15 over:

- 812,000 people aged 65 years and over (50 years and over for Indigenous Australians) accessed Commonwealth Home Support Programs (CHSP), enhancing independence for frail individuals through basic home maintenance, support and care
- 24,900 people accessed transitional care on release from hospital, assisting their recovery and the provision of longer term support options
- 83,800 people accessed home care packages, individually tailored home-based care
- 231,000 people accessed permanent residential aged care.<sup>31</sup>

30. 2014–2015 Report on the Operation of the Aged Care Act, Department of Health, November 2015. Available: <https://www.dss.gov.au/ageing-and-aged-care/publications-and-articles/reports/report-on-the-operation-of-the-aged-care-act-1997>

31. Ibid.





In 2014–15, the Not-For-Profit sector was responsible for 57.1% of operational residential care places, for-profit providers were responsible for 38.0%, and government providers were responsible for 4.9%.<sup>32</sup> Australian Government expenditure for aged care 2014–15 totalled \$15.2 billion; an increase of 7.1% from the previous year.<sup>33</sup> Higher than expected growth in Aged Care Funding Instrument (ACFI) subsidies, resulted in the December 2015 Mid-Year Fiscal and Economic Outlook (MYEFO) showing residential aged care expenditure forecasts exceed the 2015–16 Budget and forward estimates by \$943 million over four years to 2018–19.

A number of changes to the aged care system were announced in the 2015/16 Budget, including the rollout of Consumer Directed Care (CDC) from July 2015, and the deregulation of Home Care Packages from February 2017; a single integrated home care program from 2018, and the establishment of a single quality framework for all aged care services and increased options for private market provision of accreditation services. There is growing concern that the implementation of these reform measures will cause further polarisation of care services, which will adversely impact the marginalised and vulnerable.

The emphasis on consumer choice in aged care is welcomed by The Salvation Army. However, the concept of consumer choice tends to assume that each consumer is in a position to make an informed choice about service arrangements, often relying on family members or trusted friends to offer advice and assistance about the best form of support and the comparative price. Many individuals do not have these supports, making it essential that independent assistance is provided for them to make service provision and price choices.

The Salvation Army supports homeless aged Australians, more than half of whom (54%) have experienced mental illness, three times the prevalence of people who reported they had never been homeless. Many placements fail for older people with mental health issues, and recognition of the specific needs associated with this demographic have been largely overlooked by the current reform measures.

With the population of people with lifelong disabilities ageing, the current use of residential aged care centres for housing relatively younger people with high level care needs is inappropriate and inadequate. Further, aged care is not designed or resourced to facilitate the active involvement of relatively young people with high clinical needs in everyday activities or support their continued participation in the life of their community. There is a need for age appropriate residential care options for this group.

The Salvation Army welcomes the implementation of the homeless viability supplement in residential aged care services, as well as the annual grant to provide a residential aged care facility for homeless people, recognising that bonds (RADs and DAPS) are generally unavailable to assist in funding new development. The Salvation Army encourages the Australian Government to consider ongoing challenges associated with management of aged care services in rural and remote settings; adequate and sustainable supplement levels to address the limitations servicing remote locations (i.e. hotel service costs); financial options for transport for those assisted in the home/community, to prevent isolation and loneliness; and recruitment and retention of skilled staff in rural and remote areas.

32. Ibid.

33. Ibid.

There is an estimated need for an additional 55,770 FTE care workers (37,620 in residential aged care and 18,150 in community aged care) from 2013 to 2023. Due to the high median age of an employee in the aged care sector, half of the aged care workforce will be of retirement age in 15 years.<sup>34</sup> The ageing workforce will place enormous pressure within the industry to services and requires urgent strategic workforce planning.

The Salvation Army calls on the Australian Government to consider the following:

**Key issues:**

1. Appropriate supply, demand, design, affordability and location of accommodation for the ageing population, including proximity to services and public transport.
2. Limited financial resources of the ageing population that requires the construction of accommodation that is low maintenance and utilises sustainable practices such as solar orientation.
3. Adherence to 'ageing in place' and 'universal design' principles.
4. Appropriate funding models to meet the needs of the marginalised older person.

**Recommendations**

1. Ensure that high quality services are assessable to disadvantaged and homeless individuals, providing appropriately flexible and specialised models of care and funding models.
2. Implement an appropriate strategic workforce training and recruitment plan to meet the changing needs of the aged care industry, including technological changes.
3. Develop a clear strategy to support residents and consumers with severe expressive behaviours and mental health problems within the aged care sector.
4. Develop a strategy to ensure ongoing viability of rural and remote aged care service provision.

34. 2014-2015 Report on the Operation of the Aged Care Act, Department of Health, November 2015. Available: <https://www.dss.gov.au/ageing-and-aged-care/publications-and-articles/reports/report-on-the-operation-of-the-aged-care-act-1997>









**Australia**

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