

was later heard in Campbelltown,²⁸⁴ 140km away, with the sentence deferred on the basis that the accused enter a good behaviour bond of \$200 AUD and on condition that he submit to the supervision and guidance of Major [X4]. The accused officer was dismissed from the Army on his admitting his guilt, but six months after his dismissal the Social Services Secretary wrote to the Chief Secretary noting that the accused had shown 'deep repentance' during that time and recommending he be re-instated to the Army.²⁸⁵ Despite the Chief Secretary's support, this recommendation was ultimately not accepted.²⁸⁶

9.5.17 In conclusion, for the period in which child migrants from England and Wales were sent to Salvation Army children's homes in Queensland and New South Wales, these homes were characterised by poor physical environments and pervasive physical abuse. In this context, children found themselves coerced into acts in which they were sexually abused and felt unsafe making disclosures of sexual abuse. Where children did make allegations of sexual abuse within their homes these were sometimes dismissed by staff. Allegations of sexual abuse were rarely investigated by Salvation Army officers outside of the homes, in part because monitoring of these homes by the Army was largely ineffectual, but there were also several instances in which senior officers failed to act on allegations of abuse made either by children or other staff in the Army. Where investigations took place, there was a tendency to believe officers accused rather than the children involved. The religious culture of the Army, as well as close relationships between officers, seems to have encouraged an approach to sexual abuse where those found to have committed sexually abusive acts were allowed to remain in the Army, or re-apply to join it, if they showed what others judged to be proper repentance. The Royal Commission found little evidence of pastoral concern being extended to children who had experienced abuse.

9.5.18 An important concern for the Army in dealing with allegations of abuse was to protect its external reputation. It appears to have been aided in this both by the relevant State Child Welfare Departments – whose own inspections of Army children's homes were ineffective – and by the police and judicial authorities. As similarly noted by the Forde report, these external agencies appear to have deferred to the moral authority of religious organisations rather than intervening strongly in their work to protect children.

9.5.19 It should also be noted that we have seen no evidence of any monitoring system in place from the UK, through the Salvation Army or the Government, that provided any protection for children placed in these Salvation Army institutions.

9.5.20 Historical documents noted in relation to this investigation of the Salvation Army also raise wider questions about the effectiveness of child welfare monitoring in New South Wales and Queensland, as well as whether child welfare officials, the police and criminal justice system prioritised protecting the reputation of voluntary organisations over rigorous investigation and prosecution of offences. As the Forde report noted in relation to residential

²⁸⁴ Royal Commission, *Case Study 5*, Exhibits: Letter from Social Services Secretary to Colonel Goffin, 5th August, 1974.

²⁸⁵ Royal Commission, *Case Study 5*, Exhibits: Letter from Social Services Secretary to Colonel Goffin, 26th November, 1974.

²⁸⁶ Royal Commission, *Case Study 5*, Report p.57.