



WEBSITE NEWS

The Salvation Army, New Zealand Fiji & Tonga Territory
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*Issued on the Authority of Commissioner Garth McKenzie (Territorial Commander)
For The Salvation Army NZFT website*

THE SALVATION ARMY AND HOMOSEXUAL LAW REFORM BILL 2005

In July 2006, The Salvation Army's Territorial Commander, Commissioner Garth McKenzie, issued a statement to coincide with the 20th anniversary of the passing of the Homosexual Law Reform Bill.

The Salvation Army remains focused on building bridges of understanding and dialogue between itself and the gay community.

When people come to us for help, our policy is to show love and care to all without discrimination.

July 2006 Salvation Army Statement

'The Salvation Army remembers the time leading up to the passing of the Homosexual Law Reform Bill as one in which judgemental and prejudiced words were spoken on both sides of the debate.

'We would wish to clarify that while The Salvation Army did not initiate the petition opposing the Bill, we did take a prominent public role when a few senior Salvation Army leaders offered our assistance in coordinating the petition. However, this was not a policy unanimously endorsed by all in Salvation Army leadership at the time and it did give rise to considerable debate within our movement nationally.

'While some Salvation Army members supported the petition, others were uncomfortable to varying degrees and took no part. A further body of opinion supported the Reform Bill and even initiated a counter-petition. Then, as now, The Salvation Army encompassed a diverse community with a wide range of opinions on this and other subjects. We therefore continue to seek God's wisdom on what it means to live as biblically-informed Christians in today's world.

'We do understand though that The Salvation Army's official opposition to the Reform Bill was deeply hurtful to many, and are distressed that ill-feeling still troubles our relationship with segments of the gay community.

'We regret any hurt that may remain from that turbulent time and our present hope is to rebuild bridges of understanding and dialogue between our movement and the gay community. We may not agree on all issues, but we can respect and care for one another despite this.'