

## Outsourcing Community Service Delivery

**Organisation:** The Salvation Army Aged Care Plus

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Aged Care Plus

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The Committee Manager  
Committee on Community Services  
Parliament House  
Macquarie St  
Sydney NSW 2000

Dear Sir/Madam,

**Inquiry into Outsourcing Government Community Service Delivery**

The Salvation Army Aged Care Plus is pleased to present this submission on the Terms of Reference into the inquiry into outsourcing Government Community Service Delivery, attached.

Yours sincerely,

Sharon Callister  
Chief Executive Officer



Aged Care **Plus**

**OUTSOURCING SERVICE DELIVERY**

**SUBMISSION TO THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY SERVICES**

**APRIL 2012**

The Salvation Army Aged Care Plus (TSAACP) is one of the largest faith based aged care providers in Australia, operating 17 residential centres with 1484 residential licenses, 416 independent living units and 55 community care packages complemented by some HACC funded programs across New South Wales, Queensland and the Australian Capital Territory. The Salvation Army Aged Care Plus annual operating income is just under \$100m, including \$58m in government funding and interest income from \$72m of bonds. The Salvation Army Aged Care Plus has over 1060 employees and hundreds of volunteers to support its mission in caring for the older Australians. This service is complemented by other social programs conducted by The Salvation Army targeting marginalised older Australians who are ineligible for Commonwealth funded programs such as homeless people, those living in squalor, drug rehabilitation and those isolated through dislocation from their family.

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## CONTENTS

a. Processes, outcomes and impacts of transfer.....	4
b. Appropriate model development... ..	4
c. Appropriate levels of integration.....	4
d. Capability frameworks.....	5
e. Enhanced capacity building .....	5
f. Future employment trends.....	5
g. Private philanthropy.....	7
h. Use of technology.....	8
i. Similar service management and jurisdiction .....	10
j. Any other matters.....	10

The Salvation Army Aged Care Plus (TSAACP) broadly supports the terms of reference as they stand, in order to inquire into and report on the devolution and outsourcing of housing, disability and home care service delivery from the Government to the non-Government sector. TSAACP have made individual responses on the particular focus areas for comment below.

**a) State Government processes, outcomes and impacts of transferring housing, disability and home care services from Government to non-Government agencies;**

As a non-government provider of a range of services to the community, including to people who are financially and socially disadvantaged, TSAACP welcome investigation into the transfer of housing, disability and home care services to the non-government sector. The potential of this transfer is in line with recommendations from the recent Productivity Commission report, "Caring for Older Australians", improving care continuity and consumer choice, improving the ability of people to age in their homes and communities, and catering for special needs .

**b) The development of appropriate models to monitor and regulate service providers to ensure probity, accountability and funding mechanisms to provide quality assurance for clients;**

TSAACP welcomed the introduction of the Community Care Common Standards in 2011 which were developed jointly by the Australian Commonwealth and State and Territory Governments. As part of broader community care reforms, these aimed to develop common arrangements to simplify and streamline the way community care is delivered. Prior to this different programs and funding bodies required compliance with a range of requirements and regulations. This instrument has drawn together the differing community care standards into a single set of quality standards and has had the benefit of reducing the administrative burden for service providers and lessened confusion for clients.

**c) The development of appropriate levels of integration among service providers in rural and regional areas to ensure adequate levels of supply and delivery of services;**

TSAACP provides residential and community care to people living in the Central West, Hunter and Mid North Coast of NSW, and as such is aware of the challenges involved in providing services in rural and regional areas. Services such as housing and home care must be both supported and accessible, and this can only be achieved through integration and co-location where possible and

appropriate. Improvements in the interface between health, disability and community care providers will only strengthen service supply and delivery, improving outcomes for consumers.

**d) Capability frameworks ensuring that community agencies are not overly burdened by regulatory constraints;**

TSAACP is a large provider of aged residential and community care services across metropolitan, rural and regional NSW, in one of the most regulated industries in the country. TSAACP attracts funding from a number of sources, and meeting the regulatory, compliance and policy requirements of each can be onerous and time consuming. TSAACP would welcome the development of a capability framework to allow a common and consistent description of the expectations of contracted agencies, which will underpin the delivery of services for the community in NSW.

**e) Enhanced capacity building and social integration in the delivery of services by local providers;**

TSAACP support capacity building in the sector, seeing social integration as both the integration of minority groups such as the financially and socially disadvantaged into the mainstream, as well as a level of transparency in work, personal, faith and local community interactions. Enhanced capacity building and social integration in service delivery will strengthen processes and systems in order to address and adapt to new and evolving demands. However, TSAACP caution that questions such as what capacities should be built, for whom, and to what end must be considered.

**f) Future employment trends, expectations and pay equity for women employed in the non-Government sector;**

Australian labour market analysts have predicted that the current national skills shortage will increase significantly over the next 20 years, and this shortage is felt particularly in the aged care sector, where the average age of staff is increasing rapidly. Many employers have recognised the need to keep older Australians in the workforce for an extended period of time and that older workers can contribute positively to their business objectives. Within the Aged Care industry, and specifically at TSAACP we have a variety of incentives available to staff that may encourage the recruitment and retention of older workers. These incentives include Purchased Annual Leave (PAL), Flexible Work Arrangements (part time, casual, working from home), Ongoing Training and Development for staff through initiatives like the Fellows (scholarship) Program and Study Leave, Salary Packaging including Meal Entertainment and Accommodation, Private Health Fund Options etc.

In addition , TSAACP is investigating –

- choosing to recruit from an older demographic, thus widening the pool of applicants from which to select a suitable candidates;
- phased in retirement plans;
- working from home;
- provision of additional annual leave for older workers;
- job sharing options ;
- maintaining older workers in the workforce longer through the opportunity to coach and mentor new employees; and
- remote living allowances

Organisations like TSAACP which are heavily dependent on government funding would require further financial assistance or tax incentives in order to expand on the range of initiatives already available to existing staff, particularly those who fall within the older demographic. Additional government grants may also assist in the development of campaigns or initiatives specifically targeted to recruiting older workers.

Further to this, TSAACP is creating new ways to volunteer. Most volunteers within TSAACP centres are baby boomers who have just retired, and experience has shown they tend to have a high level commitment to volunteering, moving from being success oriented to wanting to make a contribution to society. TSAACP recognise that treating these volunteers as a workforce is very important – this includes provision of orientation programs, ongoing training, 1:1 supervision and support and recognition of a job well done.

Thus, TSAACP see that volunteer management, recruitment and retention needs to be a role which sits within the Human Resources team, with a volunteer manager liaising with other departments and TSAACP centres. Volunteer management is a time consuming and complex task that deserves focus and resources as the results can far outweigh the investment required. The integration and coordination of relevant departments within an organisation (such as marketing, communication, public relations, human resource and legal) serves to promote volunteering by:

- assisting in achieving widespread changes perception of volunteers;
- addressing an organisation's attitude to volunteering participation by prospective elderly volunteers (particularly car/bus drivers);
- provision of ongoing training to volunteers to retain their skills and ensure relevance of competencies;

- raising the wider organisation's awareness of the importance of volunteer management including recruitment, training and retention;
- creating additional incentives to assist volunteers by developing various recognition programs, such as recognition of service badges, celebration of International Volunteers Day, Volunteers Week and access to staff programs such as Employee Assistance;
- establishing a relationship with local volunteer referral service agency;
- providing meaningful, interesting, creative and challenging volunteering opportunities that draw on existing skills and competencies, as well as life experience; and
- opportunities to pay for expenses incurred in line with volunteering.

TSAACP recognise the volunteer market is competitive and understand the need to be flexible when working with volunteers. This may include creating volunteer opportunities to fit the skills of the volunteer, rather than attempting to fit the volunteer into predetermined volunteer role. TSAACP are investigating the possibilities of utilising volunteers with Information Technology skills. This is through the development of E-volunteering opportunities such as online companionship programs, extending Virtual Visiting, online chat and playing online games. This provides volunteering opportunities for people who may be homebound, or are unable to access transport, or allows access for residents in rural areas, where it has been traditionally very difficult to attract volunteers.

Further, the TSAACP Board of Management comprises TSAACP staff, Salvation Army officers and volunteers. This model creates opportunities for the involvement of these volunteers in strategic planning, policy development and organisational direction, again drawing on workplace skills.

**g) Incentives for private philanthropy in the funding of community services;**

TSAACP is responsible for the care of well over one thousand aged and disabled people across NSW, QLD and the ACT, many of whom are also socially and financially disadvantaged. TSAACP is dependent on government funding for the continuation of this care. The Salvation Army, as TSAACP's parent body, and one of the world's most recognised charities, is dependent on fundraising through annual events such as the Red Shied Appeal, held every May. As such, TSAACP would welcome incentives for increasing philanthropy in the funding of services for the community.

TSAACP see opportunities for philanthropy to -

- support turning research into practice;
- support innovative models of care;

- develop partnerships to address specific issues ;
- facilitate cross sectorial and multi disciplinary discussion and action.

**h) The use of technology to improve service delivery and increase cost effectiveness;**

Technology has revolutionised the world. The benefits (both direct and indirect) of the technology revolution are leading to increased quality of life, care and health for many older people and people with disabilities. As with many other providers of residential and community care, TSAACP is undertaking a number of initiatives to both engage with and provide best practice care to older people, utilising technology.

TSAACP see the introduction of the Tele-health program by the Commonwealth Government as an excellent examples of engaging older people in the digital economy. As a provider of residential aged care in a number of rural areas, TSAACP is working to introduce Tele-health (comprising voice and video elements) to facilities, as well as telecare type services in community programs. The scope of telemedicine/telehealth (through video conferencing) should be further revised and expanded beyond medical specialists to general medical and nurse practitioners as well as other health professionals. As a large and respected provider, TSAACP stands ready to assist in this type of program.

In order to engage older people, technology must be inclusive. Inclusivity has two elements - access to technology and innovation. The Salvation Army mission and values are firmly rooted in issues of social justice, and believes that any individual, regardless of their age or socio-economic background, should be able to make full use of technology such as mobile phones, the internet and email, in the users preferred platform.

Recent initiatives at TSAACP Centres and in the community include encouragement programs to introduce different forms of e-business (banking, bill payment) and e-socialising (Skype, Facebook). TSAACP offer residents access to a virtual visiting program, in which internet based video conferencing is the medium for socialising with family and friends, and this has proven to be a powerful tool connecting people at a time when they may be feeling isolated and vulnerable.

Innovations such as smart phones and tablets largely focus on business users or relatively well-off people pursuing leisure activities. Inclusive innovations would ensure the life circumstances of all people are underpinned by effective technologies. Thus, TSAACP believe that the changes associated with ageing should be factored into the design of technology targeted at older people and people with disabilities – this may include screens that do not reflect glare, and keyboards designed for people with visual impairments. It is also as important to make sure that price competitive technology is available, including hardware, software and access to the web.

Older people generally, have not grown up with technology and the challenges of learning to use it when manual dexterity and eyesight may be poor must be factored into any training offered. Age specific training, provided through volunteers in TSAACP centres is crucial as knowledge and skill plays vital role in utilising technology in day to day life. Training can be provided in the form of games and through community programs for seniors. Older people may be encouraged to use technology if government initiatives/grants could be offered for those willing to engage in using the latest technology. Isolated older people can be persuaded to use technology to socialise, entertain and learn new things, as well as daily tasks such as shopping. TSAACP are piloting a project where residents of aged care facilities spend time with a computer literate volunteer, doing Christmas shopping for family and friends. Further, the introduction of the National Broadband Network will ensure that all remote areas are well connected with internet accessibility. The availability of high speed internet and ease of technologies designed specifically for older people encourages seniors to use computer and smart devices more frequently. TSAACP provide computer kiosks at a number of sites, at our own expense, to guarantee access to residents. Access to appropriate digital technologies can enable older people to remain active at work or in their community, thus utilising their accumulated experience and skills.

TSAACP Centres have access to technological solutions such as Vocera (a healthcare communication system), an Electronic Medication Management System, and with the introduction of virtual visiting, access to e-volunteering and e-socialising, recognise the positive difference which can be achieved utilising technology. Older people must be provided with opportunities and to be educated and encouraged to use e-books, e-newspapers, e-travel and other interest based information on the internet. More aged centric websites such as senior citizen portals can be further developed, which offer hearing and vision assistance as required. This will improve the quality of life through easily accessible and understandable information.

**i) A comparison of the management and delivery of similar services in other jurisdictions; and**

TSAACP recognise that the number of programs available and the differences between programs can make it confusing for clients to access the care they need. TSAACP support the development of a single gateway into the aged care system as proposed in the Productivity Commission report “Caring for Older Australians”, as an extension of or addendum to, the existing HACC Single Point of Access. A system which provided this service would allow benchmarking of service types and offerings for clients with one phone call, allowing a comparison to be made.

**j) Any other related matters.**

TSAACP has provided a comprehensive response to the terms of reference for this Inquiry and has nothing further to add.

TSAACP welcome the opportunity to make this submission to the Advisory Panel on the Economic Potential of Senior Australians. We support work towards a society which truly and equally values all members, ensuring a better future for all. TSAACP looks forward to the opportunity to contribute further.