

# TRANSCRIPT

## FAMILY AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

### Inquiry into the handling of child abuse by religious and other organisations

Melbourne — 5 April 2013

#### Members

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#### Witnesses

Mr D. Tolputt, director, Scripture Union Victoria, and board member, ChildSafe Ltd, and  
Ms E. Payne, administrations coordinator, Scripture Union Victoria.

**The CHAIR** — Good afternoon. I remind members of the public gallery to please turn their phones off or onto silent. As we have just heard, we have a number of competing issues happening outside the Parliament, so could you all bear with us. I ask witnesses if they could speak into the microphones to assist with that; that would be appreciated. It is our democracy at work. But we are here, nevertheless, to hear from you. I welcome Mr David Tolputt, director of Scripture Union Victoria and also board member of ChildSafe Ltd, and also Ms Emma Payne, administrations coordinator of Scripture Union Victoria. Thank you, and welcome to both of you.

**Mr TOLPUTT** — Thank you.

**The CHAIR** — All evidence taken by this committee is taken under the provisions of the Parliamentary Committees Act, attracts parliamentary privilege and is protected from judicial review. Any comments made outside the precincts of the hearings are not protected by parliamentary privilege. All evidence given today is being recorded, witnesses will be provided with proof versions of the transcript, and please note that these proceedings are not being broadcast. Following your presentation, committee members will ask questions relating to the inquiry and the evidence that you give to us. Thank you very much for providing the additional information; we look forward to hearing from you. I hope that you can compete with what is going on outside. Thank you very much.

**Mr TOLPUTT** — I am sure we will. Thank you very much for the opportunity to come to speak to the committee. We are delighted to be here. We were asked to present some information about a safety management process that we put in place some years ago with Scripture Union. It was at the request of the committee that we came to this. I guess it is because you have probably heard about this from a few people along the way. Basically what I have done is put a PowerPoint presentation in front of you that you can follow. I am going to pretty well romp through this and leave plenty of opportunity for you to ask questions. But I think there are some important things in here that will help us with this.

The information you requested is in the bullet points on the first page there, which are: how was it developed and designed, including what was driving the need for it; how does it work; who is using it in Victoria particularly; how do we evaluate it; and, what is its future. Primarily, they are the questions we will be addressing. Flicking over the page, I want to walk you through the history quickly, particularly at the start and at the end because those are the key parts here.

We commissioned ChildSafe in 2002 as a program called ‘Lighting a Path to Safety’. It was originally commissioned as the Scripture Union safety management program. I do not know if you are aware, but nationally Scripture Union works with 15 000 or so volunteers per year, mostly aged between 16 and 25 years of age. We work in public spaces, and work with young people primarily. It has been on Scripture Union’s heart and mind for decades to be working safely with young people.

When I first arrived in the national role in 2000 we had a manual that was sitting on the shelf. I was regularly getting requests from churches. They would ring me up and say, ‘We’ve got a copy of your manual. Can we use this for our safety manual in our church?’. I had no idea what the arrangement for that was, so I rang one of my colleagues and he said, ‘Yes, just let them have it; give it to them’. We did that; fine.

In about 2001 you will remember there were two major factors that impacted the insurance industry — HIH crashed, and 9/11 took place — and a lot of confidence in the insurance industry was broken. That, and a sense that the community standards were going to rise significantly in the area of safety management, led us to realise that that safety manual was nowhere near good enough for the work we were doing. But one of the things we did decide as we commissioned this in 2002 was that we wanted to make it transferable. We had in mind particularly that we wanted to make it available to local churches and to set in place a system that might bring us a sector-wide reform, because even at that stage we were starting to hear really sad stories about breakdowns in church policies and procedures. So that is where this came through.

We produced this as a standard for Scripture Union nationally, and very quickly we found that three or four major organisations picked it up. The Salvation Army did, the Lutherans nationally picked it up, Youth for Christ picked it up, and the Uniting Church Vic/Tas picked it up as a standard as well. We helped them to customise it and to work it through into their organisations.

We commenced the company ChildSafe Ltd in 2006 and changed the name. We also updated the standard in 2007 to an online version. It went online in 2007; I will show you a screen shot in a moment of the online version. We are currently in the third update. So we are updating it now, particularly to modularise it. The reason for that, what is driving that, is that we sensed that there are a lot of issues that are taking place. One of the big challenges with any safety management system is that the more information you put in it, the less people read it, particularly on the volunteer base. So what we are trying to do is create a system that makes the material very portable, very usable, and targeted. The modularisation allows us, almost within a week, to produce some guidelines for people on a particular issue that might arise, and it can then become available to the entire sector. So modularisation is a really important part of the next step of this, and that will be rolled out later this year as a new model.

How does it work? It is a system, it is not a manual, and it is really important to understand that. In our view you cannot have a safe practice by simply having a policy manual. You have to have a process that implements this and that really works it through to the ground. This is a four-level-of-information system designed to provide safety management performance and trackability from governance to ground.

It uses targeted information, and I will show you in a moment how that looks. I will get Emma to put the material on the table so you can see how it looks as a package of written material. It uses a particular function called 'permission to proceed'. In our organisation we are basically pretty rigorous. If our teams — our volunteer directors and team leaders — do not comply with certain aspects of the process, we will not give them permission to proceed with the program. We will lock it and block it. It is pretty clear what they have to do. We have found actually that the whole culture of the organisation has been improved markedly as people have put their head over proper safety management in every sense.

It is designed around a culture of care as well as a culture of compliance. One of the things that we detected in a lot of manuals and a lot of program strategies was that they focused on compliance. If you read the manuals, you would think they were written by lawyers primarily. What we want to do is help people to really think about children and think about what helps them to be safe when they are working with children. That is because we are an organisation that works with children. That is our work. In practice we also work by allowing organisations to continuously improve. That was something we learned in our own organisation. It is one thing to put a standard in place, but to get people to move to that standard takes a fair bit of time. Gradually, bit by bit — in fact in a very quick space for us — we very quickly found compliance being taken on board in so many helpful ways.

Just to walk you through how the system works primarily, you will see on your sheet — and I have put this in here so you can get a visual as well — there are four levels there. You will see the small book on the right-hand side as you look at it is the team members. Then you have one for team leaders; that is volunteer team leaders. You have one there for coordinators and one there for risk management officers of organisations. Then there are some resources on the CD which are available as well.

Just to quickly walk you through how it works, if you look at the first level, the first level is the team members and it contains only the basic information that everyone working with children and vulnerable people needs to know. Vulnerable people are important to us as well, because we often find ourselves working with people who are aged, and they also have special needs. In here, included in this particular manual, which is quite succinct and easy to carry around, is the concept of being a safe person, helping to create a safe team and playing your part in making a safe team. We have a code of conduct in there which includes physical contact, special needs, cultural awareness and basic behaviours and attitudes of people working with children. We have a child protection part in there, which is about identifying and responding to abuse, bullying and reporting, and how you go about doing that. Creating a safe environment includes sanitation and hygiene, first aid, mental health and basic food safety. All of those things are contained because we believe everybody working with children needs to know how to navigate that stuff, including critical incident management — when something goes wrong, what do you do at a team member level?

Going over the page, the next level — the coloured bars at the top of your sheet indicate that this level builds on the last level. We do not reproduce the material that was in the previous manual: the team leaders must know both. At the team leader level they need to know information that the team members on the ground do not need to wrap their heads around. This is what makes this not a massive manual but actually succinct, targeted information. In this one here you have information like creating a safe team culture — how do you create it?

Properly appointing team members; that is the screening issue — that is, how do you screen? There are guidelines, forms and checklists in there about how you go about doing that. Training and managing a safe team, because the team leader is responsible for training the team to work safely. We provide resources for that. Risk management planning — team leaders need to be able to do the risk planning. They need to work out how to identify whether something is inherently risky and to manage around that. Then you have the safety planning and permission to proceed checklist. Remember I said before that permission to proceed is the mark, it is the key to this process. They have got to submit this to somebody above them, and when that is checked they can proceed. In our organisation, right around the country with our 15 000 volunteers, it works extremely well.

Then there are modules being produced for contextual specific issues such as working with under-5s, such as if you are taking a group swimming or if you are going to go bushwalking with kids. We do not want to put that in the manual because it would make the manual massively thick; we want to make it available. Each of those modules is a training unit in its own right, and the plan with this process is that team leaders will have their information that is core and then our organisation helps them to identify which of the modules they need to pick up in order to work well with the work they intend to do. It closes the gaps very nicely.

There is also advanced incident management. Team leaders need to know a whole lot more about managing an incident than the team member on the ground does. So it is in here. You see this level comes with forms and resources to create simple systems.

I will not go through the next two slides in that detail, but you will see there is a manual there for coordinators. That is for those people who appoint leaders. Take, for instance, the local church. The local church has a pastor, has a youth coordinator who might be paid and they have youth group leader, a Sunday school coordinator, a playgroup leader. They have half a dozen leaders in their group but they have two people in the church who sit at the coordinator level. They are the people who appoint the people to do the Sunday schools, and they need to have information. They need to be very clear about their obligations and responsibilities. This builds on those other two levels. You will see there particularly things like how to assess risk plans, how to properly appoint team leaders, how to manage the permission to proceed process and further work at an advanced level.

The fourth level there is the level that I sit at in my organisation called the RMO — risk management officer. In this process here we recognise that there need to be proper resources for people at the top of the organisation to do their work well, looking through the organisation and ensuring that it is actually working to its policies. In here we have things like creating an organisational culture, implementing ChildSafe across the organisation, training and managing that all-important coordinator level leadership, and auditing safety management programs. How do you go about auditing what is going on on the ground so that you can kind of look at it to see how this thing is working from top to bottom? You can see what we say: it is a system, not just a manual.

Going further, on the next page you can see that a few years back we determined that it would be a good move to put this online. The safety management online process allows team members to register, and they can walk through the training process online. It allows team leaders an opportunity to see who has actually been through this process, who is marked and who is not. You will see there the four different colours: the red, the amber, the green and the black. That is basically pointing to red is, 'No', amber is, 'They are on their way', green is, 'Yes, they are through', and black is, 'There is a question to be raised here; there is a flag to be raised here'.

This system is being utilised by many organisations now, and they are finding it very helpful indeed. It actually dovetails with the information. The next step of the journey with SMO and with ChildSafe is to put the information in those manuals online as well so that it is all online. But one of the things we are very conscious about is that when you put an online system in place very often people think that it is going to be automated and it will automatically do the job. You have to build a culture, and you cannot build a culture online, in my view. It is one of the reasons why in Victoria we have taken a very strong stance in our training and our culture building, because as an organisational CEO my best defence against child abuse and against injury to children is to ensure that the people who work under us, right to the ground, understand how important it is to get that right. That is key.

Just as we come to the end of this, we were asked about the key factors for success — what makes this thing really work? First, I think the fact that it is built for volunteers by an agency that works on the ground with volunteers and has done so for 130 years gives it a bit of credibility. You understand, then, that when I say that is a strength, the key strength in this particular factor is that it is not written from a risk-averse perspective. It is

not written from a legal perspective. It is legally strong, but it is not written in legal language that people have to navigate — they have to have somebody sitting alongside them to interpret. It is very easy to get your head around. It has easy-to-digest, targeted information as a key focus. If this thing were written in one manual and people had to figure it out, I promise you most volunteers would say, ‘I will get to that when I have a bit of spare time’. They would never get to it. In this sort of context and this sort of format, we are able to really ensure that people can digest and use this information.

The trackability is one of its key strengths — that you can track it from top to bottom. In many situations I have been in they have had policy manuals that have sat on the shelf of a CEO or someone in the organisation, but everyone on the ground uses their best common sense. That is not safety management, and common sense is not always common. The trackability — the ability to be able to see at any stage whether this thing is being implemented — is a key component.

We have found that the commitment and priority of upper level leadership to the overall process is absolutely essential. If you get lip-service at the top, it will not happen down on the ground. Disciplined implementation is needed to make this thing work, and that requires support. The key, in my view, to this whole process is the team leader and coordinator levels, because they are the people who are ultimately going to have the connection to both the top and the bottom of the organisation. They have to really carry this well, so we put a lot of energy into training our team leader and coordinator levels, and we are extremely confident about the training that goes on from our teams about safe practice on the ground, which is pretty pleasing to us and comforting to me as a CEO.

Who is using ChildSafe in Victoria? There are a whole pile of one-off little churches — I have not listed them — but of the major organisations Scripture Union Victoria, Prison Fellowship, the Uniting Church, Baptist churches, Christian Reformed churches, Churches of Christ in Victoria and Tasmania, Australian Christian Churches Victoria, the Salvation Army, the Lutheran Church and Youth for Christ are all using ChildSafe in Victoria at this point in time. Our vision at the start was to bring sector-wide reform. We could have just written this for Scripture Union and kept ourselves in a nice place, but our mission is actually to serve churches and support them in the work they do.

The future of ChildSafe — where is it from here? I want to say this: ChildSafe has actually been a commitment from Scripture Union — it has been a gift from Scripture Union, really — to see sector-wide reform. We have had no government money for this. We have had no significant support from denominations apart from the fact that they have purchased the materials as we have put them in there. We found regularly as we have gone through this process that our sense is that churches undervalue safety and care. They often jump up and down about the cost of these things, but the reality is that there is a lot of intellectual property that has gone into this process. So there it is. We have been pleased to do that. We have had a lot of supporters. Our own donors kicked in money because they believed in what we were doing with this.

The program has enormous potential for both the religious sector and the wider sector. We are starting to explore now scouting groups, local council groups and local sporting groups. We think there is an enormous challenge right across the sector. Anybody working with children needs to raise the standard, but it is underresourced to meet that potential. We are very aware of that.

The potential of ChildSafe, which you asked about as well — with adequate funding ChildSafe could be a sector-wide standard within one to two years. I am talking about across the broader sector. It could continuously update. We already have a process where we can do that, because Scripture Union has probably 100 000 past volunteers in its community who walk in all walks of life, from the legal to the medical to every walk of life. We even have politicians in this Parliament who have actually had stuff to do with SU in the past, so we are very aware of where we can get that expertise from.

We think that with adequate funding ChildSafe Victoria could be really, terrifically centred and app based, giving real portability for the material. I think we could assist organisations to implement the entire program effectively. Right now one of the big challenges for Scripture Union and for ChildSafe as a company — ChildSafe the company is so very small that assisting large organisations with a top-to-bottom kind of development and training is a real challenge. Many of them have done very well because they have worked well with us, but that is the challenge. Within our own organisation — it has been over four or five years — it has

changed the way we work with children and families. But we have the resources within our own organisation to do that with our own volunteers. That is basically it. I suppose I am open to questions.

**The CHAIR** — Thank you very much. Emma, would you like to make any comment to the committee before I open it up to questions?

**Ms PAYNE** — Only that I sit on the bottom end. I have been a volunteer, and I have been a team leader, filling out the forms and that kind of stuff. The thing I have been really challenged by is to not just take common sense and use that, but I found this incredibly helpful, and I can honestly say I can now work with a team of people who are safety conscious. Coming from a very normal background where no safety thing has ever gone wrong in my life, I have never seen a red light, and this means you do not need one. You do not need past experience to think through that. I am also part of the team that is going through and rewriting parts of it, just to make it even more accessible, partly because I am in that age bracket; I am in the 16–25 age bracket. It is so important that this is and continues to be something that my generation will engage with. Even more importantly, my generation will then keep other generations accountable for sticking with it as well.

**The CHAIR** — Thank you for that. You are an example of using this program, so it is very helpful for us to understand the practicalities of it.

In your presentation, David, you said there were three or four major organisations nationally that are using ChildSafe, then you listed a number of others. You talked about the effectiveness for team leaders, and Emma has just highlighted her role as a team leader, can you explain to the committee if there is buy-in from all these organisations from those at the very highest levels within those organisations — so not at a team leader level, per se, if it is with kindergartens or youth groups, but the very senior clergy — have they had buy in? Did they approach you to undertake your program, or did you approach them?

**Mr TOLPUTT** — Our experience has been that it has been variable, largely because many of those denominations do not have a top-down compliance structure in the first place. With the resources we have placed before them and the assistance we have given them, all they have to get is a pastor in a local church who says, ‘Look, I’m just not interested’; and many of those denominations do not have the structure to say, ‘You know what? We’re going to remove you from your post’. In other words, where we have a permission to proceed process, many local churches do not have a permission to proceed process, or structure.

I suppose originally, when we first put this together, we were thinking that we would resource the churches. Then we became much more aware that we were going to need to really help them to implement this thing with culture as well. Then we realised that the work of doing that is actually really quite time-consuming for a ChildSafe organisation that is really quite small. So the truth is that it is patchy, but we know from the evidence we have had from clients speaking to us from the larger organisations that they have a strong sense that their safety preparedness and safety management is much stronger because of this.

In a way it works on that continuous improvement idea I was speaking about before. As a CEO, I look at a risk management process and I think that if I have no structure and no process in place, I have to manage and worry about every single person and every single thing they do on the ground. If I have this system in place, a 75 per cent take up and they are really seriously onto it, it has just reduced the potential for that to take place by an enormous amount. This happens gradually, bit by bit, and in my own organisation we are moving towards full compliance. In fact, I do not think that even in our organisation we will ever have full compliance any more than we ever have full compliance with the laws of the land, but I figure that if I can actually get to a point where I have, say, 95 per cent compliance with the process and the culture built, I can manage that 5 per cent a whole lot more easily than managing 100 per cent of who-knows-what that is going on out in the field. Ultimately that is the reality about working with a broad volunteer sector unless you have staff members on every post watching every minute. This is why you have got to build a culture underneath this thing and then start to really move that through the organisation.

**The CHAIR** — Does that cultural change need to get the buy-in from the very top levels?

**Mr TOLPUTT** — It absolutely does. I did say that one of the critical factors for long-term success is that the senior leadership needs to buy into it. One of the big challenges with senior leadership and particularly in church denominations is they move around a fair bit. The bishop might be there for two years and he might buy in, but then you have got to go through the whole process of getting that buy-in again. But again, if it has been

sown well through the organisation, automatically what should happen is that the person stepping up into the role should have been involved at the coordinator level at the very least. That is how it works in our organisation. Our directors rotate about every three or four years, and all of the directors that come up through have actually been through this process and step straight into it as a role.

**Mrs COOTE** — Thank you both, David and Emma; it is a very interesting program. Can I ask about the list of groups you have given us here. You speak about culture and cultural change, and you are implementing a new culture. How resistant or otherwise have some of these organisations been to a culture change? I know that you have just said to the Chair about it being a top-down approach, but culture often does not operate that way; it takes time to get it going. What sort of resistance have you found in a cultural sense going into some of these organisations — for example, the Salvation Army.

**Mr TOLPUTT** — I am actually a Salvationist, and the Salvation Army are really serious about this whole issue of safety management. We have not had any pushback on the culture per se; it is the change management process — it is the implementing. In fact with these kinds of things, historically this is where safety programs fall down. Usually it is in the implementation. You have got this manual that sits here, you bring people in and train them, and because we have trained them we assume that they know what to do. They do not get spoken to for two or three years, and the stuff just leaks away. Then new volunteers come in or new staff come in, and nobody thinks about the new people having not been trained. It is that kind of process.

It really needs to be consistently placed in front of the organisation. The materials include all the facilities for doing that, but at the end of the day I think you need to have a champion in the organisations who will drive that, and I do not think the champion can be the CEO. The CEO has got to buy in. They are the people who nod or shake their head, but the champion has got to be given authority to move through the organisation with that.

**Mrs COOTE** — With these organisations, have they sought your assistance because of an issue that has happened or because of cultural pressures outside? What has actually prompted them to engage with you?

**Mr TOLPUTT** — We set the challenge before most of the organisations did. We approached them and basically laid out for them where things were going to be heading. And I suppose we approached them on the basis that they needed to really take working with children and the safety management more seriously than they do. Because we are an interdenominational agency — we work across all denominations — we are pretty aware of what happens in most of those denominations when it comes to their safety management, generally speaking. This was back in 2002 when I was first involved in the start of this. We certainly went and lobbied those organisations and said, ‘We want to talk to you about this’, and put it in front of them and really tried to get them into it. We believed in it.

**Mrs COOTE** — Thank you very much indeed.

**Ms HALFPENNY** — You might have answered some of this, but the permission to proceed, can you just explain? What sort of organisation does not get to proceed? Or group or whatever?

**Mr TOLPUTT** — That is actually within an organisation. I can speak about it particularly from within our organisation. Our context would be that we have myself as the state director; Emma would fulfil the coordinator role at this point in time, Emma is now on our staff; and we would have volunteer team directors of our teams, say, going and doing a holiday program. We might have 50 people down on a beach somewhere doing a holiday program, and then you have got the team members. Each of those team members is a team member; that is the context there.

What would happen then is that we would require the team director on the ground, on the beach, to recruit the team members properly, to show evidence that they have actually screened them, that they have had their reference checked — we reference check every volunteer we work with — and that they have had their working-with-children check, that they are compliant in that level.

We require that, and we also require them to show evidence, through their risk planning — we have a risk plan pro forma — that they have actually looked at the risks in their program that are not covered by the ChildSafe manual, because the ChildSafe manual is a risk management manual for that purpose but for those things that are specific to their place there, we need to see evidence that they have thought that through. It is not good

enough for us either for them to trot out last year's forms and send them to us again with a new date on it. We spot that a mile away. We are very conscious of that; we will not allow that.

The other part of that is to ensure that their program is at a satisfactory standard and quality that it is not going to cause us any risks in that way. They have to show evidence for that and there are checklists. When they come back to us and show us the evidence of that, and there are papers that we need to see, we are then able to look at that and say, 'Tick, tick, tick: permission to proceed'. In our own culture, though, we never — as far as I know, and certainly it is my policy — allow anything to come through and get an automatic tick. We will always ask a question because we want them to think safety.

**Ms HALFPENNY** — Just one other question — and I feel a bit unfair because I did not ask this of Child Wise earlier, so as objectively as you can — are there any fundamental differences in terms of philosophy or assumptions between the two programs? There might be small things, but any of those really basic fundamentals that may be different?

**Mr TOLPUTT** — The big difference would be that there is a lot of emphasis on training, and the material supports the training. Actually what we emphasise is material, and the training supports the material. I think that is an important distinction. We are very strong on training, but ultimately you have got to be able to be sure that this is going to be sewn in right from top to bottom. That is a key part for us. Our training is really at the leadership level, because we figure that if the leadership level is trained well, people on the ground are going to be well resourced to do the work that they do well. I think that is a key difference.

**Mr O'BRIEN** — Thank you for coming. I want to touch on some insurance issues. I note that you have listed at page 2 of your manual that Ansvar and Australian Evangelical Alliance recommend ChildSafe. We have had Ansvar appear before us yesterday and talk about compliance mechanisms in place as a condition of insurance. I want to ask you how frequently that is emerging as an issue in terms of organisations needing to demonstrate that they now comply with a program like yours and have ongoing maintenance as a condition of insurance, and how that is paying out as an agent for change, if you like.

**Mr TOLPUTT** — I think that is interesting, and it is a really good question. I was having this conversation with the EA insurance broker just the other day, saying that I would dearly love to see insurability attached to a process that required them to do a bit of thinking before they gave insurance. If there was incentive for organisations to think carefully about their safety practices as part of that process, I would dearly love that.

**Mr O'BRIEN** — We have had this interaction with lawyers. Would you also agree that there needs to be a liability as a precondition to insurance? People will not necessarily insure if they have got fundamental exemptions from being sued in the first place.

**Mr TOLPUTT** — I totally agree. The safety of children in the community is of absolute paramount importance, and if there are exemptions that exempt organisations from their due liability and their due diligence in working with children, that ought not to happen, in my view.

**Mr O'BRIEN** — It might not be purely exemptions, it might be restrictions et cetera or cultural practices or perceived reasons why certain actions are taken. In your experience, following on from Ms Halfpenny's question, have you been able to identify organisations that do not have adequate systems in place? You do not necessarily have to name and shame, but could you give us some examples of how by engaging in your programs they have improved the outcome?

**Mr TOLPUTT** — I am probably not the person who can really speak to that for you, because I am a board member of ChildSafe. As a board member I do not necessarily engage with all the clients on the ground. But I can certainly speak from within the Scripture Union context, and there are eight movements around Australia working with 15 000 volunteers; that is a significant client.

I do remember in my first four years as the state director — I have been with this role now for nine years — that was in the early stages of rolling out Lighting a Path to Safety, ChildSafe. At the start some of our director-level leaders said, 'Look, this is just too hard'. We had people even a bit further up the ladder in our organisation saying, 'If you do that, your volunteers are not going to come'. My basic view was, 'I will live with that; I will live with a few less programs to make sure that we are doing the right thing with that quite happily'.

But what we actually found was this: there were incidents that took place. For instance, one of our teams had a young girl who disclosed abuse by somebody else. When you are dealing with 16 to 25-year-olds, it is a confronting thing to have that take place. You have years of experience, if you are a bit older, but in this case what I heard directly — and I am hearing this regularly — is, ‘Thank God for ChildSafe; it just walked us right through the whole process’, and the directors were able to keep their head. We teach our teams to keep their head, and our team directors to keep their head particularly.

The quote unquote was, ‘Thank God for ChildSafe. It was just so easy to work through what we had to do with that’. In the end we reported that through to the authorities, and they said, ‘Look, there is not much we can do about that, because she was of a certain age’, but the system worked. Every year I am consciously delighted with the experiences I have of people working the system and coming through. To give you an example, we have this thing called emergency response in our organisation.

**Mr O’BRIEN** — Are you talking Child Wise or the Salvation Army here?

**Mr TOLPUTT** — No, ChildSafe and Scripture Union.

**Mr O’BRIEN** — I used the wrong description.

**Mr TOLPUTT** — Scripture Union and ChildSafe. We have this process called emergency response, and it has actually become more of a help desk, because we have very few incidents that really merit being called an emergency — seriously we do not — but we have this process because you never know. Regularly every year we meet and we look at all the calls we got, and as we go through those calls there will be 20 or 30 calls. What we see in every single one of those is: they got the system; they understood how it worked; they knew who to call; they knew when to ask when something was outside of the normal thing; they knew to ask this. For me as a CEO it is one of the best measures I have of seeing it. It comes from camping guys and from this mission team and from that school group and from that group, right across their organisation. Every year I get a lovely opportunity to see how the teams on the ground are playing with the ChildSafe process, and I am pretty heartened by what I see; it is a good thing.

**Mr O’BRIEN** — I will not ask another question, but something to think about is your role in the Salvation Army, for example. It is an organisation which we have heard some horrific things about from the boys homes.

**Mr TOLPUTT** — Yes.

**Mr O’BRIEN** — I am sure that would be disturbing to you.

**Mr TOLPUTT** — Yes.

**Mr O’BRIEN** — It would be a good exercise to see how that interaction with your organisation, ChildSafe, worked over time, but I will leave that on notice.

**Mr TOLPUTT** — Yes. That is good. Yes.

**Mr WAKELING** — David and Emma, thank you very much for your work and for your presentation. I am interested in the clients that are using your program, and particularly the Uniting Church, the Baptist Church, the Salvation Army and the Lutheran Church. I am assuming that you as an organisation entered into arrangements with their national or state bodies.

**Mr TOLPUTT** — Yes.

**Mr O’BRIEN** — I am then interested in what the take-up has been — you may not have the stats with you — of your program by the various churches within those denominations. Off the top of your head, is it a high take-up? Is it varied?

**Mr TOLPUTT** — Yes, it is varied. Again, in the Salvos it is interesting. I did some children’s ministry with the Salvos for a while. Again one of those lovely things, I found myself sitting in a ChildSafe training day getting my ChildSafe manual and being taught how to use ChildSafe, and I thought, ‘Oh, this is working’. Then someone looked in there and saw my name in one of the books, saying, ‘You wrote this’, and I said, ‘Yes, I did actually’.

What I am saying is the Salvos, I think, can bring that compliance a bit better, but for quite a few of the other traditions — the Uniting Church particularly — it is quite a challenge for them, because their structure is not a top-down-driven structure. What they have got going for them really — and to answer your question, I cannot give you an actual figure on the take up — —

**Mr WAKELING** — Yes, that is fine.

**Mr TOLPUTT** — but I can certainly say that it is patchy or patchier in those organisations that do not have a structure that matches the ChildSafe structure.

**Mr WAKELING** — To lead on from that, you and Child Wise are both in the field, if you like, providing these services.

**Mr TOLPUTT** — Yes.

**Mr WAKELING** — Do you believe that as a committee we should be looking at whether or not there should be a mandated obligation on organisations to engage in a program of this nature, which they can obtain from a provider, whoever it may be? From what you are saying, for those that take it up it has been fantastic, but there are clearly churches in the four denominations that I have just mentioned that currently do not utilise your program or another program. Parishioners would be none the wiser as to which church is actually a participant in this program.

**Mr TOLPUTT** — Yes. I would certainly endorse that. I am not saying that as a ChildSafe board member — you know, like as a financial thing. I am saying that because I have been a pastor in a church where I had a most horrendous, ugly incident take place, and I know the enormous damage it does to families and children and to church communities when these things actually surface. Common sense is not good enough, not any more — it is not — so I fully endorse that.

**Mr WAKELING** — Thank you, David.

**Mr O'BRIEN** — Just following on from Mr Wakeling's question — and I understand that, and please do not take offence to this — —

**Mr TOLPUTT** — No, not at all.

**Mr O'BRIEN** — We need to understand how it would interact. I note at the start of your brochure you say on the second page, under 'Being biblical':

We advocate the use of the bible and accept its authority. We try to evaluate all that we are doing and plan to do in the light of biblical teaching and principles.

**Mr TOLPUTT** — Yes.

**Mr O'BRIEN** — I see further on you explain that you do not actually necessarily avoid church jargon and explain or rephrase in there. I must say as a manual it is a well-written manual from my perspective. How would you reconcile your situation in relation to secular organisations if it was mandated?

**Mr TOLPUTT** — Quite simple. The manual you have in your hand there is the Scripture Union version.

**Mr O'BRIEN** — Yes.

**Mr TOLPUTT** — So it has information in it for Scripture Union people only, but when we customise, that information does not go in those manuals at all. As a safety management organisation, safety management is the key. In fact in the new rewrite we have made a call to take all that out of the Scripture Union manual because that material has nothing to do with safety; it is much more about team members knowing what they have just joined. We say, 'Do that somewhere else, but this is a safety manual. If it is going to make fewer people read it because it is too thick, then take that stuff out; it is not necessary'.

Essentially what I am saying is that we could actually produce things for the Islamic community, and if we did that for the Islamic community, we would want to sit down with some Islamic people so that it was culturally sensitive and culturally relevant but also lifting their standard. Just because a community has an age-old

tradition of behaviours that are damaging to the health of young people does not mean we should say, 'Sure, because it's a cultural thing we will leave it there'. We do not do that with whale eating. I think we should really be challenging every community that works with children to have the health and wellbeing of children in their hearts. That is the first part. I do not know of any parent, no matter what tradition they come from, who does not want to see their children grow up happy, healthy, whole and free of abuse.

**Mr O'BRIEN** — Thank you.

**The CHAIR** — I do not believe there are any further questions, so on behalf of the committee, thank you both very much indeed for appearing before us this afternoon. Your time and evidence has been most helpful. Thank you very much indeed.

**Mr TOLPUTT** — We are very grateful. Thank you.

**Ms PAYNE** — Thank you.

**Witnesses withdrew.**