

FEATURE

The human face
of homelessness

FAITH TALK

Loving our
neighbours on
the street

MY STORY

A haven of
support for
Jasmine

The hidden plight of the homeless

Pandemic adds new layer to a complex problem



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**SO MANY PEOPLE ARE HANGING ON BY
THE THINNEST OF THREADS.**

TREAT PEOPLE WELL.

YOU COULD JUST BE THAT THREAD.

TOBYMAC

**MUSIC PRODUCER,
SONGWRITER, AUTHOR**



The Salvation Army is about giving hope where it's needed most.

What is The Salvation Army?

The Salvation Army, an international movement, is an evangelical part of the universal Christian Church.

Vision Statement

Wherever there is hardship or injustice, Salvos will live, love and fight alongside others to transform Australia one life at a time with the love of Jesus.

Mission Statement

The Salvation Army is a Christian movement dedicated to sharing the love of Jesus by:

- Caring for people
- Creating faith pathways
- Building healthy communities
- Working for justice

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Love your neighbour

This year, National Homelessness Week will be held from 3-8 August. The theme, "Everybody needs a home", reflects the importance of having a safe place to live, but also a place feel accepted, loved and cared for.

As winter deepens, teams of Salvos around the country go out around the clock, providing hot food, drinks, blankets and genuine care for a vulnerable and growing population. Salvo homelessness services also work tirelessly to provide stable and permanent accommodation, and ongoing help, to the many desperate people, our fellow humans, who call the streets home.

COVID-19 has changed how the Salvos operate, but the work is ongoing, adapting, and striving to fill increasing, and complex, needs.

Everyone can make a difference. Perhaps it's volunteering to deliver food, donating goods or financial contributions, showing kindness to those without a home, or pointing them to services who can help them find one.

Jesus tells us to love our neighbours. That includes our neighbours on the street. Let's consider doing just that.

Simone Worthing
Assistant Editor



The Salvation Army is the largest provider of homelessness services in Australia. As the COVID-19 pandemic hit earlier this year and case numbers across the country began to escalate, the Salvos quickly responded to adapt and help meet the growing and constantly changing needs of people experiencing homelessness, especially those for the first time.

Now, as Melbourne experiences a second lockdown and coronavirus cases in other parts of Australia rise, this flexible response is continuing.

“We were watching what was happening overseas early this year and knew that Australia would not be exempt from the pandemic,” says Livia Carusi, the Salvos’ General Manager for Homelessness. “We also knew that vulnerable people were at greater risk of coronavirus and would be hardest hit.”

The Salvation Army swung into action. Major Jenny Begent, Head of Social Mission, had daily meetings with Livia and the general managers of the Salvos’ three other social mission services – Alcohol and Other Drugs, Family Violence, and Youth – as well as state managers and a range of team leaders, to work on managing service response at different phases of the pandemic, and keeping the business continuity plan current.

“The Salvation Army around the country also liaised with external authorities around expectations of our organisation and collaboration,” says Livia. “Our teams continue to meet regularly to focus on the recovery process, although that is changing again now with the situation in Victoria.”

The pandemic has brought changes to the way the Salvos’ homelessness services interact with clients and community members, with many



Hidden plight of the homeless

Pandemic adds new layer to a complex problem

WORDS

SIMONE WORTHING

of these new ways of operating expected to remain into the future.

“We are adhering to all government guidelines, which include an increased level of cleaning at all sites, rostering staff to ensure our ability to be agile and mobile, increased consultation with other streams, and moving people between streams to continue services and connections,” explains Livia.

“We have also moved to increased contact via email, phone and use of technologies where possible, which is working well and will probably continue going forward. This also applies to services such as transition housing and support.”

APPROPRIATE FACILITIES

In Salvation Army residential settings, such as Pindari Crisis and Supported Accommodation

in Brisbane, clients were moved to a new temporary accommodation as part of a government initiative to house some of the city’s most vulnerable people in one place and help combat the spread of COVID-19. The Salvation Army continues to provide support for the clients.

In the Northern Territory, Darwin’s Red Shield Hostel is undergoing a major redevelopment, now with COVID-19 guidelines being applied. Cultural considerations for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are also a major feature of the redevelopment.

“Our buildings are no longer fit for purpose,” says Livia. “We need to make sure, with strict hygiene and social-distancing policies in place, that our facilities are appropriate. It’s time to move away from shared facilities. This won’t be the last public health crisis, so we need to be prepared for what might come next. ▶



Residents from the Salvos' Pindari hostel in Brisbane were moved to a new location, with this view of the Brisbane River, as part of the Queensland Government's efforts to combat COVID-19.

"This has impacted decisions around occupancy rates, as well as keeping staff updated with current changes, appropriate signage and industrial cleaning. We have also had to identify rooms that, should someone present with symptoms or need to self-isolate, we could ensure their safety and that of other residents.

"Group activities have had to be suspended and residents given more access to TVs, books, jigsaw puzzles and the like, to keep them active and engaged. We are, of course, very mindful of the health and wellbeing of our staff and are ensuring they are doing well and getting the support they need."

These changes have been consistent across the four streams of the Salvos' Social Mission.

ROUGH SLEEPERS

Work supporting rough sleepers has continued, as this group of people are particularly vulnerable and at risk.

"We are responding appropriately, using personal protective equipment and social distancing," says Livia. "In Victoria, under State Manager [for Homelessness] Shane Austin and together with other agencies, we are getting people off the street and into hotels and motels, which provides them a level of independence with attached support. This is happening in other states as well.

“

We don't want a new generation of homelessness – we want to respond through prevention.

”

"It's hard to say what will happen in the future. I hope that the government, businesses and charities will get it right and we can assist the homeless into stable and permanent housing so they don't come back onto the streets. We don't want a new generation of homelessness – we want to respond through prevention.

"We are also working with people who have never been homeless or sought help before – people whose entire industry has been impacted by the pandemic. People will continue to hurt, and how they recover will to a degree depend on what we do as a community, and how we all respond.

"For The Salvation Army, we will, both now and into the future, respond with assistance to those who knock on our doors. We will keep engaging with governments, the



business sector and other agencies – we have a long history of working with the homeless and bring a lot to the table.

“We will be there for the long haul with other like-minded organisations and we need to speak up around decision and policy recommendations to ensure people get the help and dignity they deserve.”

ENDING HOMELESSNESS

Livia says that stimulating and expanding social housing is critical to solving homelessness and giving people dignity and a permanent home. This includes using the private rental market where appropriate, as well as the increased use of serviced apartments taken ‘offline’ and used as a private rental.

“These ideas are becoming more established and are also more appropriate for other vulnerable people, such as women leaving

situations of domestic violence, or First Nations peoples,” she says.

“The ideas are out there, and homelessness can be eliminated. There has to be a strong political will, a collective desire to end street-sleeping, a drive to building the necessary societal structures, and stimulating the economy in a way that allows for social and affordable housing, especially as we work through the pandemic and beyond. It’s as basic as Salvation Army founder William Booth’s ‘I’ll Fight’ speech” (see outside back cover).

Simone Worthing is the Assistant Editor of Salvos Magazine.



Scan here for more on homelessness.

The human face of homelessness

Salvos serving those most vulnerable to pandemic

WORDS

SIMONE WORTHING

Phillip* is 75 years old, has a level of dementia, lived on his own and was experiencing several health and social issues. He was about to be evicted until The Salvation Army intervened. "We knew living on the street would have a bad outcome for Phillip," says Mark Dixon, Program Manager for Homelessness Services in Gippsland, Eastern Victoria.

"We referred him into a residential support service where he will have a better quality of life and his family can be part of his care. We also organised for him to be assessed for a specialised residential service that provides housing and care to the elderly at risk of homelessness due to their addictions."

Jeff* is a rough sleeper with an acquired brain injury. He is well known in the local region and was seen as having few options. He was high functioning and now, due to his injuries, has complex needs and is unable to commit to decisions or follow through on arrangements aimed to get him off the street.

"Jeff is a lovely gentleman with a wicked sense of humour," says Mark. "We see his potential and won't give up on him. We are working with mental health services, the local council and police to make sure he won't have to sleep in a tent through the winter."

Alex* is a young person, 20 years old, who

lives with a mental health disorder. He lives in a caravan park and has limited problem-solving skills. "Local and regional services aren't an option for him, but again, we see his potential and will take him on as a client," says Mark. "With the right care and in the right circumstances, he has a good future and won't end up as a rough sleeper."

Mark and his team, who work in crisis intake and transitional housing, community connections, youth homelessness and intensive case management are based in Leongatha, 130km south east of Melbourne.

"Our clients include people of all ages and genders who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and who have high and complex needs which require creative and flexible service responses," Mark explains.

"Our focus is on social and spiritual support; on securing stable and permanent accommodation so people don't have to come back needing a further crisis response."

“

It's always about the client, about the mission, and not leaving anyone behind.

”

"We are doing preventative work but largely, at the moment, we are reacting to daily crises based on a 'triage' system – looking at who is homeless today, not who will be homeless in a month's time, and responding to that."

"Regardless of where our clients go, until we

resolve the immediate crisis we stay in touch until they have 'safe landing' or a safe option for the night. Clients can always re-engage with us again as needed."

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, between two and 10 clients would come into the service for assistance each weekday. Now, working under COVID-19 restrictions and according to government guidelines, limited face-to-face appointments occur. Most work is done by phone and electronically – acquiring crisis accommodation including motel stays, case management, providing rental assistance, managing client safety, and linking to other services.

As demands increase on all Salvation Army homelessness services, finances to cover crisis clients' immediate needs are an ongoing challenge and a daily balancing act for Mark and his team.

OPENING DOORS

Public housing is in short supply, there are not enough refuge beds or crisis accommodation options and the homelessness team, while committed, resourceful and highly-skilled – is small. Mark works with a team leader and 13 workers, most of whom are part-time.

"They are passionate and mission-focused," says Mark. "They advocate for those who are in the 'too hard' basket. Today is the day for change and we don't give up! Yes, we advocate for change but in the meantime, we walk the walk with clients and are getting some great outcomes for them. Last year we supported more than 1,500 clients."

As a manager, Mark sees his role as opening doors for his team to give them the tools they need to develop innovative strategies to help get clients to the next stage in their journeys.

INCREASED DEMAND

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, homelessness services are seeing a huge increase in demand for crisis motel stays – around 90.7 per cent in Gippsland. This is largely due to lost jobs and will most likely increase in the future as more businesses fail to reopen.

As changes to government assistance packages end and accumulated expenses, such as rent during the rent relief period come to their end, services are expecting the 'next wave' of homelessness to hit.

"We are encouraging people to talk to real estate agencies about arrears and renegotiating rental contracts, and proactively talking to Government for additional Housing Establishment Fund (HEF) support," explains Mark.

"We did get some additional HEF funding to assist, but it falls short of what we need, especially given the complexity of mental health issues with the homeless rough sleepers and those directly impacted by COVID-19.

"If the Salvos don't do this, who will? I came back to work with The Salvation Army to help be a voice for those who don't have a voice and to advocate where the system is broken. This is a great organisation; it's always about the client, about the mission, and not leaving anyone behind."

**Names have been changed*



Scan here for more on homelessness.

Loving our neighbours on the street

How pasta and a box of beans might just change the world for some

WORDS

BELINDA CASSIE

I'm going to need you to put your imagination to use here. It's a crisp Wednesday night in the city. It's been raining on and off throughout the day, the streets are damp and the wind cuts through the multiple layers you're wearing. It's already been a long day, before you even started loading up the van. That Zoom meeting went a good half-hour longer than it should have. Of the three urgent replies you needed not one got back to you, and you ended up having to do all the washing up in the staffroom kitchen – again. But here you are. Plastic takeaway dishes filled with pasta casserole, some fruit, a boxful of beans and all the clean blankets that could be found. Your day was long, but for some the night ahead is even longer.

As part of my role as a chaplain, I've been working in the inner-city of Sydney for a few years now with both people at risk of homelessness, or experiencing homelessness. Recently, I watched the series on SBS, *Filthy Rich and Homeless*. I spotted the faces of people that I knew – people I've spoken with, and served meals to; people I've made phone calls on behalf of, and sat in the gutter with. Some I've only met once; some I am fortunate enough to call my friends.

Every week, the community worker based at one of our churches in the city takes a team of us out to different places in the city. There

is Mary in the first park. Depending on the day, Mary can be articulate and jovial. She has a dry sense of humour and tells me that the KitKat I offered her will rot her teeth. On other days Mary has no idea who we are and is afraid of any of us getting too close to her.

Bob sleeps in the covered walkway nearby. He welcomes us each time with, "Wipe your feet on the mat", and each time we wipe our feet on the imagined mat before we walk over to offer him this week's pasta dish – but only if it isn't a spicy one.

At the next park, some of the team rush ahead. They are eager to catch up with Jim. Jim might sleep on a mattress under a bridge, but he has been a wise sounding board for some of the team over the last couple of years. We'll run into Rosa and Michael later on, and Ivor isn't in his usual spot so one of the team will swing by tomorrow night to check and see if he is okay.

The wind is still biting and the concrete is still damp, and it's late already but the whole night still lies ahead for our friends on the street as they try to find places to stay warm. We've passed out all the meals we have and the beans ran out long ago. But the conversations have been warm and heartfelt. I don't know that we are doing anything that is going to radically change life for anyone who



is homeless. But tonight, like every week, a few friends met and talked and laughed and shared, and it mattered. And it made a difference in the lives of those who too often go ignored and unseen.

In the Bible, in the book of Matthew, some scholarly folk were quizzing Jesus on what the most important commandment was. Jesus' answer was pretty concise. He simply said that the most important thing is to love God with all your heart and mind. Then love your neighbour as yourself. That's it. No bells or whistles – love God, love your neighbour, love yourself.

We aren't changing the world with pasta and

a box of beanies, but we will keep loving our neighbours on the streets as best we can, for as long as we can.

**All names have been changed.*

Captain Belinda Cassie is a Salvation Army chaplain, Inner City Social Mission, Sydney.



Scan here for more on finding meaning.

Salvos a haven of support for Jasmine

From food vouchers to Bible College – a young mother’s journey with The Salvation Army

WORDS

JASMINE*

It could happen to anybody.

I was in a relationship that I needed to leave very quickly. I had my life planned and I thought I was in financial control, but everything changed almost overnight.

The violence started when I was pregnant. The relationship didn’t start like that. I’d known him for a few years, but I had no idea what he was like behind closed doors.

He had been the primary earner, and when I left [the relationship], with a baby, I suddenly found myself without an income and on my own financially. I knew I needed a leg-up, but felt quite embarrassed actually, having to go and seek support.

I had been out of the relationship for about 12 months when he came to where I was living, and I knew I had to move again, and quickly [because it wasn’t safe].

This was when I came across the Salvos. They helped me secure rental assistance to get into a new property. They also had a partnership with the police in the area and they sent a police officer around to do a security check on the new property. It was amazing; it gave me that extra confidence when I moved in. Then, they referred me to a ‘victims of crime’ scheme to get some compensation to pay for



security cameras and to access counselling.

After going through trauma, I really needed someone to be able to walk me through all that and the Salvos were there just at the right time. My Salvation Army caseworker even sat with me through my court proceedings.

The Salvos Moneycare program also helped with free financial counselling to give me a good view of my financial position. I needed someone else to look over things and give me some strategies and options. I was doing okay, but the Salvos still wanted to help me with some grocery vouchers – which I actually needed right at that moment.

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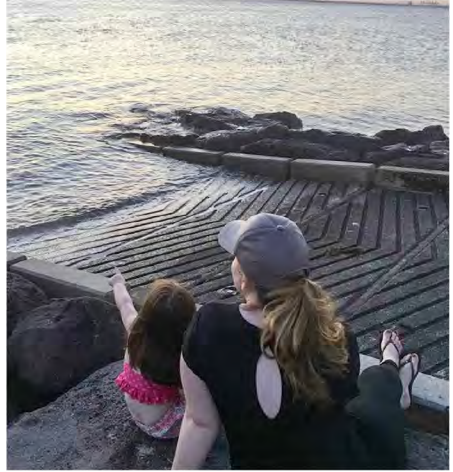
It was through The Salvation Army's help that restored my faith in Jesus and my hope in humanity.

”

I remember thinking to myself, “There still are good people in the world”. The Salvos' support gave me that hope that I could get through.

I'd grown up as a Christian but then went off on my own in my late teens. It was definitely through The Salvation Army's help and through the support of the other organisations that assisted me at that time that restored my faith in Jesus and restored my hope in humanity.

I started working with The Salvation Army alongside Major Lance Jeffrey. He's so passionate about everything to do with



Jasmine and her daughter found freedom with the help of The Salvation Army.

God and is such a great person. I developed a strong interest in learning more about Christianity and an opportunity arose to study at The Salvation Army Bible College. I'm completing a Graduate Diploma in Theology.

I worship at a Salvation Army church, I'm a youth Bible study leader and I'm being trained as a worship leader. And I was enrolled as a Salvation Army member last November.

I feel like I'm on a journey. I'm on a path and I don't know where it will lead, but I know God's in it, and it has something to do with The Salvation Army.

** As told to Lauren Martin. On request, Jasmine's last name and location details have not been included in this article.*



Scan here for more on domestic violence.

Red velvet brownies



Ingredients

140g butter, 1¼ cup white sugar, 2 tbsp cocoa powder, 1 large egg plus 1 large egg yolk, 1 tsp vanilla extract, 1 tbsp red food colouring, 1¼ cups plain flour, ¼ tsp salt, 1 tsp white vinegar.

Method

Preheat oven to 180°C. Line a 20 x 20cm baking tin with baking paper.

Microwave the butter in 30-second intervals until melted.

In a large bowl, whisk the melted butter, sugar and cocoa powder. Then whisk in the egg, extra egg yolk, vanilla and red food colouring.

Fold in the flour and salt with a spatula or wooden spoon. Whisk in the vinegar.

Pour the batter into the tin and bake for 28-32 minutes, or until a toothpick or skewer comes out clean or with a few crumbs attached.

Cool the brownies in the tin completely before slicing with a sharp knife. Serve brownies on their own or with ice-cream.

Have a laugh



Bible byte

“Love others as well as you love yourself.”

Matthew chapter 22, verse 39
The Message Bible translation

	3				9	4
7				5		
	6				7	
			5			3
		1	8			
		7		3	1	2
	9	3				2
	4	5	3	6		
8				2		

Sudoku

Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.

Tum-Tum

On which page of this week's *Salvos Magazine* is Tum-Tum hiding?

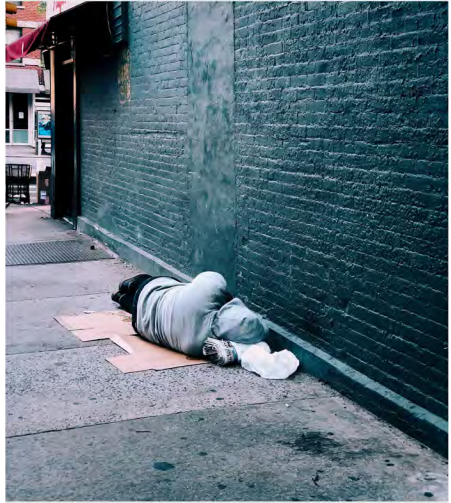


Answers: 1. 3-8 August. 2. Everybody needs a home. 3. 116,427. 4. Seven per cent. 5. Support, care and advocacy for them.

Tum-Tum: is hiding behind the coffee sign on page 14

8	7	6	9	2	5	3	4	1
2	4	5	3	1	6	7	8	9
1	9	3	7	4	8	2	5	6
6	5	7	4	3	9	1	8	2
3	2	1	8	7	5	6	4	9
9	8	4	5	1	2	7	6	3
4	6	2	9	5	7	1	3	8
7	1	6	5	2	8	9	4	3
5	3	2	1	8	7	9	6	4

Quick quiz



1. When is Homelessness Week 2020?
2. What is the theme this year?
3. How many people in Australia were counted as homeless on Census night in 2016?
4. What percentage of homeless are rough sleepers?
5. What does God tell us to do for the homeless?

Did you know?

- Finland has almost eradicated rough sleeping due to a focus on providing stable housing for the homeless.
- Homelessness service providers say the COVID-19 crisis has created an unparalleled opportunity to end rough sleeping in Australia.

I'll Fight

On 9 May 1912, General William Booth, founder of The Salvation Army, entered into Royal Albert Hall in London to give his final address, "I'll Fight".

The General's words sum up the essence of The Salvation Army's mission and vision.

While women weep as they do now,
I'll fight;
while little children go hungry as they do now,
I'll fight;
while men go to prison, in and out, in and out,
as they do now,
I'll fight;
while there is a drunkard left,
while there is a poor lost girl on the streets,
while there remains one dark soul without the
light of God,
I'll fight,
I'll fight to the very end.

