

NEWS

Partnership
launched in
Alice Springs

FAITH TALK

What's your story?

MY STORY

Stability after
family violence

The hidden faces of family violence

Supporting women in crisis, and beyond



SALVOS

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“The highest form of knowledge is empathy, for it requires us to suspend our egos and live in another’s world.”

-Plato



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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The Shadow Pandemic

Since the outbreak of COVID-19, emerging data and reports from those on the global frontlines show that all types of violence against women and girls, particularly domestic violence, has intensified. Australia is part of this devastating picture. The United Nations describe this as the 'Shadow Pandemic' and have called for a worldwide collective effort to stop it.

The Salvos will be among the millions who observe the annual United Nations Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women on 25 November.

In our feature this edition, Melanie Cop, a Salvos family violence chaplain, shares openly about her role in working with women escaping domestic and family violence. She talks about listening to the stories of terrified and broken women and how the team and community support these ladies to regain confidence and hope as they rebuild their lives and look to the future.

It's a message reflected in the Bible, the desire to "free the oppressed and shatter every type of oppression" (Isaiah chapter 58, verse 6).

For more information, see un.org/en/observances/ending-violence-against-women-day

Simone Worthing **Assistant Editor**

The hidden faces of family violence

Salvos Domestic and Family Violence chaplain supports women in crisis and beyond

WORDS SIMONE WORTHING

The Salvation Army will be among the millions who observe the annual United Nations Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women on 25 November.

Violence against women and girls (VAWG) is one of the most widespread, persistent, and devastating human rights violations in our world today. The COVID-19 pandemic has intensified VAWG around the world, including in Australia.

In general terms, VAWG manifests itself in physical, sexual, and psychological forms, encompassing intimate partner violence, sexual violence and harassment, human trafficking, female genital mutilation, and child marriage.

In the 2020-21 financial year, the Salvos in Australia assisted more than 5800 women and children and provided more than 63,000 sessions of care to those at risk of, or experiencing, domestic and family violence (DFV). Salvos services include crisis, emergency, transitional and long-term housing, counselling, casework, outreach, and support.



Captain Melanie Cop, family violence chaplain, says she has 'the best job in the world'.

CHAPLAIN'S ROLE

Captain Melanie Cop is a Salvation Army officer (pastor) and family violence chaplain. She visits women in refuges, safe houses, and those the Salvos support in local communities.

"Everyone has a story," Melanie says. "Some of the stories I hear are of triumph and overcoming, some are of sorrow and loss, and then there is everything in between. Women share stories with me of some of their darkest and most terrifying experiences – stories that keep them awake at night and bring terror in the shadows.

"I listen to these stories without judgement," she says. "Tears may flow, and I hold their hand, but the most valuable thing I can do is to be present. We want to provide hope, safety and care, but tragically, not all stories have a happy ending."



The women find gardening and outdoor projects both fun and therapeutic.

One of the refuges where Melanie works is a short-term stay centre. It's the first point of call for women literally fleeing their homes and needing emergency care.

"The DFV team works with the police, hospitals, motels – whatever is needed – to make sure the women are safe," Melanie explains. "The team arrange paperwork, crisis payments and longer-term accommodation. We look after the women physically and emotionally. We are there alongside them.

"Longer-term support may include being with a family in court, attending the police station with them to make a statement, or escorting them to appointments. Other days I might organise a birthday party, picnic, or back-to-school supplies. Each day is different.

"As chaplain, I offer spiritual care through prayer or study or offer a faith connection

best suited to the person's faith or belief."

Melanie shares that her work is "both amazing and emotionally exhausting at the same time".

"I love being part of a journey and contributing in a positive way to that journey. It's really important to me to see that the women are empowered, and not just enabled, and to see them grow in their own strength. It's such a privilege to see them come from introverted and timid to confident and happy, to see that transition or the potential in each of the victim-survivors. I really do have the best job in the world."

LOCAL SUPPORT

Melanie connects with women, children, and families from all backgrounds, cultures, faiths, the LGBTIQ+ community and those who are differently abled. It's not recommended for ►



victim-survivors to stay in their local areas, so a large part of her role is to connect them with their new communities.

In some areas, the refuges are well integrated with local Salvos churches. In non-pandemic times, the local teams involve and support the clients in activities such as women's groups, playgroups, art therapy, coffee catchups, Christian yoga, and craft. They aim to help meet individual needs as well.

"During lockdowns, one of the churches offered free lunches, so I would walk down with one of our ladies having a one-on-one chat," Melanie shares. "The officer, Alison, would meet us and make us feel accepted and welcomed. Another church helped us with gardening projects, and we painted their wall in rainbow colours. So therapeutic!

"These churches also invite the women to Christmas activities and services, donate gifts to their children, and celebrate them as part of their family. All these activities give the women a sense of normality and some distraction as well.

"COVID-19 has been our biggest challenge in terms of not being able to provide safe human connection, hugs, and face-to-face contact. Language and culture barriers are also challenging – trying to support the women who don't speak English well."

CONNECTIONS

The Salvos also provide an extensive network of social services that Melanie and her colleagues can tap into.

"I've been able to refer people to homelessness services, detox and rehab support, Salvos Stores, and others," she says. "We also have extremely gifted officers who have skills in areas that have been so helpful in assisting women. Other churches pray for us and offer support also."

Community connections for food resources, including SecondBite and OzHarvest, also play an important role in supporting the women.

"Resources and budgets are one of our biggest challenges," Melanie shares. "Government funding doesn't cover our costs, so we rely on our Salvos Red Shield Appeal and community support."

Going for a walk during lockdowns gave Melanie, right, time to chat with the ladies.



NOT JUST PHYSICAL

Melanie works only with female victim-survivors. "Men, infants to adult children, same-sex couples, the elderly, even pets, experience family and domestic violence – across all communities, ages, cultures and genders, although we know that women are disproportionately victims of family violence," Melanie emphasises. "And perpetrators have many faces – partners, adults, children, neighbours, parents and grandparents.

"Violence can also present as intimidation, emotional, financial and spiritual abuse, coercive control, threats, gaslighting, manipulation and male privilege (To read more on this, check out theduluthmodel.org/wheels/understanding-power-control-wheel/).

HOW TO HELP

If you have a 'gut feeling' that something is not quite right with a friend or family member, it's important to check in with them," Melanie advises.

"If a woman suddenly goes off the grid and is not contacting her family or friends, it's definitely concerning. So, too, are physical signs, depression, no available finances, having to ask permission to do things or being constantly checked upon.

"It's not always about encouraging the woman to leave her situation; it's about asking questions, knowing and communicating other options, and connecting them to the right services," she says. "These services (see box on right) can give the women the knowledge they need to move in a positive direction.

"If safety and well-being is an issue, then further intervention is required. This may mean calling 000 in an emergency."



CARING FOR SELF AND OTHERS

On a personal note, Melanie is training in Forest Therapy – a practice that aids in dealing with trauma, grief, a range of mental health issues and general well-being, with time in nature. "It's a 'tree-hugging thing' that involves absorbing the healing powers of nature to help people feel more relaxed and able to work through whatever they are experiencing in life," she says.

"My work is really driven, and I need to recharge myself and take time out. Our clients do. We all do. Forest Therapy gives us all a chance to stop, focus, calm down and experience a sense of peace. These are some of the best gifts of life."

GETTING HELP

- In an emergency – 000
- 1800RESPECT (1800 737 732)
- Salvation Army services – salvationarmy.org.au/need-help/family-and-domestic-violence/
- Safe Steps on 1800 737 732 or visit safesteps@safesteps.org.au
- Lifeline – 131114
- Men's Referral Service on 1300 766 491 or ntv.org.au



Scan here for more information on Salvation Army Domestic and Family Violence Services.

Accessibility toolbar enables inclusive experience

The Salvation Army has launched an accessibility toolbar on its national website (salvationarmy.org.au), providing an inclusive online experience for visitors to access content and services barrier-free.

“The internet can be an incredibly intimidating place for those with access barriers, and those lacking the tools they need to adequately understand or communicate are at a significant disadvantage,” said Adrian Kistan, Salvos General Manager for Mission Inclusion. “The Diversity and Inclusion team identified the need to improve access to and awareness of The Salvation Army’s social services and spiritual support for people of all abilities.”

The Accessibility Toolbar includes features like text speak, a screen reader in 35 different languages, a screen ruler, and



The newly-launched accessibility toolbar on The Salvation Army’s national website provides an inclusive online experience.

personalised font size and colour (making the web page easier to read). This ensures that people with sight loss, cognitive impairments, learning difficulties, attention disorders, and people who speak languages other than English can access the website in a way best suited to their individual needs.

New partnership launched in Alice Springs

The Alice Springs Salvos recently launched a 12-month partnership with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to provide thousands of hygiene packs, food items, and domestic products to its community centre, The Waterhole.

Major Rhonda Clutterbuck, Alice Spring Salvos officer (pastor), said the church would also donate clothing and commercial quantities of laundry powder, rolled oats, and soup to the Salvos-run centre.

“They might be seemingly small things, but it adds up [financially] because of the nature of our community,” Rhonda said. “They’re things we use every day and we go through a lot.”

The partnership was announced at an official event at The Waterhole centre last month. Guests from both denominations attended the event.



Paul Lekias, left, a senior leader in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Australia, presents Majors Dean and Rhonda Clutterbuck the first of thousands of hygiene packs the denomination plans to donate to the Salvos Waterhole community centre. Photo: Tony Lawry.

Around 1000 of the hygiene packs were presented at the launch. Another 8300 will be donated over the coming year. The packs contain soap, shampoo, conditioner, toothbrush and toothpaste, washcloth, and a shaving razor.

Aussie jumpers warm Moldovan hearts

The Salvos 'Woollens for Moldova' project recently sent several boxes of hand-knitted items and warm blankets to this Eastern European nation, one of the poorest in Europe.

The children's jumpers have already found "happy little owners".

Major Andrei Iniutocichin, who oversees the Salvos in Moldova, said winter had "come early" this year, and the contents of three boxes had already been distributed to several of the Salvos' 15 churches there. Two more boxes containing additional jumpers, scarves, beanies, socks, and blankets have been shipped.

"We are very grateful to receive these kind donations from your people, and the overwhelming response to your call touches



Ladies from Riverview Gardens Aged Care Centre, near Brisbane, enjoy making items for the children of Moldova.

our hearts," Andrei said. "The socks, hats, gloves, scarves, and sweaters will find their new grateful owners in the northern region of Moldova. [But] it's especially surprising for many people to hear that the woollens came from hot Australia – the land of deserts and kangaroos!"

'Money talk' on the cards for families

The Salvos Moneycare services have launched a new tool to help equip families and give them the confidence they need to remove the potential awkwardness of conversations around money and finances.

This tool – a card series called 'Conversation Starters', shared a different card or tip online each day through various Salvos internet and social media portals during last month's Anti-Poverty Week.

Kristen Hartnett, the Salvos Moneycare manager for regional NSW and the ACT, said that conversation was a vital part – the first step – of the support process and pivotal to helping solve poverty.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has caused a different set of challenges for many people,"



New conversation cards help to remove the awkwardness of discussions around money.

said Kristen. "It takes technical skills around money [to work through those challenges], but it takes soft skills around the relationship; around the conversation about how we look after each other now. This is what we hope the conversation cards prompt."

To see the card series, go to bit.ly/3bvyrtu

What's your story?

If you have a tale of faith, then you need to tell it

WORDS DEAN SIMPSON



Scan here for more
on finding meaning.

I sat down feeling quite deflated. How could anyone possibly be impacted by the story of my life I had just shared?

It was a Sunday morning church service, and I was one of two people who had been asked to share my testimony, my faith story.

The fellow who went before me had the congregation transfixed with his 'gutter to glory' account of his life. At 42, he seemed to have had several lifetimes of experience to share, relating how he had come from a dysfunctional family, was abused as a teenager, turned to heavy drugs and alcohol, spent a lot of time in prison, and had tried to take his own life several times.

He was dramatically converted while undergoing rehab at a Salvos recovery centre and was now a case worker at the same centre assisting vulnerable people who were going through the same thing he had. Phenomenal story. The congregation actually clapped at the end.

Then it was my turn. I was in my late teens and hadn't experienced anything that remotely resembled the story that went before me. In the end, I decided honesty was the best policy and related what I perceived was the most boring testimony in the universe.

I said I felt like I had been born a Christian. Definitely born into The Salvation Army anyway. I had a very stable upbringing with two loving parents, had attended Sunday school, asked Jesus into my heart, went to church every Sunday, tried not to swear, read my Bible daily, and aimed to be the best young Christian I could be. Full-stop. That was it.

A sea of blank faces greeted me as I finished. Lead balloon.

SIMPLE BUT POWERFUL

After the service, I tried to slink away out a side door, but my testimony partner intercepted me and grabbed me by the shoulders. He had tears in his eyes. He looked at me, and through a cracking voice, said how much my story had affected him. I'll never forget his words: "I wish I had your story Dean. I really do. I'm so envious of you."

Really? I couldn't believe what I was hearing. He went on to say something like: "Your upbringing, your church life, your faith ... all from an early age ... I'm so jealous. I've wasted most of my life, it was hell, but I've now got a second chance. My story is so complex. Yours is so simple but powerful. Keep telling it."

Several of my friends also stopped me and said they had a similar story to mine but thought it wasn't exciting enough. They had now been encouraged to share their story boldly.

The lesson I learnt that morning was that everyone who finds faith in God has a story. And that story is powerful.

In the Bible, in 1 Peter chapter three, verse 15, we are instructed: "Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have."

In other words, if you have found faith in God, you have a story to tell. And God is relying on it.

Our role is to tell our story of spiritual transformation; God's role is to enact the process of transformation in the lives of people who hear our story. Look for opportunities to do this and be part of building God's kingdom.

So, what's your story?

Dean Simpson is part of the Communications team for The Salvation Army Australia.

Support builds stability after escape from domestic violence

Bams shares her journey from trauma to hope

WORDS HOLLY REED

In the lead-up to the United Nations International Day of Elimination of Violence Against Women on 25 November, Bams shares her journey escaping a violent relationship and the extensive support she received along the way.

The United Nations (UN), promoting the International Day of Elimination of Violence Against Women, reports that, "Violence against women continues to be an obstacle to achieving equality, development, peace as well as to the fulfilment of women and girls' human rights."

Some groups are more vulnerable, with the UN reporting that: "While gender-based violence can happen to anyone, anywhere, some women and girls are particularly vulnerable - for instance, young girls and older women, women who identify as lesbian, bisexual, transgender or intersex, migrants and refugees, indigenous women and ethnic minorities, or women and girls living with HIV and disabilities, and those living through humanitarian crises."

ALONE AND VULNERABLE

Relatively new to Australia, Bams was preparing to leave a violent relationship. She had no support available and no income. She feared that she might end up homeless or forced to live in an unsafe boarding facility.

Bams reached out for help the day she knew she had to remove herself from her violent ex-partner. "I tried to look for places to shelter myself. Because I'm trans too, it's even harder. One of the shelters wasn't so great, so how could I put myself at risk?" she says.

"I rang up the domestic violence line, and then I just rang [the Salvos] Samaritan House and talked to them directly. I went in the next day for an intake and assessment. It happened so quickly."

SHELTER FROM ABUSE

At Samaritan House, Bams was supported with shelter, food, clothing, medical and dental care, legal assistance, access to counselling, and workshops around healthy relationships.

Importantly, she was given a safe space to process and discuss her traumatic experience of domestic violence among others who understood her pain.

Although the service usually offers short-term stays, Bams was able to stay for over a year.

"Everything seems to be delayed with my court case [due to COVID-19]," she says. "I'm so grateful to Samaritan House for helping me with this because of my situation."

During her time with the service, Bams says she saw many women and children come through and leave again. While everyone had a unique story, she says, domestic violence was a common thread. Sharing with understanding staff and other women who had escaped violence meant a great deal to her.

"I felt like my voice [could] be heard," she says.

SOMETHING SPECIAL

As a long-term resident, Bams also celebrated Christmas and a birthday at Samaritan House. She was deeply moved by the workers' effort to ensure residents felt special on those occasions.

"It's not [just] about material things, it's about their thoughtfulness," she explains. "It's made me feel like I'm not alone, I'm being cared for."

Bams began volunteering to cook for the other residents and hopes that one day she will be able to find work in a restaurant and further her tertiary education in hospitality management.

As she continues her recovery journey after violence and trauma, and works with her caseworkers to build a secure future, Bams says that staff, management, and donors'

support of The Salvation Army has given her safety she would not have had otherwise.

"The Salvation Army is Christian, but they help all kinds of people – any race, any background, any religion – they help. So, it's just a big thanks to them that they support you no matter who you are. I'm so grateful for that."

To read more about the International Day of Elimination of Violence Against Women go to: [un.org/en/observances/ending-violence-against-women-day](https://www.salvationarmy.org/en/observances/ending-violence-against-women-day)



Scan here for more information on Salvation Army Domestic and Family Violence Services.



IMAGE: STOCK / GETTY IMAGES

Lemon squares



PHOTO: STOCK / GETTY IMAGES

Ingredients

1 cup plain flour, ½ tsp baking powder, ½ cup butter, ¼ cup icing sugar, 1 cup sugar, pinch of salt, 2 tbsp lemon juice, grated rind of ½ lemon, extra icing sugar.

Method

- Mix flour, baking powder, butter and icing sugar thoroughly.
- Press evenly into 20cm square pan, with sides to around 2.5cm. Bake at 180°C for 20 minutes.
- Beat sugar, salt, lemon juice and lemon rind together. Pour over the base and bake for another 25 minutes.
- When cool, dust lightly with extra icing sugar.
- Makes 25 squares.

Bible byte

I've never quit loving
you and never will.
Expect love, love, and more love!
Jeremiah chapter 31, verse 3
The Message translation

Quick quiz

1. Which Australian beach was named beach of the year in 2021?
2. How many beaches does Australia boast?
3. How many kilometres of coastline makes up Australia?
4. How many years would it take you to visit all of Australia's beaches if you visited one per day?
5. Which is the longest beach in Australia?
6. When did surf lifesaving start in Australia?



PHOTO: STOCK / GETTY IMAGES

Tum-Tum

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



Wordsearch

Words are hidden horizontally, vertically, diagonally, forwards and backwards. Enjoy!

V T I V D R E R G G L B I O N S N A A A
 O N S U N S H I N E S L A T R E M M U S
 L O R A N L I I I L E U E S N O T S G I
 L R E N S E M F F R D E N I L T S A O C
 E F L W O M N I R I S S A H G A T W A C
 Y H S L I L N S U E L A D O S S S E O C
 B C A W A L L H S O L L C L S E I B L C
 A A S E S E O I S O E E T C E U S U R D
 L E D F T T L N F M H E M N M G S B E T
 L B B I I S L G U E S F S T I E A V D E
 S S D S L O H S B L S L L B E R N D S U
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 S H R E V E F U F C S G V E N H C A M S
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 D L H S U S L R S C I N C I P R E U N E
 L O O P K C O R A L C U R R E N T S C S
 B S I W R S F R S E E E L D U N A C S V

- Barbecues
- Beaches
- Beachfront
- Blue
- Coastline
- Coral
- Currents
- Fishing
- Flags
- Lifesaving
- Picnics
- Rockpool
- Salt
- Sand
- Sandcastle
- Seagulls
- Shells
- Shore
- Summer
- Sunshine
- Surfboard
- Surfing
- Swimming
- Tides
- Volleyball
- Waves

HAVE A LAUGH

How did Darth Vader know what Luke got him for Christmas? He felt his presents.

Why did the man get fired from the calendar factory? Because he took a few days off.

Have you played the updated kids game? I Spy With My Little Eye . . . Phone.



What gets wetter the more it dries? A towel.

DID YOU KNOW?

The search engine Google was initially known as BackRub.

The first footprints on the moon will remain there for a million years.

If all of an adult human's blood vessels were laid out end to end, they could encircle the earth four times.

The word 'strengths' is the longest word of one syllable in the English language with only one vowel.

Answers: 1. Queensland's Whitehaven beach. 2. 10,000. 3. 50,000. 4. 27. 5. Coorong. 6. 1907.
Tum-Tum: is hiding on page 2.

No one should spend Christmas homeless.

Kate and her husband were hard working Aussies. But when they lost their business and ran into debt, the young couple, together with their two children had no choice but to live at a campsite.

There were over 43,000 Aussies like Kate's family who were living at risk of homelessness last Christmas.

But you can help. Donate to the Christmas Appeal and give some unexpected hope and joy this Christmas.



Donate today

salvationarmy.org.au/assistkate
or scan the QR code



**Christmas
Appeal**

**LEAVE NO
ONE IN NEED**