

# salvos

magazine

NATIONAL  
HOMELESSNESS  
WEEK 2023

## The stigma of homelessness

The healing power of  
a home to call your own



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### NEWS


A new,  
positive  
lifestyle

### FAITH TALK

Kindness -  
the ripple  
effect

### MY STORY

Hope for  
everyone



“For Jesus,  
there are no  
countries to  
be conquered,  
no ideologies  
to be imposed,  
no people to  
be dominated.  
There are  
only children,  
women, and  
men to  
be loved.”

– Henri Nouwen



## 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



The Salvation Army Australia acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land on which we meet and work and pay our respect to Elders, past, present, and future. We value and include people of all cultures, languages, abilities, sexual orientations, gender identities, gender expressions, and intersex status. We are committed to providing programs that are fully inclusive. We are committed to the safety and wellbeing of people of all ages, particularly children.

# Salvos Magazine

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**Hope for everyone**

## Playing our part

The theme for the Salvos this Homelessness Week (7-13 August) is 'It's time to end homelessness: together, we can.'

As the cost of living rises and the housing crisis deepens, the Salvos, as well as other agencies and organisations, are seeing a rapid increase in people asking for help. The images we see of desperate people sleeping in cars and caravans, couch surfing and living on the streets reflect reality for more and more Australians.

Each of these people has a story to tell – of housing affordability, job loss, rising costs, relationship breakdown, illness, abuse and domestic violence – and the list goes on.

This edition of *Salvos Magazine* features Kerrie's story about how she came to be homeless and how Salvos services have helped her. There are also stories of people and programs working with the complexities around homelessness and changing the lives of people from all walks of life.

Jesus told us to love our neighbours. This includes our neighbours experiencing homelessness. Let's consider our common humanity and respond accordingly.

Simone Worthing **Editor**



# The stigma of homelessness

The healing power of a home to call your own

**WORDS** Kerrie

After a series of traumatic events, Kerrie was shocked to find herself homeless. Eventually she found shelter, advocacy and support through The Salvation Army's Still Waters service in Queensland. This Homelessness Week 2023 (7-13 August) Kerrie shares her story to help fight the stigma of homelessness and support other older women who are homeless, often through circumstances beyond their control.

Over the past few years, I have met women in their late 50s and over-60s living in their cars under a bridge – women who are homeless simply through life circumstances often totally out of their control. Just like me.

Without the care of the Salvos' Still Waters (emergency and medium-term crisis accommodation service and case management), including the house they eventually helped me into, I don't know where I would be now – most likely still living in my car. Sick and in pain. Alone.

I know now that I have value, and that there is still hope in life, but it has been a long journey.

I was the eldest of five children and the only girl. Dad worked away a lot and

Mum was often sick. I didn't know it at the time, but she was an alcoholic, so I virtually had to raise my four brothers and take care of my mother too. We also spent times in various children's homes in our younger years.

“

**I feel there is still a stigma and shame for homeless older people, particularly women.**

”

I didn't have a normal teenagehood either as I still had the responsibilities of the children. I loved school though, and I focused on that. I especially loved English and through it all managed to keep a sense of humour.

## **ESCAPING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

As I got older I got a job on the railways, had my first child and eventually got married. My four children and I faced physical and mental abuse and during that time I worked up to three jobs to support them.



The Salvos are seeing an increasing number of homeless women sleeping in their cars.

After 25 years of physical and mental abuse, my son helped me move out, but the damage was done. There was no confidence left. No self-belief. I couldn't look anyone in the eye.

After the divorce I struggled. I lost the house and struggled to make ends meet. With a teenager still in my care, I worked a lot of the time and we rented a few places in caravan parks.

### **SICKNESS AND HOMELESSNESS**

After my children were grown up, I was working in aged care when I started to feel unwell and had several falls. After many tests my doctor told me that as I had several complex conditions I couldn't work anymore.

With no job and having to attend many medical appointments, finding a place to live became a nightmare. I was informed that the room I was renting would soon no longer be available.

I searched for something I could afford but just couldn't find anywhere to rent, so I started living in my car and kept looking for an affordable rental. This was so hard. I was trying to manage my health, with advanced osteoarthritis in both knees and my lower spine, and blood cancer.

At the time I felt so alone, but soon learned how many older women are facing the same situation. Women my age and older living under bridges and in cars, through no fault of their own.

“

**I put on my makeup and go out, something else I had stopped doing.**

”

### **SALVATION ARMY STILL WATERS**

One day I went to an op shop to buy a light so I could keep reading in my car. When I saw a poster in a nearby window advertising housing help I talked to a lady and she suggested I contact the Salvos. I went into the Salvos church next door and was greeted by a lovely woman named Wendy, a case worker, who took me to Still Waters. It was the best thing that's ever happened to me.

Just being at Still Waters gave me peace. Within a couple of weeks, one of the ►





Kerrie with her Salvos caseworker, Wendy. Photo: Gold Coast Bulletin. Richard Gosling

independent units there became available, with its own kitchen and ensuite. After a couple of months I started to feel alive and after eight months Wendy and the team found me a brand-new place to live in.

“

**I used to think I was too old for anything, but I don't think that now.**

”

Today I am happy and in a better frame of mind, although I push my health a bit, but I'm okay with that. I have a nice little garden and keep busy. I read a lot – I have books everywhere.

I continue to cook for myself, something I had stopped doing before Still Waters. I put on my makeup and go out, something else I had stopped doing. I used to think I was too old for anything, but I don't think that now.

**HOMELESSNESS AMONG OLDER WOMEN**

I feel there is still a stigma and shame for homeless older people, particularly women. I felt so much shame. I had worked all my life and yet people asked me how I got myself in that situation.

The most significant change in my thinking is to appreciate life and start realising that I have always been a good person. My case worker and I had heaps of chats around loving myself and focusing on myself and my health.

I now have a beautiful new home and for that I will be eternally grateful. I feel really thankful for Salvos donors and volunteers who make such a difference in people's lives. I have learned that no matter how far down you get, the Salvos are there to put their hand out and help you.

I really do thank God for the Salvos.



Scan here for more information on Salvation Army homelessness support services.

# Homelessness Week 2023

From January to April 2023:



The Salvos' homelessness services assisted more than 16,500 people and provided more than 94,000 sessions of care to those at risk of or experiencing homelessness.



Females made up 44 per cent of people experiencing homelessness.



Nearly a quarter (23 per cent) of people experiencing homelessness were aged 18 years and under.



122,494 people were estimated to be experiencing homelessness on Census night in 2021.



Rates of homelessness per 10,000 increased in Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania from 2016 to 2021.



An average of 18,300 children were housed in specialist homelessness services in 2021 (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2021).

The Salvation Army is one of the largest providers of homelessness services across the country, providing welcoming services to youth, adults and families.

This Homelessness Week, we are calling on the Australian community to partner with us to end homelessness and ensure that nobody struggles alone.

Everybody deserves a safe, secure home – this is a basic human right. But the cost-of-living crisis, affordable housing shortages and ongoing rent and mortgage stress mean that more people from all walks of life are struggling to find, or are at risk of losing, that safe home.

During Homelessness Week, and throughout the year, the Salvos partner with national and state homelessness and housing peak bodies and government agencies to find sustainable solutions to end homelessness.

We have made calls to the government to:

- Increase social housing stock
- Increase family and domestic violence programs and policies
- Introduce solutions for rental availability and pricing
- Address general cost-of-living crises in Australia.

You too can help someone find the keys to their safe and secure home this Homelessness Week.

Ideas to consider:

- self-education about homelessness
- writing to your local member of parliament
- donating to the Salvos
- volunteering with the Salvos or other agencies.

For more information, go to [salvation-army.org.au/homelessness-week/](https://salvation-army.org.au/homelessness-week/)

## Hope in complex homelessness support

The Salvation Army believes that having safe, secure and affordable housing is a human right, and offers a range of supports to build capacity for independent living.

This Homelessness Week (7-13 August), Amanda Stokes, manager of the Salvos' Victorian-based Flagstaff and The Open Door accommodation, says the resilience she encounters in residents who are dealing with complex trauma as well as homelessness continually inspires her.



Amanda says her work is a passion as much as a profession.

After more than 15 years at the coalface of complex homelessness support, Amanda says her role remains a passion as much as a profession, as she is constantly inspired by the residents she serves.

Flagstaff and The Open Door are part of the Salvos' Homelessness Metro Melbourne Residential Services and operate 24 hours a day, seven days per week. The two sites provide 101 beds in total for single individuals 18 and over who identify as male, who are experiencing homelessness, and have multiple and complex support needs.

Flagstaff and The Open Door staff work to provide a safe, secure and supportive short-term accommodation service. Amanda explains that the service model supports community members to achieve positive change, walking with them rather than dictating the changes in any way.

The Community Engagement Team provides therapeutic, recreational, educational, vocational and capacity-building activities. The service also offers support from the Alcohol and Other Drugs team to provide care recovery coordination, and manages the on-site needle and syringe program.

When asked what keeps her inspired and driven to make a difference, Amanda says, "I'm continually amazed by our community members and their resilience. Many have experienced terrible trauma throughout their childhood and that is carried through to adulthood. Complex mental health issues and struggles with alcohol and drugs are the daily reality many of our residents face."

While the team regularly sees heartache and tragedy, Amanda says there are also stories of almost heroic resilience and transformation. – **Naomi Singlehurst**



# Homelessness prevention program encourages positive lifestyle

The Supported Housing Program is run by The Salvation Army in the Northern Territory (Darwin and Katherine) in partnership with Danila Dilba Health Service, Department of Territory Families, Housing and Communities, Top End Mental Health Services, Alcohol and Other Drug Services and The Salvation Army's House 49.

A prevention program supporting people at risk of homelessness who are also living with diagnosed mental health issues, the Supported Housing team engages with participants through the delivery of support services, including the Salvos' Positive Lifestyle Program (PLP), care planning, intervention and advocacy.



Phillip promotes a recent Open House art program.

Service manager Phillip Buatava says, "We work from the other end of homelessness, with people who are case-managed by the Top End Mental Health team and who live in their own homes but are at risk of homelessness. The prevention program provides psycho-social support to enable individuals who already have a home to remain in their home."



Phillip Buatava and his team work to prevent homelessness.

The PLP works to build greater self-awareness, help transform communication skills and build healthy relationships. With flexible delivery, the program is a non-invasive, non-judgmental way to encourage participants to look at responses and experiences around self-awareness, anger, depression and loneliness, stress, grief and loss, assertiveness and self-esteem.

Phillip says, "I am a huge fan of the PLP, and it is embedded in our Supported Housing Program contract. It is a non-intrusive way of supporting an individual in our prevention program, without calling it therapy. The different PLP topic books are highly effective and allow people to undertake and review the topics at their own pace." – **Naomi Singlehurst**

For more information on PLP, go to [salvationarmy.org.au/fassifern/need-help/positive-lifestyle-program/](https://salvationarmy.org.au/fassifern/need-help/positive-lifestyle-program/)

# Kindness – the ripple effect

Paying it forward brings reciprocal happiness

**WORDS** Bryce Davies

The other day I went to a McDonald's Drive Thru and ordered a small Filet-O-Fish meal deal with a chocolate shake. It came to around \$12.50 and I got ready to pay the girl at the window, but she joyfully announced that the guy in front of me had already paid my bill.

“

**Jesus ... let his love and actions do the talking.**

”

I was delighted and somewhat stunned, as I had been considering doing the same thing while I was waiting to be served. Just a few days earlier I had generously been given \$50, so I said I was happy to pay for the person behind me.

The guy in front of me had pulled over to wait for his order to be finalised, so

I thanked him and he waved me on with a smile. I drove out of the car park and as I stopped at a red light a guy pulled up alongside me, wound down his window and thanked me for paying his bill. He shared that he had paid for the guy behind him too.

## **GOODNESS AND GENEROSITY**

I drove away from the lights with a big smile on my face and a warm, fuzzy glow in my tummy – not only from the magical chemistry of combining fried fish and a chocolate milkshake but also the mysterious intersection of goodness and generosity on a random day with random people.

I have no idea what motivated the kindness. Whatever it was, it is hard to deny that the goodness here was a beautiful thing, without an agenda, that sowed generosity



into the world with an ongoing effect, like throwing a stone into a pond.

Kindness got Jesus into a lot of trouble. People questioned him about his motives and the authority of his goodness. How was he so wise and insightful? How was he so obviously good without 'proper training' and the 'right' credentials? Jesus didn't bother giving his critics a clear answer – he just continued being the amazing person he was and let his love and actions do the talking.

### **KINDNESS AND LOVE**

Many people are cynical about authority of almost any kind and are more inclined to join groups and events that have pure motives, and almost no requirement to join or align to any rigid sort of philosophy. There is a growing trust in the mystery of goodness for the sake of kindness and love.

The care and affection I experience in community life feels safe and genuine.

When the agenda is pure, we are not trying to control each other and there are no requirements to believe anything or behave in certain ways. When love and generosity are given,

they are free from the bonds so often associated with institutions and experts.

The irony of this truth is that things could be disorganised and a bit ad hoc, without a central power body calling the shots and setting the direction of our groups. But they are not. We meet consistently and communicate seamlessly and the spirit of mutual support and encouragement is powerful.

This culture of loving support and care is not mandated or even defined. It is just evolving organically and is a beautiful thing to be a part of.

The only people who questioned Jesus' motives and credentials were the religious leaders of the time who were threatened by his influence and goodness. The people he was intimately involved with, and who he loved, felt his holiness and pure love and couldn't get enough of it.

Definitely something to think about and respond to.

*Major Bryce Davies is a Salvation Army officer (pastor) based in Queensland.*



Scan here to read more life-changing stories of hope.



# Hope for everyone

When Sean started volunteering at Streetlevel he found purpose and hope.

**WORDS** Naomi Singlehurst

Helping in the kitchen for community meals, assisting with the mobile coffee van and serving in any way he can, Sean feels he is an integral part of The Salvation Army's Streetlevel – a service started in Brisbane in 2009 to support those living rough or disconnected from community. Streetlevel offers chapel services, meals, referrals, social enterprises, community connection and more.

Invited by another Streetlevel volunteer, Sean turned up around a year ago to also volunteer, and says with a wide smile, "The rest is history. They literally can't get rid of me. I just love helping people."

He was also surprised to be recommended by the Streetlevel team when some local accommodation became available and says that, while struggles remain, he has more friends, faith, joy, security and hope than he has ever had.

## THE EARLY YEARS

Sean's parents divorced when he was seven years old. His dad remarried and his mum struggled with serious health issues. Although he knew he was loved, he was hurt and angry and now believes he also had ADHD, leading to impulsivity and inability to settle at any school. He was continually expelled and was eventually deemed uncontrollable.

Sean says, "I was 13 and a half when I became a ward of the state. I was supposed to be fostered out but that didn't happen. I hung around with some

wrong people who were a lot older than me. I got pretty street-smart, and I'd find spots where I could make cubby houses and find places to hide and sleep. In Tassie I lived in a cave for three and a half months."

“

**My story is helping people, especially those who need to know that things can change and get better.**

”

With his dog Zac for company, Sean started an apprenticeship, and was helped by his family with housing, but through drug use, and later alcohol use, sabotaged every opportunity. Despite family who tried to support him, a range of good jobs, and one long-term relationship, Sean's struggles with addiction and, he believes, undiagnosed ADHD, left him unsettled and unstable through many stages of his life.

## ROCK BOTTOM AND WAY UP

After maintaining work and a relationship for many years, Sean thought he had life sorted but kept falling back into addiction. At one stage after an altercation in a rehab service, he jumped from an eight-storey building.



After facing many battles in life, Sean is now in a safe and caring place and is helping others find hope.

"I'd never ever attempted to take my own life before," he says. "I don't know what I was thinking. I call it a bit of a cry for help. I was in hospital for three weeks and pretty much wheelchair-bound because I broke my heel, fractured my other heel and fractured my back. But from there, things started picking up."

Sean reconnected with his family, who were always loving towards him, and became a volunteer with the Salvos' Streetlevel service. He has now found his "tribe", friendships, purpose and is also exploring Christian faith and belief.

"I absolutely love helping people," he says. "I love the whole environment of volunteering. It's a chance where I can give back. A lot of people who go to Streetlevel are still highly in addiction and on the streets. I share a bit of my

story with them and feel I'm giving hope and help not to give up.

"I am currently studying Certificate 3 in Community Services at TAFE and am absolutely loving it.

"It's going even better than I even thought it would. I'm not living in shame anymore. I used to hide a lot of what's happened in my life, but I'm finding my story is helping people, especially those who need to know that things can change and get better.

"There's hope for everyone."



Scan here for more information on Salvation Army services.

# Chunky tomato soup



## Ingredients

350 g tomatoes; 1 tbsp olive oil; 1 clove garlic, finely chopped; 1 leek, thinly sliced; 1 onion, chopped; 1 medium carrot, diced; 1 tbsp tomato paste; 5 cups water or vegetable stock; salt and pepper to taste, herbs to taste

## Method

- Skin and roughly chop tomatoes.
- Heat oil and add garlic, leek and onion. When soft, add carrot, tomatoes and tomato paste. Stir to combine.
- Add water or stock and season to taste.
- Simmer until carrots are soft. Serve with fresh basil or lemon thyme.

## Quick quiz

1. What is the most common tree in Australia?
2. There are approximately how many eucalypt species in Australia?
3. Approximately how many leaves does an adult koala eat each night?
4. Around how many hectares of native forests and woodlands are bulldozed across Australia each year?
5. By 2030, how many native animals are estimated to have died in Australia due to excessive tree-clearing?

## Bible byte

“But they will each sit under their own vines and fig trees, and no one will make them afraid again.”

Micah chapter 4 verse 4  
*The Voice translation*

## Tum-Tum

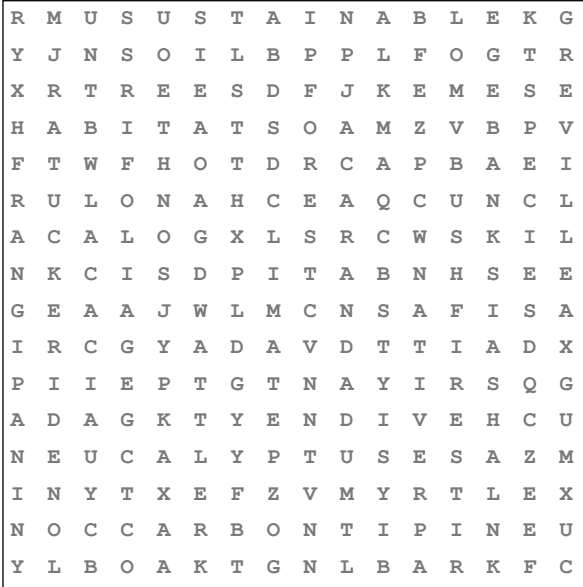
On which page of this week's *Salvos Magazine* is Tum-Tum hiding?





# Wordsearch

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



- |            |             |
|------------|-------------|
| Acacia     | Habitats    |
| Ash        | Jacaranda   |
| Banksia    | Myrtle      |
| Bark       | Native      |
| Bushfires  | Oak         |
| Carbon     | Pine        |
| Climate    | Soil        |
| Eucalyptus | Species     |
| Foliage    | Sustainable |
| Forest     | Trees       |
| Frangipani | Tucker      |
| Grevillea  | Wattle      |
| Gum        | Woodlands   |

## HAVE A LAUGH

- What type of tree likes to give high fives?  
**A palm tree.**
- How do trees get on the internet?  
**They log on.**
- How can you identify a dogwood tree?  
**By its bark.**
- Why did the tree get stumped?  
**It couldn't get to the root of the problem.**



## DID YOU KNOW?

**National Tree Day (30 July) is Australia's largest community tree-planting and nature care event.**

**Each year, around 300,000 people volunteer their time to educate Australians about the natural world around them.**

**The National Tree Day program has seen Australian communities plant almost 26 million trees since 1996.**

**Quiz answers:** 1. eucalypts 2. 900 3. 1 kg. 4. 500,000 hectares. 5. 750 million  
**Turn-Turn:** is hiding behind the shield on page 9.



# Homelessness Week 2023



Scan here for more information on Salvation Army homelessness support services.