



By Lauren Martin

**The Salvation Army has unveiled its first national Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) during an Australia-wide web launch, which included participation from each division of the Australia Territory.**

The RAP has been a year in the making, building on learnings from information gathered in approximately 100 yarning circles that involved officers, employees, volunteers and Salvationists. It has been guided by The Salvation Army's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ministry team and signed off by Reconciliation Australia, as well as The Salvation Army Board.

Uncle Vince Ross, The Salvation Army National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Council Convenor, said the RAP should be a document that inspires action: "Documents have a place, but unless we can get the relationship on a strong footing, those words mean little.

"Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have a strong sense of relationships and of coming together. Reconciliation is not something that one person decides to do, it is done with others; it is a continuous journey that requires commitment and effort by all parties."

The plan outlines several actions The Salvation Army commits to taking, in the areas of truth-telling; social justice and advocacy; cultural immersion experiences; returning of artefacts; and Christmas Cheer.

Some of the actions include committing to ensuring current and future officers be given the opportunity to gain a lived experience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture by taking part in a cultural immersion experience.

Others are centred around increasing opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander involvement in The Salvation Army, including creating opportunities for employment and career development and representation in divisional and territorial forums and conferences.

The Salvation Army has committed to ensuring its personnel across Australia have the cultural capacity to create safe spaces for Indigenous peoples, and for reconciliation to be a continuous journey.

The Territorial Commander, Commissioner Robert Donaldson, encouraged all leaders to "reach out to local Indigenous communities to open pathways for dialogue. Each of us has a part to play in this important process of reconciliation.

"Together we seek God's direction and blessing as we move forward in reconciliation, relationship-building and engagement."





## Enter into hope

In our present world, hope is the small things. Never has this been more pronounced than this year of 2020 when hope is definitely celebrated in small but significant steps.

As we look towards Christmas, we may have a mix of emotions. There is pain from this year, things not able to be achieved, separation from family and friends, isolation, loss of income and employment. Along with these feelings, Christmas can be a reminder of unresolved conflict, painful relationships and stress.

Yet, when we hear Christmas music, see a lighted tree, smell, a delightful Christmassy smell there's a feeling of wonder, awe and hope. Christmas inspires hope most of all for us. The stories and symbols that speak to the Christmas story whisper 'keep going, don't give up'.

The Christmas story draws us to the star of hope that led the wise men to Jesus. As they were guided towards the baby, Jesus promises to guide us; we can trust him on our journey of life.

The Christmas story draws us to believe, to believe the impossible. Jesus born of Mary in a stable filled with farm animals, the saviour of the world born in a simple, smelly stable. Yes, we believe.

Lastly, Christmas draws us to the light that persists in the darkness of whatever circumstance we find ourselves in. Christmas reminds us that even when things seem dark, we can trust the everlasting light, 'The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it' - John 1:5.



*Robert & Janine*

**Commissioners Robert and Janine Donaldson**  
Territorial Leaders

## The deepest peace

What a challenging year 2020 has been. But no matter what was thrown our way, Salvos truly lived, loved and fought alongside others to see our vision realised. And most of that was while personally dealing with COVID-19 restrictions.

I continue to remain humbled to be Chief Secretary of this potential-filled territory and to lead so many passionate and dedicated people.

This year, more than ever, Salvos are being called to leave no one in need – to show people and families doing it tough that through Jesus' love, there is hope this Christmas.

Christmas is a special time of the year, and not one Christmas goes past for me when I don't recall Christmas Eve 1974. During the hours when Cyclone Tracy raged around my family and I in Darwin, I experienced deep unfathomable peace and calm. I believe that peace came from the presence of Jesus among us as we huddled together in our kitchen. It was for me a realisation of the promise of God when he sent Jesus to earth as a babe – Emmanuel – God with us.

2020 has been a turbulent year. My prayer is twofold for you this Christmas: that you would know deep peace despite the challenge and hardship of this year; and that you would have an awareness of God's presence because of the promise realised at the birth of Jesus. Emmanuel – God with us.



*Winsome Merrett*

**Colonel Winsome Merrett**  
Chief Secretary

*Spirit of giving*



This year's Christmas Day Offering will go directly to the Self Denial Appeal, with Salvationists invited to financially support the work of our brothers and sisters overseas who are doing it tough due to the COVID-19 pandemic. And, in social-distancing fashion, there's no tithing envelope required thanks to a new SMS platform.

"This year with the impact of COVID-19 on so many of our Partner Territories, it was felt that supporting more than one project through our Christmas Day Offering would be helpful," said Major Bruce Harmer, National Secretary for Public Relations.

A text message from Territorial Leaders, Janine and Robert Donaldson, on 4 December invited Salvationists to prayerfully consider their Christmas Day offering, which can be given anytime during December.

Scan the  
QR code  
to donate:



# Celebrating Christmas

## 'cancer and COVID-free!'



**Christmas 2020 will take on new meaning for Lieutenant Zochhuansangi from The Salvation Army Behliangchhip Corps in the India Eastern Territory.**

Diagnosed at the beginning of the year with breast cancer, she took leave from the corps where, with her husband, she is the corps officer: "I felt at peace in God's grace. It was the thought of leaving my one-year-old son that weighed me down."

From the rural village of Behliangchhip in the Jampui Hills, not far from the Bangladesh border, she began her 3000km journey to recovery on the other side of India to the Tata Memorial Hospital in Mumbai.

"I faced tears and challenges throughout the treatment. In spite of this and the painful separation from our son, God's might, love and power was revealed to me again."

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*"His name is above cancer and his name is above COVID-19."*

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While in hospital, there was another twist. Lieut Zochhuansangi contracted COVID-19. "There was so much fear and uncertainty surrounding COVID. I felt lonely, far away from home and desperate. I was sharing hospital space with strangers and people who didn't even speak the same language as me. I desperately prayed to God for a miracle."

One stranger became an answer to her prayer: "She gave me a gift hamper containing all the things that I needed during my stay in the COVID isolation ward. I cried. I realised that God was with me and that he was taking care of my every need."

Today, Lieut Zochhuansangi is in remission from cancer, is COVID-free and reunited with her son.

"In a very powerful way, my sickness reminded me that God will always be with me. He proved that he is above everything. His name is above cancer and his name is above COVID-19."

"I fully believe that God's power was made perfect in my weakness" - 2 Corinthians 12:9-10.

*\*As told to Lauren Westwood*



## Others newsletter

Welcome to the first Others newsletter, where we connect Salvos in mission through news and stories of hope and transformation. And while this newsletter will be printed and distributed quarterly, we encourage you to read the daily Salvation Army news, testimonies, and personnel updates at [others.org.au](https://others.org.au)





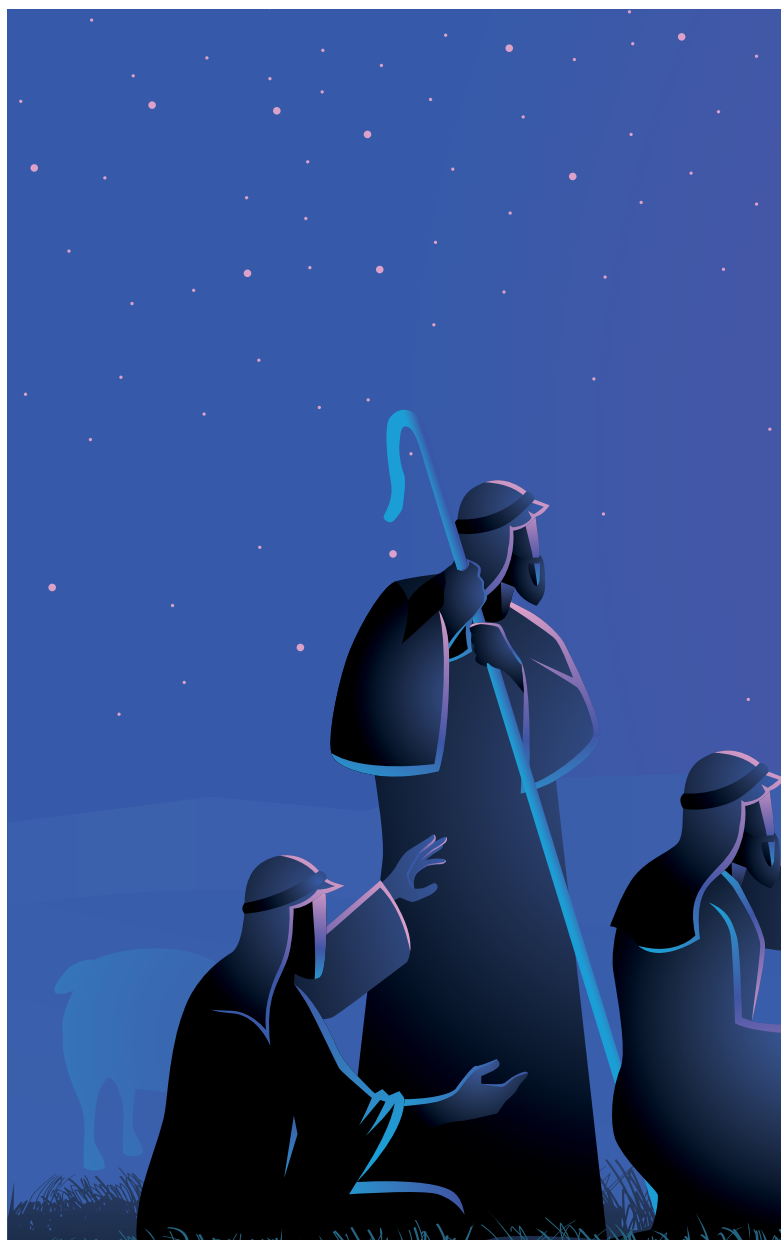
## The General's Christmas Message 2020

By General Brian Peddle

The year 2020 has been unique, interesting and challenging. We have lived through a global pandemic, the ramifications of which continue to impact our lives. We have witnessed the best of humanity as communities came together and helped to care for the vulnerable and those who we needed to shield. We have seen the worst of humanity as racism cost lives and led to violent protests by demonstrators from varying viewpoints. All of this has combined to both exhilarate and exhaust us throughout this year.

It is into our messed-up, complex, ever-changing, uncertain and perplexing world that Jesus comes as the Prince of Peace. Jesus was familiar with prejudice, oppressive political regimes, institutionalised religion and suffering. So, although the man Jesus lived 2000 years ago, his words still have relevance because he, as the Son of God, has an eternal perspective.

So, what did Jesus teach us about peace? In the Sermon on the Mount, as he began his teaching ministry, Jesus said: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God" - Matthew 5:9. Then, in preparing his disciples for his departure and the arrival of the promised Holy Spirit, Jesus says: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I



give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid" - John 14:27.

This is the same Jesus who spoke to the wind and waves, saying, "Peace, be still!" - Mark 4:39 (King James Version). To the woman who anointed his feet at Simon's house, Jesus said, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace" - Luke 7:50. After explaining many things to his disciples, Jesus said, "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world" - John 16:33.

Peace distinguishes the earthly existence of Jesus. In announcing his birth, the angels declared, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favour rests" - Luke 2:14. As Jesus appeared to his followers after the Resurrection he would declare: "Peace be with you!" - John 20:21.



"Glory to God in the highest  
heaven, and on earth peace to  
those on whom his favour rests"  
(Luke 2:14).

If Jesus was so intent on sharing the peace of God with others, we must do the same, but we cannot share with others what we do not first have for ourselves. Consequently, we need to ensure we are living in relationship with God and receive his peace that is beyond our understanding, yet which keeps our hearts and minds secure in Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:7). It is from this position of peace, of keeping our focus upon God (Isaiah 26:3), that we are able to experience the peace of God in the storms of life and share that peace with others. We are called children of God when we are peacemakers, peace-bringers and peacebuilders because we share the very essence and nature of God with others.

So, in this Advent season and beyond, let us be people of peace. May our very presence bring peace into rooms, situations and lives because we are indwelt by the Holy Spirit. May our words be words of peace because we share the words of God. Wherever you are and whatever

situation you find yourself in, may you experience the peace of God today.

*Except where mentioned otherwise, Scripture quotations are from the New International Version*



*General Brian Peddle, World Leader of The Salvation Army.*

# The gift of hope

By Lieutenant Andrew Webb

**At Christmas, and throughout the year, I have learned that one of the greatest gifts we can give is hope.**

At times, we might have to hold on to hope for others, acting as 'hope-bearers' for them, until they can see it for themselves. Sometimes it can be a long journey, but it can also be as simple as an encouraging word.

My wife Laura and I were reminded of that several years ago.

That Christmas, we had a substantial budget tightening, but the needs had not decreased. So, we committed as a corps to creating around 150 Christmas hampers for families as we had done in previous years.

A couple of weeks before the distribution date, we had been able to gather much of what we'd needed, but we were short on funds and had almost no long-life milk. (We wanted to have all the essential staples in the hampers, plus more.)

So, Laura simply prayed for milk – or a donation to buy some.

Then she went to pick the kids up from school.

I was just packing up and an old Holden Commodore came rolling into the car park. A fellow who looked like he'd lived a tough life got out and opened his boot. There were 250 bottles of long-life milk. He'd just been to the supermarket and bought it for us.

Laura and I had not yet told a soul – not even at the church – but that was exactly what was needed, with plenty to spare. What an answer to prayer!

He and I loaded it all into the office and I went back out to his car to thank him and see him off. He asked me, "Do you know why I did this today?" And then said, "Five years ago I came here, and my life was a real mess, but someone (from your centre) put their arm around me and told me my life would be OK. And so, I've come back to say thank you."

He continued, "You won't see me again because I've moved out of the area, but I just felt I had to do this for you today."

*As followers of Jesus, the very 'currency' we trade with is hope.*

I learned many lessons from that – including the fact that you never know what an enormous impact a small gesture of encouragement might have on someone. Plus, you never know if it will come back to you in a blessing later down the track.

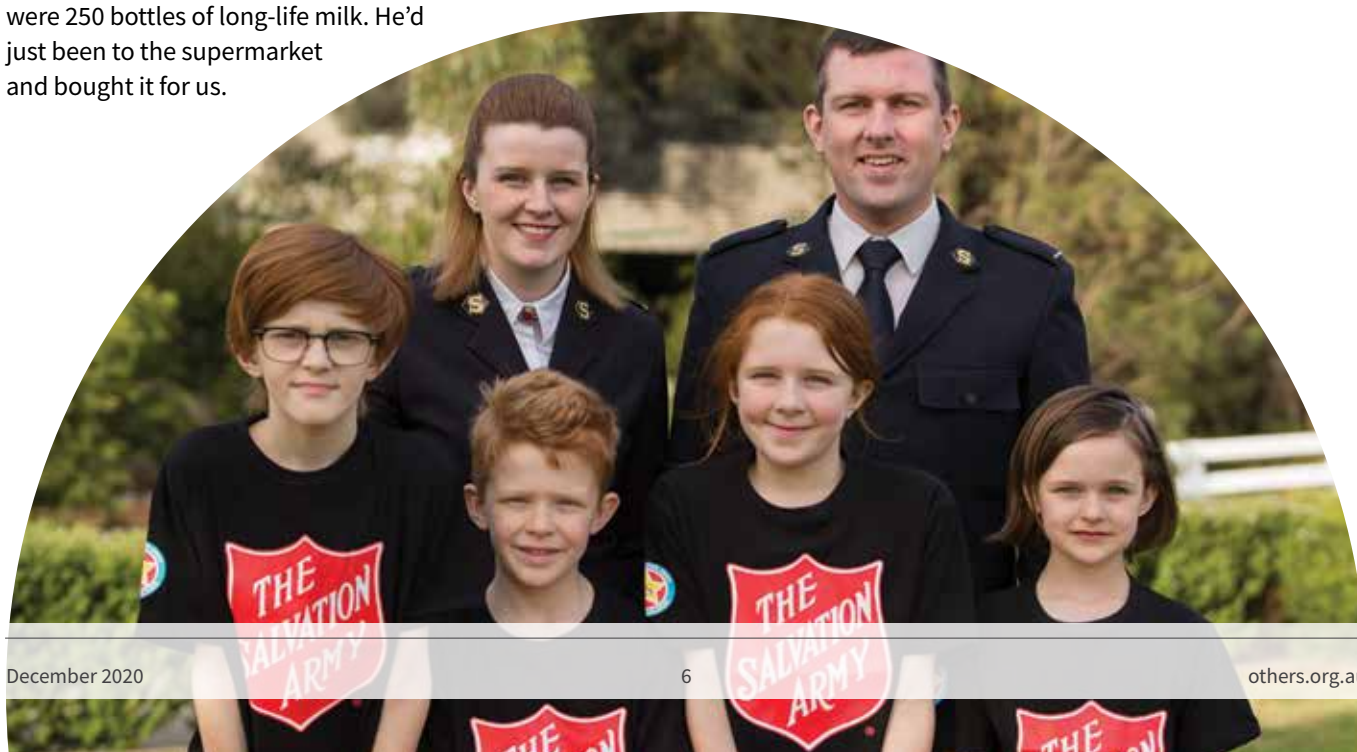
And I've also learned that when my wife prays for something – look out!

There have been so many other situations that seemed hopeless, where we felt we were able to carry a glimmer of hope into our community. As followers of Jesus, the very 'currency' we trade with is hope.

It is a precious gift we can give out lavishly, confident in a God who provides in endless supply.

*Lieutenant Andrew Webb is Corps Officer at Sunbury Corps in Victoria.*

*Pictured below: Lieutenants Laura and Andrew Webb with their family.*





# Commissioning

## 2020

For the first time in The Salvation Army's history in Australia, a session of cadets has been commissioned in an entirely 'online' ceremony, from various locations across Australia. In their message to the *Messengers of Grace* session, Commissioners Janine and Robert Donaldson said: "As recipients of God's grace, our responsibility is to show God's wonderful grace that reaches out to everyone. Regardless of status, background or circumstances. God's grace is available to all."



BETHANY BAILLIE

From: Eastern Beaches (NSW)

**Appointed to: Corps Officer, Kalgoorlie-Boulder (WA)**

"I have become more confident in who I am and how God uses me ... this greater confidence in who I am created to be has changed how I see God and makes it possible for me to lead authentically."



BJ BAILLIE

From: Eastern Beaches (NSW)

**Appointed to: Corps Officer, Kalgoorlie-Boulder (WA)**

"I have discovered that it is not up to me to decide how people connect with God; instead I am called to provide an environment conducive to faith encounters – all week long, not just on Sundays."



WAYNE COLLYER

From: Moreland City (VIC)

**Appointed to: Corps Officer, Palmerston & Top End Ministry Team Member (SA/NT), Assistant NT Social Program Service Manager and Coordinator (Social Mission Department)**

"Throughout the training experience, the common learning for me has been the importance of bringing myself to ministry; I don't need to be someone I am not."



GRAHAM R. KENNEDY

From: Torquay (VIC)

**Appointed to: Corps Officer-Team Member, Ballarat (VIC)**

"It has been a long journey to get to officership, but I am confident that God has been, and will be, present in both the high and low times."



WEI (BETH) SHAO

From: Hurstville (NSW)

**Appointed to: Corps Officer-Team Member, Hurstville (NSW)**

"The countless unknowns about officership could make me nervous. What I know for certain is that God is trustworthy to guide my life."



ALISON TEMPLAR

From: Brunswick (VIC)

**Appointed to: Corps Officer-Team Member, Brunswick (VIC)**

"I remind myself every day that my role is to 'act justly, love with kindness and walk humbly' with the people God puts on my pathway, and I am privileged to be able to do so."



SARAH WALKER

From: Wollongong (NSW)

**Appointed to: Corps Officer-Team Member, Parramatta (NSW)**

"I want to lead well, I want to contribute to our organisation and I want to grow the local church. But above all of these things, I want to show all people that I encounter the love of Christ."

If you missed the Commissioning, or would like to watch it again, head to Salvo Studios on YouTube or scan here:





By Garth R. Hentzschel

The Salvation Army's 60s pop group, The Joystings recorded several Christmas songs and carols. Joy Webb, the leader of the group, said she "always really loved Christmas time ... in my family life, it has always been a wonderfully happy time."

This may be a reason why Joy wrote and recorded many songs about Christmas. The record, *Christmas with the Joy Strings* was released by Regal Zonophone in 1965, which on the B side included one of Joy's own Christmas songs, 'Such a Tiny Child'.

An unusual recording of 'O Little Town of Bethlehem' appeared on the B Side of 'Well Seasoned'. The carol was put to the tune of 'The House of the Rising Sun', sung by Bob Dylan in 1962 and The Animals in 1964. 'Well Seasoned' was released 1966 and produced by Regal Zonophone in the UK and by Epic in the USA during 1967.

For 20 years, Joy would join each consecutive General of The Salvation Army as they visited Salvation Army institutes at Christmas, including The Haven, a Salvation Army children's home. These visits gave rise to some of Joy's other Christmas songs such as, 'Noel', 'The Surprise' and 'Christmas is...'

The best-known Christmas song by Joy Webb is 'A Starry Night', a Salvation Army song that has entered secular

mainstream music. The first title of this song was 'King of all the World'; however, Robert Dockerill of EMI Records told Joy: "Titles sometimes sell songs and 'A Starry Night' oozes Christmas atmosphere."

The song was first sung at a Christmas televised event in Trafalgar Square, London. Training college staff had given The Joystings a flask of coffee and as the rehearsals went on and on in freezing temperatures, The Joystings crept away to warm themselves with the coffee. The other artists saw them move away, so followed. As The Joystings started pouring out the coffee, the other artists grabbed a cup each and lined up for their share. After all, it was The Salvation Army, and they always gave a cuppa when people were in need!

'A Starry Night' was recorded in 1964 by Regal Zonophone in the UK and by Columbia in Australia. The song appeared in the UK charts for four weeks and reached 34 in the top 40. It remains popular; for example in 1997 it was in the top 10 of the UK school assembly song charts. In 2009, it appeared on the CD *Carol of the Bells – 25 Most Loved Christmas Songs* arranged by Derric Johnson, consultant for Walt Disney Company. It has also been recorded in sign language and developed for karaoke.

*Garth R. Hentzschel is President of the Brisbane Chapter of The Salvation Army Historical Society and Executive Editor of The Australasian Journal of Salvation Army History*



# George knows the true gift of Christmas

By Barry Gittins



Lifelong Salvationist George Ellis loves Christmas, which is an opportunity for him and his wife Joy to celebrate Jesus' birth and spend time with their family.

In particular, George knows that the most wonderful time of the year revolves around relationship, not receiving gifts. George, who soldiers at Melbourne Project 614 Corps, is encouraging people to take stock this Christmas, after a year that led us to question what 'normal' looks like.

"Jesus taught us that it is more blessed to give than to receive," George says. It is a truth he has lived out through his life, serving others in many ways through The Salvation Army, including decades spent collecting at Christmas time and helping provide for people in need leading up to Christmas Day.

The ideas of building a personal fortune and consumerism's allure never had any appeal for George, who worked as a greengrocer, in the health sector, and as the founder of The Salvation Army's archives and museum in Melbourne.

"We had enough," he says. "I could have made much more money, but making money has never been my ambition. I have been very happy to help, to serve and to volunteer.

"Giving, rather than taking, is rare these days, but I encourage everyone to give, because you will be so happy helping others. The 'seed' for me was planted by the people who helped me and were kind to me as a boy growing up in a Salvation Army children's home. They set a loving example that has stayed with me."

George says when people give selflessly and sacrificially, he sees "changes in people's attitudes, and they gain hope. By the grace of God, their lives are changed for the better."



George is an active member of Melbourne Project 614 Corps

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Everyday Salvos



# New South Wales and Australian Capital Territory

## ‘One life at a time’ in Moree

By Lauren Martin

Situated on the banks of the Gwydir River in north-west New South Wales, Moree is an agricultural town with a large Indigenous population.

“Our main focus in Moree is to make a significant impact amongst youth and children in the town and we really wanted to focus on the long-term picture of seeing a generational change,” says Jason Poutawa, who co-leads The Salvation Army in Moree.

## Hope in the heart of Canberra

Canberra City Corps has transitioned during COVID-19 to being a Community of Hope, focusing on recovery services.

The corps has long had a strong connection with Canberra Recovery Services, and during the easing of COVID-19 restrictions began holding non-traditional COVID-safe gatherings in open spaces to maintain and deepen relationships.

“God is doing such incredible, beautiful, things,” said Corps Officer Captain Sally Stevens. She recounts how she heard one person say, “I never knew a place like this ever existed” after they had someone sit down and listen to their story. Someone else said, “I’ve missed this place.”

“I love doing life at Canberra City Salvos,” she said. “I’m so thankful to God for the slow, deep ways I see him at work around me.”



Moree Salvation Army co-leader Jessica Poutawa with girls from the corps’ kids club.

To do this, the Army is investing heavily in mentoring. Deadly Diamonds is a leadership program made up of eight to 10 young people from the Army’s youth group who help to lead the Salvos’ weekly kids club. Most of them also participate in Salvos Mentoring, a once-a-fortnight (or weekly) breakfast with one or two of their peers and a local Christian mentor who commits to being a reliable support person to them for at least a year.

Some might question the allocation of resources to invest so heavily in so few lives. After all, the Great Commission of Jesus is to reach the whole world. In Moree, Deadly Diamonds and Salvos Mentoring works intensively with a mere 20 to 30 young people at a time.

But Jason likens the model to that of Jesus, who had powerful connection points with multitudes of people but heavily invested into just 12 – his disciples. “You look at the impact that Jesus made on those 12 and then the impact that they made on the world after he left. That is central to what we are doing – to get to those places of trust and intimacy and connection ... and to consistently be a positive role model on their journey.”

Read more on this story and  
how young people’s lives  
are being transformed:





# Queensland

## Hope House 'A radical new way of doing church'

By Darryl Whitecross

"A radical new way of doing church" has been born from the disruption of COVID-19 on Queensland's Sunshine Coast.

Caboolture Corps Officer Major Helen Ellicott said during the COVID-19 restrictions when churches couldn't meet for corporate worship, God had said to her that "the way forward is to look back: Look back at the early Church and how they did church".

She said the early Church met in homes and broke bread together. "They cared for each other and took care of each others' needs; they studied the Scriptures and prayed together, and God answered their prayers." So, with the early Church as an example, the congregation now meets in homes in smaller groups.

The corps made a bold decision to move their family store into their corps citadel, a much better facility which was sitting empty week after week due to the COVID restrictions. Corps church programs and community outreaches moved back to the corps' original site in Lower King Street – where several other Army welfare programs such as Doorways and Moneycare now operate.

The old family store site – a house – has been transformed into 'Hope House', where corps ministries for all ages operate.

It also has a men's shed attached, complete with 'big boys toys', a couple of pinball machines, a couple of billiard/snooker tables and a series of big-screen computer stations.

There is a plan to serve breakfasts on Sunday mornings for people experiencing homelessness.



Member for Morayfield, Mark Ryan, officially opens the Caboolture Family Store as Manager Carol Clark, and Caboolture Corps Officers Majors Bruce and Helen Ellicott cut the ribbon.

Floored by mission vision: Caboolture Corps Officers Majors Helen and Bruce Ellicott discovered a "beautiful timber floor" under the old floor coverings when giving hope to the old house that used to house the family store.



# Victoria

Watch a video of  
Northside Salvos here:



*Major Joy Cassidy loves connecting people at Northside Salvation Army.*

## Corps planted during lockdown thrives

The Salvation Army Northside Corps and Community Centre in the northern suburbs of Geelong was about to launch Sunday worship just as COVID-19 began spreading across Victoria.

To maintain a connection with their community, they began 'church in a bag'. It started with six people and has now grown to a socially-isolated congregation of more than 30.

How? "It's all about relationship," says Major Joy Cassidy.

"Out of those six people, they weren't all Christians. Some of them had never been to church, some of them had never picked up a Bible in their life and then some had been Christians for a long time," she said. Each of the 'church in a bag' had Bible-based reading material, an activity centred on prayer or Bible teaching and a small snack. They were hand-delivered with a socially isolated chat.

The other way the corps connects with its community is its twice-weekly fruit and veggie market days, all operational throughout 2020, adhering to COVID-19 regulations. Joy said the market day is about more than just food: "It's actually about the journey, which is different for everybody.

"I think sometimes we can negate the importance of just building a relationship and for people to be valued. They're not just a person, they are somebody and somebody of worth."

## Organic church growth during COVID

By Rod Yule

In Stawell and Ararat, God's Spirit is breathing new life in the midst of a global pandemic. Pre-COVID, nearly 40 people would attend Salvation Army services at the two Victorian corps. With the onset of COVID-19, the formal services stopped and prior to Stage 3 Lockdown, there were 16 small groups and nearly 80 people engaged in meeting together in homes to pray, read God's word and share in meals together. All the groups have been exploring the Seven Signs of John's Gospel.

People who never previously came to the Sunday services are now coming to these 'home churches'. Captains Greg and Lynne Turnbull, Corps Officers at Ararat, and Sandra Pickens, Ministry Assistant at Stawell, feel that they are "more engaged in the community", and the groups are "more organic and less programmed".

Without COVID-19, Greg admits they may have continued to do the same traditional services. In the middle of genuine anxiety and grief for people in the face of this pandemic, God is doing new things.



Simon Adkins with his painting from 'Art Fridays'

Tasmania

## Creativity builds resilience at Common Ground

By Jessica Morris

When The Salvation Army Housing Campbell Street residence had a small fire accident last year, the artwork that lined their common-room walls was ruined. Now, thanks to a successful council grant for the Common Ground facility, a new art program is helping residents make their mark on the community.

The grant allowed the Campbell Street team to cover the cost of materials, and 'Art Friday' was born. Every week, multiple residents gather to paint and create from the heart under the guidance of Jakub Rejlich, who works as a Support Staff member at Campbell Street and has experience in the fine arts. And they've done more than just fill the new common-room walls – they all managed to sell their paintings too!

"The art group is a lifeline for me," said Sharee, a tenant and art group participant.

"I always thought I was not good enough, but these art days have given me the confidence to express myself and find my identity as an artist."

"The creative process can bring healing to people through individual and collective emotional and spiritual expression. The tenants have clearly been able to express some of this spiritual encounter, which is part of their God-given capacity as people," said Major Brad Watson, Public Relations Secretary for Tasmania.

Any artist will tell you that you can't contain creativity, which is why no one was surprised when one tenant, Simon, went off-canvas and painted the building – a trend they hope to continue in the future.

For now, multiple structural pillars at Campbell Street stand painted as permanent reminders that anyone can go "From Darkness to Light".

"I wanted for those people who have started their journey in Common Ground to remember that we all came from the dark but that we can all start on a new and bright future in a warm, safe and grounded environment," said Simon.



# South Australia and Northern Territory

## Top End expansion

By Darryl Whitecross

COVID-19 restrictions in the Northern Territory this year have given Darwin Corps the opportunity to upgrade its facilities in order to offer hope to more community members.

Former Corps Officer Captain Peter Jones (who has now been appointed as Public Relations Secretary for the Northern Territory) said that “pre-COVID” the weekly community breakfast ministry could get quite busy with a dozen or more people wanting to use the single shower onsite.

Now, with four showers due to the COVID renovation upgrade, that should ease congestion.

With the addition of laundry facilities and also an upgrade



*Renovations at Darwin Corps in the Northern Territory during COVID-19 has allowed the corps to serve more people.*

to the kitchen, Peter said the breakfast ministry would be able to grow.

The corps is looking to begin 2021 with the same vision it began 2020: that “each time someone walks through the door”, that person would immediately be made to feel they were “the most important person on the planet”, Peter said.

He said intentionally letting people know they are important means they leave the corps feeling valued, knowing that “someone cares; someone has shown them a bit of hope”.

## Reimagining ministry in Adelaide

The Salvation Army is reimagining some of its ministry opportunities in the City of Churches.

The congregations of the Oakden and Campbelltown corps in north-east Adelaide have been holding joint worship services, calling the union North East Salvos.

Captain Aaron Stobie, Campbelltown Corps Officer, said in praying through the possibilities and discussion with the area officers and corps leadership, there was “a strong sense that God is calling the two corps to be working together for greater community impact leading to greater Kingdom growth”.

Other ways the corps are working together include in youth ministry, men’s fellowship and in ministry to local schools.

## Christ at the Door

Earlier this year, Australia Territory Leaders, Commissioners Janine and Robert Donaldson, encouraged all officers to read the book, ‘Christ at the Door’ by retired American Commissioner Phil Needham.

Port Augusta Corps in South Australia went one step further and started a book club using the book, helping the corps to reimagine what church could look like post COVID-19 and into the future. “It’s a very good book to challenge the concept of ‘church’,” Corps Officer Major Gaye Day (pictured below) said.





# Western Australia

## The Third Place

By Lauren Martin

Subiaco is located in the heart of Perth, among some of the most affluent suburbs of the West Australian capital. It's the sort of place where The Salvation Army would normally send Red Shield Appeal collectors, not social workers. But in her role as a corps officer in nearby Floreat, Major Lyn Jones felt God laying on her heart the everyday struggles of those for whom finances aren't an issue.

These struggles, she says, may include loneliness, social isolation, relationship breakdown, messy divorces, or stress.

Lyn now serves as Mission Leader of The Third Place in Subiaco, a Salvation Army expression unlike any other in Western Australia. Completely renovated, the former Subiaco Corps building has office space, a commercial kitchen and café, a worship area and breakout areas for intimate chats or small groups. A number of partnerships with different groups and organisations mean that the place is a buzz of activity.

The focus of The Third Place is about faith, friendship and fellowship. "The main thrust of this space is just to [support people] dealing with life and mental health. If we're all honest, all of us have to deal with that, just on different levels. We all have stress, anxiety, fear, pain, loss. And we normally don't deal with that very well! So, we're going to give people the tools to do that and a safe place to do that."

## Discipleship focus

The Salvation Army in Western Australia launched its Urban Missions Movement in 2020 – an alternative leadership pathway for people to explore their calling.

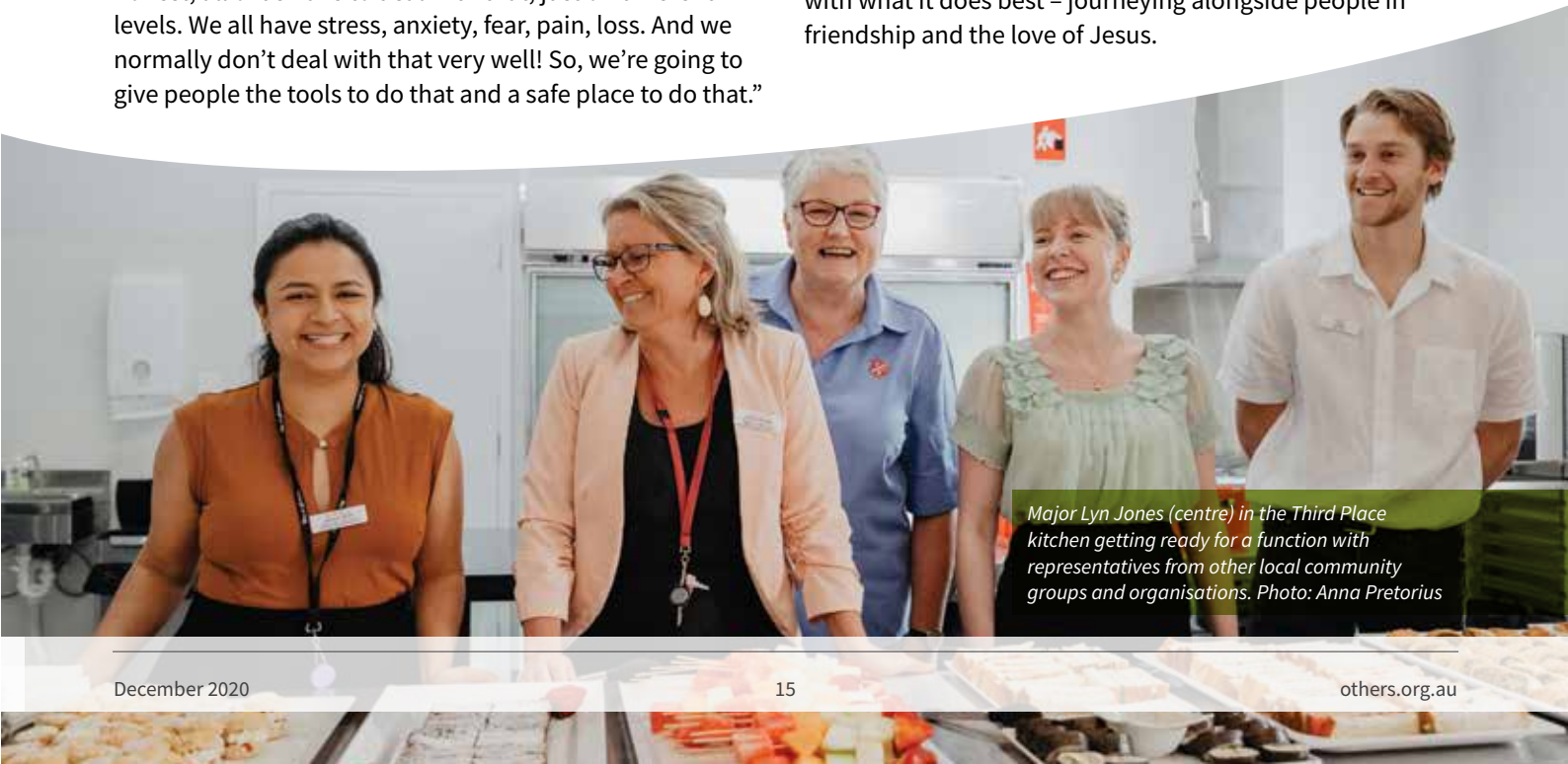
The things that set the Urban Missions Movement apart from other leadership training courses is that it's open to people of all ages – "It's not just a 'youth thing,'" say Auxiliary-Lieutenants Marendra and Steve Freind who run the movement – and it's not a live-in commitment.

Each participant stays living within their own communities and serving at their own corps, but receives regular mentoring, hands-on training and mission opportunities. This means participants can maintain their normal jobs and lives while investing intensely in their relationship with God, learning how to be a disciple and disciple others, and set aside time to listen to Jesus about how he wants them to follow him, within their own spheres of influence.

"We need to raise up leaders for the future," Marendra said. "We have tried to break down the paradigm of Sunday-centric and program-centric church [and ask], 'How can we be Kingdom builders in our communities every day?'"

With so many key partnerships offering a range of supports from The Third Place, Lyn says The Salvation Army can get on with what it does best – journeying alongside people in friendship and the love of Jesus.

Read more about The Third Place:



Major Lyn Jones (centre) in the Third Place kitchen getting ready for a function with representatives from other local community groups and organisations. Photo: Anna Pretorius

## Difficult roads lead to beautiful places

One of Amanda's first jobs was at the Doveton Salvos in south-east Melbourne, sorting and distributing toys for children at Christmas time. Today, she is the team leader for emergency relief at nearby Packenham Salvos. Amanda (pictured) shares her story:

Sadly, [my mum] became a heroin addict and my sister and I were taken from her care. We lived with my father's mum and dad and had a great life. I always knew, though, despite everything, that mum loved us.

I stayed with my grandparents until I was 13 and was expelled from school. My sister and I moved back to mum's and lived the party life for many years. I wanted my life to be different.



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I went to TAFE and completed years 11 and 12, and then started a Diploma of Community Services. I was struggling to find a service to do my placement with and decided to contact The Salvation Army's Doveton Thrift Shop and Community Services Centre. Major John Farquharson – now my mentor – was the manager there and was so encouraging.



After my initial Christmas work, I continued with the job. In one of the most eye-opening work experiences I've had, I became involved in the PIVOT youth crime prevention program run from the Dandenong Salvos.

The kids could relate to me because I knew what it was like to be drunk, hungry, not able to rely on family, and surrounded by drugs. I had a deeper understanding of what they needed and how they wanted to be treated. I became more of a role model to them.

I finished my diploma in late 2018. It took me almost three years and two attempts, but I did it!

I love that the Salvos care for the whole person. We can offer them food, crisis assistance, referrals and a faith pathway if they are curious.

Through the pandemic, I have felt the need to belong somewhere, to have that feeling of family and community. My colleague John sent me the link to Berwick Salvos online church, and my partner, Greg, and I have been going for a few months now.

It has been easy for me to join church online. I can be in the background, in my home environment and I feel really comfortable and enjoy being there. Church explores the Word of God in a non-pressured environment.

Online, I have found people to be friendly, open and accepting. I want to be a part of this, to get to know the congregation. The format allows people to share and we get insight into others.

I feel like this is the start of really nice journey for me. Difficult roads definitely lead to beautiful places.

Scan QR code for more transformation stories.

