

# On the Scene

SPRING 2006 NEWS & STORIES FROM THE SALVATION ARMY AUSTRALIA EASTERN TERRITORY

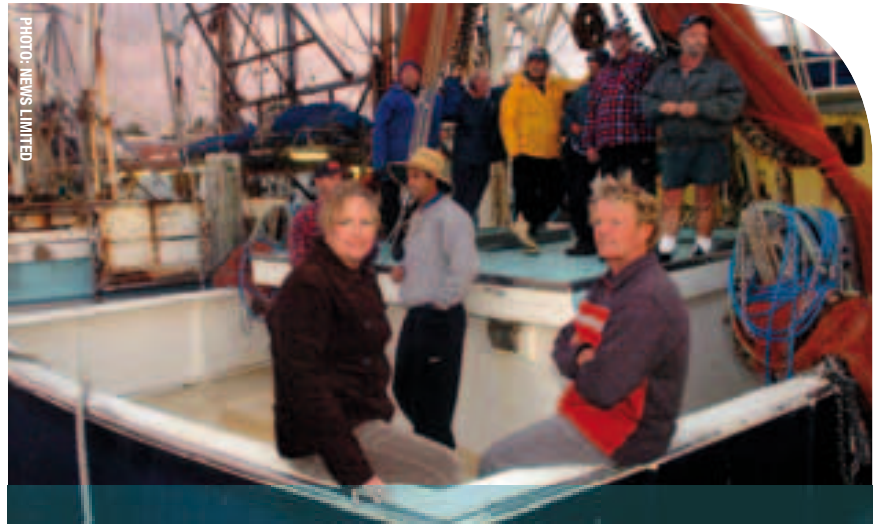
## Devastated fishing families

### Helping to ease the pressure

**“Fishers now tell of the devastation to their businesses, the break up of families and the frightening prospects of suicides in their communities.”**

TANIA CHESWORTH.

**RIGHT** A GROUP OF AFFECTED FISHERS FROM CROWDY HEAD IN NORTH NSW.



Faced with an extended period of drought, steeply-increasing licensing costs and regulations, and spiralling fuel costs, the commercial fishing industry in NSW is in crisis, according to a new report.

The report *Drought Effects of the NSW Fishing Industry* by the Clarence River Fisherman’s Co-operative, says: “Fishermen will tell you, ‘when there is a drought on land, there is a drought in the water’. The effects on fishing businesses and people are the same as for farmers. And the effects are long-felt after the drought has passed, with a lag period of around two years.”

Climatic factors such as El Nino, which can bring drought to the mainland, mean radical changes to sea temperatures, water nutrient quality and fish location. Land drought also means that river systems

dry up and bait sources die, or rivers are not flushed out to sea and so breeding patterns for marine fish change in response.

The report says: “This drought is having a large impact on the fishing industry, more than any other in history. Financial obligations are many. For example, government licences and fuel prices are at an all time high, product prices at an all time low and institutions are backing away from the industry, with only two insurance companies handling boat insurance.”

Scone-based drought support worker Tania Chesworth agrees: “On average I am taking between five to ten calls per week from families on the coast, from the far north coast down to the south coast (of NSW). Again and again I hear the same story, of an industry that was once self-sufficient, people

who took pride in their profession and their ability to be good providers for their families. The same fishers now tell of the devastation of their businesses, the break up of families and the frightening prospects of suicides in their communities.

“Fishers are being driven to work in risky conditions and rough weather to help make ends meet, and lives have been lost as a result,” says Tania. “These families are desperate for help. There is currently no form of (government) drought assistance available for commercial fisherman, as they are not classed as primary producers.”

In response, **The Salvation Army** has been able to give a number of grants to fishing families in greatest crisis to help meet essential household expenses.

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Thredbo landslide survivor Stuart Diver has lent his support to a new Salvation Army campaign in appreciation for the support he was shown by The Salvation Army after the Thredbo disaster. See page 4.

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Salvation Army’s Foster House has become the unlikely means of connecting with homeless men in inner-city Sydney.

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RED SHIELD APPEAL

Thank you!

Thank you to the thousands of volunteer doorknock collectors and generous supporters who have helped raise a record result of just over \$64 million nationally for the 2006 Red Shield Appeal. Your support has enabled us to move into the new financial year with increased confidence.



An easy way to help the environment and your community is to think about Salvos Stores! Instead of throwing away your quality used clothing, furniture and furnishings, donate them to Salvos Stores. We'll give you back your storage space and sell those items to raise money for our important community projects. For advice on what Salvos Stores can accept, call one of our volunteers on 13 SALVOS (13 72 58) or visit [www.salvosstores.org.au](http://www.salvosstores.org.au)

### Binge drinking booklet

The Salvation Army will launch an awareness campaign during September in response to the increasing problem of binge drinking in our community. As part of this, an information booklet will be available regarding the dangers of binge drinking and alcohol abuse. To obtain your free copy, please phone (02) 9266 9820 or visit [salvos.org.au/alcohol](http://salvos.org.au/alcohol)

### Free christmas concert

"Christmas Unwrapped" is a free family concert to be held at Sydney Town Hall, Sunday 3 December. This is a very popular event so be there early to get a seat. Concert starts at 6pm sharp! Visit [salvos.org.au/christmas](http://salvos.org.au/christmas) for more details closer to the time or phone us on (02) 9266 9551.

# A land of droughts ~ and flooding rains

An extreme wet season greatly exacerbated by torrential rains associated with Cyclones Larry and Monica has left some property owners and managers in Queensland's top end still isolated since the storms passed.

"Many of the top end properties we visit are still feeling the effects months later," says Colin Kingston of **The Salvation Army's** Outback Flying service.

"We were up at a couple of properties recently south of Normanton and they were saying they're only just starting their first round of muster for the year. Normally this happens in March. They still can't access stretches of their land that are under water," he says.

Since the rains, the Outback Flying Service has organised a food drop, visits and evacuations, and simply a hand of friendship, to those trapped on isolated properties. Although property managers and owners on the vast properties plan ahead for the wet season isolation, the higher levels of rainfalls surprised many.

Captain Kingston explains: "The irony is

that we also visit people south of Mt Isa who did not get much rain at all. There are some properties within an hour's flying of Mt Isa that haven't had rain for three years."

Throughout Queensland, The Salvation Army has been heavily involved with relief efforts in the aftermath of Cyclone Larry in far-north Queensland. The Army's primary role in responding to the tragedy was through the provision of food and catering services to Emergency Services personnel and displaced community members.

Seventeen volunteers manning four Salvation Army Emergency Services (SAES) trailers were the frontline of the response. The specially-trained SAES volunteers were brought in from Cairns, Townsville and Atherton, and also included five Innisfail locals. On many days they cooked continuously from 7am until 4pm.

Salvation Army representatives in Innisfail continue to be involved in helping to develop strategies to rebuild the town and surrounding areas. ○



CYCLONE LARRY RELIEF EFFORTS (L) AND THE SALVATION ARMY OUTBACK FLYING CHAPLAINS, CAPTAINS COLIN AND BEV KINGSTON (R).

### FROM PAGE 1 Easing the pressure

Tania Chesworth says: "With the Salvos' help, we've been able to help some fishers pay some personal household accounts. Just for people to know the phone isn't going to be cut off, or that they can register their vehicle – that's been a really big help.

"I say to them 'look this isn't going to

change your life, but it will take a little bit of pressure off'. We all know what it's like to be fronted by bills. Giving that little bit of relief helps them then to think about where they need to be headed in the future. Just knowing that somebody cares about them also makes a big difference. They're so grateful." ○

# Socks, jocks and friendship

'Socks and jocks' have become the unlikely means of building relationships with chronically homeless men in Sydney.

**RIGHT** MANAGER OF FOSTER HOUSE, MAJOR BOB SEYMOUR HAS BEEN DELIGHTED WITH THE SUCCESS OF 'SOCKS AND JOCKS'.



PHOTO: ADAM HOLLINGWORTH

Throughout the night – every night – local councils, police and charity street vans pick up intoxicated men who live rough on the streets of inner Sydney and drop them at the Knudsen Place Intoxicated Persons Unit at **The Salvation Army's** Foster House.

The men who use Knudsen Place – 1300 beds are provided each month – are the chronically homeless, and generally suffer from a range of mental illnesses and severe alcohol addiction.

The average length of stay for a client at Knudsen Place is just a few hours – long enough to sober up and have a shower but not much else. Service manager Major Bob Seymour says: "The guys we see at Knudsen Place are the long-term, rough sleepers on the streets, who are very hard to engage in any sort of relationship to encourage them on the road to recovery. They're generally very suspicious of people, and not in a hurry to associate with anyone."

Seeing successes in other areas of the service, a case manager was employed specifically to attempt to engage some of the men during their short stay at Knudsen Place. "We looked at a variety of ways to try and build relationships with these guys," says Bob.

One of these ways was the new and very simple Socks and Jocks program. Knudsen Place clients have always

been offered a fresh set of second-hand clothes, but now Foster House is giving the men brand new socks and jocks instead of previously-owned underwear. "Various Rotary Clubs donated money so that each of the guys could be given fresh, new underwear, still in the wrapper," Bob explains. "It's a small thing but, as expected, it did elicit a response from the guys, and gave us an extra chance to relate to them."

"These small acts of kindness, and the heart behind them, have made a difference. It's a gift of something new, a creature comfort, something unexpected. It also helps many of them who have serious foot care and other problems, as often they wear the same clothing for weeks at a time if they don't come into the service."

The results have been profound. In the last 12 months or so there has been an average of 19 clients per month moving from Knudsen Place into detox and onto the path of stability. "This is something really new," says Bob. "It's not something that used to happen at all. You've got to be prepared to be committed for the long-term, and to be able to show the guys that you've got an interest in them, that you care."

"Importantly, the Socks and Jocks program helps us build that first step in friendship, so that we can eventually say,

## George's story

George\* first came to The Salvation Army's Foster House after he had passed out in a police wagon following a night of drinking methylated spirits. Dirty from sleeping on the streets of inner-city Sydney, caked in vomit and urine, he was picked up for his aggressive behaviour and for damaging property while high on the dangerous spirits. He slept off his hangover at the Foster House Intoxicated Person's Unit (Knudsen Place). Given a light breakfast, a shower, and clothing in the morning, he snarled at any of the workers who moved towards him.

Over time, George became a regular at Foster House. Each time he came, he would be shown care and respect, despite having to be subdued on occasions for his aggressive behaviour. He would be given fresh second-hand clothes, plus a crisp new set of underwear and socks. Somehow, deep within him, it stirred feelings of an old life of comfort.

Staff could see a glimmer of another man in George's eyes, although many times they almost gave up on him as his metho-fuelled rages threatened to become a danger to themselves and others. Eventually their perseverance paid off. They learned that George had been a successful businessman. A family break-up had led him into a spiral of depression, alcoholism, and eventually methylated spirits addiction and homelessness.

George eventually moved into Foster House's detox unit, then into crisis care, and finally into long-term housing. He has now been sober for two years and is re-building his family and business relationships.

'You don't have to live like this anymore. There is a better way. And we can help you take the first step'.

\* THIS IS A TRUE STORY. NAME AND SOME DETAILS CHANGED TO PROTECT PRIVACY

# A lifetime bond

Stuart Diver shares how support in his time of need translated into a relationship that won't be broken.

Thredbo landslide survivor Stuart Diver knew little about **The Salvation Army** before he captured the attention of the nation as the only survivor of Australia's worst landslide in 1997.

"I never thought I'd need the Salvos, yet my life changed dramatically after Thredbo and The Salvation Army was there to help me and my family through the ordeal," says Stuart.

Now Stuart is lending his support to The Salvation Army by becoming the face of a new campaign encouraging people to remember The Salvation Army in their Will.

Stuart lost his beloved wife Sally and 17 other friends – and himself lay trapped and freezing in the rubble for 65 hours – after 1,000 tonnes of earth, rock and trees collided at high speed with the two lodges where they were staying in the ski village of Thredbo, NSW.

Salvation Army chaplains Lieut-Colonels Don and Bernice Woodland first met Stuart after he was flown to Canberra Hospital by helicopter. Don explains: "Our aim was simply to be with Stuart and his family to help them get through those initial days – whether helping Stuart's mum shop for clothes and other practical items for Stuart, handling the media, or helping the family deal with their torn emotions.

"I visited Stuart each day, told him I'd come every night to have a prayer with him. Stuart made me promise if he was asleep that I'd still have a prayer for him. The family was dealing with the whole spectrum of emotions, they were difficult days."



ABOVE STUART DIVER WITH LIEUT-COLONEL DON WOODLAND; ONE OF THE ADVERTISEMENTS FROM THE NEW CAMPAIGN IN WHICH STUART ENCOURAGES PEOPLE TO REMEMBER THE SALVATION ARMY IN THEIR WILL, AS HE HAS DONE (INSET).

Although the support was expressed through simple gestures, it was very important for Stuart. He says: "We're a close family and would have got through it, but the Salvos' support made the process a lot quicker. We were all dealing with our own grief and Don was someone outside it who could offer the kindness and compassion we needed at the time. That led on to support in a more practical sense with the crucial advice we needed such as how to handle the media.

"It's a pure support role the Salvos offer. You feel there's someone there, whether it's just a hug or talking through the details of what happened. When you feel everything has just been pulled from beneath you, that one stopgap makes the process of dealing with the trauma a whole lot easier. Subconsciously now, I think I just know that support is always there," says Stuart.

"The relationship and bond has continued over the years. Those bonds are never broken," says Stuart.

Stuart adds that something that was not always mentioned, something his friends from Thredbo tell him about, was The Salvation Army's role in Thredbo providing cups of coffee, catering and counselling after the disaster. "The community of Thredbo has felt indebted to them ever since. It's not just about individuals. Sometimes a whole community – as in the case of Thredbo – may need to call on the Salvos.

"The feeling I get whenever I see the Salvos is that it doesn't matter who you are or where you've come from, the kindness and compassion they show is the same and it's unbelievable.

"I've continued to support the Salvos because of what they did for me. It comes back to the fact that you never know what's going to happen in your life, you never know when you may need the Salvos. Everyone in the community should always keep that in the back of their mind and, if life's going well for you now, this is the time to contribute," says Stuart. *O*

If you would like further information, please tick the relevant boxes and return by mail to: **The Salvation Army, GPO Box 9888, Your Capital City.**

Or fax to: **02 9266 9805.**

- Worship and church programs
- Community services
- How I may become a member of the Red Shield Club (our donor association)
- Wills and bequests

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*Letters & feedback welcome!*