

# On the Scene

SUMMER 2009 NEWS &amp; STORIES FROM THE SALVATION ARMY

SPECIAL REPORT • SPECIAL REPORT

## Disaster response

To help meet critical needs in times of natural and man-made disaster, The Salvation Army internationally is dedicated to the ongoing training of emergency support teams. Currently, The Salvation Army world-wide operates almost 3,000 manned mobile emergency units, and provides disaster relief to around 1.7 million people (2008 figures).

Thank you to all who have so generously supported The Salvation Army's disaster relief and recovery work in our region in recent times. A brief snapshot of the work follows:

### Stop Press – Queensland Fires

At the time of going to print, bushfires were blazing across central and south-east Queensland, including serious blazes outside Rockhampton and Bundaberg. Salvation Army Emergency Services (SAES) Capricorn (Rockhampton), Bundaberg and Blackwater teams worked tirelessly to feed hundreds of exhausted fire and emergency services workers.

The Capricorn SAES team of 40 Salvation Army workers and volunteers worked non-stop for five weeks. Bundaberg SAES, at the fire at Gaeta, near Gin Gin, about 140km north-west of Bundaberg, was due to be relieved by the Blackwater SAES team.

### Kokoda flight tragedy

Following the tragic crash of an Airlines PNG Twin Otter charter flight, in August 2009, which claimed the lives of all 13 people aboard, The Salvation Army in Papua New Guinea (PNG) provided meals, emotional support and professional counselling for those dealing with the tragedy, including police, defence force personnel and local villagers.



SHARON PATTERSON



ABOVE: BUSHFIRE RESPONSE  
& INSET: ROCKHAMPTON SAES TEAM  
& LOCAL AIRPORT CHAPLAINCY

### Devastation in the Asia-Pacific region

In the months leading up to Christmas 2009, a series of earthquakes, storms and tsunamis devastated the Asia-Pacific region, affecting millions of people. At the time of writing, The Salvation Army emergency response was still in its infancy. However, extended and updated reports may be viewed through The Salvation Army International Headquarters website at [www.salvationarmy.org](http://www.salvationarmy.org)

For more information regarding the Indonesian Earthquake and the South Pacific Tsunami, please visit [salvos.org.au](http://salvos.org.au) or phone **13 SALVOS (13 72 58)**.

While The Salvation Army is an international organisation, all donations to The Salvation Army Red Shield Appeal in Australia remain within Australia unless we run a specific Disaster Relief Appeal.

Days after the tragedy, PNG-based Australian Salvation Army Major Julie Alley (who assisted tirelessly with the support effort) said: "The retrieval process is horrific as the slope of the mountain is so steep that most of the time just to get to the site, the men had to crawl on hands and knees. A helipad has been chopped into the jungle, about a 15-minute trek from the site, which is really the side of a mountain."



**ABOVE: DISTRIBUTING FOOD PARCELS FOLLOWING FLOODS IN THE PHILIPPINES. & INSET: MEDICAL TEAM & COMPASSION IN ACTION TEAM, INDONESIA**

### Java (Indonesia) earthquake

Local Salvation Army teams in Indonesia assisted authorities with relief work, when an earthquake measuring 7.3 on the Richter scale hit the island of Java in early September. With United Nations agencies and other NGOs, The Salvation Army's 'Compassion in Action' team visited affected areas. As a result, team members provided relief assistance in Tasikmalaya, one of the worst-affected areas.

### Sumatra (Indonesia) earthquakes

After two devastating earthquakes hit the Indonesian island of Sumatra, The Salvation Army sent emergency teams to the city of Padang and surrounding districts, to undertake rapid assessments and begin responding to the massive natural disaster. The Governor of Sumatra asked that priority be given to children's care and health services. In response, The Salvation Army sent medical personnel to participate in a united effort and also distributed items for babies and children, including milk and clothing. Temporary shelter, food, clean water and bedding were also distributed.

### Tsunami aftermath in American Samoa, Samoa, Tonga

Salvation Army officers and personnel from The Salvation Army New Zealand, Fiji, and Tonga Territory, as well as Australian chaplains provided counselling, support and practical assistance to people

evacuated from tsunami-devastated regions of Samoa, American Samoa and Tonga. Direct assistance was also supplied to the affected areas, after a Salvation Army needs assessment team established a base in Apia and met with other NGOs, officials and local villagers.

Emergency response also flowed to Australia, where Salvation Army Airport Chaplains were present at Sydney International Airport to offer comfort and support where required, for those departing to, and arriving from Samoa and Tonga following the tsunami.

### Floods in the Philippines

Devastation caused by Typhoon Ondoy (Ketsana), followed by Typhoon Parma, left millions of people affected by flooding, with hundreds of thousands having to take refuge in evacuation centres. Salvation Army emergency teams worked around the clock to assist those in greatest need, including distributing food and relief parcels to thousands of families.

### Salvation Army emergency response in Taiwan switches focus to education

Following the devastation of Typhoon Morakot, which hit Taiwan in August 2009, The Salvation Army provided around 1,000 volunteer hours to the immediate clean-up operation. After extensive consultation with survivors, village chiefs, school principals, government officials and NGOs, a coordinated approach was

agreed on, which included the provision of education packs, at a total cost of just over 2.8 million Taiwan New Dollars (more than US\$85,000), primarily funded from overseas donations. In one particular area where families were left without many possessions, Salvation Army teams provided more than 1,600 schoolchildren with clothing, shoes, books, bags and other equipment, and also provided disinfectant packs to 1,800 homes.

### Victorian bushfire update

A report, released in September 2009, detailing the ongoing Salvation Army response to the Victorian bushfire recovery, noted that although the crisis has passed, the needs of the affected communities remained great. It was reported that around 500 people each week continued to access help from Salvos bushfire recovery centres in Whittlesea, Healesville, Traralgon, Wodonga, Seymour and Flowerdale (and others).

The Salvation Army is currently working with 28 Community Recovery Committees, established to develop plans and projects to aid the recovery of specific communities, and is endeavouring to address the business and economic needs of devastated areas, as well as assist individuals, families and communities.

With generous support from members of the public and the corporate community, The Salvation Army has distributed over \$8 million in aid to affected communities. To view the complete report including details of expenditure, please visit [www.salvationarmy.org.au](http://www.salvationarmy.org.au)



**ABOVE: INSIDE THE WHITTLESEA RECOVERY CENTRE.**