

NSW storm and flood response



ADAM HOLLINGWORTH



RIELEND HENZSCHEL

ABOVE: THE DISASTER RECOVERY CENTRE IN NEWCASTLE AND AN EVACUATION CENTRE AT MAITLAND (INSET).

Hidden devastation

“The NSW storms and associated floods have been much worse than even the Newcastle earthquake. The damage has been more widespread and our people estimate the need for assistance in the recovery phase has been two to three times greater,” explains head of **Salvation Army** Emergency Services (NSW, ACT, Qld), Major Kevin Hentzschel.

“Floods can be deceiving though, because although the devastation caused is generally more widespread than with earthquakes or cyclones, which have confined epicentres, the damage can be a lot less visible. With floods, the damage tends to be internal, behind closed doors,” says Kevin.

Immediate response

As storm waters rose in the central coast and Hunter areas of NSW during 8-12 June, 545 Salvation Army Emergency Services (SAES) volunteers provided 24-hour catering for evacuees and State Emergency Service workers. The SAES teams served 28,111 meals and 38,843 refreshments/ drinks at evacuation centres at Maitland (two centres), Rutherford (two centres), Toukley, Singleton and The Entrance.

Community barbecues

During the week after the storms, SAES held community barbecues at Civic Park and New Lambton, Newcastle, to provide hot meals and moral support to those affected (read more, page three).

Many residents had been without power for a long time and welcomed the hot meal.

Ongoing support

The “one-stop-shop” Disaster Recovery Centre set up by the NSW Department of Community Services brought together all the support agencies at one location in the Newcastle CBD. The Salvation Army’s role included provision of food parcels and food vouchers for people affected by the storms, and assistance with accommodation, furniture, clothing and other items.

The Salvation Army Community Services in Newcastle and on the Central Coast distributed 3,131 food hampers and 1,856 food vouchers to help people through the initial crisis, before moving to the ongoing recovery phase. **CONTINUED PAGE 3**

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THREDBO LANDSLIDE



Looking back at the Thredbo landslide, 10 years after the tragedy.

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More coverage of the flood crisis and stories from the Newcastle area.

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Bundaberg Salvationist Tom Quinn’s vision of changing lives has left a lasting legacy.

Red Shield thank you

Thank you to the thousands of volunteer doorknock collectors and generous supporters who have helped raise a record result of just over \$67 million nationally for the 2007 Red Shield Appeal. Your support has enabled us to move into the new financial year with increased confidence.



RED SHIELD APPEAL

OAM for Harmers

Salvation Army officers Majors Joyce and Hilton Harmer, who have spent half a century in service to the community, received Order of Australia medals as part of the 2007 Queen's Birthday honours list.

The Harmers were recognised in particular for their work supporting those in the NSW court system – from families who had had children hurt, raped, or murdered, to offenders terrified of prison. Joyce's chaplaincy work centred on Sydney's Downing Centre, while Hilton worked Sydney's Central Court and local courts, even going out on evictions with sheriffs.



Thredbo disaster 10 years on

Members of The Salvation Army joined a commemorative service in July at Thredbo, NSW, to remember 10 years since the horrific Thredbo landslide – one of this nation's worst disasters.

Just before midnight on 30 July 1997, a landslide at the NSW ski village of Thredbo swept the Carinya and Bimbadeen ski lodges, and all those people asleep inside, more than 100 metres down to the valley floor.

Around the nation, Australians collectively held their breath, watching in horror and admiration as emergency services, faced with the continual and very real threat of further landslides, battled to find anyone alive in the rubble.

Local engineers and plant operators, police, ambulance and fire services, and support agencies – including 70 members of The Salvation Army – worked tirelessly in the aftermath of the landslide.

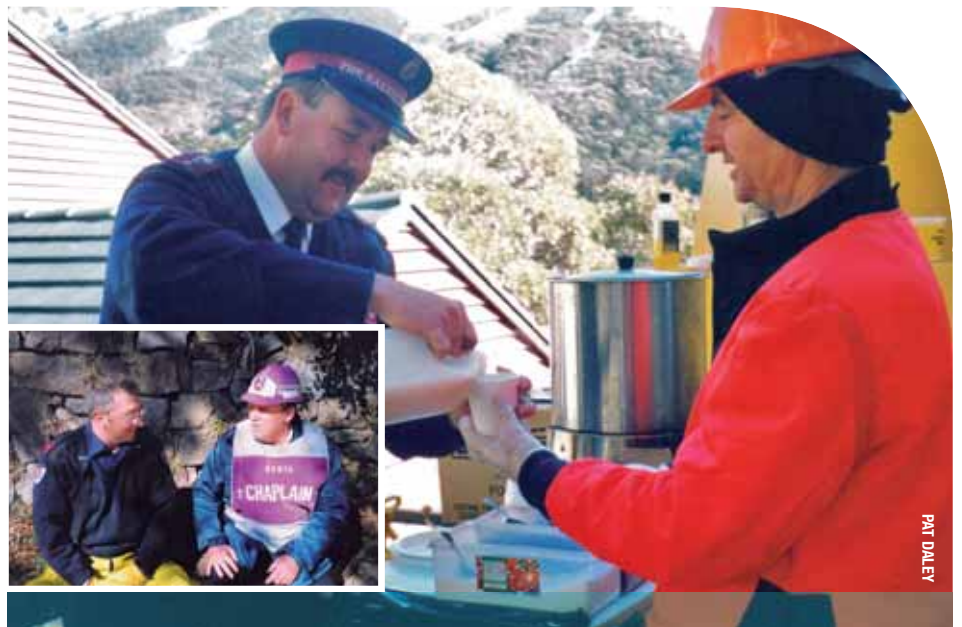
For a period of eight days, Salvation Army volunteers manned coffee urns and barbecue plates, providing around 16,000 meals. Salvation Army members offered

chaplaincy, counselling and support during the frantic fight to find survivors, and to the grieving friends and relatives of the 18 people tragically killed.

Support and friendship was also provided to the sole landslide survivor, ski instructor Stuart Diver, by The Salvation Army Head of Chaplaincy at the time, Lieut-Colonel Don Woodland and his wife Bernice.

Major Earle Ivers of The Salvation Army says he will never forget his experience at Thredbo. Looking back, Earle says he thought he had prepared himself for the shock of the disaster, but when he arrived he was "overcome by the magnitude of it".

"I marvelled at the spirit of community that exists in that place, but couldn't escape the enormous sense of grief and loss that was theirs. Standing in the crowd outside the small chapel during the service I heard men and women weep, I heard them whisper the Lord's Prayer, and I stood silently as the words of 'How Great Thou Art' echoed through the valley. God was there. I have no doubt about it." ○



MAJOR EARLE IVERS (ABOVE, LEFT) AND MAJOR BOB GARVEN (INSET, RIGHT) OF THE SALVATION ARMY SUPPORTING EMERGENCY WORKERS AT THREDBO IN 1997.

Media coverage around the anniversary of the Thredbo landslide may bring back painful memories for some people. You may wish to make an appointment to talk to a professional counsellor at The Salvation Army Counselling Service. Locations include Sydney (02) 9743 2831; Penrith & Campbelltown (02) 4731 1554; Canberra & Tuggeranong (02) 6248 5504; Brisbane & Brisbane North (07) 3349 5046. Our caring telephone counsellors at Salvo Care Line are also available 24 hours on 1300 36 36 22 (Brisbane metro – (07) 3831 9016).

Barbeque helps lift storm victims' spirits

Following is a selection of photos and stories from The Salvation Army community barbecue held at Alder Park, New Lambton, on Thursday 14 June.

The area was badly affected because, in addition to storm waters coming down the street, three feeder creeks that meet nearby also backed up. Much of the area was without power for the week following the storms.

"Many people were still in shock over the events of the weekend and benefited from simply having someone to talk to over a cuppa," said Major Angela Eyles of The Salvation Army, who attended the barbecue. ○



ADAM HOLLINGWORTH

Stephen and his family lost everything in the storms except some clothes and a computer they managed to salvage. On the Friday night, 8 June, they watched hopelessly as the water began seeping through their floorboards. "You feel so powerless," said Stephen. Even the family car had water up to the level of the stereo.

They stayed in the house that first night, the family of four and their dog all squashed on to the one double bed that remained dry. However, by morning the smell was unbearable, with everything covered in mud. The family moved to stay with relatives, returning each day to work on the overwhelming clean-up operation. When Stephen and

daughter Kieran (pictured above) came to the community barbecue on the Thursday for a quick break, they appeared very demoralised. A chat with Salvo volunteer, Les Holland, and a few other locals, seemed to help lift their spirits significantly. "I never thought it would be me standing like this with you guys," said Stephen to the SAES workers.



LEFT: ELECTRICIAN, MARK GROENEVELD, WAS FORTUNATE TO AVOID HAVING HIS HOUSE AFFECTED BY STORM WATER, BUT LOST ALL HIS ELECTRICAL TOOLS AND A NUMBER OF FAMILY ITEMS WHEN HIS GARAGE WAS HIT BY THE STORMS. MARK AND BROTHER-IN-LAW PAUL, WHO WAS HELPING WITH THE CLEAN-UP, WERE GLAD OF A QUICK BREAK: "IT MEANS WE DON'T NEED TO STOP AND MAKE LUNCH, THIS WAY WE CAN GET STRAIGHT BACK TO WORK," SAID MARK; **RIGHT:** THE DISASTER WAS PARTICULARLY TRAUMATIC FOR MANY ELDERLY RESIDENTS.

Hidden devastation for storm victims

FROM PAGE 1 Footnote

A number of Salvation Army buildings in Newcastle and the Central Coast were also affected. Divisional Headquarters in Newcastle was affected by the storm, with staff continuing to work in the uncomfortable conditions

to keep providing support to the wider community. Other Salvation Army social service centres, including This Way Up furniture factory for disadvantaged young people and the Oasis youth centre at Wyong, were also affected and needed to close temporarily. ○



THE SALVATION ARMY ACKNOWLEDGES THE SUPPORT OF NRMA INSURANCE FOR OUR EMERGENCY SERVICES TEAMS.

Legacy of Bundaberg 'hero'

touches thousands

Described at his funeral in late 2006 by Bundaberg Mayor Kay McDuff as "one of the kindest men who walked this earth", the life and work of Salvation Army member Tom Quinn OAM helped tens of thousands of people.

Instead of thinking about retirement after a long career as a senior executive, Salvationist Tom Quinn's passion for helping underprivileged people was so great that he began studying law at age 69.

In 2003, at age 75, Tom was admitted to the Bar. Although he had already achieved much for the community throughout his working life, Tom then spent his last years serving disadvantaged people in his local area of Bundaberg, Queensland, for free.

Based at The Salvation Army community centre he helped to found, Tom took on more than 440 pro bono cases during his short career for people who were unable to obtain legal aid. He helped people who were at the lower end of the socio-economic scale, including children who had been abused and people with drug and alcohol addictions.

The service he provided is estimated to be worth around \$1.2 million dollars.

Most importantly, the community centre Tom founded in partnership with his church, The Salvation Army Bundaberg Corps, has been instrumental in not only providing legal support, but helping turn lives around. In the words of local MP, Mr Paul Neville, the centre has become "a beacon of achievement, hope and restorative comfort for hundreds of deprived people, especially young people."

The facility was established after



LEFT: THE LATE TOM QUINN PICTURED IN EARLY 2006 WITH A FAMILY WHO WAS HELPED BY THE TOM QUINN COMMUNITY CENTRE; & ABOVE: THE TOM QUINN COMMUNITY CENTRE IN BUNDABERG IS TRUE TO TOM'S VISION OF TRANSFORMING TROUBLED YOUNG LIVES.

Tom became concerned about a number of parents in the area struggling with children who had behavioural problems. He wanted to offer them a centre for training and recreation.

Discovering a derelict recycling plant, Tom spoke to local Salvation Army Major Peter Pearson about his vision. With tremendous support from the local community and former associate, Tom Osborne, they set about renovating the plant, which was given as a "deed in trust" by the Qld Department of Natural Resources.

With Tom Osborne as manager, the centre commenced operations in early 2003, named the Tom Quinn Community Centre in honour of Tom.

Today, true to Tom's vision, the centre provides counselling and a number of programs for 'at-risk' young people and others with personal problems, poor workplace skills and learning difficulties.

There is a mature-age return to work program, Work for the Dole programs, and 'Get Set for Work' for young people

disengaged from school and work. There is also school support and a youth refuge/accommodation program. The Tom Quinn centre has recently become a Registered Training Organisation and will be delivering training in horticulture, hospitality, retail, business, and furniture-making.

Manager, Tom Osborne says: "Many of the kids we see here face a mind-boggling array of issues, including sexual abuse, drug addiction and very damaged parents. We don't turn anyone away. We see many lives of hardship and struggle but we also see lives absolutely changed."

Speaking after Tom Quinn's death, Paul Neville MP said: "Tom made his life's work giving back to the community...he had a burning ambition to help people and especially the most deprived..."

"Tom Quinn was a father, grandfather, teacher, trainer, councillor, aviation devotee and carer of the poor and deprived. He lived Christ's injunction not only in theory, but in practice: 'For as often as you have done to the least of my brethren, you have done this unto me.'"



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.**

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Letters & feedback welcome!