



Life transformation brings hope to many

“Mat was amongst the most dangerous people in our nation. Now, he is a genuine asset to our society.” – Craig Stephens, Dooralong manager.

Speaking at a **Salvation Army Red Shield Appeal** launch earlier this year to raise funds and awareness for Salvation Army programs, Mat, who was once seen to be too out of control for even his own tough bikie colleagues, sincerely thanked Salvation Army supporters.

Having lived a life fuelled by drugs and violence, Mat underwent an amazing turnaround in his life after going through The Salvation Army’s Bridge Program at the Dooralong Transformation Centre on the NSW Central Coast.

He went on, after graduation, to receive an Outstanding Achievement Award from Hunter TAFE – after studying business management.

Reaching others

After working and saving, Mat then spent more than two months travelling throughout Asia, speaking and volunteering in prisons, orphanages and churches. Today he continues to share his story to support The Salvation Army.

Mat says his early childhood was happy – his dad was an accountant and his mum, a nurse. However, at age 12, he was diagnosed with an attention



MAT IS NOW DEDICATED TO SERVING OTHERS. INSET: WITH MAJOR BRUCE HARMER AFTER SHARING AT A RED SHIELD FUNCTION.

deficit disorder and around the same time his parents separated.

Mat was first expelled from school in Year 7, and from age 17, lived a life of drugs, alcohol, extreme violence and imprisonment. For many years, his gun never left his side.

Amazing transformation

After his father’s sudden death and two unsuccessful attempts at rehab, Mat booked into the Dooralong centre and as well as completing the Bridge Program, “committed his life to Jesus”. He says: “God has made huge changes; amazing changes”.

Dooralong manager Craig Stephens says: “We have three major Australian universities conducting ongoing research



Each year, around **3600** people are helped by The Salvation Army Recovery (addiction) Services

into the Bridge Program to ensure the best evidence-based practice is delivered at all times. But most importantly, we are committed to helping even those that other organisations won’t accept into their programs, and this often results in the most breathtaking transformations in the most broken of lives!” *o*

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Legacy flows from lifetime of support

“When dad came back from the war he couldn’t speak highly enough of the Red Shield chaplains who looked after the troops. From then on, mum and I always gave a donation.” – Brenda

For Brisbane-based retirees Jim and Brenda, remembering **The Salvation Army** in their Wills is an effective way to leave a significant legacy.

Jim, who worked for Queensland Railways in the engineering field, says the couple have always supported others, through The Salvation Army and a number of other causes.

He says: “I think it was instilled in

both of us really by our parents who were good, honest, working-class people, who helped their neighbours; and it’s something that we have enjoyed doing.”

Brenda, who worked in administration with CSR and married Jim in her early 30s, has fond memories of attending Salvation Army youth events as a child.

After her family emigrated from England to Australia, Brenda’s father fought during WWII as an Australian soldier.

Brenda says: “When dad came back from the war he couldn’t speak highly enough of the Red Shield chaplains who looked after the troops. From then on, mum and I always gave a donation.

When I started work, I continued to donate. It wasn’t a huge amount but it was regular and I was still doing that when Jim and I married.”

Jim says of the couple’s decision to remember the work of The Salvation Army in their Wills: “We decided that as we are both in our 80s, it’s going to cost us money to go into care, so we can’t give away large amounts of money away while we’re alive. But, there will be a significant amount left in our Wills.”

“We have every feeling of trust that all the money that goes to the Salvos gets used properly for their good deeds,” Brenda adds. 



In 2014, **31,000+** contacts made by chaplains

Community Impact snapshot With thanks from the heart

“Our family has had a long association with The Salvation Army starting way back when our first three children were christened by the local Salvos in a very memorable bush christening. When we lost one of those beautiful children 17 years later, who should run to our side but the same Salvos. They lifted and carried us and we are ever grateful there are angels on earth.

(In the current drought) whether it’s a drop-in chat at our remote station in the outback, or monetary help in the form of helping us out with our power bill, it’s so comforting to know that there is someone out there you can turn to and who will listen. Thank you for all you have done for us.”

– “An outback family” (to Captain Sharilyn Bush)



Photo as featured OTS February 2014, by Shairon Paterson.

Salvos a hit with country music couple

She is known as the “grand lady” of Australian country music and her accomplishments are staggering – singer-songwriter, author, music producer and six-time Golden Guitar winner at the Australian country music awards, which she co-founded.

Joy (Kirkpatrick) McKean OAM is also the wife and for many decades, manager of Australian music legend, the late Slim Dusty, who died in 2003, aged 77.

Now in her 80s, Joy says the kindness of country people when the family was travelling and touring helped her truly appreciate the value of caring for others.

Joy says: “Travelling in the early days, when we were struggling, it was the people who had the least who were the most helpful. In areas where you couldn’t get fresh vegetables for the children, local people would drop in fresh produce and help in other ways. We found their kindness so inspirational.”

Joy and Slim (real name David Gordon Kirkpatrick AO MBE) went on to mentor many young country artists (with scholarships and many other training initiatives to continue in the future via the new Slim Dusty Centre and Museum).



Salvo supporters

The couple also generously supported the work of **The Salvation Army** for well over 50 years.

Joy laughs when she recalls the audacity of a Salvation Army officer in Moree, more than 50 years ago, who was holding a street rally. He appeared one day at the door of their caravan and invited the couple to perform.

Joy says: “We had a lovely evening and that really tuned us into the Salvos. What the Salvos do is mind-boggling. We have always tried, even in our travelling, to support The Salvation Army. Once you’re fortunate enough to be able to do it, I think you should help where you can.”

With Joy’s support, Slim regularly performed at Salvation Army events and supported the Red Shield Appeal. He became the face and voice of the Salvation Army’s first Wills and Bequests

program in 1993, and left a bequest to The Salvation Army in his Will.

Family connection

Their country-music star daughter, Anne Kirkpatrick, also supported the Salvos’ “Braver, Stronger, Wiser” campaign that saw 500,000 DVDs sent out free of charge to offer tools for managing depression to those facing hardship or disaster.

Asked to name a highlight in a lifetime of highlights, Joy says one of the greatest was watching Slim sing *Waltzing Matilda* as the closing act of the Sydney 2000 Olympics.

Joy says: “As Slim walked out, the roar, the enthusiasm and the electric feeling was just amazing. Slim’s connection with those people was very, very heart-warming. It was actually quite staggering!”

We would love to hear why you support The Salvation Army. Tell us what motivates you to give and you may feature in our next edition of *On the Scene* Email generosity@ae.salvationarmy.org

Community story snapshot



The 2015 Salvation Army Economic and Social Impact Survey (ESIS) revealed:

87% per cent of adults and

60% of children surveyed reported severe deprivation (and went without more than five essential items in life) and

57% had gone without meals.

Read more about the ESIS report and financial hardship on the back cover

Sikh community reaches out to drought-affected farmers



AMAR SINGH (BACK ROW, THIRD FROM LEFT) AND MEMBERS OF THE SYDNEY SIKH COMMUNITY DONATED A RANGE OF GOODS TO FARMERS, TO BE DISTRIBUTED BY SALVATION ARMY RURAL CHAPLAINS.

It was a segment on the Alan Jones program on Sydney's 2GB radio station that first alerted Amar Singh to the desperate plight of Australian farmers experiencing drought.

Amar, who runs a small family transport business, spoke to members of his and another local Sikh temple; he posted on social media and was interviewed on radio, which attracted more support, including a donation from the Riverwood Lions Club.

Then, just before Christmas, Amar, together with a group of volunteers, transported a van, a four-wheel drive and a large trailer full of non-perishable groceries to **The Salvation Army** in Dubbo.

Amar explains that the Sikh community is traditionally an

agricultural community and many could relate to struggling Australian farmers.

"We have the same sorts of problems in India, with farmers committing suicide and lack of income in farming," he says. "I thought 'this is a first world country, it shouldn't be happening here'. I knew we could do something to lend a hand and let farmers know that ethnic communities in Australia are thinking about them."

Dubbo-based Salvation Army rural chaplain Captain Sharilyn Bush has been distributing the groceries and says: "The donations were incredibly well thought out, with nappies for young families and even food for farmers' dogs."

Sharilyn says: "It reminds them that they are not alone – they are not

forgotten and it gives them a glimmer of hope that other people are thinking about them and caring for them."

Amar (through the Sydney-based charity Turbans 4 Australia) later organised a second donation valued at around \$4500 for The Salvation Army to distribute to survivors of Cyclone Marcia in Queensland. ○



In 2014, 5,000+
families assisted in
disaster-affected areas

Care flows back into community

“Typically, when you are getting calls, you assume the call is for a need, but Sarah was calling to ask how she could help and give something significant back to the community!” – Lieutenant Brad Whittle, Salvation Army Mt Isa Corps Officer and Mt Isa Recovery Services Centre Chaplain

After her husband Errol suffered a major heart attack, underwent surgery and, as a result, lost his mining job, Sarah says life became very difficult for the Mt Isa family.

The first blow came when the couple found out that they were not entitled to their insurance cover because Errol’s condition was seen as a curable.

The family had always had an income and always paid their bills on time and Sarah says: “It was a very drastic change and it came very, very quickly. Once we paid rent, we were left with only \$18.20 a fortnight. It became very tough, very fast. It caused such a strain on our relationship, and on our mental health.”

Heads above water

It was then that **The Salvation Army** came on board to help the family in this time of struggle. Sarah says: “The Salvos organised a beautiful gift for each of our children for Christmas. And during the year they made up food hampers or helped us with vouchers for food. I felt bad, but they just made us feel loved.”



CAPTAIN MAVALLE STEELE

SARAH, ERROL AND THEIR FAMILY HAVE SUPPORTED OTHERS IN NEED AFTER BEING HELPED THROUGH A TOUGH TIME.

Errol and Sarah eventually started a cleaning business and they say the Salvos were a great support while this business slowly built up.

Giving to others

To “pay back the love”, Errol and Sarah, three of their children and some friends, decided they would make over 500 two-course meals, plus hampers, and hundreds of lolly bags for kids, for Christmas 2014. They distributed these

to emergency shelters in the area, including The Salvation Army’s Serenity House. The couple have since offered some cleaning services to Serenity House and have distributed more support to local shelters.

“It is a lovely feeling to give to others,” Sarah says, “and we know through our experience, it is also lovely to know there were people who cared enough to help us back on our feet. It was so encouraging!”

You can help!

You can help others like Sarah and her family back on their feet through a hard time, by reaching out to them when help is most desperately needed. And the need is great! It is now estimated 2.5 million Australians live below the poverty line, including 603,000 children.

More than 2400 people, visiting 262 Salvation Army centres around the nation, were surveyed for the 2015 Economic and Social Impact Survey (ESIS) with disturbing findings showing that, on average,

people had just under \$18 a day to live off after accommodation expenses. The \$18 a day would then need to cover expenses such as food, health, medical, clothing, education and utility costs.

Fifty-six per cent of respondents said their current financial situation was worse than last year. Eighty-seven per cent of adults and 60 per cent of children surveyed reported severe deprivation (and went without more than five essential items in life).



56% of respondents said their current financial situation was worse than last year.

To view the full report you can visit salvos.org.au and search ‘ESIS Report’