



2022

Flood Appeal Report



QUEENSLAND AND NEW
SOUTH WALES FLOODS |
DECEMBER 2022 REPORT



Foreword

SAES STORY

“My phone buzzed at 3am with an alert, saying that you had to evacuate

now because the levy would overtop by 4am. When I read that alert, I knew Monday was going to be a big day.”



Watch Captain Philip Sutcliffe, Northern Rivers corps officer (minister), as he walks us through the devastation in Lismore and The Salvation Army's response.

As Australia woke to news of severe flooding in south-east Queensland on 22 February, The Salvation Army Emergency Services (SAES) team began their first activation in Dakabin evacuation centre in northern Brisbane the next day.

The flood disaster crossed the border into northern New South Wales in a matter of hours, and The Salvation Army swiftly released \$1 million from Red Shield Appeal funds and launched the 2022 Flood Appeal on 1 March.

Corporate Australia, philanthropists, and everyday Australians united to respond to the call, raising an incredible \$17.87 million to directly support the estimated 25,000 households displaced or devastated by the raging floodwaters.

The Salvos' emergency services strategic partner of over 10 years, Woolworths Group, also swung into action and launched a round-up campaign within 24 hours of the Flood Appeal, encouraging customers to round up their purchases, or donate, at the registers.

The Judith Neilson Foundation, a friend and supporter of The Salvation Army, donated \$5 million to the Flood Appeal, testament to her passion as a patron, adviser and benefactor to charities that help vulnerable people.

Global natural resource company, Glencore, also generously donated \$2 million to the Flood Appeal in recognition of the widespread impact the flood crisis had in Queensland and New South Wales.

Major Bruce Harmer, National Public Relations Secretary for The Salvation Army, shared his gratitude and appreciation of all Australians for uniting and supporting fellow Aussies at their point of need, time and time again.

“We have seen in the past two years, through bushfires,

floods, drought and COVID-19, the spirit of generosity shown in times of hardship,” he said.

“When tragedies like this emergency event occur, we are always overwhelmed by the public's desire to help in any way they can. Donations are distributed to ensure we are restoring dignity and sustainability to Australians in need.”

At the flood's peak, The Salvation Army was present in 20 evacuation centres in south-east Queensland and northern New South Wales. As the water receded and evacuation centres closed, The Salvation Army was actively involved in 30 recovery hubs at the height of the early recovery phase.

Salvation Army local corps (churches) were flooded, and like the rest of the communities they serve, they rolled up their sleeves and donned their gumboots, clearing debris and responding to the massive clean-up effort. Nearby corps opened their doors to evacuees or banded together to deliver food hampers and clean-up kits to impacted residents. No one in the area was left untouched.

Thanks to our generous donors, partners, volunteers and supporters, The Salvation Army walked alongside residents as they began their journey of recovery. Even when the rains hit again only four weeks later, road closures may have temporarily hindered our reach, but they did not hamper the communities' will to overcome the devastation, nor our mission to serve the communities at their point of need.



Authorised by
Captain Stuart Glover
Secretary for Mission

14 November 2022



How we've helped

Thanks to our generous donors, partners, volunteers and supporters, the 2022 Flood Appeal raised \$17.87 million. These vital funds supported more than 40,000 people in the first seven months.



\$17.87 million
donations
received



\$4.05 million received
from Commonwealth and
State Government funding



39,676
recovery grants
issued



\$13.44 million
grants
distributed



42,218 people
assisted
with financial assistance,
in-kind support or advice

Funds donated to the 2022 Flood Appeal have been spent on the response and recovery from this disaster. The cost of delivering emergency relief and recovery support is less than 10 per cent of funds raised. At least 90 per cent of funds raised will be distributed directly to people impacted by these floods.

Stages of emergency assistance

The Salvation Army adopts a three-phased approach to disasters for sustainable, long-term recovery – **Response, Recovery, Rebuild.**

Phase 1: 23 February – 22 March 2022

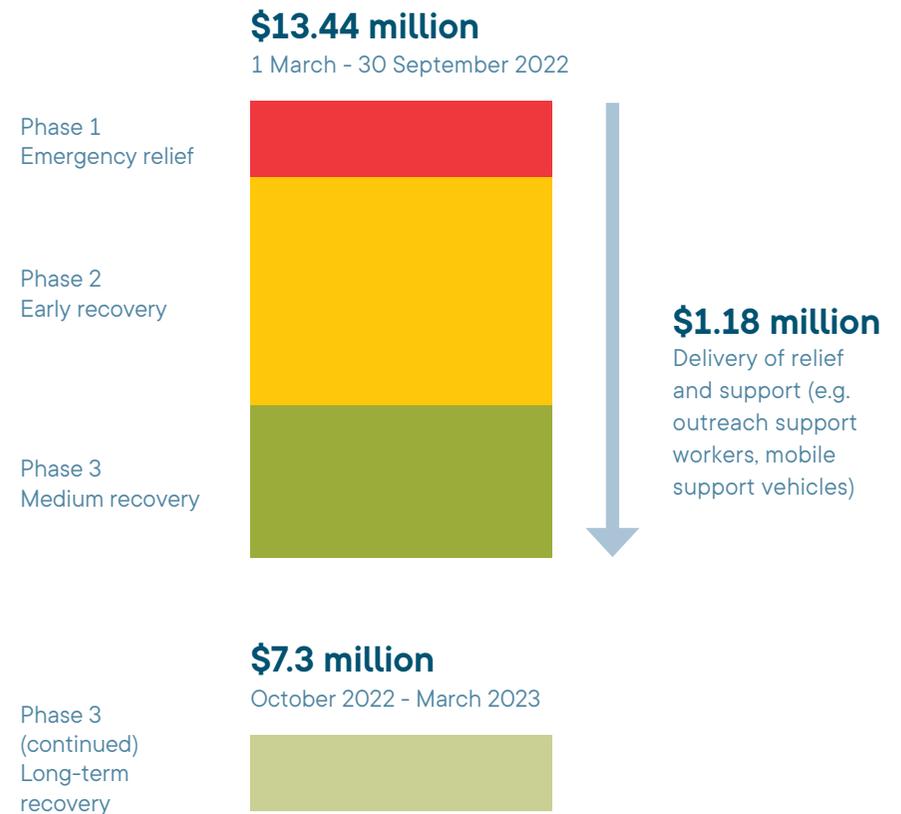
The first month focused on emergency relief, providing food, shelter, clothing, emergency cash, and other basic survival essentials and fuelling the frontline with meals and refreshments as they battled the floods.

Phase 2: 23 March – June 2022

The next three months focused on distributing financial assistance directly to impacted residents. This money is spent on early recovery activities such as assisting residents as they move out of evacuation centres and into temporary accommodation, and the extensive clean-up of their properties. The Salvation Army helped residents navigate the suite of grants available and supported their application process.

Phase 3: July 2022 – March 2023

From July, we entered the medium-to long-term recovery stage where people face the largest expenses. Many who have experienced damage to or lost their homes will begin to repair or rebuild permanent structures. This is also the stage where we conduct outreach with our Winnebago teams to connect with hard-to-reach communities, particularly the most vulnerable who have been unable to seek support for themselves. Our commitment to support communities for the long haul means we are still there when those impacted need us the most.



Responding with urgency



7488+ volunteer hours worked

at evacuation centres



42,647+ meals and refreshments served

at evacuation centres

In the immediate emergency response phase, Salvation Army Emergency Services (SAES) and local corps (churches) provided over 40,000 meals and refreshments in more than 20 evacuation centres in the first two weeks of the floods. This was made possible thanks to over 250 volunteers and local suppliers deployed at short notice, working alongside Salvation Army employees and officers around the clock, ensuring evacuees and first responders were fed and rested. Local Salvos were also on hand, connecting with people and providing emotional and spiritual support during this traumatic time.



The Salvation Army's Lismore Family Store is in the heart of town and was flooded alongside the devastated community.

FDO



FLOOD APPEAL STORY

Tweed Heads community comes together at Salvos evacuation centre

The fast-moving floods that inundated towns in south-east Queensland and northern New South Wales took everyone by surprise, leaving many communities cut off and thousands of homes under water. As a result, many of these communities have had to manage on their own, but what emerged was an unbreakable community spirit of generosity and camaraderie.

The Salvation Army's Tweed Heads Corps (church) operated as an evacuation centre when the disaster struck. Cut off from other towns, Salvo officer Major John Viles said they have been blessed to have such an incredible community come together in support of those who had to be evacuated.

Speaking after the waters receded and many evacuees were able to leave, John shares his experience of running a busy evacuation centre.

“At our peak, we had around 160 to 180 evacuees in the centre that were actually residing here. Then there were more who were coming in and using facilities. Those who were stranded in motorhomes came in and used the facilities and came in for a feed, but that has started to peter out,” he said.

Every part of the facility was used to support people evacuated from their homes. The church was converted into a dormitory, and the foyer and the centre's cafe facility converted into a donation drop-off zone as well as a food portal.

John said they've been blessed to have so many people volunteering and donating.

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“They’re donating secondhand clothes. In a lot of cases, as well as food, underwear was surprisingly an issue that we never even thought of but of course everyone would need.

Building a mattress city

“The first night that people arrived we had probably half an hour’s notice. We had about 200 people inbound and had nowhere for them to sleep. We had the floor, but the majority of them came from a caravan park where it was a mostly elderly residents, and the floor is pretty hard.

“We put a post out on our community Facebook pages asking if any community members had a blow up mattress they could donate to The Salvation Army. We had a convoy of community members driving down and dropping off mattresses. So many of them were brand-new ones that people had bought just in case they had people drop over and the benefit is now we almost have a blow up mattress city in our facility.”

That mattress city is providing a quality of comfort, much needed in an open space with what John describes as “a veritable menagerie of birds and cats and dogs that have been evacuated with their owners”.

“[Thanks to donations] we have more animal food than you could poke a stick at. It’s awesome because I was not expecting to have an evacuation centre that would also carry pets as well. But it makes sense, if you’ve got to get out, you grab all the valuables – and that’s you, your partner, your kids, your pet.”

With cats, dogs and birds making noises, sleep apnoea machines, snoring and people chatting through the night, being able to provide bedding and a comfortable mattress made a significant difference to those who’ve been evacuated.

Caravan park residents bear the brunt

Those residing at the evacuation centre had truly lost everything. Residents at the caravan park, who are mostly older, retired Australians, have been particularly impacted.

“I was talking to one gentleman and his house got flooded in the last event in 2017. He was blessed to have insurance cover the repair of his caravan unit and he used some of his retirement money to raise it an extra 400 mm, thinking that if there was ever a flood again it would never come into the home. When he was evacuated, his house was half under water and he’s been told that it was fully submerged,” said John.

“This is an event this area has never seen before, and it was just so shocking. The gentleman would say to me constantly that it ‘defied logic’. He had no idea that it was coming so fast and so high and so significant, and was really grateful for a couple of local fishermen who started rowing around the caravan park and putting people in their tinny and getting them to safety.”

Woolworths lends a hand

Access to ongoing grocery supplies is another challenge in a disaster, particularly as so many businesses had been impacted by the floods.

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- *Mattress city: Tweed Heads Corps (church) was the only non-government managed evacuation centre in the emergency response.*



- *“If you’ve got to get out, you grab all the valuables – and that’s you, your partner, your kids, your pet,” said Major John Viles, Tweed Heads corps officer (minister).*



- Sometimes it's the little things. Pictured here are sweet messages going out on meals being served by Salvation Army Emergency Services teams at an evacuation centre in Lismore, northern New South Wales.

Scan the QR code or click here to read this story on The Salvation Army's website.



“The first day, we had nothing because the shops closed early due to the floods,” said John. “We were fortunate enough to have members of the community donate packets of new food and we had local volunteers in the church preparing it. One of our SAES volunteers in our church was making a week’s worth of dinners and she brought that in. So we’ve been really blessed in that way.

“We are using the local Woolworths and the manager there, Sarah, has been fantastic. Woolworths have been fantastic! Big W has offered anything that we need. The manager there, David, met me at the shops on the first day I could actually get there after the waters had receded and offered their services as much as possible.”

A collaborative effort

During natural disasters, charities and other services work together tending to the needs of those impacted, and all these services tend to a certain area of need. In New South Wales, The Salvation Army’s responsibility is to feed evacuees. However, when another agency is unable to fulfil one of their obligations, another agency jumps in. This was the case for John’s team at Tweed Heads when another charity, responsible for physical needs such as clothing, was cut off by the floodwaters.

Consequently, Tweed Heads Corps also became a clothing depot. Volunteers from the community came in to sort out the clothes into sizes and gender and remove anything unusable, and people have been able to wander in and grab what they need.

John said this was the first time the facility had been

used as an evacuation centre. Supported by The Salvation Army’s Strategic and Emergency Disaster Management (SEDM) team and “an incredible community”, they worked around the clock to meet the needs of evacuees.

“Every 10 minutes, somebody walked in with a donation and asked, ‘Can I do anything?’ We had pages and pages of names of people who were willing to give their time to clean bathrooms, prepare food, sort clothes, go around and reinflate all the air mattresses that have gone down in our air mattress city.

“We have been unbelievably blessed by the Tweed Shire community and others. On one of our first nights, we had a local cafe come in and ask if there was anything they could do. We asked them to make dinner and gave them all the food and they used their facility. We had these incredible curries and casseroles, which were spectacular.

“Just this morning there was an emergency call-out for people who were stranded in the Mount Warning area at Fingal Head and local cafe owners from Next Door Espresso came in, and with a team of people, prepared sandwiches for 150 people, so yeah, super, super blessed by that.”

As emergency response turned to recovery, John said the volunteers were getting a little bit ‘war-weary’.

“It had been an ongoing time, but at the same time – like any Australian – they got in, they did what they needed to do when it needed to be done to help other people. We’ve had great teams of people that worked here.”



The gift of grants in the recovery phase

As the water receded and evacuation centres closed, the Strategic Emergency and Disaster Management (SEDM) team was in full operation in 30 government-run recovery hubs in Queensland and New South Wales during the peak of the early recovery phase. Recovery hubs are operated by multiple agencies, including The Salvation Army, and are a one-stop shop for information, referrals and personal support and guidance with accessing financial assistance.

Thanks to the generosity of the Australian public, and our partners, volunteers and supporters, The Salvation Army provided a suite of financial grants to help people get back on their feet and support those who need to repair or rebuild their homes and to replace furniture.

In the first seven months of the floods, assistance by The Salvation Army included:



\$13.44 million distributed

in financial assistance



39,676 recovery grants issued



42,218 people assisted



250+ volunteers deployed

in a total of 30 recovery hubs

STORY

All hands on deck in early recovery phase

The scale and speed of the flood disaster was unprecedented, and the Salvos SEDM team called upon the entire Salvation Army workforce to volunteer at recovery hubs, many of which had flood-impacted people queuing out the door.

Lachlan, a Salvo who works in The Salvation Army's Melbourne headquarters, took time out from his regular job as executive manager of Cybersecurity to volunteer in a Brisbane recovery hub.

Lachlan said his time at the hub was a whirlwind of emotions, but above all, there was gratitude for what some individuals might take for granted, like a home to live in and clothes to put on each morning.

“Getting out and doing this kind of work for a few days, even if it's once a year, truly grounds you and brings you back to front and centre of what the Salvos' mission is all about,” Lachlan said.



- Salvos employee Lachlan took time out from his regular job in Melbourne headquarters to volunteer at a Brisbane recovery hub.

Woolworths S.T.A.N.D Partnership

Support Through Australian Natural Disasters (S.T.A.N.D) is a Woolworths Group program that raises vital funds for Australian charities who provide relief to communities in times of natural disaster.

As The Salvation Army's principal disaster partner, Woolworths Group has actively and generously contributed to the Salvos emergency and disaster services for over five years.

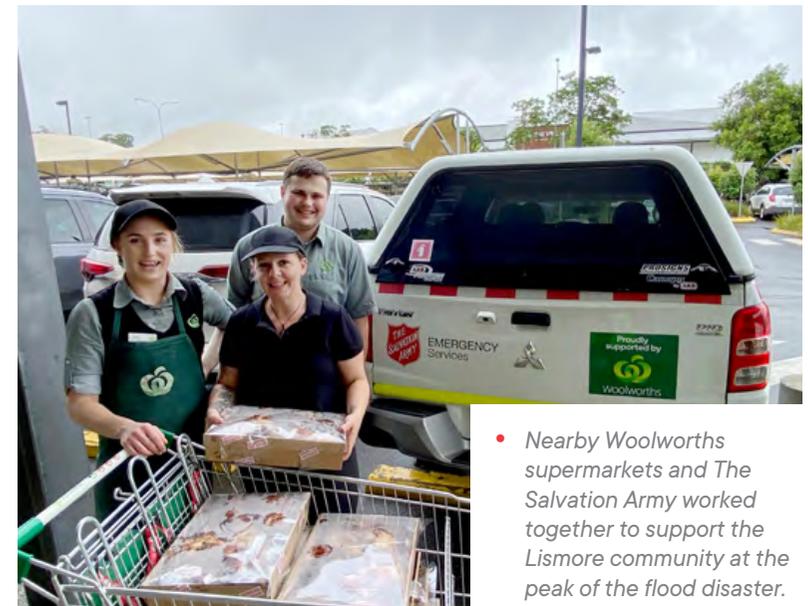
2022 flood disaster

Woolworths responded swiftly to the unfolding flood disaster and mobilised a nationwide initiative on 2 March to support The Salvation Army's emergency response. Customers were given the option to round up the total of their shopping docket and donating the amount directly to the Salvos' Flood Appeal. In the first two weeks of activation, over \$780,000 was generated.

On the ground, Woolworths' frontline teams supported the Army's emergency response locally. Pallets of water, food, refreshments, cleaning products and gift cards were made available to SAES state coordinators in Queensland and New South Wales for distribution to flood-affected residents.



- Local Woolworths store managers volunteered to pack hampers at The Salvation Army's Hawkesbury Corps in New South Wales. These packs were delivered by a Woolworths team member and a Salvation Army corps officer to flood-affected communities in Ebenezer and surrounding areas in north-west Sydney. "Hearing the stories of loss and devastation from the public first-hand, cemented the importance of our partnership with Woolworths, in servicing our communities together in times such as these," said Brett Barton, Salvation Army relationship manager.



- Nearby Woolworths supermarkets and The Salvation Army worked together to support the Lismore community at the peak of the flood disaster.

The road ahead

Not everyone can make their way to a recovery hub. For this reason, the SEDM team mobilised the Salvos' Winnebago to conduct outreach in hard-hit areas in May. The first mobile unit started in Lismore, with Salvos going door-to-door to connect with hard-to-reach people who could not get themselves to a recovery hub.

Team leader of The Salvation Army North NSW Flood Recovery Team, Major Bev Kingston, said the elderly and those who are severely traumatised are often the ones who miss out.

“We went to a small community on the river at Tumbulgum and discovered that not many people had received any help from the Salvos yet. We spent three weeks in their community, and it really had an impact on them. Every person expressed their gratitude that we met them at their point of need and were able to help them,” Bev said.

The New South Wales mobile unit is staffed by three Salvos outreach workers and supports approximately 100 people per week on average. The team not only connects eligible residents to financial assistance and donated Amart vouchers, but also provides a listening ear, and emotional and spiritual support.

“Community members love to tell us of their connections with the Salvos, often through Sunbeams, Guards and Boys' Legion. They often tell us how their parents told them to donate to the Salvos and that you can trust them to help,” Bev said.

“People are very thankful that we take the time to come to where they are. Time and time again we have tears and profound gratitude that there is help even though time has passed on. The toll of the recovery journey is showing, and people are so grateful for our message of hope and help.”

The outreach team encountered many young families who had never experienced floods before. Bev said that so many of them had moved back into houses that had walls pulled out, waiting for repairs.

“They are basically camping in the shell of their houses,” Bev said, “because they cannot afford to live anywhere else.”

“One lady was so overwhelmed with the support she received, she cried a bucketload of tears and had to hug all three of us. She said she was beginning to despair because she couldn't move forward, but the help we were able to provide, thanks to our donors, was a real turning point for her.”

In Queensland, a mobile unit commenced outreach activities in the state's south-east in October 2022. Letterbox drops and connections with local community groups including Rotary and Lifeline have been made as additional pathways for flood-affected referrals, in preparation for the mobile unit's arrival.

The mobile units are expected to continue outreach activities in New South Wales and Queensland until March 2023.



STORY

A day in the life of a Salvos outreach worker

Written by Renai Ross in August 2022

This week the team met with many Northern Rivers locals who are still very much struggling with rebuilding their lives both physically and mentally. One was a local Lismore resident who I met up with on Monday. Their story is typical of so many residents.

We had arranged to meet at a local café in Lismore. Upon their arrival for their appointment, they apologised for being a little late, explaining that they had finally had a plumber turn up that morning to see if they could fix the plumbing in the caravan that they had purchased to live in on the property almost four months ago. Their home has been deemed uninhabitable and beyond economical repair, so they are now living in this caravan in their front yard. The caravan's plumbing is old and brittle and needs replacing. The plumber said that the job was too complex, and he has not got the time to fix it. This is such a common problem with many residents in the region – a shortage of tradies due the very high demand.



- The Salvation Army's mobile unit connects hard-to-reach residents with financial assistance, and emotional and spiritual support. "We had quite a number of tears in the Winnebago today – tears of relief and joy at there being help for them. We need to replace the tissue box," said Major Bev Kingston. Pictured is the Salvation Army northern NSW outreach team (left to right): Renai Ross, John Harris, Major Bev Kingston and Helen Cumming.

The community member had not mentioned when arranging the appointment that they had also lost their vehicle in the flood and had no transport and had to walk to the appointment location, which is about a 25-minute walk from home, and there is very limited public transport from where they live.

During our meeting they spoke about how the sound of rain sends them into panic. They are extremely worried about the predicted weather events, and their mental health has been significantly affected by the trauma experienced during the flood as well as the uncertainty of their future.

They were overwhelmed with emotion when I told them how we could help them. They also said just having someone sit there with them listening to their story of how everything is affecting them made their day a good one. Having one of The Salvation Army cars was a blessing as I was able to give them a lift home as there were showers predicted and the community member did not need any added stress due to the anxiety they feel every time it rains.

Renai is a SEDM mobile unit outreach worker assisting flood-impacted communities in northern New South Wales.

Thank you

Thanks to the generous donations of our partners, supporters and everyday Aussies, and the vital assistance of our volunteers, we were able to immediately mobilise support as floods devastated the country.



A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO OUR MOST GENEROUS DONORS



GLENCORE



Woolworths



STORY

Finding a way home after the floods

Brisbane resident, Tarnji, was one of the many people displaced by the floods throughout Brisbane in February this year. The 55-year-old was living in shared accommodation before finding herself homeless in a matter of days.

"I was devastated," she says. "For a while I was angry with God and angry with life. I didn't want to continue, but I got to a point where whatever we go through, the sooner we accept it, the sooner we come to a place of content."

"I spent eight days at the Sleeman's Sport Complex Flood Evacuation Centre. People were highly stressed. They had just lost their homes and many had lost their jobs."

"I spent a good part of my life in a counselling position helping others. To find myself on the other side of that was frustrating at my age."

Tarnji was once a therapist with a Bachelor of Community Welfare before an unexpected medical event left her vision impaired for seven months.

"I lost my sight and then my job and I was put on disability support. My life hasn't been the same since," Tarnji recalled.

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- *Tarnji (right) lost her home and possessions in the 2022 Queensland floods. "I had already been through three floods before this, and I had lost everything three times."*

Seeking help is humbling

After the evacuation centre closed, Tarnji was connected to crisis accommodation in a Salvation Army women's shelter.

Tarnji described seeking help as humbling. "When I arrived, I felt like just a number. I've had a career. I've been the professional. Pride is a big thing. Being stripped of pride is just as hard as being stripped of your possessions.

"Thankfully my time at the shelter was made bearable because of my Salvos case manager, Giang. I cannot speak highly enough of her," Tarnji said.

"The most precious thing given to me was the gift of listening without judgment and allowing me to tell my story, with my emotions."

Giang said emotional support is just as important as practical support when it comes to providing care.

"When you're in a situation that you haven't been in before and you're in crisis, it's nice to have someone there to help you navigate the services," Giang said.

Thanks to support from The Salvation Army, Tarnji has now been able to find permanent housing.

"I went from being a broken, middle-aged woman feeling like I was a ship in stormy weather, to finding my feet, having someone to navigate when I was not in control, and having someone recognise me as a human who needed help. I am now in my own little unit, which I'm very grateful for, and enjoying my place that is secure and quiet.

"The practical help, the emotional support, and



- *Tarnji (centre) shares her story of transformation at the Salvos Sleepout fundraising event launch in Queensland. "Tarnji was absolutely awesome to work with. She is very resourceful and has worked very hard at finding her own way out of homelessness," said Salvos case manager, Giang (right).*

the financial assistance with getting a few pieces of furniture, have all contributed to my significant change where today I can say that I love my life.

I am not just a number

"Giang and the Salvos didn't just help me get my accommodation, tick the box and walk away. Still today, if I was to ring the centre and say, 'Hey, I need to talk', I know that Giang or someone will be there to listen to me. Relationship is real to the Salvos, and I will always treasure this."

Today, Tarnji has returned to part-time work as a counsellor while she continues to work on her health, but she hopes to return to full-time work in the future. In the meantime, she is volunteering as a counsellor supporting women experiencing

homelessness and domestic violence, and has recently supported the Salvos Sleepout, a state-wide fundraising event hosted by the Queensland Salvation Army headquarters.

Tarnji has also connected with her local Salvation Army corps to help others in her community who are experiencing or are at risk of homelessness and need a little extra support.

"There's more to your life than what made you homeless. This happened to me, and it could happen to you tomorrow. But you can conquer anything, no matter where you are, if you have someone who really cares and reassures you that you are not alone."

The Salvation Army's Commitment to Inclusion Statement



The Salvation Army Australia acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land on which we meet and work and pay our respect to Elders past, present and future.

We value and include people of all cultures, languages, abilities, sexual orientations, gender identities, gender expressions and intersex status. We are committed to providing programs that are fully inclusive. We are committed to the safety and wellbeing of people of all ages, particularly children.

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**The Salvation Army
Australia**

salvationarmy.org.au

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