



Media Release

22 June 2016

Salvation Army Urges Extra Support to Beat the Winter Chill

The Salvation Army says the recent extreme weather has caused an increase in homeless people accessing its services, and says extra support is needed to address the higher demand for emergency housing this winter.

Sydney Inner City Homelessness Director, Major Bryce Davies, says now more than ever it's important that people dig deep to help those in need as homeless accommodation services reach their capacity over the coming months.

"During these colder periods when extreme weather events become more frequent, homeless people are more susceptible to depression and making bad choices due to the desperate situation they find themselves in," Major Davies said.

"It is vital that we are able to accommodate the extra influx of people needing housing assistance this winter. Being turned away from shelter because there aren't enough beds is a bitter pill to swallow."

Recent research from The Salvation Army indicates Australians are having an increasingly difficult time with many surviving on just \$17 a day once accommodation costs are covered. Data showed this financial stress means taking drastic steps such as going without meals, medical attention or heating a single room of a house during winter.

In addition to emergency relief, this week the Salvos will provide accommodation to more than 2,000 people experiencing homelessness, refuge to 500 people experiencing violence in the home and a wide variety of critical social services.

Major Davies says the Red Shield Appeal aims to raise \$74 million by June 30 to provide critically needed services for Australians doing it tough this winter season.

"We encourage anyone considering making a tax time donation to consider making an investment to The Salvation Army, reaching our important goal means we will not need to reassess how we continue to deliver our services over the winter months," Major Davies said.

"A small donation goes a long way and can have life changing outcomes. Winter is our busiest time of the year, so please think of those who are less fortunate this season and help us bring hope to where it's needed most."

Donations can be made by calling 13 SALVOS (13 72 58), online at salvos.org.au or by posting a cheque to PO Box 9888 in your capital city.

AT A GLANCE statistics from The Salvation Army Economic Social Impact Survey (ESIS):

Housing:

- * 68% of clients are now suffering extreme housing stress.
- * Family violence is the leading cause of housing transiency with children at significant risk of social exclusion due to housing instability. 64% of respondents who moved due to family violence say their children had to change schools as a result. 40% of people who were surveyed have moved house an average of three (2.7) times in just 12 months.

Deprivation:

- * 86% of clients (and 58% of households with children) report severe deprivation and now go without 5 or more basic items, for example; medical treatment or three meals a day.
- * Numerous clients live off just \$16.96 a day (to pay for *everything* after housing /accommodation is paid for.)
- * Some clients on Newstart Allowance are having to survive off just \$15.29 a day.

Impact on children:

- * 20% (one in five) cannot afford medical treatment or medicines that are prescribed for their child and 42% (two in five) cannot afford a yearly dental check-up for their child.
- * More than half of all parents surveyed (6 out of 10) cannot afford an internet connection for their child. This places children at significant risk of social exclusion and hinders their ability to fully participate in schooling.

ENDS

For more information or media comment please contact:

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