



Media Release

29 July 2016

Missing Persons Week: Stay connected to help those at risk

The Salvation Army is urging people who want to find a missing family member to contact its Family Tracing Service as part of National Missing Persons Week (31 July-6 August).

National Missing Persons Week is an annual campaign to raise awareness of the issues and impacts surrounding missing persons cases. This year's theme, "Stay Connected", aims to emphasise the importance of staying connected with family and to enhance the support networks for someone who is at risk of going missing.

"In this day and age of technology and social media, staying connected is often taken for granted. Communication and relationships break down for various reasons, and our hope is to help and support those families to reconnect and support them where needed," says Allyson Sutherland, caseworker at The Salvation Army's Family Tracing Service.

The Salvation Army Family Tracing Service believes in the importance of family. It seeks to restore family relationships by tracing relatives and assisting, where possible, with reunion and reconciliation. The service has been operating in Australia since the 1920s and registers 2000 searches each year. It has networks in more than 100 countries and has located thousands of missing persons across Australia.

An estimated 38,000 people are reported missing in Australia every year. That's one person every 15 minutes. While the vast majority are found, 1600 people remain disconnected from their family and loved ones.

The Salvation Army Family Tracing Service has a 75 per cent success rate in locating missing persons with about 40 successful cases processed every week.

"We search for and hopefully locate the missing relative and when he or she is located offer mediation for the reunion. We also play an advocacy role if the people concerned do not know one another or the relationship is strained," says Allyson Sutherland.

"Whatever the outcome, we encourage anyone who wants to reconnect with their family to reach out and contact their families to say 'Hey, I'm okay' and if you are unable to find your family please contact The Salvation Army Family Tracing Service and let us help you."

To find out about The Salvation Army Family Tracing Service please visit the website at salvos.org.au/familytracing or call 02 9466 3479 in NSW/ACT and 07 3222 6661 in QLD.

For more information or media comment please contact:

The Salvation Army Media Department- (02) 9466 3143