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news

Brisbane sleepout raises \$33,000 for women's homelessness services

By Cliff Worthing

The Salvation Army Brisbane City Women's Homelessness Services was the beneficiary of funds raised by the Brisbane Sleepout on 8 September at the RNA Showgrounds.

About 70 people participated in the event, raising more than \$33,000 for women's services, which provide supported accommodation for 35 women at a time and a mobile support service focused on early intervention and prevention of homelessness for women.

"It was a good night. Everyone was in a reflective space and shared their own stories and experiences," said Amelia Nixon, Community Development Worker at Brisbane City Women's Homelessness Services. "It was great to build relationships with lots of like-minded people with a shared purpose."



Two participants at The Salvation Army Brisbane Sleepout set up for the night.

Program Manager Jocelyn Harrison provided an overview of the service and encouraged participants to recognise the importance of listening to and reflecting on the experiences of women who had experienced homelessness. She asked everyone to reflect on the question, "What does home mean to you?" to set the tone for the evening and build shared understanding for attendees.



The Brisbane Streetlevel Mission team provided much-needed coffee and chocolate for attendees at the sleepout – (from left) Sean Aston, Lisa Kroon, Paul Campbell, Heather Olm and Bronwyn Rule.

A panel discussion that included two women with lived experience of homelessness enhanced participants' understanding of the issues faced by women. Emma and Betty explained their challenges of escaping domestic violence, interactions with the Department of Child Safety and being priced out of the rental market.

"Emma and Betty really connected with the audience and appreciated being able to tell their story," Amelia said. "They received congratulations for positive changes in their lives, shared pictures of their children and couldn't believe how much people cared about them as individuals. It broke down a lot of barriers."

Funds raised will help the women's service support early interventions such as assisting with rental arrears, sustaining a current tenancy, furniture or relocation costs for new tenancies and addressing other barriers to keeping their children in the home and the family being able to stay where they are.

"We are all in this together," Amelia said. "We can respond as a community to address this growing issue, listening and valuing the contributions of those who have experienced this firsthand, alongside the work of government and social services in this space."

"I was really moved by the outpouring of support for homelessness in the community, and even though I was nervous to speak, I am so glad I did it," Emma said. "Thanks everyone for showing up and showing your support."

news



Young Elle Smith says she has grown closer to God since she started working for The Salvation Army as a Doorways caseworker in Coffs Harbour (NSW).

Job with the Salvos brings new life to Elle

By Elle Smith

I started working for the Salvos as a drought relief assessor. Prior to that, I had only been working as a barista at Maccas, so this was my first big job out in the workforce. It was just a beautiful way to start my professional development. My team leaders were gorgeous, constantly checking in on me, always offering a listening ear, great guidance and good mentors.

Then an opportunity to work for The Salvation Army's PAL [Phone Assistance Line] came up, and I was offered to work there full-time. At the time I was only 18. I was still quite young, so I was so grateful that they didn't see my age as a sign of inexperience. I have lived experience.

Then, I had an opportunity to move up to Coffs Harbour [on the NSW mid-north coast.] I had completed my Diploma [in Case Management], and a year later the Salvos contacted me and asked me to apply for a Doorways Case Management position.

The values that the Salvos have – I see it in everyone who works in the organisation – it's such a beautiful place to be surrounded by amazing people. I went for the interview, and I was very lucky to get the job.

I was brought up a Catholic and went to a Catholic school, and as I went through high school my faith was no longer a priority for me. But it was always something

underlying. When I had troubles, I did always pray, but I had lost touch with [my relationship with God.]

Being surrounded in my work by Andrew, Jeanette [Coffs Harbour Corps Officers, Majors Andrew and Jeanette Van Gaalen] and a lot of the volunteers who have such strong faith, it was an inspiration to me to get back in touch with that. It aligns so well with me and how I view the world.

I was a little bit nervous to speak about it at first. It was almost like I felt like I didn't have enough experience. But I had an amazing support network. The Van Gaalens and their children have been really good to me ... letting me ask a lot of questions. I did a lot of readings and asked a lot of questions!

Then I had the opportunity to be baptised, and that was such a special experience. Since then, I have felt God every day, and I find a way to connect with him more and more now.

When I speak to members of the community that I am trying to support, I feel God in me. He speaks through me – everything feels so light. Knowing I have someone that I can turn to and talk to anytime and can love me unconditionally no matter what – is just such a beautiful feeling.

When I first started working for the Salvos, I could see God shining through all these people. Now, I get to be one of those people. I think if you just let God shine through you, people will see, and they will ask and want to be part of it!

viewpoint



New Salvos message like a 'breath of fresh air'

Major Peter McGuigan writes personally about The Salvation Army Australia's new message for the community: 'Believe in good'.

I've been a Salvationist most of my life – you could say the whole of my life, given I was born into a Salvation Army family. Not only that, but I'm a blueblood Salvo, sold out to the Army's mission to transform the world by sharing God's love in word and deed. I'll give up lots to play my part in seeing the fulfilment of this great goal.

During my lifetime, many phrases have been employed by the Salvos to engage the community in supporting their mission. Perhaps the most memorable was 'Thank God for the Salvos', a line we still sometimes hear from community members when they see us in action.

Others have included 'We're all in this together', taking its lead (with permission) from the number one hit song by Ben Lee. And 'You can give hope where it's needed most', one of our more recent mottos using the Red Shield in place of the 'o' in hope.

But last month, for the first time in a long time, I felt inspired by a message from The Salvation Army that is much more than a cry to support our work. Last month,

my organisation, my church, released a statement of encouragement for humankind to believe in something that transcends everything that weighs us down, destroys people's lives, and keeps humanity from thriving.

Statement for our times

'Believe in good' were the words that rang out from the Salvos like a church bell ringing across a valley on a Sunday morning, calling people to believe, experience and share the goodness of God amid uncertainty about humanity's future. "Whatever happened to good," goes the ad that hit our TV screens late last month. "It's a word that gets thrown around a lot ... At the Salvos, we believe 'good' deserves better. Let's reclaim its true meaning ...".

'Believe in good' is a statement for our times, coming from the heart of The Salvation Army. Listening to the 5am news last week, and already aware of this new message, it was noticeable that the first five news items were about bad things happening in the world. I considered how easy it is for us to be personally stressed about our global and local state of affairs. It conjures a feeling of helplessness – not knowing what one can do about it.

If ever there was a time for the individuals, families and communities of Australia to draw a line in the sand and believe in good, it is now. To believe in good is to lift our heads above the cultural gravity line and choose to be no longer pulled down by the negative, the bad, the gloom ▶

viewpoint

and the foreboding that seems to hang in the atmosphere.

It is to create a culture of good in the world that resists all that destroys the human spirit and takes positive action towards ending the bad things – things like homelessness, racism, poverty, family violence and environmental decline.

It's about no longer giving way or accepting trends on social media that gravitate towards infamy, scandal and false premise. Believing in good, we choose to see through the eyes of God and give ourselves towards making the world a better place for all. It is going to a deeper place and recognising and entering into the source of goodness – the unmitigated love of God – even if we don't fully understand the goodness and the love of God or don't think we deserve it.

A multi-dimensional message

The Salvos' new message is multi-dimensional. Its first goal aims to raise the spirit of Australians amid challenging times and point them to the ultimate source of good. Introducing the Salvos' new message at Tuggeranong Corps in Canberra, Major Dean Clarke said that 'Believe in good' opens the door for conversations about belief and goodness.

At Parramatta Corps, Major Kylie Collinson said she was "a little emotional" when she first saw the 'Believe in good' video produced especially for Salvos. "I love that The Salvation Army helps somebody every 17 seconds ... We believe in this transforming good. We believe in the hope that comes from [good]. We believe in the hope that Jesus brings."

'Believe in good' also encourages people from every corner of the community to join us in believing in good and making it happen, particularly in the dark places of the world where one too many people struggle with life in the face of seemingly insurmountable challenges. By believing in good and acting on it, together, we can make a difference. That's what the Salvos are saying on this level.

Then, 'believe in good' is also a message for the Salvos themselves – their internal publics or stakeholders, public relations linguists might say. And I'm talking first about fully signed-up Salvos. These are people who, like me, have signed up to experience and share the goodness of God in both word and deed. It is about following the example of Jesus Christ, who introduced humanity to a new way of living, including how we think about ourselves and our actions.

It was Jesus who gave us the example of the Good Samaritan. And to a question that was put to him about healing people on the Sabbath, he replied, counter-culturally, "If any of you has a sheep and it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will you not take hold of it and lift it out? How much more valuable is a man than a sheep! Therefore, it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath" (see Matthew 12).

Like it has been for many charities and churches in the 21st century, things haven't been easy for the church side of The Salvation Army. A confluence of changes in the world – including those brought about by the pandemic, the impact of social media, and people questioning the



Major Kylie Collinson says we believe in the hope that comes from good.

relevance of traditional church sub-culture – has resulted in significant challenges for The Salvation Army.

But the Salvos are reimagining themselves in this vastly different world to the one where they first set out on their mission more than 150 years ago. 'Believe in good' captures the essence of this re-creation, both for themselves and the world. The source of the good we espouse remains the same, and at the heart of 'Believe in good' is a strong call to renewal. How we communicate and share goodness is under renovation. Our new catchcry is a call to transformative action for Salvos and the world at large.

By the way, this past month, I've been personally challenged by Psalm 119:68, a heartfelt prayer given up by the ancient King David amid his own challenging circumstances: "You are good, and the source of good; train me in your goodness."

story of hope

Red Dust partnership making a positive impact in the Red Centre

By Chloe Rice

Partnerships play a vital role in living out The Salvation Army's mission of transforming lives and restoring communities.

One such partnership is the collaboration between The Salvation Army and Red Dust, a community organisation, implementing intergenerational Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD) programs for men aged 18 and above on Arrernte lands in Alice Springs.

For a decade, The Salvation Army ran an Indigenous AOD recovery program out of Alice Springs. With challenges such as unmet targets, staffing issues and program revisions, it was evident that a change was needed.

In 2019, territorial leadership acknowledged the significance of having Indigenous leadership running the program, prompting Tam Tran, The Salvation Army's National AOD Specialist, to approach Red Dust.

Red Dust soon became the delivery partner of the program, and The Salvation Army maintained the government contract, meeting accreditation and governance requirements. Six months into the partnership, the program was exceeding its goals.

Between July 2021 and June 2022, the program saw approximately 200 yarning circles being facilitated, 146 brief interventions provided, 15 suicide prevention actions and 18 referrals to other services.

Kathryn Wright, General Manager for AOD, says that the cultural knowledge and leadership Red Dust brought to the delivery of the program – through outreach activities, cultural trips and yarning circles – was critical to its success.

"For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, connection to culture and Country has a direct link to a significant reduction in alcohol and other drug-related harm. Of course, it makes sense, as a connection to Country increases First Nations people's sense of self and belonging," Kathryn explains.

The program takes a trauma-informed approach, acknowledging the impact of personal and intergenerational trauma on people and their journey to recovery. This critical approach establishes a sense of safety and trust through the various activities Red Dust runs throughout the year. Some of these include camps, yarning circles and vocational activities and work skills programs.

There is also a focus on Elders passing on their knowledge to younger men, conversing through several generations. Specifically, the 'Elders' group' has helped clients obtain better access to traditional knowledge and perspectives, reconnecting a sense of identity to places of history and belonging. Between 2021 and 2022, 39 new clients engaged with this group through the partnership with the Salvos.

Exploring spirituality is another key element to the



Fred Docking, Service Manager and Northern Territory Coordinator, says the program is 'achieving new heights'.

delivery of the program, which has led to a deeper sense of culture, identity and faith. This results in a strengthening of first-hand participants, their families and communities.

The 'Train the Trainer' initiative is another example of the support Red Dust is able to equip previous program participants with the necessary skills to become trainers themselves. By passing their knowledge and passion, participants become living proof of the program's sustainability and potential for long-term change. Throughout 2021-22, Red Dust employed four Alice Springs-based Aboriginal men and four Elders as coordinators, drivers, cultural guides and facilitators.

Red Dust's ability to connect to these communities is reflected in the growing number of participants joining the activities. These connection points help provide a stronger sense of self, cultural safety and alliance to community members, something the Salvos haven't been able to do previously but are working on through such partnerships.

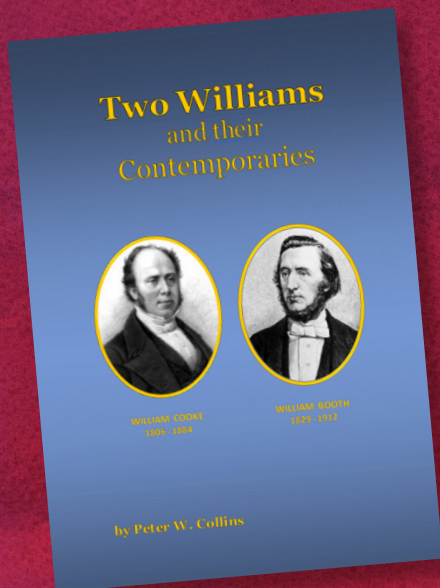
But the partnership is twofold. From Red Dust's perspective, collaborating with the Salvos meant they could gain their own accreditation, which took 8-9 months.

Fred Docking, The Salvation Army's Service Manager and Northern Territory Coordinator, shares, "The Salvation Army assisted Red Dust in getting accredited, enabling them to secure funding and achieve new heights.

"Capacity-building has allowed Red Dust to grow independently while the partnership continues to provide employment opportunities, lifting people out of poverty and making a positive impact on individuals, families and communities."

Although there is still much work to be done in this space, Fred explains that there are four pillars of recovery – safety, hope, health and community. Addressing these in a culturally safe environment is the key to delivering true transformation in any community.

book review



Left: *Two Williams* is a well-researched book that covers the association between Salvation Army co-founder William Booth and the older Dr William Cooke, who for seven years was a mentor for the young Booth.

Right: Author Major Peter Collins spent three years, mostly during the COVID-19 pandemic, researching material for the book.

Two Williams and their Contemporaries by Peter W. Collins

By Major Iain Trainor*

For anyone interested in the history of The Salvation Army and the influences that impacted co-founder William Booth, this book is a must.

Written by retired Salvation Army officer Major Peter Collins, the book is a pleasant read that holds attention throughout the little over 400 pages. Before the reader assumes this is just a rehash of what has already been written, please be assured that is not the case.

The book reminds the reader that the Wesleyan tradition came about through difficult times. The writer makes it very clear that John Wesley's heart was set to reinvigorate the Church of England with the Spirit of Holiness. The Methodist New Connexion, the Primitive Methodists, and other disparate groups struggled with theology and organisational form.

The inclusion of the theological stance and ministry of people like William Cooke, Charles Finney, James Caughey and the Fletchers gives insight into the life and times of great change not just in society but also in the Church and the role of the female ministry.

While anyone with a passion for Salvation Army history would understand why both William and Catherine are referred to as the founders, the treatise gives very little doubt about Catherine's influence on William, and one wonders how The Salvation Army might have evolved had she lived.

With so much turmoil evidenced throughout the book, it does not take a genius to recognise the Spirit at work.

Indeed, the progression from the East London Revival Union to the Christian Mission to The Salvation Army is one of God's hand guiding, at times, very human individuals.

The book deals fairly with the Methodist New Connexion conferences and the seminal conference at Liverpool, which set an unequivocal course for Booth and what would become The Salvation Army.

If one were critical – not of the book, but the events – one might be perplexed at the reversal of direction taken by Booth. One of the most controversial points of contention in early Methodism was regarding the control Wesley exerted and the desire to broaden the organisational structure, yet in the organisation of The Salvation Army, Booth was totally autocratic. While vital for the effective development of Booth's Army, one does wonder at the impact on strong-minded co-workers.

Collins spends considerable time outlining the internal conflicts that plagued the Methodists, and one wonders if the structure of The Christian Mission was modified to avoid such pointless, futile conflicts, which inevitably detracted from the soul-saving function of the organisation.

In conclusion, I would commend this work based on the significant insights it gives to the eventual development of The Salvation Army.

Two Williams and their Contemporaries is available from Salvationist Supplies by emailing trade.sydney@salvationarmy.org.au or trade.melbourne@salvationarmy.org.au or by calling Sydney Salvationist Supplies (1800 634 209) and Melbourne Salvation Army Supplies (1800 100 018).

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