

# salvos

online *e-news*

## CONNECTING SALVOS IN MISSION

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## news



Employment Plus National Director Dr Graeme White (L), Federal Minister for Regional Development and Territories and local member for Eden-Monaro, Kristy McBain, and The Salvation Army's Head of Government Relations, Major Peter McGuigan, at the launch of the Employment Plus bus.

### Employment Plus bus making jobs more accessible

The Salvation Army's Employment Plus has officially launched a new mobile bus program that it has been trialling for the past month in a regional area of southern New South Wales.

A recent survey undertaken by Employment Plus found that nearly half of its job seekers who struggle to get to their appointments may be impacted by poor public transport in their area or not having a car, a driver's licence, or finances for fuel.

So, The Salvation Army's employment service set out to remove those barriers to employment by trialling a new face-to-face service taking Employment Plus directly to job seekers.



A modified bus, equipped with two interview stations and everything needed for job-seeking, began to visit job seekers in Berridale, Bibbenluke, Bombala, Boorowa, Cooma, Harden and Jindabyne.

"Finding work can be a difficult and emotional task, and we want to take some of the stress and headache out of getting support so that job seekers can really focus on finding work – rather than finding us," said Employment Plus National Director Dr Graeme White.

"We know it's even harder for regional job seekers who have that bit further to travel to make appointments."

Nearly 500 appointments took place in the bus during the pilot program. The new service was officially launched by the Federal Minister for Regional Development and Territories and local member for Eden-Monaro, Kristy McBain, outside Parliament House in Canberra.

"I've been so impressed by the positive work from this new mobile bus program's pilot, including in my own electorate of Eden-Monaro, and I'm excited to see this support for regional job seekers continue – directly connecting them with crucial, face-to-face employment opportunities that could transform their future."

It's anticipated that similar Employment Plus bus services will be launched in regional areas across other states of Australia in the coming years.

# news



Project 614's newest senior soldiers holding their certificates (from left): Dianne, KJ, Robert, Greg, Scott and Jianfen. (Middle row): Lieut-Colonel Yvonne Daniels, Majors Brendan and Sandra Nottle, Major Pearson Chuang. Matthew Daniels (614 café manager) is holding the flag.

## Six new soldiers bolster ranks at Melbourne Project 614

By Cliff Worthing

Senior soldiership becomes highly relevant today when a corps delivers on mission, according to Major Brendan Nottle, Project 614 Corps Officer in Melbourne.

Amongst all the celebrations on Easter Sunday, six senior soldiers were enrolled.

"During tough times, having a place to belong, being in a tribe of significance that is meaningful is something people search for," Brendan said.

Retired officers Lieutenant-Colonel Frank and Yvonne Daniels led the soldiership classes. One of the soldiers, Jianfen, preferred spiritual conversations in her native language, so she worked individually with Chinese-speaking Major Pearson Chuang (Melbourne Project 614 Corps Officer, team member).

"It was great working with them because they were keen and wanted to put their faith in action through 614's mission," Frank said. "They came from such diverse backgrounds but became a tight little group through the soldiership process."

### Individual journeys

Dianne came to Project 614 after Salvos Funerals conducted her daughter's funeral. She was so impressed with the officer who conducted the funeral and the funeral director that she asked for the nearest Salvation Army corps to attend. Frank and Yvonne met her at the front door and listened to her story. She now volunteers at the corps café.

"Dianne embraced the congregation in an amazing way and before long said to me, 'I'd like some of those epaulettes', so we started recruiting a group to join her," Frank said.

KJ had spent time in a Salvation Army children's home, served in the military, and lived roughly before coming to 614. Two other soldiers had previous Salvo connections but have since found a home at Melbourne Project 614. "Everyone was involved in the corps some way but just wanted to make that extra commitment," Frank said.

While the Daniels were leading the group through the soldiership process, Pearson was working with Jianfen. Jianfen had been a part of the Richmond congregation for about 20 years but started attending 614 about a year ago. She regularly attends the weekly Chinese language Bible study, and serves as a volunteer at the corps during Red Shield Appeal and collecting donations.



The new senior soldiers sign their certificates at the holiness table.

"She showed she had a love of the people and wanted to put her Christianity into action," Pearson said. "So, when we discussed becoming a soldier, she jumped at the chance."



# feature



Senior Manager of Digital Channels, Salvos Stores

Lucas joined the Salvos Stores team in 2018, playing a pivotal role in launching the Salvos Stores' online strategy.

## Salvos Stores paving the way to a digital future

By Matt Allensby

Meet Lucas Ferrier, Senior Manager of Digital Channels for Salvos Stores, who recently was featured in the Top 50 People in E-Commerce Report. We sat down with Lucas to discuss his journey to the Salvos, his nomination, and his vision for Salvos Stores' digital future.

Lucas' journey with the Salvos began after he returned to Australia from the United Kingdom. Having worked for the British Heart Foundation's retail division for two years, Lucas was invited to speak about his experience in the UK at a conference on Charitable Recycling in Australia. Matt Davis, Director of Salvos Stores, happened to be in the audience and was keen to hear more.

"One of the big things that I was talking about was the shift to online retail and how it was proving really successful [for the UK market]," Lucas said. "Matt recognised the growth of e-commerce in Australia and was in a position to consider what this might look like for Salvos Stores into the future."

Shortly after the conference, Lucas was invited to Melbourne to meet with both Matt and Edwina Morgan, General Manager of Customer and Strategy at Salvos Stores, to explore the opportunities for Salvos Stores' digital growth. Lucas describes it as a 'full circle' moment for himself – having begun his journey in Melbourne and now returning there.

Since joining the Salvos Stores team in January 2018, Lucas has played a pivotal role in launching Salvos Stores' online strategy, allowing customers to search, view and purchase products that are available at stores across the territory.

"I'm really driven by a love of working with people at the heart of The Salvation Army. Whether that's our volunteers, our customers, or our community, I love working with them," Lucas said. In early 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic shut the retail industry down in most states, driving sales to online platforms. Salvos Stores followed this trend by immediately launching their online strategy, providing a lifeline to keep their store teams and customers engaged.

"We were in a position where there had already been

some thinking behind the scenes around what [the online strategy] would look like for Salvos Stores into the future, with COVID accelerating that strategy," Lucas told us.

What typically would have taken five months' worth of development happened in the space of five weeks, with the team now having to launch their strategy early. This enabled Salvos Stores to continue operating throughout each state's subsequent lockdowns, and more so continues to be a resounding success. Over 50,000 products are listed online at any one time, raising significant funds to support vital Salvos programs that serve the most vulnerable in our community.

Whilst discussing his nomination in the Top 50 People in E-Commerce Report, Lucas expressed his surprise when he discovered he would be featured in the report, describing it as another 'full circle' moment in his career.

"It was a huge surprise to me. I remember when I first started the role in 2018, Edwina took me to the Top 50 in E-Commerce event to connect and network with others in the industry and told me one day she could see me being featured," he recalled.

When asked about Salvos Stores' future in digital strategy, Lucas expressed excitement about their current projects, explaining one of their recent successes in implementing AI-driven search on the Salvos Stores website. This search function recommends similar products to visitors, leading to increased sales.

Lucas highlighted none of Salvos Stores' recent advancements would be possible without the support of the leadership team. "We have a really progressive and forward-thinking executive leadership team who have an appetite for change, providing unique contributions around creating positive impacts within our communities," he said.

This support has contributed to developing a website that is class-leading among all the international territories, with teams from the USA, UK and New Zealand territories interested in what Salvos Stores Australia is achieving with their online strategy.

Why not visit the Salvos Stores website today and treat yourself to a sustainable shopping spree?

# viewpoint



## Expecting perfection yet loving unconditionally Salvos Online writer Lauren Martin asks some annoying questions about what it means to follow Jesus

We often say in The Salvation Army that we are in the 'business of transformation', and most certainly, we know that God's heart is to transform lives, families and communities and that he calls us to join him in his work.

But what does that actually mean? And if God doesn't need me (which is certainly true) but he wants me in his Great Commission ... what am I supposed to be doing?

I often call myself a 'Christian realist'. I'm a passionate follower of Jesus, but it's got to mean something quite tangible for me to consider it worthwhile.

I vividly remember my 'conversion experience'. After probably months of ignoring the pull of the Holy Spirit to recognise and enter into the reality of Jesus, God hammered it home during a General John Gowans sermon at a Commissioning event (remember the ones at Darling Harbour in Sydney?).

I was a snotty mess, and the lovely Salvationist sitting next to me told me she didn't need her hankie back! I recall being cranky at God afterwards and almost challenging him that if I was going to become a 'Christian' against my will, it had 'gosh-darn' (I think I used different words at the time) better be worth it!

Fast forward a few decades and, by golly, it has been – but not without my dogged determination to truly experience God and try and work out what it means to follow him.

So, when terms are bandied about, like the fact that we need to 'partner with what God's already doing' and 'join him on his mission', I'm all in for it, but the journalist and realist in me tends to ask a few questions. Questions like, "How does God bring about transformation in people, and how the heck can I possibly assist?"

Well, we're supposed to love people unconditionally, right? Absolutely. Love without judgement. That's the Jesus way.

But I think there's more.

When I think of God, I get a sense of his perfection, awesomeness, power, and glory. Mind-blowing! He created us perfect in his image, and – in a paradoxical way that can only work with God – he expects perfection from us yet knows it won't happen and loves us regardless.

Jesus, God's image in humanity, operated the same way. He called out people's best – yet never shamed or blamed when less than the best was delivered. He calls people continually to follow him and take steps closer to being the people we are created to be.

The fact that Jesus sees perfection in me is mind-blowing and allows me to be brave enough to take steps of faith towards that best – knowing that when I fail, he loves me regardless.

That's the type of Jesus follower God calls me to be! Asking God to show me his perfect creation in everyone I meet and call out people's best, allowing them to see a clearer vision of the people they are created to be.

Imagine what can happen when broken people are given permission 'have a go' by a follower of Jesus who can see the best in them and will love them, regardless of their failures? Never blaming or shaming but shining a light on God's preferred future for lives, families and communities.

That's what God does for us, and you'd have to agree it's transformational. What a transformational gift we can give others if we do the same!





# story of hope

## Former troubled teen finds his oasis in life through music

By Lauren Martin

Owen Davis credits music – and Jesus through The Salvation Army – with saving his life.

Twenty years ago, his life on the streets of inner Sydney was chaotic and dangerous, with The Salvation Army's Oasis Youth Support Network and its then manager, Major Paul Moulds, his only anchor.

Decades later, the musician and videographer has moved on from his life on the streets, but he's never lost his passion for assisting others in the same position he found himself in as a teen, without a place to call home.

In 2016, he was part of The Salvation Army's Couch Project 'Streets to Stage' tour of 12 high schools, raising money and creating awareness around youth homelessness. From that, Owen birthed a 'Street 2 Stage' (S2S) initiative that gained funding to work with young people experiencing homelessness, training them in music production and videography.

It was full circle for the young man, who took part in a similar initiative through The Salvation Army's Oasis more than a decade earlier. "I don't forget that," he says, his passion and faith running so deep that he continued anyway when funding ran out for the project.

"This work is really important to me. Everyone was saying to me, 'Just wait for the funding, don't waste your time', but I thought, 'I'm not going to let these young guys miss out due to lack of funding.'"

### Streets 2 Stage initiative

The projects Owen developed, and runs, are the Street 2 Stage 'One Shot' and 'One Take' initiatives. One Shot focuses on music production, and One Take focuses on film production.

Owen connects with young people experiencing homelessness through word-of-mouth referrals or social media and invites them to be part of the eight-week program. They learn production, writing, recording, mixing/editing and mastering, and marketing/PR skills from Owen, who has qualifications in screen media.

"They are then able to use their skills in their life," says Owen. "They are able to go out and take steps forward like finding accommodation, finding a job and holding that job and doing some good stuff with their life. It 100 per cent improves their self-esteem and gives them concrete skills that transfer to many different job opportunities – not just in the music or film industry."

Frank has gone from experiencing homelessness, being in and out of jail, to now "happily living with my partner and my child ... and so lucky to be able to share my story on a stage. I truly went from the streets to the stage," he says.

Stories like Frank's are never instant, and Owen personally knows the value of long-term journeying with people, having experienced it himself with his mentor, Major Paul Moulds.



Owen Davis continues to volunteer for The Salvation Army, decades after his life was changed through his experiences at the Army's Oasis Youth Support Network.

Despite appointment changes taking Paul away from Oasis and even interstate, he never lost touch with Owen and has been there through many ups and downs.

### Salvation Army partnership

Paul remembers meeting Owen as a teenager, saying, "He was very angry, but he always had a dream – even back then, you could sense it. Over the years, we have been able to help him. He has done all the work himself, but we have been able to help him find pathways to do that."

Paul says he's thrilled to work alongside Owen again in his new role as Team Leader of Greater West Salvos. Earlier this year, the team was granted government funding to develop 'Western Sydney Oasis' – a multi-million-dollar transformation centre at St Marys.

"We have plans in western Sydney to develop a whole lot of positive and creative youth projects to help young people to express themselves and give them skills and training. Owen is part of that team that is helping us plan it."

### Music funding the mission

Owen unleashes his creativity in his spare time through his rap characters – 'Fiction' and 'OE' – who both release music. Fiction is an anti-hero character, who Owen describes as portraying "the worst of everyone, the dark side of everyone".

Owen releases a music single every month, with 20 per cent of all proceeds from OE's releases donated to The Salvation Army. The music is released through all major streaming services such as Spotify, iTunes and Amazon and also as an NFT.

He's also started a new initiative – Justice News – working with others who have had experience with homelessness to interview real people about social justice issues.

"Jesus is the inspiration for what I do – not for fame or for money but to see a better world, that's my dream."

# army archives



Doreen as a young Salvation Army officer (left) and doing what she did best throughout her life and ministry – comforting.

## Remembering 'Griff' – an angel in a Salvation Army uniform

Brigadier Doreen Evelyn Griffiths, better known as 'Griff' to all who knew and loved her, was one of The Salvation Army's most gracious and caring officers.

Admitted to the Order of the Founder by General John Gowans on 24 February 2002, Doreen's commitment as a family and welfare officer over several decades exemplified her overwhelming love and compassion for everyone she met.

Compliments flow whenever Doreen is remembered. A recent Facebook post on The Salvation Army Museum site is a great example. "She was a real angel," was one comment. Other comments included: "Lovely, gracious lady", "A beautiful lady inside and out", "Always willing to help anybody" and "A beautiful Christian."

Doreen Evelyn Griffiths was born in Melbourne on 3 March 1921. She came from a large family and, early in life, made links with The Salvation Army, giving her life to Jesus as a teenager.

She worked in domestic service until she was 18, after which she entered Officer Training College from the Dandenong Corps in Victoria.

She was commissioned in 1940 as a probationary-lieutenant and served at various Salvation Army corps and community centres in Western Australia, South Australia and Tasmania over the next 25 years. In 1966, she commenced 14 years of distinguished service in the Family Welfare Service, based at 69 Bourke Street, Melbourne.

Doreen's work for families in crisis was unceasing. She was non-judgemental and positive in her response and had a remarkable capacity for expressing compassion. Her service was practical, sometimes needing to shovel filth and dirt off the floor for people who simply did not know how to cope. Then there was the unforgettable day when she embraced a premature baby born to heroin-addicted parents just before he died.

Her love was not given sparingly, time was not counted, and her financial rewards were small, but she brought hope

to many. She was awarded The Salvation Army's Long Service Award in 1965 and the Long Service Star in 1975.

In 1980, Doreen took up an appointment as the Children's Court Welfare Officer in Melbourne. In this role, she gave selfless service to the young people coming before the courts and their families who often need guidance and support at a traumatic time in their lives.

The magistrates, court officials and departmental officers also found the Brigadier unfailing support to them. She became an honorary probation officer in 1980, and this position was gazetted in 1981. She continued in her appointment at the Children's Court until her official retirement on 1 January 1983.

Many letters of appreciation for her work were read at her retirement, and Commissioner (later General) Eva Burrows paid a personal tribute to Doreen.

However, because of the effectiveness of her ministry, many requests were made for her to continue with her work of love and compassion, so the Brigadier gladly agreed to continue in retirement. She often worked 80 hours a week, meeting the needs of children and teenagers caught in the legal process. Often, they needed clothes, some had not eaten for days, but most of all, they required personal and emotional support. She continued to work in the Children's Court until she was limited by ill health in 2000.

At her final farewell in 2001, Judge Jennifer Coate unveiled a plaque naming the children's playroom after Brigadier Doreen Griffiths.

Other awards handed to Doreen included the Victorian Employers Federation Community Services Award (1988), the Advance Australia Award (1989), Inaugural Inductee to the Victorian Honour Roll for Women (2001) and the Medal of Australia (AM) in the Queen's Birthday Honours (2003).

Brigadier Doreen Griffith was promoted to glory on 9 October 2003.

*Article courtesy of the vic.gov.au website, with extra information provided by Barry Gittins of The Salvation Army Museum*



Doreen assisting a young family during her early officership years.