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International Women's Day

Accelerating action for a gender-equal world



4 The gender data gap

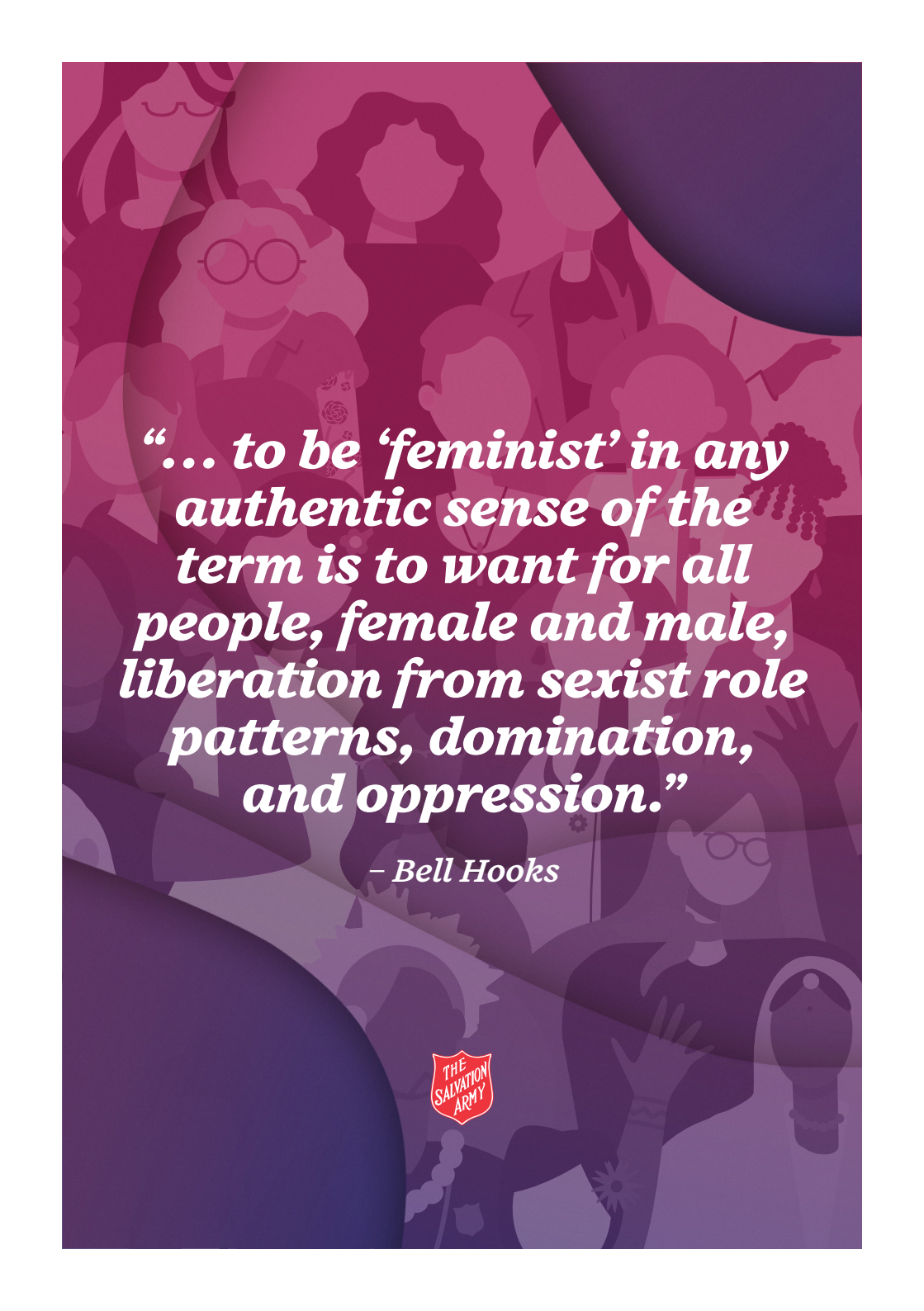
The need to increase equality and empowerment for women and girls

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Women in India and Ghana change the lives of society's most vulnerable



“... to be ‘feminist’ in any authentic sense of the term is to want for all people, female and male, liberation from sexist role patterns, domination, and oppression.”

– Bell Hooks



What is The Salvation Army?

The Salvation Army, an international movement, is an evangelical part of the universal Christian Church.

Vision Statement

Wherever there is hardship or injustice, Salvos will live, love and fight alongside others to transform Australia one life at a time with the love of Jesus.

Mission Statement

The Salvation Army is a Christian movement dedicated to sharing the love of Jesus by:

- Caring for people
- Creating faith pathways
- Building healthy communities
- Working for justice

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 well-being of people of all ages, particularly children.



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For ALL women and girls

“For ALL women and girls: Rights. Equality. Empowerment.” This is one of the 2025 themes for International Women’s Day on 8 March. The theme calls for action that can unlock equal rights, power and opportunities for all and a future where no one is left behind. Central to this vision is empowering the next generation, particularly young people, as catalysts for lasting change.

The statistics around gender inequality and inequity, as well as the skyrocketing rates of family violence and sexual assaults, show that action against patriarchy, misogyny, sexism and entitlement must continue.

In this edition, we feature stories on the gender data gap, finding identity as a woman and the power of women’s stories around the world.

When Jesus walked the earth, he challenged the cultural and religious norms of the day by including and empowering women. There is no doubt that everyone is equal in the eyes of God.

For these stories and more, go to **salvosonline.org.au**

Simone Worthing
Editor

Raising the priority to urgent

Accelerating progress to close the gender data gap

by Sandra MacDonald

Have you noticed that there is often a line up for the women's toilet but not for the men's? What about an office space where men walk around in short sleeves while women rug up? Or how mobile phones and other hand-held devices fit more comfortably in a man's hand than a woman's? I was surprised that the men's version of a matching family set of pyjamas we bought came with pockets, while the women's design did not.

These are all outworkings of gendered data bias. The dignity and needs of women have not historically been well considered in building design or public places. The determination of standard office air conditioning temperature was based on the metabolic rate of men. More men are involved in the design of products we use every day, so different hand sizes are rarely factored in and the desire of women to also have pockets in garments is overlooked.

Reading the book *Invisible Women* by Caroline Criado Perez last year, I discovered the breadth of ways that women and girls live in a world that favours men. This default thinking (or non-thinking) creates a gender data gap. The

scale of impact caused by this gap ranges from minor irritation through unjust to deadly!

Poor outcomes

The examples shared probably fit into the inconvenient and unjust categories, but one deadly example is that women are more likely than men to suffer serious injuries and death from car accidents. It is not then surprising to discover that most crash test dummies in vehicle safety tests are based on an average male body type. Even when other body types are included in the tests, they are scaled down versions of the male prototype so do not reflect women's body shapes and are rarely positioned in the driver's seat!

Criado Perez argues that whether the data gap is malicious and deliberate or unintentional, the outcome is the same. She was looking for patterns and discovered a multitude of ways that our world defaults to male as norm and women as other – and that this leads to poor outcomes for women.

Once you start looking and listening, it should not take long to add more things to the gender data gap observable in your own

“Each one of us has a way we can accelerate action.”

professional and personal life. This year's International Women's Day theme is based around accelerating action. This suggests it is time to 'put the pedal to the metal,' and raise the priority to urgent – not coast along or shift into neutral, allowing thoughtless perpetuation of patriarchal norms and gender bias.

Accelerating action that increases equality and empowerment of women and girls benefits everyone. Leadership research found that women were better leaders and more effective during the crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse found that the presence and involvement of women in governance correlated with better decision making and accountability, and led to superior outcomes in relation to child safeguarding.

Take action

Step one might be to notice the gender data gap, but the more important second step would be to do something about it! You may have influence, power and responsibility at an institutional level where you can advocate for increased visibility and voice

of women and girls in design, manufacturing, decision making, research, sports or leadership. Maybe your sphere of influence is your own family, local community or church. Each one of us has a way we can accelerate action.

I've been working on eliminating the word "guys" from my vocabulary. It's not that difficult to say, "C'mon everyone!" or "Hey, everyone," or "Hi people". If it would seem strange or awkward to address a group as girls, then it should equally stop us in our tracks to address a group as guys. A simple change in language has immense power.

Will you join me in changing the language you use or making other changes to accelerate action to raise the visibility and voice of women and girls to overcome gendered data bias?

P.S. Legislation was proposed in the USA last year to address the crash test dummy issues. I wonder what other changes will come in time as we accelerate action individually and collectively?

Major Sandra MacDonald is a lecturer at The Salvation Army's Eva Burrows College, Naarm, Melbourne



BEYOND CABBAGE AND POTATOES

Finding my identity in a dark and distant land

by Amanda Brummell-Lennestaa

It took moving 15,562km away from home in Sydney to the north of Sweden as a 38-year-old woman, a wife and mother of three daughters, for me to discover who I was as a woman.

Prior to that, I'd been a fierce advocate for vulnerable women in my work. I'd also been active in countering some of the ridiculous things said to me about the challenges that would surely befall me in raising three teenage daughters.

It wasn't, however, until I had the humbling experiences of learning a new language, feeling the isolation of long and dark winters, learning to walk and drive on snow and ice, and learning to cook a million different recipes using cabbage and potato, that I began to explore my identity. Much of this was based on the construct of womanhood I'd unconsciously absorbed through my upbringing and broader Australian culture.

Let's be honest, it wasn't the cabbage and potatoes that were the catalysts for this exploration, but they were a steady presence! I was curious about how Sweden had become a more gender-equal society, with accountability and transparency playing major roles in everyday life.

Civic responsibility

When we arrived in Sweden, my youngest daughter was of daycare age. It was mind-blowingly affordable, even as a full-time language student.

I was intrigued by the serious way that such young children explored civic participation and responsibility. My daughter learned a cool rap based on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The children joined with a neighbouring aged care facility and went together to pick up rubbish as part of an environmental initiative. Children also developed skills in democratic and consensus building

through a student representative council (SRC) with neighbouring daycare centres. From what I understand, the need for more meatballs and hotdogs on the lunch menu were common matters requiring attention!

I loved seeing that from an early age, girls and boys were shown that they equally have a voice, and it matters. Regardless of their ability, gender, age, ethnicity or nationality, culture, religion or socio-economic status, they were of inherent worth and equal in value.

It was freeing to see how there was often less discomfort in discussing gender and its power dynamics. It seemed that kids were being raised with a notion of personhood first and foremost. I didn't perpetually hear things like 'boys will be boys.' Instead, many boys were being raised to have their security and sense of self vested in things other than

aggression and dominance. I loved seeing groups of dads who were clearly on parental leave, having coffee, going for walks with prams and taking complete responsibility for the nurture of their children. There weren't the tired jokes about men not knowing how to change nappies, or that if a woman went out then a male partner would provide some kind of sub-standard domestic support.

Who I am

In Sweden, I began to understand that my experiences as a mother and a woman were, and still are, tightly bound to the social construct of masculinity. I finally understood how rejecting so many of these harmful, orthodox stereotypes would improve outcomes for me as a woman.

As I began to unpack my questions of identity,

I grasped that I wasn't just a tired mum juggling work, study, parenting and domestic responsibilities. I truly perceived I was a whole person, worthy of investment in all aspects of my personhood.

I can now confidently say that I am Amanda, an intelligent, single woman in my 40s. I've known survival, trauma and healing from gender-based violence. I am a mother and disability carer to three teenage daughters who live with rare disease. I am both Australian and Swedish, living my days with a messy mixture of language and culture. I have a deep spirituality that is guided by the life of Jesus who stood against the oppression of women.

Taking the time to deconstruct identity doesn't require everyone to move to Sweden, but it takes a willingness to challenge harmful gender stereotypes that limit women and men from participating in their full and glorious humanity.

Amanda is General Manager Diversity Equity and Inclusion for The Salvation Army Australia.



↑ Amanda, top left, found her identity as a woman in the distant land of Sweden.

GENDER INEQUALITY AND INEQUITY

Gender inequality refers to the unequal treatment or perceptions of individuals based on their gender. It encompasses social, economic, political and cultural dimensions, and often results in discrimination and disadvantage for individuals based on their gender identity or expression.

Ignorance and discrimination against people who are non-binary or transgender are also examples of gender inequality and inequity.

Discrimination can happen against people of any gender. The most common form of gender-based discrimination is against women, but any discrimination based on gender is harmful.

Although women make up over half the population in Australia, they are underrepresented in almost all places of influence. Across every industry in Australia, women are paid less than men and they are also disproportionately more likely to be doing unpaid work at home.

Gender-based violence, including domestic violence, sexual harassment and harmful traditional practices such as child marriage and female genital mutilation are significant manifestations of gender inequality. Discriminatory laws and social norms can perpetuate violence and limit survivors' access to justice and support services.

Gender equality promotes and protects the safety and wellbeing of people of all genders.

Gender inequality is also harming our economic and social interests. Discrimination and unsupportive workplace practices deprive our society of the full contributions of women, especially in leadership roles.

Gender equality and women's economic security has the potential to benefit boys and men too, through increased personal wellbeing, happier relationships, greater economic growth, and more peaceful societies.



Australian women approaching retirement have 23.1 per cent less superannuation than men of the same age.

12%
AUSTRALIA'S
FULL-TIME
GENDER PAY GAP

Australia's full-time gender pay gap is 12 per cent, with women earning an average \$238 per week less than men.



AUSTRALIA'S
OVERALL PAY GAP
43RD
IN THE WORLD

The World Economic Forum annual global gender gap index indicates that Australia's overall pay gap was 43rd in the world in 2022.



The "typical" Australian man spends five hours less per week doing housework than the "typical" Australian woman.



WE HAVE THE POWER TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

WE CAN URGE ACTION FROM OUR GOVERNMENTS

Governments can actively implement policies that promote women's independence and decision-making, both in public and private. For example, policy changes that allow for a more even distribution of childcare responsibilities have the potential to enhance women's workforce engagement and reduce gender inequities.

Governments can also set the example for gender equality by ensuring equitable paid leave and superannuation arrangements for public sector workers so that informal care and pregnancy do not lead to long-term disadvantage.

WE CAN IMPLEMENT CHANGE IN OUR COMMUNITY AND OUR WORKPLACES

Our workplaces can promote gender equity by reviewing policies and procedures — for example, developing policies and procedures that ensure pay equity, flexible work opportunities and family violence leave.

Businesses and community groups can actively work to create a safe and respectful culture that values, supports and celebrates leadership opportunities and career progression for women.

Community groups and businesses can have respectful and safe conversations to educate people on how attitudes within our community may be contributing

to gender inequality. We can look to our own leadership and decision-making structures to ensure women have equal voices.

WE CAN HAVE INFLUENCE IN OUR PERSONAL LIVES

All individuals, irrespective of gender, need to call out sexism – both overt and covert. We can challenge language and images that suggest that women are less than men.

We can challenge our own unconscious bias that allows for gender inequality to exist in our own lives. We can question constructions of masculinity that suggest men are aggressive or dominant, constructions of femininity that suggest women are passive or subordinate, and constructions of gender that allow only for a strict binary.



BRAVE AND VULNERABLE

The inspiration and challenge of women's stories

by Rosy Keane

International Women's Day gives us an opportunity to pause and reflect on the invaluable contributions of women, while acknowledging the challenges they face that hinder their safety and success.

Let us recognise Karen Kyleso, the 21-year-old Norwegian who, in January, became the youngest person to reach the South Pole solo and unassisted. Despite being lighter and shorter than most men, standing at 152cm and weighing 48kg, Karen gained 10 per cent of her body weight to ensure she could pull a 100kg sled across 1130km – roughly the distance between Adelaide and Canberra – in 54 days.

We must also recognise Gisèle Pelicot, the Frenchwoman who became a global icon after waiving her right to anonymity in a mass rape trial against her ex-husband and 49 other men. She stated, "Shame must switch sides", from herself to the perpetrators, offering hope to future victim-survivors. France's Institute of Public Policies revealed that from 2012 – 2021, 94 per cent of rape cases were either not prosecuted or never brought to trial.

Limited progress

While the world has made strides, the vulnerability of women in systems that fail to support their flourishing continues. In healthcare in 2025, there is a concerning

increase in maternal complications and deaths, many stemming from fear of legal repercussions in the US or misdiagnosis due to insufficient women's healthcare research. Poverty, intimate partner violence, and the climate crisis disproportionately impact women. The United Nations Global Report on Trafficking in Persons estimates that 79 per cent of all modern-day slavery and trafficking involves the sexual exploitation of women and girls.

Lessons from history

Reflecting on history, we observe that women have long faced violence and oppression. In the Bible, 1 Samuel chapter 25, Abigail, who is married to a cruel and hateful man, intervenes

“ Women’s stories are foundational to the spiritual and emotional fabric of communities.



to protect their village from King David’s wrath. Her wisdom and bravery save herself and her servants, while her husband’s heart ‘turned to stone’.

Embracing risk

We can find inspiration in turning to Mary, the mother of Jesus. When she agreed to bear the Messiah, she risked divorce from her fiancé, Joseph, potential religious execution for being an unmarried, pregnant woman, and the dangers of childbirth. Yet, she embraced this risk in obedience to God, making her a true hero.

“I am the Lord’s servant,” Mary answered. “May your word to me be fulfilled” (Luke chapter 1, verse 38).

May we all be as brave! Mary’s relative Elizabeth faced judgment throughout her life for being childless. We pause here to acknowledge women who still face judgment and criticism regarding their choices or abilities concerning childbearing and rearing. We also thank God for the faithfulness of Elizabeth and Mary and the crucial role they played in bringing the Good News to earth: Elizabeth experienced the miracle of becoming pregnant ‘in her advanced years’ with John the Baptist, and Mary was the virgin who gave birth to Jesus the Messiah.

The mutual support they offered during pregnancy must have provided profound consolation after the loss of their sons in adulthood, with Jesus dying for our sins on a cross and John the Baptist being killed for his prophetic voice regarding the will and way of Jesus.

Healing power

Women’s stories are foundational to the spiritual and emotional fabric of communities. Their prayers, presence and contributions are crucial to healing the world. So, as we celebrate women’s achievements and recognise the struggles they continue to face, let us join in praying for them.

ADDRESSING BARRIERS TO GENDER EQUITY

Salvation Army women from around the world recently shared life experiences that, although challenging, gave them hope and helped shape them into who they are today. We share two of these stories below:

STANDING UP FOR JUSTICE (INDIA)

The Salvation Army India National Office recently held a weekend of awareness and action training on several issues faced by women, with the goal of cultivating a culture of respect, empathy and empowerment which values the experiences and voices of women.

Guests enjoyed specialist teaching on a wide range of topics including violence against women, women in leadership, media representation of women, women's health and wellbeing, and legal rights and advocacy for women. Colonel Annamma Simon, Secretary for Women's Development at the India National Office, hosted the meeting.

Group discussion, led and informed by the realities and concerns of the weekend delegation, explored raising boys to respect women and girls to understand their rights, the value of formal training and mentoring among women in ministry and leadership, and how to empower women in local settings to stand up for justice.

"One evening saw an astonishing moment as each woman, with bold and strong commitment, shared her wonderful story," one delegate shared. "Each shared something unique and inspiring which encouraged the rest of us. As a group of women who come from and work in several different states, these stories brought us closer together and [empower us] to better

know how to help and support one another in prayer. Now, we stand united under the big umbrella of one family."

CARING FOR WIDOWS (GHANA)

Widows and widowers face significant social and economic challenges including poverty, discrimination and a lack of access to further education and employment opportunities. It is estimated that the number of widows globally is approximately 245 million, of which 115 million live in poverty.

Understandably, the greatest challenge widows and widowers face after the death of a spouse is the challenge of moving on with their lives. Some find it hard to make important decisions



PHOTO BY KOJO KWARTENG ON UNSPASH

alone or to assume responsibilities formerly shouldered by a spouse. In addition, the financial situation of a widow or widower may be dire, especially if the spouse accrued medical bills as the result of a long illness, or if the widow or widower is left with no means to support the family.

The Bible repeatedly declares the sacred importance of caring for widows. Across Africa, The Salvation Army runs a variety of outreach ministries that seek to reach widows and widowers with words of comfort, practical

support for bereavement through counselling, skills training for income generation, and community activities which build connection with others.

In Ghana, the widows fellowship plays an essential role in providing emotional support, companionship and a sense of belonging for individuals navigating great loss and grief. For them, a typical meeting involves a facilitated safe space for sharing stories and emotions and talking about the impact of grief in the company of others who face similar

challenges, as well as time for Bible study and prayer.

There is also a skills training initiative that participants can engage in by decorating slippers with beads as an income generating activity. With the help of their leaders, there is also opportunity to embark on the small-scale trading of eggs and water. In the community of Ashanti North, over fifty women are receiving financial assistance to enhance social inclusion and provide them with better opportunities for income generation.



Pancakes – allergy free



Ingredients

1 ½ cups plain flour, gluten free; 1 ½ tbsp baking powder;
½ tsp salt; 3 tbsp sugar; 3 tbsp butter, dairy free; 1 ½
cups almond milk; toppings of your choice

Method

In a large bowl mix together flour, baking powder, salt and sugar.

Add in melted butter and milk.

When mixed, let batter sit for 5 minutes.

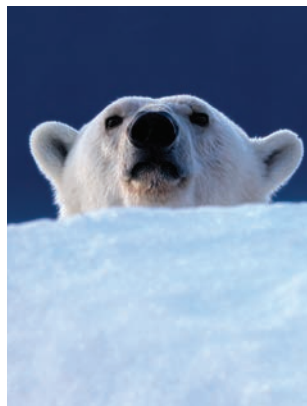
In a medium frying pan, spread batter to cover the pan.

Cook for 2-3 minutes, turn and cook until golden.

Serve with toppings of your choice!



Quiz



1. What colour is a polar bear's skin?
2. How many eggs can sea turtles lay at one time?
3. The Indonesian Komodo Dragon is a type of?
4. What is the offspring of a whale called?
5. What does a snake's tongue help them do?
6. Why are bees so essential?



Believe in Good: Tips

2 March Dr Seuss Day

"The more that you read, the more things you will know.
The more that you learn, the more places you'll go."

– Dr Seuss

"You're never too old, too wacky, too wild, to pick up a book and read to a child."

– Dr Seuss



Tum-Tum



On which page of this week's *Salvos Magazine* is Tum-Tum hiding?



Have a laugh

Why couldn't the two elephants go swimming?

Because they only had one pair of trunks.

Why do squid swim in salt water?

Because pepper makes them sneeze.

Why shouldn't you play cards in the African savannah?

Because it's full of cheetahs.

What happened when the lion ate the clown?

He felt funny.

Did you know?



Australia's Chayne Hultgren (The Space Cowboy) holds world records in most swords swallowed at once (24 swords) and most swords swallowed while riding a unicycle (3 swords on a 3m-tall unicycle).



Answers

Quiz: 1. Black 2. 180 3. Lizard 4. Cat 5. Smell 6. They help to provide the food we eat. Turn-Turn: is hiding behind Amanda on page 7.



Word search

E K E H I W I Q U O L L L I P Y
U O C X E I B W F N L C Z O S I
C A O N S L F A I P L A N E T C
A L S C P D W E N L A C E V T O
L A Y R E L A W A K D A K Q H N
Y N S N C I L O Y M S C Q C R S
P O T V I F L M S A T I Q L E E
T Y E R E E A B O X W A A U A R
U Y M H S O B A N A T U R E T V
S K K X D L Y T N P E O P L E A
B O T T L E B R U S H F C K N T
L K Y S A N I M A L S X E X E I
B E X T I N C T I O N C B M D O
P L A N T S P N A T I V E U U N
W A T T L E S N D F G P N B J Y
R T E N V I R O N M E N T M G T

Words are hidden vertically, horizontally, diagonally, forwards and backwards. Enjoy!

Acacia	Eucalyptus	Quoll
Animals	Extinction	Species
Banksia	Koala	Threatened
Bottlebrush	Native	Wallaby
Conservation	Nature	Wattles
Ecosystem	People	Wild
Emu	Planet	Wildlife
Environment	Plants	Wombat



Bible byte

“The Spirit has given each of us a special way of serving others.”
1 Corinthians chapter 12, verse 7
Contemporary English Version

LOOKING FOR A GIFT IDEA?

kid zone

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