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'It's a new day' for the Melbourne Staff Band

By Barry Gittins

About 250 people attended the commissioning of Melbourne Staff Bandmaster Mark Hamilton – the 11th person to lead the group in its 135-year history – at Box Hill Corps on Sunday 2 March.

"It's a new day," Commissioner Miriam Gluyas said before the meeting commenced. Declaring the MSB's new leader to be a Jesus-centred, Spirit-led man, the Territorial Commander added that "this is the next phase, in leading people forward and leading them to Jesus. He will be a great mentor and leader."

The band's new Executive Officer, Major Matt Reeve, echoed those sentiments, viewing Mark as the right person for the role and describing the MSB as a group ready to "engage with all facets of The Salvation Army, encouraging, uplifting and transforming people's lives."

The new bandmaster's first musical choice was Paul Sharman's 'My God and King!', which featured tight, elegant sectional work from the cornets. This was immediately followed by a restrained, masterful rendition of Sam Creamer's 'Hold That Fort!'

During the induction ceremony, Miriam addressed Mark directly: "I recognise and affirm you as the bandmaster of the Melbourne Staff Band ... You will have a group of people who will raise loud, beautiful sounds of joy to the Lord. God has called you to this purpose."

Miriam described the MSB as a group of disciples who will bring "people into the very presence of God", and she urged the new bandmaster to prepare himself for excitement and a little disappointment as he encountered incredible opportunities.

TERRITORIAL NEWS



New Melbourne Staff Bandmaster Mark Hamilton with Commissioner Miriam Gluyas at the commissioning service.

"You will do this with the support of others, and many will cheer you on."

Acknowledging that "it does seem surreal that I'm standing up the front and [outgoing bandmaster] Ken Waterworth is not," Mark said he was "truly humbled to be in this position" and that his music selections reflected his thoughts as he commenced his role.

"It is my desire for the band that we will act courageously, when prompted by the Spirit, to take a stand for Christ. The Melbourne Staff Band has a valuable ministry, and God's not finished with us yet," Mark added.

Two other ceremonies took place during the afternoon. MSB Secretary Darren Waterworth presented long service certificates to Yasmin Van Gaalen-Prentice (10 years), Shaun Maxfield (10), Mark Hamilton (25) and Michael Agnew (30).

And with due solemnity and reverence, Miriam installed Majors Matt Reeve and Lance Jeffrey into new roles (as executive and assistant executive officers respectively).

SALVOS HOUSING

New-look Tandarook House aged care facility officially opens

By Lerrisse Smith

Exciting new transformative housing projects have emerged in Victoria, with Salvation Army Housing Victoria (SAHV) at the forefront of these innovative ventures.

A former 10-bedroom aged care facility, known as 'Tandarook House', has been transformed into six social housing units in south-western Melbourne. Meanwhile, a youth housing project is underway in the western metro region of the city and is due to open mid-year.

The refurbished aged care units in Cobden, south-west Melbourne, provide safe and secure housing for people over the age of 55. Homes Victoria funded this \$1.7 million redevelopment as part of the \$5.3 billion Big Housing Build initiative to grow social housing and support local economies.

"Safe, secure and affordable housing is one of the most basic human needs," said Chris Karagiannis, CEO of Salvation Army Housing.

"Yet we see too many Victorians facing daily challenges accessing long-term housing in regional areas. We believe this project will help support vulnerable people in the region and provide them the opportunity to transform their lives and give them a place to call home."



Divisional Commander Colonel Kelvin Merrett officially opens the new Salvos aged care housing project, Tandarook House. (Photo courtesy of WD Newspapers)

Victoria Divisional Commander Colonel Kelvin Merrett recently officially opened Tandarook House.

The SAHV acquired the aged care facility located in the Shire of Corangamite six years ago as part of an agreement with the Shire through a land swap with the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) to redevelop it for long-term social housing. The funding for the development was secured in 2022 and completed at the end of December last year. It was tenanted within six weeks.

The new facility provides a mix of one- and two-bedroom units and features a 7-star energy rating and a 5-star green rating. It aligns with accessibility standards in Silver Level Liveable Housing Standards and NDIS Specialist Disability Accommodation Improved Liveability Standard.

Youth housing project underway

The other exciting new SAHV venture, a two-town-house youth-specific housing project, is due for completion soon and will provide stable housing for local young people. The properties in Melbourne's MetroWest will cater for five residents in each home.

A tenancy life program has also been implemented for young people to build extended life skills. The aim is for the young people to be self-sufficient and independent, said Irena Baric, State Manager of Victorian Salvation Army Housing.

She said SAHV always worked closely with The Salvation Army's social mission stream and was

excited the community could benefit from its new housing projects.

"There's never enough housing," Irena remarked. "What Salvation Army housing does is social and affordable housing. It is only 25-30 per cent of someone's total income that is charged towards rent. All of this highlights the power of community and the power of succeeding in partnership with The Salvation Army's homelessness service and youth, and through external stakeholders.

"It is only then that we can really bring our mission to life because we focus on social housing and people most in need. It is through the public community we are able to transform lives."

Colac comes clean on how it connects with the community

By Lerisse Smith

It may appear to be a small gesture. However, the provision of new washing machines and dryers for the Colac Salvos Community Centre has fostered greater community engagement and strengthened connections among local residents from all walks of life.

“It has been a lifeline,” says Josiah Van Niekerk, Colac Corps Leader. “More people can now come through our laundry. It has more than doubled our capability in that space, and, for us, it is great to be able to have people in washing their clothes.

“But what we really want them to do is also eat the cakes and drink the coffee that we make and have a sit down with the team and a chat. We have a lunch on Monday, brekky on Wednesday and food all day Friday, and we want people to come in and spend their time here and make this space as a second home, which we are seeing more and more.”

A key component for the Salvos team has been reshaping their mindset about the individuals in need who use the laundry. It’s not exclusively the homeless or those facing financial hardships who utilise the facility. It serves the entire community and has attracted a variety of diverse people.

“It can be a social, mental or spiritual need being met,” Josiah says.

“We might have someone come in who is a multi-millionaire that has got 75 washing machines at home, but they are coming in so they can have a cup of coffee while getting their washing on. At the end of the day,



Colac Corps volunteers (from left) Nola Gray, Robert Wadsworth and Christine Oakley test out the new laundry facilities donated by The Rotary Club of Colac West.



Colac Corps Leader Josiah Van Niekerk says the gift of new washing machines and dryers for Colac Salvos Community Centre has opened the door to greater community engagement.

the greater need for any Salvation Army expression isn’t necessarily to feed people or get their clothes cleaned – that’s a bonus. That’s the easy part. It’s about building relationships [and] building pathways for people to get access to the Kingdom of God. A washing machine is a vessel where people can do that.”

The four shiny new washing machines and four dryers donated by the Rotary Club of Colac West are getting a good workout for five hours each Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

The space can easily accommodate about 8-10 households each session, while on a good day, there were only about four. Additionally, the new vented dryers allow people to dry items such as sleeping bags, blankets, dressing gowns and a larger volume of clothes.

Josiah said the donation of the white goods had also helped with the financing of the facility. The cost of running the laundry has not been cheap. Since the Community Centre opened about 20 months ago, there have been huge costs associated with getting everything up and running.

“We need to cover things that aren’t glamorous, like the laundry,” Josiah said. “To get it functional, we had to run \$10,000 worth of power in the laundry room, and to run a whole new circuit to make it operational and some more water in as well cost about \$15,000 to \$18,000 before you buy the washing machines.

“It has been an amazing opportunity to work with the Rotary Club to give generously to the community with the laundry service a really good way to get different kinds of people in that might not necessarily come in for relational kind of purposes to begin with. We definitely rope them in where we can!”

SCHOOLS



The new mural at the Lawnton Campus, painted by artist Rachel Saurini, of Big Picture Designs.

Salvos school unveils new mural at Lawnton

By Anthony Castle

The Salvation Army's Independent School at Lawnton (Qld) has unveiled a new mural by a local artist.

The Lawnton Campus north of Brisbane is a Non-State Special Assistant School that supports students who are or have been disengaged from mainstream education. The mural was created to express the school's unique environment and values.

"This vibrant addition to our little oasis has not only enhanced the aesthetic appeal of our school but also serves as a wonderful reminder of the stunning natural environment that surrounds us," says Kimmi Naidoo, Assistant Principal.

"The mural's design was inspired by our school team's intention of creating a sacred space of belonging."

The Lawnton Campus has been delivering specialised programs to the community for a decade, offering an alternative learning approach for young people who have disengaged from school.

Lawnton is a positive learning environment that offers social, spiritual and emotional development with an emphasis on social justice.

In 2022, the school opened a new campus facility on the Pine Rivers Corps site, including four learning areas, a hospitality centre, and an art and IT centre.

"We are deeply grateful to Pine Rivers Corps for sponsoring this wonderful project," says Kimmi. "Their generosity has enabled us to bring this vision to life, and we are thrilled with the outcome."

The mural was crafted by artist Rachel Saurini, the owner of Big Picture Designs.

It features a quote from Psalm 1:3 to reflect the school's values: "They are strong like a tree planted by a river. The tree produces fruit in season, and its leaves don't die. Everything they do will succeed."

The students have embraced the mural, with some students sharing what it means to them:

"It makes the school feel more welcoming" ... "I love the colours; they make it feel alive!" ... "This makes me proud to be here."



Assistant Principal Kimmi Naidoo says the mural creates a sacred place of belonging.

IHQ launches new book: *Gospel Conversations*

“How do we know that God exists?”

“What about suffering and evil?”

“Who made God?”

“Are all religions true and equal paths to God?”

“Did Jesus rise from the dead?”

“Can the Bible be trusted?”

These are just some of the questions addressed in Major Phil Layton’s new book, *Gospel Conversations: Building Confidence Through Christian Apologetics*, with an emphasis on helping overcome the fear of sharing Jesus with others.

The Salvation Army International launched this book during family prayers, led by Phil, at International Headquarters (IHQ) recently.

During his introductory remarks, International Secretary for Communications Major Peter McGuigan, an Australian officer, acknowledged the author’s work and the fact that it was his fourth book.

“Writing a book is a journey that takes many twists and turns,” he said. “So, congratulations on having arrived at this point.”

Peter also commended the IHQ editorial team for their work alongside the author.

Phil spoke of the urgent need to share the love and the message of Jesus with others in a world where people often think about the big questions of life but rarely talk about them. He gave a personal example



Major Phil Layton signs copies of *Gospel Conversations* at the book launch at IHQ.



General Lyndon Buckingham (left) wrote the foreword to Major Phil Layton’s book *Gospel Conversations*.

in which he had been challenged by the Spirit of God after not sharing Jesus with a person during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In his foreword to *Gospel Conversations*, The Salvation Army’s international leader, General Lyndon Buckingham, writes: “This book by Phil Layton directly addresses those fears which may deter us from sharing the gospel and builds confidence through providing easy-to-remember logical arguments to some of the most common questions which Christians face today.

The book guides readers in navigating doubts and sharing their faith with empathy and respect. *Gospel Conversations* will prove an essential companion for personal faith development and equip all Christians to share Jesus.

Whether looking to deepen your own understanding or feel more empowered to share your beliefs, this book is an invaluable resource for you, your family or friends.

The book is available from The Salvation Army trade department and Amazon.

Kobo and Kindle e-book editions are also available.

ARMY ARCHIVES

Museum slides achieve UNESCO recognition

By Kirralee Nicolle

A collection of Magic Lantern slides and documents from The Salvation Army's historic Limelight Department, now held at the Salvation Army Australia Museum in Melbourne, have been recognised by UNESCO* in an inscription ceremony.

The slides were entered in the Memory of the World Register, which recognises items of "significant documentary heritage" for the purpose of "preserving and promoting humanity's documentary heritage for future generations".

The Register includes manuscripts, items of oral tradition, library and archive holdings and audio-visual materials, such as the Limelight slides.

The ceremony, held in The Menzies Library at the Australian National University in Canberra on Thursday 28 March, was attended by The Salvation Army Australia Museum Assistant Manager Barry Gittins.

Museum Manager Lindsay Cox and Dr Martyn Jolly, Associate Professor from the School of Art and Design at Australian National University, put together a 55-page submission for consideration by the panel.

The collection includes 357 of the total of about 2000 slides produced by the Limelight Department, some more than 120 years ago.



Dr Martyn Jolly (left) and The Salvation Army Australia Museum Assistant Manager Barry Gittins with the recognition certificate.



Museum Manager Lindsay Cox and Dr Martyn Jolly, Associate Professor from the School of Art and Design at Australian National University, look over the Magic Lantern slides.

Each one was a size of 80mm x 80mm, and the slides were hand-coloured after being produced using costumed actors on sets designed by the studio staff.

When projected for audiences across Australia, the slides were accompanied by live music, singing and narration, and told stories of martyrdom and sacrifice for the sake of the Christian faith.

An additional set of slides numbering about 100 from 'Soldiers of the Cross', a multi-media production produced by the Department, also resides in the National Film and Sound Archives in Canberra.

Guest speaker for the Canberra event, ANU University Librarian, Director of Scholarly Information Services and Chief Scholarly Information Officer Roxanne Missingham, herself a Salvo in Canberra, described the Limelight Studio's holdings as "an exceptional collection – if you really want to see some marvellous stories, join them on Facebook because the way they are bringing the collection to communities is just exceptional."

* UNESCO, founded in 1945, is the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. It promotes world peace and security through international cooperation in education, the arts, sciences and culture.