

**FEATURE**

Homelessness, heartache and healing

**FAITH TALK**

It's about trust

**MY STORY**

Diem finds a family

# Providing a 'home' for homeless Australians

Addressing the national tragedy on our streets



# SALVOS

MAGAZINE



Today you could be  
talking to someone who  
is trying their best not to  
fall apart. So, whatever  
you do today,

*do it with kindness*  
in your heart.

*Seen on a blackboard in a rural Victorian coffee shop*





## The Salvation Army is about giving hope where it's needed most.

### 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

# Salvos Magazine

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Diem finds a family

## Seen and yet invisible

Next week, 1-7 August, is National Homelessness Week.

In Australia, there are over 116,000 people experiencing homelessness on any given night. Many of these people, including adults and children, sleep in their cars, on the couches of friends, and on the streets.

The Salvation Army is the largest provider of homelessness services across the country, catering for individuals and families. In this edition, we feature the story of Alison, a woman with a job and steady income who became homeless through circumstances that can impact any of us. At a traumatic time in her life, Alison says she felt both visible – to anyone who walked past the car she slept in – and invisible. Her plight was overlooked by most, not seen and understood for the desperate and life-threatening situation it was.

Alison, and thousands like her, are our “fellow human beings” who have nowhere to go, whose lives are potentially in danger, and who need a home and a family. This need is common to us all.

Let's do what we can to respond.

Simone Worthing **Assistant Editor**

# Homelessness, heartache and healing

Being seen and unseen as life unravels

WORDS HOLLY REED



Forced to live in her car for over two years, Alison\* says the experience of homelessness seriously impacted her physical and mental wellbeing. While she is now in a private rental, Alison says she is still dealing with the trauma and the ever-present fear of history repeating itself.

Some experiences were worse than others during the two years Alison and her dog Max lived in her car.

Apart from the struggle of managing multiple health issues, it was the simple things that she found hardest – like trying to find somewhere to shower before a doctor’s appointment and feeling desperately self-conscious about personal hygiene.

Then there were the often-frightening nights when she was too afraid to open the windows for fear of her safety.

“The cops come ... and shine floodlights on the car ... and you’ve got drunk people and sober people and kids walking past,” Alison says. “I’ve had people throw things at the car, bang on it, run around it, shake it so it starts to move ... screaming at the top of their lungs.”

### HOMELESSNESS SPIRAL

Until her late 30s, Alison was a working professional and paying off a home. The possibility of homelessness seemed a million miles away. However, after her last contract ended, she struggled to find another job and eventually couldn’t keep up her mortgage payments. Alison’s best option was to move interstate to share a rental property with a friend.

They rented a cottage for several years in a popular holiday town until Alison’s friend unexpectedly moved out, owing Alison a substantial amount of money. Alison’s health issues were affecting her ability to walk by this stage, and several applications for disability support were denied.

Alison managed to cover both her and her friend’s share of the rent for a short time until the owner wanted the property vacated for use as a holiday house. With a beloved pet in tow, Alison simply could not compete in the highly competitive rental market while living on a Centrelink income.

“I had nowhere to go, so I just set up a bed in the back of the car, loaded up the boot and cleaned the house,” she says.

“

Alison became both highly visible and invisible, in equal measure.

”

### WITHOUT A HOME

Alison drove around for hours on the first night, unsure of what to do. She eventually found a quiet dead-end street to reduce the risk of people driving past. However, when she woke the next morning, there was a security

camera pointed right at her car. This intrusion into her privacy at her most vulnerable was just the beginning. Alison became both highly visible and invisible, in equal measure.

At that point, staying in her car seemed a temporary solution. But days turned into weeks, weeks into months and months into years.

“I had to ask people, ‘Where do you go? Where do you park? Where do you have a shower? How do you go to the toilet?’” she says. To ensure some level of privacy, Alison ►



would often use a public-toilet sink to wash at 4am, often in freezing conditions.

It was over a year before Alison was able to say to someone, “Yes, I’m homeless.”

Alison reached out to a local Salvos homelessness support service, where she was provided with case management. But with the high demand for transitional housing, her age and circumstances made her a lower priority than youth, families, and people over 55 (the public housing waiting list for a single adult female can be 5-10 years).

### COVID CREATES CHANGE

Eventually, the COVID-19 pandemic provided an opportunity for Alison to be supported into temporary motel accommodation as part of the state government’s COVID safety measures. Alison now had easy access to amenities, but the likelihood of the motel stay ending was ever-present.

“I was there for three months in the end. But it was constantly like, ‘this isn’t permanent, you’re moving soon, you’ll be back in the car again’,” she says.

“I am thankful to the motel for letting us

“

**Caring for him [my dog] got me through some of the hardest times of my life.**

”

both in. A lot of people said I should just ‘surrender the dog’, but I can’t stress enough how fundamental Max has been in keeping me going. His loyalty, unconditional love and caring for him got me through some of the hardest times of my life.”

### DEALING WITH TRAUMA

Alison stayed in contact with the Salvos through her case worker, Judy, who helped her find some secure accommodation in a private rental. “By this time, Alison’s legs were bad ... and I knew that her mental health was really precarious,” says Judy.

Judy explains that the preference is to have Alison in public housing, where she can live with some certainty and not at the mercy of an insecure private rental market.

“I want to say a big thank you to all those who helped – the Salvos, landlords, real estate agents,” says Alison. “I’m so grateful that they took the risk and gave Max and I a chance, given the situation we were in.”

*\*Name and some details changed to protect privacy*



Scan here for more information on Salvos Homelessness Services.

## 'Captain Sal' wheels to life across Western Victoria

A new regional support vehicle, affectionally known as 'Captain Sal', has expanded the services of the Salvos in Portland, Victoria, Now, Lieutenants Heather and Peter Stamp (pastors) and their team can reach communities across the Glenelg Shire.

The name Captain Sal, coined by six-year-old William Kinsella of Heywood Consolidated School, was selected from 140 entries. Naturally, William was the first passenger after cutting the ribbon.



William Kinsella (centre) became the first official passenger on 'Captain Sal' after winning the naming contest for the Regional Support Vehicle (inset photo). William is pictured here with Salvo Peter Stamp (left) and Anna Impey from Portland Aluminium.

converted into an interview room, allowing for Doorways (emergency relief) appointments and other support services to operate. The project has partnered with several local support and healthcare providers to extend the range of services that Captain Sal can deliver.

"It's not about what we as The Salvation Army can provide, but how we can all join together to best meet the needs of the Glenelg Shire," said Peter. – Jessica Morris

## Community responds to drought-stricken town

The Gladstone Salvos have come to the aid of drought-stricken residents of the Boyne Valley in Central Queensland.

Captain Chris Ford, Gladstone Salvos officer (pastor), said residents in Builyan, 100km south of Gladstone, had resorted to showering at the town's community hall because the taps had been 'turned off' as freshwater bores supplying the town had all but dried up.

A request for assistance saw the Salvos and their community response team swing into

action, organising to get hundreds of litres of fresh drinking water to Builyan. The Salvation Army's Strategic Emergency and Disaster Management (SEDM) provided the funding. Avis car and truck rental company provided a flatbed truck for the mission.

Chris said a 48-pack of bottled water was handed out to each person in Builyan in the first shipment, plus an extra pack for each family, with more deliveries, and additional assistance and services, planned. – Darryl Whitecross

# Providing a 'home' for homeless Australians

This National Homelessness Week (1-7 August 2021), the Salvos are calling for a national commitment to end homelessness in Australia.

Dr Jed Donoghue, Acting General Manager of Homelessness at The Salvation Army, explains that the governmental COVID response to primary homelessness during 2020 showed it is possible to house and support our homeless population and, by extension, prevent premature deaths due to homelessness. What is needed, he says, is government and community commitment.

## HOME

This year, the focus of the Salvos through National Homelessness Week (NHW) is around the notion of 'home' – a simple but powerful concept.

Home provides a foundation for employment, education, family and community engagement, warmth and safety. It serves as a secure base from where one can access health services, employment and training.

From the Salvos' perspective, a major focus of this NHW is education and advocacy around the issue of premature death due to homelessness.

We can all take steps – be it the government, community agencies or individuals – to better engage and understand this issue and act to prevent people from dying.

## NATIONAL SHAME

The fact that even one person dies on the street as a result of homelessness is a national tragedy. Sadly, it is a widespread and under-reported issue.

If you think about some of the extreme weather conditions during winter and summer in Australia, it's plain to see the adverse impact on the health of those sleeping rough or in inadequate housing.

Then there is the potential of violence and abuse, difficulties accessing appointments with doctors and other service providers, general lack of food – let alone nutritious food, substance abuse and chronic health issues, including mental health issues.

## STOPPING THE SPIRAL

There is a range of factors that lead to or

increase the risk of homelessness.

Some of the contributing factors can include relationship and family breakdown, loss of or insecure employment, or health issues – which can make it extremely difficult to meet and maintain the cost of living, including housing.

To combat this, we need a national bi-partisan approach from our government that says, 'homelessness in this country is a national shame and, as the government, we have a responsibility to protect our most vulnerable'.

It is vitally important to set tangible, accountable outcomes and then act – including to significantly increase the stock of social housing, which is the best safety net for people at risk of or experiencing homelessness.

### A ROLE FOR ALL

Firstly, it is important to acknowledge that the issue exists and not judge without understanding. We can all read, learn, listen and ask.

We all have the chance to reach out to our local, state and national parliamentarians, and all we have to do is look at how the government responded to the public health crisis of COVID-19 – acting quickly and mobilising people sleeping rough – off the street and into accommodation with support.

We can also have conversations with friends and family, or, if possible, talk to someone who we see is sleeping rough, and offer to get them a cup of coffee or a meal, or assist them to get to an agency.

### LIFE-CHANGING 'HOME'

In our social housing and homelessness sector, we have seen remarkable transformations take place. When a person secures a home, it can make a huge difference to their physical and mental health, bring a sense of hope and

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We are talking about  
the lives of ... our fellow  
human beings.

”



Jed Donoghue (left) with Jade Munnings, Salvos Housing Coordinator, at the Australasian Housing Industry awards 2019.

security, and potentially improve their family and community connections.

So, this NHW, please get involved, please get engaged, and please speak out – for the sake of the most vulnerable in our community.

We are talking about the lives of our fellow Australians, our fellow human beings, and the fact that a home – or lack of – can be a matter of life or death.



Scan here for  
more information  
on Salvos  
Homelessness  
Services.



## It's about trust

Lessons in life from the passenger seat

**WORDS** BELINDA DAVIS

I have discovered that I am not the best passenger in the car. I am not a huge fan of driving and will happily suggest my husband drive as I relish the opportunity to relax and not concentrate on the task of manoeuvring a vehicle through often crazy traffic.

I am also blessed with being able to do other things in a moving vehicle that some others can't, such as reading, writing, craft or playing with my iPad. This suits my husband as, when I am taken up with other activities, I don't keep trying to activate the 'brake' on the floor of the passenger side. There is no such device, but I really wish there was!

I have the uncanny ability to look up at the wrong time – when brake lights from the vehicle in front seem to be bearing down on me at an unreasonable pace, for example. Then, on goes my brake. When I think my husband is about to pull out in front of oncoming traffic at the completely wrong time (according to me) – on goes my brake.

Each time this happens, my lovely husband looks over and tells me something like, "It's okay" or "I've got this" or "I saw them." I reassure him it's not trusting his driving – it's the other drivers I worry about. But I am now wondering, is that actually the case?

“

**[When] things aren't happening the way I would want them to ... I try to take back control.**

”

Is it really about others, or is it more about me and that I am not in control of the vehicle? I absolutely trust David's driving ability – until I sense that things aren't happening the way I want them to, and then I try to take back control.

While this is an issue that I need to navigate in my marriage, I certainly see a reflection of this attitude in my relationship with God, too. There have been many times that I have been in the middle of a situation I have entrusted to God, but when I begin to feel that things are not happening in my time frame or in the way that I think they should, I try to step in and apply the imaginary brake. It usually doesn't go well.

There is a Bible verse that comes to my mind each time in Exodus chapter 14, verse 14, "The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still."

Another well-loved favourite is from the book of Proverbs, chapter 3 and verse 5, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding." Again, I do trust God and his direction, but I need to continually relinquish control to him for the situations I face.

I will also try to relax in the process, both with God and my husband's driving!

*Major Belinda Davis is a Salvation Army officer (pastor) in South Australia. She blogs at [a-blessed-life.com](http://a-blessed-life.com)*



Scan here for more on finding meaning.

# Diem finds a family

The power of community in restoring shattered lives

WORDS BRYCE DAVIES



On their wedding day Diem and Vihn (centre) enjoyed special support from John, left, and Helen, from the Salvos.

Diem was born in Vietnam and came to Australia in 2003. She soon married and had a child but stayed in a very isolated Vietnamese community in suburban Brisbane. Her English was limited, and she had very few friends to support her. The marriage broke down, and Diem found herself at The Salvation Army Glenhaven women's refuge in Brisbane with her then two-year-old son.

She was given a safe place to stay and was supported with counselling and case management to help her deal with her challenges. Diem was also helped to find a small flat where she could live independently, not far

from The Salvation Army church I was running at the time with my wife, Sue.

We found out that Diem was nearby and started to look for ways to connect with her. After a coffee with Sue's mum, Helen, Diem started coming to the Salvos. We also started inviting her to our family meals and gatherings.

Before too long, Diem and her son became like family. We all attended her Australian citizenship ceremony and cheered her on when she became a member of the Salvos. The church community supported her

through some very tough times.

Eventually, Diem met Vihn, and they fell in love. I was honoured to do the wedding and my lovely wife Sue sang. Sue's dad, John, walked Diem down the aisle and my daughter, Georgia, was one of the bridesmaids. When a child arrived a few years later, I was honoured to perform the Salvos equivalent of a christening.

The decision to buy a house is scary enough, but when English is your second language, and you are not familiar with Australian ways, it is even more so. Diem had a good job as a dental technician and a lovely confidence in God. Vihn, whose qualifications as an electrician are not recognised in Australia, turned his hand to tiling. They worked hard and saved a housing deposit. John helped them find the right home and made sure the documentation was done properly. They were so grateful to have a trustworthy person like John in their lives and who had the time and inclination to get involved.

John and Helen needed some tiling done recently, and so Vihn was asked to do the job. The area to be tiled was significant. Vihn insisted on doing the work for free, and it was a real battle to convince him to accept some payment. He did a magnificent job, and as he laboured, John and Helen were so proud of him, his meticulous attention to detail and impressive work ethic.

When Vihn was doing the grouting the next day, Diem came along with a huge bowl of Vietnamese food to share for lunch. I played with four-year-old Brian like he was my own son. We all adore Diem, and even my kids lovingly call her 'sister Diem'.

I asked Diem recently what her life would be like if she had not found God, come to the

“

**[Diem's] story of recovery and resilience is an inspiration.**

”

Salvos and connected with our families. She didn't even want to think about it.

I asked Helen what her life would be like if she had not met Diem. "Funny," she said, "the Vietnamese tradition is that children look after their parents and make sure they have everything they need in their old age. Diem and Vihn fully intend to uphold this tradition and devote themselves to making sure John and I have everything we need."

Helen looked at me as if to say, "Who do you reckon is the favourite son-in-law now?"

The blessing of having Diem and her family in my life has been a delight now for over 15 years. Her smile and friendship are more pure and sincere than anyone I can think of, and her story of recovery and resilience is an inspiration.

And her fried rice is to die for!

*Major Bryce Davies is a Salvation Army officer (pastor) in Queensland.*



Scan here for more on the need for community.

## Thai sweet potato soup



### Ingredients

2 tsp cooking oil, 1 small brown onion, 3 tsp red curry paste, 750g gold sweet potato, (peeled, coarsely chopped), 2 tsp lemongrass paste, 1 tsp salt, 1 tsp brown sugar, 2 cups unsweetened soy milk, ½ cup light coconut milk, 1 tbsp sesame seeds, toasted, coriander sprigs, to serve.

### Method

Heat oil in a large saucepan over medium heat. Add onion and cook, stirring for 5 minutes. Add curry paste. Cook, stirring, for 1 minute.

Add sweet potato, lemongrass paste and 1½ cups water and bring to the boil. Reduce heat, simmer, covered, for 15 mins or until the sweet potato is soft.

Add salt, brown sugar, soy milk and coconut milk. Set aside to cool slightly. Blend or process soup until smooth.

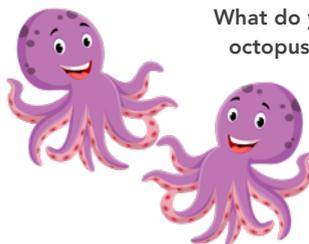
Return soup to saucepan and stir over low heat until heated through. Serve sprinkled with sesame seeds and coriander if desired.

## Have a laugh

When two vegans get into an argument, is it still called a beef?



What do you call two octopuses that look the same?  
Itenticle.

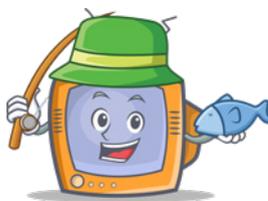


Why did the doughnut visit the dentist?

To get a new filling.



What's the best way to watch a fly fishing tournament?  
Live stream.



## Bible byte

God is our safe place and our strength. He is always our help when we are in trouble.

Psalm chapter 46, verse 1  
*New Life Version*

# Wordsearch

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

- |            |           |
|------------|-----------|
| ACCEPTANCE | FERAL     |
| ANIMALS    | FISH      |
| ATTENTION  | FRIEND    |
| BIRDS      | GROOMING  |
| BUDGERIGAR | HEALTH    |
| CATS       | INDUSTRY  |
| COLOURS    | INSURANCE |
| COMFORT    | LABRADOR  |
| CRABS      | LIFESPAN  |
| DOGS       | OWNERSHIP |
| DOMESTIC   | PETS      |
| EXERCISE   | SCIENCE   |
| FAUNA      | WELFARE   |

# Quick quiz



1. Approximately how many pets are there in Australia?
2. Approximately what percentage of pets are dogs?
3. Which breed of dog is Australia's most popular?
4. Approximately what percentage of pets are cats?
5. Approximately how much do Australians spend on pets annually?
6. Which three countries have the highest rates of pet ownership?



## Tum-Tum

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

**Answers:** 1. 29 million 2. 40 per cent 3. Labrador retriever 4. 29 per cent 5. 13 billion 6. Argentina, Mexico and Brazil.

# Did you know?

- Australia gets more snow each year than Switzerland.
- The strongest muscle in the body is the tongue.
- There are about a billion bicycles in the world.
- A group of wombats is called a wisdom.



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# Kidzone

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## Have you taken care of your Will?

Like ripples in a pond, a gift in your Will to The Salvation Army can impact more lives than you could ever imagine

When having your Will made or updated, please consider including a gift to The Salvation Army.

Please contact The Salvation Army's Wills and Bequests team to find out how you can start or continue your legacy of generosity.

Together, we can give hope where it's needed most long into the future.

For a free copy of our Wills information booklet, contact us on 1800 337 082, email [willsandbequests@salvationarmy.org.au](mailto:willsandbequests@salvationarmy.org.au) or complete and return the coupon.

[salvationarmy.org.au/wills](http://salvationarmy.org.au/wills)



- Send me a FREE copy of your Wills information booklet
- I am interested in leaving a gift to The Salvation Army
- I have included a gift to The Salvation Army in my Will

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