

**FEATURE**

Ending modern  
slavery

**FAITH TALK**

The art of  
friendship

**MY STORY**

From the streets  
to 'home' again

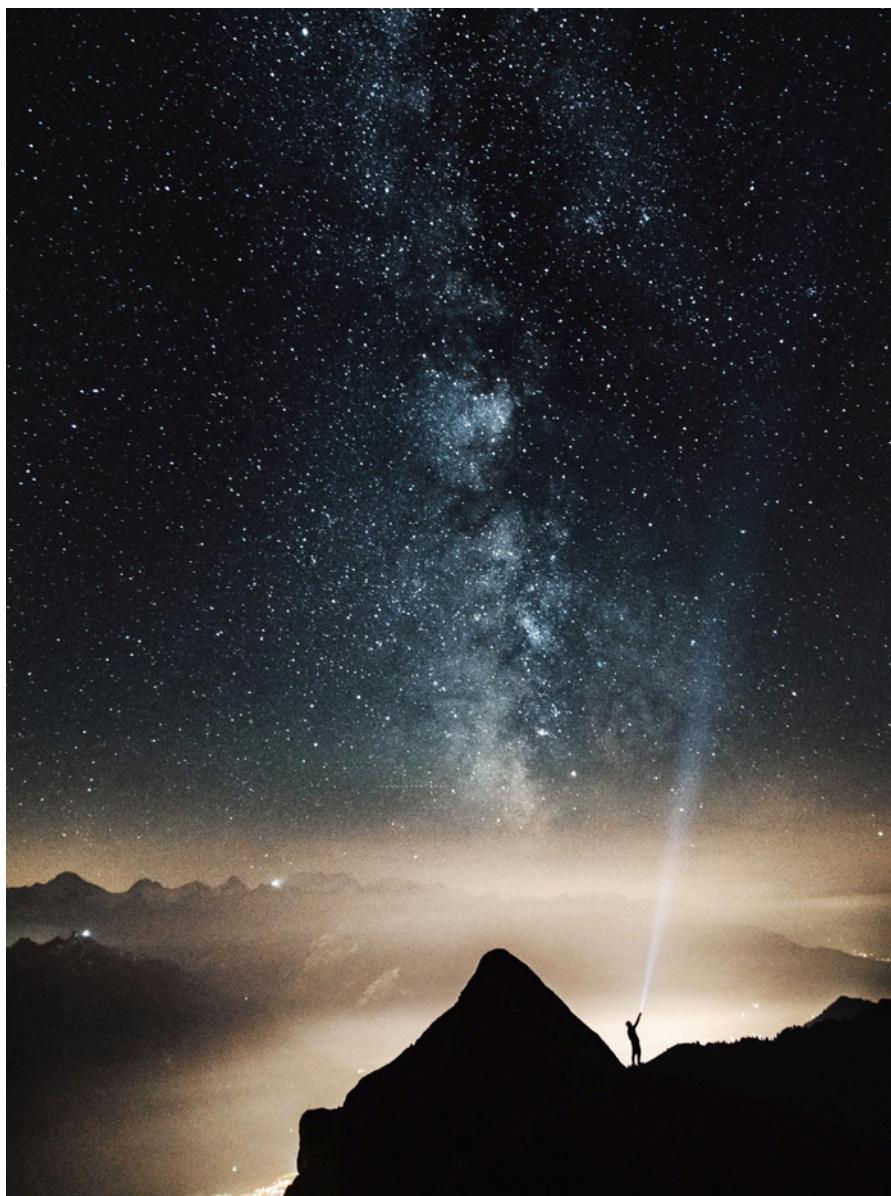


SALVOS

MAGAZINE

# God or the supernatural?

What Australians believe



If you have the power to  
**make someone happy**,  
do it. The world needs  
more of that.

Author unknown





## 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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**From the streets to 'home' again**

## A higher power

In the recent Australia Talks research-based initiative developed by the ABC in collaboration with Vox Pop labs, survey results showed that the number one issue on which Australians are most divided is the extent of their belief in a 'higher power'. While 60 per cent said they believed to some degree, 37 per cent said they had no belief at all.

Although religion was always said to be one of the three taboo subjects of discussion, it seems that Australians are talking about it – and disagreeing – in high numbers. In this week's feature, we present a slightly older survey that goes deeper into the different 'higher power' and supernatural beliefs of Australians. This survey shows that, although beliefs differ, people are searching for something outside themselves, something that anchors them and gives hope and meaning to their existence.

In My Story this week, 'Chook' is one man who has found that hope and meaning in a relationship with Jesus. He has seen Jesus transform his life and calls on that strength and love every day. Check out Chook's story, and more, on [salvostmagazine.org.au](http://salvostmagazine.org.au)

Simone Worthing **Assistant Editor**



# God or the supernatural?

## What Australians believe

WORDS NATASHA MOORE

Only 48 per cent of Australians say they believe in ghosts or the possibility they may exist, but 69 per cent say the same for the soul, according to new research.

The survey of 1000 people, carried out by McCrindle Research for the Centre for Public Christianity (CPX), asked respondents about their openness to the existence of a range of spiritual realities: ghosts, miracles, angels, a higher power/God, the soul, ultimate meaning or purpose in life, and life after death.

The results suggest that, as a nation, we may not be as sceptical as we think we are.

In an interview in 2005, the poet Les Murray was asked how comfortable he felt with being "an eccentric Australian voice, a rural poet speaking for an urban culture, a Roman Catholic speaking for a largely secular people". He responded: "I just speak as I am. I am a Catholic and I don't believe that other

people are necessarily secular. I think that intellectuals are mostly secular or are required to pretend that they are. But broader people are very varied ..."

This new survey backs up Murray's intuition.

For example, on the question of miracles: roughly a third of people (31.2 per cent) responded "I believe this exists"; almost another third (29.1 per cent) said "I am open to the possibility that this exists". Some opted for "unsure" or "unlikely", but only 13.8 per cent were willing to say they did not believe there's any such thing as a miracle.

### THE YOUNG AND THE RESTLESS

Surprisingly, perhaps, it was the youngest age group – 18-26-year-olds – who expressed the most openness to the non-material: 49 per cent said they believe in the soul, and 48 per cent in life after death (in both cases, another 28 per cent were open to the possibility).

The percentage who said "I believe this does not exist" about any of the options never rose to double digits for this cohort (9 per cent for ghosts, only 4 per cent for life after death).

By contrast, the oldest age bracket (76+) was much more sceptical: a full 40 per cent said they do not believe in ghosts, and 28 per cent dismissed the possibility of life after death.

The gender disparities will be less surprising to some. Men were, on average more than twice as likely as women to tick the "I believe this does not exist" box.

### WOMEN AND BELIEF

When it comes to the existence of God or a higher power, men and women said they believed or were open to it at almost the same rate. But for the rest, women were markedly more willing to profess belief: 50 per cent to 38 per cent for the soul, 38 per cent to 30 per

cent for life after death, 34 per cent to 26 per cent for angels.

This tracks with persistent trends, across a number of religions and cultures, which associate women with higher religiosity and see atheist groups skew male.

## As a nation, we may not be as sceptical as we think we are.

**SOUL-SEARCHING**  
Australians are most united (as we see in comparable surveys elsewhere) in the idea that we have or are souls – that we are more than the stuff of which our bodies are made.

Overall, 69.7 per cent of respondents said they either believed in or were open to the existence of the soul, with 14.7 per cent unsure, 5.7 per cent thinking it unlikely, and 9.9 per cent saying they do not believe it exists.

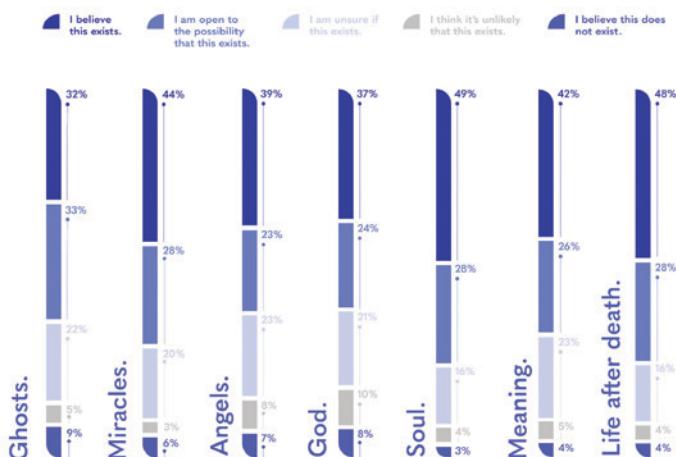
While the concept of the soul may traditionally be embedded within a religious belief ▶



### Is there more than we can see and touch?

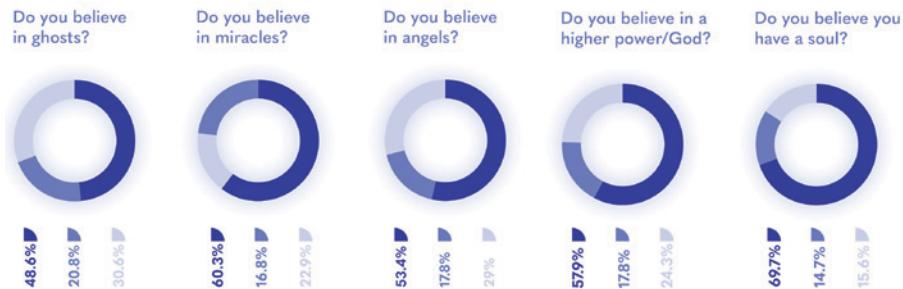
18-26 year olds

Images supplied by the Centre for Public Christianity.





## Is there more than we can see or touch?



system, the fact that belief in or openness to it persists at higher rates than for associated concepts like God (57.9 per cent) or life after death (59.6 per cent), suggests that it taps into something important for 21st-century Australians, especially for young people.

Jamaican theologian J. Richard Middleton explains that the soul as popularly conceived – often as a kind of essential self, distinct from the body – is more of an ancient Greek idea than a Christian one. His account helps us understand why it might be attractive today:

"For Plato, I think, the notion of a soul was some point of stability and universality in the world. Because the world is a flux, everything is passing away, but the soul is this immaterial part of you that never changes – it just is you, and it's eternal. I think people need something that's beyond this world to cling to, something transcendent. And if you don't have God, you're going to find a substitute. I think soul functions as a God-substitute in our world, as something to cling to."

Middleton is blunt about where he thinks we'll find what we're looking for: "I would say go to the real source, look for God. Soul is a pale second-best, in my opinion."

## RESURRECTION

In a separate question, respondents were asked for their view on the claim that Jesus Christ rose from the dead: 23.6 per cent said they are certain this happened; 15.8 per cent are certain it didn't. Others thought it possible (19.7 per cent) or unlikely (12.8 per cent).

But the most popular answer, at 28.3 per cent, was "I don't know". There's a humility to that that Les Murray might appreciate. As he wrote in his poem, *Church*:

"The wish to be right  
Has decamped in great numbers  
But some come to God  
In hopes of being wrong."

*Natasha Moore is a research fellow at the Centre for Public Christianity ([publicchristianity.org.au](http://publicchristianity.org.au)).*

*This article first appeared at ABC News.*



Scan here for more on finding meaning.

## Cairns Salvos offers cultural hub

Integrating refugees into the community through several initiatives and helping them on their faith journey is a growing outreach for Cairns Salvos in Far North Queensland.

Cairns Salvos officer (pastor) Major Ben Johnson said about 100 people with a refugee background regularly attend either the English-language or Swahili/Kinyarwanda-language services on Sunday mornings, a Nepali service on Saturday mornings or the youth service on Friday nights.

Simon Gazmer, a Bhutanese refugee who has been in Australia for about 10 years, has been employed by the church as a part-time inter-cultural ministry worker and leads the Nepali congregation.

The church also runs a Just Brass music program for young people. The group was able to perform at the Cairns launch of this year's Red Shield Appeal.

The church's community integration programs include a 'Drive-A-Mentor', which is helping refugees (and others) get their driver's licence. This assists them in getting into the job market.

"Most of those who have accessed this program so far have been from the Congolese and Rwandan communities," Ben said.



Top: Major Ben Johnson with Vestine Uwera, centre, and Esther at Harmony Day celebrations. Above, from left: Claudine, Patrick and Nadia attend the Salvos Swahili Kinyarwanda service.

Some of the youth were also being sponsored to play in the church basketball teams, which are part of a competition in the city. "All interaction is helpful in developing their English-speaking skills," Ben said.

"The [Cairns] church building has become a gathering space for many cultural groups and is really seen as being at the centre of the community." – Darryl Whitecross

## Funeral services expand to Victoria

Salvos Funerals has expanded its services to Victoria six years after it was founded in NSW. The services are now available in Melbourne and the Mornington Peninsula, with profits going to the frontline mission work of the Salvos. "By choosing Salvos

Funerals, you will not only receive a service full of compassion, but you will also contribute to the incredible work of The Salvation Army's 2000 services across Australia, helping people in need every day," said Marc Allison, Salvos Funerals Sector Advisor.



# Salvos continue work to help end modern slavery

The Salvation Army played an active role in Australia's inaugural online modern slavery conference – *Partnering to End Modern Slavery* – which took place last month.

Organised by Anti-Slavery Australia, the conference included speakers from government, business, the services sector and academics to share ways to prevent, identify and respond to modern slavery and human trafficking occurring in Australia.

Claudia Cummins, Program Manager of The Salvation Army's Trafficking and Slavery Safe House\*, spoke on the panel *Identification and Support of Survivors*. Claudia shared some of the Safe House's key learnings from working

with survivors since 2008, in particular the need for flexible, holistic and trauma-informed support.

Claudia also discussed the need for government-funded support to be delinked from engagement with the criminal justice system, arguing that survivors of trafficking and slavery should not have their access to services be contingent on engagement with the police. "Survivors have an inherent right to access support which will see them move out of crisis as a victim of exploitation, towards a safe and independent life," she said.

The panel, which consisted of representatives from other support services, the Department

of Human Services and academia, echoed this sentiment.

Heather Moore, The Salvation Army's Policy and Strategic Project Advisor, spoke on the second day of the conference on the panel *Survivor Experiences and the Survivor Voice in Australia*. Heather discussed The Salvation Army's Freedom Advocate program, which saw survivors of modern slavery share their experiences and insights to raise awareness and create change.

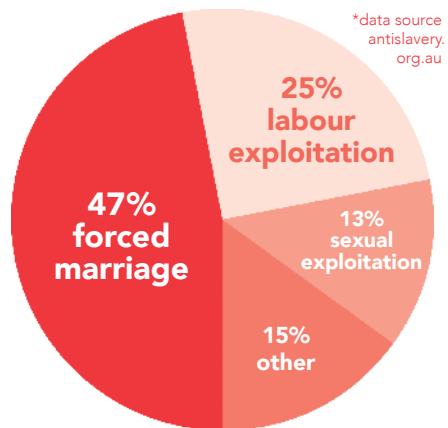
Heather discussed the importance of effective, ethical and empowering engagement with survivors, and spoke alongside Feda Abdo from Muslim Women Australia and Moe Turaga, a survivor advocate. Noting the sophisticated forums for survivor engagement in the United States and United Kingdom, the panelists called for survivors' voices and expertise to be front and centre of Australia's anti-slavery movement.

Panel discussions from *Partnering to End Modern Slavery* will be made available online at [antislaveryaustralia.delegateconnect.co/](http://antislaveryaustralia.delegateconnect.co/)

**For more information, go to: [antislavery.org.au/national-conference-partnerships-against-modern-slavery-8-10-june-2021/](http://antislavery.org.au/national-conference-partnerships-against-modern-slavery-8-10-june-2021/)**

\*Through the country's only Trafficking and Slavery Safe House, the Salvos run a unique support service for people who have experienced human trafficking, slavery, or slave-like offences. This includes those who have experienced, or are at risk of, forced marriage.

The Trafficking and Slavery Safe House provides supported accommodation and case management for single women over 18. Outreach case management support can be provided to women, men, women and men with children, and young people, living in the community.



## TYPES OF SLAVERY



**Human trafficking**



**Debt bondage**



**Deceptive recruitment for labour or services**



**Forced marriage**



**Child labour**



**Servitude**

# The art of friendship

Allowing differences to unite, and not divide us

WORDS BRYCE DAVIES

I recently watched a fascinating film on Netflix called *My Octopus Teacher*. The film's maker, Craig Foster, had been experiencing some burnout in his life and felt disconnected from his true self and the natural world.

When he was a child he used to ocean dive in the kelp forests near his home in South Africa, and he loved it. So, when he returned there sad and feeling lost, he started diving again in an attempt to rediscover himself and his love for nature.

Every day he dived in the kelp forest and documented his experience. In time he met a curious young octopus and started watching it. He became fascinated with this unusual creature. He marvelled at its ability to change colour, defend itself from predators and catch prey with surprising creativity and skill. His octopus friend was quite clearly able to learn and adapt.

Over time, the octopus trusted Craig and would sit on his chest or allow Craig into her world to see how she lived, ate and slept. Craig also saw the octopus recover from a shark bite that nearly killed her.

Later, after mating with a male octopus and producing a large number of eggs, Craig witnessed her die naturally while she was tending to her eggs. He then saw a shark takes her body away. He was very emotional as he shared about her death and the lessons about the fragility of life and humanity's connection with nature she had taught him.

You can't get more unlikely friends than a human and an octopus. Yet, with some dedication and curiosity, it became a beautiful relationship. The wonders and brilliance of the common octopus are now being appreciated across the world through this fabulous documentary.

## COMMON TRAITS

This relationship prompted me to think about the relationships we humans have with each other. Our family and friends. Our work colleagues. The people we just don't understand. Do we notice them and try to understand their intricate beauty and complexity? Do we pass off differences as right or wrong when maybe they are just like an octopus and experiencing life in another world to us?

My friend Robbo is a very different sort of fellow to me, with a vastly different experience of family life, work life and social life. His body and mind are in very different



“

## The art of friendship is a critical skill for any functional society ...

”



PHOTO BY BALL PARK BRANDS/UNIVERSAL

places to mine in terms of health, education and cognition. To be with Robbo is to experience humanity in a different way.

Recently, though, we experienced again our one common trait. We sang songs in the car with the radio up full blast. We are both terrible singers but we are enthusiastic, and in a car there is very little damage done.

It has taken some time, but I love Robbo and care about what happens to him. It hurts me when he is sad and I love to laugh with him and share a joke.

People can be very different can't they? Different cultures and upbringings. Different religions and beliefs. Different diets and taste in music and fashion. Different experiences of pain and suffering.

The art of friendship is a critical skill for any functional society to develop, and key to this in my view is to not be so afraid of difference. Diversity adds colour and variety to life, and I am all for it.

I am not sure I am ready to plunge into cold water every day to pal up with an octopus any time soon, but I'm open to making new friends and experiencing life with them. Aren't you?

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



Scan here for more  
on the need for  
community.

# From the streets to 'home' again

Chook finds stability, hope and faith after decades of substance abuse

WORDS NAOMI SINGLEHURST



Chook has been volunteering with the Salvos in Queensland for the last 10 years and goes out of his way to help others.

As National Homelessness Week (1-7 August) approaches, Chook shares his journey from 'sleeping rough' for 10 years, to finally finding stability, and the opportunity to care for himself and others.

Today, as Chook walks through his front door, he feels a real sense of security and peace. It is even sweeter, he says, because for 15 years, he had nowhere to call home.

Having spent 10 years living rough, including under a bridge, through Tasmania's often near-zero winter temperatures, Chook recalls, "You try and find a sheltered spot, but then when you stop moving, you get cold pretty quick.

"Unless you have some bedding, or cardboard or plastic or something, you are better off moving all night and then maybe you can go

to sleep in a patch of morning sun."

## BATTLE WITH BOOZE

Staying awake all night wasn't always possible for Chook. "I was in the grip of unrelenting alcoholism and more often than not, I'd collapse. Often I used to wake up in the police cells or in hospital," he says.

When pressed about the factors that led to past homelessness and addiction, Chook won't use any of it as an excuse, but does see that an unhealthy self-image contributed to addiction.

"There was a broken home, and the old man had an anger problem and us kids lived in fear at the time. But that's not what makes me an alcoholic – it is what happens in my mind prior to me taking a drink, and in my

body after I take that drink. I start and I can't stop," he shares.

What he does understand now, is that the first time he had a drink was the first time he felt 'normal'.

"I think the fundamental thing that contributed to my alcoholism was that I believed there was something wrong with me. This was untrue, but I believed it and that alcohol could fix it," he explains.

#### **LOSING IT ALL AND FINDING HELP**

Addiction saw Chook spiral downwards into poverty and homelessness.

In 1996, Chook found some stability and moved to Queensland for a job. He managed to control his drinking, but only for some time.

One day, having lost all sense of hope, he consumed two bottles of prescription medication. As he recounts now, "I basically laid down to die. But I woke up the next morning! It was then I thought, maybe I've been wrong about life."

After that incident, Chook found his way to a detox unit, and was subsequently offered a place in a residential (live-in) recovery service run by the Salvos.

Chook graduated from the program, moved into the service's transitional housing and was then provided the assistance he needed to put his name on a community housing list. He finally secured long-term accommodation and remains there today.

#### **ON THE ROAD TO RECOVERY**

Chook stayed 'dry' for eight years, but then drank again. "My ego was smashed," he shares. "I realised I'd become something I never ever wanted to be – a charity case."

**I basically accept there is a God and I'm not him.**

“

Chook also realised he needed to be completely honest about his issues and began to seriously apply all that he had learned in recovery and 12-step programs previously.

"That was 17 years ago," says Chook proudly. "I've been free from alcohol and mind-altering drugs since. I've been volunteering with the Salvos for the last decade, mainly with 'extended [recovery] care' and I will go out of my way if my story can help someone else."

#### **THANK GOD FOR HOME**

Looking back now, Chook is grateful for all the support he has been given and believes through it all, the hand of God ultimately pulled him through into recovery and stability. He is full of gratitude and faith for the guidance of his 'higher power'.

With a smile, he says, "I've got a very child-like faith. I basically accept there is a God and I'm not him. I must remain in the 'freshness' of my faith – my reliance on God has to begin all over again each day as if nothing has yet been done."



Scan here for more information on Salvos homelessness services and support.

# Carrot cake



## Ingredients

1 cup almond meal,  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup chopped walnuts, 1 tsp cinnamon, 1 tsp nutmeg, pinch of salt, 2 eggs,  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup melted butter,  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup coconut milk, 2 carrots peeled and grated.

**Icing:** 1½ cups unsweetened shredded coconut, ½ cup butter cubed, juice and rind of 1 lemon, 1 tsp vanilla extract.

## Method

Combine almond meal, walnuts, cinnamon, nutmeg and salt.

Add eggs, melted butter, coconut milk, grated carrots and stir well.

Fill two lined cake tins with the cake batter and place in moderate oven (180–190°C) for 35 minutes. Allow to sit for 10 minutes before cooling on a wire rack.

**For the icing:** Whiz coconut in blender or food processor until fine.

Add butter cubes and continue to whiz.

Add lemon juice, rind and vanilla and keep whizzing until smooth and spreadable.

Spread icing on top of both cooled cakes and place one cake on top of the other. Sprinkle with a few extra walnuts if desired.

# Have a laugh

## Why are elevator jokes so good?

They work on many levels!



## Why did the golfer wear two pairs of pants?

Just in case he got a hole in one!



## Why did the kid cross the playground?

To get to the other slide.

# Bible byte

"Live happily together in a spirit of harmony, and be as mindful of another's worth as you are your own."

Romans chapter 12, verse 16  
The Passion Translation

# Wordsearch

W	O	T	S	S	J	P	I	N	I	I	S
O	C	S	H	E	L	M	E	T	S	Y	A
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ALPS  
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CLIMB  
CYCLING  
DESCENTS  
DRAFTING  
FAVOURITES  
FRANCE  
GRAND  
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HELMET

JERSEY  
PARIS  
PELOTON  
POINTS  
RIDERS  
SPECTATORS  
STAGE  
SUPPORT  
TEAM  
TIME  
TOUR  
TRIAL  
YELLOW

# Quick quiz



- Where does this year's Tour de France end on 18 July?
- Who won the first stage of this year's race?
- How many stages are in this year's race?
- Which stage is the longest this year?
- How many kilometres will the race cover?
- How many Australians began the race this year?



## Tum-Tum

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

# Did you know?

- Tasmania has the world's cleanest air.
- The world record for the tallest stack of doughnuts was more than 3000.
- The Bible is the world's most shop-lifted book.
- Brain activity can power a small lightbulb.

# kid zone

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



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

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