



To our Army of Volunteers,

This year on December 5, as we celebrate International Volunteer Day, let us take a moment to reflect on the year that's been. A year filled with challenges, heartache and loss. However it's also one where we can give thanks for the commitment of our people to see lives transformed one at a time with the love of Jesus. I have seen many mission volunteers give more of themselves so selflessly and others wanting to do the same but limited due to COVID-19 restrictions. It is truly an honour to lead a movement where so many mission volunteers are committed to transforming Australia one life at a time with the love of Jesus.

This year's International Volunteer Day theme "**Together we can through volunteering**" resonates so loudly for The Salvation Army. As we band together, we can meet challenges and respond to those who most need our help to ensure no one is left in need.

At the beginning of 2020 we saw darkened skies and scorched earth across Australia. As people were evacuated from their homes and coming to terms with their loss, mission volunteers came rushing in numbers to cook, serve and be present for our fellow Australians. Not even a few months later we entered the global COVID-19 pandemic. A time marked with uncertainty for many of us, but where restrictions didn't limit us, we continued to do what we do best, serve. Mission volunteers went above and beyond to help bring Australians through this difficult time.

So often we highlight national disasters and the role of mission volunteers, but every day, you are contributing to The Salvation Army's mission in meaningful ways through vast and varied roles. It is through your unrelenting care and commitment that we can impact millions of Australians every year.

As we slowly return to our normal routines and enter the Christmas season, I am thankful for the opportunity to continue working alongside one another. It is in our DNA to meet injustice face-to-face with compassion and care for others. Whether you're located in a corps, a social centre, a program or a fundraiser, thank you for being part of The Salvation Army and bringing hope where it's needed most.

I pray that you and your families have a Christmas filled with joy, celebration and the awareness of God's love. This International Volunteer Day, I extend my heartfelt thanks to you, our amazing mission volunteers!

Happy International Volunteer Day!

Thank you again and God bless you each,

Colonel Winsome Merrett

Chief Secretary