

IT'S BEGINNING TO LOOK A LOT LIKE CHRISTMAS AS NEWCASTLE PERMANENT LAUNCHES TOY DRIVE WITH THE SALVATION ARMY

Donations accepted at Newcastle Permanent branches until 12 December

Newcastle Permanent is keeping tradition alive by teaming up with The Salvation Army again this year for their annual Christmas Toy Drive Appeal, calling the community to donate a gift to share the magic of Christmas.

With the support of the community, the annual Toy Drive has brought smiles to the faces of families doing it tough on Christmas morning for nearly 40 years, last year collecting a record breaking 7,500 gifts.

The Salvation Army Auxiliary Lieutenant Bernie Muendel said the community's support is what makes the annual Toy Drive so powerful.

"We are seeing more people in need than ever before, but with the support of the community we can make a real difference to those in need this Christmas," Lieutenant Muendel said.

"We know that cost of living pressures are impacting people, so seeing the community still donating what they can to help others is just so touching."

Lieutenant Muendel said that gifts for all ages are appreciated, including babies and teenagers.

"For those looking to donate, we recommend toys, books, and games for younger children, and gift vouchers, sports equipment and beauty products for teenagers," he said.

"We encourage parents to bring their children along when choosing a gift to donate. Allowing kids to select a present for a child their own age is a powerful way to teach them true meaning of giving."

Local mum Leonie said the support of The Salvation Army changed her life for the better after leaving an abusive relationship with just the clothes on her back.

"The Salvos helped me see that surviving wasn't the end of my story, it was the beginning. They helped me build a new chapter – one filled with safety, warmth and choice," she said.

"That freedom was made possible by the love and support I received from The Salvation Army."

Newcastle Permanent spokesperson Kirrah McClelland said the organisation is dedicated to helping as many families as possible this year.

"We were truly touched by the generosity of our community last year who helped us collect a record number of gifts, and we hope to exceed that number again this year to help spread some extra Christmas cheer with as many families as possible" Ms McClelland said.

"Christmas is such a special time and coming together as a community to wrap our arms around those in need this season is our absolute honour."

Along with collecting gifts in branches, each year Newcastle Permanent's employees donate their time at The Salvation Army warehouse sorting gifts and preparing them to be opened by families on Christmas morning.

Donations can be made at any Newcastle Permanent branch until Friday 12 December. Gifts should be new and unwrapped and are accepted for all ages, including teenagers.