

## ‘Salvos Rural Appeal’ launches in Australia

**The Salvation Army supports farmers through drought, isolation.**

### STEELES

Lts. Simon and Natalie Steele, chaplains with The Salvation Army Rural Support Services, in outback Queensland. The helicopter allows them to reach isolated areas otherwise inaccessible.

With drought increasing its grip on rural Australia, The Salvation Army is encouraging Australians unaffected by drought to support struggling farmers through the [Salvos Rural Appeal](#).

“Having supported farmers for more than 100 years, we know that rural communities go through times of plenty, and times of need,” said Pam Wilkes from The Salvation Army’s Rural Support Services. “If Australians living in cities or rural communities who are flourishing can get behind our rural appeal, they will be enabling us to maintain and grow our much-needed support services for regional communities, ensuring that The Salvation Army will be there for them, and others, when times are tough.”

The Salvation Army’s 15 chaplains, rural and regional centers and outback flying service in the Northern Territory and Queensland provide long-term practical, emotional and social support to thousands of Australians. Chaplains have reported that the need for assistance in managing depression and financial problems is increasing, exacerbated by isolation and a reluctance to seek help.

“If times are tough, farmers have less income to employ farm-hands, leaving them too busy to seek assistance in times of need,” Wilkes said. “That’s why The Salvation Army’s Rural Support Services are crucial. Our rural support staff drive and fly hundreds of thousands of kilometers every year to visit isolated properties, letting farmers know that they’re not forgotten and that there is help available.”





The Salvation Army's Farmstay Program utilizes chaplains and

other volunteers to look after properties to give farmers a holiday.

Marie Turnbull, a retired farmer from Mayfield near Quambone in western New South Wales (NSW), has endured many tough times over the years, including droughts and floods. Salvation Army rural chaplains have been a constant support to her family.

"We have been in a very low place and the lovely Salvation Army chaplains were the ones that always supported us, always got us up, when nobody else did," she said. "I can't thank The Salvation Army enough."

Third-generation sheep, cattle and goat farmers Phil and Barb Hodges live alone on their 1,975-acre farm at Barraba in northern NSW.

454176207\_640 "Their help by minding our farm on occasions, for us has been the difference between having a break from the pressures of drought and finances and having to force ourselves to soldier on under very difficult circumstances and maybe eventually breaking down," Phil Hodges said.

The [National Farmers Federation](#) (NFF) endorses the appeal and has thanked The Salvation Army for its work in support of rural communities.

"Strong, tough and hardy people need help from time to time. We all do. It's part of being human," said NFF President Brent Finlay. "Farmers care about their fellow Australians, and we're grateful to know that they care about us, too."

The Rural Support Services relies on corporate and individual donations, as well as the Army's own funds. Donations to the Salvos Rural Appeal will enable The Salvation Army to provide increased levels of practical and social support to rural and remote communities in need.

"It's Australians supporting each other, standing shoulder-to-shoulder," Wilkes said. "And it's powerful because it's so close to home. Donating to the Salvos Rural Appeal is an investment for tough times ahead."