

MEDIA RELEASE

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Freedom Partnership Initiative: SALVOS TAKE A STAND AGAINST MODERN SLAVERY

In recognition of the first *United Nations World Day against Trafficking in Persons*, The Salvation Army will today launch a new initiative, the *Freedom Partnership*, equipping Australians with the information and knowledge to identify slavery and slave-like practices which currently exist in the Australian community and thereby helping to bring to an end this exploitative system in society.

Most Australians would be unaware that slavery and slave-like practices touch most of us either directly or indirectly through our everyday consumption of goods and services – products of which may have been produced through these exploitative activities both here in Australia as well as other parts of the world.

National Manager of The Salvation Army's Freedom Partnership, Jenny Stanger, says the Freedom Partnership initiative will use online tools and social media to engage and support the Australian public as they act and fight against slavery and slave-like practices in Australia.

"Online tools – including social media – have created incredible opportunities for both individuals and organisations in advancing human rights around the world," Ms Stanger said.

"Through the Freedom Partnership initiative, we want to empower Australians to create and be part of the largest, most organised and dynamic anti-slavery movement in history."

Ms Stanger says current efforts to address modern slavery in Australia have mostly occurred at the highest levels of the federal government, as well as through the work of grassroots community organisations.

"While there has been some progress made in combatting modern slavery at the federal level, it is important local and State governments, as well as the business sector, increase their awareness of slavery and slave-like practices within their own organisations and their supply chains," she said.

"The Freedom Partnership initiative aims to fill this gap between these groups by carrying the anti-slavery message to a mass audience, which is critical in a nation such as Australia which is so reliant on imported goods and services produced in areas of the world where basic human and labour rights are a daily struggle."

While online tools and social media are a cornerstone of the Freedom Partnership initiative, the program will also have staff based in Sydney, Melbourne and Canberra to support clubs, students, faith based groups, trade unions, community service providers, businesses, government agencies, policy makers and others to engage in its aims.

"Modern slavery is a system made up of complex parts and it is only through the collaborative effort of individuals, community groups, the business sector and government that this exploitative system will crumble," Ms Stanger said.

To make a pledge against modern slavery, or for more information about the Freedom Partnership initiative, please go to endslavery.salvos.org.au.

ENDS

For media enquiries or to organise an interview with Jenny Stanger, please contact:

The Salvation Army Media Office – (02) 9266 9820

BACKGROUND:

The Freedom Partnership is an extension of The Salvation Army's existing anti-slavery work in Australia. The Salvation Army has privately operated Australia's only Safe House for victims of slavery for the past five years. Salvos Legal Humanitarian provides comprehensive legal advice, services and representation to people who have experienced slavery. The Salvation Army has collaborated with the Australian Institute of Criminology on slavery research, advocated for passage of the *Crimes Legislation Amendment (Slavery, Slavery-like Conditions and People Trafficking) Bill 2012*, and is a member of the Australian Government's National Roundtable on Human Trafficking and Slavery coordinated by the Commonwealth Attorney General's Department. In 2011, The Salvation Army received a Freedom Award from the Minister for Justice and Home Affairs, Brendan O'Connor. Salvation Army staff have consulted for the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, US State Department Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons and International Labour Organisation on international training and capacity building projects. The Freedom Partnership is sponsored by a gift from the Minderoo Foundation.