

Monday 8 January 2024

HEARTS OPEN FOR SALVOS CHRISTMAS TOY DRIVE APPEAL

The 2023 Christmas spirit was on full display across NSW, with more than 7000 gifts generously donated to The Salvation Army and NGM Group's Christmas Toy Drive Appeal.

In its 35th year, 2023 heralded a new chapter in the annual event with Greater Bank joining the Newcastle Permanent as a collection point following the merger of the two institutions under the NGM Group banner.

2023 was also a big year for Barbie and she featured in the thousands of donations, along with ever-popular miniature cars and interactive toys for babies and toddlers, and vouchers, sporting equipment and books for older kids and teenagers.

Salvation Army Public Relations and Community Engagement Manager Rod Dibley said the Salvos were thankful for the support they have received from across the state.

"It's always heartwarming to see not just the number of gifts that have been donated, but that people also put thought into what it is they are selecting," Mr Dibley said.

"With cost-of-living on the rise it's tough out there for a lot of people, so to see so many still open their hearts and make that donation is truly appreciated.

"Last year we had more people reach out to the Salvos for help than we have previously seen, so the need was high, and these gifts ensured that thousands of kids did not miss out on Christmas Day."

Newcastle Permanent Partnerships and Community Engagement Manager Kirsten Lyndon said that Greater Bank was a welcome addition, with the need in regional NSW even higher last year.

"We were thrilled to have Greater Bank on board and contribute to such wonderful donation numbers," Ms Lyndon said.

"We're very proud to be able support the Salvos, but we couldn't do it without the generosity of the community.

"From the bottom of our hearts, thank you to everyone who contributed to putting smiles on so many young faces on Christmas."