



**Media Release
14 December 2010**

Australia's largest gift appeal achieves 5 million gift milestone for people in need

South Australian originator comes forward

Twenty-three years ago Eve Mitchell and one of her colleagues from Kmart Noarlunga had an idea. After noticing a Christmas tree set up by the Mayor to collect gifts for local people in need, they asked their store manager if they could also collect gifts for charity. The Kmart manager agreed and the rest, as they say is history!

Since then the Appeal has grown to be Australia's largest gift Appeal and this year hopes to collect 450,000 gifts for The Salvation Army to distribute to people in need at Christmas.

Eve who still works at the store said, "I never thought the idea would go so far. We just wanted to try to help a few people in the local area – I'm humbled but proud of what we have achieved"

The Kmart Noarlunga store – located in a blue collar area south of Adelaide – has in most years of the Appeal, collected more gifts than any other Kmart store in the country.

According to Kmart Managing Director Guy Russo, the enthusiasm of team members like Eve has been the key to ensuring the Appeal flourishes each year.

"The Appeal is what it is today because of the determination and energy of people like Eve," he said. "Five million gifts is a huge achievement. She must be so proud that her initiative has helped make a difference to so many Australians each Christmas."

With only two weeks until Christmas, Australians are asked to continue donating to ensure no one goes without this year.

Now past the half-way stage in its 2010 campaign, the Appeal has received 104,177 gifts nationally, which is a 10 percent increase on the same time last year.

"It's wonderful to see the support Australians have provided so far," said Major Brad Halse from The Salvation Army. "Please remember that by donating to the Appeal, you can help make this a memorable Christmas for those experiencing hardship."

"We encourage everyone to give what they can to those who can't afford even the most simple gifts," Mr Russo reiterated. "And it's even easier to donate now with online contributions accepted for the first times. Simply visit www.kmart.com.au/wishingtree to make a contribution."

For further information please contact:

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Kmart Wishing Tree Appeal Information

The Appeal collects gifts on behalf of The Salvation Army who distributes them to children and families that would otherwise go without on Christmas morning. Gifts can be donated at any Kmart store right up until Christmas Eve, and for the first time, this year online contributions will be accepted.

To donate a gift, simply take a gift tag off a Wishing Tree located in any Kmart store (www.kmart.com.au/stores), identify the appropriate gender and age of a suitable recipient, put it with your gift and place it under the tree.

Alternatively, donors can make a cash contribution at any Kmart store register or visit www.kmart.com.au/wishingtree to contribute online. Cash contributions will be converted by Kmart into Kmart gift cards, allowing Appeal recipients to choose their own Christmas gift.

People of all ages rely on the support of the Salvation Army at Christmas. When making a contribution please consider that it is the elderly, teenagers and boys and girls aged 10 to 12 who are often overlooked.

Kmart and the Salvation Army are aiming to raise a record 450,000 gifts this year.