

Media Release

Hon Jacinta Allan MP
Premier



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NO SILENT NIGHTS THIS CHRISTMAS IN MELBOURNE'S BUSY CBD

Melbourne comes into its own over Christmas with heaps of fun activities for families – and the Christmas cheer will be even brighter with the return of the Salvation Army's beloved carolers and musicians.

Premier Jacinta Allan joined Minister for Major Events Steve Dimopoulos, Minister for Small Business Natalie Suleyman, Lord Mayor Nick Reece, Commanding Officer of the Salvation Army Major Brendan Nottle and carolers at Melbourne Town Hall to announce the Salvation Army is getting the band back together.

The Salvation Army band will bring the city streets to life with music from Monday, 9 December until Christmas Eve.

This is a chance for everyone to come together, enjoy the sound of Christmas and donate to the Salvation Army – who do amazing work every day of the year to support vulnerable Victorians.

In addition to carolers, the Salvos will have a variety of musicians out on key street corners as well as the stations on the City Loop – including vocalists, violinists, guitarists, a string quartet and the traditional Salvos' brass band.

The beautiful music isn't the only thing bringing the city to life this Christmas time, with a wonderland of events and dazzling decorations for families to enjoy.

From the iconic Myer Christmas Windows to the Christmas Eve Circus at Town Square to the festive-themed maze in the Docklands – Christmas is set to take over, bringing families to the city and filling up local businesses, restaurants and hotels.

Families can enjoy a First Peoples makers' market and performances at Federation Square thanks to Koorie Krismas, or they can collect a map from Mary Martin Bookshop to join the Melbourne City Christmas Treasure Hunt.

There's Christmas Crafternoons at the Library at The Dock, or you can find bespoke gifts of artwork, pottery, glass, crafts, candles and old wines at the Artist Christmas Market in East Melbourne.

These Christmas events join Melbourne's jam-packed calendar of major events for families and friends to enjoy this festive season.

Iconic sports will return with the Boxing Day Test and the Australian Open – and the *Pro Kabaddi Melbourne Raid* will be held for the very first time at John Cain Arena.

The world-first exhibition of the contemporary artist Yayoi Kusama will transform NGV International and a dedicated kids gallery and the return of NGV Friday Nights will attract even more visitors.

For some Victorians, Christmas is tough – it's why the Labor Government will also donate \$20,000 on behalf of the Victorian people to Kmart Wishing Tree Appeal, which is run in partnership with the Salvation Army.

The appeal aims to make Christmas brighter for Aussies facing hardship or crisis through gifts to those in need.

The Government is also proud to regularly support the Salvation Army's Red Shield Appeal and was pleased to contribute \$150,000 this year to help Victorians in need.

Quotes attributable to Premier Jacinta Allan

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"The Salvos are simply incredible and it's a blessing to hear their wonderful carolers back in the city."

"Melbourne comes alive over Christmas with music and events – it's a great time to take the family in and enjoy everything that is on offer."

Quote attributable to Minister for Major Events Steve Dimopoulos

"This is just the start of our golden mile of major events including Always Live – which is on right now – the Boxing Day test at the MCG, The Australian Open and the Yayoi Kusama exhibition at the NGV. Melbourne is, without a doubt, the place to be this Christmas."

Quote attributable to Minister for Small Business Natalie Suleyman

"This Christmas, we're encouraging everyone to shop local and support our small businesses across Victoria. Every purchase you make in a local store helps keep the community strong."

Quotes attributable to Lord Mayor of Melbourne Nick Reece

"We've decked the halls and now it's time to bring Yuletide carols to the streets of Melbourne, thanks to the talented musicians of the Salvation Army."

"Melbourne is Australia's Christmas capital. I'm so pleased our Christmas magic is going to be amplified with carols ringing out on street corners and City Loop train stations."

"The Salvation Army does incredible work year-round and I encourage everyone to strike the harp, join the chorus and dig deep to support this worthy charity."

Quotes attributable to Commanding Officer of the Salvation Army Major Brendan Nottle

"We've been out of action in recent years, but in the words of Arnie – we're back!"

"With the generous support from the City of Melbourne, our bands will be playing around the city. It's an opportunity for people to donate, if they'd like, but most importantly it's an opportunity for Melbourne to be at its best – a place where we look out for each other and ensure that no one is left behind."