

Media Release
For Immediate Release
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Operation Santa set for 20th year of giving

UnitingCare's Christmas Appeal *Operation Santa* is once again set to bring Christmas joy to children across the country. In partnership with Target, UnitingCare is asking the community to join forces in helping children and families in need.

From today until Friday 23 December, people can donate Christmas gifts at any Target or Target Country stores across Australia.

UnitingCare NSW.ACT Executive Director Reverend Harry Herbert said an estimated two million Australians, including more than one in 10 children, still live in poverty.

"Thousands of people request support services each day from UnitingCare and this demand spikes around Christmas," Reverend Herbert said. "The increasing cost of food, fuel and housing is placing more pressure on those who have previously not needed support.

"The theme for *Operation Santa* is 'Spread the Joy'. This is what we aim to bring people, and especially children, from across the community who are doing it tough this Christmas.

"People from all walks of life can find themselves suddenly out of work or, due to a sudden crisis, find they are just unable to make ends meet at Christmas time.

"For the past 20 years we've been asking people, in the spirit of Christmas, to give an extra present to those in our community who are less fortunate."

How can people help? Spot the large red *Operation Santa* tree at any Target or Target Country store, take a gift tag, buy a gift for someone in need and place it under the tree. Alternatively, gift cards can be purchased from Target and Target Country registers.

UnitingCare representatives will collect the gifts and ensure they are distributed to those in need by Christmas morning. All gifts go to people in the local community where they are donated.

Thanks to the generosity of the community, UnitingCare and Target have collected and distributed more than 1.7 million gifts in the past 20 years, with more than 65,000 donated last year. Help us collect 100,000 gifts this Christmas for those in need.

Media contact: Bj Jafari – (02) 9376 0446 or 0431 549 220
Campaign contact: State Coordinator Tricia Brown - (02) 9376 1456 or
tbrown@unitingcarenswact.org.au.

