



MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release

ROSIES – FRIENDS ON THE STREET CELEBRATES HELPING QUEENSLANDERS FOR 35 YEARS

Queensland's iconic homeless support agency *Rosies – Friends on the Street* starts its year-long celebrations this November to mark 35 incredible years of helping the state's most vulnerable.

A special, month-long state tour kicks off at Brisbane Powerhouse on **November 4** to help the charity raise awareness about its crucial work in building community and creating friendship and connection for people who are homeless, experiencing financial hardship, socially isolated or lonely.

It will mark this important milestone by taking life-sized cardboard Rosies van cut-outs on tour to 27 sites around the state so people can stop by to learn more about homelessness and the work Rosies does and to speak to some of the 1500 incredible Rosies volunteers.

The celebrations are an opportunity to reflect on the wonderful work of love, care, connection and friendship that Rosies volunteers, patrons, donors and supporters have experienced over the past 35 years.

Rosies has become a constant in the lives of Queenslanders in need. It is estimated that its volunteers have had over 1 million hours of genuine conversation with its patrons and made at least 2 million warm and savoured drinks.

The other roadshow locations will only be announced on Rosies' social media channels 24 hours before the van arrives and will enable the charity to surprise and delight and celebrate with the communities who support its incredible work.

Rosies CEO **Jayne Shallcross** said raising awareness around homelessness and the struggles so many are facing and celebrating the fantastic work Rosies volunteers had achieved in its 35 years was incredibly important. The Story Bridge and Victoria Bridge will be lit up in red lights on **November 2** to help mark the occasion.

"People often underestimate the importance and value of genuine conversation," Ms Shallcross said.

"We take the time to connect because we never want our patrons to feel unloved, uncared for or alone.

"We often hear stories about our patrons feeling invisible and they tell us how much it impacts their self-worth and dignity when people turn to avoid their gaze or walk across the road to avoid them.



“We are privileged to meet and listen as our friends share their intimate and personal stories with us. This genuine connection is, at its core, what Rosies is all about and why we do what we do.”

Sadly, the homeless support agency will celebrate its milestone at a time when the volunteers have never seen such large numbers of people sleeping rough.

Ms Shallcross said the number of people in overcrowded places, in hostels or on the streets had jumped 10 per cent across all the Queensland sites they visited but had skyrocketed in Brisbane city.

“We are seeing homeless people seeking refuge in areas in the city which previously have not been frequented by those seeking shelter,” Ms Shallcross said.

“People are looking for little alcoves where they can sleep safely or sleeping in their cars.”

“There has been a fundamental change in demographic with more women and families attending than ever before. And, we are also seeing more younger and older people.

“We are seeing more and more patrons coming to our vans.

“It’s a challenging atmosphere. And over the next few years, we expect this situation to keep increasing.”

Rosies has partnered with Brisbane artist and former patron **Jake Moss** to create a one-of-a-kind merchandise range that includes vibrant and on-trend T-shirts, caps and totes, with proceeds going back to Rosies to keep vans on the street.

Jake has been homeless twice in his young adult life and said volunteers from Rosies helped him turn his life around by being there for him, chatting to him and caring about him.

“I’m so honoured to have had the opportunity to design this merch because it’s a fantastic way for me to show my enormous appreciation for Rosies,” Jake said. “Rosies volunteers saved my life.”

Rosies vans service 14 areas at Beenleigh, Brisbane City, Brisbane North, Caboolture, Cairns, Gold Coast North – Southport Nerang, Gold Coast North – Surfers Paradise, Gold Coast South, Ipswich, Logan, Mareeba, Sunshine Coast, Toowoomba and Wynnum Manly. To learn more about Rosies – Friends on the Street, go to rosies.org.au

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