

Media Release

7 November 2017

TOY RUN TO HIT THE FREEWAY A WEEK EARLY

The Motorcycle Riders Association SA (MRASA) is now in its 39th year of organising the annual Adelaide Toy Run, where toys are collected for children in need at Christmas time and distributed through the St Vincent de Paul Society (Vinnies).

Each year, over 4,000 toys are distributed by Vinnies SA, primarily through the Society's unique home visitation program, that provides food, clothing, furniture and emergency funds to around 60,000 people each year throughout metropolitan and regional South Australia.

This year, the Toy Run will be held a week earlier than usual, on Sunday 3 December, with riders leaving Victoria Park at 11am. The spirited community event culminates at Callington Oval in the Adelaide Hills with entertainment, food stalls and festivities for the whole family.

Cathy Beaton, State President Vinnies SA, said "Almost 70% of the toys we give out at Christmas are provided by the MRASA's Toy Run. So it's an enormously important event for us and the people we assist."

"Many South Australian families are struggling with unemployment, high utility costs, health issues or other pressures and it's wonderful to ensure thousands of disadvantaged families are able to experience the joy of giving over the festive season." Ms Beaton said.

Together with Vinnies home visit service, toys are given out through Vinnies crisis accommodation centres and Fred's Van meal services.

In recent years an expanding cohort of scooters has accompanied the roar up the freeway, in a display of generosity and cheer for needy kids. Another change is the range of toys, with a move away from soft toys to more diverse items preferred by children and teenagers.

Craig Harrison has been riding in the Toy Run for five years, dressing as Elvis in his first year and hauling an assortment of toys canvassed from family, friends and workmates. Since then, he's roped in an ever increasing cohort of riders and donors. With soft toy donations discouraged, his Christmas bear remains on his bike for the journey home.

"A special memory from last year was stopping at Semaphore Beach on the way home, I noticed a man watching a little girl paddle in the shallows," Mr Harrison said.

"With my Christmas bear still tied to the bike, I took it off and asked the man if his little girl would like it. He was overjoyed as he proceeded to explain the family had only arrived in Australia a few days earlier and it was to be his little girl's first Christmas here. With tears in his eyes, he could not have been more grateful over a very small token of kindness."

Mr Harrison says he gets a great deal of satisfaction in giving to others. "Children miss out on what a lot of us take for granted at such a special time of the year. The MRASA Toy Run brings together great people who love riding motorcycles, for a common cause. We do it for the kids!

Notes for Editors:

Anyone interested in participating in the Toy Run can register, and the public are welcome to join the event in Callington at the end of the ride.

Traditionally the Toy Run is held on the second Sunday in December, however, in 2017 the Toy Run will be held on a new date being the **first Sunday in December (3/12/2017)**.

More information on the Toy Run is available at the website: www.mrasa.asn.au/toyrun.shtml or Facebook page: www.facebook.com/MRASA-Toy-Run-1460069354242526/

- ENDS

For further information or to organise a photo with Craig Harrison or Cathy Beaton, please contact Megan Andrews, Marketing Manager on (08) 8112 8712 or 0419 940 721 mandrews@svdpsa.org.au.

St Vincent de Paul Society SA Inc: GPO Box 1804, Adelaide SA 5001

Administration: Ph (08) 8353 8600
Fax: (08) 8353 5500
Fundraising: Ph: (08) 8212 5813
Fax: (08) 8212 0345
Donation Enquiries: Ph: (08) 8159 0315
Fax: (08) 8211 6318

Email: svdpsadmin@svdpsa.org.au
Website: www.vinnies.org.au
Donation Hotline: 13 18 12
