

BLESSING BAGS NEWS

BLESSING BAGS CHRISTMAS

BAGGING UP DAY

WEDNESDAY 5TH
DECEMBER 2018



BLESSING BAGS CHRISTMAS

OUTREACH DAY

MONDAY 17TH
DECEMBER 2018



Give the gift of compassion this holiday season!

We say it every year, but it really is unbelievable how quick time flies! We are in full swing preparing for the upcoming holiday season. There are numerous opportunities to get

involved with Blessing Bags, whether that be attending our bagging up day on the 5th of December, or coming along to our outreach day on Monday the 17th of December.

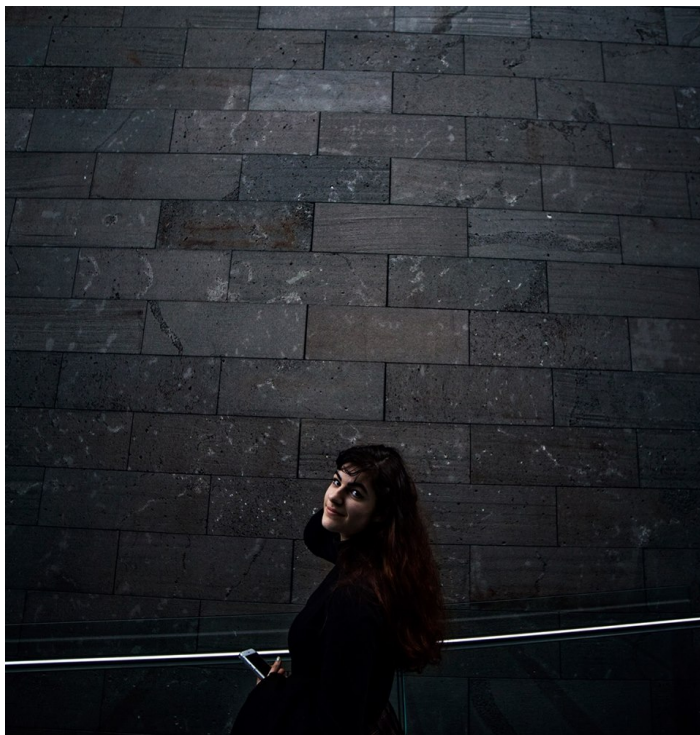
Meet our members: Christine Semerdjian

G'day, I'm Christine, the resident policy researcher and writer at Blessing Bags.

I got involved with Blessing Bags in November 2017, in which I reached out to Laura offering to write research papers for the organisation.

I have a long-standing passion for social justice, which started out in high school, and has stayed with me all throughout university and my working life. Being involved with Blessing Bags has been rewarding in so many ways.

Apart from my work with Blessing Bags, I am involved in a couple of other organisations: the Australian Youth



Climate Coalition and Academics for Refugees. All of these social justice causes are vastly different, but they are ultimately interlinked, which is why I try to get involved with as much as I can to try and advocate for these social justice issues.

One of the greatest things about being involved with Blessing Bags is the people who make this organisation possible. Everyone involved is open, kind and driven, and really shows that Blessing Bags is an organisation that practices what we preach.

From the year I have been involved with Blessing Bags, researching and writing on the Public Housing Renewal Program has been one of the most eye-opening and exciting projects I have undertaken. When I first heard about the privatisation of public housing, I was in disbelief. It was a great opportunity for me to talk about this important issue and tell people about this project.

It's opportunities like these that really make my time at Blessing Bags special and worthwhile. To be able to both educate and write about important issues, but also make a tangible difference to the lives of people in Melbourne and beyond.

Organisation Update

Bagging Up Day

This month we held our first ever weekend bagging up day! The day was a huge success with 440 bags made up. It was great to see so many students and full time workers come along who would otherwise not be able to attend during the week. We would like to say a massive thank you to all of the people that came along, we will definitely be hosting another weekend bagging day in the future!



Balcombe School

This month we got the opportunity to visit the Balcombe School and speak at their primary school assembly. It was a fantastic opportunity to meet and inspire young people to help out their local community. We would like to thank Balcombe School for the wonderful opportunity!

Upcoming Events

As we head closer towards the holiday season, we've been organising heaps of events to show some generosity and compassion for those doing it tough. We would love our next bagging up day on Wednesday the 5th of December to be just as successful as the last, so please come along if you're free and interested!

Of course, we need to distribute the bags we have made to those who need them, and we could use all the help we can get! If you're free to come along and get involved at the upcoming outreach day on Monday the 17th of December.

Christmas Fundraiser

We have some wonderful prizes up for grabs in our Christmas Raffle fundraiser! Tickets are \$5 each, or 3 for \$10! The raffle will be drawn at our Christmas bagging day on the 5th of December! Prizes include:

- 2x 12 month contracts SIM cards valued at \$600 each from [Moove Mobile](#)
- Logo design Package from [Creative Nest Design Studio](#) valued at \$450
- Cut, colour and blow wave valued at \$130 from [Pure Styling](#)
- [Modern Royal](#) \$100 online voucher and 3 mugs valued at \$20 each.
- Candles and perfumes valued at \$100 from Le Rêve
- One hour Swedish massage valued at \$80 from [Balanced & Scented - Relaxation Massage](#)

To purchase tickets all you have to do is deposit payment into our account and either [email](#) or Facebook message us.

In the news: October 2018

“The electorate of Wentworth is notorious for its abundance of harbour side mansions, but there is homelessness and desperation amongst the luxury cars and Yachts.”¹ In the past month, research has revealed the invisibility of people experiencing homelessness, despite the numbers increasing. This increase has caused a great strain on soup kitchens and other food services that support people experiencing homelessness. After supplying 1.2 million meals to the Tasmanian community in the past year, the shelves at Foodbank Tasmania’s warehouse are practically empty.² The demands for these services are increasing, but the resources available to these organisations are scarce. These services, typically run by volunteers, are urging the general public to donate canned food or any loose change to continue to feed members of our community. People experience homelessness due to a range of issues, such as housing stress, domestic violence and job insecurity to mention a few. Australians must remember people experiencing homelessness deserve the same amount of love and respect as we do.

On Census night, **116,427** Australians were experiencing homelessness of some form. **58%** were male, and **42%** were female



I want to tell you a story about a homeless man. This story reveals the sad truth that any person can experience homelessness, at any time. His real name won’t be used for privacy reasons. Let’s call him John. John moved to Australia in 1981 and got a job in Sydney as a security guard. He worked hard and enjoyed his job. After 30 years at the age of 54, John lost his job. They wanted someone younger and who would understand the ‘new generation’ better. Following this, it was difficult for John to keep up with his bills which lead him to experience homelessness. For the last two years, he has moved from shelter to shelter, still trying to find work.

The harsh realities reflected in this story are not unique. They are struggles too many Australians have had to face for too long. Raising awareness and educating people is just one simple way to help people like John, and our broader community of people experiencing homelessness all over Australia.

¹ Dadson, M 2018 ‘Charity’s supplies running low as demand for food assistance across Tasmania rises’, ABC news, < <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-10-14/tasmania-foodbank-running-on-empty/10373574>>

Free Public Transport for People Experiencing Homelessness and Vulnerable Victorians

At the start of this month, Housing Minister Martin Foley announced people experiencing homelessness and disadvantaged Victorians could now travel for free on public transport. The year long trial under the Andrews Labor Government will provide weekly and monthly passes to vulnerable people, in an effort to keep them out of the criminal justice system in the form of fare evasion. Passes will be provided through emergency relief groups including The Salvation Army, Launch Housing, Australian Red Cross and the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre. The trial has occurred after a review of ticketing in 2016 that revealed many poor people had no choice but to fare evade since they couldn’t pay for public transport, which is needed to reach appointments and basic services.