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Country: Australia



Name	Food Care Kit for Homeless Persons	
Components	<p>Non-perishable food items as in the photo, a bag or basket. A useful kit could contain</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Food items: Muesli bars, fruit snacks, cans of beans, corn, tuna or fruit. It is best if the cans' lids have a ring top pull for easy opening.2. Basic toiletries: Tooth brush and tooth paste, tissue paper, soap, sanitary pads, comb.3. Clothing items: A pair of socks, a warm hat.4. Gift certificates for supermarket or fast food chains.	
Directions and Preparation	<p>Fill a bag or basket with the items. You may choose to donate directly to individuals or through various charitable organizations during the Christmas holidays. As Christmas time is a traditional family time in many countries the loneliness and poverty of homelessness is felt more keenly during Christmas.</p>	
Other relevant information	<p>In Australia, there were about 116,000 homeless people on Census Night in 2016. This is probably an under estimation, given that couch surfers, people staying in temporary refuges, shelters or caravan parks are unlikely to have been represented fully. Rough sleepers, street beggars and buskers on the streets of our major cities are usually the obviously visible homeless persons.</p> <p>Homelessness in Australia disproportionately affects women and children with the majority of cases originating from domestic violence. Adolescents escaping from family violence have also been known to find themselves homeless!!</p>	

Food insecurity is a closely related issue. Whilst the homeless are certainly almost always hungry and looking for food, food insecurity extends to far more Australians than those who are homeless.

Every year at Christmas time in Australia, the news outlets show politicians and celebrities waiting on tables serving homeless people Christmas fare. Charities hand out care kits such as the one I described above. This probably causes little harm but indicates sympathy rather than empathy. Real solutions are far more challenging and are related to the politics of inequality. For women and children, addressing food insecurity is in part addressing and preventing family violence.

Individual and corporate financial donations as well as large donations of food from organizations such as Food bank and Oz harvest are invaluable to the charities that feed the homeless all year round. That notwithstanding, contributions of food care kits such as the one described here for homeless persons at Christmas serves its own special purpose.