

MEDIA RELEASE
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Share the Dignity launches biggest ever 'It's in the Bag' appeal to support women in crisis: 150,000 bags needed this Christmas

Bunnings Warehouses become collection hubs for Australia's largest period poverty appeal to help growing demand from disadvantaged women and kids.

Australian period poverty charity Share the Dignity is calling for donations of bags filled with essential items to restore dignity and hope to women and girls fleeing domestic violence or experiencing homelessness at Christmas.

This year launches the biggest "It's in the Bag" campaign yet with 150,000 donations needed to support a surge in requests from over 3,000 registered charity partners. Australians can support by donating a bag at their local Bunnings Warehouse from 14 – 30 November.

It's in the Bag encourages Australians to fill a new or unused bag with unopened essential items, including a toothbrush and toothpaste, shampoo and conditioner, roll-on or solid deodorant, soap or body wash and period products (for an Adult Bag) and a few extras for a Mum & Bub bag or Teen Bag. [Learn more about bag types here.](#)

"It's devastating to know that for every bag donated, there's another woman we can't reach," said Founder Rochelle Courtenay.

"We have already begun the horrible task of preparing our charities for the worst because the requests have increased so drastically. We can never meet demand, but this year we're trying really hard to try and close that gap. Until the system changes we'll keep showing up, because we can't change their circumstances but we can change their Christmas."

Previous "It's in the Bag" recipient Gemma knows firsthand the dignity that a bag brings when facing domestic violence, being forced to flee her home with her children and only being able to gather what she could carry for them on the way out.

"I felt seen and heard that day. When you leave, you're thinking about packing the kids' things, packing what you need to get to the next place, but you don't think about the necessities and It's in the Bag thinks about the necessities. The little things. And it's for the woman."

Bunnings Chief Customer Officer, Rachael McVitty, said Bunnings is proud to support Share the Dignity with the Christmas appeal, hosting collection boxes for bag donations at over 300 stores until Sunday 30 November.

"This year, we're putting our full support behind Share the Dignity to help them collect 150,000 bags and are encouraging anyone who is able to donate to put together a bag filled with essentials and drop it at your local Bunnings this November. If you're short on time, we've also got the option to buy a virtual bag through our website," said Rachael.

"We're excited to have some new ways to support Share the Dignity this year, selling Dignity First Aid Kits and hosting a national 'Decorate to Donate' workshop where customers will have the opportunity to use their creativity for good and decorate a tote bag to use for their donation."

To learn more about the campaign and how Australians can show their support for women and girls facing homelessness, domestic violence or poverty, visit the [It's in the Bag](#) website.

Australian women sharing their story:

This year, 5 women who have previously received an It's in the Bag donation have bravely shared their experience.

Gemma

"When you leave, you think about your children at that time and it's all about them and their safety and you don't think about yourself."

For Gemma, leaving meant prioritising her children's needs over her own and only packing what they needed to get to the next place. When opening her bag, Gemma was overwhelmed that she had toiletries and necessities that she couldn't afford - a small reminder that she deserved happiness and love.

[Watch Gemma's story here.](#)

Jaklyn

When Jaklyn received an It's in the Bag donation, it was a simple but restorative gesture. She'd spent Christmas alone and terrified having fled domestic violence with nothing, feeling shameful and undeserving of anything - even a gift. The bag she received allowed her to feel clean and valued again and helped her regain a sense of self-worth. It showed her that someone else cared and that she was worthy of love.

"That was really important to me, to finally have something for myself. To hold onto products that were mine and for me. Because I hadn't had that in a very long time."

[Watch Jaklyn's story here.](#)

Essie

When Essie fled DV, she was isolated, and her funds had been cut off completely by her perpetrator. She was starting a court process and needed to find accommodation for her and her 11-month-old daughter, so receiving an It's in the Bag meant there was one less thing to stress over. Essie had received the gift of essentials and hope.

"When you're in such a desperate situation, it's so hard to ask for help...To the person who packed my bag, thank you so much. It really has changed my life."

[Watch Essie's story here.](#)

Amy (**pseudonym used for safety*)

"I didn't wash my own hair for 2.5 years. If I had gotten into the shower without telling him or tried to wash my own hair, he would break through the ensuite locked door and rip the shower screens off. It got to the point where I was too scared to not tell him," Amy recalls.

"The impact that he had on me and my daughter mentally and emotionally - you can't reverse that... The bag restores your faith in humanity... your dignity and self-worth."

For more recipient stories please [visit Share the Dignity's YouTube.](#)

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Coverage Opportunities:

- **Interviews** with Share the Dignity Founder, Rochelle Courtenay, charity partners, previous bag recipients (on request), Bunnings Chief Customer Officer Rachael McVitty and It's in the Bag Ambassador Yvie Jones
- **Case studies** from women and girls whose lives have been changed by the campaign.

- **Bunnings National 'Decorate to Donate' Adult D.I.Y. workshop (Thurs 13 Nov)** decorating a tote bag for a Share the Dignity donation, more details here: [National Community Support - Bunnings Australia](#)

About [Share the Dignity](#)

Share the Dignity was founded in 2015 when founder Rochelle Courtenay first learnt of homeless women going without basic period products during their menstrual cycle. For Rochelle, the question was not, "why is no one doing anything?" but rather, "what's stopping me from doing something?" Since then, Share the Dignity has donated >5 million packets of period products and >1,000,000 It's in the Bag donations to people who menstruate.

Visit the [Share the Dignity website](#) to learn more about It's in the Bag and their other campaigns in their fight to end period poverty.

About the [Bloody Big Survey](#)

The 2024 Bloody Big Survey was conducted from 1 March to 31 May 2024, with a total of 153,620 responses, an increase of almost 30,000 participants from our first survey in 2021. It is the first of its kind and largest body of research on period poverty in the world, sparking significant conversations. The Report was prepared by Dr Jane Connory from Swinburne University, with data support from Ashish Chopra and WhyHive, in conjunction with Share the Dignity.

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