

Where to go when you're alone for Christmas

There's no reason to be alone on Christmas thanks to the kind hearted Aussies who are putting on events across the country.



They say it's the most wonderful time of the year, but for many, Christmas is a time they'd rather come and go quickly.

Thousands of Australians and expats who call our shores home won't have family to spend the holidays with.

You might be happily single, have just moved to a new city far from home or have sadly lost a cherished family member this year, or simply find it hard to connect with the family you have.

Regardless, no one should be alone for Christmas if they do not wish to be.

Fortunately hundreds of kind hearted people and community groups agree that this shouldn't be the case, and are opening up their doors to offer food and celebrations to complete strangers.

Attending an Orphan Christmas isn't something to be ashamed of, in fact you may even find you're 'adopted' into a new family or friend group who you're able to enjoy more holidays with in future.

It will certainly connect you with people in your community who are in similar circumstances.

So if you find yourself alone this Christmas, here's where to find the 'orphan' gatherings happening nearby.

It's time to say less 'bah-humbugs' and more 'hello neighbours'.

All events are held on Christmas Day unless stated otherwise.

NSW

PARRAMATTA MISSION

Christmas Day Lunch

11am-2pm

119 Macquarie St Parramatta

Western Sydney's largest community support group is hosting Australia's biggest Christmas Day lunch on December 25 with 600 Australians expected to attend.

70 volunteers are also giving up their time to make this day extra special for those who need it most.



“We would like to create a space for people to come together and share a meal — those who may be alone or isolated, or who are part of our Parramatta Mission community,” a Mission spokeswoman said.

The Mission is also asking for a \$25 donation from community members to help make the lunch extra special.

“The average Australian will spend \$25 a head on Christmas lunch this year. That’s enough to buy someone who is homeless five home-cooked meals,” the spokeswoman said.

“Shouldn’t everyone have enough to eat this Christmas?”

LENTIL AS ANYTHING

Christmas Day Buffet

391 King St, Newtown

12pm-7pm

The kind-hearted chef’s at Lentil’s Sydney and Melbourne locations offer delicious food with ‘pay what you can afford’ pricing.

“If people can’t afford anything, they can volunteer for their meal, and if they have extra financial means, they can pay it forward for the next person.”

Restaurant Manager Nicole Khoury said.

Lentil's are open 365 days a year so you can enjoy their food any day. Their fully vegan menu changes twice a day and are cooked by chef's who hail from all over the world.

On Christmas guests are invited to come for the whole day or spend an hour or two.

“Many people in our community are disconnected from family, for various reasons, so this is where many people gather as a family,” Ms Khoury said. “Our food is always vegan for it an inclusive diet — it doesn't discriminate against religion, philosophy on animal welfare or dietary requirements. All welcome!”

SYDNEY BY KAYAK

5am-7am

Lavender Bay boat ramp

These keen Sydney kayakers can help you to kick off Christmas with a magical sunrise paddle.

Organiser Laura says paddlers will grab a coffee and head out to the harbour for the spectacular wake up.

“We paddle past Luna park and under the bridge, sitting across the water from the Opera House to enjoy the sun hitting the horizon,” she said.

“The beauty of doing this on Christmas morning will be just how quiet the harbour will be. The ferries don't start until we're back onshore and most commuters will be at home with their families, so we'll literally have the entire harbour to ourselves.



Laura has been taking guests out for a paddle on Christmas for the last five years.

The cost is \$175 per person but it's sure to be a morning to remember.

Price includes all equipment and qualified instructor as well as a coffee.

COFFS HARBOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE

Orphan's Christmas Luncheon

North Coast Regional Botanical Gardens

11am-2.30pm

For the last ten years the event has been hosted at the gardens on Christmas Day. The tradition continues in 2018 thanks to Deb Leaney, Ange Anderson and Alena Sproule.

This year up to 250 people are forecast to attend from the elderly without family, the homeless, overseas visitors, singles and more. All are welcome.

“The Team goal is to make everybody feel part of the Community spirit to enjoy Christmas Festivities in a warm supportive Community environment so nobody is isolated or alone on Christmas Day,” Debbie Leaney said.

Guest need to register at Coffs Harbour Neighbourhood Centre (Coffs Community Village) or via email orphansxmas2018@gmail.com or mobile 0476 198 243.



MANLY WHARF HOTEL

Orphans Christmas Eve

(December 24 event)

12-pm onwards.

Manly Wharf Hotel brings back its Orphan's Christmas lunch and dinner for those away from home.

Expect the traditional Australian Christmas meal with glazed ham, baked potatoes and more, paired perfectly with a beer or glass of house wine.

Soak up Australia's holiday spirit with a feast set right on the jetty wharf before kicking on into the evening with DJs Robbie Rommers and James Jensen spinning tunes till late.

Note the Manly Wharf Hotel won't be open Christmas Day.



SYDNEY SOCIALITES

Expats and Orphans Christmas

1pm-7pm

Sydney CBD

For the fourth year in a row Sydney Socialites have teamed up to host a picnic for travellers with nowhere to go on Christmas Day.

About 100 people from across the globe attend each year and it's a great way to mix with other cultures and make some new friends.

The picnic will include members from the world's largest expat and travellers groups such as InterNations and CouchSurfing.



SIDELINES SPORTS GRILL

8/12 Karalta Rd

Erina

12pm-3pm

Sidelines has teamed up with East Gostford Football Club to offer free food and drinks who anyone who is alone on Christmas.

“To us its not charity its about coming together and giving back to the Central Coast community,” Troy from Sidelines said.

Going by the reaction to their announcement, this is sure to be a packed out event.

For more info call (02) 4365 1071.

THE WINERY

Surry Hills

The Winery has a capacity of 90, offering food and drink for Christmas Orphans. We’re told it’s sold out but onya Winery for hosting something and spreading the cheer with your community.

Issy said she didn’t expect the event to sell out so quickly. “I have found that a lot of people will be by themselves this year,” she said.



VIC
FEDERATION SQUARE
Melbourne CBD

All day

There's plenty happening at Federation Square on Christmas Day, just wander into Melbourne city and take a look. From the 9am breakfast to an all day movie marathon, head on down and get into the spirit in the Square.



LIDO ROOFTOP CINEMA

Movie night

Glenferrie Rd, Hawthorn

9pm-11.30pm

It ain't Christmas without a Christmas movie and plenty of cinemas will be screening the favourites on Dec. 25. One of them is Lido. So if you feel like popcorn and a frozen coke for Christmas here's your chance.

NEWCOMERS NETWORK

Christmas Picnic Lunch

Queen Victoria Gardens

99 St Kilda Rd

The Network has held this event since 2006 and boy has it grown. This year they're expecting up to 200 people — citizens or not, young and old, singles or married and of any faith.

“Even if you do not normally celebrate this religious occasion, it is still nice to have ‘something to do’ on Christmas Day as plenty of people at work will ask you ‘what are you doing for Christmas?’”



LENTIL AS ANYTHING

Christmas Day Buffet

1/3 St Heliers St, Abbotsford

562 High St, Thornbury

41 Blessington St, St. Kilda

12pm-7pm

The kind-hearted chef's at Lentil's Sydney and Melbourne locations offer delicious food with 'pay what you can afford' pricing.

In Melbourne on Christmas Day the vegan eatery is offering a full buffet for a 'pay what you can afford' pricing at three different locations across the city.

Guests can come for an hour or stay the whole day if they want to.

The food is delicious and it's a great excuse to meet new people and try cuisine from across the world on December 25.



LUCKY COQ

179 Chapel St, Melbourne

Christmas Eve 4pm-3am

If you fancy bringing in Christmas with a party head down for some cheer here. The bar is offering \$2 pizzas jam packed with traditional Christmas foods like turkey, cranberry, sage and cheese.

The organisers say the event is aimed at backpackers who are away from family but anyone flying solo is welcome.



SCOTTISH ORPHANS

Basement Bar, Bendigo

17 View Point, Bendigo

6pm-1am

If you're Scottish and alone on Christmas this is the place for you.

The bar will be offering Scottish craft beer and custom cocktails to take people's minds of what can be a very difficult time.



FITZROY BEER GARDEN

243 Gertrude St, Fitzroy

Christmas Eve from 4pm-1am

Can't make it home for the holidays? Tyson from FBG says join their family for one hell of a party instead.

They'll be offering Christmas drinks including a Jack Daniels Fire Eggnog and music playing all night. The event is free to come along and have a blast.

QLD

ROSHNI INDIAN

Christmas Day Lunch

164 Victoria St, Mackay

12pm-2pm

Raj, Jess and the Roshni team are inviting the Mackay community to join them for lunch on Christmas and it sounds delightful (note the restaurant will not be open otherwise on this day).

"Its Christmas time again and all of us at Roshni want to spread our philosophy of happiness and light with our Mackay community. The last two years we opened up our restaurant and our hearts to people in the community who are a little less fortunate, without family or just doing it tough," Raj wrote.

“Let myself, Jess and our family cook for you. We will be serving the traditional ham, prawns, salad and desserts, as well as our most popular curries and rice. To us this is not charity, it’s about coming together and giving back to our community that has given us so much; making sure no one is alone or goes hungry on Christmas Day.”

The family plan to cook for about 300 people on the day.



SUNSHINE COAST COMMUNITY

Orphan Christmas BBQ

Mooloolaba Beach

From 7am

Hosted by Taz Calandrucchio, the Mooloolaba community is having a brekkie barbie and a few games of beach volleyball.

A true Aussie Christmas is spent on the beach right?



SA

HADES HULA HOUSE

A very Hades Christmas

52 Semaphore Rd, Semaphore

This beach suburb tiki bar is hosting a Christmas to remember.

They're approaching their orphan Christmas with dark humour and for \$5 you can be apart of it.



WA

MISSION AUSTRALIA

Christmas Lunch in the Park

Wellington Square, East Perth

11.30am-2pm

For 43 years Mission has held a massive Christmas lunch in Perth. This year they're expecting more than 1200 people to attend — that's a lot of people who won't be alone on Christmas thanks to them.

More than 250 volunteers are also giving their time and effort to help make the lunch special.

They're encouraging people to help out by donating a plate to the cause.



STAND-UP PADDLEBOARDING

Orphan's Christmas paddle

10am-6pm

Garvey Park, Perth

If you're keen to be active and on the water on Christmas Day, join this group for a paddleboard.

For \$30 can join in the fun on the water.

Kids and dogs welcome