

For immediate use

Thursday, 2 April, 2020

ORANGE SKY RE-LAUNCHES SERVICES IN QUEENSLAND TO HELP HOMELESS THROUGH COVID-19

Orange Sky has launched a campaign today focused on 'continuing connection' during COVID-19, which coincides with the relaunch of its services in Queensland.

The campaign will aim to ensure the community's most vulnerable are not forgotten during - and after - the COVID-19 outbreak.

There are more than 116,000 Australians experiencing homelessness, and now more than ever, people doing it tough need connection and support from the community.

Orange Sky is trialing a new community response service model today, with increased health and safety measures, after recently pausing its free laundry and shower service across Australia and New Zealand on Monday, 23 March.

Orange Sky Co-Founder Nic Marchesi said he knew it wouldn't be long before the organisation was back on the street in all locations supporting people doing it tough.

"Innovation is in our DNA at Orange Sky and our team is committed to finding new ways to keep the most vulnerable people in our community connected over this time," he said.

"We acknowledge that every hour of every day might look different in this COVID-19 world, and the way we operate our service will continue to evolve, but what remains the same is the reason *why* we do it. Our mission is to *positively connect communities* and we will continue to work as hard as we can to find ways to support our friends during this crisis.

"We know that so many people are struggling at the moment, but we also know our friends (people experiencing homelessness) are doing it tougher than most.

"That's why we've launched our #continueconnection campaign, because we can't let the conversation stop. We know that the need for our service will continue to grow - and we want to be there on the other side with an orange van and six orange chairs ready to support anyone who needs it. Our team is working hard to find innovative and safe ways to deliver our service during this time, so we're asking the community to share how they're keeping the conversation going through the hashtag #continueconnection."

Over the past five years, Orange Sky has supported Australians doing it tough with more than 1.2 million kilograms of laundry, 12,700 warm showers and 207,000 hours of connection.

Nic said the organisation would need support from the community to ensure they can help those who need it, both during the pandemic and when it's over. This includes support financially, as well as through sharing stories online of how people are continuing to connect with their community.

"We know there are going to be more Australians who are doing it tough as a result of COVID-19, and more of a need for access to free laundry, warm showers and genuine connection," he said.



— Australia —

“In times like this, it's essential we support one another and show compassion to those who need it most. We are always humbled and amazed by the passion of the community to support our friends on the street.

“We are one community experiencing the impact of COVID-19 together and we need your support to keep the conversation going.”

Orange Sky is partnering with Valley Hearts in Brisbane to trial its first shift today with new health and safety requirements, since pausing services last week.

Valley Hearts Chaplain Rata Bowerman said she was thrilled that Orange Sky was back supporting people doing it tough.

“Valley Hearts and Orange Sky have partnered together to support the community for a few years now. It's a privilege to be out there working alongside Orange Sky during this difficult time and I think it will bring a sense of hope to people who are doing it tough.”

Ros from Brisbane, who uses Orange Sky's services, said this week that she was concerned about those people who are sleeping rough during this tough time.

“I am hand washing now and many people sleeping near me just go without. The people sleeping in the city are going to struggle as you cannot live without these services for long. People are avoiding each other and there is a lot of disconnection, I feel like there is going to be a lot of mental health problems really soon,” Ros said.

Nic said Orange Sky was committed to supporting those who are doing it tough and would be providing daily updates to the community.

“We will be keeping everyone informed on the progress we're making, the challenges we are coming up against, and how we're innovating and working to continue connection and support for our community. We don't have all the answers right now, but we're inviting people to come on the journey with us as we look to support our friends in need.”

Tune in to Orange Sky Australia's Facebook page on Thursday, 2 April at 7pm

AEST: www.facebook.com/OrangeSkyAU

Any developments to Orange Sky's campaign, shift delivery and locations can be found here -

<https://orangesky.org.au/continue-connection/>

-Ends-

For media information please contact Megan Groundwater at Orange Sky: megan@orangesky.org.au

0447 816 257

Media spokesperson:

Nic Marchesi, Orange Sky Co-Founder



— Australia —

One Community Campaign Page on COVID-19:

<https://orangesky.org.au/continue-connection/>

Imagery and vision available:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/a0evh8vy4w9p0eq/AACi1eu8T6yMDqr5gNSDsQyZa?dl=0>

About Orange Sky:

Orange Sky is a non-profit organisation providing free mobile laundry and shower services to people doing it tough. Established in 2014 by two best mates, Nic Marchesi and Lucas Patchett, Orange Sky began as an idea to help some of the 116,000 people experiencing homelessness across Australia. Nic and Lucas won Young Australian of the Year for their efforts to support the community in 2016.

Fast forward five years and Orange Sky now has 32 vans operating across every state and territory in Australia, providing 10,000kg of laundry and 1,500 hours of conversation a week to people in need.

To date Orange Sky has:

- Completed more than 1.2 million kilograms of washing;
- Provided more than 12,700 warm showers; and
- Facilitated over 207,000 hours of genuine and non-judgemental conversation on our six orange chairs.

For more information please see Orange Sky on:

- Website - www.orangesky.org.au
- Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/OrangeSkyAU>
- Instagram - <https://www.instagram.com/orangeskyau>
- Twitter - <https://twitter.com/OrangeSkyAU>