



Media Release

Date: Tuesday, 19 May 2020

Orange Sky launches world's first laundry pod to support homeless

Orange Sky is launching a new service that will continue to support people experiencing homelessness with free laundry and genuine connections.

The Orange Sky laundry pod, which houses three washers, three dryers and six orange chairs, will launch next week in Mackay with the support of Mayor Greg Williamson and Orange Sky volunteers.

The pods can be transported to locations across Australia where a van might not be viable/possible.

The 2016 Census indicates there are more than 400 people experiencing homelessness in Mackay and 116 000 across Australia. It is predicted that this figure will increase due to the effects of COVID-19 all over the country.

This new innovative laundry pod will increase Orange Sky's impact in new locations and support the community's most vulnerable with free laundry and, most importantly, genuine and non-judgemental conversations.

Orange Sky is piloting the laundry pods in Mackay, Queensland where a mobile van has been in operation since October 2017. In that time, volunteers have provided people doing it tough with around 1,200 loads of washing and 3,300 hours of genuine and non-judgemental conversation.

Orange Sky Co-Founder Nic Marchesi said he was excited about the opportunity to help even more people in Mackay and pilot the pod system to scale across other areas of need".

"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 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.

"There has never been a more important time to launch our new laundry pods. We know that the need for our service will continue to grow - and we want to be in as many locations as possible to provide free laundry and a place for genuine conversation. Our volunteer team in Mackay have done an incredible job so far and we are excited to see what will be possible with this new initiative.'

Mackay Mayor Greg Williamson has been a big supporter of Orange Sky since the launch of a laundry and shower van in 2017. The laundry pod pilot would not have been possible without support from the local council and Mackay's community of passionate volunteers.

"I understand this innovation from Orange Sky is being launched here in our district and that is something we welcome and are proud to support. Orange Sky is a fantastic organisation that truly delivers a community solution to the members of the community most in need."



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Orange Sky Volunteer Patrick 'PJ' Wells believes that Orange Sky is about much more than washing clothes, it's the connection to people experiencing homelessness that really contributes to making an impact on people's lives.

"I am extremely proud to be an Orange Sky volunteer. I have never before felt so much heart, such gratification knowing that you are helping someone. I feel very strongly that it's me that should be thanking Orange Sky. Volunteering allows me to contribute in such a powerful and meaningful way. I'm honoured to be a part of this exciting change and looking forward to my next life-changing conversation with one our friends in Mackay."

The Pods are an Orange Sky funded service with support from the Jelley Family Foundation.

Tune in to Orange Sky Australia's Facebook page on Tuesday, 19 May at 6:30pm AEST for the official launch: www.facebook.com/OrangeSkyAU

-Ends-



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Information

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Orange Sky website: orangesky.org.au

Imagery and vision available: Laundry pod phot ppos and video (Orange Sky general overlay)

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 1.4 million kgs of laundry and 240,000 hours of conversation a week to people in need.

To date Orange Sky has:

- Completed more than 1.4 million kilograms of washing;
- Provided more than 14,000 warm showers; and
- Facilitated over 240,000 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>