

What does Orange Sky do?

Orange Sky provides a free mobile laundry and shower service for people experiencing homelessness. Each week, all over Australia, thousands of volunteers put other parts of their life aside for a few hours to positively connect with our friends on the street through genuine and non-judgemental conversation. We always partner with service providers such as food vans or drop-in centres, and make sure that we set up at locations where our friends feel most comfortable. Our mission is to positively connect communities through laundry, showers and conversation.

What obstacles did Nic and Lucas come up against when they first started Orange Sky?

Nic and Lucas came up against a lot of challenges when they first decided to start Orange Sky. The boys were only 19 when they found themselves in front of one of the Australia's biggest laundry suppliers and asked for "two washing machines and two dryers" to chuck in the back of their old van. To their surprise, the company said yes - but it wasn't all smooth sailing from here. They broke 3 washing machines before finally getting right a third time. Although the boys came up against a number of obstacles and personal disappointments, they didn't let this stop them. With a willingness to give things a crack and never take no for an answer, the boys continued to grow Orange Sky while balancing full-time work (Nic) and university studies (Lucas). Today, we have a team of 30 staff and over 1,000 volunteers who are helping to connect people all over Australia. We face challenges every day, but with a strong focus on our mission to positively connect communities, we are able to overcome these obstacles and help our friends in need.

Is Orange Sky religiously or politically affiliated?

Orange Sky is not religiously or politically affiliated. Our volunteers spend time on shift connecting with our friends on the street through genuine and non-judgemental conversation, and our mission is to Positively Connect Communities through a free mobile laundry and shower service.

Where do you operate?

When we roll out a van in a new location, we always connect with local service providers and make sure we set up in areas where our friends feel most comfortable. You can check our shift locations at:

www.orangesky.org.au/locations.

Where does the name 'Orange Sky' come from?

The song, Orange Sky by Alexi Murdoch was a huge inspiration for our co-founders, Nic and Lucas, when they first decided to build a mobile laundry van. The entire message of the song is about 'helping out your brothers and sisters', which is important part of what we do at Orange Sky every day around Australia.

What will people do while their clothes are being washed?

In the time that it takes to wash and dry a friend's clothes (about one hour), there's not a lot to do but sit down and have a chat. It's an opportunity for our volunteers and friends to have a genuine and non-judgemental conversation, and helps to provide a person doing it tough with a positive connection back to their community.

What will people wear while their clothes are being washed?

A lot of people think that our friends only have the one set of clothes, but this normally isn't the case. Only about X percent of people experiencing homelessness actually live on the street, so many of our friends bring things like bed sheets, towels and blankets to wash in our machines.

orangesky.org.au

Where does the power and water come from?

We are able to plug into power and water at a lot of our shift locations, but if this is not an option, it doesn't stop us from being able to operate. All of our vans have on board water tanks and generators, which means we are able to operate anywhere in Australia without needing access to power or water. The water tanks in our laundry and hybrid vans are 270 litres, which is about six loads of laundry, while our shower vans have 500 litre tanks, allowing for 15-20 showers. Before every shift, we fill up our clean water tanks, and after shift, we empty the grey water directly into a sewer point.

Do you need to put detergent in the machines?

All of our vans have self-dosing laundry detergent pumps, which automatically put detergent into each load of washing. All that our volunteers do is put the washing in the machine and press go!

What can we do to help?

The biggest impact you can have is by starting a conversation - whether it's with a friend from school, your family, or a person you see who might be doing it tough. You can also hop on to our Facebook page and read some of the stories of our friends and volunteers. The most important thing to know is that you don't need a bright orange van or a washing machine to make a difference - you can help to positively connect your community by remembering the power of a simple conversation.

What does the future hold for Orange Sky?

Orange Sky Australia is in the process of setting up a charity in New Zealand and the USA. The exact timeline for this is still uncertain, but keep an eye on our social media for more details as things progress! We can't wait to start connecting people all over the world through free laundry and conversation.