



Orange Sky

Nic Marchesi and Lucas Patchett

An interview with Maggie Hamilton

The impulse for Orange Sky, a free mobile laundry service for homeless people, started early for Nic Marchesi and Lucas Patchett, when they volunteered to help feed the homeless from a high school van.



The support and trust of our community has surprised us.

"A few years after we graduated from school, we hatched the idea to throw two washing machines and two dryers in the back of an old van with a plan to visit parks around Brisbane to offer free laundry services to those in need," tells Nic, a former a camera operator and editor for the ABC and Seven Network.

Launching in October 2019, the mobile laundry idea required a little finessing. "Sudsy - our beat-up old van - broke down the first two mornings in Brisbane's Wickham Park," says Nic recalling how heartened they were by their new friend Jordan who, though doing it tough, stuck with them and their new mobile laundry.

"Jordan trusted two twenty-year-old boys with a crazy idea to wash his only possessions ... his belief in us became our motivation to fix the van each time. On the third morning, we successfully washed and dried Jordan's clothes and I can't explain how truly happy that made us."

"Inspired by the 1966 Bryan MacLean song Orange Skies, the essence of Orange Sky is that everyone is equal under an orange sky." Orange Sky now operates at 25 locations nationwide with over 3,000 volunteers.



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"Each morning, many of us are lucky enough to put on a fresh set of clean clothes. Being able to support people that don't have access to that feeling was what inspired us!

Orange Sky isn't about solving the issue of homelessness or saving people, it's about creating a safe, positive and supportive environment for people who are too often ignored, or who feel disconnected."

After being jointly awarded Young Australian of the Year 2016, Nic and Lucas, and their team, continue to work on the Orange Sky offerings.

"Since building Sudsy, our first van, innovation has been at the core of Orange Sky's DNA," Nic reflects.

"Our next goal is to triple our impact and help 40,000 people doing it tough by 2025. To achieve this, we are discovering new ways to improve and scale our services to help more people. Laundry access in remote Australia can be challenging and costly, therefore, we focused on tripling our remote services.

Going forward

"Orange Sky needs to continue to build its capacity to help more people, and one of our main opportunities is to build sustainable long-term partnerships with the business and philanthropic sectors," Nic explains.

From vehicle upgrades, inventing new asset types, improving our sustainability and introducing services to new areas, we are always working towards something. There is never a dull moment at Orange Sky!

Further details: www.orangesky.org.au

Creative Team - Heart of Australia (26 October):
Anatole Kononewsky, Maggie Hamilton, Glen Barry,
Chris Frost, Chris Hooper, Tiriki Onus, Bronny Lane



"We don't use: 'customers' or 'patrons', when addressing those using our services, they're just friends like you and I."

