



THE BIG ISSUE AUSTRALIA

The Big Issue Australia is an independent organisation that develops and operates a number of social enterprises providing opportunities for homeless and marginalised people to positively change their lives.

We are an agent for social change, using entrepreneurial practices and sound business strategy to promote social inclusion and alleviate poverty in Australia. Our innovative programs and services focus on helping people who are socially disadvantaged, and may otherwise slip through the cracks, to build confidence and the capacity to help themselves.

This is achieved by using various mechanisms to connect people with the community, such as the Street Magazine Enterprise, the Community Street Soccer Program (Street Soccer), the Women's Subscription Enterprise and the Big Issue Classroom.

The people who participate in our programs come from a range of backgrounds including mental illness, homelessness, long-term unemployment, intellectual and physical disability, drug and alcohol dependency, family breakdown and others suffering from social isolation, such as refugees.

The Big Issue Australia's is proudly non-judgemental and inclusive, treating all people with dignity and respect, and promoting independence and self-reliance.

The Big Issue Australia's Solutions – helping people help themselves

The Big Issue Street Magazine Enterprise

The Street Magazine Enterprise uses the publishing model to deliver an independent, sustainable and self-funded business solution to homelessness. By selling The Big Issue magazine each fortnight, homeless, marginalised and disadvantaged people have the opportunity to earn an income and be actively included in society.

Authorised vendors purchase copies of The Big Issue for \$2.50 and sell it on the streets for \$5.00, keeping the difference. Around 3,500 homeless, marginalised and disadvantaged people across Australia have been recruited, trained and supported by The Big Issue Street Magazine Enterprise, more than 6 million magazines have been sold, with \$13.2 million going into the pockets of Australia's homeless and unemployed.

Recent research conducted by RMCG Consultants for Business, Communities and Environment, showed that the Street Magazine Enterprise is estimated to save society \$20,000 per vendor per year from a reduction in the level of demand for a range of social services such as hospitals, welfare support, emergency services and correctional facilities. With approximately 450 vendors working across Australia, this equates to a total annual economic benefit of \$9 million. Taking into account the total annual operating cost: *Every \$1 invested in The Big Issue Street Magazine Enterprise is generating benefits to society of \$4.50.*

The Big Issue Classroom

The Big Issue Classroom is a social business run by The Big Issue Australia that provides a range of different educational workshops delivered at primary, secondary and tertiary level.

An Introduction to Homelessness is a one hour workshop that helps students explore issues around homelessness and social justice inequalities in Australian society and practical ways of addressing them. An engaging, interactive and honest workshop, the session is facilitated by a specialist presenter, featuring a personal account from a guest speaker who has experienced homelessness firsthand. Students have the opportunity to actively participate in the session which is delivered in an easy-to-understand format that students can relate to.

The content of this workshop varies slightly, depending on the age group of the students taking part.

An Introduction to Homelessness is also offered in an online format for students from regional areas.

Resource Kits are also provided to teachers participating in the workshops, to extend the learning back into the classroom after the session is finished.



Sessions are \$290+ GST.

The Women's Subscription Enterprise

The Women's Subscription Enterprise is a new social enterprise by The Big Issue Australia that provides employment, training and pathways opportunities for disadvantaged women.

Through the sale of subscriptions to The Big Issue magazine homeless and disadvantaged women are employed to work as Dispatch Assistants, sorting, collating and inserting magazines for distribution to subscribers every fortnight. As well as paid employment, the women will also receive ongoing training and pathways opportunities, and the chance to develop their skills in a safe, secure and rewarding environment.

Subscriptions will be sold commercially, so there is no pressure on the women to make sales and all revenue is directed into the pockets of disadvantaged women, through the provision of wages, training, mentoring and support.

For every 100 subscriptions sold, the Enterprise can employ one woman.

The Big Issue Community Street Soccer Program

The Community Street Soccer Program, known as Street Soccer, uses the power of sport to promote social inclusion and personal change for homeless, marginalised and disadvantaged people. It changes lives and creates healthier communities across Australia.

Street Soccer involves males and females of varying ages and abilities, getting together once a week for soccer training and matches. Permanent pitches, equipment and a dedicated soccer coach are provided at each location. Support staff also work closely with players, linking them to services that address their individual issues and needs.

The Big Issue Australia successfully hosted over 50 nations that participated in the Melbourne 2008 Homeless World Cup. Held at Melbourne's Federation Square and Birrarung Marr from 1- 7 December, it was one of the largest community events ever staged in Australia. Over 100,000 spectators, 900 volunteers and 30,000 school children embraced the event and experienced first-hand the power of sport to connect people, break down prejudices and change the world.

In 2011 The Big Issue Australia successfully staged the Street Football Festival at Darling Harbour, Sydney. Staged on a spectacular floating pitch in Cockle Bay, the event brought together 56 marginalised Australians for nine days of football action from May 28, culminating in the National Street Soccer Championships. The event also incorporated a Corporate Cup and agency and junior teams. The Street Football Festival is set to run at Darling Harbour for the next four years.

Ongoing support and activities

Vendor support staff in each state, along with the Street Soccer coaches and coordinators, work closely with vendors and players, linking them to services that address their individual issues and needs. Each state provides additional activities, for example creative writing workshops, fortnightly Vendor BBQs or Street Soccer Best and Fairest functions, that extend the participants' growth, confidence and inclusion with the wider community.

Why do our programs work?

Initiatives of The Big Issue Australia put the person at the centre of the solution, providing them with the support and tools necessary to help themselves make positive change. The programs we operate also provide mutual benefit to both the vendor/participants as well as the community.

Programs help participants by:

- Providing opportunities to help themselves
- Boosting self-esteem and confidence
- Preventing social isolation with the opportunity to make friends in a positive environment

- Promoting positive changes such as improved housing situation, finding employment, addressing drug and alcohol abuse, seeking help for mental illness or reconnecting with family.
- Improving mental health and well being
- Provides a real sense of purpose and belonging
- Promoting discipline
- Earning an immediate income where they may have no other employment option (Street Magazine Enterprise)
- Improved health and fitness (Street Soccer)

Programs help the community by:

- Breaking down stereotypes of homeless and marginalised people
- Improving community health and well-being
- Diverting at-risk people from hospitals, courts, emergency services and correctional facilities, therefore providing a saving for taxpayers

Homelessness in Australia

Background

- 105,000 homeless people every night in Australia
- Growing rate of poverty and homelessness

• **Definition of Homelessness**

The most commonly accepted definition of homelessness includes three categories in recognition of the diversity of homelessness.ⁱ

- **Primary homelessness** is experienced by people without conventional accommodation (for example, sleeping rough or in improvised dwellings)
- **Secondary homelessness** is experienced by people who frequently move from one temporary shelter to another (for example, emergency accommodation, youth refuges, "couch surfing")
- **Tertiary homelessness** is experienced by people staying in accommodation that falls below minimum community standards (for example, boarding housing and caravan parks).

• **Causes of Homelessness**

- Poverty
- Unemployment
- Domestic violence
- Family breakdown
- Poor physical health and mental illness
- Sexual assault
- Drug and alcohol addiction
- Social isolation
- Refugee status
- Financial difficulties
- Inferior housing

• **The Impact of Homelessness**

Homelessness means that every day almost one in every 200 Australians lives without their most fundamental human rights.ⁱⁱ

By forcing people away from their family, friends and community, homelessness:

- Results in social and economic costs to individuals, families, communities and our nation
- Makes it difficult to maintain school or further study
- Leaves people vulnerable to long-term unemployment and chronic ill-health
- Often excludes people from participation in the social, recreational, cultural and economic life of our communities

Homelessness impacts on an individual's right to:ⁱⁱⁱ

- Health
- Safety
- Privacy

- Education
 - Work
 - Non-discrimination
 - Social security
 - To vote
 - Freedom of movement and freedom of association
 - Freedom of expression
 - Freedom from cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment
- **Costs on Society**

Homeless people also make greater demands on a wide range of services than do members of the general community. A study by the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI) estimates these additional costs at between \$10,000 to \$40,000 per homeless person per year.

It is estimated that the long-term economic cost to the community of not assisting the 50,000 children who pass through specialist homelessness services each year is close to \$1 billion per annum.^{iv}

- **Facts and Figures**

In 2008 The Road Home (White Paper), the Australian Government noted that:

- Every night around 105,000 people are homeless. On the night of the 2006 Census, those homeless were not all sleeping rough:
 - 45% were staying temporarily with family and friends
 - 21% were living in boarding houses and other temporary accommodation
 - 18% were sleeping rough on the streets
 - 16% found a bed in our homeless service system
- For people who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness, finding a job or other opportunities to participate in the community is critical
- In a country as prosperous as Australia, no one should be homeless
- Reducing homelessness is everyone's responsibility. Australia's efforts to reduce homelessness have to be urgent, as well as sustained

Some Frequently Asked Questions

Who organises and funds The Big Issue Australia?

The Big Issue Australia is a viable and sustainable organisation which uses a combination of market-based ventures, corporate sponsorship, government funding and other fundraising to ensure its continuation and growth into the future.

Why is the money best spent in this way?

The Big Issue focuses on solutions that fix the causes of homelessness (eg: domestic and family violence, social isolation, drug and alcohol dependency, unemployment) rather than the outcomes, such as a lack of housing. In many cases people who participate in our programs have given up on counselling and traditional support systems. They are given the opportunity to get fit or earn an income, make new friends, seek support and advice and make positive change in their lives.

Why is The Big Issue different?

The Big Issue Australia is an independent, not-for-profit organisation with Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) status. What sets us apart from charities is that through the Street Magazine Enterprise we provide a product (The Big Issue magazine) that the public can buy and it's through these sales (and other business related ventures) that we are able to operate.

The Big Issue Street Magazine Enterprise is a social enterprise and does not rely on donations or government funding. It is an independent, viable, sustainable and self-funded business.

How can I get involved?

- *Buy The Big Issue* – for just \$5 you can enjoy a great read and know that half the cover price is going straight into the pocket of your local vendor.
- *Buy a subscription to The Big Issue* – for just \$155 your organisation can enjoy a great read and help employ homeless and marginalised women across Australia.
- *Become a partner* – help us deliver our programs and support homeless and marginalised people nationwide.
- *Get involved at work* – order a subscription for your workplace or include us in your Workplace Giving Program.
- *Get involved at school* – experience The Big Issue Classroom where students learn about homelessness and discrimination in Australia, or sign up for Shoesday Tuesday (October 13, 2009)
- *Purchase a Street Soccer Experience* – an opportunity for corporate or community groups to attend a training session and experience Street Soccer in a hands on, active and inspiring way.
- *Raise funds* – help us continue to recruit and support homeless and marginalised people across Australia
- *Volunteer* – speak to us about assisting in the office or at Street Soccer events.

6. Contact

For further information and contacts in each state please visit our website www.bigissue.org.au or contact:

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