



COMMON GROUND QLD SPECIAL FEATURE

a new vision for homelessness launched

Thérèse Rein launched a pioneering new housing and homelessness organisation in South Brisbane on August 21. Common Ground Queensland is a new company with a mission to end homelessness through supportive housing. It will compliment existing services.

Supportive housing combines permanent solutions with individual support for chronically homeless people. This support moves people out of cyclical and long term homelessness.

Ms Rein said the new program would offer permanent tenancies to a range of people including those who are homeless and low income workers. "Everyone is deserving of dignity... and there is great dignity in becoming a tenant," Ms Rein said.

Federal Housing Minister Tanya Plibersek and Queensland Minister for Community Services and Housing Karen Struthers joined Thérèse Rein at the launch.

Ms Plibersek said Common Ground is a unique way of addressing chronic homelessness. "Clients move into their own new units, enter into rental agreements and pay rent," Ms Plibersek said.

"They are then supported with a range of services to help them keep their tenancies, regain stability in their lives and participate more fully in their community. Common Ground adopts a 'whole of community' approach, drawing on community, government, business and philanthropic support to reduce homelessness.

"It is an excellent example of committed organisations partnering together to reduce homelessness," she said.

Ms Struthers recalled many people at the launch were part of protests during the Brisbane Expo in 1988. Many homeless people were forcibly moved out of the area.

The minister said, twenty years on, it was encouraging to see real and lasting solutions coming back to the area. She also said having help at hand so tenants could address the issues that cause homelessness was a crucial element of Common Ground.



Federal Housing Minister Tanya Plibersek, Chair of the Common Ground Qld board Penny Tarrant, Queensland Minister for Communities & Housing Karen Struthers, Common Ground Alliance Patron Thérèse Rein.

"Common Ground is an example of delivering integrated services that deal with the complex needs of chronically homeless people," Ms Struthers said.

Minister Struthers said the Bligh Government would set up a high level steering committee to spearhead the drive.

"We need to all work together with a shared goal—to end homelessness. Nothing is more important than that," she said.

Common Ground Queensland focuses on supportive housing that identifies individual needs and barriers to permanent housing. The Common Ground model works to end long term and cyclical homelessness.

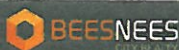
Thérèse Rein is patron of the Australian Common Ground Alliance. It includes initiatives in Queensland, Victoria, South Australia, New South Wales and Tasmania. She is a passionate advocate for innovative solutions to homelessness that promote and recognise the dignity of individuals.

congratulations to Common Ground Queensland

Your proposal's an innovative and badly needed solution and we look forward to welcoming you to the neighbourhood. We're excited!



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