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New Hope For Homeless

Thérèse Rein launches "Common Ground", a new Queensland homelessness organisation



Caption: L-R The Hon Tanya Plibersek, MP, Minister for Housing and Minister for the Status of Women; Ms Penny Tarrant, Chairperson, Common Ground Queensland; The Hon. Karen Struthers, MP, Queensland Minister for Community Services and Housing and Minister for Women; Ms Therese Rein, Patron, Australian Common Ground; Ms Karyn Walsh, Coordinator Micah Projects Inc and Chairperson of the Queensland Council of Social Services.

Thérèse Rein has launched a pioneering new housing and homelessness organisation in Brisbane, in conjunction with federal Housing Minister Tanya Plibersek and Queensland's Minister for Communities Karen Struthers.

Thérèse Rein is patron of the Australian Common Ground Alliance. It includes initiatives in Queensland, Victoria, South Australia, New South Wales and Tasmania.

Thérèse is a passionate advocate for innovative solutions to homelessness that promote and recognise the dignity of individuals.

Speaking at the launch, Ms Rein said the new program would offer permanent tenancies to a range of clients, including homeless people and low income workers.

Clients would enter into rental agreements and pay rent, or the equivalent of 30 per cent of their income.

"Everyone is deserving of dignity...and there is great dignity is becoming a tenant," Ms Rein said.

Federal Minister for Housing Tanya Plibersek, MP announced a \$40 million grant to construct a purpose-built building on a site at 16-18 Merivale Street in South Brisbane. Australian construction giant Grocon will lead a consortium of private sector companies who will build the complex at no profit.

Queensland Minister for Community Services and Housing Karen Struthers said the State would provide \$4.38 million in funding for on-going services, including 24-hour on site support for tenants, managed by West End's Micah Projects Inc.

"Aside from the on-site support, it encourages visits from other support services such as drug or alcohol counselling and mental health support," Ms Struthers 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.

On any night in inner city Brisbane 2070 people experience homelessness. This includes 288 people sleeping rough, 1325 people in boarding houses, 190 people in crisis accommodation and 267 staying with friends or family. Recent Census data indicates an alarming 60% increase in people sleeping rough in inner city Brisbane.

Common Ground Queensland will provide a solution to end homelessness for the most vulnerable and chronically homeless in Queensland. Common Ground Queensland's vision is to complement existing services by working in partnership with community, government, business and philanthropy to create permanent homes integrated with

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support for individuals and families who are homeless in Queensland.

The initiative is a response to the federal government whitepaper The Road Home: A National Approach to Reducing Homelessness.

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