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Brisbane Common Ground Evaluation: Final Report

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WORK

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Executive Summary

Context

In July 2012 Brisbane Common Ground supportive housing was opened and the first people commenced their tenancies. Brisbane Common Ground is a model of supportive housing comprising 146 units (135 studio and 11 one bedroom units) in a fourteen story building located in South Brisbane. The building also has onsite offices for both the support provider and the tenancy manager.

Brisbane Common Ground aims to assist tenants sustain housing, improve their quality of life – health, social and economic, and reduce their utilisation of acute, crisis and emergency services (Queensland Government 2012). Brisbane Common Ground has been funded to target tenants who:

- Have low to moderate incomes, with a focus on people who are working and have connection to the local area;
- Have experienced chronic homelessness (which a focus on people who have been or are currently rough sleepers) who will benefit from coordinated service delivery and 24/7 security and support.

Brisbane Common Ground is referred to as a flagship initiative under the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness (Queensland Government 2012). The model of supportive housing sits within the policy context and agenda set out in the Commonwealth Government (2008) White Paper on Homelessness: *The Road Home: A National Approach to Reducing Homelessness*. The White Paper outlined a vision for offering supported accommodation to all rough sleepers who 'need' it by 2020. Central to the policy aim is the provision of programs offering integrated support to people with high and complex needs; these include innovative housing models that offer secure housing and wrap around support (Australian Government 2008).

Brisbane Common Ground has been funded and is delivered through a unique Government-business-community partnership with the Queensland Government, Commonwealth Government, Grocon Pty Ltd, Micah Projects and Common Ground Queensland Ltd (Queensland Government 2012).

Evaluation Purpose

The purpose of the evaluation is to “examine whether the Brisbane Common Ground initiative has been successful in assisting tenants to maintain secure housing and improve health, well-being, social and economic outcomes” (Queensland Government 2012: 7). The evaluation was tasked with examining four dimensions of Brisbane Common Ground; these are:

- The implementation of the initiative and to identify key successes and areas for improvement;
- The design and performance of the building is meeting user requirements and supporting the achievement of the service's objectives;
- The effectiveness of the Brisbane Common Ground supportive housing service in improving long-term tenant outcomes and circumstances;
- The value for money of the model.

Evaluation Design

The evaluation is informed by a multi-methodological research design. The methods used included:

- (1) A literature review of peer reviewed academic as well as grey literature;
- (2) A summary of the tenancy management database;
- (3) Analysis of financial and costing documentation;
- (4) Qualitative interviews with tenants (N=27);
- (5) Qualitative interviews with a broad range of Brisbane Common Ground stakeholders (N=12)
- (6) A tenant housing and support satisfaction survey (N=120);
- (7) A two wave, 12 month longitudinal tenant outcomes survey (N=63, N=47);
- (8) Analysis of tenant service usage administrative data (N=41)

Key Findings

Formative Evaluation

- Brisbane Common Ground has been implemented as intended; that is, as a model of supportive housing consisting of secure long term housing with linked voluntary support services;
- Implementation has been enhanced by four factors, these are: stakeholder espousing a shared vision for Brisbane Common Ground; stakeholders critically translating supportive housing evidence into practice; stakeholders understanding the

complexities and opportunities for effective service delivery for the tenant cohort; establishing Brisbane Common Ground as a home for tenants.

- Clear, close and positive professional relationships between support services, housing management, and security providers have contributed to Brisbane Common Ground's effectiveness;
- Brisbane Common Ground has purposefully targeted (50% of tenants) people with chronic experiences of homelessness, who require support;
- Brisbane Common Ground, despite concerted attempts, has not achieved the anticipated number of people receiving low to moderate incomes who are employed to occupy 50 per cent of tenancies;
- Brisbane Common Ground provides formal support services to the majority of all tenants;
- Tenants rated and described the onsite support services, and the supportive practices of Brisbane Common Ground staff, in extremely positive ways.

Post-Occupancy Evaluation

- Tenants report overwhelmingly high rates of satisfaction with multiple dimensions of their housing, including: suitability for needs; privacy; affordability of rent; size of unit; design of building, condition of unit; location, access to amenity, and communal areas;
- Access to car parking was the only aspect of Brisbane Common Ground that tenants reported high levels of dissatisfaction and low levels of satisfaction;
- Nearly all tenants described Brisbane Common Ground as their home;
- Tenants described Brisbane Common Ground as safe. The concierge and onsite support were appraised highly and tenants attributed safety to onsite support, including concierge;
- Many tenants used communal areas as intended, and communal areas constituted a space for friendships, accessing informal modes of support, and participation in activities;
- Tenants reported concern about the presence of other tenants intoxicated and intimidating behaviour in communal areas and immediately outside the building;
- Brisbane Common Ground staff were conscious of some negative uses of communal areas, and they take action to address the problem;

- There is no evidence that Brisbane Common Ground is stigmatised, or perceived negatively by immediate neighbours;
- Brisbane Common Ground is used frequently as a for hire venue by the non-for-profit and business sectors.

Tenant Outcomes

- Brisbane Common Ground has (1) removed barriers for people experiencing chronic homelessness with support needs to access housing, and (2) fostered the conditions for tenants to sustain housing;
- There are examples where tenants leave Brisbane Common Ground of their volition to access alternative housing as part of housing consumption throughout the life course;
- Improvements in training and labour market participation were modest, but tenants perceived their training and employment opportunities had improved since moving to Brisbane Common Ground;
- Many tenants reported that their physical and mental health had improved since moving to Brisbane Common Ground, and they likewise reported improvements in access to health care;
- Reported consumption of tobacco, alcohol and illicit substances remained relatively stable over a 12 month period;
- Most tenants reported improvements in satisfaction with life and mental wellbeing over a 12 month period;
- Tenants were actively engaged in socialising with friends and family, and a majority reported that they provided assistance to people not living with them.

Cost offsets

- Compared to the costs to the Queensland Government of a person being chronically homeless for twelve months, a twelve month tenancy at Brisbane Common Ground achieves a tenant reducing their annual use of Queensland Government services – including the cost of providing Brisbane Common Ground – by \$13,100. Using government administrative data that rigorously measures service usage, the analysis has identified Brisbane Common Ground achieves a cost offset of \$13,100 per tenant per year.

Key learnings

-
- Supportive housing can successfully assist people with chronic experiences of homelessness, who also have needs for support, make immediate exits from homelessness into secure housing;
 - People with chronic experiences of homelessness, who also have needs for support, can sustain housing;
 - People with chronic experiences of homelessness, who also have needs for support, can access and sustain housing, without the need for interventions to prepare them for housing;
 - In the presence of stable and affordable housing with linked voluntary support, assertions about an individual's need to be 'housing ready' are made redundant;
 - Indigenous and non-Indigenous tenants alike achieved similarly positive outcomes and appraised Brisbane Common Ground at equally high levels. There was likewise consistency in findings among tenants of both gender and across tenants of different ages;
 - Brisbane Common Ground, consistent with the intention, is operationalised in practice as a unified supportive housing model. The supportive housing, rather than housing and support providers working separately or working towards separate objectives, is a key determiner in the success of Brisbane Common Ground;
 - People as homeless, and for some, as public housing tenants, report serious threats to their safety and physical security;
 - Providing a safe living environment for vulnerable tenants is critical. For tenants residing at Brisbane Common Ground, their needs for safety and physical security meant that the presence of concierge, onsite support services and CCTV for example, were not often described as intrusive;
 - Tenants at Brisbane Common Ground desired and achieved friendships and mutual networks of supports among other tenants. Many tenants also participated in formal activities and utilised the communal spaces in the building. The friendships, informal support, activities and built form at Brisbane Common Ground contributed to positive tenant outcomes;
 - Tenants reported significant concern about other tenants behaving in intimidating, aggressive and rude ways in communal spaces. Tenants reported a preference for onsite staff to assertively deal with the negative behaviour of other tenants;

- The practice of transferring tenants from one property in the building to another property is a successful strategy in achieving tenancy sustainment;
- The housing outcomes reported are unambiguously positive. It is difficult for this research, however, to demonstrate the profound practice challenges and resources that are dedicated to enabling some tenants achieve the outcomes reported in this evaluation.
- Brisbane Common Ground has been implemented according to key principles of supportive housing in the published literature (Hannigan and Wagner 2003), these include: stable and affordable housing, safety, accessible and voluntary support services, and tenant independence;
- If tenants are purposefully allocated supportive housing because of experiences of chronic homelessness, with needs for support, it is probable that some non-housing outcomes will take significant time to materialise. This notwithstanding, it is important for supportive housing to continue to assist tenants achieve non-housing outcomes. Resources, along with continued practice efforts to enable the achievement of non-housing outcomes, should be actively pursued by supportive housing;
- For people who experience chronic homelessness and exhibit high use of health, criminal justice and homelessness services, a tenancy at Brisbane Common Ground is associated with a reduction in service use that, even when the cost of providing Brisbane Common Ground are included, constitutes a cost offset of \$13,100 per person per year.
- Brisbane Common Ground is one approach to supportive housing. To determine the merits of Brisbane Common Ground compared to other models, especially supportive housing delivered through scattered site properties with support provided through outreach, experimental research is required.

Conclusion

Brisbane Common Ground is a one off initiative of supportive housing in Queensland. The evidence presented in this evaluation (1) demonstrates the success of Brisbane Common Ground, and (2) identifies key principles, features and practices of Brisbane Common Ground that have relevance beyond the specific initiative. Various approaches to supportive housing, based on the learnings identified in this evaluation, are required to play a role in meeting the housing and non-housing needs of people who have been excluded from, or experienced negative outcomes in, traditional forms of housing.

1 Introduction

This report presents the findings of an evaluative study examining the nature and effectiveness of Brisbane Common Ground. The Queensland Government defines Brisbane Common Ground as an innovative model of supportive housing, adapted from New York City's Common Ground pioneered by Rosanne Haggerty (Queensland Government 2012). Brisbane Common Ground aims to assist tenants sustain housing, improve their quality of life – health, social and economic, and reduce their utilisation of acute, crisis and emergency services (Queensland Government 2012).

The Queensland Government (2012) further states that the mix of tenants with low to moderate incomes is a defining feature of the Common Ground model of supportive housing. The mix comprises:

- People who have low to moderate incomes, with a focus on people who are working and have connection to the local area;
- People who have experienced chronic homelessness (which a focus on people who have been or are currently rough sleepers) who will benefit from coordinated service delivery and 24/7 security and support.

The tenant mix aims to create a socially inclusive community in which all tenants can do well (Queensland Government 2012). Tenants are single people, with very limited scope for allocation to couples. No families with children will reside in Brisbane Common Ground.

Brisbane Common Ground comprises 146 units (135 studio and 11 one bedroom units) in a fourteen story building located in Hope Street, South Brisbane. The building also has onsite offices for both the support provider and the tenancy manager. Commercial and retail space is available for lease on the ground floor.

Brisbane Common Ground sits within the policy context and agenda set out in the Australian Government (2008) White Paper on Homelessness: *The Road Home: A National Approach to Reducing Homelessness*. The White Paper outlined a vision for offering supported accommodation to all rough sleepers who 'need' it by 2020. Central to the policy aim is the provision of programs offering integrated support to people with high and complex needs; these include innovative housing models that offer secure housing and wrap around support (Australian Government 2008). Similar to all other Australian State Governments with the exception of Western Australia, the Queensland Government funded Common Ground supportive housing as a means to provide innovative housing and support models to achieve headline targets in reducing the incidence of homelessness. Brisbane Common Ground is referred to as a flagship initiative under the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness (Queensland Government 2012). It represents a means to reduce homelessness and achieve

program and service reforms. Similarly, Brisbane Common Ground contributes to the National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA) priorities and is consistent with the intentions outlined in the *Queensland Strategy for Reducing Homelessness 2011-2014*, namely assisting people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness achieve sustainable housing and greater social and economic participation.

Brisbane Common Ground has been funded and is delivered through a unique Government-business-community partnership with the Queensland Government, Commonwealth Government, Grocon Pty Ltd, Micah Projects and Common Ground Queensland Ltd (Queensland Government 2012). The Commonwealth Government provided the major portion of funding for land and construction of Brisbane Common Ground under the Nation Building Economic Stimulus Plan. Delivery of the Brisbane Common Ground initiative is managed by the Department of Housing and Public Works. The Queensland Government also provided some funding for construction works. In addition to conceptualising the initiative and participating in the building and model design, Micah Projects has been contracted to provide the onsite support services in the Brisbane Common Ground building. Grocon Pty Ltd was appointed as designer and builder of Brisbane Common Ground. As part of its corporate commitment to the community, Grocon built Brisbane Common Ground at cost, on a no profit, no margin basis. Common Ground Queensland Ltd is the onsite property and tenancy manager. The Brisbane City Council is also a stakeholder, with the Brisbane City Council closely consulted during the design process and providing reduced construction taxes and fees.

1.1.1 Purpose of the evaluation

The purpose of the evaluation is to “examine whether the Brisbane Common Ground initiative has been successful in assisting tenants to maintain secure housing and improve health, well-being, social and economic outcomes” (Queensland Government 2012: 7). The evaluation is guided by an Invitation to Offer set out by the Queensland Government. The Invitation to Offer identifies the following aims of the evaluation:

- Monitor the implementation of the initiative and identify key successes and areas for improvement;
- Determine whether the design and performance of the building is meeting user requirements and supporting the achievement of the service’s objectives;
- Assess the effectiveness of the Brisbane Common Ground supportive housing service in improving long-term tenant outcomes and circumstances;
- Examine the value for money of the model.

The Invitation to Offer goes on to outline that the findings from the evaluation will be used to:

- Inform future investment decisions and service system improvements;
- Contribute to national Council of Australian Governments reporting on outcomes achieved under the National Partnership Agreement on Housing and the Nation Building Economic Stimulus Plan;
- Recommend improvements in service delivery (where required);
- Inform policy and program development;
- Contribute towards the national evidence base around what works (or is leading practice) in reducing homelessness;
- Enrich understanding of building design for supportive housing.

The aims of the evaluation are consistent with the four components of the evaluation outlined in the Invitation to Offer and then revised in the addendum (Queensland Government 2013).

The four components of the evaluation include:

- **A formative evaluation** that monitors the implementation of the initiative and examines the appropriateness of the supportive housing model in meeting client needs, service delivery, eligibility and allocation processes and how well partnerships are working;
- **A post-occupancy evaluation** that focuses on social aspects of Brisbane Common Ground, including tenant's housing and design preferences, their use of spaces, and the extent to which the design and the built environment contribute to housing sustainability and other social and well-being outcomes;
- **Longitudinal Research and Tenant Outcomes** to assess whether the initiative has been effective in assisting formerly homeless tenants to maintain secure housing and improved health, wellbeing, social and economic outcomes;
- **Value for money analysis report** to identify and demonstrate – on the basis of the best data that is available – the cost effectiveness of Brisbane Common Ground.

The four components of the evaluation, together with the evaluation's aims, provide a sense of the extensive and comprehensive nature of the evaluation. The comprehensiveness of the evaluation is further evident by the far-reaching research questions. The research questions drive the evaluation and they were developed by the research team to take account of the requirements outlined in the Invitation to Offer and based on the considerable feedback and contributions provided by Brisbane Common Ground stakeholders. The research questions are:

-
- Has the model been implemented as intended, and what factors have impacted (positively or negatively) upon implementation?
 - Is the model appropriate to achieve the set aims and objectives?
 - How well has Brisbane Common Ground been managed?
 - How could support from the Queensland Government be improved?
 - What are the tenancy assessment processes, and how do they contribute to or undermine the intended allocation of properties and tenant mix?
 - How is access to mainstream and allied service providers achieved, and is it successful?
 - Is the concierge providing a controlled, safe and welcoming environment?
 - Are the tenancy managers and support providers working collaboratively?
 - What are the central features, elements and practices of Brisbane Common Ground, and how do they compare with the evidence base for supportive housing?
 - What contributes to or undermines program success?
 - What are the key learnings from the first two years of the program, and how could they inform and enhance future supportive housing practices (both at Brisbane Common Ground and elsewhere)?
 - How is Brisbane Common Ground rated by tenants, and what are tenants' preferences for housing and support?
 - Is Common Ground people's home?
 - Is Brisbane Common Ground a safe, comfortable and desirable place to live, and what contributes to and undermines this?
 - In what ways do tenants use or avoid using the building, and what could contribute to more positive or less negative use?
 - What is the impact of the tenant mix (reduced stigma, social interactions, role modelling)?
 - How do neighbours perceive Brisbane Common Ground?
 - Is Brisbane Common Ground (or developing to be) a community resource?

- What housing outcomes (for all tenants), including sustainability, has Brisbane Common Ground achieved?
- What health, quality of life, socio and economic participation, and social and community participation outcomes have formerly homeless tenants achieved?
- What socio and economic participation outcomes have low income tenants achieved?
- Do formerly homeless tenants consume alcohol and illicit substances? If so, at what quantity and frequency, and has their usage changed since residing in Brisbane Common Ground?
- What has contributed to and undermined the achievement of housing and other outcomes?
- What groups of people (in terms of Indigenous status, gender, age, culture, formerly homeless etc) does Brisbane Common Ground work well for?
- What are the total costs and total revenues (net revenues) per annum of the model?
- What is the value of financial in-kind contributions leveraged from private sector and community support
- Is the model financially sustainable over the long-term? What factors impinge upon the financial viability?
- In what ways have the service utilisation patterns of formerly homeless tenants changed since residing in Brisbane Common Ground, and what are the financial savings?
- On the basis of the available data, what is the net cost of the initiative?

1.1.2 Structure of the report

The report is structured as follows. In Chapter Two we describe the research methodology. Chapter Three overviews the literature and key debates about supportive housing. Chapters Four through Eight address the research questions. Chapter Four deals primarily with the formative evaluation. Chapter Five responds to questions about tenants' experiences and preferences living in Brisbane Common Ground. In Chapter Six we present housing outcomes for all tenants and 12 month longitudinal data for tenants' allocated housing because of chronic homelessness. Chapter Seven provides an analysis of relevant and supplied financial material to assess the costs of Brisbane Common Ground. In Chapter Eight we both summarise key pieces of evidence and respond to high level questions about the appropriateness of Brisbane Common Ground.

2 Research Design

A multi-method research design was used to address the diverse and comprehensive research questions. The methods used included: (1) a literature review of peer reviewed academic as well as 'grey literature'; (2) a summary of the tenancy management database; (3) analysis of financial and costing documentation; (4) qualitative interviews with tenants; (5) qualitative interviews with a broad range of Brisbane Common Ground stakeholders [non-tenant]; (6) a tenant housing and support satisfaction survey; (7) a two wave, 12 month longitudinal tenant outcomes survey, and (8) the collection and analysis of tenant service utilisation data.

2.1.1 Literature review

The literature review consisted of keyword searches through relevant data bases, as well as drawing on the research team's expert knowledge of pertinent Australian and international peer reviewed and grey literature. The literature review is a means to identify and critically analyse the evidence base for supportive housing. The first phase of the literature review was conducted to inform the development of the research design. A systematic review of relevant literature continued throughout the evaluation period and new and emerging data was assessed and informed the overall analysis and findings presented in this report.

2.1.2 Tenancy database

The Brisbane Common Ground tenancy database, maintained by Common Ground Queensland, was systematically assessed to identify and quantify the number of tenancies allocated and sustained. The research team worked in a close and collaborative way with the tenancy manager so that the database was summarised in a way that tenant identities and information was not disclosed. In addition to the tenancy outcomes based on a longitudinal survey of a sample of tenants, the systematic analysis of the tenant database enables complete saturation of all tenancies to be analysed, quantified and reported. In February 2015, the research team accessed the tenancy database and extracted information on every property in Brisbane Common Ground from July 2012, when it first opened, until 5 February 2015. Information that was extracted included every tenancy commenced, every tenancy ended, every tenancy transferred within Brisbane Common Ground, and the stream of allocation under which all tenants were allocated a property i.e., with a history of homelessness or low to moderate income.

2.1.3 Analysis of financial documents

The financial analysis is based on financial and contract documents provided to the research team by the Queensland Government, Micah Projects and Common Ground Queensland. There were key documents not provided to the research team, and the analysis of the costing of the model is limited as a product of the limited information provided. The documents included, along with the component of the financial analysis they informed, are described in Chapter Seven.

2.1.4 Tenant qualitative interviews

We conducted qualitative interviews with Brisbane Common Ground tenants (N=27). Of the 27 participants, 17 were female, 10 male. Four participants identified as Indigenous, and 23 non-Indigenous.

Qualitative interviews were used to examine tenants' perspectives and experiences living in Brisbane Common Ground. Drawing on a semi-structured qualitative interview schedule, we sought to understand what tenants identified as positive and negative about living in Brisbane Common Ground, what services they used, the impacts of living in Brisbane Common Ground on their health and well-being, and whether tenants saw themselves living at Brisbane Common Ground in five years' time.

Twenty of the qualitative interview participants were recruited because they were allocated a tenancy on the basis of chronic homelessness and high vulnerability. Seven other tenants were recruited on the basis that they had initiated the formal processes to exit Brisbane Common Ground. The qualitative interviews with the seven tenants who were leaving Brisbane Common Ground sought to examine whether the tenant perceived the exit as positive or negative, and to understand whether the tenant believed that residing in Brisbane Common Ground contributed to positive outcomes.

Qualitative interviews were professionally transcribed and then analysed thematically. First the data was imported into NVivo to facilitate iterative coding into themes. Then we coded data discretely in response to the individual questions, before moving to coding across the entire qualitative data set. The three members of the research team worked collaboratively to develop concepts and themes. Discrepancies in initial codes were discussed until agreement was reached (Padgett 2008).

2.1.5 Stakeholder qualitative interviews

Brisbane Common Ground stakeholders (N=12) participated in qualitative interviews. Stakeholders were invited to participate in a qualitative interview based on their professional capacity and experiences working with/alongside, or perspectives on, Brisbane Common Ground. Informed by the research questions about aspects of Brisbane Common Ground from a range of perspectives, we recruited stakeholders to participate in interviews because of their experiences providing either housing or support services, including external service providers. Of the 12 interview participants, eight were interviewed in their capacity representing either the onsite support provider (N=6) or the onsite housing provider (N=2). We made several attempts to interview a diverse sample of external professionals who provide onsite services at Brisbane Common Ground, and two stakeholders participated in interviewed: a senior representative from the Queensland Police Service and an external provider of health and social services. One of the stakeholders represented the Queensland Government. To maintain anonymity and to protect against inferred identification, in the report we refer to the onsite tenancy manager

and support providers using the generic term onsite service provider. For representatives from the onsite tenancy and support services working in management and director roles, we use the term manager.

Two of the research questions aim to assess whether Brisbane Common Ground constitutes a community asset, and to explore the neighbours' perception of Brisbane Common Ground. To address these research questions we actively endeavoured to recruit neighbours to participate in qualitative interviews. To achieve a wide response rate from neighbours, one member of the research team door knocked each of the eleven neighbouring properties on the block on which Brisbane Common Ground is located. All of the eleven properties were commercial. The research team member described the research project to the neighbours and invited them to participate in a qualitative interview for the purposes of the Brisbane Common Ground evaluation. The research team member also provided the neighbours with written information outlining the research and an invitation to participate. One recently relocated business was emailed directly. This business, however, declined to participate. After this extensive recruitment phase, only one neighbour volunteered to participate in a qualitative interview.

Qualitative interviews with stakeholders were analysed thematically using the process described above (Section 2.1.4).

2.1.6 Housing and support satisfaction survey

A housing and support satisfaction survey was conducted with Brisbane Common Ground tenants (N=120). A saturation sample was sought of all of the 148 Brisbane Common Ground tenants. The 120 participants represent a response rate of 81 per cent; see Table 1 for participant demographics.

Participants were recruited through a letter inviting participation and then with follow up contact by the concierge and onsite support providers. The survey was conducted in an office at Brisbane Common Ground. Participants were provided a \$30.00 voucher as honorarium for agreeing to participate in the survey. The surveys were carried out from January to February 2014. The first three authors administered the surveys. The survey was accessed on a tablet and administered face to face. Almost all participants completed the survey independently; only a few people sought assistance mainly because they found the tablet's touch screen too difficult for their large fingers. The researchers also assisted people with literacy concerns - researchers read out the questions and answers and recorded the participant's responses and typed up their qualitative responses.

The survey instrument consisted of 53 quantitative questions, a mixture of multiple choice and Likert Scale questions, and five open-ended qualitative questions. The survey was structured to include questions about satisfaction with and suitability of housing, the broader Brisbane Common Ground building, and its location to amenities, intentions to continuing living at

Brisbane Common Ground, whether Brisbane Common Ground was home, friendships, neighbourly support, perspectives on and experiences with onsite support, housing and security staff, and people's opinions on the best and worst things living at Brisbane Common Ground.

All quantitative data was analysed within the software program SPSS and includes univariate and bivariate analysis.

Qualitative data from the survey, consistent with the approach to analysis of the qualitative data from the tenant and stakeholder interviews, were thematically analysed (see Section 2.1.4).

Table 1. Housing and support satisfaction survey: Participant demographics

Characteristic	Number	%
Gender		
Female	62	52
Male	58	48
Age		
20 – 30	33	28
31 – 40	24	20
41 – 50	36	30
51 – 60	22	18
61 – 70	5	4
Indigenous status		
Does not identify as being Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	103	86
Identifies as being Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	17	15
Australian born		
Born in Australia	98	82
Born outside Australia	22	18
Language		
English-speaker	115	96
Language other than English	5	4
Allocation status		
Chronic experiences of homelessness	60	50
Low to moderate income	60	50

2.1.7 Longitudinal tenant outcomes survey

We conducted a longitudinal outcomes survey with tenant's allocated housing at Brisbane Common Ground because of previous chronic homelessness and high vulnerabilities.

Purpose

The purpose of the longitudinal outcomes survey was to identify and measure tenant outcomes and change over a 12 month period. The outcomes measured are directly related to the objectives of Brisbane Common Ground. Namely, Brisbane Common Ground aims to enable people with chronic experiences of homelessness and high vulnerabilities to sustain housing, improve their quality of life – health, social and economic outcomes (Queensland Government 2012). Through a Round 1 and Round 2 outcomes survey, the longitudinal study sought to identify and measure change over a 12 month period in the following key domains. These domains include tenants': education and training; employment; physical health; diet; quality of life and satisfaction; mental health; alcohol, tobacco and illicit substance use; access to a broad range of health services; and social and community participation.

The 12 month longitudinal design (Round 1 and Round 2) provided the basis to identify tenants' reported status on the above measures, and then to measure change over time. The logic for the longitudinal survey is based on the objectives of Brisbane Common Ground in assisting people with a history of homelessness to access and sustain housing, and then to improve other life domains such as health, well-being, training, education and social participation and inclusion. The longitudinal design thus provides us with an empirical basis to assess what, if at all, changes tenants had made in their lives over a twelve month period.

The Round 1 surveys, however, were not baseline surveys. The first tenants moved into Brisbane Common Ground in July 2012. By the time we conducted our Round 1 surveys in November 2013, most tenants had resided in the building for more than one year. As such our longitudinal design is not able to capture changes in tenant's domains that occurred in the period of time when they first moved into Brisbane Common Ground until the period of time from when they completed their Round 1 survey. To address the limitations of not gathering baseline data, at both Round 1 and Round 2, in addition to asking tenants to report their status of the variable noted above, we asked several questions about whether tenants perceived their situation or opportunities had changed since moving in to Brisbane Common Ground.

Round 1

Fieldwork for the Round 1 outcomes component of the evaluation took place between November and December 2013 with the aim of recruiting into the survey all of the 71 tenants allocated housing because of chronic homelessness. With the assistance of onsite support workers identifying the relevant tenants, the research team invited tenants to participate in the survey via a letter. Follow up invitations to participate in the surveys were made with the assistance of onsite support staff. A total of 63 participated in the Round 1 survey. The 63 survey respondents constituted 89 per cent of all tenants residing at Brisbane Common Ground between November and December 2013 who were allocated housing because of chronic homelessness.

Round 2

Fieldwork for the Round 2 outcomes component of the evaluation took place between November and December 2014 (12 months after Round One). We intended to include all, and only, the tenants in Round 2 who participated in Round 1. For the Round 2 survey we recruited the sample using the same approach we used for Round 1.

Of the 63 tenants who completed a survey at Round 1, 47 also completed a survey at Round 2. Of the 16 tenants who completed a survey at Round 1 but did not complete a survey at Round 2 (attrition), three were temporarily away from Brisbane Common Ground during the two month fieldwork period, one person was incarcerated, two were deceased, one person refused, two people did not respond to our invitations, and seven no longer resided at Brisbane Common Ground. In terms of the latter group who no longer resided at Brisbane Common Ground, three of these individuals participated in a qualitative interview just prior to exiting. These three individuals are included in the 27 tenant qualitative interview sample described above (Section 2.1.4).

Procedure

Both the Round 1 and Round 2 surveys were completed in a face-to-face interview. Survey participants were given the option of completing the survey independently of the researcher or with the assistance of the researcher. The researchers were available to read aloud the survey questions and assist respondents to complete their responses. Researchers offered participants assistance as a means to remove barriers to enable participation of people with limited literacy and English abilities. Surveys were conducted using a tablet. Participants were provided a \$30.00 voucher as honorarium for agreeing to participate in the survey.

A note about self-reported data:

A number of the questions in the survey ask tenants to indicate their subjective reports of matters including substance use, drinking behaviours, and smoking. It is important to note that the reported data is based on participants' self-reports. In terms of alcohol and substance use, or mental illness, responses to these areas can be influenced by socially desirable responses, or by people not freely disclosing information that may be stigmatised.

Analysis

Descriptive statistics have been undertaken to summarise patterns in the responses tenants gave to a number of questions relating to health, well-being, quality of life and social participation. As noted above the same measures were completed by tenants at Round 1 and Round 2. The descriptive analysis provides an understanding of the change over time in these measures and present information on tenant's life domains. Each domain is described in detail. A balanced-samples approach was utilised to improve accuracy of data and measures

presented. Hence, the sample sizes presented below relate to 47 tenants (that is only tenants completing the survey at Round 1 and Round 2).

2.1.8 Tenant service utilisation data

We accessed the administrative data documenting service usage history of 41 tenants.

Administrative data detailing service history was accessed for a two year period, this included the twelve months pre Brisbane Common Ground tenancy commencement, and the twelve months post Brisbane Common Ground tenancy commencement. We accessed the service usage histories from eight service providers. The eight providers, and the information accessed, included: (1) public emergency hospital presentations, comprising the triage category, departure status, and visit type; (2) public hospital admitted patient records, comprising length of stay, elective status, discharge status, and major diagnostic category; (3) public mental health, comprising intervention type, treatment unit, and duration in minutes; (4) Queensland ambulance incidents, comprising number of incidents [this data was accessed from the emergency department information reporting “mode of arrival”]; (5) Queensland Corrections, comprising identification of custody or probation or parole, episode commencement, completion and duration; (6) Queensland Courts, comprising number of court appearances; (7) Queensland Police Services, comprising occurrences as offender, offences as an offender, occurrences as a victim, and number of times in police custody, and (8) Specialist Homelessness Services, comprising nights in homelessness accommodation, and financial assistance provided.

We purposefully sampled Brisbane Common Ground tenants on the basis of two criteria. First, we included tenants who were allocated a Brisbane Common Ground tenancy because they were assessed as experiencing chronic homelessness. Second, we only included tenants who had resided at Brisbane Common Ground for at least twelve months at the time we sought their consent. We excluded tenants who had resided at Brisbane Common Ground for less than twelve months because our design required service usage to be accessed and measured over a twenty four month period that involved twelve months post tenancy commencement.

The administrative data provides evidence to arrive at approximations of the cost of the services used by people when they were homeless, and then the cost of the services used in the year tenants resided at Brisbane Common Ground. With data providing information about the costs associated with services used by tenants about Brisbane Common Ground, we arrived at estimated cost offsets.

2.1.9 Ethics

The Brisbane Common Ground evaluation sought ethics in two phases. Early in the project, prior to data collection ethics approval was sought and obtained from University of Queensland (Approval Number 2013001322) to undertake the housing and support satisfaction survey, outcome survey, and qualitative interviews with the tenants; and the qualitative interviews with

the stakeholders. The lead author conducted consultation with the Brisbane Indigenous spokespeople to gain support for this evaluation.

A second ethics process was undertaken in relation to obtaining the tenant service utilisation data. As outlined in the preceding section service use data was obtained from the administrative records of eight pivotal services used by people experiencing chronic homelessness. Consent was obtained from 41 tenants to access their service use pre and post Brisbane Common Ground tenancy commencement. In line with guidelines for research with human participants, the research team ensured all tenants were given the opportunity to give informed and voluntary consent, and given the right to withdraw from the study. Consent meant that the research team would be provided with anonymous information about the tenant's use of services. To enable this process the Statistical Analysis and Linkage Unit at Queensland Health acted as data custodian. Ethical approval was gained from Queensland Health (HREC/14/QHC/34), Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (EO2014-4-134), Queensland Police Service (notified by email), and Queensland Department of Justice and Attorney General (notified by email) respectively. In addition, University of Queensland ethics was sought and gained for the collection of service usage data (Amendment 2013001322). Upon receipt of the list of participating tenants, the Statistical Analysis and Linkage Unit at Queensland Health devised a statistical linkage key and liaised with each aforementioned service provider to gain service usage data specific to their agency, and on receipt collated the units of service use. The collated service use was then forwarded to the research team for further analysis.

2.1.10 Limitations

There are three key limitations in the research design and thus evaluation. These are: no baseline data; no control group or comparator, and self-reported data. As discussed above, and further in Section 6.2, the evaluation was contracted more than one year after tenants moved into Brisbane Common Ground. When, therefore, the Round 1 outcomes survey was conducted, nearly all of the 63 participants had lived in Brisbane Common Ground for a number of months; indeed, most of the participants had lived in the building for one year or more. By conducting our Round 1 surveys many months and even more than a year after people commenced their Brisbane Common Ground tenancy, our measures do not take account of any changes in people's situation (health, well-being, drug and alcohol use, for example) that occurred in the time between tenancy start and participation in Round 1. This represents a significant problem. We could assume, as the logic of the program model would imply, that people who exit chronic homelessness and immediately accessed supportive housing may improve on a number of key measures that we are interested in. Our validated measures of physical health, mental health, drug and alcohol use, life satisfaction and well-being, will not capture any changes that may have occurred in between tenancy commencement and completion of the Round 1 survey.

Second, although the research draws on triangulated methods and data sources to build an empirical evidence base for Brisbane Common Ground, there is no control group or point of comparison. Thus the research is not able to draw firm conclusions about how the effectiveness of Brisbane Common Ground compares to other models of supportive housing, or indeed, even compares to homeless accommodation. The limitation of not drawing on a control group notwithstanding, the research does identify the key principles and features underpinning the effectiveness of Brisbane Common Ground. It is possible to examine the key features of Brisbane Common Ground identified in this research alongside themes from the published literature to critically consider what lessons Brisbane Common Ground represent for supportive housing and responses to chronic homelessness beyond the specific Brisbane Common Ground example.

Third, our non-housing outcomes data relies on tenants' self-reporting. Self-reported data can be both a strength and a limitation. As for the former, self-reported data is significant because it enables people to provide firsthand accounts of their situation, their progress and their problems (Parsell, Tomaszewski and Phillips 2014). On the other hand, self-reported data can be a limitation when people are asked to report and disclose stigmatised information. Our data about tenants' drug and alcohol use is based exclusively on self-report. This is not only potentially limited because respondents may under report their use. It is also possible that over the twelve month study when tenants developed rapport with the researchers, they would have been more likely to disclose alcohol and illicit substance use compared to Round 1 (when there was less rapport). If tenants did in fact under report their use of alcohol and illicit substances at Round 1, but then were more willing to disclose alcohol and illicit substance use at Round 2 when rapport and trust had developed, it would show a rise in the actual level of alcohol and illicit substance use over time that may not reflect actual changes in use.

3 Supportive housing: a review of the literature

3.1.1 Introduction

In this chapter we draw on an overview of the evidence for supportive housing presented by Parsell and colleagues in two recent Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI) reports (Parsell and Moutou 2014; Parsell et al., 2015). First, we outline some of the key debates about the definitions and competing conceptualisations of supportive housing. Second, the chapter discusses the ways that supportive housing is directed toward particular people, especially people who are homeless and people with psychiatric disabilities. Third we describe the objectives of supportive housing and locate these within an historical context. We conclude the overview by presenting the evidence for, and critiques of, supportive housing.

3.1.2 What is supportive housing?

The Corporation for Supportive Housing (n.d.) from the United States defines supportive housing in straightforward and broad terms. Supportive housing “combines affordable housing and services that help people who face the most complex challenges to live with stability, autonomy and dignity”. The Corporation for Supportive Housing emphasises the significance of combining housing and support services. Further, they demonstrate that supportive housing is an endeavour directed toward people with needs in addition to housing. The target population for supportive housing is of central concern because it provides an indication of its nature and purposes.

Farrell et al., (2010) note that there is no singular definition of supportive housing, but they suggest that supportive housing, in contrast to transitional housing, is long term and permanent. The literature from the United States highlights the permanency of supportive housing as central. Henwood et al.,’s (2013) review of supportive housing, consistent with United States Federal policy (United States Housing and Urban Development 2012), explicitly refers to permanent supportive housing to clearly illustrate the permanency and to distinguish permanent supportive housing from shelters and other forms of non-permanent homeless accommodation. Permanent supportive housing includes programs ‘that provide access to affordable community-based housing along with flexible support services intended to meet a broad array of health and psychosocial needs’ (Henwood et al., 2013).

Hannigan and Wagner (2003: 1) note that supportive housing involves the combination of affordable and accessible services, the latter services determined by the individual tenants. In an overview of supportive housing from the United States, Hannigan and Wagner (2003: 4–5) identify the following core principles that have guided the development and effectiveness of supportive housing:

1. Permanence and affordability; a key priority is to increase the supply of affordable housing. Affordability is typically defined with rents not exceeding 30 per cent of income. Affordability is

often enabled through subsidy programs, such as through Section 8 vouchers (US Federal government program).

2. Safety and comfort; tenants should feel safe and comfortable in their homes. Supportive housing buildings must at a minimum comply with building codes, and every effort must be made to provide security measures to meet tenants' needs, including the promotion of tenants taking collective control over their environment.

3. Support services are accessible and flexible, and target housing stability; support services not only cater for tenants' diverse needs, but also retain flexibility to cater for changing needs over time. Tenant sustainment is fundamental.

4. Empowerment and independence; supportive housing is purposefully designed to promote tenants' empowerment and to foster tenant independence. Tenants are in their homes and service providers are there to be supportive.

The principles identified by Hannigan and Wagner (2003) share many similarities with a review of international and Australian literature informed by the views of people with mental illness about their housing preferences and needs to live independently (O'Brien et al. 2002).

The Australian Common Ground Alliance (ACGA) put forward Common Ground as one model of supportive housing. The Australian Common Ground approach to supportive housing emphasises the importance of Housing First in terms of housing stability, permanence, and voluntary engagement with services and treatment (Australian Common Ground Alliance n.d.). Similarly, they advocate for a model of supportive housing that includes single-site apartment living, with a range of supportive services that are delivered onsite (Australian Common Ground Alliance n.d.).

Some researchers make distinctions between supportive housing and supported housing. Lipton et al., (2000) describe supportive housing as housing programs linked to some form of support services that include community mainstreaming, empowerment and support flexibility. This definition of supportive housing is contrasted with supported housing. The latter, comparatively, they argue is a more choice based, independent and permanent type of housing (Lipton et al., 2000).

Parkinson, Nelson and Horgan (1999) also distinguish between supportive housing and supported housing. They state that supportive housing focuses on rehabilitation and resident identity, whereas supported housing focuses on empowerment, community integration and citizen identity. Further, they suggest that supportive housing is short term, and consists of group homes and clustered apartments, and features in-house staff. While Parkinson, Nelson and Horgan's (1999) definition contrasts with the aforementioned notion of supportive housing as 'permanent' (Henwood et al., 2013; United States Housing and Urban Development 2012),

both Parkinson et al., (1999) and Lipton et al., (2000) present supportive housing as less normalised and more restricted than supported housing. Indeed, Lipton et al. (2000: 480) say that treatment-orientated supportive housing constitute the remainder of the residential continuum, including group homes, supportive apartments, community residences and halfway houses where housing and services are generally integrally related. It is important to note that the debates about supportive housing and the difference between supportive housing and supported housing have largely been carried out in the United States.

3.1.3 Who is supportive housing for?

Supportive housing in the United States is often directed toward people with mental illness. This focus is both explicitly stated in funding eligibility terms (Burt 2006), and it is also evident in the aims and core principles of supportive housing as a mechanism for consumers to achieve community integration, normality, autonomy and empowerment (Tabol et al., 2010). Supportive housing, in the North American context at least, has been developed to meet the needs of people living with or recovering from psychiatric illness.

Recognising that the practice and research has been focused on supportive housing as a response to people with mental illness, particularly in the United States, Hannigan and Wagner (2003) point out that supportive housing is also directed toward people living with HIV, older adults, individuals with physical disabilities, the formerly homeless, low income working people, and more recently, families. Henwood et al., (2013) also recognise that supportive housing in the US has been synonymous with mental health, but they argue that supportive housing is increasingly being directed toward vulnerable groups and medically frail people regardless of mental health diagnosis.

In Australia, the Australian Common Ground Alliance directs their supportive housing advocacy toward the most vulnerable chronically homeless in the community (Australian Common Ground Alliance n.d.). In addition to long-term or multiple episodes of homelessness, vulnerable homeless status is taken to mean 'people with disabilities, mental illness or substance misuse disorders' (Australian Common Ground Alliance n.d.).

As the focus on vulnerability in terms of homelessness, disability and mental illness makes clear, when thinking about the individuals to whom supportive housing is directed it is important not to artificially place people into discrete categories: either homeless or mental health consumers. People with mental illness may also be homeless. While supportive housing is often purposefully and successfully directed toward people with mental illness, because people with mental illness are overrepresented in the homeless population, the mental health consumers (supportive housing tenants) often report experiences of homelessness.

In this respect, supportive housing as a mental health intervention also functions as a means to enable people to exit homelessness and sustain housing. Similarly, the groups that are

offered supportive housing on the basis of mental illness diagnosis or histories of homelessness may also be defined on the basis of other objectively ascribed criteria or category, such as families, people with disabilities, or older or young people. Further, and as is now increasingly becoming understood, tenants of supportive housing may also have significant physical health problems that supportive housing intervention is well placed to address. Understanding the intersectionality of people's problems and identified status is central to understanding the way that supportive housing can and should respond to a diverse range of people in housing need.

3.1.4 The aims of supportive housing

The aims of supportive housing are consistent with the primary focus of the intervention directed toward mental health consumers who often also report experiences of homelessness. Kirsh et al., (2009) said that when supported housing is successful it enables residents to take stock of their lives and to imagine future lives. They frame supported housing as an intervention to help people to recover from mental illness. In turn, when supported housing is successful it is a means for residents to return to work, school, volunteering, and reconnecting with family and other social circles (Kirsh et al., 2009).

Cohen et al. (2004) state the importance of supportive housing as a model to enable people with experiences of homelessness to live independently. Independence is framed closely with permanence, and the capacity of supportive housing to prevent recurrence of homelessness (Cohen et al., 2004). The ACGA (n.d.) identify the Common Ground model of supportive housing as a means to achieve housing outcomes for people experiencing homelessness. They state that:

Common Ground supportive housing aims to successfully end chronic homelessness through housing the most vulnerable in our communities.

In South Australia, Australia's only jurisdiction with an official supportive housing policy, supportive housing is likewise an initiative linked to homelessness objectives. The South Australian Homelessness Supportive Housing Program Policy (Government of South Australia 2012) anticipates outcomes that include fewer people becoming homeless and resorting to rough sleeping, together with broader macro objectives of reducing the incidence of overall homelessness.

3.1.5 History of supportive housing

Supportive housing as a mental health intervention directed toward people with psychiatric disabilities and often histories of homelessness has emerged out of a historic response to the previously dominant mental health paradigm. The development of supportive housing came out of hospital closures following deinstitutionalisation (Fakhoury et al., 2002; Wood 2004). Supportive housing was one mechanism to provide people with psychiatric disabilities independent housing following major hospital closures.

Also as a psychiatric legacy, Rog (2004) identifies the emergence of supported housing in the 1980s as a response to a residential continuum model, whereby people with psychiatric illness progressed along a staircase of support and accommodation options until finally graduating into housing. Despite damning critiques (Sahlin 2005; Tsemberis 1999), the staircase model of support and then housing remains in practice in many jurisdictions, but the supportive housing approach constitutes a successful response. Tabol et al., (2010) points to the literature identifying the limitations and impracticalities of the continuum model in achieving positive housing and support outcomes.

In addition to the historical changes in mental health provision that have shaped the nature of contemporary supportive housing (in the United States), and notwithstanding the recognition that people with mental illnesses in supportive housing often have histories of homelessness, the supportive housing movement has origins in homelessness services in major cities of the United States. Hannigan and Wagner (2003) locate the emergence of supportive housing beginning in the 1960s as a means to assist people living in private forms of accommodation, such as single room-occupancy hotels. They argue that the supportive housing movement started to develop as not-for-profit organisations began to acquire and redevelop their own forms of single room-occupancies as a response to the emerging problem of homelessness.

Henwood et al., (2013) argues that policy-makers in the United States have made a considerable shift toward addressing long-term homelessness through permanent supportive housing rather than relying on shelter and transitional housing. They argue that the contemporary focus on permanent supportive housing is embedded within the evidence that demonstrates the significant health problems associated with homelessness, together with the understanding that the provision of housing is an important part of health care service delivery, is cost effective, and is consistent with basic human rights (Henwood et al., 2013).

Running alongside normative ideas about supportive housing as economically efficient and a socially just way to respond to the needs of people experiencing homelessness with or without a psychiatric disability, funding and policy streams in the United States have been influential. Referring to United States legislation for more than 25 years, Hannigan and Wagner (2003: 4) explain the growth in supportive housing thus:

Financial support from a wide variety of sources contributed to the nationwide expansion of supportive housing development. The passage of the federal Low Income Housing Tax Credit legislation in 1986, for example, provided the opportunity for private investors to receive tax credits in exchange for direct investments in low-income housing. Similarly, the federal government made a major commitment to housing homeless individuals with the authorization of funding streams sponsored under the Stewart B. McKinney Act of 1987.

The result of the financial support to enable the development and expansion of supportive housing in the United States cannot be overstated. In 2010, there were 236,798 permanent

supportive housing units, constituting one-third of all beds available to people who are homeless (United States Housing and Urban Development 2011). Once residing in permanent supportive housing, however, people are no longer defined as homeless (the 236,798 tenants in supportive housing, like the tenants in Brisbane Common Ground, are formerly homeless). The United States government has stated an intention to expand the permanent supportive housing sector as a means to end homelessness. The 236,798 units of permanent supportive housing in 2010 represent a 59,968 unit of stock increase since 2006 (United States Housing and Urban Development 2011). The increase in permanent supportive housing in the United States has been greater than the increase in shelter beds and stands in further contrast to the decrease in transitional housing. Along with government subsidies (including Section 8 Housing Vouchers) and tax incentives, the Corporation for Supportive Housing (n.d.) has played a significant role in contributing to the growth in supportive housing by providing predevelopment funds, bridging loans and technical assistance to enable community groups and organisations to develop supportive housing across the United States.

There is far less of an historic legacy of supportive housing in Australia, and the local growth has similarly been less pronounced than in the United States. In the homelessness sector, Common Ground and the Youth Foyer models constitute two significant and politically visible developments in contemporary Australian supportive housing history. In a move that created significant momentum, the Commonwealth Government asserted that “more supportive housing models, such as Foyer models, also need to be established to target young people who are homeless” (Australian Government 2008: 50). This national recognition builds on the local practices of establishing Foyer models since the early 2000s in Victoria, New South Wales and South Australia (Steen and Mackenzie 2013) and has led to the more recent discussion of establishing this form of supportive housing in the ACT (Martin 2010).

3.1.6 What is the evidence for supportive housing?

There is a large body of research evidence reporting on the outcomes attributed to supportive housing. The outcomes evidence is methodologically robust. However, the inconsistent use of definitions by supportive housing programs, coupled with some research that provides limited information about what supportive housing actually entails, means that broad statements about what the body of literature says are difficult to substantiate. What is clear from the research evidence, however, is that the provision of affordable housing with some form of voluntary support services is a successful means to enable people with experiences of homelessness and mental illnesses to sustain housing.

3.1.7 Housing sustainment and homelessness exits

Arguably the largest and most important evidence about supportive housing demonstrates housing sustainability and reduced rates of homelessness among people who enter supportive housing programs. The Housing First approach developed by Sam Tsemberis in the early 1990s at Pathways to Housing (Pathways Housing First), New York City, has been evaluated

successfully by a number of important studies. The Pathways Housing First model of supportive housing consists of scattered-site and secure housing funded through the Federal Government Section 8 Housing Voucher. The housing is combined with a modified Assertive Community Treatment team. Pathways Housing First provides community-based services, a service coordinator and the Assertive Community Treatment team includes psychiatrists, nurses, addiction and employment counsellors and peer support specialists (Tsemberis et al., 2012). In one review of the Pathways Housing First supportive housing evidence, Johnson, Parkinson and Parsell (2012) demonstrated that the PHF model of supportive housing had consistently achieved housing retention rates of over 85 per cent for people with psychiatric disabilities and chronic experiences of homelessness. The evidence shows that people are able to sustain their housing for up to five years (Tsemberis and Eisenberg 2000).

The Pathways to Housing approach of supportive housing is only one model, but it is worth noting that the United States Government's plan to end homelessness cites the Pathways Housing First model of supportive housing as an evidenced solution (United States Interagency Council on Homelessness 2010). The Pathways Housing First model of supportive housing is directed toward people with psychiatric illnesses and often histories of homelessness.

Others have conducted systematic reviews on the nature and effectiveness of supportive housing that have included a range of different models, including Pathways Housing First (Fakhoury et al., 2002; Rog 2004; Rog et al., 2014; Tabol et al., 2010). Based on a review of 15 studies examining supported housing for people with mental illnesses and people experiencing homelessness, Rog found that once in "housing with supports, the majority of individuals with serious mental illnesses stay in housing, are less likely to become homeless, and are less likely to be hospitalised, regardless of the specific type of housing conditions."

Fakhoury and colleagues examined supported housing primarily in the mental health context. Because their focus was mental health, rather than homelessness, the review did not examine housing sustainability and homelessness exit outcomes. They concluded that the outcomes for supported housing are mixed, yet:

... it seems that functioning can improve, social integration can be facilitated, and residents are generally more satisfied. (Fakhoury et al., 2002: 312)

Tabol et al., (2010) conducted a systematic analysis of 38 studies reporting on supported housing interventions for homeless individuals with serious mental illness and/or substance use disorders. The Tabol et al., (2010: 454) review did not focus on outcomes; rather the authors provide 'an overview of the literature's attention to the supported housing model and adherence to this model among various programs'. Their review consisted of several studies and was included in Rog's review and the Johnson, Parkinson and Parsell (2012) review. These reviews primarily based on original research conducted in the United States, together

with other North American studies (Collins et al., 2013; Lipton et al., 1988; Mares and Rosenheck 2011; Newman et al., 1994; Shern et al., 1997), have all shown that people with serious mental illnesses and experiences of homelessness can sustain exits from homelessness in various forms of supportive housing. Consistent with research on the Pathways Housing First model of supportive housing, other studies (Johnson, Parkinson and Parsell 2012), Lipton et al., (2000) have found that people with serious mental illnesses and experiences of homelessness can remain stably housed for up to five years in supportive housing.

Closely linked to the evidence about housing outcomes is the highly influential research arguing for the cost effectiveness of supportive housing. The seminal research of Dennis Culhane and colleagues in the United States provide the most compelling and robust evidence for supportive housing in terms of the cost savings of supported housing for people with mental illnesses compared to the costs of homelessness. Culhane et al., (2002) found that people in supported housing achieved better outcomes (reduced hospital and shelter use and jail/prison time) than people in other forms of housing or people experiencing homelessness. Their research has shown that for people with serious mental illness that are also heavy users of crisis emergency services (in places where those services exist and are accessible), the costs of providing supportive housing are mitigated by the reduction in service utilisation. As Culhane (2008) noted, however, the cost effectiveness arguments for supportive housing vary across regions, and importantly, these arguments are disproportionately based on the service usage of a small cohort of people with chronic experiences of homelessness and serious mental illness, that is, heavy service users. The caveats that Culhane notes about the cost effectiveness of supportive housing or the non-representative samples in other research are often overlooked by advocates calling for supportive housing on the basis of cost effectiveness (Johnson, Parkinson and Parsell 2012).

Compared to North America, there is nowhere near the number nor the level of detailed research examining models of supportive housing in Australia. In many respects, the limited Australian research in this area is a product of the limited supportive housing programs that have been established to address homelessness (until recently). The evidence cited above is largely drawn from the North American context (although the Fakhoury et al., 2002 review included the UK and Europe). Nevertheless, from the emerging Australian research similar findings can be identified from the evidence base. In a detailed evaluation of what is arguably Australia's largest supportive housing initiative, Bruce et al., (2012) report positive outcomes from the New South Wales 'Housing and Accommodation Support Initiative', known as HASI.

HASI is a state government program that aims to provide people with mental illness with access to stable housing, clinical mental health services and accommodation support (Bruce et al., 2012). HASI is a mental health intervention. Consumers of HASI must meet the eligibility criteria of having a diagnosed mental illness. Despite the focus on diagnosable illness rather

than homelessness/housing status, 43 per cent of HASI consumers were defined as homeless when they entered the program (Bruce et al., 2012). The evaluative research demonstrates positive housing and non-housing outcomes for HASI consumers. Bruce et al., (2012: 83) report that 90 per cent of consumers (N=806) sustained their tenancy since joining the program. Similarly positive housing outcomes were identified in terms of minimal rental arrears, minimal engagement with the tenancy tribunal and high rates of tenancy satisfaction. The evaluation also found that most HASI consumers reported improved quality of life and better clinical outcomes (Bruce et al., 2012). In an evaluation of Victoria's Housing and Support Program for people with psychiatric disabilities, Robson (1995) found that people's housing stability improved, and there were likewise improvements identified in terms of community connections, social networks and reduced hospital use.

Recent research on Australia's new Street to Home initiatives also adds to the evidence base on local supportive housing. In Commonwealth Government funded evaluations in Melbourne (Johnson and Chamberlain 2013), Brisbane and Sydney (Parsell et al., 2013a, 2013b), the research clearly demonstrates that Street to Home programs can assist people with long experiences of homelessness and rough sleeping to exit homelessness and sustain housing after 12 months. For a similar cohort of people with long-term experiences of homelessness and rough sleeping, Melbourne's Journey to Social Inclusion program has achieved excellent housing outcomes over a 24-month period (Johnson et al., 2012) and 36 months (Johnson et al., 2014a).

3.1.8 *Elements of success*

The evidence base on supportive housing is clear: supportive housing is a successful means to enable people with chronic experiences of homelessness and a diagnosable mental illness to sustain housing. In light of this widely accepted finding, many have asked, what are the elements and factors of supportive housing that mediate successful outcomes? In a review of international literature specifically in the mental health field, Fakhoury and colleagues observed that:

... hardly any evidence about the effects of differences in clinical practice. The question is not just what structure is most suitable for the delivery of quality supported housing care, but also what practices and interventions undertaken in these places are likely to lead to the most positive patient outcomes. (Fakhoury et al., 2002: 312)

The limited evidence about the effective clinical practices notwithstanding, several scholars have pointed to the importance of coupling affordable housing with user directed services. Farrell et al., (2010) studied families in supportive housing in the United States and concluded that housing vouchers combined with individualised support appear to be an effective form of assistance for families. Similarly identifying the importance of affordability in promoting positive tenant outcomes, Hurlburt, Wood and Hough (1996) found that people in receipt of Section 8 Vouchers—irrespective of the nature of the support they received—had a greater likelihood of

accessing secure housing. Nelson, Aubry and Lafrance (2007a: 358) ask the question that, in light of housing and support clearly achieving positive housing outcomes for people with mental illness and experiences of homelessness, which approaches are most successful in improving outcomes? They answered their own question by pointing out that the provision of permanent housing to homeless mentally ill people produces significant positive effects on their housing outcomes.

In research with people with mental illnesses who had experienced homelessness, Clark and Rich (2003), Hurlburt Wood and Hough (1996), and Rosenheck et al., (2003) found that individuals receiving housing plus case management achieved better housing (and less hospitalisation) outcomes than individuals receiving only case management.

Nelson, Aubry and Lafrance (2007) reviewed 16 studies that examined housing and a range of housing and support interventions, such as Assertive Community Treatment and intensive case management. They found that these supportive housing models were able to reduce homelessness and hospitalisation for people with mental illnesses. They concluded by asserting that “in terms of the most effective approach in reducing homelessness, it appears that providing permanent housing and support is the most successful approach” (Nelson, Aubry and Lafrance 2007: 358).

In an Australian study (Victorian), O’Brien et al., (2002) engaged people who had experienced a psychiatric disorder who lived in social or private housing without formally linked support. The study sought to identify what the individuals saw as most helpful and important in supporting them to stay housed. Their study found that supports from case workers, mental health professionals and friends were all key features that people saw as enhancing their capacities to stay housed.

The supportive housing evidence base presented thus far about housing outcomes for people with chronic experiences of homelessness and serious mental illness illustrates that affordable and permanent housing with associated support services are the primary mediators of success. Greenwood et al., (2005) and Nelson, Sylvestre and Aubry (2007) add to this by asserting that consumer choice over housing and support are critical factors to the success of supportive housing. Consumer choice is arguably the defining trait of the PHF model of supportive housing (Johnson, Parkinson and Parsell 2012), but Stefancic and Tsemberis (2007) extend this by asserting that a key element of supportive housing for the promotion of recovery.

3.1.9 Conclusion

We set out in this chapter to provide a critical and selective examination of the published literature examining supportive housing. The centrally important debates about how supportive housing is conceptualised have been highlighted. Although without an agreed definition, the

literature broadly conceptualises supportive housing as affordable housing with the linking of a range of support services. There is wide agreement that support services should be voluntary, and that supportive housing is a means for people to achieve autonomy and self-determination.

It is in the prevailing context of supportive housing associated with normative claims about autonomy and volition that the literature positions supportive housing as an intervention directed toward people with serious mental illness. Indeed, the support services combined with supportive housing often assume a mental health focus, and are conceptualised as voluntary and normal as opposed to the mandatory and stigmatised nature of traditional mental health service provision (including psychiatric inpatients).

The focus on mental health consumers together with the contemporary Australian policy agenda illustrated the interaction of mental illness and homelessness. In addition to supportive housing directed toward people with experiences of homelessness on the basis of their diagnosable mental illness, current policy has explicitly developed supportive housing as a mechanism to respond to homelessness policy objectives. The chapter analysed a range of published research that has unambiguously demonstrated that supportive housing is an effective means to assist people with chronic experiences of homelessness and serious mental illness to sustain housing.

4 Formative evaluation

The formative evaluation examines the implementation, management and operation of Brisbane Common Ground and assesses how well the various components of the initiative are working (Queensland Government 2012). The first people commenced their tenancies at Brisbane Common Ground in July 2012. The formative evaluation focuses on the initiative from the point at which tenants first moved into Brisbane Common Ground, and continues the analysis over the first two and a half years of operation until February 2015. This two and a half year period enables an extensive assessment of the implementation of the initiative.

We have examined the implementation, management and operation of Brisbane Common Ground through multiple means. First, the formative evaluation is informed by qualitative interviews with Brisbane Common Ground service provider stakeholders (N=12). The stakeholders provide significant insider knowledge of the operation of Brisbane Common Ground. Second, in addition to analysing the perspectives of service provider stakeholders, the formative evaluation draws on data obtained directly from tenants. This includes survey data with tenants (N=120) about their satisfaction and qualitative interviews with tenants (N=27) about their experiences living at Brisbane Common Ground. The tenant data about their firsthand experiences living at Brisbane Common Ground provide an important perspective of how well the initiative has been implemented and how well it has been managed over the first two and a half years. Third, we conducted an analysis of program documents outlining the initiative's objectives and program model to inform our assessment of Brisbane Common Ground implementation, management and operation.

We also conducted observations of the day-to-day operation of Brisbane Common Ground over the 27 month evaluation period (November 2013 – February 2015). This period provided the research team firsthand experiences to observe the direct practices and day-to-day delivery of housing and support services. Observations enabled the research team to unpack and distinguish between *perspectives in action* from *perspectives of action* (Snow and Anderson 1993). The latter involve constructed responses to a question; for instance, a perspective of action involves how a support provider explains the way they engage with a tenant. Perspectives in action, on the other hand, involves the direct observation of a support worker engaging with a tenant and then asking the worker or tenant about the engagement and service delivery process. The observations of the practices and the day-to-day operation of Brisbane Common Ground were not premised on an assumption of validating what was reported in interviews and surveys. Rather, observations served the purposes of triangulating data sources to gain a comprehensive understanding of the management and practices of Brisbane Common Ground.

4.1.1 *Has Brisbane Common Ground been implemented as intended, and how well is the initiative managed?*

Brisbane Common Ground was implemented consistent with the principles and requirements set out by the Queensland Government. Since implementation Brisbane Common Ground has consisted of long term affordable housing with integrated, and voluntary, support services. Moreover, all of the evidence obtained in this evaluation strongly indicates that Brisbane Common Ground is managed well.

An evaluation of the effectiveness of the management of Brisbane Common Ground requires consideration of how each of the three agencies (onsite tenancy provider, onsite support provider, and onsite security) as separate entities and as a whole meet the objective of providing supportive housing. There was a clear view expressed by stakeholders that effective management of Brisbane Common Ground was attributed to several key features and practices. Common among these, and as discussed in more detail below and throughout the report, were: forming clear roles and responsibilities for the three providers - tenant support, tenancy management and security; all staff having a clear understanding of the complex needs of the tenants and how within the parameters of their role, each provider understands how best to support the tenant group; good communication within and across the three providers onsite through both formal and informal channels; having highly professional staff including a mindfulness of confidentiality; and drawing on external specialist services to meet the needs of the tenants.

Clear roles and responsibilities across the three providers

Since Brisbane Common Ground's inception considerable thought and practice has been devoted to establishing and delineating the respective roles and responsibilities of each of the three service providers: support, tenancy and security. The work to establish the roles is in part due to the innovative nature of the Brisbane Common Ground initiative and the unique combination of support, tenancy management and security in a single-site supportive housing building. All providers have separate roles and processes and it is evident considerable ongoing consultation was required to form effective operating practices. In the short time of operation, substantive work has been undertaken in working through who does what and how to assist in sustaining a person's tenancy. As noted by one manager the first two years of operation involved determining "what exactly are the elements of support that need to be coordinated to get a person's life back on track, stabilised as well as housing stability." The manager went on to comment:

Working out our roles and responsibilities has taken a lot of work. I mean we've tried. We've really not wanted to go too far away from what's been recognised as evidence based practice. (Manager)

The available evidence was drawn on in establishing the roles and the management of Brisbane Common Ground. Stakeholders likewise drew attention to the importance of

developing an understanding of where and in what practice context other service providers' responsibilities lie:

I think that's where, especially from our perspective being the property tenancy manager, when we've had some staff who get sucked into that side, that's when you get problems because we need to stand back. We need to raise those issues if we see that happening with [support provider] and let them deal with that side. We need to stay in our role. (Manager)

Below we highlight how Brisbane Common Ground has benefited from all stakeholders ascribing to a shared vision of what Brisbane Common Ground aimed to achieve, together with a shared commitment to the combined practices for realising the aims. Alongside the shared vision stakeholders attributed the successful management to a consciousness of the different functions and roles of other providers. Another manager commented on a clear yet positive tension between the operation of the three providers:

That also brought in a little bit of conflict because in this model there always will be conflict because you have two different groups. The purpose and the objectives needs to be the same. One is where we would be advocating very strongly for the tenants, where we would be for the tenant's rights, while [housing provider] will be looking at the financial aspects of it, looking at the tenancy. So there'll always be that tension but it has to be a healthy tension. (Manager)

Shared culture

The creation of a shared culture of supporting tenants to sustain housing across the three providers is a vital adjunct to having clear roles and responsibilities. The shared understanding that each agency has different roles and responsibilities in achieving the broader program's objectives were evident. Commenting on the relationship between the support and tenancy provider, a manager remarked:

It's amazing to see on the operational level [housing provider] and [support provider] staff we work as a team. That has been quite noticeable to me in the last month. With few changes happening I realise the closeness of the team, the respectfulness that we have for each other, each other's skills and the type of work we do. So I think that's working really well at the operational level. (Manager)

The culture of working together and supporting staff from other providers was consistently observed in the foyer area of the building. The foyer area was a physical site for not only the joint service delivery of the three providers, but it was a site where each of the providers was frequently observed to deliver services in a way that had direct benefit for the other providers.

Good communication

A number of structures and processes are set up to facilitate communication and information sharing. The processes surrounding allocation are a case in point where meetings to organise

a new tenancy balance the requirements of the respective agencies whilst accounting for the needs of the tenant.

Then, really, it comes down to working together between [tenancy provider] and [support provider], understanding the floor that we've got the vacancy, who else we have on that floor, what our experience of them has been, understanding as much possible the person that we're interviewing, linking with their support provider. (Onsite service provider)

A distinctive advantage to single site supportive housing is that communication can be 'just in time' and problem solving in relation to a tenancy can be sorted out promptly. With all agencies at the one location prompt problem solving is possible. This was contrasted to time delays that commonly occur as a result of coordinating tenants, tenancy managers and support workers to address tenancy issues in scattered site supportive housing. As noted by an onsite service provider such delays can result in preventable sanctions. The cost of this however is the round the clock demands on staff:

Well Common Ground Queensland's a new agency so we're a bit luckier that we've got a history of support work. So we were adapting it to being in building. It's a big adaptation for workers to be in a building all day and have people demand you all the time. So we've really had to work through some of those issues. Working out the supervision issues for after hours. We've formalised on call now for the workers, not for the tenants. (Manager)

In addition to the informal communication process, formal processes including regular meetings provide a means for constructive communication.

There's a sustaining tenancy meeting every week but every day there would be conversations around whether there's been complaints, whether from the pest inspections or the maintenance requests there's issues around the state of the unit or damage, behavioural issues in terms of reports from incidents in the building. So the tenancy managers and the three case coordinators they meet formally every week to develop sustaining tenancy plans and then we go and do the work with people about what they need to do to meet those goals of that plan. (Manager)

Professional staff including maintaining confidentiality

The professionalism of staff at Brisbane Common Ground has been consistently observed throughout the evaluation. This has included everyday interaction as well as professionalism during occasional difficult times such as a resident falling over, and talking with a distressed tenant. As noted in the following chapter, the professionalism of staff at Brisbane Common Ground has also been noted by a neighbouring business operator. Ensuring professionalism is often a subtle process. An onsite service provider described how professionalism and collaboration was important to ensure positive tenant outcomes and the functioning of the building:

... if it's for the first instance we try and separate the powers that the landlord's going to breach and do the sanctioning kind of stuff, the nasty stuff and that's up to [onsite support provider] to come in behind and, "Is there anything else we can do for you? Do you need help? Are you drinking too much? Do you need help with counselling?" or whatever and then we try and join it together that we will review - It varies. It just depends on the person. Maybe in two weeks' time after the breach expiry is gone we'll look how you're travelling then it's up to me to say, "We've had no reports. You're doing well," or "You could still improve." (Onsite service provider)

Multidisciplinary team

Drawing on the external specialist services to meet the needs of clients is an essential feature of effective management at Brisbane Common Ground. The recognition by professional staff of the complex needs of the tenants ensures referrals and links are made to specialist support services.

It's so crucial when you're working with complex people to have a team that has clinical support there, also with regard to having external services that specialise. (Onsite service provider)

The combination of skilled professional staff onsite and external specialist services results in a multidisciplinary team to assist and support tenants with complex histories and ongoing needs. The specialist agencies largely visit onsite and utilise flexible work practices (that is not structured clinic appointment times) to best fit in the tenants preferences.

Building maintenance

In this section we draw on survey data with tenants (N=120) to further address the question how well is Brisbane Common Ground managed. Augmenting the discussion above based on the perspectives of service providers, the data presented below provides a source of evidence about how well Brisbane Common Ground has been managed by documenting the perspectives of tenants. The figures below report data on tenants satisfaction with the maintenance of their individual unit (Figure 1), and maintenance of the building (Figure 2).

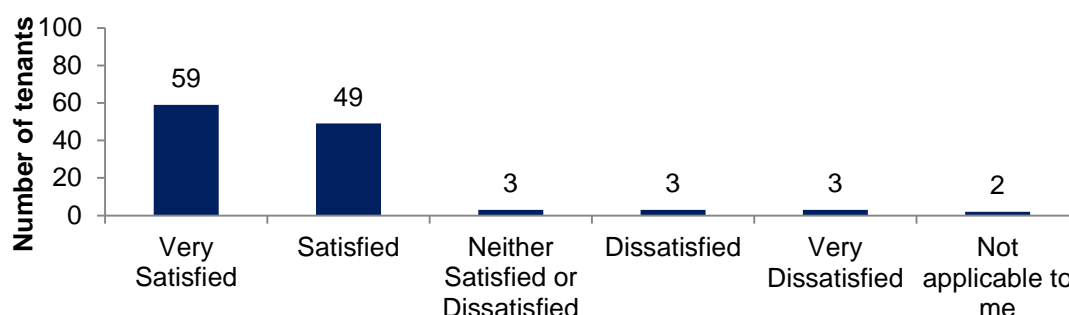


Figure 1. Tenants self-reported measures of satisfaction with the maintenance of their unit

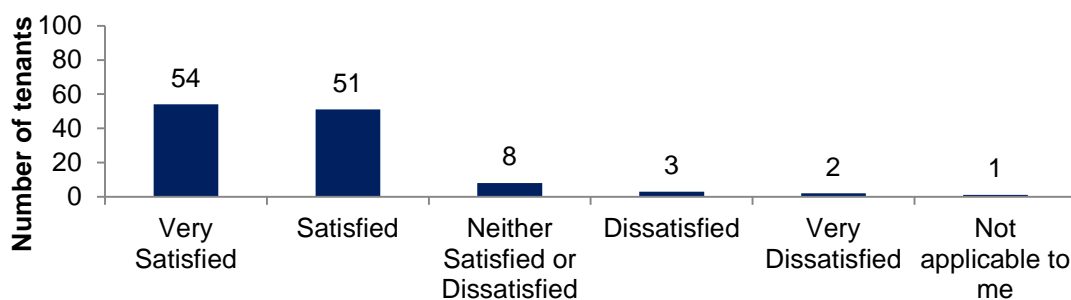


Figure 2. Tenants self-reported measures of satisfaction with the maintenance of the building

The results presented in Figure 1 and Figure 2 unambiguously demonstrate an overwhelming level of satisfaction with maintenance of both tenants' units and the building as a whole. Ninety one per cent of respondents reported satisfaction with the maintenance of their unit, whereas 88 per cent were satisfied with the maintenance of the building as a whole. These results compare favourably with data from the 2012 National Social Housing Survey. The national survey found 71 per cent of social housing tenants satisfied with the day-to-day maintenance of their housing and 77 per cent satisfied with the emergency maintenance (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2013).

The quantitative survey data with tenants and qualitative interview data with service providers demonstrates that Brisbane Common Ground has been managed well, and was implemented as intended. The results presented throughout this report about myriad other components of Brisbane Common Ground provide a more complete picture of the management of Brisbane Common Ground. Consistent with the results presented here, the data of tenant assessment, support delivery, tenant satisfaction, concierge and security, together with tenant housing and non-housing outcomes, provide further evidence of Brisbane Common Ground as a well-managed initiative. Below we specifically consider the factors which have impacted upon implementation.

4.1.2 What factors have impacted (positively or negatively) upon implementation?

The implementation of Brisbane Common Ground followed a national move to adopt and implement the Common Ground model of supportive housing in Australia. Subsequent to Australia's first Common Ground supportive housing opening in Adelaide, Brisbane's Common Ground was implemented soon after the Victorian and New South Wales Government's implemented Common Ground models in Melbourne and Sydney respectively. Parsell, Fitzpatrick and Busch-Geertsema (2014) show how an alliance of advocates successfully

lobbied governments, the private sector, and philanthropy to bring about the implementation of the new Common Ground approach to Australia. At the national level and also relevant to Queensland, Common Ground was advocated as a means to create additional affordable housing stock that would be directed toward people with chronic experiences of homelessness who had been excluded from other forms of housing.

The implementation of Brisbane Common Ground was informed by the early learnings in other Australian states as well as stakeholders in Brisbane visiting New York City and meeting with and discussing the Common Ground model with those who had direct experiences in delivering different forms of supportive housing. In this section we describe the implementation of Brisbane Common Ground, drawing out the factors that have negatively and positively impacted implementation.

Shared Aim Amongst all Stakeholders

A key feature contributing to the successful implementation of Brisbane Common Ground is a vision shared among diverse stakeholders who worked both collectively and independently to bring Brisbane Common Ground together for a number years. Through a formal Brisbane Common Ground Steering Committee, a formal design committee, and by individuals representing various sectors including the Department of Housing and Public Works, Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services, Grocon Pty Ltd, Micah Projects, and Common Ground Queensland Limited, a shared vision of Brisbane Common Ground was implemented that stakeholders universally saw as innovative. Referring to sentiments expressed by DHPW staff working through the early stages of implementation, a stakeholder reported that it was:

Quite exciting as well, but there is going to be opportunity to do something different other than our traditional shelter responses which everybody has agreed needed to be reformed but nobody quite knew how we were going to do that and what the alternate models would be. (Government representative)

The openness to innovation to address the limitations of traditional models was described as the impetus for favourably examining the Common Ground model. Stakeholders identified the limited experiences in Queensland at providing supportive housing and that working toward the implementation of Brisbane Common Ground was challenging because the community housing sector had not managed anything like the Common Ground model or the scale before. Nevertheless, the desire for something new to meet the housing and support needs of vulnerable people, even though it raised capacity issues, culminated in key government, industry and community organisations coming to “understand” what was needed and what Common Ground represented:

They developed a shared understanding of the model and what it was trying to do and how it worked, because not everybody had that. (Manager)

The shared understanding that developed is a substantive achievement given the different background and roles of the individual stakeholders. A shared aim also facilitated clarity and commitment amongst all stakeholders in a changing political environment. The implementation of Brisbane Common Ground was thus enhanced because a diverse range of stakeholders came together and developed a unified narrative about (1) what the problem was and (2) how a Brisbane Common Ground model could address the problem.

The Critical Translation of Evidence

An integral part of the implementation process was critically translating practices from Common Ground in the United States and other Australian states. As noted, the implementation of Brisbane's Common Ground followed Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney. The stakeholders charged with implementing Brisbane Common Ground actively drew on the learnings from both the United States and other areas of Australia where Common Ground supportive housing was operating.

The transfer of policy or social programs across borders, especially international borders, is widely understood to be complex. The successful transfer usually requires a sound understanding of borrowing and host contexts; a depth of understanding, and then transfer of, the critical dimensions that contributed to the program's success in the original context (Dolowitz and Marsh 2000). Stakeholders expressed their awareness of the evidence for supportive housing, and the need to implement Brisbane Common Ground in a way congruent with the evidence base. They also reflected on the need to understand how the evidence base was applicable to the Brisbane context.

We've really not wanted to go too far away from what's been recognised as evidence based practice in the States but everyone has an opinion so you've got to work it through and I think we've done well at holding that line that we want to know why it doesn't work before we change it. It's not that you don't adapt but if something's evidence based and it's got a good improvement level – I mean there's a lot of stuff on the website of SAMHSA [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration] and that about what is good practice in supportive housing so you want to try and do that. Not just change it because we've got a different view. (Manager)

The totality of experience on the Brisbane Common Ground Implementation Partnership Group and the Brisbane Common Ground Steering Committee including the program wisdom of service providers and policy stakeholders ensured considerable debate and reflection about the form Brisbane Common Ground ought to assume. There was a strong view expressed that the implementation was significantly enhanced because stakeholders critically reflected on and used the evidence base about supportive housing to underpin their decision making.

One example of the critical translation of evidence into the implementation of Brisbane Common Ground is the delineation between tenancy, security and support services. Two managers observed:

I think that they've done a fantastic job in setting it up and the separation of the property and tenancy manager from the support role. I think that having that separation of roles is good and the partnership, though, between our organisations in order to have that be effective in having those separate roles, but the joint goal, I think the partnership is important there. (Manager)

So I think that's one of the secrets because the support, if it has to operate just on its own and there's no convergence with the tenancy and property management, it's really, really difficult. (Manager)

Stakeholders not only emphasised the importance of separating these domains of service delivery – as consistent with the published literature (Rog 2004) – but they also highlighted their practices of implementing formalised mechanisms to integrate the separate entities into the one program. Brisbane Common Ground needed to include separate modes of service provision with separate roles (tenancy, support, security, for example), but the separate provision of services needed to form and contribute to a unified supportive housing model. The implementation of Brisbane Common Ground was successful, at least in part, because the separate service providers understood that their individual success relied upon other providers and the successful delivery of their services.

The practices of implementing the measures to separate support, security and tenancy management reflect a broader culture of Brisbane Common Ground staff to adopt a continuous improvement model to inform policy and practice. Widely utilised in the aged care and health sectors, a continuous improvement approach to management and day-to-day practice at Brisbane Common Ground provides a mechanism to continuously reflect and improve systems and processes. The core elements of continuous improvement were observed in practices at Brisbane Common Ground, these include: actively reflecting upon practices and searching out limitations and strategies to overcome them. As one notable example, Brisbane Common Ground changed the visitor policy to enable tenants to exercise more autonomy over people staying overnight in their unit. The impetus for the changed policy was described thus:

We got lots of feedback from tenants at the beginning that they didn't like that [visitor policy].
(Manager)

The manager reflected on the changed policy and argued that the decision was made based on tenant feedback, an analysis of legislative requirements, and consideration of the values of Brisbane Common Ground. Processes to realise continuous improvement were also evident in the descriptions of an onsite service provider actively working with security staff to help them understand the basis of a tenant's disability of autism and how autism influenced the tenant's behaviour. The onsite service provider drew on both their professional human services

qualifications and the values of Brisbane Common Ground in treating people with disabilities respectfully as a rationale for intervening to assist in changing the practices of security. Continuous improvement, as described in these ways, constituted a culture where the organisation looked to enhance processes and service delivery in a way consistent with overarching objectives of tenant well-being and tenant dignity. The operation of continuous improvement at Brisbane Common Ground was independently affirmed by an external service provider:

I think they take a really holistic view of exactly what the residents needs are and they really just try and get any service that they think might be of some sort of benefit there. It just sounds like they're constantly looking at evolving, innovating, adding little things to the timetable that might be of benefit to the tenants. (External Service Provider)

Understanding the complex lives of tenants

A further critical determiner of the positive implementation of Brisbane Common Ground is the considerable institutional memory of Micah Projects. Not only the onsite support provider, but Micah Projects has also played an instrumental role in initiating and implementing Brisbane Common Ground. Micah Projects has gained a depth understanding of the challenges, opportunities for positive intervention, and lives of people who are homeless. This is particularly the case for individuals who have slept rough and/or experienced chronic homelessness. Through the provision of street outreach, the delivery of the Brisbane Street to Home initiative, and playing a leading role in the 50 Lives 50 Homes project (and now the 500 Lives 500 Homes program), Micah Projects has built up an evidence informed practice basis in service provision to people who are homeless.

Micah Projects' informed understanding has been pivotal in the organisation's role in actively contributing to the design of the building, the delineation of responsibilities between support and tenancy providers, and significantly, in the role of support and the form it assumes. Through direct practice experiences (operating Brisbane Street to Home, for example), and drawing on an informed knowledge of the international evidence base, Micah Projects has attracted external funding to provide an onsite clinical nurse. Gaining support for an onsite clinical nurse was described as critical because:

Integrating health care was a key success factor in the States and in England for sustaining tenancy for the chronic homeless with high health needs. It influences their behaviour so much. (Manager)

Micah Project's institutional memory and expertise is recognised and has enhanced implementation. On the one hand, the organisation advocated for integrated medical care because of an understanding of the tenant group's needs. On the other, they understood potential problems of integrating health care into single-site supportive housing and they implemented the health service accordingly:

The main job that we wanted to focus on was medication management. So how do you do that in a way that's not institutional like you line up and get your meds dished out. That's one thing they do in the States that we didn't want to do. (Senior stakeholder)

The funding obtained from non-government entities to pay for the clinical nurse, and the manner in which the clinical nursing service functions, is a concrete example of the positive role Micah Project has played in implementation.

Recognition that Brisbane Common Ground is a home

The implementation of Brisbane Common Ground has benefited from a long standing intention to provide a home. Stakeholders have widely reported their understanding was to develop and implement Brisbane Common Ground, not as a homeless facility, rather decisions about how Brisbane Common Ground is implemented and operationalised are underpinned by the objective of creating homes for tenants.

One stakeholder described that from the first inception of the Brisbane Common Ground idea up until day-to-day practice, people must enter Brisbane Common Ground and think:

Oh, this is just like any other building. It's a residential apartment where people live. (Manager)

Likewise, another stakeholder described the design features created an openness so that tenants felt at home: "just the way the building feels; people feel like it is home." The stakeholder went on to link the design features with the more fundamental objectives set out by the practices of onsite staff to respect tenants by providing tenants "somewhere they value, somewhere that they feel like home."

The desire to create a home was informed by an understanding that Brisbane Common Ground, as a large building housing people with high needs and support provided onsite, could be the antithesis to home. Many people articulated their drive to ensure that Brisbane Common Ground needed to be a home, and not an institution.

The objectives are to have the onsite support but have it in a way that doesn't institutionalise but still maintains people's individual leases and supports people to meet their obligations as tenants. (Manager)

The challenge to not create an institution was addressed through design and practice. In terms of the former, the presence of onsite support, particularly security and concierge in the foyer, was understood as potentially undermining efforts to create home. A stakeholder reported how they toured other Common Ground initiatives, and they made a decision to create an open built form, where concierge staff were openly accessible (rather than behind glass) to create a more welcoming environment. Further, and as noted above, the onsite clinical nurse delivers services in a discreet way, and does not subvert the autonomy of tenants, such as "get your meds dished out."

The implementation has benefited from several factors as described above. There was a unanimous view expressed by stakeholders that the implementation and operation of Brisbane Common Ground was positive:

It's beyond anyone's expectations except maybe Micah's, I don't know, but certainly beyond mine and beyond anyone in the department. (Manager)

In addition to the positive factors that have enhanced implementation, challenges attracting tenants through the low to moderate income stream have impacted implementation in a way different from the model intention. Brisbane Common Ground has not achieved the anticipated number of people receiving low to moderate incomes who are employed to occupy 50 per cent of tenancies. A manager reported that the Department of Housing and Public Works actively encouraged Brisbane Common Ground to house higher income people to address revenue pressures. The manager remarked, however, that Brisbane Common Ground has achieved only limited success in attracting employed tenants. As described below, Brisbane Common Ground did not believe it was financially viable to leave properties untenanted while recruiting high income tenants, so a decision was made to allocate housing to people who were unemployed through the low to moderate income stream.

4.1.3 What are the tenancy assessment processes, and how do they contribute to or undermine the intended allocation of properties and tenant mix?

The assessment processes are a fundamental dimension to the ongoing operation of Brisbane Common Ground. Brisbane Common Ground has been funded to target an approximate 50 per cent mix of people, who either:

- Earn low to moderate incomes, with a focus on people who are working and have a connection to the local area; or
- Have experienced chronic homelessness, with a focus on people who have been or currently are rough sleepers, and will benefit from coordinated service delivery and 24/7 security and support (Queensland Government 2012).

The tenant mix of low to moderate income people and those with previous experiences of chronic homelessness is seen as a “defining feature” of the Common Ground model and aims to create “a socially inclusive community in which all tenants can do well” (Queensland Government 2012: 11). We consider social mix in Section 5.1.5, for now we demonstrate the threefold significance and justification of the assessment processes to the Brisbane Common Ground model. We then examine the on the ground practices of the assessment processes.

First, the assessment processes must ensure that Brisbane Common Ground provides housing to people who require support, namely: approximately 50 per cent of the tenants. As one stakeholder argued, Brisbane Common Ground is “not for people who can live by

themselves or live independently. It's for people who actually require support." The provision of onsite support, including social support, concierge and onsite tenancy officers, can only be justified on the grounds that the tenant cohort have particular needs that the onsite resources can meet. Indeed, the model of locating support onsite rests on an assumption that the people who require onsite support within an affordable housing model have not had their needs met in other forms of housing and accommodation where onsite support and security features do not exist. It can be argued that people's experiences of chronic homelessness, one of the criteria for accessing Brisbane Common Ground, is in fact evidence that other models of housing and accommodation where support is not located onsite has not met their needs. Thus prior experiences of chronic homelessness represents a strong indicator that people, for a period of time at least, require a model of housing different from what has traditionally been made available.

Second, assessment processes are critical to Brisbane Common Ground because the model explicitly intends to achieve a social mix of tenants. The low to moderate income tenants are, in theory, different from the chronic homeless tenants in that the former are employed, and the latter are not. The differences between the two groups may well be less stark in practice, as it is possible that people entering Brisbane Common Ground because of low to moderate income may have previously been chronically homeless. Further, the social mix is based on a static point in time assessment. People who enter Brisbane Common Ground because of low to moderate incomes earned through employment may become unemployed and thus may no longer be low to moderate income earners. As demonstrated below, people allocated tenancies because of low to moderate income may also either develop support needs or they may have support needs that were not identified during assessment.

Likewise, tenants' allocated properties because of chronic homelessness may gain employment and as a consequence may achieve low to moderate status; they may also overcome the problems that required support and constituted their eligibility in the first place. In fact, people with histories of chronic homelessness becoming employed and overcoming personal problems and social exclusion would constitute an excellent sign that Brisbane Common Ground had achieved one measure of success. Nevertheless, social mix is an ideal that is informed by people's status upon application and assessment at the point of entering Brisbane Common Ground. Because the social mix is based on an individual's assessed circumstance and not the tenure of housing, (see Sautkina, Bond and Kearns 2012; Randolph and Wood 2004), it is always possible that people will change and over time may no longer possess the indicators of a category, be it low to moderate income, or need for support.

Third, assessment is central to Brisbane Common Ground because it is a practice mechanism for the housing and support provider to ensure a predetermined building dynamic is achieved. For example, our interviews with stakeholders demonstrated the importance of the assessment and allocation processes taking account of the number of people with intellectual

impairments, other diagnoses or health conditions. It was also explained that the assessment of tenants informs where in the building a tenant will be located; for instance, a person convicted of a sex offence would not be allocated a property on the same floor as a tenant who has children visit. As one stakeholder observed when describing the allocation of tenancies:

The gender mix is important, how many people can you sustain with active addictions? How many can you sustain with personality disorders? You've got to keep an eye on that. (Onsite service provider)

The link between a thoughtful assessment of applicants and the purposeful allocation of tenancies was highlighted by Parsell and colleagues with Melbourne's Elizabeth Street Common Ground (Parsell et al., 2015). They found that the initial allocation of tenancies in Elizabeth Street Common Ground to a disproportionate number of people exiting prison, and without an assessment of the building dynamics, created significant problems for the liveability and environment in the first year of operation. The systematic assessment of applicant's vis-à-vis building dynamics that Brisbane Common Ground employs is a critical features of the successes and positive outcomes identified in subsequent chapters.

Day-to-day practices: assessing applicants

From a practice perspective, a history of chronic homelessness and a requirement for support underpin all aspects of the assessment process. Chronic homelessness, a term with a clear definition in the United States and one that is often used without a clear meaning in Australia (Parsell 2014), is operationalised at Brisbane Common Ground as "six months rough sleeping or two years with no stability" (manager). An applicant's need for support is the second critical assessment piece; assessing for support can be difficult. A stakeholder highlighted the importance of vulnerability in determining access to Brisbane Common Ground. An onsite service provider stated that:

So if you're talking about two or three people we might say, "all right. They're all pretty much suitable for this vacancy", and we might then have the conversation, "who needs it most? Who's the most vulnerable? (Onsite service provider)

These sentiments were consistently expressed by a diverse range of stakeholders. One summed up the need for support linked to affordable housing, and not just a need for affordable housing, by noting: "this building is not for people who are just homeless." A dominant theme emerged from all stakeholders that clearly argued Brisbane Common Ground was not only a housing response for people with high vulnerabilities and support requirements, but it was also a model that included objective assessment measures to identify people's vulnerability. A key stakeholder in this area explained:

So we do an assessment to see the type of support they [applicants] need because with this building it's not for people who can live by themselves or live independently, privately or live in the community.

It's for people who actually require support, people with complex needs. That's where [support coordinator] does assessment to check whether this is the right environment for them, do they require the support, what sort of support they require, do they currently receive any support from other agencies. (Manager)

Despite the centrality given to assessing for support needs, the assessment processes, guided as they are by a determination on the most vulnerable and the most in need, have limitations. Several stakeholders explained how the assessment processes to determine vulnerability and eligibility were partial. One stakeholder described the importance of matching for success, whereby the allocation is consistent with the needs of the individual applicant. But the stakeholder stressed that matching for success is challenging because the limited information about the person and their circumstances constrains the housing provider's capacity to make a fully informed decision. When asked about what could assist in matching for success, an onsite service provider remarked:

I think in practice it's impossible because they're going to go through an outreach worker and there's not going to be any detailed assessments done on their side. So until you actually get to know the person over a little bit of time you're not going to pick up on it. (Onsite service provider)

In addition to the challenges inherent in relying on partial sources of information to inform an assessment, the Brisbane Common Ground assessment process seeks to identify if an individual's support needs are beyond what can be provided onsite. A stakeholder explained that, after a tenant commenced their tenancy, it became apparent that the tenant required a high level of day-to-day personal and healthcare. It was explained that the tenant's support needs could not be met at Brisbane Common Ground, and the staff supported the tenant to move into a "nursing home."

A further indication of the assessment processes can be gleaned from a description of some characteristics of the tenant group who were allocated a Brisbane Common Ground property because of chronic homelessness. Table 2 is informed by self-reported data from tenants (N=63) participating in the Round 1 outcomes survey. In support of the intention of assessment and allocation processes to house people with chronic experiences of homelessness and who also would benefit from coordinated service delivery and 24 hour support, Table 2 shows that more than half of the respondents reported lifetime experiences of homelessness of more than two years; ten of these respondents reported experiencing more than 10 years of homelessness in their lifetime. Further, of the 63 people, only three were employed. Indeed, 43 of these people had been outside of the labour market for more than one year. There were similarly low rates of education and training reported, with 57 people not engaged in any formal training or education. The rates of disengagement from the labour market and training are consistent with the majority of tenants, 72 per cent, identifying a disability that prevents them from working. The demographic data reveals that the Brisbane Common Ground

assessment process is facilitating access to the intended target group of people with chronic experiences of homelessness and other needs.

Table 2. Tenants self-reported data from Round One outcomes survey

Question	Response options	N
EXPERIENCES OF TIME SPENT HOMELESS		
Length of time spent homeless in lifetime		
	< 3 months	3
	> 3 months and < 1 year	11
	> 1 year and < 2 years	8
	> 2 years and < 5 years	10
	> 5 years and < 10 years	12
	10+ years	10
	Total	55
EDUCATION		
Currently enrolled in a course		
	No	57
	Yes, part-time	5
	Yes, full-time	1
	Total	63
EMPLOYMENT		
Currently employed		3
Never been employed		9
Amount of time in last paid employment		
	Days (3-6 days)	3
	Weeks	1
	Months (2-9 months)	4
	Years (1-35 years)	43
	Total	63
Currently have a disability that prevents from working		
	Yes	42
	No	18
	Total	60
SUBSTANCE USE		
Regular use of an illicit substance in the last 12 months		
	Yes	20
	No	40
	Total	60

Day-to-day practices: low to moderate income tenants

The discussion thus far has focused on the assessment and allocation of tenancies to people because of chronic homelessness and high vulnerability. The assessment processes for people with low to moderate incomes also involved a systematic and deliberate procedure. To access Brisbane Common Ground as a low to moderate income tenant, properties are advertised using online platforms used in forms of private rental, such as realestate.com.au or Gumtree.

There are two key decisions that influence the assessment of tenants with low to moderate incomes. The first decision is based on an applicant's income; income is significant because rents charged to tenants are based on a tenant's income. Thus a tenant's income will determine the amount of rent paid. To some extent, rent from higher earning low to moderate income tenants can offset the low revenue base of very low income tenants. When describing the assessment processes, a stakeholder remarked:

So what we're looking for is people who don't subsist wholly on a Centrelink benefit; as long as they've got at least a casual wage to go with it. So it raises a little bit more income. (Onsite service provider)

The second decision that underpins the assessment of low to moderate income tenants is their capacity to function independently, in the absence of support. Whereas the people with chronic experiences of homelessness are screened into Brisbane Common Ground because of an assessed requirement for support, albeit as imperfect as it is, low to moderate income tenants are screened out if the assessment determines they required a level of support that increases the overall demand beyond the capacity of the support service. When referring to low to moderate income applicants it was explained that:

We don't want them to have support needs or else that's going to put pressure on [the support provider]. (Onsite service provider)

Even though the assessment processes actively determine whether people applying for Brisbane Common Ground through the low to moderate income stream have support needs, a stakeholder stated that some of these tenants "have come with pretty high needs themselves." The stakeholder articulated a challenging issue for Brisbane Common Ground. If Brisbane Common Ground has vacancies, and if the only applicants under the low to moderate income stream have support needs, there is financial pressure to allocate them tenancies, in spite of their support needs and the resources involved in supporting them. The stakeholder explained:

You can't keep the place vacant while you're out trying to get the higher income people. (Manager)

The stakeholder expressed the view that Brisbane Common Ground has been forced to allocate tenancies to people through the low to moderate income stream who received the entirety of their income from Centrelink benefits. This assertion is evidenced through the onsite service provision data. Throughout the 2013/14 financial year, support periods were opened for 165 tenants of Brisbane Common Ground. A support period is opened whenever the onsite support provider delivers any kind of formal service to a tenant. The 165 tenants who received support in the 2013/2014 financial years constitutes 92 per cent of the tenant cohort that resided at Brisbane Common Ground during that period. More specifically, of the 165 people who received support, 71 were allocated a tenancy because of low to moderate income.

The allocation of tenancies to people on Centrelink benefits through the low to moderate income stream has implications for the funding model¹. Further, and as the data above indicates, the tenants allocated a Brisbane Common Ground property through the low to moderate income stream require and receive a high level of support from the onsite service provider. Whereas Brisbane Common Ground was funded to provide support to approximately half the tenant cohort, in practice over 90 per cent of tenants receive formalised support from the onsite support provider.

4.1.4 How is support provided, and are the tenancy managers and support providers working collaboratively?

Consistent with the Brisbane Common Ground service model and in line with the evidence base (Rog 2004), support services at Brisbane Common Ground are voluntary and tenant directed. As a stakeholder noted:

It's voluntary. Our roles are people engage with us voluntarily. (Onsite service provider)

The voluntary nature of services available at Brisbane Common Ground means that tenants can chose the nature, extent and timing in which they engage. The onsite service provider above remarked that the voluntary and tenant directed nature of the services means that tenants are more likely to meaningfully engage and work as active participants. As the data above about the number of tenants provided support in the 2014/13 financial year demonstrates, the vast majority of tenants (92%) choose to engage with support. Moreover, stakeholders stressed that the voluntary nature of engagement was a more respectful and empowering approach because tenants did not feel compelled to engage with support and go through formal support requirements as a means to keep housing (Carr 2011). The stakeholder recognised that some tenants, especially new tenants, are reluctant to engage with support. The stakeholder said that it is important for them to build a professional relationship with tenants characterised by trust. Through the building of trust and provision of practical assistance, it was described that tenants freely sought out support.

¹ It likewise has implication for the intended social mix; see Section 5.1.5

Parsell et al., (2015) argues that the term support in supportive housing is used with little explanation; support is a concept that sounds good and makes sense, but there is little evidence about what support actually entails in supportive housing. At Brisbane Common Ground support is provided in many ways, by various stakeholders, and support is conceptualised as an endeavour to achieve multiple ends. At the concierge desk, there is a tenants' support worker, in addition to a security officer (discussed in Section 5.1.3). The role of the tenant support worker is to respond to the day-to-day and immediate needs of tenants. This includes unlocking doors when keys are misplaced, arranging transport, liaising with the case coordinator, and listening to tenants when they have problems, especially in the middle of the night. The latter was described as a significant form and means of support that was unique to the Common Ground model. A stakeholder explained that:

The other role the tenant services play at night particularly is the emotional support to people with mental illness, so the people with insomnia, the people who are up and down all night, the people who are anxious, issues around self-harm, issues around intoxicated behaviour... So all those things that would cause stress and accumulate stress by waiting 12 hours until 9:00 am are reduced.
(Manager)

The supportive role of the tenant support workers at the concierge desk is substantiated by a tenant:

The staff here, it's good that they do listen to that because it's good to have someone that actually does listen to you instead of just going, yeah, alright. It will get better or it will get worse, so on and so forth. Sometimes it does get better, but I still can't sleep because of it. Like I said, I come down here at night talking to Leanne or whoever at the front desk here and it helps a little bit, not sleeping. I don't want to go annoy my mates here and that. I've got the staff here overnight to actually help me talk about what is going on in my head. (Female, 31-40 years, Non-Indigenous)

Both the manager and the tenant argue that the presence of support staff 24 hours per day meant that problems that occur over night can be addressed onsite to ensure that minor issues are deescalated and to reduce the need for call out support (such as ambulance or emergency departments).

The onsite service providers also provide a case coordination function, a function that is more formalised and more in-depth than the tenant services worker role. Below we demonstrate how the case coordination role is deliberately directed toward addressing tenancy problems and sustaining tenancies. The case coordination role also includes supporting tenants to develop living skills. In the extract below, the tenant refers to support organised by an onsite case coordinator and delivered by an onsite staff member (chef), an external service provider, and further support from a Brisbane Common Ground neighbour:

I've never been in a flat before and this is the first time I've been in a flat and I'm trying to learn how to do everything the right way. I also got [chef] coming down and teaching me how to cook. And I got

[external support provider] teaching me how to do my shopping. I didn't think I'd get here because I've been living in and out of hostels but I never thought I'd get into a flat. But I gotta learn how to keep it tidy and all that and do the washing and [Brisbane Common Ground neighbour] helps me out sometimes and [external support provider] reckons I'm doing good. (Female, 41-50 years, Non-Indigenous)

In addition to living skills and practical day-to-day support, the case coordination role involves supporting tenants with a wide range of problems and needs, these include: child protection issues, family law court issues, liaising with community and external supports, and providing tenants assistance to exit Brisbane Common Ground if requested. Case coordinators provide a range of direct service provision functions that transcend well beyond meeting the immediate housing needs of tenants.

Stakeholders emphasised the importance of staff training and the need to develop a sophisticated model of service delivery. At an immediate and practical level, staff interpersonal skills and developing a capacity to deescalate problems was emphasised:

...we have trained everyone. We want police to be a last resort not the first. So everyone has been trained in de-escalation skills, managing complex behaviour, motivational interviewing. (Manager)

The stakeholder above argued that onsite staff had a role to play in supporting tenants to develop strategies other than, for example, contacting the ambulance for a minor issue such as a headache. In addition to managing behaviour that is complex, and enacting strategies that reduced tenants reliance on contacting emergency services to deal with crisis, it was understood that service provision and the day-to-day practices of onsite support needed to be informed by an understanding of tenants' situations and locating their behaviours within a context of their life experiences and diagnosis. When reflecting upon behaviour that may place a tenant at risk of breaching the tenancy act, another manager stressed:

But it's not their intention to cause these issues. It's to do with the post traumatic disorder. We know there has been some sort of trauma. That's their way of surviving, that's their way of engaging. (Manager)

Support was thus provided in a manner that reflected the situation and needs of the individual tenant. These assertions from the manager above are endorsed by a tenant who described receiving support at Brisbane Common Ground:

They know I've got post-traumatic stress disorder. If I'm going off, if someone pushed me to the limit where I go off my head, they know how to control it. They know what to do here, and it's good to have people like that around that knows what they're doing when I go off. (Female, 31-40 years, Non-Indigenous)

Further consistent with assertions about appropriate and the voluntary nature of service provision, the tenant survey shows that 76 per cent of respondents found Brisbane Common

Ground staff helpful to talk about personal problems, with eight per cent identifying staff as unhelpful to talk about personal problems (Figure 3).

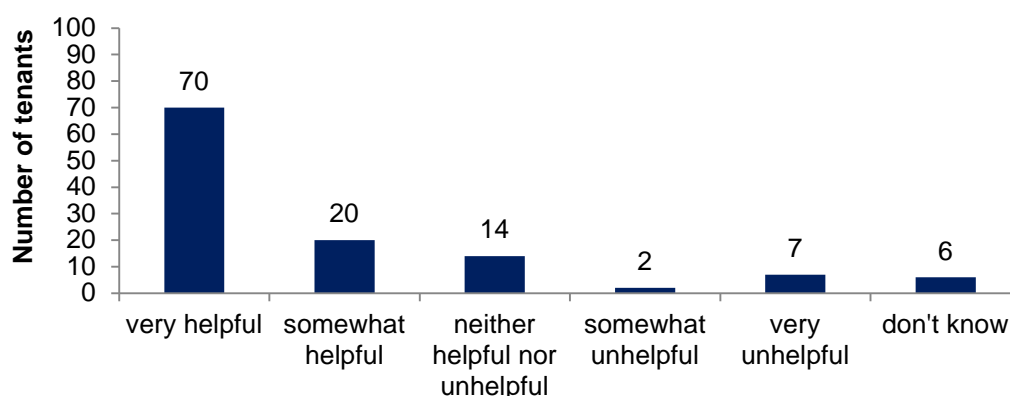


Figure 3. Tenants' ratings of helpfulness of staff when tenants need to talk to someone about personal problems

The extent to which tenants reported the helpfulness of staff is contextualised by their qualitative comments. Dominant among tenant's characterisations of onsite support staff were the approach used by staff and the practical assistance provided.

The staff are very well informed of what's going on in the building and also very friendly with their tone of voice and body language. They do very well at always speaking to people as adult, regardless of how affected the individual is. (Female, 18-30 years, Non-Indigenous)

It's been wonderful. I've had amazing support... Common Ground. Paul and Andy and Derrick and Janice have been brilliant and they treat me brilliantly. They've almost become like a second family because they're so helpful. So it's good. (Female, 41-50 years, Non-Indigenous)

It's the facility within common ground and the support that you get if you have problems they come and talk to you they give you alternative ways to solve problems. (Male, 18-30 years, Non-Indigenous)

The relationships between the tenancy managers and the support providers were also seen as significant in successfully meeting tenants' diverse needs. A stakeholder described how in previous roles where he provided social support to tenants experiencing problems, accessing the tenancy provider and liaising with them to address a tenant's problem was problematic. The stakeholder described how an inability to access the tenancy manager in previous roles invariably resulted in the tenant "spiralling out of control really because you haven't got a proper way of communicating" with the tenancy provider. On the other hand, at Brisbane Common Ground the stakeholder observed that when a tenant experiences a problem:

I'll ring [onsite tenancy manager] or get [him/her] upstairs and we'll discuss it immediately. That's fantastic. (Onsite service provider)

Stakeholders identified the importance for the tenancy worker and support workers to be able to immediately and informally contact each other to address a presenting issue. In addition to ad hoc contact, a formal Tenancy Coordination Meeting between the two parties takes place each week. The meeting is framed as a mechanism to overcome tenancy problems and to promote tenancy sustainment. By explicitly framing the meeting as sustaining tenancies, it clearly represents and signifies the commitment held by both parties to achieve the agreed upon end of housing sustainment. More specifically, sustaining housing was not simply an objective of the support worker, but a combined objective shared by both parties. In practice, and as described by stakeholders, this meant if a person went into rental arrears or even if they discontinued their voluntary automatic rent deduction payment (Centrelink), both the support provider and tenancy provider would work with the tenant to develop a sustaining tenancy plan.

It is the close relationship between the tenancy and support providers that stakeholders believe contributes to problems being resolved and tenants thus sustaining their tenancies. Indeed, the stakeholders interviewed often contrasted the positive and effective working relationships at Brisbane Common Ground with their direct practice experiences in other housing and support roles where there was disconnection between the two roles. It is, however, not just the functioning of close relationships and collaborations between tenancy and support providers. Nor is it solely about support providers and tenancy providers being colocated onsite. Rather what is fundamental, and what drives the positive outcomes described above, is the tenancy provider and the support provider sharing a similar understanding and ascribing to a shared vision of supportive housing. One stakeholder emphasised the importance of the tenancy provider understanding the role, challenges and opportunities that the support provider has. The stakeholder said that Brisbane Common Ground worked well because the tenancy managers, rather than adopting a punitive approach to tenants or believing that tenants could make positive change immediately, understood the challenges faced by the support provider and the challenges moreover, of the tenant cohort:

So with [tenancy workers] they understand that's not how it works. It's actually a long process. People are not going to change overnight. (Manager)

Alongside this description of the tenancy providers understanding the challenges faced by the support providers to promote the conditions for tenants to comply with their tenancy obligations, all stakeholders expressed a coherent and consistent vision of Brisbane Common Ground:

They developed a shared understanding of the model and what it was trying to do and how it worked. (Manager)

From this vision all staff sought to deliver the range of services at Brisbane Common Ground in a way that worked toward the realisation of the consistent outcome. Instead of tenancy managers focusing exclusively on rents and tenancy issues, and support providers focused exclusively on a tenants support needs; both stakeholders understood that their roles constituted part of a function to achieve the objectives of Brisbane Common Ground. Even though they had different roles and represented different professional and training backgrounds, the tenancy providers and support providers presented a unified narrative about how their roles contributed to Brisbane Common Ground providing safe, secure and affordable housing for people who had otherwise been marginalised from housing.

The function of Brisbane Common Ground can be contrasted with dominant practices in social housing, welfare and health profession to people with mental illnesses. In a recent examination of the antisocial behaviour policy in Queensland's public housing, Jones and colleagues (Jones et al., 2014) not only found social housing and a broad range of mainstream and community service provider working separately, but they identified fundamentally disjointed conceptualisation of tenants/client needs. Mental health and service providers routinely work with their clients in a way that does not take into account the role of housing, or how the presence/absence of housing contributes to or undermines other areas of their client's well-being.

Similarly, they found that public housing authorities routinely issue antisocial behaviour strikes to tenants with mental illnesses without taking into account, or working with, tenants health and support providers (Jones et al., 2014). Brisbane Common Ground does not only constitute an integrated approach at the service provision level, but unlike other areas of public housing and service provision, Brisbane Common Ground is a model that is fundamentally integrated as a concept and endeavour to promote positive housing and well-being outcomes for tenants.

The data presented in this section demonstrates that support is provided in a way consistent with the evidence base. Moreover, and as further substantiated in the subsequent chapter demonstrating housing outcomes, the provision of support at Brisbane Common Ground is significantly contributing to positive housing outcomes.

4.1.5 How is access to mainstream and allied service providers achieved, and is it successful?

In addition to the direct provision of a range of services, Brisbane Common Ground is intended to facilitate tenants' access to external service providers. The onsite support providers identify mainstream and allied services which tenants require and are eligible for. This has resulted in a range of human services visiting Brisbane Common Ground and working with tenants including drug and alcohol counsellor, personal counsellor, vocational assistance, domestic assistance and personal care. The onsite support provider facilitates the engagement from

mainstream and allied service providers through developing memoranda of understanding, shared case management plans, referrals and assessment protocols.

An onsite service provider explained how the role with tenants involved trying to:

Link them in and encourage them to go mainly or see if it's even relevant for some people. It may not be relevant for some people but mainly trying to encourage people.

When describing the role of onsite support providers facilitating tenants accessing external service providers, a stakeholder emphasised the importance of onsite staff playing an active role. The stakeholder observed that tenants will often not engage with external service providers, even when the service provider is delivering a service the tenant has identified as necessary and desirable. The stakeholder referred to the incongruence between what tenants need and what tenants do. On occasions when external support providers do visit Brisbane Common Ground, the stakeholder stated that onsite support staff:

Have to tee them up otherwise they [tenants] sit in their unit, and that's all they do. So we do spend a bit of time doing that, ringing around. We ring people that have talked about it or have seen them in the past. We might ring, say, 10 or 12, maybe 15 for [drug and alcohol counsellor]. Maybe two or three will come. That's about our percentage ratio and we're happy with that. (Onsite service provider)

Consistent with the depiction of direct service delivery by onsite staff as actively trying to facilitate tenant engagement, the onsite staff similarly employ active means to facilitate tenants accessing and working with external support providers. A human service worker visiting Brisbane Common Ground on a drop in basis, rather than a structured way, argued that the drop in basis matched the preferences of tenants.

I really can't emphasise enough the whole drop-in nature of the service I do there [Brisbane Common Ground]. It wouldn't work if I said, "I'll see you at 9:00 am next week and we'll just do this for three months." It wouldn't work. I discovered that really, really quickly when I first started that there and I'd like to think that the reason that I get a really, really good turnout and I get really good value from the service is (a) because of the staff there and (b) because of that whole flexible nature. If you give those guys an appointment and say, "Turn up then," they're not going to turn up because something's going to happen. But if you go, "Okay, I'm here on Monday and Wednesday next week. Any issues chat to the front desk and make a time," or we might do a Tuesday night when something does come up but having that ready access to the service there it seems like it makes a real difference. (External service provider)

The assertions from onsite service providers about their active strategies to engage tenants with external support services are valued by tenants. The survey data reported in Figure 4 shows that 71 per cent of respondents indicated that staff at Brisbane Common Ground were helpful in assisting them to access external services, agencies and people. Only four per cent found staff unhelpful in this respect.

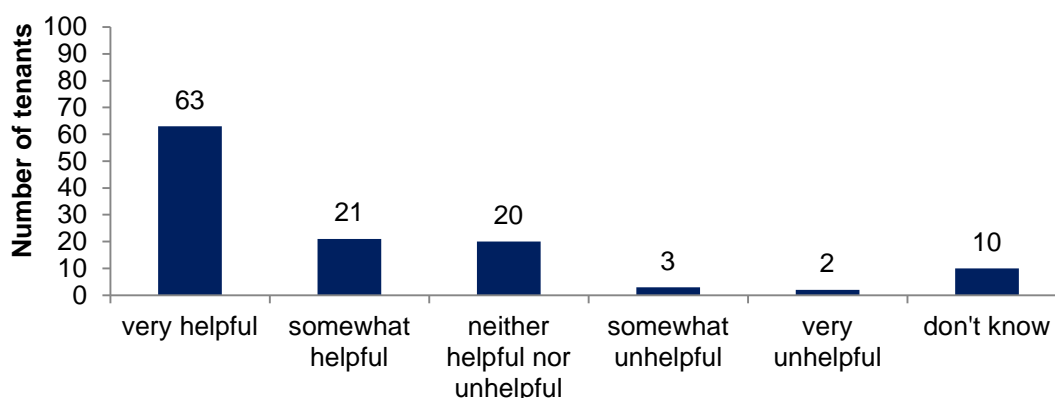


Figure 4. Tenants' ratings of helpfulness of staff to assist in accessing services, agencies, and people located outside Brisbane Common Ground

If we scrutinise the survey responses in terms of people allocated a tenancy because of chronic homelessness and high vulnerability and distinguish them from people allocated housing because of low to moderate income status, we see that the differences between the two groups are minimal. Figure 5 shows that the tenants who reported staff helpful in assisting them access services, agencies, and people outside Brisbane Common Ground were roughly similar: 52 per cent of tenants with a history of homelessness and 48 per cent of low to moderate income tenants. The minimal difference between the two groups is likely explained by both groups of tenants actually receiving support services.

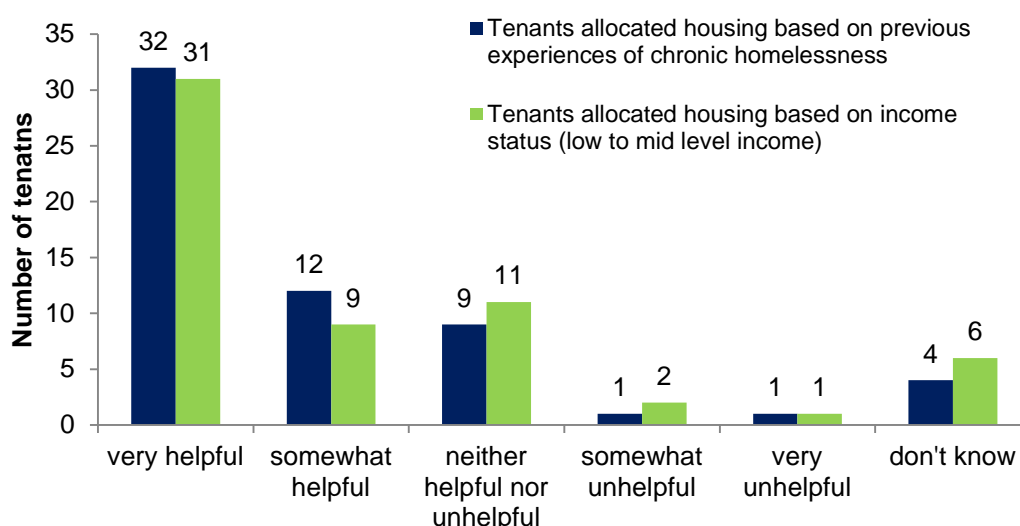


Figure 5. Tenants' ratings of helpfulness of staff at Brisbane Common Ground in assisting to access services, agencies, or people outside Brisbane Common Ground by tenant allocation group

5 Post-Occupancy evaluation

The post-occupancy evaluation examines whether the design and performance of Brisbane Common Ground is meeting user requirements (Queensland Government 2012). The key users of Brisbane Common Ground are the tenants, the onsite support providers, and the onsite tenancy managers. Consistent with the formative evaluation, this chapter draws on survey data from tenants (N=120), qualitative interviews with tenants (N=27), and qualitative interviews with key stakeholders of Brisbane Common Ground (N=12), including onsite support providers, onsite tenancy managers, external support providers, a government representative and a neighbour.

5.1.1 *How is Brisbane Common Ground rated by tenants, and what are tenants' preferences for housing and support?*

The tenant and support satisfaction survey (N=120) revealed overwhelming satisfaction with multiple components of Brisbane Common Ground. Figure 6 shows that 94 per cent of tenants were 'definitely' or 'thought' they were pleased with their housing. Only six per cent of respondents were 'not really' or 'definitely not' pleased with their housing.

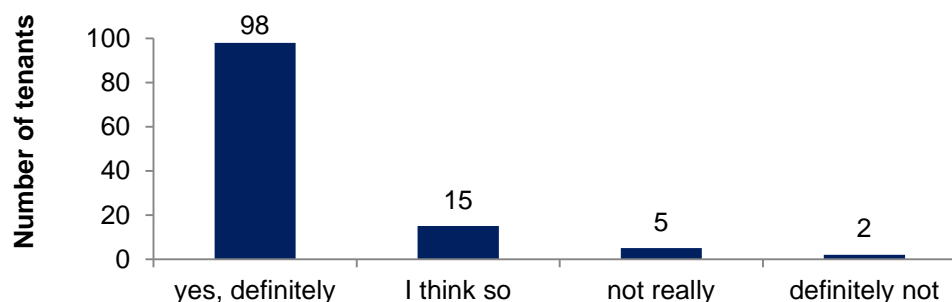


Figure 6. Tenants' ratings of their pleasure with their current housing

Similarly, Figure 7 through Figure 9 demonstrate that 88 per cent of respondents were satisfied with suitability of their housing to their households needs; a further 92 per cent were satisfied with the affordability of their housing, and 82 per cent were satisfied with the size of their unit.

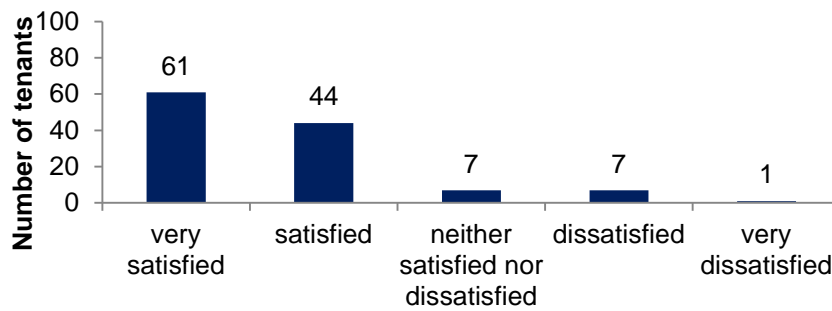


Figure 7. Tenants' ratings of satisfaction with the overall suitability of their current housing for the needs of their household

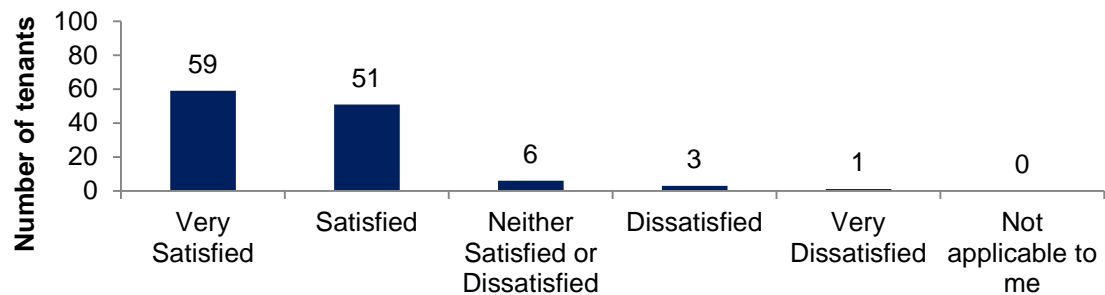


Figure 8. Tenants' ratings of satisfaction with the affordability of their rent

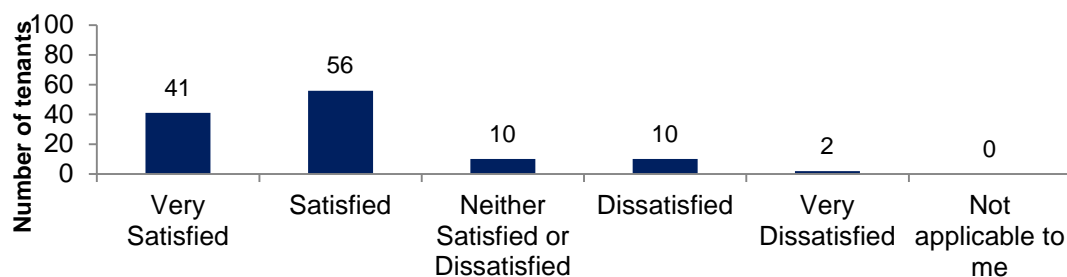


Figure 9. Tenants' ratings of satisfaction with the size of their unit

The survey data presented unequivocally portrays tenants as pleased and satisfied with their housing and the built environment at Brisbane Common Ground. The positive responses in the data moreover are consistent with all but one of the other 17 specific housing questions

reported in Appendix 1². In Appendix 1 we show that 39 per cent of respondents were dissatisfied with access to parking, whereas only 13 per cent reported satisfaction. Parking was the only area examined where the majority of Brisbane Common Ground tenants did not report satisfaction or report positively on their needs being met.

Extending the satisfaction data, in the section below we evaluate whether, and if so how, the high levels of satisfaction with the built form at Brisbane Common Ground translated into tenants' feeling at home.

5.1.2 Is Brisbane Common Ground people's home?

Tenants were asked "do you feel like your current housing at Brisbane Common Ground is your home?" The overwhelming majority, 93 per cent (N=111), responded that Brisbane Common Ground was their home.

To contextualise the survey responses, we asked "what makes your current housing feel like home?" We considered open-ended questions consistently applied would enable tenants' the freedom and opportunity to articulate their views on living in single-site supportive housing. Responses to the question about what contributed to Brisbane Common Ground feeling like home included:

My family can come here any time they want and can stay for a couple of days. (Female, 51-60 years, Indigenous)

I feel that it is my home which means that I can put things in it, I can make it my apartment and my room and my space and it all reinforces the emotional and material security. (Male, 61-70 years, Non-Indigenous)

Living here it's in your own control. Your room can be as clean as you want or it can be as messy as you want, either way. But I think the control is back in your hands, gives you the power to make whatever you desire. (Male, 41-50 years, Non-Indigenous)

Being able to have my independence. (Male, 18-30 years, Non-Indigenous)

I can stay up late and watch my movies late on the weekend. A flat screen TV. A washing machine. (Male, 31-40 years, Non-Indigenous)

Being completely independent and living on my own gives me a great sense of pride in the sense that I am able to support myself in any and all ways required to lead my own life. (Female, 18-30 years, Non-Indigenous)

² In Appendix 1 we present survey data on responses to satisfaction with other aspects of Brisbane Common Ground, including: layout of building; condition of inside of unit; layout of their unit; location; rooftop garden, rooftop Gambaro room; rooftop tenants' lounge; car parking access; living in a high rise building; proximity to shops; proximity to public transport; proximity to recreational facilities; proximity to medical services; proximity to educational and training facilities; proximity to employment; proximity to community and support services, and proximity to family and friends.

Having one's own place was described as promoting the physical conditions to live life of one's own volition. For many, housing at Brisbane Common Ground and the way of life it enabled was contrasted with their previous life experiences as homeless. The importance respondents attributed to home, such as having family visit whenever they want, sit within their past life experiences as homeless where they were dependent upon others and had little control over their environment. Parsell (2012) shows how rough sleeping means that people rely on charity and welfare organisations for taken for granted tasks such as using the toilet, washing and eating. The remarks of the three tenants below about their life as homeless before moving into Brisbane Common Ground are illustrative:

Feels comfortable it is a roof over my head and better than living on the streets. (Male, 31-40 years, Indigenous)

The fact that you know it's not a boarding house when I go in and shut my door it's my own little world. It's beautiful. (Male, 41-50 years, Non-Indigenous)

Just having all my things in the apartment, even though it is a bit small makes it home. It is better than before I moved in here when I was living out of a suitcase sleeping on friend's couches, in backpacker places and in parks. (Female, 18-30 years, Non-Indigenous)

The literature on the meaning of home recognises that home is a multidimensional concept (Mallett 2004). To understand home one must understand the subjective experience that individuals have with place, and the individual meaning they ascribe to place (Easthope 2004). Central to the concept of home is the extent to which people have privacy, where they have control and where they feel secure and settled. As Padgett (2007) remarks, these dimensions of housing can constitute markers of ontological security. The survey results presented in Figure 10 through to Figure 12 provide a strong indication of the markers of ontological security for tenants of Brisbane Common Ground.

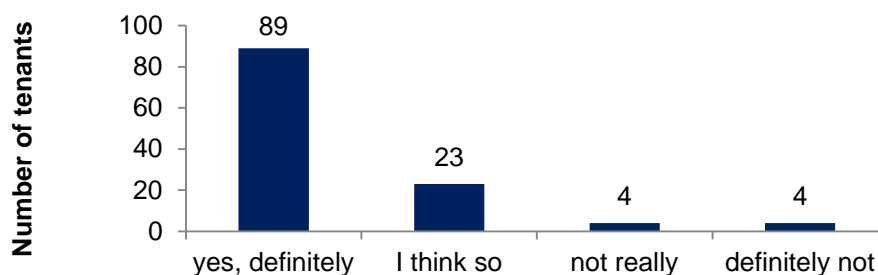


Figure 10. Tenants' ratings of how settled they feel in their current housing

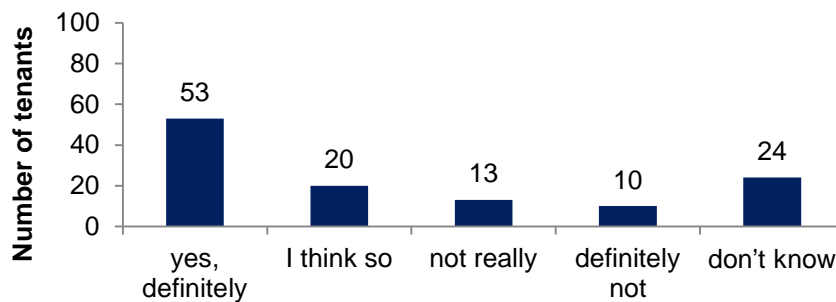


Figure 11. Tenants' ratings of living at Brisbane Common Ground in five years

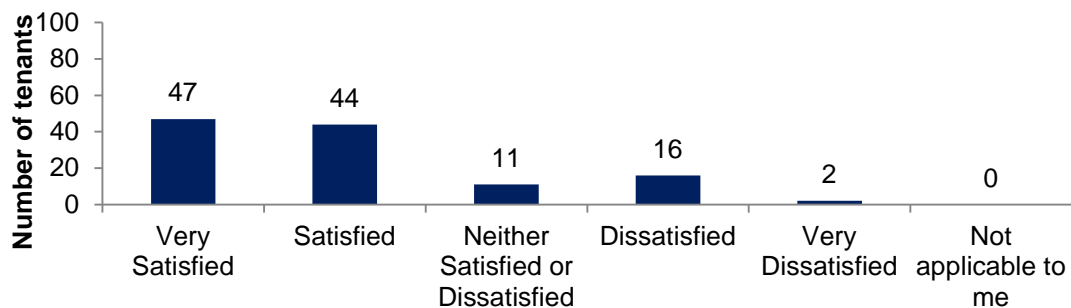


Figure 12. Tenants' ratings of satisfaction with the privacy at Brisbane Common Ground

Brisbane Common Ground tenants overwhelmingly experienced their units as home. Consistent with Padgett (2007), units were markers of ontological security because they enabled people to bring control and order to their day-to-day lives. Also consistent with Padgett, housing for people exiting homelessness assumed importance given that they had previously lacked the basic conditions for autonomy and control.

In addition to the independence of their dwelling contributing to ontological security, many people linked their feelings of home to the security and design features of the single-site supportive housing model. Security features and controlled access to the building meant that tenants felt comfortable, safe and in control living in their units. In the section below we present data demonstrating tenant's satisfaction with safety and security at Brisbane Common Ground, and illustrate how security and safety were similarly central to markers of ontological security and feelings of home.

5.1.3 *Is Brisbane Common Ground a safe, comfortable and desirable place to live, and what contributes to and undermines this? Is the concierge providing a controlled, safe and welcoming environment?*

The concierge service, and the centrality given to tenant safety and security, are key dimensions to Brisbane Common Ground. Indeed the presence of onsite concierge, although not entirely unprecedented in the social housing context (Parsell et al., Forthcoming), is a defining trait of the Common Ground model of supportive housing. Concierge distinguishes Common Ground supportive housing from other models that use scattered-site housing and support delivered through outreach.

Consistent with the requirements set out by the Queensland Government, concierge at Brisbane Common Ground operates 24 hours per day, seven days per week (Queensland Government 2012). Concierge is located in the building foyer and is staffed by two personnel: a security officer (formerly provided by SNM), and a Micah Tenant Services worker (see Section 4.1.4). The concierge service, including both the security and tenant services personnel, has several related aims, these are: to monitor the building, to control access and in and out of the building, to respond to tenant need, to promote onsite tenant and visitor safety, to ensure responsible use of communal resources, and to foster a warm and friendly environment (Queensland Government 2012).

In addition to the characterisation described in official documents, interview data with stakeholders illustrated the far reaching role of concierge. A manager explained that concierge was a means for tenants to assume control over access to their homes. The manager explained:

We can see tenants, particularly the Indigenous tenants, who now use concierge to restrict visitors, to have an option as to whether they want a visitor, have some options around whether they do want their family there or not there or that they can come when they invite them. So it's their home.

Above the respondent spoke about the way Indigenous tenants used concierge to avoid unwanted visits from family and friends. Visits from family and friends among Indigenous tenants is understood to be a major factor in tenancy failures (Habibis 2011). The stakeholder above argued that concierge provided the means to not only restrict unwanted visitors, but in doing so to also give tenants "more control."

As a further example of concierge enabling control, an onsite service provider explained that tenants will use the concierge service to assist them remove visitors that have overstayed their welcome. The stakeholder described situations where tenants would call concierge from their rooms and:

Say, we need this person to leave [unwanted visitor]. And so concierge can have the person leave.

The characterisations of security provided through the concierge service give a sense of the blurred distinction between security and support. Consistent with the proposition presented in Chapter Four that the form of support at Brisbane Common Ground is multifaceted and that it is directed toward multiple objectives, the outcome of security is to have tenants feel supported and in control of their environment. A manager described how the function of concierge created a welcoming environment by demonstrating to tenants that support was available, and importantly, accessible to address problems if they arise:

Security can mean support and support can mean security. That walking in every day past the concierge desk, being greeted, knowing that there are people around who could take control of situations if they need to be managed, then that's support. That's a supportive environment and you're just walking through it... people think that the security is about containment but it's much more than that. It's about an environment where people can feel at ease. (Manager)

The comments provided by stakeholders represent firsthand accounts of their roles in delivering, including the management of, concierge services. Their accounts provide an important part of the analysis, but they represent one perspective. When these accounts are coupled with the qualitative and quantitative data from tenants, a complementary narrative and account of concierge emerges. Taken together with the stakeholder material presented above, the tenant data demonstrates that the aims of the concierge service are being met. Concierge is providing a safe, controlled and comfortable place to live. Indeed, and as raised by several tenants of their own volition, it is the presence of concierge that creates the safe and desirable living environment, and in the absence of concierge tenants believe that Brisbane Common Ground would be less safe and less desirable. One tenant remarked poignantly:

I think the 24 hour security and social support is vital. I think if either of those were removed, there would be the type of place would change dramatically for the worse. (Male, 61-70 years, Non-Indigenous)

Our survey with tenants (N=120) directly sought to elicit their views on the service and function of concierge. Figure 13 shows that the overwhelming majority, some 90 per cent of respondents, reported satisfaction with concierge; only four per cent reported dissatisfaction.

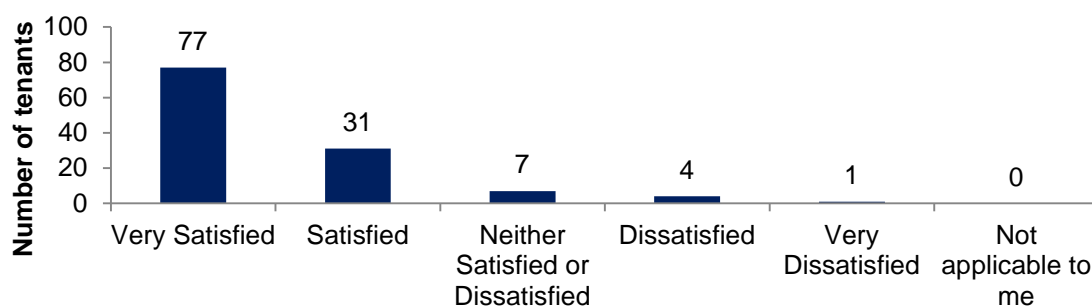


Figure 13. Tenants' ratings of satisfaction with the concierge

As explained above, concierge assumes several functions. One key function of concierge is to promote tenant and visitor safety in the building. Thus a measure of the concierge is the perception of safety reported by tenants. As shown in Figure 14, most tenants, 86 per cent, reported satisfaction with safety in the building; seven per cent reported dissatisfaction with safety. The National Social Housing Survey found 83 per cent of all social housing respondents reported that the safety and security outside of the home within the neighbourhood as meeting the needs of the household (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2013: 24). Safety is a key issue in social housing. A recent analysis by Wiesel et al., (2014) shows that violence and intimidation by neighbours is one of the primary push factors out of social housing.

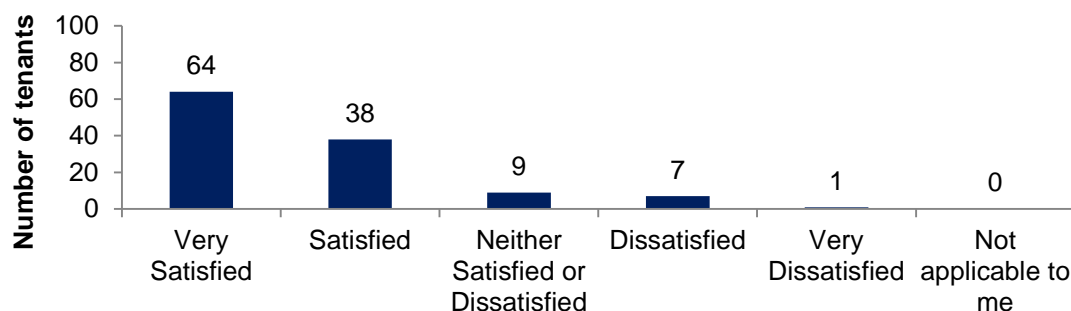


Figure 14. Tenants' ratings of satisfaction with the safety at Brisbane Common Ground

Alongside satisfaction with concierge and safety, Figure 15 and Figure 16 present data on the extent tenants perceive they use the concierge service, including both the Micah Tenant Services worker and the security (SNM) worker.

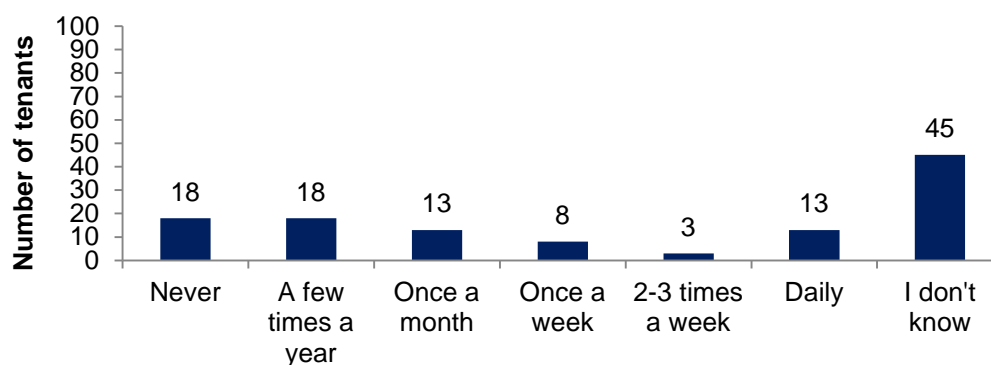


Figure 15. Frequency in which tenants report accessing assistance from the SNM workers at the concierge desk

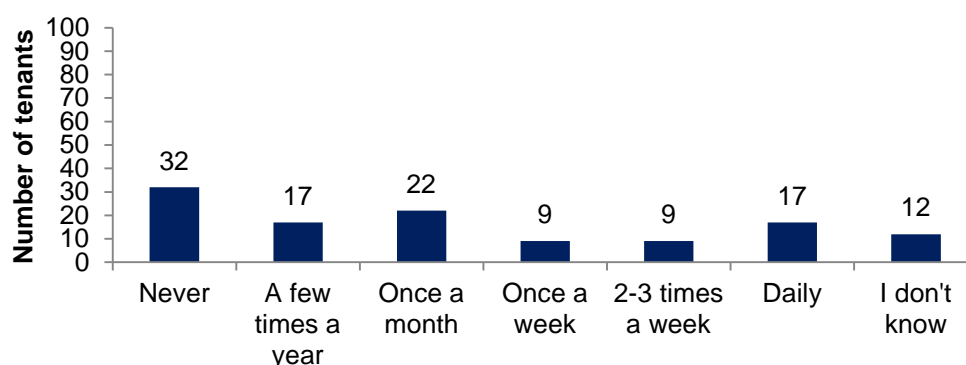


Figure 16. Frequency in which tenants' report accessing assistance from the Micah Tenant Service Workers at the concierge desk

The results show a high rate of people not knowing whether they accessed assistance from the concierge, particularly whether they accessed assistance from the SNM workers; Figure 15 shows that 45 people did not know. We suspect that this high rate of people not knowing whether they accessed assistance from SNM is attributed to tenants not distinguishing a SNM worker from a Micah Projects worker.

Notwithstanding the high numbers of people who reported not knowing whether they accessed assistance from the concierge, the data shows that 20 per cent of the respondents accessed the SNM worker at least once per week, and 30 per cent reported accessing the Micah Tenant Services worker for assistance at least once per week. We also stress that Figures 15 and 16 are based on tenant's self-reported use of the concierge services, and that the concierge

provides services in the building that may not easily be perceived by tenants as a service that they access.

Frequent (reported) access to the SNM and Micah Tenant Services workers at concierge was disproportionately reported by people who were allocated a tenancy because of chronic homelessness and high vulnerabilities. For example, 15 of the 17 people who accessed the Micah Tenant Services workers daily were allocated housing because of chronic homelessness, and 12 of the 13 people who accessed the SNM daily were also allocated housing because of chronic homelessness.

A further indicator of the concierge providing a controlled, safe and welcoming environment is tenant satisfaction with the foyer. The concierge is located in the foyer, and the foyer space is a fundamental dimension of the single-access point to the building. Consistent with the levels of reported satisfaction about concierge and safety, 89 per cent of respondents reported satisfaction with the foyer area (Figure 17).

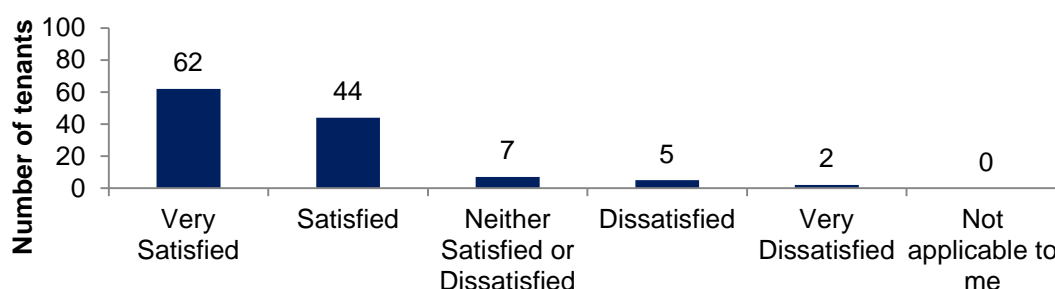


Figure 17. Tenants' ratings of satisfaction with the foyer

The qualitative data builds on and adds to the high reported levels of satisfaction evident from the survey data. The qualitative data from tenants provides a strong indication of how they perceive concierge plays a vital role in promoting a safe, controlled and desirable living environment.

I feel an increased sense of security thanks to the concierge system and logging of all guests. The concierge are always friendly and say hello to me in passing. (Female, 18-30 years, Non-Indigenous)

I feel safe. I have made it my own. I say who comes in and who doesn't. I feel happy here and able to live the life I always wanted. ... It's my home ... I feel safe here- which I've never experienced before. (Female, 18-30 years, Non-Indigenous)

I am extremely grateful to live in such a secure building, as I was being stalked in the latter part of last year, and I know I am safe here as people are not simply allowed to come and go. (Female, 31-40 years, Non-Indigenous)

I come here and feel quite safe. I can't ever go back to a unit of housing commission. The safety here at my age is a top priority. (Female, 51-60 years, Non-Indigenous)

I feel safe because of the concierge. I would not feel safe if it wasn't the concierge. (Female, 51-60 years, Non-Indigenous)

Not only describing the security features of single-site supportive housing in positive terms and to explain how it contributes to a positive living environment (which for most was described as their homes), the qualitative data from tenants offers no sense that the security was perceived as intrusive. This is also evident in Figure 12 where 76 per cent of tenants were satisfied with privacy at Brisbane Common Ground.

Tenants explicitly linked their feelings of safety and security to the security features of the building. Moreover, many people linked the desirability of security at Brisbane Common Ground to feelings of insecurity experienced as homeless or living in other housing ("housing commission").

5.1.4 In what ways do tenants use or avoid using the building, and what could contribute to more positive or less negative use?

Tenants use multiple spaces in the building, and some of the spaces are utilised with considerable frequency. As demonstrated above (Section 5.1.2), 93 per cent of tenants described Brisbane Common Ground as their home. Home included the physical space of people's independent units that enabled them to exercise autonomy and control over their lives; the security features of the building were central to people feeling safe and secure within their homes. In addition to people's independent units, there are several communal areas of Brisbane Common Ground used frequently by tenants, and tenants and stakeholders both emphasised the significance of communal spaces.

On the other hand, the foyer and entrance area to the building was described by some tenants and some stakeholders as a space where negative use of the building occurred. In this section we first describe how Brisbane Common Ground is used by tenants, and we then present data on some negative uses of Brisbane Common Ground, and identify ways the negative use is responded to.

Figure 18 through to Figure 22 present data on tenants self-reported use of five communal spaces at Brisbane Common Ground, these are the; computer room; rooftop garden, Gambaro Room, communal balconies, and the rooftop tenants' lounge. The computer room was the most utilised space. Of the 113 who responded, 47 tenants (42%) used the computer on a weekly basis. Thirty two people reported never using the computer room. The rooftop garden was also used by many tenants; 40 per cent, or 47 tenants, reported using the rooftop garden at least weekly. Only 24 tenants, or 20 per cent, had never used the rooftop garden.

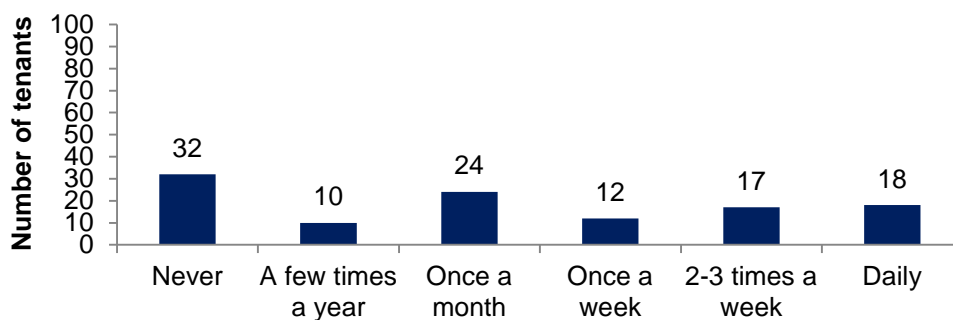


Figure 18. Tenants' self-reported use of the tenant computer room

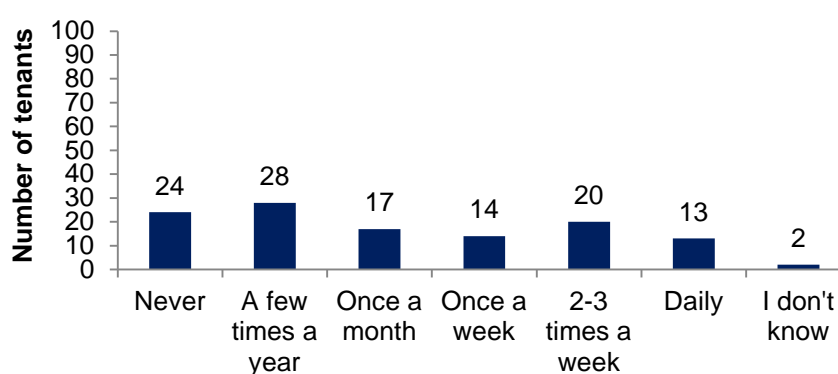


Figure 19. Tenants' self-reported use of the rooftop garden

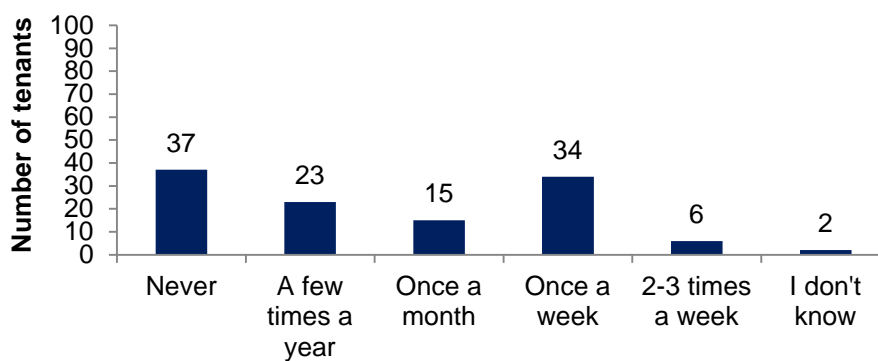


Figure 20. Tenants' self-reported use of the rooftop Gambaro function room

The Gambaro Room is located on the top level of the building adjacent to the rooftop garden. Forty people, or 34 per cent, reported using the Gambaro Room at least once per week. Most of these people (N=34) used the Gambaro Room once per week. This use is likely to be

associated with a community meal which is provided once per week on a Wednesday evening in the Gambaro Room. Internal Brisbane Common Ground data indicates that, in the year 2015, on average 35 tenants attended the Wednesday night meal each week. Tenants described the meal favourably.

... and we have our barbeques too. I enjoy that. We have meals here, up on the top floor. I can't ask for anything more. That's all I need really. (Male, 18-30 years, Non-Indigenous)

The chef here, she actually does cooking that's nice. One night you should probably come and try it because actually she does cook nice enough food. Especially her, the spinach and ricotta cheese or feta cheese triangle things. (Female, 31-40 years, Non-Indigenous)

The communal balconies and the rooftop tenants' lounge are used by fewer tenants than the three spaces described above. The rooftop tenant's lounge was used at least on a weekly basis by 38 tenants. Slightly fewer, 35 tenants, reported never using the rooftop tenants lounge. Twenty five tenants (21%) used their communal balconies at least weekly. Sixty three tenants, or 54 per cent of respondents, reported never using their communal balconies.

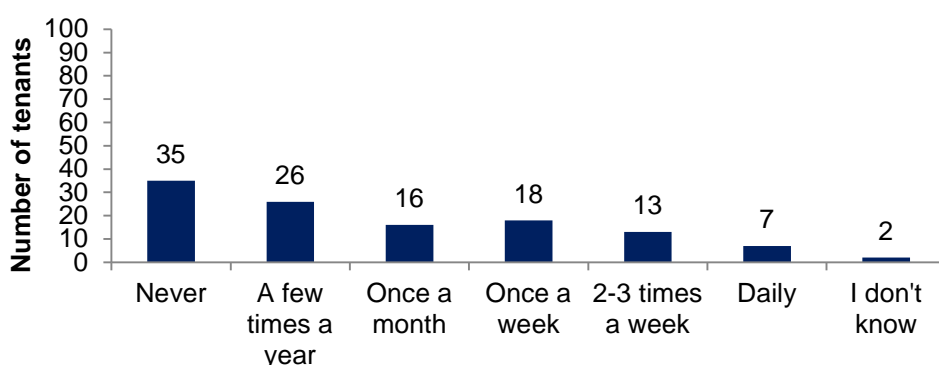


Figure 21. Tenants' self-reported use of the rooftop tenants' lounge

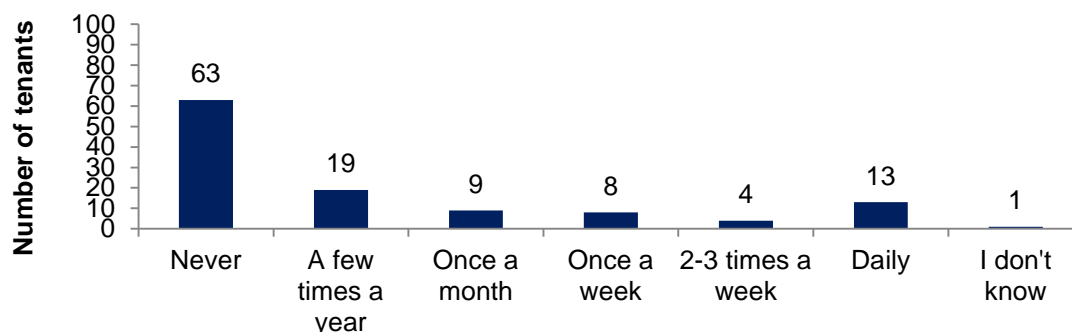


Figure 22. Tenants' self-reported use of the common balconies, accessible from their individual levels

The communal spaces play a deliberate and central role to the Brisbane Common Ground model. The Queensland Government (2012) identifies the communal spaces at Brisbane Common Ground as important physical sites to promote social interactions and a sense of community among tenants. Although there is not a pre-determined or definitive number that would indicate sufficient or insufficient use of space, the survey data presented above does indicate that many tenants are using communal spaces as intended.

The rooftop garden, as one example of communal space, has multiple functions. Stakeholders described how tenants use the herbs growing in the garden for their cooking. Other stakeholders described how the rooftop garden was a space for both socialising and peaceful relaxation alone. Reflecting on the latter, one tenant described using the rooftop garden thus:

Yeah. Yes, I do. On the weekend I'll go and sit up there in the sun because sometimes I don't get the sun on my side of the building or very late afternoon sun, so I'll just go sit up there, take my book and read. It's lovely. (Female, 51-60 years, Non-Indigenous)

Tenants and stakeholders alike articulated notions of using communal spaces at Brisbane Common Ground in ways that reflect some complexities presented in the research literature. Gehl (2011) highlights how it is not simply the design of the built environment that fosters social interactions, but a common factor among residents that gives them reason to either come together in social spaces or use social spaces individually. The significance of communal spaces such as computer room, rooftop garden or function room providing a free community meal, can only be grasped by taking account of the tenants' needs. For tenants who are predominantly living alone and predominantly with low incomes, accessing resources in communal spaces such as meals, computers and social interactions can be particularly important. But the benefits of communal space can extend beyond venues for social interactions and accessing practical resources. As one stakeholder insightfully observed:

[The] common areas. I think a lot of the benefit of them, even if nobody's in them, is a sense of space. I think that's really important, a sense of not being closed in. Because there is a lot of space, a lot of places where people can go. (Manager)

This characterisation of communal spaces is consistent with how the tenant above described using the rooftop as a place to read in the sun. In addition to the survey and qualitative data about the use and significance of communal spaces at Brisbane Common Ground, the research has found that tenants are engaging with each other socially; that many tenants identify other Brisbane Common Ground tenants as their friends, and likewise, for a large number of tenants friendships among other tenants and social interactions in communal areas contribute toward Brisbane Common Ground being perceived as a community.

Figure 23 and Figure 24 report on number of friendships and extent of socialising with other tenants at Brisbane Common Ground.

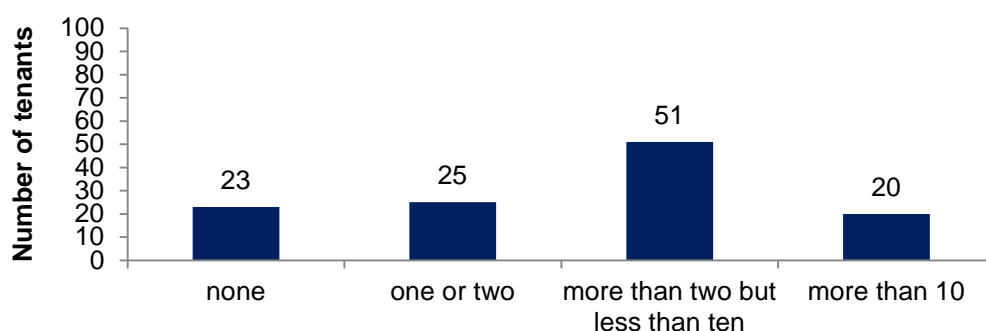


Figure 23. Tenants' self-reported indications of the number of other tenants in the building who are their friends

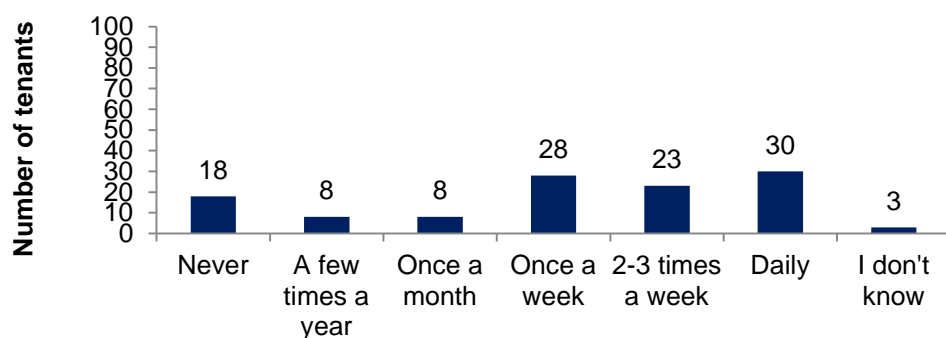


Figure 24. Tenants' self-reported ratings of how frequently they socialise with the other tenants in the building

The data about friendships and socialising are stark (Figure 23 and Figure 24). We see that the majority of tenants reported others at Brisbane Common Ground as their friends. Indeed, 43 per cent reported between two and less than 10 friends, whereas 17 per cent reported more than 10 friends at Brisbane Common Ground. These reports are consistent with the high rates of socialising with Brisbane Common Ground neighbours. Sixty nine per cent of tenants socialise with other Brisbane Common Ground tenants at least once per week, and 30 per cent socialise daily. Only a minority of tenants, 19 per cent, reported having no friends at Brisbane Common Ground. Similarly, only 15 per cent reported never socialising with others tenants of Brisbane Common Ground.

The qualitative data clearly illuminates the meaning that tenants ascribe to their friendships and socialising at Brisbane Common Ground. For many tenants, their friendships among other residents, socialising, and formal activities and resources provided onsite foster a sense of community:

I have some lovely friends in the building, there is a great [sense] of community. Groups are great if I could make the times when they are on. (Female, 18-30 years, Non-Indigenous)

Even going away is no problem as there is always someone to tend plants on the balcony and care for my pet cat. ... It is nice to belong to the building as after a while people get to know one another, say hello etc and I have even made some very good lady friends here. (Female, 61-70 years, Non-Indigenous)

Understanding environment in which I don't feel like an odd-ball. Opportunity to make others feel welcome and support them too on occasion. I also like getting to know others in the building and we smile a lot at each other which is special about this building. (Female, 31-40 years, Non-Indigenous)

Friendships among other residents were expressed as fundamental to people's positive experiences of community. Indeed, in addition to describing friendships as positive aspects of single-site supportive housing or factors that contribute to feeling at home, some tenants directly linked their friendships with other tenants to a "sense of belonging" or "sense of community." A female participant (31-40 years) did not identify friendships, but rather spoke about not feeling out of place. For other tenants, the activities provided at Brisbane Common Ground helped foster community. As one tenant remarked:

Yes it does. It feels like a village. ... Yeah, because there's a library, there's a pool table, there's dinners, there's buses to take you shopping, hospital, train down the road, bus down the road, gallery, markets down the road, everything. So it does feel like a village. (Female, 41-50 year, Non-Indigenous)

Like friendships and socialising among tenants, activities are central to promoting positive well-being because they have the capacity for tenants to participate as active consumers rather than passive clients of social services (Parsell, Tomaszewski and Phillips 2014). This is highlighted well by the three tenants below:

I volunteer and help out with the music group that is run for people here and it's clearly a very beneficial program because there are people who go to that who might otherwise just stay in their rooms. (Male, 61-70 years, Non-Indigenous)

It makes me feel good to be able to help and work with the Common Ground people here. So you're giving something back to what you're getting. I feel it's very important when you take, take, take to be able to give something back whether it be a bit of your time, your knowledge. It doesn't need to be pound for pound but just something. (Male, 41-50 years, Non-Indigenous)

I've been heavily involved in this art project where we're putting a canvas on every floor. We've been doing that for nearly a year now, so it's nearly finished. We're going to launch it on the 24th of next month. (Female, 61-70 years, Non-Indigenous)

Figure 25 demonstrates that there were high levels of participation in formal activities at Brisbane Common Ground. Forty two per cent of respondents indicated participating in an activity at least once per week.

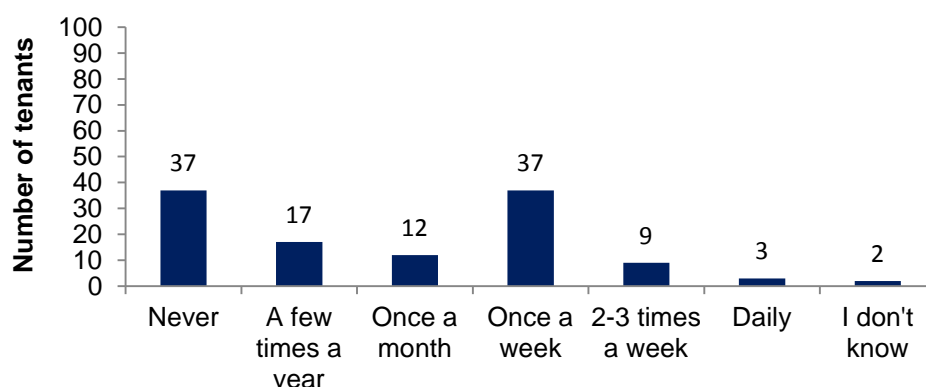


Figure 25. Tenants' self-reported ratings of how frequently they participate in activities provided by or operated in Brisbane Common Ground

Negative use of spaces

All of the data and analysis presented thus far highlights the positive implementation and operation of Brisbane Common Ground, and it likewise demonstrates the level of satisfaction and benefit reported by tenants with not only the built form and service provision, but also with their neighbours. Alongside this, data from the evaluation also identified some negative uses of space. Negative use of space involves some tenants on some occasions acting in ways that intimidated tenants, or ways that were inconsiderate.

When tenants described negative uses of space they often did so with reference to tenant intoxication in communal areas. Tenants were asked, what is the worst thing about living at Brisbane Common Ground? The most dominant response – indeed often the only negative evaluation tenants could offer – was the behaviour of other tenants in communal areas. These comments are illustrative of this negative use of space.

Having to deal with drunk residents in the foyer. Constantly here. (Male, 41-50 years, Non-Indigenous)

Definitely just having to deal with peoples especially men who are inebriated and can be inappropriate and can be on drugs. (Female, 41-50 years, Non-Indigenous)

Some of the tenants sometimes you feel very uncomfortable around some of the tenants. Especially when they have addictions. (Female, 51-60 years, Non-Indigenous)

The single entry to the building designed to control access to promote security, had the consequence of tenants coming into close contact with others whose behaviours intimidated them. On these occasions, tenants expressed feeling unsafe or uncomfortable because of their illicit substance and alcohol use of other tenants (at certain times). The concerns raised were directed fundamentally toward the specific behaviour of certain tenants, in certain places (shared foyer and entry) and under certain conditions (alcohol and substance intoxication).

The concerns people expressed about negative uses of space, however, did not negate the positive experiences people described at Brisbane Common Ground. Many of the people who mentioned the negative uses of space, also described how living at Brisbane Common Ground was a community. The concerns articulated by tenants about the problematic use of communal spaces at Brisbane Common Ground were recognised by stakeholders. Speaking about tenants congregating in the foyer and outside of the building entrance, two stakeholders reported:

Yes, because it is intimidating if you've got seven or eight or ten people out there yarning, talking, mucking about. Some of them are pissed. It's pretty intimidating. What you're doing is you want the community not to notice this building or the people. (Manager)

Because people sit out there, they smoke and I've seen people cross the street and walk over there because if you're walking up the street and there's a great big crowd of people who could be intoxicated I'd cross the street too. I just don't think that's a good look for our building. (Manager)

Consistent with these observations from management, a neighbour who appraised the presence of Brisbane Common Ground favourably, also observed that:

The biggest impact and the biggest issue is more just when people move and some of the residents move outside of the paved area. So people might stop in and sit around out the front. So it can be a little bit intimidating for staff to walk past. (Neighbour)

The range of stakeholders articulated concerns which resonate with the sentiments expressed by some tenants. There was a collective agreement that congregating in the foyer and outside in the entrance area, and the intimidation that this provoked (to some tenants), was problematic. Not only were stakeholders clearly conscious of the issues, they also employed several strategies to effectively mitigate the problems.

There was a collective understanding that the congregation outside the building was often motivated by tenants smoking. Tenants smoke outside the building, often near the entrance. Outside the entrance to Brisbane Common Ground is a shaded enclave area, with several areas for seating. These comfortable and shaded spaces also enable people to sit outside and observe the fluid movement of public space. In many respects, the built form and design of the

outside area is precisely what urban planner would argue facilitates people's engagement with the public realm (Gehl 2011). Despite the desirability of the outside space as an area to smoke, socialise, and to watch the street, Brisbane Common Ground staff sought to encourage tenants to use alternative spaces. As one significant example, policy was changed so that tenants were able to smoke on communal balconies in the building. To further discourage congregating outside the building, a "proactive concierge" approach was established, whereby concierge would go:

Out and talking to them [people congregating out the front of the building]. We'll you've got to keep that up. So there's constantly monitoring, constantly problem solving, how do you engage tenants in the problem solving? (Manager)

Indeed, a neighbour of Brisbane Common Ground, who said that all of his interactions with tenants had been "absolutely polite and lovely", remarked positively on the practices of concierge in their efforts to reduce congregation: "the security guards are really good at Common Ground."

The concierge, and the onsite staff more broadly, have a complex role to play. On the one hand, they need to provide a welcoming and positive response to tenants. Indeed they need to respond to tenants in a way that understands the tenants are interacting in a space that it is their home. Our multiple sources of survey data about satisfaction and home, coupled with tenant and stakeholder qualitative data, does strongly indicate that onsite staff are successfully delivering their services in a way that promote a safe and controlled living environment that is experienced by tenants as their home.

On the other hand, concierge and onsite staff need to restrict problematic uses of space, and prevent tenants behaving in ways that intimidate other tenants. One tenant who described Brisbane Common Ground as his home and who likewise evaluated the service provision positively summed up the challenges of concierge at responding to potential problematic use of communal spaces well. When talking about the importance of staff achieving the correct balance, the tenant observed:

Like I said, the last thing you want to do is turn it into a ghetto. As long as you keep the management up at the front desk I think it probably will work, keeping that side of things up *without it being too stifling on the residents* here. (Male, 31-40 years, Non-Indigenous)

5.1.5 What is the impact of the tenant mix (reduced stigma, social interactions, role modelling)?

The mix of formerly homeless tenants with support needs and low to moderate income tenants is a central component of the Brisbane Common Ground model. The Queensland Government (2012: 11) states that the "mix is aimed at creating a socially inclusive community in which all tenants can do well." It is difficult to conclusively assess whether Brisbane Common Ground is

a socially inclusive community, and it is further difficult to determine the role of social mix in contributing to the aim.

The challenges of systematically analysing the impact to tenants of the social mix is attributed to tenants generally not knowing which tenants were allocated housing because of homelessness and which tenants were allocated housing because of low to moderate income status. Differing from socially mixed neighbourhoods where the mix is determined by observable housing type, tenure and ownership arrangements of a dwelling within a geographical area (see Randolph and Wood 2004), it is not possible to ask tenants about the mix at Brisbane Common Ground because the concept of the mix is not readily apparent to them. There is no way for a tenant to know the basis for the allocation decisions of their neighbours. Moreover, how valid is it to categorise a person by their past experience of homelessness; and even if it could be justified as a label, how long is someone formerly homeless? An onsite service provider raised these questions thoughtfully:

For a start the categories and the names are not good for me. Low income and formerly homeless I don't like them, I don't like those names. If somebody's here for 20 years are they still formerly homeless? (Onsite service provider)

Further, and as demonstrated in Chapter Four (Section 4.1.3), assessing the impact of the tenant mix is difficult because in practice, the differences between the formerly homeless and low to moderate income tenants is less apparent than what the initial Brisbane Common Ground model was premised on. Whereas the model assumed that formerly homeless tenants would require support (for a period of time at least) and low to moderate income tenants would not require support, in practice 92 per cent of all tenants receive formalised onsite support.

To examine the impact of the social mix we have relied on data from tenants that indirectly provides an indication, and from qualitative interviews with stakeholders whereby they describe their perception of the impact of the social mix. The research literature suggests that social mix, particularly when it involves de-concentrating social housing, is successful in reducing place based stigma (Randolph and Wood 2004). The survey and qualitative interview data from tenants strongly indicates that they perceive Brisbane Common Ground a positive and desirable place to live; there is no evidence to suggest that tenants feel stigmatised living at Brisbane Common Ground. As reported earlier in this chapter, survey data revealed that 93 per cent of tenants felt Brisbane Common Ground was their home, 94 per cent were pleased with their housing, and only 19 per cent would not like to be living at Brisbane Common Ground in five years. This survey data does not indicate stigma. Qualitative responses from tenants, likewise, although rarely mentioning the social mix, did not include stigma.

The diverse range of non-tenant stakeholders interviewed for this research did, however, frequently speak about what they perceived to be the benefits of the social mix. Stakeholders overwhelmingly identified the impact of the social mix as positive. The most frequent

description of social mix as having a positive impact was tied to the benefits of avoiding a concentration of disadvantage. When responding to questions about social mix at Brisbane Common Ground, the two stakeholders below illustrate this sentiment:

Yeah, I'd say it works. It would be pretty challenging having a building full of all people with very complex needs. (Onsite service provider)

I think it does what it's meant to do which is, in a sense, dilute the concentration of people with really complex issues. (Manager)

The perceived positive impact of social mix described by stakeholders implicitly draws on the theory of area effects. The area effects thesis posits that being poor and living in a deprived area (generally neighbourhood) compounds the disadvantage experienced by its residents (Atkinson and Kintrea 2001). The research of Atkinson and Kintrea (2001) supports the theory of area effects, in that poor people living in deprived environments face additional stigma and problems accessing to resources, particularly employment.

A further justification in the literature for social mix is the intention to create support, friendships, communities and role modelling among poor tenants and their working class or middle class neighbours. In a systematic review of the British published literature, Sautkina et al., (2012: 772) conclude that "tenure mix has no effects on social capital related outcomes (e.g. through role models or behavioural norms)."

Stakeholders expressed a view that there was mixing and interactions among tenants allocated housing because of homelessness or low to moderate incomes. An onsite service provider noted:

I'd definitely say so and you can see it in the community meals that we have on every week too, a mix between the low incomes and the formerly homeless mixing together. (Onsite service provider)

Our survey data with both tenants allocated housing because of homelessness and low to moderate income status reported broadly similar levels of participation in activities, use of communal spaces, and friendships with neighbours at Brisbane Common Ground. From the survey data we cannot, however, ascertain whether the friendships reported (or participation in activities, use of communal spaces) involved tenants interacting with other tenants who were allocated housing through the different stream to themselves.

Social mix at Brisbane Common Ground is thus widely perceived by stakeholders as positive. As an onsite service provider noted, "I like the theory and I like the idea." Despite having no conclusive evidence, it can be reasonably inferred that the positive living environment described by tenants is, in part at least, attributed to the social mix.

5.1.6 How do neighbours perceive Brisbane Common Ground?

The evaluation was tasked with examining how neighbours perceived Brisbane Common Ground. The evaluation team invited all neighbours of Brisbane Common Ground to participate in a qualitative interview to elicit their perceptions of living next to the supportive housing. As canvassed in Chapter One, a member of the research team door knocked on each of the eleven neighbouring properties on the block that Brisbane Common Ground is located. All of the eleven properties were commercial. Only one of the neighbours agreed to participate in an interview and provide their perspective on Brisbane Common Ground.

Two points are noteworthy about the limited response from neighbours. First, given that only one individual took the opportunity to participate in an interview, we can infer that neighbours do not hold strong views about Brisbane Common Ground. This is arguably noteworthy in and of itself. Social housing and supportive housing projects for disadvantaged people often provoke public anger. In the case of Tasmanian Common Ground, neighbours actually sought to have the development stopped through the appeals tribunal (Richards 2011). The lack of interest in participating in an interview indicates that neighbours do not hold negative views of Brisbane Common Ground. Second, having only one neighbour respond means that our findings are limited and cannot be said to represent neighbours of Brisbane Common Ground. To augment the firsthand perceptions of one neighbour, in this section we draw on qualitative interviews with Brisbane Common Ground stakeholders about how they perceive neighbours perceive Brisbane Common Ground.

The one neighbour who participated in an interview expressed the clear view that Brisbane Common Ground was managed well. The neighbour also stated that her/his interactions with tenants were positive. The neighbour stated:

I think they [Brisbane Common Ground] do a very good job. They keep it very clean - I'm pretty impressed with the way management run the whole building.

The neighbour described interactions with tenants as “absolutely polite and lovely. It’s generally friendly.” Reflecting on the neighbourhood dynamic, it was noted that “we hardly get any noise”. Moreover:

There's been the occasional heated arguments between residents but then you could have that next to you in an apartment or a building anyway. So be it. That's not a big problem. (Neighbour)

Indeed, rather than problems with Brisbane Common Ground or tenants that are unique to supportive housing, the neighbour went on to argue:

To be honest I think one of the biggest problems is the street in general needs probably a bit more development. Having the vacant block near us I think that probably has a bigger impact than anything else. (Neighbour)

Again we emphasise that the views above are reflective of the one neighbour who agreed to participate in the evaluation. Nevertheless, the views accord with the expressed intentions articulated by people who work at Brisbane Common Ground. On the one hand, stakeholders believed that neighbours perceived Brisbane Common Ground positively; on the other, they explained that the positive feelings held by neighbours were attributed to their community development and management strategies. One manager stated:

I'd have to say the local community are being very supportive but that was from a three year engagement strategy. So people know who to go to if there's a problem and people are honest with us. They tell us what they think and we give that feedback to the tenants as well. (Manager)

The active efforts to engage with neighbours, both in the planning stages and also as the building has operated, were supported with deliberate efforts of Brisbane Common Ground to closely monitor the area outside of the building. If necessary, the close monitoring would be coupled with onsite staff notifying Queensland Police Service of any concerns. A representative from Queensland Police Service stated:

But security contacts us if they observe something. There might be people hanging around and they think they could possibly be dealing drugs to residents or whatever, that type of behaviour, they contact us.

In addition to the positive responses from the one neighbour and the strategies described by stakeholders to ensure Brisbane Common Ground is perceived positively by neighbours, there was no evidence that neighbours held concerns about Brisbane Common Ground.

5.1.7 Is Brisbane Common Ground a (or developing to be) community resource?

Through the availability of a rooftop space, and multipurpose function and seminar rooms, Brisbane Common Ground has been deliberately designed to be a “community asset that adds to the local area” (Queensland Government 2012: 14). Indeed, all key stakeholders involved in operating the initiative express a strong view that Brisbane Common Ground should be open and accessible to a diverse set up people and organisations. Stakeholders expressed the sentiment that opening Brisbane Common Ground and making it useful to the wider public would enhance the realisation of tenant objectives. In describing the spaces at Brisbane Common Ground for hire, it was asserted that:

They're very important tools because one of the things about the permeability of the building as well. In terms of social inclusion was to have the building and its tenants accepted and included in the local community but having the local community coming in the building as well. It's somebody's work planning group and they come in and they're exposed to the building and they're a bit surprised and they meet a few of the tenants in the lift or whatever. (Manager)

Bringing people from the community was framed as serving a normalising function whereby people outside Brisbane Common Ground would meet tenants and understand the role and multiple benefits that Brisbane Common Ground provided. The available data does demonstrate that Brisbane Common Ground has successfully opened its doors up to a wide section of the community. Excluding tenants booking rooms or spaces within Brisbane Common Ground, there have been 138 venue bookings between January 2013 and February 2015. This includes organisations or individuals who have one-off bookings, as well as individuals or organisations that have booked Brisbane Common Ground more than once. For example, a major economic consultancy firm has hired the Gambaro Function Room on 42 occasions.

6 Longitudinal research and tenant outcomes

This chapter reports on data demonstrating housing and non-housing outcomes achieved by Brisbane Common Ground tenants. Section 6.1 presents data on housing outcomes on all Brisbane Common Ground tenants. The outcomes data is based on analysis of the Common Ground Queensland tenancy database, and then an analysis of the tenant quantitative and qualitative data. In Section 6.2, we report data from the longitudinal Round 1 and Round 2 surveys. The longitudinal data identifies tenant outcomes and change over a 12 month period.

6.1.1 What housing outcomes, including sustainability, has Brisbane Common Ground achieved?

Between July 2012 and February 2015, 217 people have been allocated a tenancy at Brisbane Common Ground. Forty eight per cent, or 103 of these people, were allocated a tenancy because of low to moderate income status. One hundred and fourteen people, or 52 per cent, were allocated a tenancy because of chronic homelessness.

Of the 217 people who have been allocated a tenancy at Brisbane Common Ground, as of February 2015, 69 have exited. Thus 148 who were allocated a tenancy since July 2012 continued to reside at Brisbane Common Ground in February 2015. Of the 69 people who have exited Brisbane Common Ground, 35 accessed housing through the low to moderate income stream and 34 were allocated housing because of chronic homelessness.

Brisbane Common Ground operates an active approach to tenancy sustainment. As discussed in Chapter Four, the tenancy manager and onsite support workers have a weekly tenancy sustainment meeting. One strategy employed by Brisbane Common Ground to address tenancy problems and to promote tenancy sustainment is moving tenants within the building. Transferring a tenant from one property to another at Brisbane Common Ground is usually intended to physically remove a tenant from a conflict or problem that is manifest in the tenant's property and is often related to immediate neighbours. Thus when tenants are transferred they move to a different floor where an assessment is made that a transfer will address the tenancy problems. In the period of analysis, 17 tenants were transferred within Brisbane Common Ground; 16 were transferred on one occasion, and one tenant was transferred on three occasions (18 transfers in total). Notably, one tenant exited Brisbane Common Ground and returned several months later to a new unit.

Of the 17 tenants who were transferred, 11 were allocated housing because of chronic homelessness and 6 based on low to moderate income. The transfer of housing can be seen as successful in promoting tenancy sustainment. Only one person who was transferred has exited Brisbane Common Ground; the remaining 16 tenants who were transferred continued to reside in Brisbane Common Ground throughout the analysis period.

How can these numbers be interpreted as housing outcomes? First, we are cautious about conclusions at the broader tenant level because the numbers reflect people who have moved in and out of the building over a 32 month period. Thus some people have sustained their tenancies for 32 months, whereas there are other tenants who have similarly sustained their tenancy, but for a shorter period (because they commenced their tenancy later). We are thus cautious about making assertions on tenancy sustainment because the tenants have resided in the building for different periods of time.

Second, simple claims about the rate of tenancy sustainment assume either a high rate of tenancy sustainment is negative (i.e., people are not using social housing as “transitional period on the path to private rental”, see Department of Housing and Public Works n.d.: 6), or a high rate of tenancy sustainment is positive (i.e., people have remained housed). From our qualitative and quantitative data, however, there is evidence to demonstrate that not remaining in the housing cannot always be directly construed as a negative housing outcome. The longitudinal component of our evaluation, for instance, identified that two of the 63 people who participated at Round 1 were deceased at Round 2. From a simple analysis of the tenancy database, these two people would be indicated as not sustaining their housing. Likewise through our exit interviews with tenants who are not renewing their leases at Brisbane Common Ground, the data shows that tenants make decisions to leave because of a diverse range of reasons such as re-engaging with family outside of Brisbane, moving to a larger dwelling, moving to a nursing home, and moving in with a friend. The tenants who described these moves did so by expressing their volition and they described moving on as a part of a broader housing and life trajectory. When people move out of housing under conditions of their choosing, the move out of housing should not be interpreted as a negative housing outcome.

If we discount death and temporary incarceration as reasons for not being in housing, there were seven people who had exited Brisbane Common Ground between the Round 1 and Round 2 outcomes survey. All of the people who participated in Round 1 and Round 2 were allocated housing because of chronic homelessness. The seven tenants who exited out of the 63 tenants represents a tenancy sustainment rate of 89 per cent. As we have explained above, however, this is a blunt measure. The measure does not take into account the reasons for leaving housing that cannot be attributed to a housing outcome in the minimal sense.

Notwithstanding the caveats about how housing outcomes can be interpreted, data obtained for this evaluation demonstrates that Brisbane Common Ground is successful in (1) enabling people with chronic experiences of homelessness and support needs to access housing, and (2) providing the necessary supports that people need so that they stay housed.

Table 3. Summary of housing data

Tenants' profile	N
Tenants who have been allocated a tenancy at Brisbane Common Ground	
Tenancy allocated because of low to moderate income	103
Tenancy allocated because of chronic homelessness	114
Total	217
Tenants who remain at Brisbane Common Ground	148
Tenants who have exited Brisbane Common Ground	
Tenancy allocated because of low to moderate income	35
Tenancy allocated because of chronic homelessness	34
Total	69
Transfers	
Tenancy allocated because of low to moderate income	11
Tenancy allocated because of chronic homelessness	6
Total	17
Transferred once	16
Transferred three times	1
Total	18

6.1.2 What health, quality of life, socio and economic participation, and social and community participation outcomes have formerly homeless tenants achieved?

In addition to housing sustainment, Brisbane Common Ground aims to assist tenants “improve their quality of life – health, social and economic” outcomes (Queensland Government 2012: 12). The evaluation has been tasked with examining whether tenants allocated housing at Brisbane Common Ground because of chronic homelessness have improved in the key domains of quality of life, economic and social participation, physical health, and mental health including drug and alcohol use. Building on from the examination of housing outcomes (Section 6.1), the remainder of this chapter presents the results from a 12 month longitudinal study to address the key non-housing outcomes research objectives.

The logic of Brisbane Common Ground is that as homeless, people will not only experience poor health, well-being, life satisfaction and other negative outcomes, but the state of homelessness represents a significant barrier to addressing problems. Further in line with the logic, the provision of secure housing at Brisbane Common Ground, coupled with onsite support services, is a means for people deal with problems such as addiction, poor health, low well-being, unemployment, exclusion, among others. The longitudinal surveys fits well with the program logic of Brisbane Common Ground, because it enables us to measure the key domains central to the model, and then to identify change over time.

We must stress, however, one major limitation with the design of our longitudinal tenant outcome survey. The Round 1 survey is not a baseline measure. The Round 1 component of the survey commenced in November 2013 immediately after the evaluation was contracted. The first tenants moved into Brisbane Common Ground in July 2012. When, therefore, the Round 1 survey was conducted, nearly all of the 63 participants had lived in Brisbane Common Ground for a number of months; indeed, most of the participants had lived in the building for one year or more. By conducting our Round 1 surveys many months and even more than a year after people commenced their Brisbane Common Ground tenancy, our measures do not take account of any changes in people's situation (health, well-being, drug and alcohol use, for example) that occurred in the time between tenancy start and participation in Round 1. This represents a significant problem. We could assume, as the logic of the program model would imply, that people who exit chronic homelessness and immediately accessed supportive housing may improve on a number of key measures that we are interested in. Our validated measures of physical health, mental health, drug and alcohol use, life satisfaction and well-being, will not capture any changes that may have occurred in between tenancy commencement and completion of the Round 1 survey.

To partially address the limitations in not having access to tenants at baseline, we added to the survey subjective questions where we asked participants to assess any changes they have perceived in the time since moving into Brisbane Common Ground. These questions are included in addition to our validated measures.

6.1.3 Education and Training

Homelessness is a barrier to participating in training and education (Mavromaras et al., 2011). It is not only practically difficult to access and complete training and education, but the poor health, trauma and precariousness of homelessness means that people are unlikely to engage with training. Through the provision of secure housing and health services, but also the resources provided and brokered by onsite support in supportive housing, it is intended that Brisbane Common Ground will assist tenants participate in education and training.

The overwhelming majority of tenants were not enrolled in training for either Round 1 (N=42) or Round 2 (N=41) (Figure 26). Of the tenants who indicated being enrolled in a course, four indicated being enrolled part-time for both time periods. Interestingly, one tenant at Round 1 indicated being enrolled in a course full-time, which doubled at Round 2 (N=2).

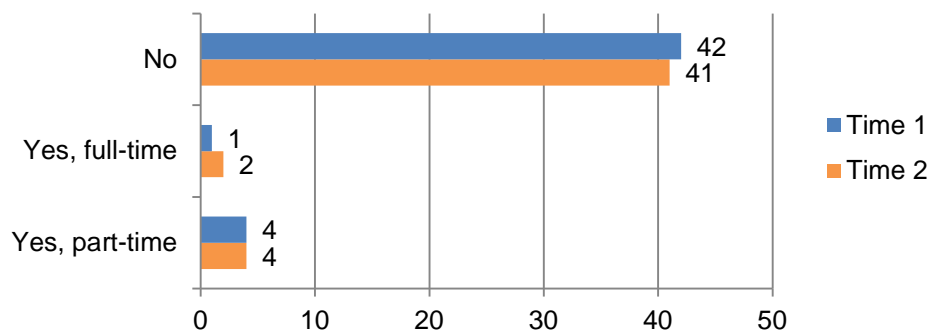


Figure 26. Tenants enrolled in a course at Round 1 and Round 2 (N=47)

To account for people who participated in training between Round 1 and Round 2, but who were not participating in training at the point of Round 2, we asked whether people about participation in training prior to the Round 2 point but after the Round 1 point. Figure 27 illustrates at Round 2, five tenants had enrolled in a course over the 12 month interval between Round 1 and Round 2.

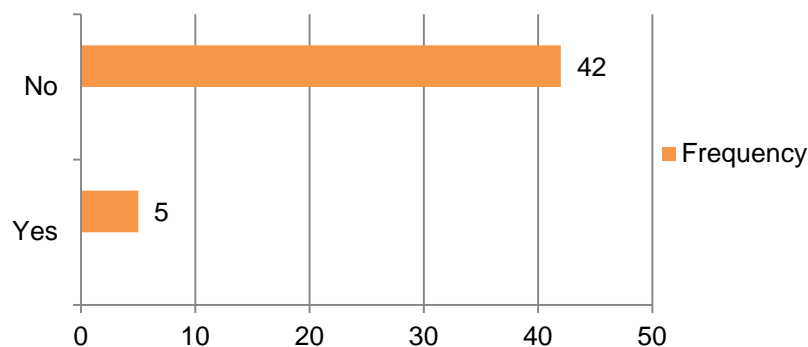


Figure 27. Tenants who have enrolled in another course at Round 2 (N=47)

Despite observed low rates of participation in education and training, tenants predominantly reported that since moving to Brisbane Common Ground opportunities to access training and education had improved, with slightly fewer reporting their opportunities not changing. As with nearly all measures reported below, it is unreasonable to expect significant and immediate changes among people who were allocated housing because of deep exclusion. The data showing that people mostly saw their improvements in their opportunities for accessing training

and education are promising (Figure 28).

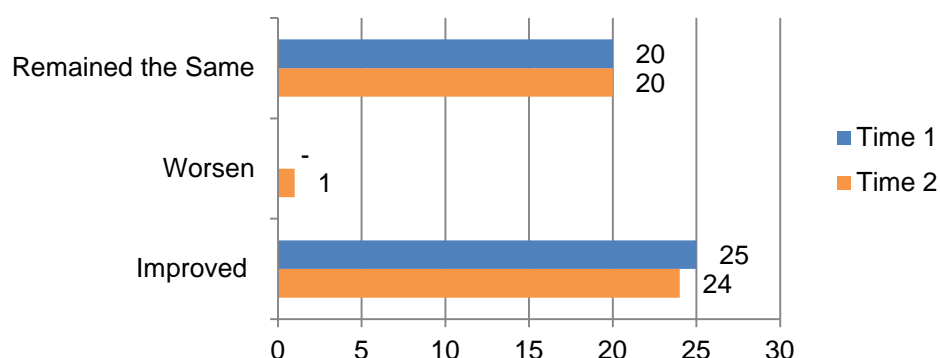


Figure 28. Education and training since moving into Brisbane Common Ground (N=45)

6.1.4 Employment

Consistent with the research documenting the barriers to education and training experienced by people who are homeless, homelessness likewise constitutes a significant impediment to taking up and maintaining employment in the labour market (Mavromaras et al., 2011). Also in line with the reported rates of participation in training and education presented above, our sample was overwhelmingly not participating in paid employment (Figure 29). Of the tenants who did, however, there was an increase of three tenants over the space of 12 months. At Round 1, three people were employed, whereas this rose to six people at Round 2. Although the rates of participation in employment are low, the increase in participation is positive.

For people who have experienced chronic homelessness and require support to sustain housing, accessing the labour market can be profoundly difficult. We saw earlier that the sample was deeply excluded from the labour market; 43 of the 63 participants had not worked in more than one year. The six people who engaged in the labour market by Round 2 had achieved well compared to what could be expected. Similar longitudinal research with the Brisbane Street to Home and Sydney Way2Home programs found that only one person in each program engaged in the labour market over a 12 month period (Parsell et al., 2013a, 2013b). Likewise, Guy Johnson and colleagues found with the Journeys to Social Inclusion pilot in Melbourne, after three years of intensive support and housing, only five people were participating in the labour market. They concluded that “for the long-term homeless the probability of re-integration into the community via the workforce is relatively small” (Johnson et al., 2014a: 21).

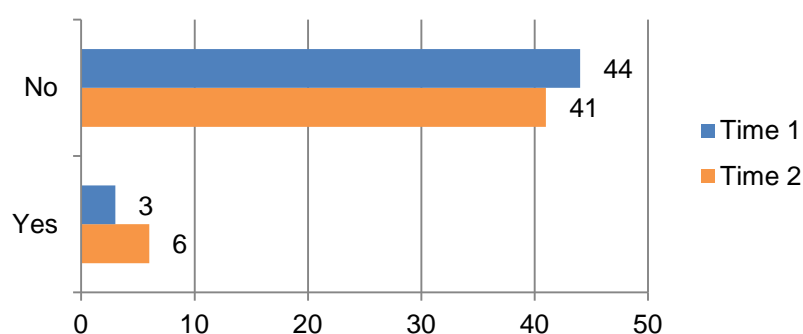


Figure 29. Tenants currently in paid employment (N=47)

Interesting findings arise from data which posed the question do you have a disability that prevents you from working? In line with the employment data, three tenants at Round 1, and six tenants at Round 2, indicated that they did not have a disability that prevented them from working (Figure 30). Fascinatingly, in the twelve month period between Round 1 and Round 2, thirteen tenants (compared to eleven tenants at Round 1) indicated they did not have a disability that prevented them from working. Furthermore, the number of tenants who agreed they had a disability that prevented them from working at Round 1 (N=33), decreased by five tenants at Round 2 (Figure 31). When we contemplate the data from both graphs below (disability that prevents from working and actively looking for work in the past twelve months), it suggests that overall health had improved to the extent to which tenants could contemplate employment at Round 2. Furthermore, the number of tenants who have actively looked for work in the past twelve months has jumped from thirteen tenants at Round 1, to seventeen tenants at Round 2.

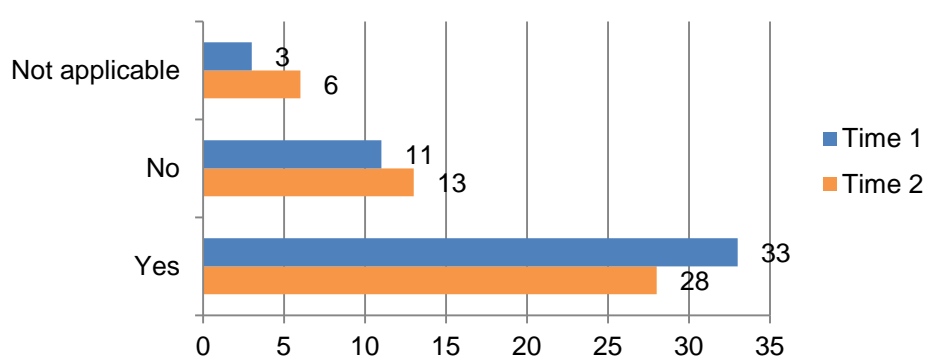


Figure 30. Tenants who had a disability that prevented them from working (N=47)

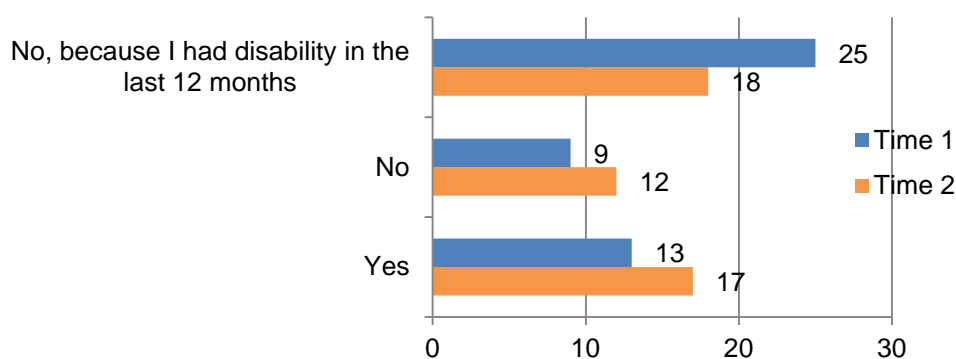


Figure 31. Tenants who were actively looking for work in the previous 12 months (N=47)

Interesting findings arise from the 45 tenants who responded to the survey question “since moving into Brisbane Common Ground, my employment opportunities have...” Sixteen tenants reported improvements in their employment opportunities since they moved into Brisbane Common Ground at Round 2, compared to Round 1 (N=13). Three tenants at Round 1 indicated their opportunities had worsened since moving into Brisbane Common Ground; 12 months later, only two tenants indicated similarly. The majority of tenants indicated their employment opportunities remained steady over both time periods (N=29; N=27) (Figure 32).

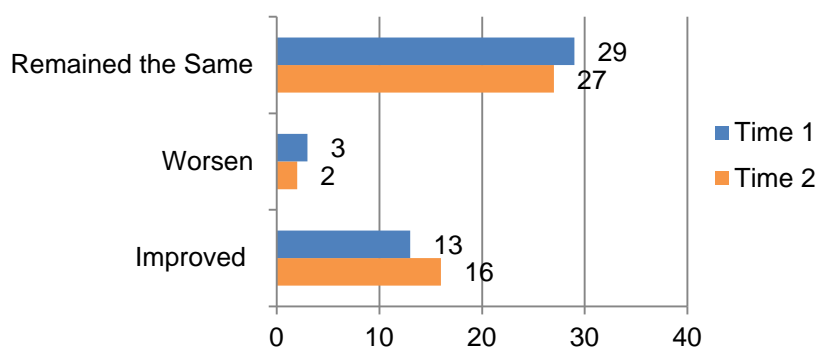


Figure 32. Employment opportunities since moving into Brisbane Common Ground (N=47)

6.1.5 Physical Health

As the logic of Brisbane Common Ground as a solution to homelessness would predict, most tenants indicated improved physical health since they had moved into Brisbane Common Ground. At Round 2, this effect was most prominent for those who had indicated 12 months prior that their current health was poor (N=16) or fair (N=8). Interestingly, the number of tenants at Round 1 who had indicated good, very good, or excellent health (N=27) dropped to 20, 12 months later. Three tenants did not know their current health condition at Round 2 (Figure 33).

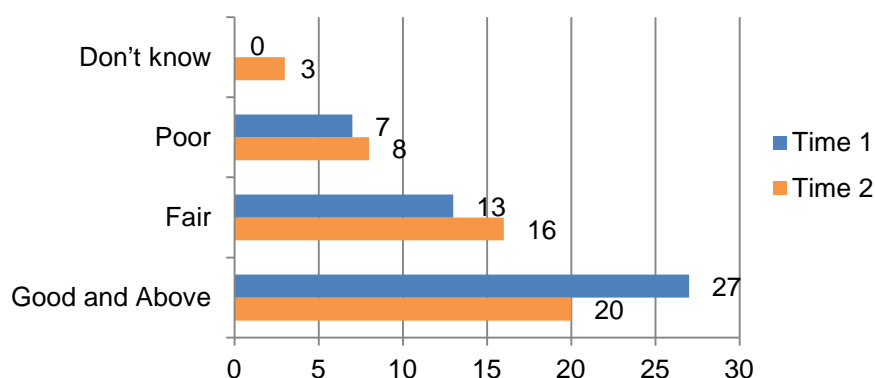


Figure 33. Tenants' current health condition (N=47)

Similar to reported health above, most tenants reported that their health had improved compared to one year earlier (Figure 34). More people reported improvements at Round 1 compared to Round 2. We are limited without baseline data, but we can infer that the higher rate of reported improved health at Round 1 reflects that many people in the year prior to Round 1 were homeless.

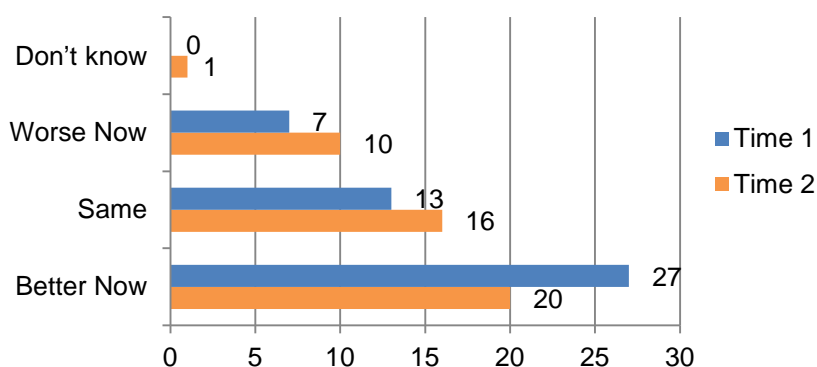


Figure 34. Tenants' ratings of their health now vs. 1 year previous (N=47)

Interesting, slightly fewer people reported a long-term health condition, impairment or disability at Round 2 compared to Round 1. It is probable that the 12 month period in between Round 1 and Round 2 – when tenants were securely housed – constituted an environment where they could address long-term health problems (Figure 35). This proposition is supported by the data that shows since moving into Brisbane Common Ground, most tenants reported that their health had improved (Figure 36).

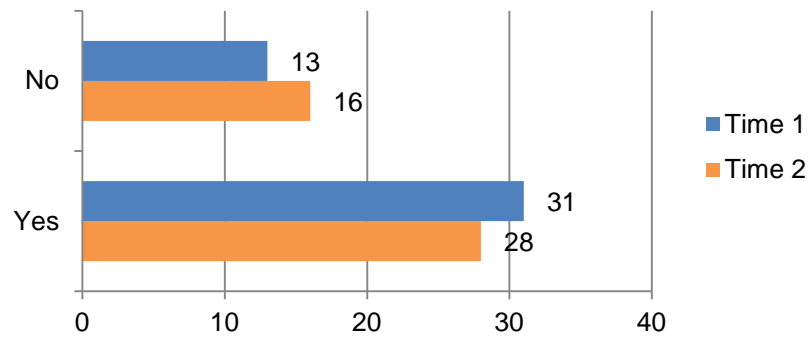


Figure 35. Tenants who indicate having a long-term health condition, impairment, or disability (N=44)

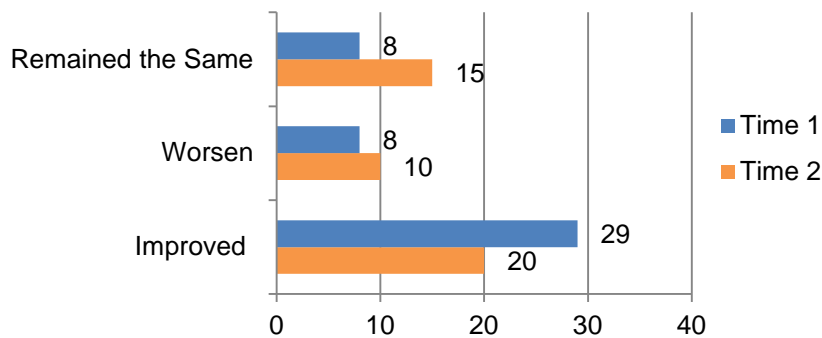


Figure 36. Ratings of physical health since moving into Brisbane Common Ground (N=45)

Consistent with self-reported improvements in health, both over a 12 month period and since residing at Brisbane Common Ground, the majority of tenants reported that access to “seeking help from medical professionals” had improved (Figure 37). At Round 1, 33 reported improved access, whereas at Round 2, 27 reported improved access to medical assistance. Five tenants indicated seeking help from medical professionals had worsened at Round 2 which is an increased of four tenants.

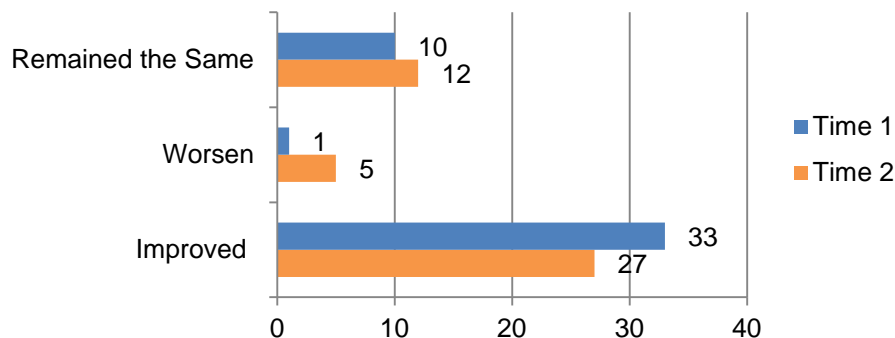


Figure 37. Seeking help from medical professionals since moving into Brisbane Common Ground (N=44)

Henwood et al., (2013) suggest that permanent supportive housing is a key site where lifestyle interventions such as diet and nutrition can be promoted as a direct and practical means to improve physical health. We asked respondents whether “living at Brisbane Common Ground made it easier to improve your diet and eating habits.” Figure 38 demonstrates that a clear majority responded in the affirmative at both time points. Eleven tenants indicated their diet and eating habits had remained the same since moving into common ground. At Round 2, four tenants indicated their diet and eating habits had remained the steady since moving into Brisbane Common Ground.

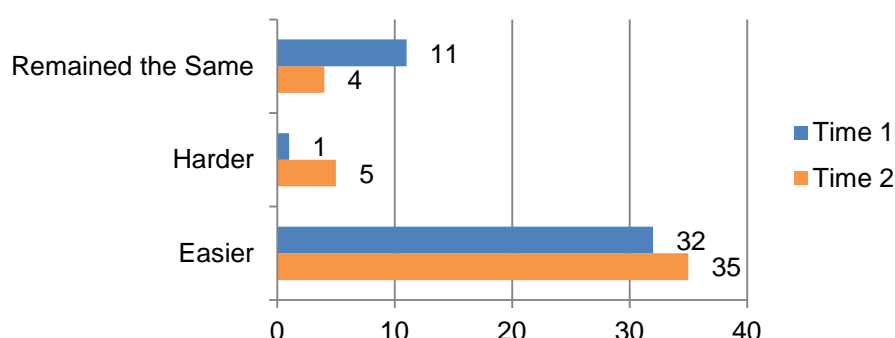


Figure 38. Diet and eating habits since moving into Brisbane Common Ground (N=44)

6.1.6 Mental Health

Unlike permanent supportive housing in the United States where tenants predominantly have a serious mental illness (Henwood et al., 2013), Brisbane Common Ground targets people with chronic experiences of homelessness and support needs. Although requiring support needs and having experienced chronic homelessness may be associated with a serious mental illness, differing from the NSW Housing and Support Initiative, having a diagnosable mental illness is not a requirement of accessing Brisbane Common Ground. Despite this, our data shows that 67 per cent (Round 1) and 65 per cent (Round 2) of the sample disclosed having ever been diagnosed with a mental illness (Figure 39). The high rates of diagnosable mental illnesses are important. If the majority of people residing at Brisbane Common Ground have a diagnosable mental illness, it raises policy questions about where in government funding should be provided, and what mental health services should be made available.

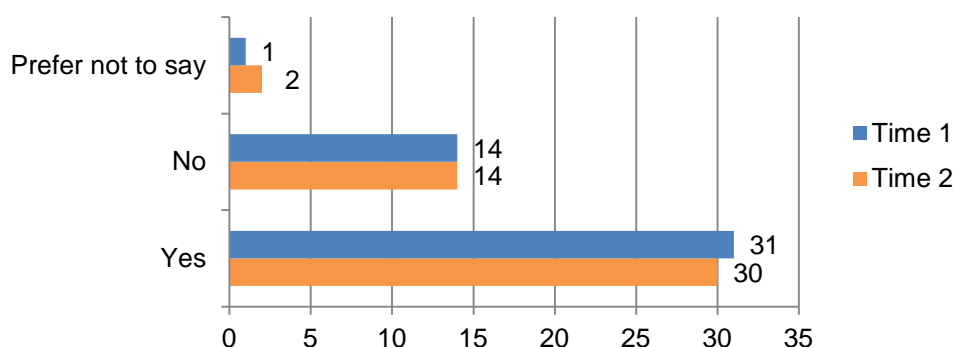


Figure 39. Tenants who self-report being diagnosed with a mental illness (N=46)

Since moving into Brisbane Common Ground, the majority of tenants have indicated their mental condition has improved (N=31; N=24 respectively) (Figure 40). Far fewer people reported their mental health staying the same (N=9; N=13), and fewer again reported decreases in mental health since moving into Brisbane Common Ground (N=4; N=7).

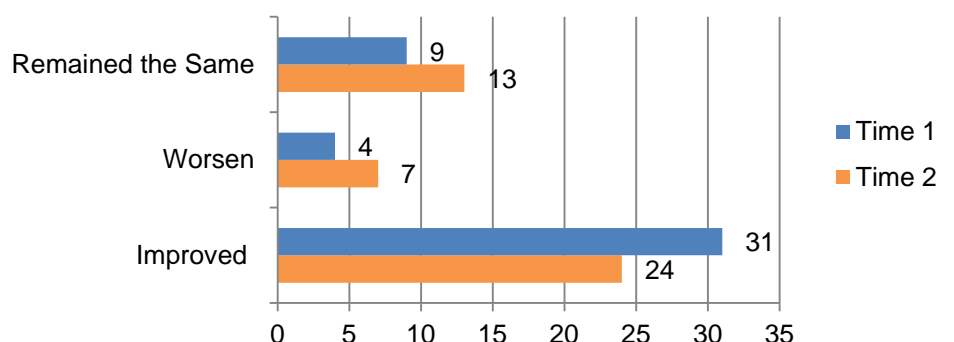


Figure 40. Mental health condition since moving into Brisbane Common Ground (N=44)

Most people who disclosed a mental health problem, reported that “since living at Brisbane Common Ground, managing mental health and access to treatment” had improved. At Round 1, 25 people reported improved management and access to treatment, and at Round 2, 23 reported the same (Figure 41). Improvements in self-reported mental health and access to treatment to manage mental health are encouraging findings. These findings are consistent with the data reported in the previous chapter about tenants describing Brisbane Common Ground as their home, and as a safe and desirable place to live. Tenants described the positive dimensions of Brisbane Common Ground as enhancing their control over life; for many, the positive aspects of Brisbane Common Ground were juxtaposed to negative life experiences as homeless. The reported improvements in mental health since moving into Brisbane Common Ground are consistent with tenant’s depictions of home.

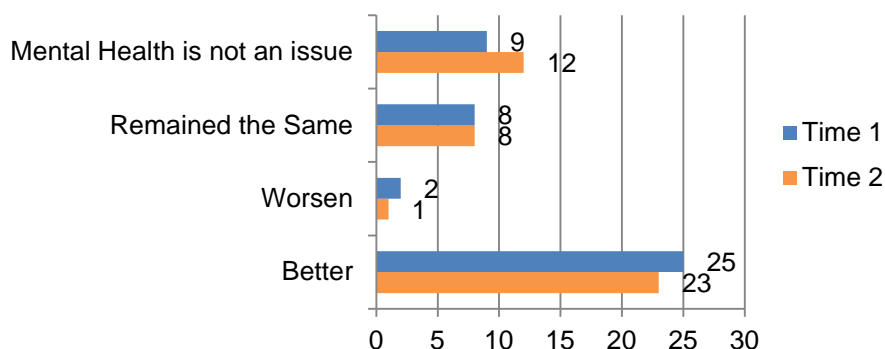


Figure 41. Managing mental health and access to treatment since moving into Brisbane Common Ground (N=44)

6.1.7 Tobacco, Alcohol and Illicit Substances

Tobacco

Tenants at Brisbane Common Ground smoke tobacco at high rates. At both Round 1 and Round 2, more than half reported smoking tobacco on a daily basis. Only 35 per cent at Round 1, and 33 per cent at Round 2, reported never smoking in the previous 12 months. Of the tenants who do smoke (Figure 42), most either smoke between 11-20 cigarettes a day, or 10 or less a day (Figure 43). Interesting findings between the two time points suggest a reduction in the quantity of tobacco smoked. Despite the reduction, tenants reported smoking tobacco at rates far in excess of the national average (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2014). In 2013, only 12.8 per cent of the Australian population reported smoking daily.

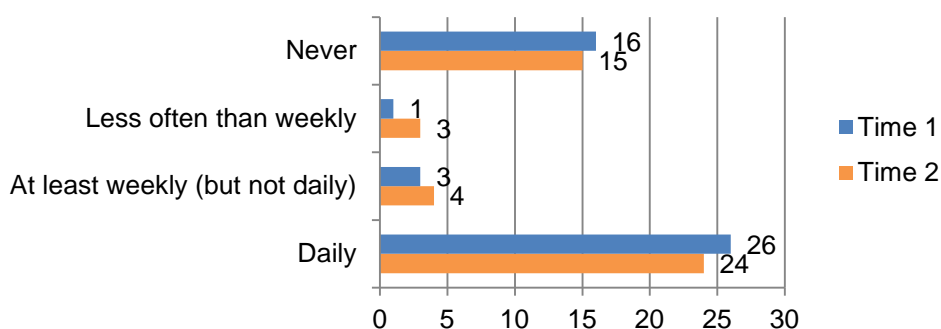


Figure 42. Self-reported smoking frequency in previous 12 months (N=46)

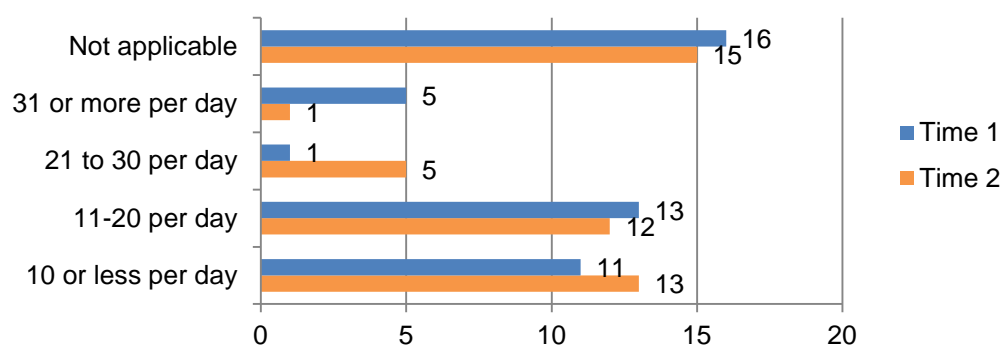


Figure 43. Average amount of tobacco consumed per day in the previous 12 months (N=46)

Since moving into Brisbane Common Ground, and at both time points, the data shows that there are roughly similar numbers of people who are smoking the same, smoking less, and smoke more often (Figure 44).

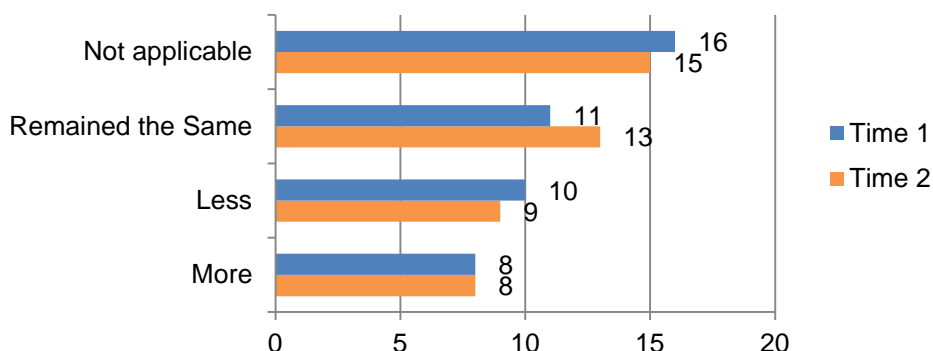


Figure 44. Self-reported smoking habit changes since moving into Brisbane Common Ground (N=45)

Alcohol

Reported frequency of alcohol consumption was relatively low. At Round 1, thirty seven per cent of respondents reported either never having consumed alcohol in their lives or in the past 12 months; at Round 2, this proportion increased to thirty nine per cent of respondents (Figure 45). At both times points only two people reported consuming alcohol daily, whereas one respondent at Round 1 and Round 2 reported consuming alcohol 5-6 days per week. Of the respondents who reported consuming alcohol in the past 12 months, the majority, 12 people (at both time points) reported consuming alcohol on a monthly basis.

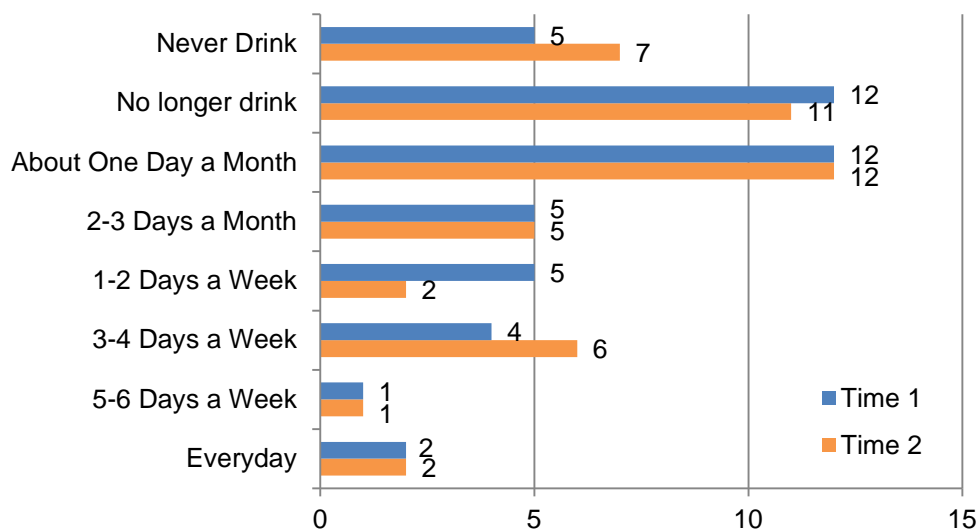


Figure 45. Self-reported frequency of alcohol consumption in the previous 12 months (N=46)

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2014: 31) defines the consumption of more than two standard alcoholic drinks per day on average as exceeding lifetime risk guidelines. They found that 18 per cent of the Australian population were exceeding lifetime risk guideline. Our data shows that of the respondents who reported consuming alcohol, many disclose consumption levels exceeding, and for some, far in excess, the lifetime risk guidelines.

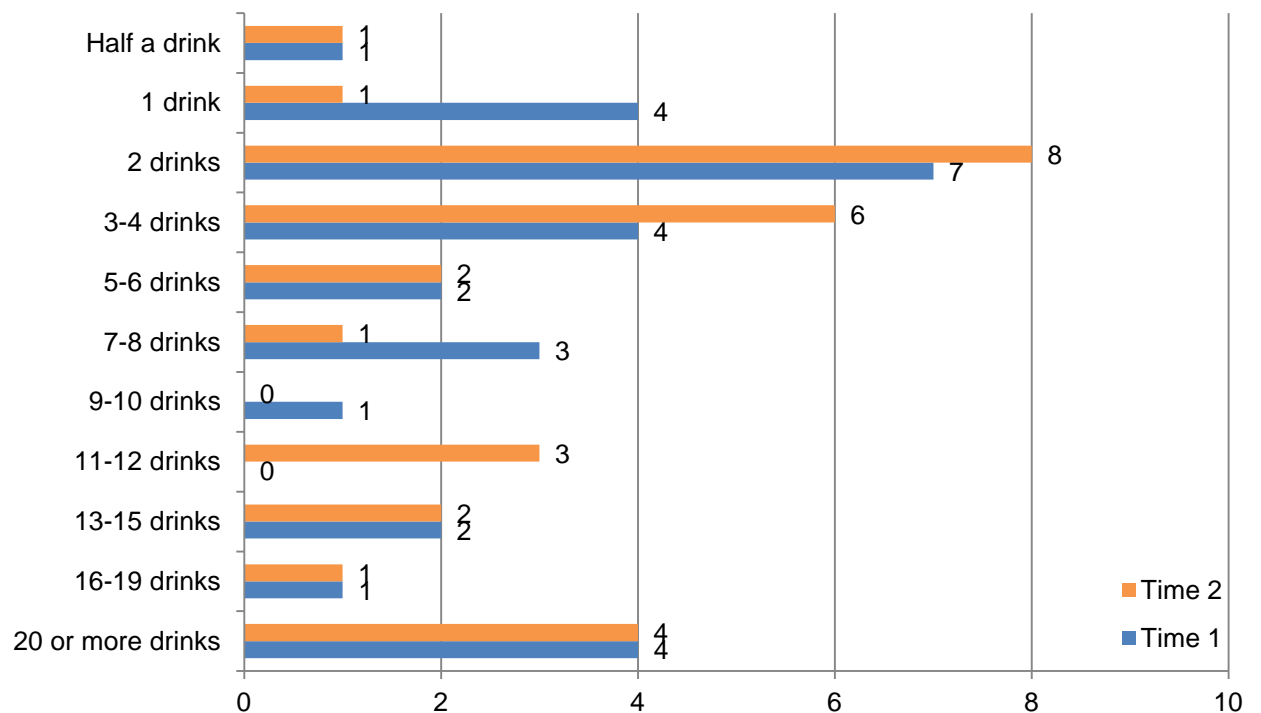


Figure 46. Number of alcoholic drinks consumed on a day that alcohol is consumed (N=29)

Perhaps offering some explanation to the low rates and quantity of alcohol consumption reported above, Figure 46 shows that 48 per cent at Round 1, and 36 per cent of respondents at Round 2, reported drinking less alcohol since moving into Brisbane Common Ground. Thirty four and 39 per cent at Round 1 and Round 2 indicated that their alcohol consumption has not changed since residing at Brisbane Common Ground. Interestingly, a small number of people, three at Round 1 and four at Round 2, reported increased alcohol consumption since moving into Brisbane Common Ground (Figure 47).

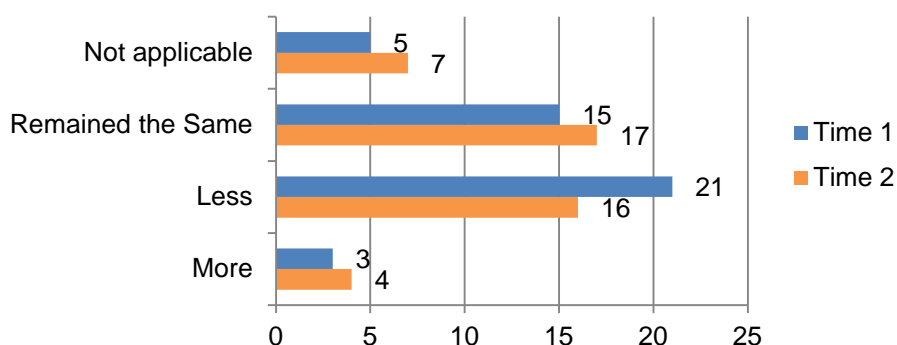


Figure 47. Self-reported drinking habits since moving into Brisbane Common Ground (N=44)

Figure 48 demonstrates that close to half of respondents who consumed alcohol in the previous 12 months identified improved access to support to work on reducing alcohol consumption. Thus we are cautious in making definitive claims because (1) we do not know how much alcohol tenants consumed at baseline (or when they were homeless), and (2) we know that the stigmatised nature of problematic alcohol consumption can influence people to provide socially desirable responses. This notwithstanding, the self-reported alcohol data suggests that the rates and quantities of alcohol consumed were lower than we expected; that a sizeable number of people reported consuming less alcohol since moving to Brisbane Common Ground, and many people also thought that accessing assistance to reduce alcohol consumption had improved since moving into Brisbane Common Ground.

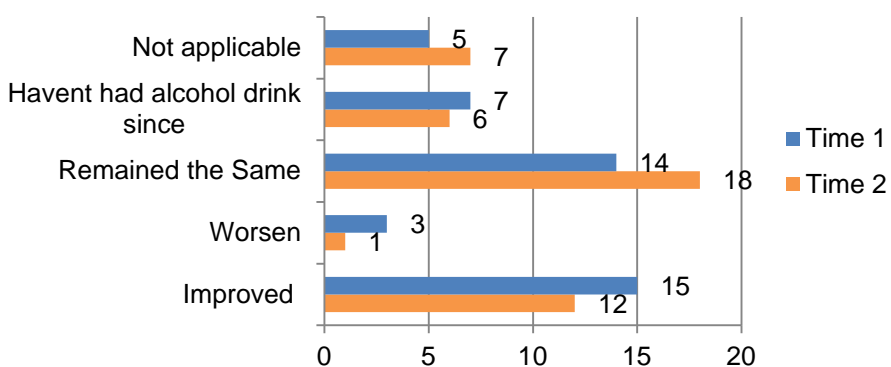


Figure 48. Access to Support Program to Reduce Alcohol consumption since moving into Brisbane Common Ground (N=44)

Illicit substances

Like alcohol consumption, the use of illicit substances is highly stigmatised and people often underreport use (Johnson et al., 2014a). At Round 1, 36 per cent of respondents reported regular use of an illicit substance in the previous 12 months (Figure 49). At Round 2, this rose to 44 per cent of respondents reporting regular use of illicit substances in the previous 12 months. The increase in the reported use between the two time points is reflected in the reported frequencies of use. At Round 1, six respondents reported daily use of illicit substances, whereas at Round 2 seven people indicated daily use (Figure 50). Similarly, at Round 1, six respondents disclosed using illicit substances on a weekly or more basis, whereas at Round 2 this number increased to 11 respondents.

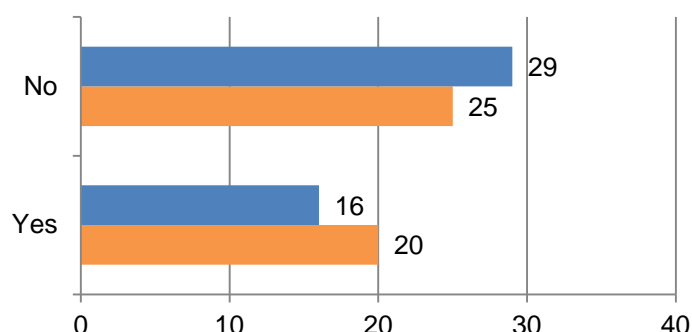


Figure 49. Self-report regular illicit substance use (N=45)

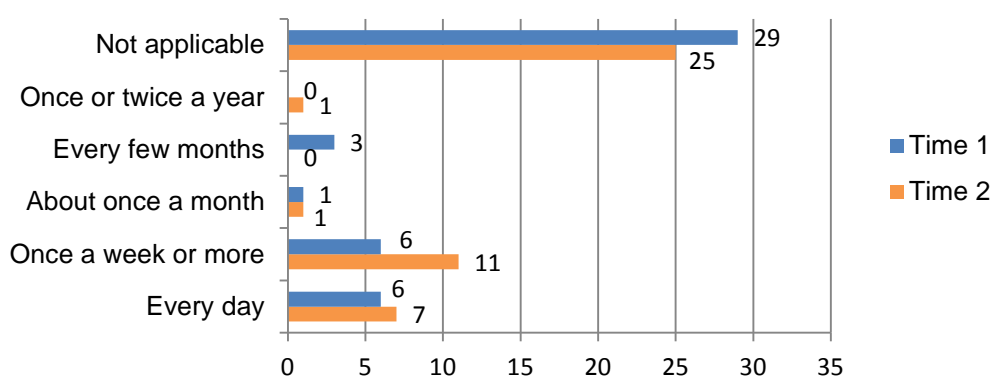


Figure 50. Self-reported frequency of illicit substance use (N=45)

Most respondents reported that since living at Brisbane Common Ground they use illicit substances at the same rate and quantity as before moving in (Figure 51). At Round 1 and Round 2, 14 and 13 respondents respectively reported that they use illicit substances less than before they moved in. Reflecting a similar trend with alcohol consumption, a small but noteworthy number of respondents reported using illicit substances more since living at

Brisbane Common Ground. How can this self-reported data be interpreted? First, it is possible that increased disclosure of illicit substance use at Round 2 compared to Round 1 reflected tenants having built up more rapport and feeling more comfortable to talk about illicit substance use with the researchers. Second, illicit substance addiction is complex, and people do not easily, or quickly, overcome addiction. In longitudinal research with people who had exited long-term homelessness and sustained housing, Johnson et al., (2014a: 18) found that reported illicit substance use increased 74 per cent to 81 per cent over a two year period.

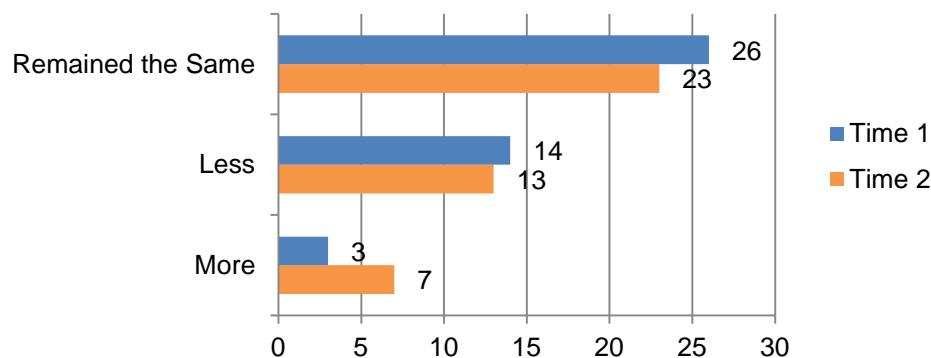


Figure 51. Use of illicit substances since moving into Brisbane Common Ground (N=43)

Again reflecting similar trends with alcohol, of the respondents who used illicit substances, they reported that living at Brisbane Common Ground “made it easier to join a program or get support to work on reducing” illicit substance use (Figure 52). It is clear that despite the reported use of illicit substances, particularly the reported daily and regular use, participants had sustained their housing. The secure housing and onsite support provided meant that continued illicit substance use did not lead to a return to homelessness. This is a positive outcome.

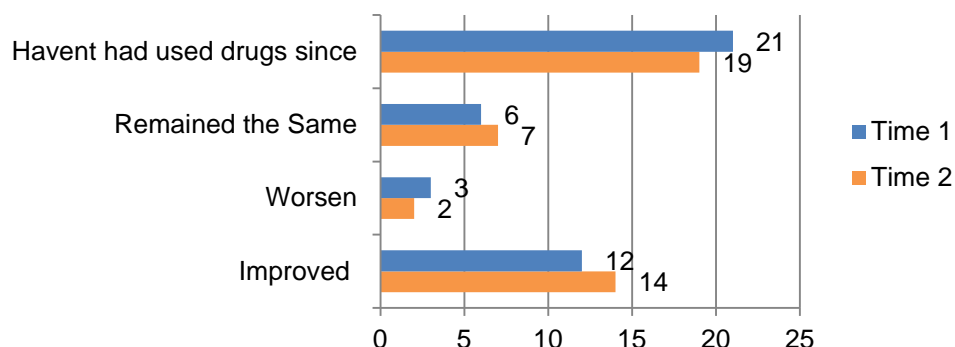


Figure 52. Access to support to reduce illicit substance use since moving into Brisbane Common Ground (N=42)

6.1.8 Life satisfaction

Tenants overwhelmingly described improved satisfaction with life since moving into Brisbane Common Ground (Figure 53). At Round 1, 81 per cent reported improved satisfaction with life, and this increased by one person (to 84%) at Round 2. One and two people across the time points reported worsened satisfaction with life.

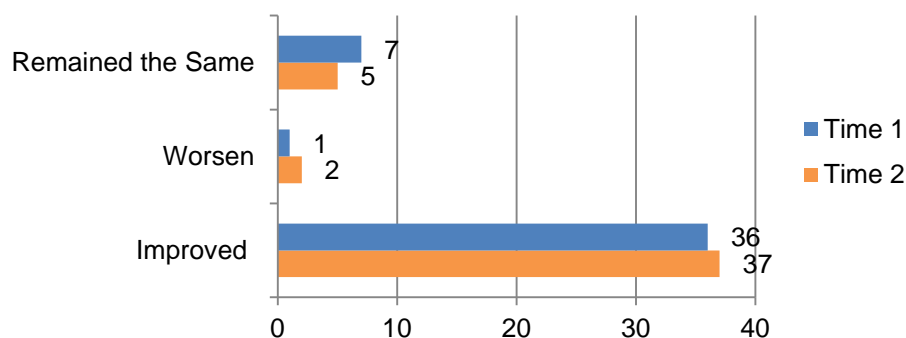


Figure 53. Self-reported life satisfaction since moving into Brisbane Common Ground (N=44)

6.1.9 Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS)

The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS), developed by Diener, et al., (1985), is a five item scale of subjective well-being. It is one of the most extensively used and validated instruments in well-being research showing reliability and sensitivity to life events (Kobau et al., 2010) and has been shown to correlate with measures of mental health (Pavot and Diener 2008). The statements examined in the scale provide a means to understand the tenants' life satisfaction. Responding to the five statements in the scale allows the tenant to perceive and judge their life satisfaction by standards set by him or herself. This is important, as many variables contribute to an individual life satisfaction, and is dependent on one's values (e.g. money, good health, or relationships). As such, the Satisfaction with Life Scale overcomes highly variable individual differences and allows the tenant to determine their satisfaction however they choose.

The SWLS is derived from 5 statements measured on a 7 point Likert-like scale of agreement (1 = strongly agree, 7 = strongly disagree). Each of the statements is scored from 1 to 7, so that the SWLS has a possible score range of 5 (low satisfaction) to 35 (high satisfaction) (Diener, et al., 1985). For our balanced sample of 47 tenants, the summed aggregate score for the scale, at both time points, is between 21 and 22 (SD = 7.01-15.94, $\alpha = 0.77$, see Table 4). The reliability coefficient of 0.77 indicates that the scale is a reliable measure of satisfaction with life. The guidelines formulated by Diener (2009), Table 4, deem this score for the sample to be in line with an 'average' satisfaction with life.

Table 4. Guidelines for average scores on Satisfaction with Life Scale

Summed Score	Average Score (for individuals)	Guideline Label
35 – 30	7 – 6	Very high score; highly satisfied
29 – 25	6 – 5	High score
24 – 20	5 – 4	Average score
19 – 15	4 – 3	Slightly below average in life satisfaction
14 – 10	3 – 2	Dissatisfied
9 – 5	2 – 1	Extremely dissatisfied

Individuals with this score on the SWLS are defined as the following:

The average of life satisfaction in economically developed nations is in this range – the majority of people are generally satisfied, but have some areas where they very much would like some improvement. Some individuals score in this range because they are mostly satisfied with most areas of their lives but see the need for some improvement in each area. Other respondents score in this range because they are satisfied with most domains of their lives, but have one or two areas where they would like to see large improvements. A person scoring in this range is normal in that they have areas of their lives that need improvement. However, an individual in this range would usually like to move to a higher level by making some life changes. (Diener 2009: 1)

The mean of the scores of tenants with a history of homelessness for The Satisfaction with Life are similar to representative data of Australian adults (Table 5). This is a very positive finding, as it indicates that despite the level of mental or physical disabilities apparent in this sample (two thirds of the sample), life satisfaction is only slightly lower than the general population and much higher than a sample of psychiatric patients. Moreover, their level of life satisfaction improved over a 12 month period as tenants resided at Brisbane Common Ground.

Table 5. Ratings of life satisfaction by tenants with a history of homelessness for Round 1 and Round 2 compared to other populations

	N	Mean	SD
Round 1	47	21.45	15.94
Round 2	47	22.28	7.01
<i>Representative comparisons:</i>			
Australian adults *	191	24.9	6.0
Psychiatric patients *	474	20.1	7.8

*Source: Pavot and Diener (2008)

6.1.10 *Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS)*

The Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale (WEMWBS) is a 14 item scale of mental well-being which covers psychological functioning and subjective well-being. The WEMWBS has a high internal reliability ($\alpha = 0.92$). Items are rated on a 5 point scale (1 = none of the time, 3 = some of the time, 5 = all of the time). Scores are summed for each item, and range from 14 to 70. As the name suggests, originally developed in Scotland, the WEMWBS is a rigorously validated measure used extensively in the UK (Brown and Janmohamed 2008). A version used in Queensland is shorter than the original scale and is thus not comparable with tenants at Brisbane Common Ground (Queensland Health 2011).

The average score for respondents (N= 47) at Round 1 was 48.3 (SD = 13.86, CI = 48.1–48.5), with a minimum score of 17 and a maximum score of 68. The Round 1 score is only slightly lower than the mean score of 50.7 (with a confidence interval of 50.3 to 51.1) measured in a generalisable study the Scottish population. That is, 51 is the average score to be expected from a population of individuals who do not experience significant mental or physical disabilities in most Western countries (Brown and Janmohamed 2008). As such, the mean from our tenants demonstrates that the average well-being is slightly lower than that of a general population. The mean for the tenants lies outside the confidence interval for the Scottish population. Hence, the well-being of the tenants with a history of homelessness, on average, is only slightly lower than what we would expect from a general population. At Round 2, the average score for the sampled is slightly lower, with a score of 43.1 (SD = 22.55, CI = 42.8 – 43.4), with a minimum score of 16 and a maximum score of 70. Consistent with the increase shown in the validated Satisfaction with Life scale over 12 months (Section 6.2.7), the validated WEMWBS found tenants reported higher mental well-being between the Round 1 and Round 2 survey.

Table 6. Comparisons of formerly homeless tenants of Brisbane Common Ground compared to Scottish population

	N	Mean	CI	α
Sample (Formerly homeless tenants of Brisbane Common Ground)				
Round 1	47	48.3	48.1 – 48.5	0.92
Round 2	47	43.1	42.8 – 43.4	
Population				
Scottish population**	1,749	50.7	50.3 – 51.1	0.89

** Provisional, based off national data obtained from the *Health and Education Population survey 2006* and the *Well? What do you think 2006* survey (N=348) (Brown and Janmohamed 2008).

6.1.11 *Community Participations*

The majority of tenants reported high levels of seeing family or friends in the past three months who do not live at Brisbane Common Ground (Figure 54). We do not know the extent to which participants saw family or friends prior to moving into Brisbane Common Ground, but Figure 55

shows that the majority reported that they were socialising more since living at Brisbane Common Ground. These figures about socialising and seeing family and friends are consistent with the high rates of friendships reported in the previous chapter (5.1.4). There is no data to identify whether tenants' socialising is a resource to open up opportunities and networks in the broader community.

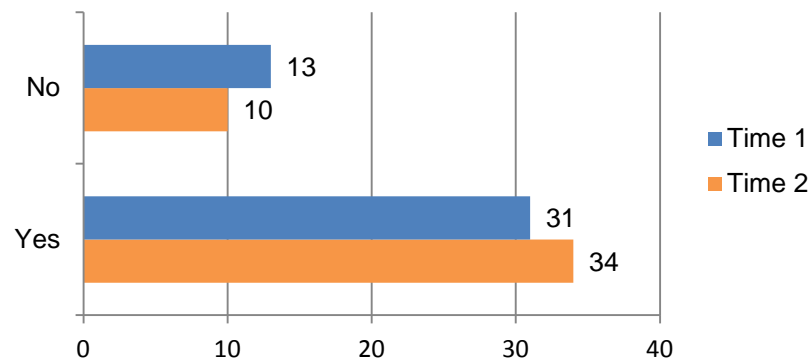


Figure 54. Tenants who self-reported seeing friends or family outside of Brisbane Common Ground in the last 3 months (N=44)

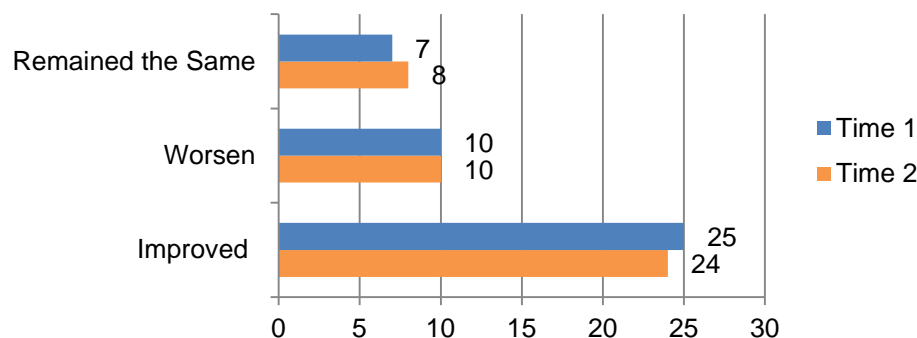


Figure 55. Socialising since moving into Brisbane Common Ground (N=42)

We asked survey participants about providing help to someone who did not live with them in the previous four weeks. Of the respondents, 36, or 77 per cent, indicated that they had provided help. Figure 56 illustrates the type of help provided, whereas Figure 57 demonstrates the recipients of the help. The provision of help and socialising data, taken together with the friendships data and use of communal spaces at Brisbane Common Ground, is consistent with the improved rates of life satisfaction. There is evidence that tenants are participating in a community of their making.

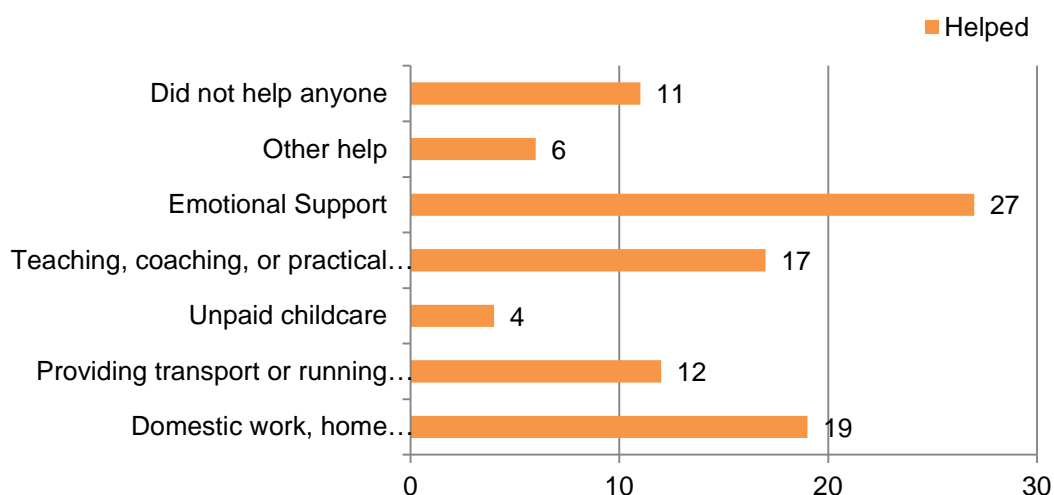


Figure 56. Tenants who indicated helping someone who did not live with them with activities in the last month (Round 2 only)

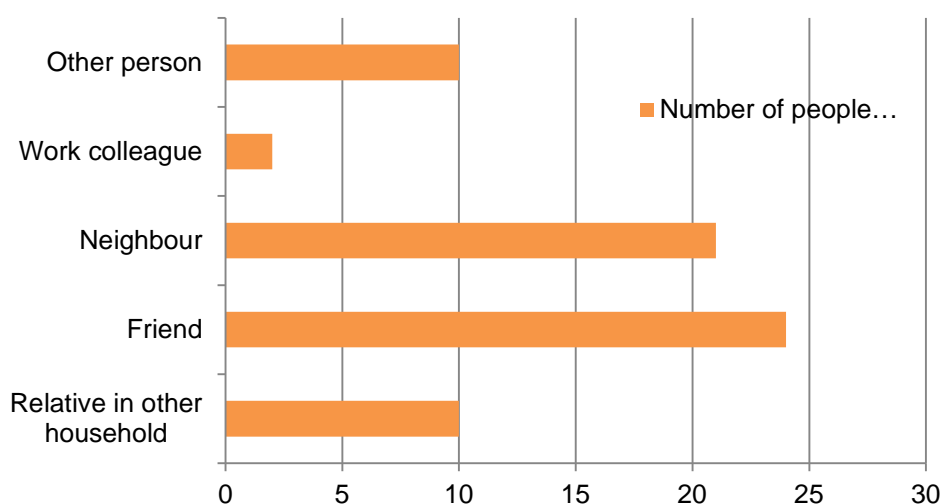


Figure 57. People whom tenants were helping (Round 2)

6.1.12 Conclusion

There are three key points that can be taken from the data presented in this chapter. First, on most measures, tenants reported either no or slight improvements in domains that are central to the Brisbane Common Ground model. As argued in the introduction to this chapter, we do not know what, if any, changes tenants experienced in the time between commencing their tenancies and completing the Round 1 survey. Without a baseline survey we cannot objectively measure change, but it is reasonable to assume that positive changes occurred in the period between people exiting homelessness and commencing their tenancies. Our research cannot demonstrate this conclusively.

Second, the majority of respondents reported that since moving in to Brisbane Common Ground, they had experienced non-housing improvements in their lives, such as improved physical health, mental health, life satisfaction and more frequent socialising with family and friends. Also consistent with these self-reported improvements, since moving in to Brisbane Common Ground many respondents, although not always the majority, reported that opportunities had improved to access education and training, employment, medical professions, mental health management, and access to supports to reduce alcohol and illicit substance use.

Third, even though many respondents continued to report health problems, problematic alcohol and illicit substance use, and unemployment, they nevertheless sustained their tenancies. This is a remarkably positive finding. Participants had experienced many years of exclusion from housing; Brisbane Common Ground has constituted a solution to their housing needs. Like others have suggested with a pilot evaluation in Melbourne (Johnson et al., 2014a), we stress the need to be realistic about what non-housing changes people who have experienced chronic homelessness will make. Or more specifically, the positive non-housing outcomes that Brisbane Common Ground aims to achieve will likely take several years to realise.

7 Value for money analysis

This chapter presents a value for money analysis of Brisbane Common Ground. This financial analysis is drawn from and limited to information in financial and contract documents provided to the research team by the Queensland State Government, Micah Projects and Common Ground Queensland, and data available in public documents. This chapter is made up of seven sections each addressing a specific research question centred on financial aspects.

The building in which Brisbane Common Ground operates is owned by Department of Housing and Public Works and leased to Common Ground Queensland. Common Ground Queensland retains all rental income from the tenants and under the lease is responsible for all maintenance costs of the building other than structural requirements, and the provision of furniture and other amenities inside the building. Structural requirements remain the responsibility of Department of Housing and Public Works. Common Ground Queensland manages the property and tenancy component that delivers the physical housing component of the initiative. Micah Projects is contracted by the Department of Housing and Public Works to provide onsite services to tenants. Micah Project leases office space from Common Ground Queensland within the building.

The financial information for 2012 and 2011 for Common Ground Queensland represents the formative years prior to Brisbane Common Ground opening for tenants on 12 July 2012. As such this information is not provided in the report and has not been used in the analysis.

7.1.1 Net revenues of the model

This section outlines the total costs and total revenues (net revenues) per annum of the model. To address this aim, information has been sourced from Common Ground Queensland Financial Statements, Micah Projects Financial Report on the Brisbane Common Ground program, and the building cost and grant funding information from the Department of Housing and Public Works. In addition, Leary and Partners (2012, 2015) reports to Common Ground Queensland on the appropriate levels of contributions required for sinking funds that allow for the replacement of furniture and fittings in each unit and for the long-term maintenance of the building are included in the analysis. The analysis consolidated the financial statements of each entity and eliminated transactions between the entities (refer Table 7). The results are adjusted to reflect a longer-term life cycle costs approach.

There are a number of factors that need to be recognised in relation to the financial statements. There has only been one full year of operations completed since the building opened. The first year of operations commenced on 12 July 2012 and with set ups costs and time taken to fully tenant the building the costs in that year are not representative of full operations. The Revenue and Expenses have been consolidated from the three components of the operations - residential operations undertaken by Common Ground Queensland;

support operations undertaken by Micah Projects; and ownership costs and grant funding from Department of Housing and Public Works. In addition, significant items not yet represented in the financial statements include rental for the commercial space at street level and any one off expenditure. These points are discussed below.

As highlighted in Table 7 costs for 2014 are \$1,603,245 including the support service and \$278,245 excluding the support service. The project costs excluding the support service after adjusting for a sinking fund increase the costs to \$756,868. Discussion on the cost per tenant is included in Section 7.6 below.

Table 7. Brisbane Common Ground Project Costs 2014

	Common Ground Qld	Micah Projects	Dept Housing & Public Works	Adjustment	Project Consolidated	Exclude Micah Projects - Project Consolidated
Income						
Rent HH	519,465	0	0		519,465	519,465
Other HH	7,096				7,096	7,096
Rent LI	641,641	0	0		641,641	641,641
Other LI	4,383				4,383	4,383
Utilities	97,547	0	0		97,547	97,547
Commercial Rent	84,050	0	0	(60,000)	24,050	84,050
Fundraising	310	0	0		310	310
Donations	3,429	0	0		3,429	3,429
Other	39,435	3,782	0		43,217	39,435
Grants	249,322	1,325,000	0	(1,574,322)	0	
Total Income	1,646,678	1,328,782	0	(1,634,322)	1,341,138	1,397,356
Expenses						
Employee Expense	727,125	969,811	0	0	1,696,936	727,125
Project Expense*	80,000	0	0	0	80,000	80,000
Operational Expenses	177,637	298,457	0	0	476,094	177,637
Tenancy Expenses	144,068	0	0	0	144,068	144,068
Property Expenses	393,216	60,000	0	(60,000)	393,216	393,216

Depreciation	153,555	514	0		154,069	153,555
Grants	0	0	1,574,322	(1,574,322)	0	0
Total Expenses	1,675,601	1,328,782	1,574,322	(1,634,322)	2,944,383	1,675,601
Surplus (Deficit) per Financial Statements	(28,923)	0	(1,574,322)	0	(1,603,245)	(278,245)
Adjust to Reflect Long Term Position using a Sinking Fund Approach to recognize Future Capital Needs						
Surplus (Deficit) above	(28,923)	0	(1,574,322)	0	(1,603,245)	(278,245)
Add back Depreciation**	153,555	514	0	0	154,069	153,555
Add back Project Expense***	80,000				80,000	80,000
Deduct Sinking Fund Contribution****	(85,044)	0	(627,134)	0	(712,178)	(712,178)
Long Term Cost Estimate for this year	119,588	514	(2,201,456)	0	(2,081,354)	(756,868)

Notes: * Advised by Sonya Keep that approval provided to expend \$80,000 of previous year surplus on Employment Project

**Removes depreciation as part of looking at long term costs

***Add back Project Expense

****Adds appropriate Sinking Fund provision as part of looking at long term costs

Sources: Common Ground Queensland Financial Statements 2014; Micah Projects Brisbane Common Ground Project Expenses 2014; Leahy and Partners (2012, 2015)

7.1.2 Findings

Commercial areas not leased

Commercial areas on the ground floor have never been leased as a result of lack of parking, low levels of walk-by traffic and difficulties in negotiating a suitable lease term. Common Ground Queensland has a short-term lease from the Department of Housing and Public Works and as a result is unable to provide a lease beyond this lease expiry date. As the space is unfinished and requires a tenant to complete the fit out it is unlikely that a lease will be possible without finding a way to provide a longer term lease as the expenditure cannot be justified. The area available for lease that is advertised in three tenancies is 373 square metres with incentives being offered.

There is a reasonable level of development under way in the vicinity and as this completes the ability to find tenants should improve. The estimated rent is \$150,000 per annum before deducting any one-off rental incentives such as a rent-free period at the commencement of the tenancy.

Reliance on funding to Micah Projects

The costs incurred by Micah Projects are funded through annual grants from the Department of Housing and Public Works. These costs include \$60,000 per annum for rental and \$279,000 plus on costs for concierge staff. If Micah Projects operated from elsewhere Common Ground Queensland may lose this revenue but this is unlikely as the onsite presence of the support provider is fundamental to the Common Ground model. If Micah Projects was to receive reduced funding then Common Ground Queensland may incur increased expenditure to cover the cost of the concierge.

Furniture Replacement

Drawing on annual grant funding Common Ground Queensland has been able to cover all expenses to date. The expenses, set out in the annual financial statements, do not include a specific provision to build a fund to pay for furniture replacement. Currently the Department of Housing and Public Works allows Common Ground Queensland to separate the funds received through the furniture rental charge. Accounting standards prevent these funds being recognised as a provision in the financial statements. The annual rental charges and accumulated funds received, however, are able to be separately identified and treated as appropriated funds in the acquittal document. Common Ground Queensland has had an experienced Quantity Surveyor (Leary and Partners 2012, 2015) develop a sinking fund approach that requires an annual allocation to provide the necessary funds in the future when the assets are expected to require replacing. Based on the projections in this report the current revenue derived from rental charges are not sufficient to meet the identified obligations. It appears that an expense to establish a sinking fund is not recognised as an expense under the terms of the funding agreement with Department of Housing and Public Works. The Department of Housing and Public Works has a policy for approval to utilise prior year surpluses. There is an unfunded obligation and it would be prudent to set aside sufficient funding to meet the future liability.

Replacement of Assets

A concern is that any apparent surpluses in Common Ground Queensland that do not include the sinking fund may be allocated to other activities, such as the Employment Project in 2014 and that funds are then not available to replace assets in the future as required. Tenants pay an additional 3 per cent of income in their rent for the assets and this amounts to approximately \$40,000 per annum and is not sufficient to meet the sinking fund requirements of approximately \$85,000 per annum.

Change in Property and Tenancy Management

If the property and tenancy management of Brisbane Common Ground was to change from Common Ground Queensland to another operator (remote but a possibility) there is likely to be a problem if the new operator was expected to pick up the unfunded liability.

Benefits related to Charity Status

The operations of Common Ground Queensland, as a charity, attract benefits in terms of being able to claim Goods and Services Tax on expenses back from the Australian Tax Office and allowing tenants to be eligible for Commonwealth Rent Assistance. If tenancy management transferred to the State these benefits would be lost. The Goods and Services Tax benefit is estimated in the vicinity of \$70,000 per annum. As the average rents are low the value of Commonwealth Rent Assistance is estimated at \$115,000 per annum.

Final Costs

The final cost of the project was \$47,062,997 including land of \$9,500,000. The Department of Housing and Public Works has subsequently written down the value of the asset to \$40,382,055 including land of \$7,000,000. The financial analysis does not include any recognition of this one off write down of \$6,680,942.

7.1.3 Factors that impact on the Financial Viability of the Model

This section seeks to determine if any factors have impacted on the financial viability of the model. A number of factors are considered in addressing this aim including reviewing and assessing the impacts of: tenant mix ratio from initial proposal against actual and any changes over time; rent policy changes particularly any changes in Department of Housing and Public Works policy; expected average rents against actuals; tenant income sources including Commonwealth Rent Assistance; rent arrears and tenant damage; repairs; and other factors. There are two sources of data relevant to this section – the consolidated financial statements (refer Table 7) and the Productivity Commission's Report on Government Services (2015). The financial information provided by the operator Common Ground Queensland has been reviewed and some clear factors impacting on viability are identified. First, without being able to review the original business case for this project it is not possible to identify or quantify the impacts of policy change. Clearly over time Commonwealth Rent Assistance will change in line with the adjustments made twice annually. Second, tenant mix and income sources are detailed in the overall evaluation. Commonwealth income support payments represents the major income source for all tenants and as income is a percentage of income the rent received is as expected.

Micah Projects support costs have been considered against the information in the chapter outlining homelessness services in the Report of Government Services 2015 (Productivity Commission) and are set out in Table 8.

Table 8. Micah Support Analysis and Comparative Cost Analysis

Micah Support Analysis			
Costs in 2013*	1,325,258		
Costs in 2014*	1,328,782		
Clients serviced in 2014*	165		
Comparative Cost Analysis	Micah	Queensland	Australia
Cost per completed support period	n/a	2010**	1,683**
Cost per client	8,053	2,422**	2,437**
Cost per day***	30.97	37.80	30.01

Notes: * Provided by Micah Projects

** Source Report on Government Services 2015 (Productivity Commission) - Using AIHW (unpublished) Specialist Homelessness Services Collection tables 18A, 18, 18A, 19, 18A, 20 and 2A.51.

***The cost per day has been calculated using 260 business days

Comparison on the basis of support costs per client is not directly valid, as the Queensland and Australian costs are based on time-limited interventions by specialist homelessness services, whereas support is available to Brisbane Common Ground tenants while they remain tenants. However, the costs per client per day of \$30 compares favourably with the Report on Government Services (Productivity Commission 2015). The overall benefit of this support program will be reflected in the improvements to client lives and reduced requirements for other services. Furthermore, people receiving support at Brisbane Common Ground are securely housed, whereas other people receiving support residing in Specialist Homelessness Services are homeless. This is a fundamental difference.

7.1.4 Findings

Factors not impacting on viability

Rent arrears and tenant damage: To date rent arrears and tenant damage have been minimal and well within expected levels in the public housing and private housing market.

Repairs: As this is a new building it is far too early to comment on the impact of actual repairs. The usual building and material warranties are expected to cover repairs unless caused by damage.

Factors impacting on viability

Rent of Commercial Space: As noted above, the building has some small commercial spaces on the ground level that have not been leased. The potential rental from these spaces of \$150,000 per annum has therefore not been achieved. Common Ground Queensland advises that despite active marketing the lack of parking and the low level of passing foot traffic makes leasing this space difficult. In addition the space requires significant fit out to be provided by the incoming tenant and there are issues around how to provide a suitable lease agreement given the short-term lease that Common Ground Queensland has from Department of Housing and Public Works. The street is also undergoing significant change with new developments in progress and when completed they are expected to activate the street to a higher level and this may improve the opportunities to lease these spaces.

Market rent for units in building: A simple analysis has been undertaken to estimate the position if the building was used for market rent. Please note this is not a formal valuation as the calculations have not been undertaken by a qualified valuer. The values are indicative and can be verified or otherwise by obtaining a building valuation (assumptions and calculations are set out in Appendix 2 and 3). This analysis indicates that the residential rental income achieved is approximately \$845,000 per annum or 42 per cent below market rent.

Tenants changing status: The model works on the premise that some tenants are formerly homeless and some are low to moderate income. There is no policy in place to determine if or when a formerly homeless person may transition to being a low to moderate income tenant. It is considered a logical step at some future point that a person can transition out of formerly homeless as they sustain housing. It is considered beyond the scope of this report to consider how to design or implement this transition. If the model maintains the ratio of 50:50 the transition whilst not generating more income will make spaces available for new formerly homeless tenants.

Support for all tenants: The support model information provided by Micah Projects indicates that the support component is being utilised by the tenants with a history of homelessness and low to moderate income tenants.

Commonwealth Rent Assistance: Whilst the model attracts Commonwealth Rent Assistance, the average rents are well below the rental required to receive the maximum Commonwealth Rent Assistance benefit. A simplistic assessment indicates the Commonwealth Rent Assistance contribution to be approximately \$115,000 per annum. It is difficult to assess accurately as the amounts payable have a wide range of eligibility that can impact on the benefit paid.

7.1.5 Value of contributions leveraged from private sector and community support

This section outlines the value of financial and in-kind contributions leveraged from private and community sectors. The analysis draws on financial statements provided by Common Ground Queensland and Micah Projects. The nature of contributions and likelihood of ongoing support as well as the “newness” of the model was considered. In addition, financial analysis in relation to the contribution from Grocon (who built the building at cost) informs this section.

Table 9 sets out the community support Common Ground Queensland and Micah Projects received in the form of donations and fundraising.

Table 9. Community support

	2014	2013	2012	2011
<i>Common Ground Queensland</i>				
Donations	3,429	8,459	48,721	28,525
Surplus from fundraising	310	44,103	57,930	0
<i>Micah Projects</i>				
Donations	0	282	n/a	n/a

The contribution made by Grocon is determined by using publically available information to estimate the total development cost including land (see Table 10). The Commonwealth Government contributed \$44,500,000 towards this project and the State of Queensland contributed a similar amount across a range of social housing program areas. The Australian Bureau of Statistics estimate that the median building construction margin is 7.1 per cent before interest and taxation (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2012). This report also advised that the margin in large companies (over 200 employees) is generally lower at 3.2 per cent. Assuming that Grocon has a 3.2 per cent margin then the profit before taxation foregone is estimated at \$950,000. As Grocon is a private company there is no publicly available financial information. Assuming that there is no debt and taxation is paid at the company rate of tax of 30 per cent then the contribution after tax by Grocon is estimated at \$665,000. This is a simplistic estimate where the building contract information has not been available and specific Grocon information is not available. This estimate is considered reasonable on available information but without knowing the cost structure within Grocon the estimate may be materially incorrect.

Table 10. Estimate of Building Costs and Grocon's contribution

Total Project Budget Cost*	49,200,000
Adjust Project Budget Cost to Actual	47,062,997
Less Estimate of Land Value**	9,515,880
Total Construction Cost	37,547,117
Less Estimate of Project Fees 15%	4,452,227
Less Goods and Services Tax 10%	3,413,374
Estimated Cost of Grocon Build	29,681,516
Grocon margin***	3.20%
Grocon Contribution from not adding margin	949,809

Notes: * 2012-13 Queensland State Budget - Service Delivery Statements - Department of Housing and Public Works page 6 ".completed construction of Brisbane Common Grounds at a total cost of \$49.2 million. Supported by Transcript of Joint Doorstop with Kevin Rudd - Brisbane Common Ground Opening said " ...That's the \$46M that the Federal Government ...has dedicated to this complex"

Supported by Media Release from The Honourable Bruce Flegg on Brisbane Common Ground Opening, "Commonwealth provided \$46M for land and building with additional capital funds from the Queensland Government"

**Land and Building purchase value provided by Department of Housing and Public Works. Rateable value 2014 \$5,000,000 and written down in DHPW accounts to \$7,000,000. Note : Any Values in DHPW will include GST as DHPW is substantially making input taxed supply and has only claimed a proportion related to commercial aspects of the development.

***Australian Bureau of Statistics Private Sector Construction Industry- 8772.0 (2012:p.10) Large 200 Or more person entities have lower operating profit margins. Average is 10.1% with only 3.2% in large entities.

7.1.6 Findings

Community Support

The early donations to Common Ground Queensland reflect funds obtained prior to the opening of Brisbane Common Ground and were used primarily to assist in purchasing assets for the internal fit out of the building. Since commencing operations the level of donations have been low and do not materially impact on the operational cash flow of Common Ground Queensland. Fundraising in 2013 and 2012 was primarily raised from the sale of tickets to an annual ball. These costs did not include donated time or paid staff time to undertake the organisation of the ball and it was decided not to continue with this activity.

Private sector support

The one off contribution by Grocon is a material contribution that is not replicable.

7.1.7 Net cost of the initiative

This section seeks to determine the net cost of the initiative. To do so it draws on the costs and revenues set out in Table 7. A life cycle cost approach to recognising ongoing building maintenance underpins this analysis. In addition, the Brisbane Common Ground model is considered in a manner that eliminates the funding flows between the Australian Government, the Queensland Government and Common Ground Queensland.

Data is only available for a short period of time (less than two years) and it is therefore only able to provide an indicative position. The full costs of new building can be difficult to assess in the early years when many components remain under warranty and because they are new they require no or very limited maintenance. Issues of design and materials used in the construction can significantly influence the longer-term costs if the design or material quality contributes to higher levels of ongoing repair or replacement.

It is considered appropriate to adjust the financial statements to account for the future requirements to replace furniture and fittings and to properly maintain the building. To do this the financial statements will have the non-cash item of depreciation removed and the contribution required for a sinking fund determined by a Quantity Surveyor added to the operating position. Using a sinking fund approach spreads the future requirements over an appropriate period rather than having large one off adjustments when the expenditure is incurred. This approach is common in body corporate situations to ensure that all owners over time contribute to the long-term costs and that there are funds available when required. The operational outcome is detailed in Table 7. Ordinarily this analysis would adjust the operational outcome for the benefits (or additional costs) of the project calculated in Table 8 and Table 9. As it has not been possible to accurately assess those costs no further analysis has been undertaken.

7.1.8 Cost of asset

In the event that the model is unable to continue there is a significant risk to the Queensland Government in terms of the value of the property.

Town Planning Approval Process: The Development Approval utilised the provisions of the *Sustainable Planning Act 2009* that provides an exemption for public housing from the usual approval process through the Local Government (in this case Brisbane City Council). The Director-General for the Department of Housing and Public Works has the authority to give development approval and Council is often consulted. The Department of Housing and Public Works advises that the Brisbane Common Ground approval is substantially inconsistent with the Brisbane City Council planning scheme.

Without getting into detail one significant area of non-compliance is the number of car parks provided. The effect of this planning status is that the building only has development approval

to be used as public housing (the non-residential components are ancillary to this use). The requirements of the Brisbane City Council for a material change of use cannot be detailed as part of this evaluation and will be determined by the relevant City Plan requirements at the time. It is expected that such requirements will have a detrimental impact on the value of the property either by requiring the Department of Public Housing and Works to expend funds to gain approval and alter the building if required or a purchaser would need to reduce what they are prepared to pay and cover expected costs to make the building compliant.

Potentially this raises an issue of asset impairment for the Department of Housing and Public Works in addition to any adjustment of initial cost to reflect market value of the building.

Market Value of the Building: A preliminary assessment of the market value of the building is estimated (but would need expert valuation advice to confirm) in Appendix 3. The analysis indicates that the Building has a value on present rents of approximately \$ 21,000,000 and a value of \$35,000,000 if market rents were achieved. The written down book value advised by the Department of Housing and Public Works for the development is \$40,000,000.

The final cost of the project was \$47,062,997 including land of \$9,500,000. The Department of Housing and Public Works has subsequently written down the value of the asset to \$40,382,055 including land of \$7,000,000. The financial analysis does not include any recognition of this one off write down of \$6,680,942.

7.1.9 Average cost per tenant

This section considers the average cost per tenant including tenants allocated a unit based on chronic homelessness. It seeks to also understand how these costs compare to other models of intervention and support for the same target group. To ascertain average cost per Brisbane Common Ground tenant annual costs and tenancy numbers were sourced from the financial statements of Common Ground Queensland and Micah Projects. Average data available for Queensland in the Productivity Commission's (2015) Report on Government Services is used to cost social housing with no support. It was not possible without access to data to make comparisons with other single-site supportive housing elsewhere in Australia, or even with homeless accommodation.

Table 11 sets out the average costs relating to both tenants allocated due to a history of homelessness and tenants allocated due to low to moderate income. Actual revenue splits are used. Direct income is actual revenue. Utility income is 54:46 (low to moderate income: history of homelessness) based on the Common Ground budget. Other income is split 50:50. To account for the higher assistance given to tenants with a history of homelessness operational expenses and tenancy expenses are split 45:55 (low to moderate income: history of homelessness). Other costs are split 50:50.

Table 11. Brisbane Common Ground Average Costs and Comparisons to Report on Government Services 2015

Brisbane Common Ground				
		Tenants history of homelessness	Tenants low income	Total
Net costs (income)		19,924	(139,512)	(119,588)
Common Ground Qld				
Net costs to DPHW (excluding Micah)		438,228	438,228	876,456
Net costs of residential services		458,152	298,716	756,868
Micah Projects Support				1,325,000
Residential Service per tenancy	146	6,276	4,092	5,184
Comparison to Report of Government Services 2015				
Queensland Public Housing**				7,116
Australian Public Housing**				8,101
Queensland Community Housing**				6,270
Australian Community Housing**				8,841

Note: Total costs of delivery based on Adjusted Actuals in 2014

*Department of Public Housing and Works

**Source Report on Government Services 2015 (Productivity Commission 2015)

Table 7 in Section 7.2 sets out a comparison of costs of support at Brisbane Common Ground (as supplied by Micah Projects) with figures for Queensland and Australia sourced from the Report on Government Assistance 2015 (Productivity Commission 2015).

7.1.10 Findings

Cost of support: As previously stated the costs for Micah Projects to deliver the support service do not appear high given the more intense support provided over a longer period than usual and the support being provided to low to moderate income tenants as well.

The costs of providing the residential service inclusive of potential sinking fund contributions compares favourably with the costs reported in the Report on Government Services 2015 (Productivity Commission 2015). Care does need to be taken with the average numbers from

the Report on Government Services as many dwelling are older and given the Brisbane Common Ground building is new major maintenance issues are still under building warranty.

Table 12. Cost per tenant excluding support costs

	Cost per tenant
Tenant history of homelessness	6,276
Tenant low income	4,092
Combined	5,184

This analysis takes a forward-looking viewpoint of life cycle income and expenses. It does not make any assessment of possible asset impairment. It is likely that the overall cost to build the project facility exceeds the market value.

Table 13. Cost per tenant including support costs

	Tenancy costs	Support costs	Total
Tenant history of homelessness	6,276	8,053	14,329
Tenant low income	4092	8,053	12,145

7.1.11 Sustainability and viability over the life of the project

This section seeks to examine whether the model is sustainable and viable over the life of the project and the long-term financial considerations. There are three key components of the Brisbane Common Ground model: ownership costs not payable by the lessee (the Department of Housing and Public Works); the property and tenancy management costs include lease costs (Common Ground Queensland); and the support costs (Micah Projects).

In the first instance sustainability is taken to mean that the project is able to self-fund over the life of the building. It also assumes that the lease terms with Common Ground Queensland are continued.

For a true picture of viability it is imperative to consider the future cash flow needs of the Brisbane Common Ground model that will enable the Department of Housing and Public Works as owner and Common Ground Queensland as lessee to meet the maintenance or replacement costs over the life of the various assets. Three assumptions underpin this examination. First, the long-term viability assessment assumes that the grant funding provided to Micah Projects as the support providers continues and therefore enables this fundamental

component of the Common Ground model to continue. Second, long-term viability excludes any assumption about ongoing grant funding from any level of government other than the indirect funding from Commonwealth Rent Assistance. Third, the rent assistance can remain, as this is an entitlement of the tenant and will continue if the tenant is in alternate accommodation. This re-casts the financial statements using a life cycle cost approach rather than the annual financial statements prepared in accordance with the accepted accounting policies or requirements set out in Funding Agreements.

To consider the sustainability and viability the long-term financial forecasts for replacement of fit out and maintenance items payable by the lessee and building owner are reviewed.

Documents considered include the financial statements of Common Ground Queensland and Micah Projects, and the long-term requirement forecasts developed by Quantity Surveyor, Leary and Partners (2012, 2015). The re-stated Common Ground Queensland financial position to recognise the life-cycle costs for the tenancy and property management of Brisbane Common Ground are set out in Table 7 based on 2014 financial information.

Department of Housing and Public Works

The delivery of public housing is not sustainable on the basis of it being self-funding.

The additional costs that are potentially borne by the Department of Housing and Public Works as owner have been assessed on the basis of the Quantity Surveyor report (Leary and Partners 2012). This is the estimate of the sinking fund required to fully maintain the building over the next 20 years. It is understood that some of the inspection activity is undertaken by Common Ground Queensland on a regular basis. As such the Department of Housing and Public Works may need to have a revised sinking fund analysis prepared to reflect this. The changes are expected to reduce the overall costs but it may not be substantial.

The expected requirements of the sinking fund for the building are set out in Appendix 4 for the Department of Housing and Public Works. This indicates that a sinking fund liability of \$664,657 existed at 30 June 2014 and that ongoing contributions are in excess of \$600,000 per annum. The Department of Housing and Public Works will need to be aware of this estimated cost as the work is required. The first major expenditure is forecast for 2018 at \$1,000,000 and over the ten years to 2022 the total expenditure is expected to be \$5,300,000.

The Department of Housing and Public Works advised that it has had negligible expenses since the opening of the building and this is expected. The Department of Housing and Public Works is not receiving any revenue from the asset and is liable for all future structural costs and as the model does not appear sustainable, as there is ongoing funding required and there will be no income to offset this for the Department of Housing and Public Works.

The final cost of the project was \$47,062,997 including land of \$9,500,000. The Department of Housing and Public Works subsequently wrote down the value of the asset to \$40,382,055 including land of \$7,000,000. Consideration of ongoing sustainability does not include any recognition of this one off write down of \$6,680,942.

Common Ground Queensland

To consider the long-term sustainability of Common Ground Queensland a forecast has been prepared that looks at the position over the next ten years. The assumptions implicit within the forecast include: the lease terms remain the same and are extended; operational costs and incomes increase over time in line with the consumer price index; a sinking fund is established to ensure that asset replacements are able to be funded; and, no additional funds are allocated to other projects. This analysis indicates that whilst Common Ground Queensland may be making small losses without grant funding it has sufficient cash resources through to 2021 (see Appendix 5). The model though is not expected to be sustainable over the long-term without either additional grants or another source of income.

Micah Projects

The support operation undertaken by Micah Projects does not have an income source other than grant funding from government. As such this component of the model is not sustainable without ongoing funding.

7.1.12 Findings

The Department of Housing and Public Works cannot specifically strengthen its position. It can review the ongoing requirements to maintain the building and the timing of the work may be flexible to suit department purposes. This must not be done in a way that may leave the building in a material backlog maintenance position.

The Common Ground Queensland position can be strengthened if the rental policy on the low income tenants allowed a wider eligibility group or allowed rents to be higher. It is recognised that the rentals established reflect present policy for public housing tenants and community housing tenants. The known exceptions are National Rental Affordability Scheme and Brisbane Housing Company that use a reduced market rent approach whilst still considering affordability for the tenant.

Other than a rental policy adjustment that will not, on its own solve the sustainability position of Common Ground Queensland, other alternative funding models purely shift the costs from one entity to another and will not provide any net gain. A sustainable rent level would require rents to be increased to a level that will not be affordable for the target client group.

As previously discussed rent policy needs to be considered in relation to developing an agreed point when (and if) a tenant with a history of homelessness becomes or transitions to a low to moderate income tenant.

If the funding to Micah Projects (or another similar service provider) ceased then there will likely be a significant impact on Common Ground Queensland. There would be a loss of rental presently \$60,000 per annum if Common Ground Queensland is unable to re-lease those premises and there would be an issue over the funding of the 24/7 concierge that presently costs \$279,000 plus on-costs that is funded by Micah Projects.

Overall the model is not sustainable without a level of ongoing support from government.

7.1.13 Conclusion

This chapter has provided responses to questions posed in the evaluation about the internal financial mechanisms of Brisbane Common Ground. The information outlined in this chapter about the cost of Brisbane Common Ground per tenant per year to the Department of Housing and Public Works serves as a basis to arrive at estimates of cost offsets. As demonstrated in the next chapter, the cost offset analysis takes the cost of delivering Brisbane Common Ground as a starting point. These delivery costs are examined in light of the costs associated with the tenants changed patterns in service utilisation.

8 Tenant Service Utilisation Patterns

We accessed administrative data to measure the service usage history of tenants at Brisbane Common Ground. This administrative data is a critical component of the evaluation because it enables us to measure their service usage history across two time periods, these are: the twelve months prior to commencing their Brisbane Common Ground tenancy (pre, when they were homeless); and the twelve months after they commenced their Brisbane Common Ground tenancy (post, when they were tenants of Brisbane Common Ground). From these measures of pre and post, we can empirically identify whether tenants patterns of service utilisation changed in the year they were Brisbane Common Ground tenants compared to the year they were homeless. The examination of tenants' service usage history, particularly the analysis of changes in patterns of service usage history that are associated with being homeless and being housed, provides evidence about the impacts of Brisbane Common Ground. Our analysis was guided by the question, do tenants of Brisbane Common Ground use less and different services in the first year of their tenancy compared to the services they used in the full year immediately prior to commencing their tenancy?

The administrative data provides evidence to arrive at approximations of the cost of the services used by people when they were homeless, and then the cost of the services used in the year tenants resided at Brisbane Common Ground. The latter costs, particularly if tenants use less services post tenancy commencement, are analysed and presented toward the end of the chapter as cost offsets associated with Brisbane Common Ground.

Our analysis of the cost of services provided to people when they are homeless compared to when they are tenants of supportive housing follows the seminal work of Dennis Culhane from the United States. Through several studies drawing on various large administrative data sets, Culhane and collaborators demonstrated that people who are chronically homeless (although not necessarily families who are homeless) use disproportionately large amounts of health and criminal services, and when the same individuals access supportive housing, their use of many health and criminal services declines (Culhane 2008; Culhane, Metraux and Hadley 2002; Culhane, Park and Metraux 2011; Poulin, Metraux, McGuire and Culhane 2010). Culhane provides comprehensive and nuanced evidence to show that for people who are chronically homeless who frequently and disproportionately use health and criminal services, some and even all of the costs of providing permanent supportive housing can be offset by their reduced use of other government funded services, especially psychiatric inpatient care and incarceration (Culhane 2008). Culhane presents a balanced argument, whereby he shows that cost offsets, when they do occur, take place at the broader government or societal level. The provision of supportive housing may promote reductions in the provision of services delivered by other entities of government, such as health and criminal justice departments.

Culhane's (2008) analysis of the numerous reasons why reduced service use may not mean money saved in the United States are applicable to Queensland and Australia more broadly. In a statement that is relevant for the tenants and Brisbane Common Ground and the Queensland State Government, Culhane argues:

Even when services utilization and costs among people who are homeless are identified, it is not always the case that the dollars spent can be recouped from reduced utilization, and redirected to housing solutions. Public resources are typically allocated by government departments individually and resources saved in one area, even those which are clearly responsible for the savings in another department, cannot necessarily be recaptured and invested elsewhere. Moreover, while the reduced utilization of services can result in reduced expenditures, that is not always the case. In systems where services are funded by direct support or subsidy of facilities and operational activities (such as jails), and not through cost-based reimbursement systems (as in health care), reduced utilization by some people will not reduce the overall facility operating costs, as those costs are paid irrespective of who uses the system, or for how long. (Culhane 2008: 109-110)

In Australia, Parsell et al. (2013a, 2013b) tried to identify changes in service utilisation among people accessing Street to Home services after they exited homelessness and accessed social housing. Their analysis relied on survey data whereby Street to Home clients retrospectively reported their service usage history. Parsell et al. (2013a, 2013b) discussed the limitations in the validity of the service usage history based on self-reports as they did not feel the participants completing the survey could recall the detail and frequency of previous twelve month service usage with great accuracy.

More recently, Johnson et al. (2014b) measured the service usage patterns of people who had exited homelessness and accessed housing through Melbourne's Social to Inclusion pilot program. Drawing on longitudinal survey data because the researchers were unable to access administrative data, they found that people who accessed housing with support after exiting homelessness reported significant reductions in the use of emergency departments, inpatients and psychiatric care, and also reductions in the use of homelessness services and less time incarcerated (Johnson et al. 2014b). The Johnson et al. (2014b: 28) study provides important cost benefit analysis about exiting homelessness and sustaining housing, but they recognise that their analysis would have been stronger if they were able to access administrative data to identify service usage.

8.1.1 The Services

Based on the services identified as frequently and disproportionately used by people who are homeless reported in the existing literature (Culhane 2008; Culhane, Metraux and Hadley 2002; Johnson et al. 2014b), we accessed the service usage histories from eight service providers. The eight providers, and the information accessed, included: (1) public emergency hospital presentations, comprising the triage category, departure status, and visit type; (2) public hospital admitted patient records, comprising length of stay, elective status, discharge

status, and major diagnostic category; (3) public mental health, comprising intervention type, treatment unit, and duration in minutes; (4) Queensland ambulance incidents, comprising number of incidents [this data was accessed from the emergency department information reporting “mode of arrival”]; (5) Queensland Corrections, comprising identification of custody or probation or parole, episode commencement, completion and duration; (6) Queensland Courts, comprising number of court appearances; (7) Queensland Police Services, comprising occurrences as offender, offences as an offender, occurrences as a victim, and number of times in police custody, and (8) Specialist Homelessness Services, comprising nights in homelessness accommodation, and financial assistance provided.

8.1.2 Service usage timeframe

We accessed the service usage history for participating tenants over a two year period. We received service usage data that specifically pertained to each person’s tenancy commencement date; we accessed service usage data for each tenant based on the full year immediately prior to commencing their Brisbane Common Ground tenancy, and the first full year that they resided at Brisbane Common Ground. With this distinction between pre, the year when participants were homelessness, and post, the year when participants were housed at Brisbane Common Ground, our data shows whether, and how often, people used the above services as both homeless and as tenants of Brisbane Common Ground. We analysed the data exclusively on the distinction between pre and post Brisbane Common Ground tenancy commencement, and below we report the service usage, and the associated costs and cost offsets, at the cohort level.

8.1.3 Brisbane Common Ground tenant participants

We purposefully sampled Brisbane Common Ground tenants on the basis of two criteria. First, we included tenants who were allocated a Brisbane Common Ground tenancy because they were assessed as experiencing chronic homelessness. Second, we only included tenants who had resided at Brisbane Common Ground for at least twelve months at the time we sought their consent (discussed below). We excluded tenants who had resided at Brisbane Common Ground for less than twelve months because our design required service usage to be accessed and measured over a twenty four month period that involved twelve months post tenancy commencement.

At the time we sought tenants consent to participate in the service usage history component of the evaluative research, in March 2015, there were 61 tenants eligible for inclusion in the service usage history analysis. Of the 61 eligible tenants, 41 provided their informed consent to participate. Tenants could only provide informed consent after the researchers went to extensive lengths to explain the nature of participation. After tenants understood what participation entailed they could provide informed and voluntary consent.

The research team intended to invite all of the 61 eligible tenants to participate. Of the 20 eligible tenants who did not participate, most were not able to be contacted by the research team. Seven eligible tenants who were invited to participate declined. Of the 41 tenants that participated, 35 provided their consent to have all of their service usage history (described above) accessed for the research. Six tenants provided partial consent, whereby they did not consent to have a combination of their Corrections, Courts, Police and Mental Health data accessed.

In the tables below we present the service usage data for pre and post tenancy commencement, the frequency and percentage differences in use twelve months pre and post tenancy commencement, and the estimated costs of delivering the use of the services.

8.1.4 Service usage, usage change, approximate costs

Table 14. Admitted Patients

N=41: n=30	12 months pre tenancy commencement	12 months post tenancy commencement	Difference between pre and post
Days	420	399	-21 (5%↓)
Cost*	\$1,064,167	\$472,673	-\$591,495

*Admitted patients costs sourced from Queensland Health Statistical Analysis and Linkage Unit. Where direct cost to hospital for admitted patients was missing, we used the figure for the amount funded to the hospital by Queensland Health (as advised by Queensland Health Statistical Analysis and Linkage Unit).

Table 15. Mental Health

N=41: n=23	12 months pre tenancy commencement	12 months post tenancy commencement	Difference between pre and post
Episodes	1,029	359	-669 (65%↓)
Minutes	27,152	10,560	-16,592 (61%↓)
Cost*	\$372,498	\$129,958	-\$242,540

*Mental health costing is based on \$362 average cost per treatment day of ambulatory care 2012-13 as reported in the *Report on Government Services Health* (2015; Table 12A.63), Productivity Commission, available <http://www.pc.gov.au/research/ongoing/report-on-government-services/2015/health/download-the-volume/rogs-2015-volume-health.pdf>

Table 16. Emergency Department

N=41: n=33	12 months pre tenancy commencement	12 months post tenancy commencement	Difference between pre and post
Presentation	156	144	-12 (8%↓)
Cost *	\$102,510	\$104,860	+\$2,350

*Emergency Department presentation cost derived from two sources. First, estimated costs were provided by the Queensland Health Statistical Analysis and Linkage Unit. This figure omits costs for four emergency presentations that could not be found. Second, the Queensland Health Statistical Analysis and Linkage Unit were unable to provide costing estimates for public patient Emergency Department presentations at the Mater Hospital. As such, costing information for public patient Emergency Department presentations at the Mater Hospital were estimated using the Australian mean for emergency department presentations (\$585) as of 2011-12 (*Report on Government Services Health*, 2015: 11.57), Productivity Commission, available <http://www.pc.gov.au/research/ongoing/report-on-government-services/2015/health/download-the-volume/rogs-2015-volume-health.pdf>

Table 17. Ambulance

N=41: n=27	12 months pre tenancy commencement	12 months post tenancy commencement	Difference between pre and post
Incidents*	64	63	-1 (2%↓)
Incident cost = \$650**	\$41,600	\$40,950	-\$650

*The ambulance incidents excludes an outlying tenant whose ambulance use demonstrated an underlying process in contrast to other tenants that does not provide reliable information about changed patterns in service use among the cohort of Brisbane Common Ground tenants. The outlying tenant went from four ambulance incidents in the twelve months prior to commencing a Brisbane Common Ground tenancy to 41 ambulance incidents in the twelve months post tenancy commencement. The tenant had a chronic health condition that required weekly ambulance transport to the hospital.

**Ambulance incident cost of \$650 in 2012-13 financial year derived from figures published in Department of Community Safety 2012-13 Annual Report (2013: 22), available at https://ambulance.qld.gov.au/docs/DCS_AR_12-13.pdf

Table 18. Corrective Services

N=35: n=2	12 months pre tenancy commencement	12 months post tenancy commencement	Difference between pre and post
Days in Custody	132	0	-132 (100%↓)
Day in Custody Cost = \$219*	\$28,908	\$0	-\$28,908
Days on Parole or Probation	154	66	-88 (57%↓)
Day on Parole or Probation Cost = \$22**	\$3,388	\$1,452	-\$1,936
Total Cost Difference	\$32,296	\$1,452	-\$30,844

*Day in custody cost derived from 2013-14 net operating expenditure published in *Report on Government Services Corrective Services* (2015: 8.23-4), Productivity Commission, available at

<http://www.pc.gov.au/research/ongoing/report-on-government-services/2015/justice/corrective-services/rogs-2015-volumeec-chapter8.pdf>

**Day on Parole or Probation cost derived from 2013-14 net operating expenditure published in *Report on Government Services Corrective Services* (2015: 8.23-4), Productivity Commission, available at <http://www.pc.gov.au/research/ongoing/report-on-government-services/2015/justice/corrective-services/rogs-2015-volumeec-chapter8.pdf>

Table 19. Courts

N=37: n=17	12 months pre tenancy commencement	12 months post tenancy commencement	Difference between pre and post
Appearances	108	61	-47 (44%↓)
Magistrates Court Finalisation* Cost = \$520**	\$23,400	\$13,217	-\$10,183

*Court costs based on the average cost of a finalisation in the Magistrates Court in 2013-14. The *Report on Government Services Courts* (2015: 7A.22) estimates that in 2013-14 there were an average of 2.4 appearances in the Magistrates Court for every finalisation. The average cost of a finalisation in the Magistrates Court in the 2013-14 financial year is \$520 (2015: 7.55). Thus to arrive at costing estimates, we divided the number of court appearances by 2.4. *Report on Government Services Courts*, (2015), Productivity Commission, is available <http://www.pc.gov.au/research/ongoing/report-on-government-services/2015/justice/courts/rogs-2015-volumeec-chapter7.pdf>

Table 20. Queensland Police Service

N=37: n=37	12 months pre tenancy commencement	12 months post tenancy commencement	Difference between pre and post
Occurrences as Offender	50	24	-26 (52%↓)
Cost per offender = \$2,453*	\$122,650	\$58,872	-\$63,778
Offences as Offender	57	28	-29 (51%↓)
Occurrences as Victim	24	11	-13 (54%↓)
Cost per victim = \$243**	\$5,832	\$2,673	-\$3,159
Occurrence Police or Corrections transport to Hospital	5	1	-4 (80%↓)
Nights in Police Custody	45	27	-18 (40%↓)
Cost per night in custody = \$830***	\$37,350	\$22,410	-\$14,940
Total cost of Police	\$165,832	\$83,955	-\$81,877

*Cost per offender derived from modelling of the cost to Queensland Police Service responding to an offender as outlined in Allard, Chrzanowski, and Stewart (2013). Cost per offender also estimated by T. Allard (personal communication, December 16, 2015).

**Cost per victim derived from modelling of the cost to Queensland Police Service responding to a victim as outlined in Allard, Chrzanowski, and Stewart (2013). Cost per victim also estimated by T. Allard (personal communication, December 16, 2015).

*** Cost per night in custody is an estimate calculated by Queensland Policy Service to house a person overnight in a watchhouse.

Table 21. Specialist Homelessness Services

N=41: n=38	12 months pre tenancy commencement	12 months post tenancy commencement	Difference between pre and post
Short Term Accommodation (Nights)	1,138	1	-1137 (99%↓)
Medium Term Accommodation (Nights)	558	0	-558 (100%↓)
Long Term Accommodation (Nights)	140	6	-134 (96%↓)
Total Cost of Specialist Homelessness Services Accommodation*	\$158,539	\$604	-\$157,935
Payment for Accommodation	\$3,665	\$100	-\$3,565
Payment for Establishment or Maintenance of Tenancy	\$6,285	\$3,127	-\$3,158
Payment for Training, Education or Employment	\$510	\$20	-\$490
Payment for Accessing External Specialist Services	\$492	\$40	-\$452
Payment for 'Other'	\$5,122	\$1,358	-\$3,764
Total Cost of Specialist Homelessness Services payments provided	\$16,074	\$4,645	-\$11,429
Total cost of Specialist Homelessness Services	\$174,613	\$5,249	-\$169,364

*The estimated average of \$86.35 per bed per night is derived from the actual funding provided by the Department of Housing and Public Works to six Brisbane Specialist Homelessness Service funded in 2012-13. The six services provided a mix of high and low supervision homeless accommodation to adults. The average cost per bed per night should be considered in light of the large cost range. Of the six Brisbane Specialist Homelessness Services, the least expensive service was funded at a rate of \$48.18 per bed per night, whereas the most expensive was funded at a rate of \$247.24 per bed per night. We draw on the average cost, as our data is unable to determine whether our sample used the more or less expensive (or a combination of) Specialist Homelessness Services.

8.1.5 Discussion

Tenants who were allocated housing at Brisbane Common Ground because of chronic homelessness used less services, often considerably less, in the first year residing at Brisbane Common Ground compared to the year prior to commencing their tenancy when they were homeless. The administrative data clearly demonstrates that the provision and sustainment of housing at Brisbane Common Ground is closely associated with tenants using less Queensland Government funded services. The administrative data provides additional evidence to the qualitative and survey based data presented in earlier chapters about the positive impact Brisbane Common Ground has on tenants' lives.

Below we synthesise the changes in service utilisation to estimate cost offsets that flow from the reduction in service uses. Prior to discussing any cost offset that may be associated with reduced service use, it is important to critically discuss how changed patterns in service utilisation can be interpreted and how the downward trends in service utilisation may constitute benefits to tenants that extend beyond any cost offsets that can be approximated.

8.1.6 Reduced service use equates to life improvements

Not all reductions in service use are positive. Likewise, not all increase in service use are negative. Some of our administrative data is blunt and we are unable to provide the nuance to explain what changes mean on every occasion. We could reasonably predict, for instance, that experiencing chronic homelessness is associated with exclusion from mainstream health services. Following this prediction, we could predict that accessing supportive housing is likely to constitute a remedy to the barriers of accessing health services. Thus on this model, and in the absence of a systematic and detailed analysis of the nature of health service use pre and post Brisbane Common Ground tenancy commencement, increasing health service use after residing at Brisbane Common Ground could be a positive progression as it may signify the disruption of barriers to health access. Indeed, Figures 37 in Chapter Six provides data which shows a majority of tenants self-reported that their access to medical professionals had improved since moving to Brisbane Common Ground. This example reinforces the importance of not assuming that reduced service utilisation is always positive; in this evaluative research of Brisbane Common Ground changes in patterns of service utilisation are analysed with reference to other data sources, particularly firsthand evidence from tenants.

Health Services

Notwithstanding caveats about the potential multiple ways changes in patterns of service use can be interpreted, the administrative data presented in this chapter demonstrate trends that signify positive impacts of Brisbane Common Ground. The significant reduction in minutes of mental health interventions and the even more significant reduction in episodes of mental health intervention suggest that living at Brisbane Common Ground is closely associated with improved mental health. The administrative data presented in Table 15 shows that the 669 fewer episodes of mental health intervention constitutes a reduction of 65 per cent. This reduction is consistent with tenants' self-report data from Chapter Six of improved mental health (Figure 40) and improved management of mental health and access to treatment (Figure 41). Taken with the survey results, the administrative data showing clear downward trends in mental health service use is a highly significant outcome for Brisbane Common Ground.

The data reporting fewer admitted patients incidents (5% reduction) and emergency department presentations (8% reduction) is less stark and compelling than reductions in mental health use, but the downward trends in the use of these primary health services is positive. Moreover, and as noted above and as reported in Chapter Six, we have confidence that the slightly reduced use of primary health services is a positive progression (rather than greater exclusion to health services) as the majority of tenants reported improved physical health and improved access to medical professionals since commencing their Brisbane Common Ground tenancies (Tables 36-37). After we excluded the tenant with a chronic health condition that required weekly ambulance incidents the data shows a consistent pattern of ambulance use pre and post Brisbane Common Ground tenancy commencement.

Criminal Justice Services

There was a clear downward and positive trend in the use of criminal justice services. Compared to the 12 months prior to living at Brisbane Common Ground when people were homeless, in the first 12 months of residing at Brisbane Common Ground there was a reduction in the number of court appearances (47↓), days incarcerated (132↓), days on probation and parole orders (88↓), and all interventions with police, including occurrences as an offender (26↓), offences as an offender (29↓), victims of crime (13↓), police or justice transport to a health facility (4↓), and frequency of times held in police custody (18↓). These are all excellent outcomes. Although it is theoretically possible that the reduction in the use of criminal justice services is explained by a reduction in people's willingness to report crime, when considered in light of the self-reported survey data on other life improvements such as life satisfaction, the reduced use of criminal justice services is an indicator of the positive impact of Brisbane Common Ground on tenants lives.

Although administrative data demonstrating downward trends in criminal justice intervention indicates positive impacts, the data is not able to illustrate the direct impacts upon individuals and the way that they perceive less intervention with the police, courts and corrective services. Nevertheless, in light of the literature highlighting the profound negative impacts that criminal victimization amounts to (Davis, Lurigio and Herman 2013), not to mention the way that criminal activity is associated with a range of undesirable life outcomes (Theobald and Farrington 2014), it is reasonable to assume that the reductions are associated with a range of positive life transformations that are in turn associated with exiting chronic homelessness and residing at Brisbane Common Ground. In short, the administrative data shows that (1) experiencing chronic homelessness is associated with a disproportionate engagement with the criminal justice system, and (2) residing at Brisbane Common Ground is associated with less frequent engagement with the criminal justice system.

Specialist Homelessness Services

As would be expected, in the first year residing at Brisbane Common Ground tenants used drastically less services provided by Specialist Homelessness Services compared to the year before they commenced their tenancy when they were homeless. Use of homeless accommodation services went from 1836 nights to 7 nights. Although it may be obvious that people would use less homeless accommodation when they were tenants compared to when they were homeless, identifying their usage is important for generating evidence about how much it costs to provide accommodation services to people who are homeless. From an understanding of the accommodation costs of supporting a person who is homeless, some of the cost offsets of Brisbane Common Ground vis-à-vis funding to continue a person's homelessness can be estimated.

Further, without the evidence provided through administrative data, we do not know the usage of homelessness accommodation services among people who are chronically homeless, nor do we have evidence whether they will immediately stop using the accommodation services upon receipt of supportive housing. The data presented in Table 21 addresses this gap.

In addition to the massive reduction in the use of homeless accommodation, tenants demonstrated a clear downward trend with their receipt of payments from Specialist Homelessness Services. Comprising payments for short term accommodation; establishing and maintaining a tenancy; education, training and employment external services, and other, the cohort received \$11,429 less payments, or a 71 per cent reduction, in the twelve months post tenancy commencement compared to the twelve months pre tenancy commencement.

8.1.7 Costs associated with service utilisation patterns

In the literature the identification of service utilisation as people move from homelessness to supportive housing facilitates the analysis of cost offsets and the cost benefits of supportive

housing (Culhane 2008; Culhane, Metraux and Hadley 2002; Johnson et al. 2014b). In addition to the benefits to people's lives that changed patterns of service utilisation indicate, for example, less incidents as victims or perpetrators of crime, measuring changed patterns of service utilisation is important as a source of evidence about whether an intervention has cost offsets or wider financial benefits.

Below we discuss some of the potential cost offsets that may follow downward trends in service utilisation identified above. Before this discussion, however, we stress that a downtrend and any associated cost offsets are only one potential argument for the justification to respond to people who are chronically homeless with supportive housing. As Culhane (2008) observes, responding to chronic homelessness with supportive housing has normative values about the worth of an individual and an individual's capacity to participate in society and realise their capabilities. Our analysis of changed patterns in service utilisation and cost offsets is presented to augment more fundamental arguments for ensuring that chronically excluded individuals are able to access secure housing.

It is worth restating the claim made at the beginning of the chapter that assertions for cost offsets need to be tempered with the evidence that any reduced service use may not be associated with reduced funding for the service. Moreover, when costs are reduced because of downward trends in service utilisation, as our data shows these will be savings largely borne by health and criminal justice departments, and not by departments funding supportive housing. Cost of sets, if they can be substantiated, will be cost offsets to whole of government spending.

Cost of providing services pre and post tenancy commencement

Tables 14 to 21 provide estimates of the cost of delivering the services accessed by tenants in the year before they commenced their Brisbane Common Ground tenancy compared with the year after they commenced their Brisbane Common Ground tenancy. In line with dramatic and expected changes in homelessness accommodation use, there was an estimated \$158,539 in funding spent on the homelessness accommodation in the year prior to tenants moving into Brisbane Common Ground compared to the \$604 in funding spent on the seven night's homeless accommodation accessed in the year people resided at Brisbane Common Ground. Similarly, people received \$11,429 less funding for payments provided by Specialist Homelessness Services in the year residing at Brisbane Common Ground, moving from \$16,074 to \$4,645.

Reduction in mental health episodes is associated with significant estimated costs in mental health service usage. Tenants used an estimated \$242,540 less mental health services in the first year of their Brisbane Common Ground tenancy compared to the year prior when they were homeless. The reduction in costs associated with reduced use of admitted patients is also noteworthy. In the twelve months prior to commencing their Brisbane Common Ground

tenancy tenants used \$1,064,167 worth of admitted patients services, whereas used \$472,673 worth of admitted patients services in the twelve months post tenancy commencement, amounting to a reduction of \$591,495.

Even though there was a small number of people using Corrections services, the change in service use from pre to post Brisbane Common Ground tenancy commencement is an estimated reduction of \$30,844. The reduced use of the Magistrates Court from pre to post Brisbane Common Ground tenancy commencement is an estimated reduction of \$10,183. Taking into account occurrences as an offender, occurrences as a victim of crime, and number of times held in police custody, the use of Queensland Police Services reduced by \$81,877 in the year after tenants resided at Brisbane Common Ground. This brings the total of \$221,528 of criminal justice services used in the twelve months prior to commencing their Brisbane Common Ground tenancy to a total of \$98,624 worth of criminal justice services used in the twelve months after they commenced their tenancy. Compared to a twelve month period of homelessness, tenants used \$122,904 less criminal justice services in the first year they resided at Brisbane Common Ground.

Table 22. Total costs

	12 months pre tenancy commencement	12 months post tenancy commencement	Difference between pre and post
Admitted patients	\$1,064,167	\$472,673	-\$591,495
Mental Health	\$372,498	\$129,958.	-\$242,540
Emergency	\$102,510	\$104,860	+\$2,350
Ambulance	\$41,600	\$40,950	-\$650
Subtotal Health Difference	\$1,580,775	\$748,441	-\$832,335
Corrective Services	\$32,296	\$1,452	-\$30,844
Court	\$23,400	\$13,217	-\$10,183
Total cost of Police	\$165,832	\$83,955	-\$81,877
Subtotal Criminal Justice Difference	\$221,528	\$98,624	-\$122,904
Specialist Homelessness Services	\$174,613	\$5,249	-\$169,364
Total Cost Difference	\$1,976,916	\$852,314	-\$1,124,603

8.1.8 Cost offsets

Caveats

We conclude this chapter with an analysis of the estimated cost offsets derived from the reduced costs associated with the reduced use in services. The reduced costs of providing services to tenants are presented in comparison to the costs of providing Brisbane Common Ground. Prior to this analysis, however, three points need to be asserted about our cost estimates used to draw tentative conclusions about cost offsets. We stress these points to argue that our cost offsets are indicative estimates and should not be taken as exact dollar amounts. Indeed, we demonstrate that our cost offsets are likely to be underestimations.

First, we calculated the cost on 41 tenants, whereas we only had complete service usage history for 35 tenants. We did not have consent to access the complete service history from six tenants. By not accessing their Corrections, Courts, Police and Mental Health data, it is probable that we are missing service usage episodes. If the overall downward trend in the data from these six missing tenants replicates the trend of the other 35 tenants, excluding their data likely contributes to an under estimation of cost offsets.

Second, although we have rigorous objective data about tenants service utilisation histories in the 12 months before and 12 months immediately after commencing their Brisbane Common Ground tenancy, the costing data is limited because it does not always perfectly correspond with the actual cost of providing the service in each individual case when the service was accessed. For example, the costing estimates used for ambulance, courts, corrections, Queensland Police Service, and Specialist Homelessness Services accommodation, are based on the one financial year, either 2012-13 or 2013-14. The majority of tenants used the services in these financial years, but because tenants commenced their Brisbane Common Ground tenancies within a two year window anywhere from July 2012 to the March 2014, our analysis includes some service use (pre and post tenancy commencement) that occurred in the 2011-12 and 2014-15 financial years. There are modest differences in how much services cost from year to year, and our analysis does not factor in these differences.

Third, we have used an average cost of service used per tenant, but our service utilisation data shows that there was great diversity in the service use among tenants. In addition to the downward trend in service utilisation, and the cost offsets associated with reducing service utilisation in the year living at Brisbane Common Ground compared to the year immediately prior when people were homeless, our data showed considerable variation among our cohort in their patterns of service use. Some Brisbane Common Ground tenants used no or very little services in both the year pre and post tenancy commencement, whereas there was much greater use of services among other tenants; our cohort of 41 tenants masks considerable within group variation of service usage patterns. It is for the heavy service users who the cost offsets are most significant, whereas for individuals who used few services pre and post

tenancy commencement, the cost offsets are minimal (as measured from a service utilisation perspective). Culhane (2008) has made the argument about cost offsets only being applicable to high service users in the United States. Importantly, and as demonstrated below, the cost offsets attributed to the change in patterns of service usage among some tenants are so significant that the cost offsets are realised at the total tenant cohort level.

Analysis

As explained in Chapter Seven, the cost to the Queensland Government of providing Brisbane Common Ground, based on the funding for tenancy and support, is \$14,329 per tenant per year. This cost is for tenants' allocated housing because of chronic homelessness, and it is the cost for this group that is included in the analysis below. Knowing the cost of providing Brisbane Common Ground, we now need to evaluate how this cost of providing supportive housing compares to other costs to the Queensland Government when tenants are not residing at Brisbane Common Ground (when they were homeless).

As a cohort, tenants used an estimated \$1,976,916 worth of services in the 12 months pre Brisbane Common Ground tenancy commencement; they used an estimated \$852,314 worth of health, criminal justice and homelessness services in the 12 months post Brisbane Common Ground tenancy commencement. Or to put it another way, the Queensland Government spent \$1,976,916, through health, criminal justice and homelessness services on people in the twelve months when they were homeless, and the Queensland Government spent \$852,314 through the same health, criminal justice and homelessness service on the same people in the twelve months when they were Brisbane Common Ground tenants.

Thus, in the 12 months post Brisbane Common Ground tenancy commencement, tenants used health, criminal justice and homelessness services that cost the Queensland Government \$1,124,602 less than the cost of the services tenants used in the twelve months prior to their Brisbane Common Ground tenancy commencement.

We can now divide the estimated annual reduced cost associated with reduced service use (\$1,124,602) by the 41 tenants to arrive at an estimated reduction in annual service use per tenant post Brisbane Common Ground tenancy commencement: \$27,429 annual reduction in service use costs per tenant.

On average, tenants used \$27,429 less on health, criminal justice, and homelessness services in the twelve months they resided at Brisbane Common Ground compared to the twelve months before they commenced their tenancies. We now subtract the annual cost of \$14,329 per tenant of providing Brisbane Common Ground from the \$27,429 annual cost per tenant reduction. This identifies a cost offset of \$13,100. The \$14,329 cost per tenant per year of providing Brisbane Common Ground is offset by \$13,100 per tenant per year through reduced usage of health, criminal justice and homelessness services.

Another way to look at the cost offset, in twelve months when individuals were homeless, they each used an average of \$48,217 in health, criminal justice and homelessness services funded by the Queensland Government (this is calculated by dividing the \$1,976,916 spent on services by the 41 tenants).

In the first twelve months residing at Brisbane Common Ground, the tenants each used an average of \$35,117 of Queensland Government funded services, and this amount includes not only health, criminal justice and homelessness services, but it includes the tenancy and support costs to fund Brisbane Common Ground.

Compared to the costs to the Queensland Government of a person being chronically homeless for twelve months, a twelve month tenancy at Brisbane Common Ground achieves a tenant reducing their use of Queensland Government services – including the cost of providing Brisbane Common Ground – by \$13,100.

8.1.9 Conclusion

The administrative data demonstrates that the cost to the Queensland Government of providing Brisbane Common Ground are offset by the reduced usage of services among Brisbane Common Ground tenants. Our analysis of changed patterns in service utilisation have been used to identify cost offsets. Our analysis has relied on actual service usage rather than simulations of what services tenants would use. The data is likewise robust because service usage is based on administrative data, rather than self-reported service usage.

The cost offsets occur at the broader Queensland Government level. Understanding cost offsets at a state government level is significant, as the direct costs of providing Brisbane Common Ground, or supportive housing more broadly, are borne by the Department of Housing and Public Works. On the other hand, the cost offsets demonstrated in this analysis show that it is reduced usage of health and criminal justice services that contribute to cost offsets. Thus, delivering Brisbane Common Ground is an expense of the Department of Housing and Public Works that has direct implications – cost offsets – for the use of other services funded by other Queensland Government departments, with different budget lines.

Finally, we have not moved from the cost offset analysis to cost benefit analysis. Our data shows cost offsets that are directly attributed to reduced service usage, but we have not speculated or analysed broader cost benefits that may be attributed to improved health, wellbeing, labour market participation and other qualitative dimensions reported in early chapters on this report. The cost offsets identified in this evaluation may be extended with future financial modelling of the cost benefits to society when people are able to exit chronic homelessness and sustain housing.

9 Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

9.1.1 Is the model appropriate to achieve the set aims and objectives?

The research has demonstrated that Brisbane Common Ground is an appropriate model to assist people with chronic experiences of homelessness and support needs to access housing and then to sustain their housing. Brisbane Common Ground is effective, and the model can be justified, when it continues the practices of specifically targeting housing to people who have experienced chronic homelessness. People with chronic experiences of homelessness have not been able to either access or sustain housing through the housing models available. As argued below, the combination of secure (tenure) and affordable housing with onsite support and security promotes the conditions for tenants to keep their housing. Alternative housing and homeless accommodation options have not meet their needs for security, stability and support. Brisbane Common Ground is thus an appropriate model because it provides a resource that is not otherwise available for people experiencing chronic homelessness with support needs.

Brisbane Common Ground has also proven appropriate at providing not only a highly rated model of supportive housing (by tenants), but almost universally tenants see Brisbane Common Ground as their home. Through the design and service delivery features, Brisbane Common Ground has not institutionalised tenants, but rather provided the resources and opportunities for tenants to achieve independence and autonomy in how they live. The data underpinning this research is not able to make conclusive long term predictions. Nevertheless, the secure housing and onsite support is associated with tenants either making non-housing improvements or tenants perceiving enhanced opportunities to improve their lives.

All of the research documenting the effectiveness of various supportive housing models indicates that for people who have experienced chronic homelessness, the realisation of non-housing outcomes, such as improved health, a reduction in drug and alcohol use, and engagement with training and the labour market, takes many years (Johnson et al., 2014a; Parsell et al, 2013; Tsemberis et al., 2010). The Brisbane Common Ground evaluation has found likewise. The multiple data sources obtained for this evaluation suggests that Brisbane Common Ground is an appropriate response to enable vulnerable tenants who have experienced persistent disadvantage to improve their lives. It should be acknowledged that the life improvements, although a laudable and appropriate ultimate outcome, will likely take many years to materialise.

Finally, we have drawn on robust administrative data to demonstrate that tenants' patterns of service utilisation change significantly in the first year residing at Brisbane Common Ground compared to the year prior to commencing their tenancy when they were homeless. The demonstrated changes in service utilisation signify two important impacts of Brisbane Common Ground. First, the reduction in mental health interventions and engagement with many facets

of the criminal justice system show that residing at Brisbane Common Ground is associated with broader life improvements for tenants. Second, the changed patterns of service utilisation demonstrate clear cost offsets of Brisbane Common Ground. Compared to the costs to the Queensland Government of a person being chronically homeless for twelve months, a twelve month tenancy at Brisbane Common Ground achieves a tenant reducing their annual use of Queensland Government services – including the cost of providing Brisbane Common Ground – by \$13,100. Using government administrative data that rigorously measures service usage, the analysis has identified Brisbane Common Ground achieves a cost offset of \$13,100 per tenant per year.

9.1.2 What contributes to program success?

The evidence generated in this evaluation has identified five key features of Brisbane Common Ground that contribute to program success. These five features are: support; safety and physical security; stable and affordable housing; an integrated model, including a shared vision; and home.

Support

Consistent with the formal intention, the research has shown that support is a critical determiner of the success of Brisbane Common Ground. The key success of support at Brisbane Common Ground is the removal of barriers to accessing support. Through the provision of actively promoted support available onsite, tenants were easily able to access – under the conditions of their choosing – a range of supports. Moreover, the evidence generated for this evaluation has demonstrated that support assumes numerous forms.

Support enhanced positive tenant outcomes because it include formal support provided by onsite support providers Furthermore, support assumed the form of supportive practices of the tenancy manager. Support was thus not only the provision of a resource that is calculated and measured through a support period being opened and reported. Rather, support involved the processes and approach taken by tenancy providers when engaging with tenants.

The survey data with tenants reporting the multi dimensions of support unambiguously show a high level of satisfaction (see Figures 3, 4, 5, 13). Similarly, the voluntary mode of support was successful in fostering tenant engagement. This is evident through the 92 per cent of tenants who received formalised support in a year.

The success of support was a function of the mode of delivery. Locating support onsite poses the risk of support being intrusive. Salyers and Tsemberis (2007) argue that the presence of services, if incongruent to tenant need, can be intrusive. At Brisbane Common Ground, on the other hand, tenants reported support not only positively and practically beneficial, but also onsite support services were not reported as intrusive or abnormal. The survey data

demonstrates that tenants were satisfied with privacy (Figure 12). These sentiments were expressed well by a tenant who stated:

Support is awesome but it's not too much which is great. (Female, 20-30 years, Non-Indigenous)

Safety and physical security

The centrality of safety and physical security at Brisbane Common Ground cannot be overstated. A consistently expressed praise by tenants when describing Brisbane Common Ground was safety and physical security. Irrespective of age, gender or Indigeneity, when tenants spoke about living at Brisbane Common Ground they emphasised the importance of feeling safe and physically secure.

The survey data showed high levels of satisfaction with both safety at Brisbane Common Ground (Figure 14), and with the concierge (Figures 13). The survey data was extended with qualitative data, whereby tenants explained the importance of safety and physical security to them. The tenant comments below emphasise two salient points.

The security guys even though they're new they're lovely people. I feel so safe. Twelve young boys tried to assault me when I was homeless, my eye socket was half way down my cheek. But I'm here I'm safe now. (Male, 51-60 years, Non-Indigenous)

The best thing was a roof over my head, not sleeping out in the open because that's originally where I came from. I used to sleep out there on the street and it was rough, it was hard, you had to protect everything that you had unless of course you slept in the mall. As a woman you're at high risk of getting robbed and mugged and stuff like that and with the murders just recently it's very dangerous for a woman. (Female, 41-50 years, Non-Indigenous)

It makes me feel safe... The cameras on every floor and every public room because it makes me feel very safe living here. (Female, 20-30 years, Indigenous)

Living here [Brisbane Common Ground] is everything I can't describe. It's a satisfied feeling that I can't describe. I come here and feel quite safe. I can't ever go back to a unit of housing commission. The safety here, at my age its top priority. (Female, 51-60 years, Non-Indigenous)

First, the presence of overt security features, such as concierge staff, single entrance to the building, and cameras, were cited by tenants to substantiate their feelings of safety and physical security. It was not simply that overt control signals (cameras, concierge staff, see Barker 2014) influenced tenants' perception of a potential threat to safety. Rather, and secondly, tenants' descriptions of Brisbane Common Ground as a place of safety and physical security were tied to their life experiences prior to Brisbane Common Ground (Parsell 2015).

In qualitative interviews, and as indicated above, tenants spoke about the importance of security and physical safety at Brisbane Common Ground in the context of their direct life

experiences feeling vulnerable and unsafe as homeless or even in social housing. The significance of safety and physical security at Brisbane Common Ground, can only therefore be understood by taking into account the violent and unsafe environments that tenants had experienced elsewhere.

Stable and affordable housing

The affordability of rent at Brisbane Common Ground is a key contributor to the success of the model. According to a broadly, although not unanimously, accepted ration criteria, the rent at Brisbane Common Ground can be considered affordable (Henman and Jones 2012). In light of the undersupply of affordable housing to low income households (Hulse, Reynolds and Yates 2014), Brisbane Common Ground is one model that provides affordable housing. Indeed, and although on a small scale, the development of Brisbane Common Ground contributed 146 units of affordable housing dedicated to low-income households.

Ninety two per cent of tenants reported satisfaction with the affordability of the rent (Figure 8). In addition to affordability, an important feature of Brisbane Common Ground's success is the provision of stable housing with the security of a residential tenancy. Contemporary Queensland Government policy (Department of Housing and Public Works n.d.), consistent with national and international trends (Fitzpatrick and Pawson 2014), problematise historic notions of permanent housing. Social housing landlords are moving toward fixed term tenancies for the duration of a tenants need. Despite the ambiguity over what can be considered long term housing, the stability afforded to tenants because of the conditions of the residential tenancy act are important. Consistent with the literature highlighting the important psychological, practical and social benefits that stable housing provides (Hulse, Milligan and Easthope 2011), tenants emphasised the important role that Brisbane Common Ground played in bringing stability to their lives.

I've found it has settled me. I feel secure and I think that's one of the big, important things. I feel as though if I do have a problem I've got somewhere to go. (Female, 61-70 years, Non-Indigenous)

Simply to have your own home list to be able to plan and to be able to plan for a more stable way of life and the stability as a natural anti-depressive feeling. It feels very secure and comfortable. That's the best part. (Male, 41-50 years, Non-Indigenous)

It is a sense of security both material and emotional security, that the place provides. I feel that it is my home which means that I can put things in it, I can make it my apartment and my room and my space and it all reinforces the emotional and material security. (Female, 20-30 years, Non-Indigenous)

Common ground, unlike many inner-city rental options, does not feel like it is time pressured and this is very important to people trying to recover from life problems or feel stable in their lives. (Male, 41-50 years, Indigenous)

Similar to the manner in which tenants described the safety and physical security at Brisbane Common Ground in the context of previous life experiences of violence and fear, tenants gave prominence to the stability that Brisbane Common Ground meant to them vis-à-vis their insecure housing and accommodation histories. The appropriateness of Brisbane Common Ground can only be understood by taking into account how the supportive housing model represents a solution to the housing and support problems tenants had previously experienced, and indeed, problems that led to tenants being targeted for Brisbane Common Ground.

An integrated model, including a shared vision

The delivery of an integrated model of affordable housing with support as a deliberate response to chronic homelessness has contributed to Brisbane Common Ground's success. The importance of an integrated model is twofold: integration at the practice level, and integration at the intention and ideological level. Practically, the physical co-location of housing and support providers, the open channels of communication between them, and the formal and informal structures for collaboration have meant that Brisbane Common Ground is a supportive housing model.

At an intention and ideological level, Brisbane Common Ground is successful because housing and service providers identify with a shared vision of what Brisbane Common Ground represents. The shared vision is not only manifest in the shared outcome of Brisbane Common Ground as a solution to chronic homelessness, but it is likewise a shared understanding of the practices that will contribute to the outcome. Thus unlike dominant approaches to housing and support where housing providers and support providers are practicing from different paradigms and largely discounted from each other (Jones et al., 2014), Brisbane Common Ground is premised on a basis that the housing provider cannot achieve positive outcomes without the provision of support, and support providers recognise that their objectives will only be served under the conditions of successful housing delivery. This recognition is the impetus for the practical operation of the model. The model does not simply work well because of co-location and efficient opportunities for the housing and support providers to work together on a day-to-day basis. The housing and support providers at Brisbane Common Ground, although separate organisations with different funding streams, see their independent roles as part of a unified Brisbane Common Ground model, whereby the work of the separate entities (housing and support) both relies upon and contributes to the other entity's work.

Home

Brisbane Common Ground is intended to create a home for tenants (Queensland Government 2012). This model intention has influenced subsequent decisions made in how the built form at Brisbane Common Ground was designed, how the initiative is operated, as well as heavily influencing the day-to-day practices of staff at Brisbane Common Ground. The literature warns

against the risks of single-site supportive housing institutionalising people into abnormal living environments (Parsell, Fitzpatrick and Busch-Geertsema 2014). The stakeholders at Brisbane Common Ground articulated awareness of these risks, and they have actively sought to ensure that Brisbane Common Ground constitutes a normal and desirable residential environment, where tenants experience home.

The evidence generated in this evaluation shows that, on the one hand, Brisbane Common Ground is experienced by tenants as their home. On the other, the endeavour to create and the realisation of Brisbane Common Ground as home, has fundamentally contributed to the initiative's success.

In addition to the survey data indicating that 93 per cent of tenants saw Brisbane Common Ground as their home, the qualitative data showed that tenants' experienced Brisbane Common Ground as their home because of the safety it provided, the stability and affordability of housing (discussed above), and because the housing and independent tenancies provided people the physical and emotional space to exercise control and autonomy over their day-to-day lives. The two comments below from tenants are indicative of this theme about why Brisbane Common Ground is experienced as home.

Living here it's in your own control. Your room can be as clean as you want or it can be as messy as you want, either way. But I think the control is back in your hands, gives you the power to make whatever you desire. (Males, 41-50 years, Non-Indigenous)

Being completely independent and living on my own gives me a great sense of pride in the sense that I am able to support myself in any and all ways required to lead my own life. (Female, 18-30 years, Non-Indigenous)

Again, drawing on a similar premise to Brisbane Common Ground constituting a solution to problems people experienced as homeless, independent units at Brisbane Common Ground contributed to positive outcomes for tenants because the housing enabled tenants to assume control over how they lived. The physical form of their unit, coupled with the stability afforded through secure tenure and safety and physical security in the building, was one necessary resource required for tenants to make life improvements. Indeed, it is difficult to suggest that the improvements people reported since moving into Brisbane Common Ground in life satisfaction, wellbeing, physical health, mental health, diet and nutrition, employment and socialising could have been possible in the absence of housing.

9.1.3 *What are the key learnings from the first two years of the program, and how could they inform and enhance future supportive housing practices?*

Based on the multiple sources of evidence generated for this evaluation, there are 19 key learnings to emphasise. These key learnings have been demonstrated and discussed at length throughout this report. In this section therefore we present the key learning concisely and summative manner. The 19 key learnings are:

- Supportive housing can successfully assist people with chronic experiences of homelessness, who also have needs for support, make immediate exits from homelessness into secure housing;
- People with chronic experiences of homelessness, who also have needs for support, can sustain housing;
- People with chronic experiences of homelessness, who also have needs for support, can access and sustain housing, without the need for interventions to prepare them for housing;
- In the presence of stable and affordable housing with linked voluntary support, assertions about an individual's need to be 'housing ready' are redundant;
- Indigenous and non-Indigenous tenants alike achieved similarly positive outcomes and appraised Brisbane Common Ground at equally high levels. There was likewise consistency in findings among tenants of both gender and across tenants of different ages;
- Brisbane Common Ground, consistent with the intention, is operationalised in practice as a unified supportive housing model. The supportive housing, rather than housing and support providers working separately or working towards separate objectives, is a key determiner in the success of Brisbane Common Ground;
- People as homeless, and for some, as public housing tenants, report serious threats to their safety and physical security;
- Providing a safe living environment for vulnerable tenants is critical. For tenants residing at Brisbane Common Ground, their needs for safety and physical security meant that the presence of concierge, onsite support services and CCTV for example, were not often described as intrusive;

- Tenants at Brisbane Common Ground desired and achieved friendships and mutual networks of supports among other tenants. Many tenants also participated in formal activities and utilised the communal spaces in the building. The friendships, informal support, activities and built form at Brisbane Common Ground contributed to positive tenant outcomes;
- Tenants reported significant concern about other tenants behaving in intimidating, aggressive and rude ways in communal spaces. Tenants reported a preference for onsite staff to assertively deal with the negative behaviour of other tenants;
- The practice of transferring tenants from one property in the building to another property is a successful strategy in achieving tenancy sustainment;
- The housing outcomes reported are unambiguously positive. It is difficult for this research, however, to demonstrate the profound practice challenges and resources that are dedicated to enabling some tenants achieve the outcomes reported in this evaluation.
- Brisbane Common Ground has been implemented according to key principles of supportive housing in the published literature (Hannigan and Wagner 2003), these include: stable and affordable housing, safety, accessible and voluntary support services, and tenant independence;
- If tenants are purposefully allocated supportive housing because of experiences of chronic homelessness, with needs for support, it is probable that some non-housing outcomes will take significant time to materialise. This notwithstanding, it is important for supportive housing to continue to assist tenants achieve non-housing outcomes. Resources, along with continued practice efforts to enable the achievement of non-housing outcomes, should be actively pursued by supportive housing;
- Tenants who were allocated housing at Brisbane Common Ground because of chronic homelessness used less services, often many less, in the first year residing at Brisbane Common Ground compared to the year prior to commencing their tenancy when they were homeless. The administrative data clearly demonstrates that the provision and sustainment of housing at Brisbane Common Ground is closely associated with tenants using less state funded services. The administrative data provides further evidence about the positive impact Brisbane Common Ground has on tenants' lives;
- The reductions in service used by Brisbane Common Ground tenants constitutes a significant cost offset of the model. The cost offsets, however, occur at the broader Queensland Government level. At a Queensland Government level, the cost of

providing Brisbane Common Ground to each tenant is less than what the Queensland Government spent on responding to the tenants, through health, criminal justice and homelessness service, in the year before they commenced their tenancy;

- The funding for Brisbane Common Ground, and probably other supportive housing initiatives, should consider how a sustained supportive housing tenancy has implications for the use and costing of other Queensland Government funded services;
- Brisbane Common Ground is one approach to supportive housing. To determine the merits of Brisbane Common Ground compared to other models, especially supportive housing delivered through scattered site properties with support provided through outreach, experimental research is required;
- Finally, the evaluation of Brisbane Common Ground has generated important evidence about this model of supportive housing. There is, however, an absence of evidence about the nature and impact of other housing and indeed homelessness accommodation models in Queensland. In the absence of evidence about other models, it is not possible to draw robust comparison about Brisbane Common Ground with other approaches funded by the Department of Housing and Public Works. It is recommended that further research examine the impacts achieved by other housing and homelessness models operating in Queensland.

9.1.4 Conclusion

Brisbane Common Ground is a one off initiative of supportive housing in Queensland. The evidence presented in this evaluation on the one hand, demonstrates the success of Brisbane Common Ground, and on the other, identifies key principles, features and practices of Brisbane Common Ground that have relevance beyond the specific initiative. If the key learnings of Brisbane Common Ground are coupled with the negative experiences of tenants in homeless accommodation, insecurely housed and in social housing prior to Brisbane Common Ground, the evidence from this evaluation can be used to form the basis of a wider Queensland supportive housing strategy. Various approaches to supportive housing, based on the learnings identified in this evaluation, are required to play a role in meeting the housing and non-housing needs of people who have been excluded from, or experienced negative outcomes in, traditional forms of housing.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Tenant satisfaction data

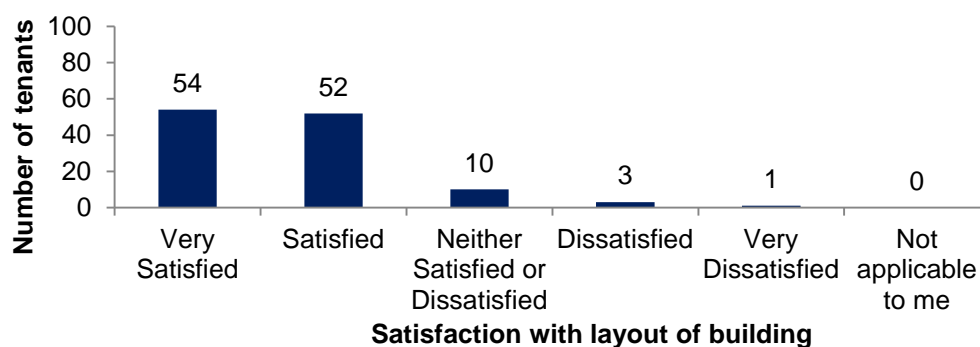


Figure 58. Tenants' ratings of satisfaction with the layout of the building

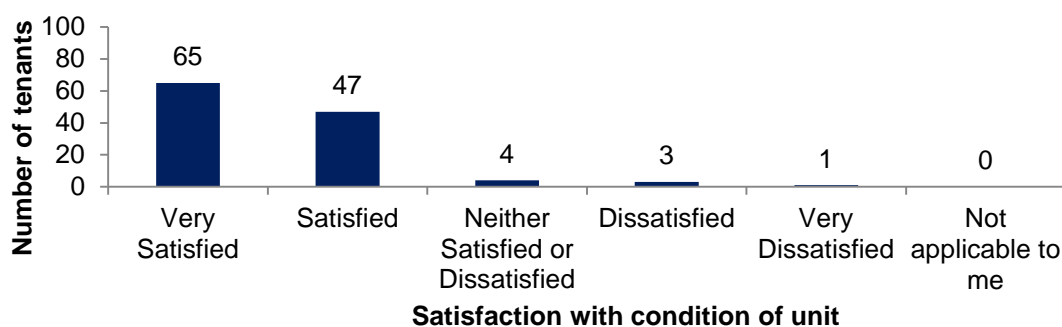


Figure 59. Tenants' ratings of satisfaction with the condition of the inside of the unit

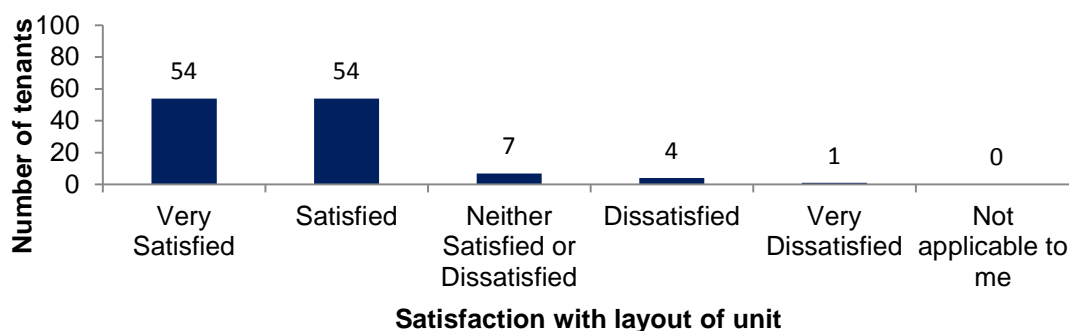


Figure 60. Tenants' ratings of satisfaction with the layout of the unit



Figure 61. Tenants ratings of the satisfaction with the location of the unit

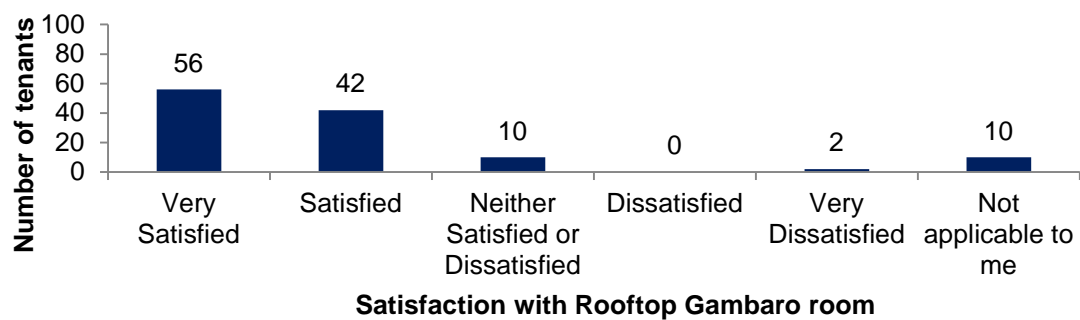


Figure 62. Tenants' ratings of satisfaction with the Rooftop Gambaro room

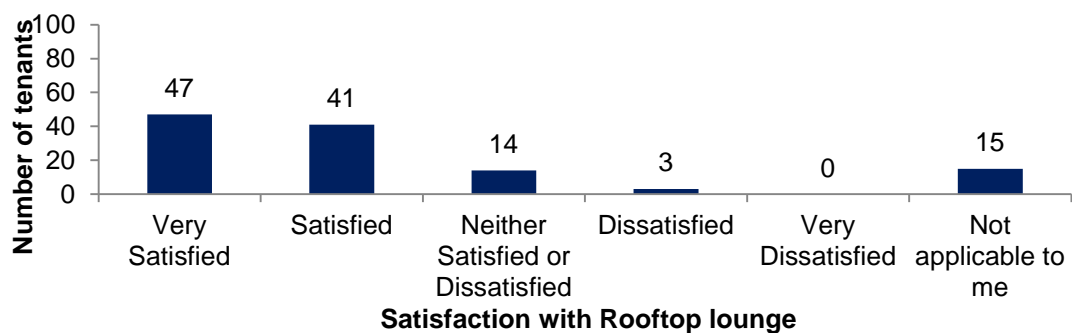


Figure 63. Tenants' ratings of satisfaction with the Rooftop lounge

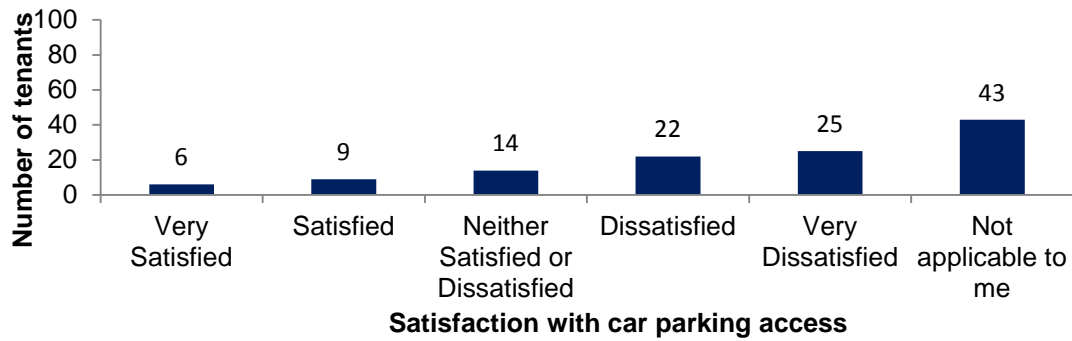


Figure 64. Tenants' ratings of satisfaction with car parking access

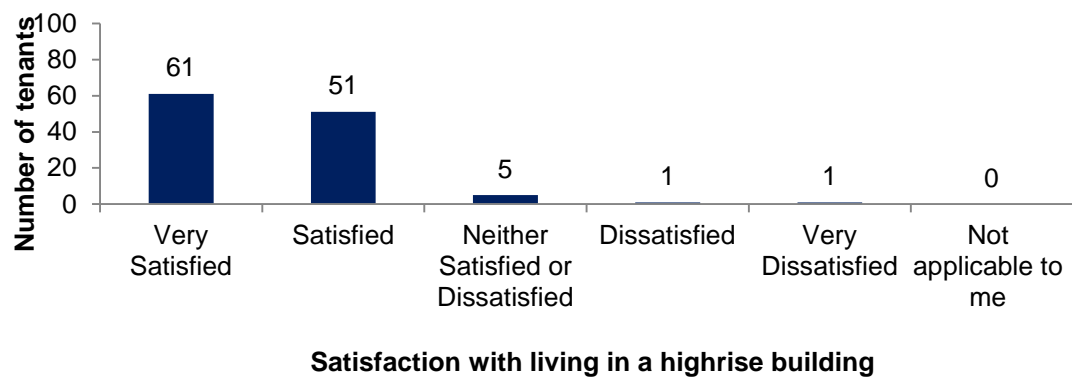


Figure 65. Tenants' ratings of satisfaction with living in a highrise building

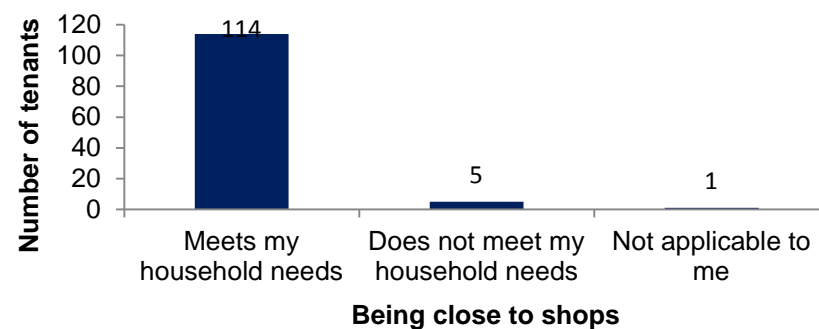


Figure 66. Tenants' ratings of proximity to shops meeting their household needs

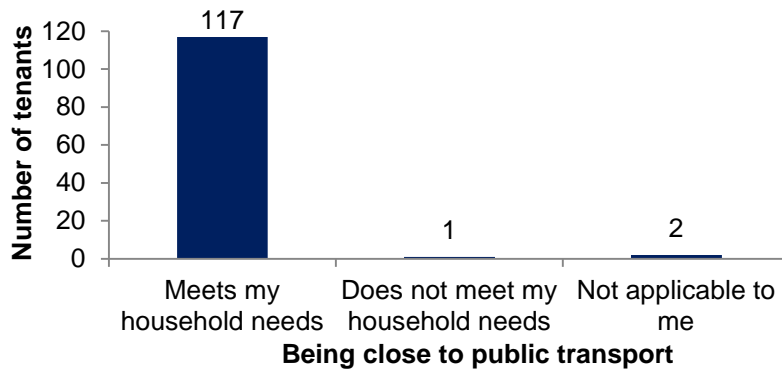


Figure 67. Tenants' ratings of proximity to public transport meeting their household needs

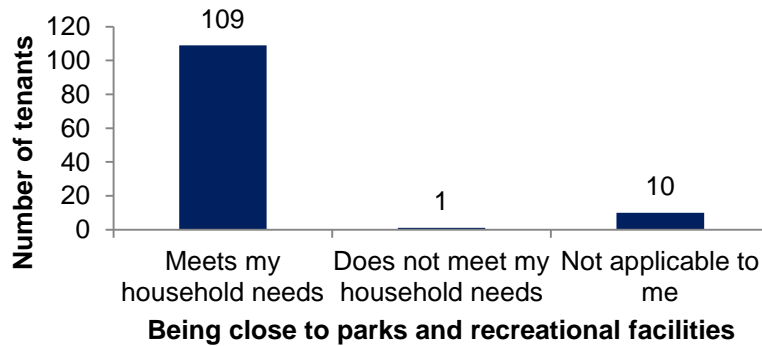


Figure 68. Tenants' ratings of proximity to parks and recreational facilities meeting their household needs

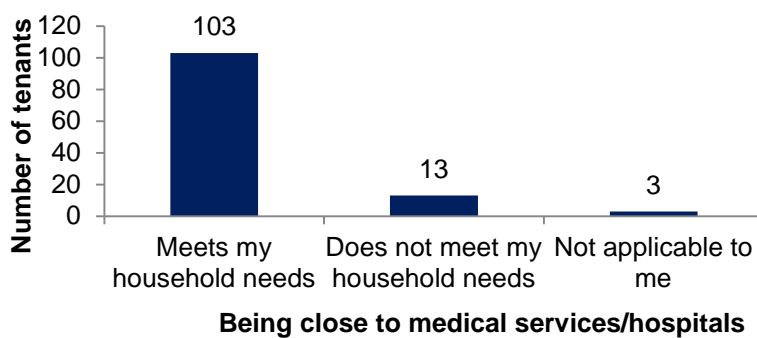


Figure 69. Tenants' ratings of proximity to medical services or hospitals meeting their household needs

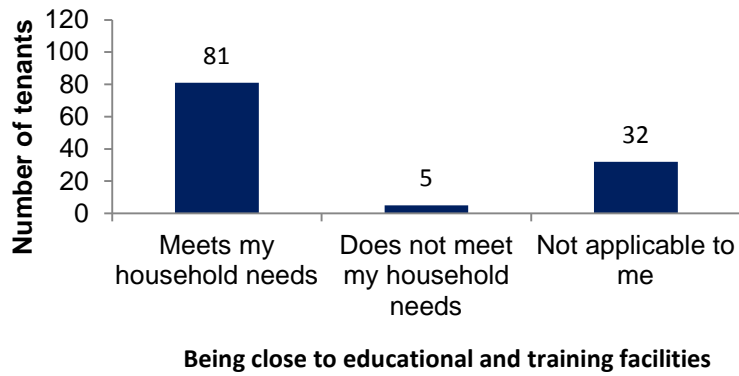


Figure 70. Tenants' ratings of proximity to educational and training facilities meeting their household needs

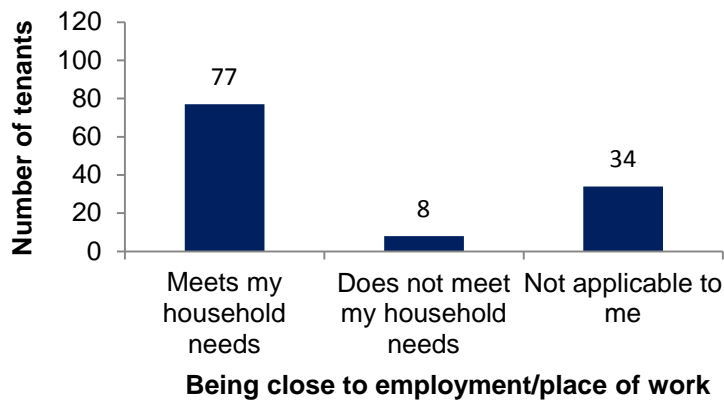


Figure 71. Tenants' ratings of proximity to employment or place of work meeting their household needs

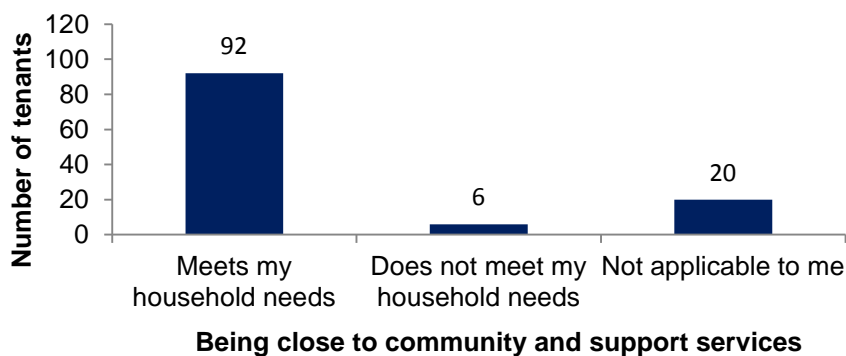


Figure 72. Tenants' ratings of proximity to community and support services meeting their household needs

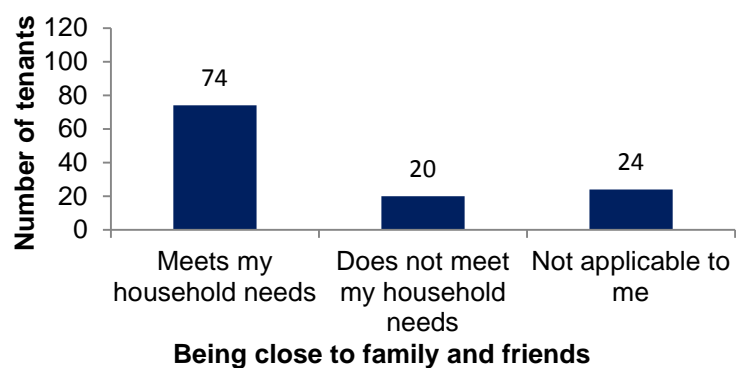


Figure 73. Tenants' ratings of proximity to family and friends meeting their household needs

Appendix 2: Market Rent

Market Rent Assessment for Brisbane Common Ground							
Market Rent in South Brisbane	#	Jun-13	Jun-14	Average	Dec-14	Jun-14	Dec-13
Studios	102	249	260	255	350	327.5	325
Adaptable	33	270	280	275			
1 Bedroom	11	300	315	308			
Source : Bees Nees email to CGQ							
Esimated Annual Market Rent				2,006,092	Source :RTA Median Rent Quarter Ending Postcode 4101		
Annual Rent from Tenants				1,161,106	Difference to Bees Nees accepted as a reflection of amenity. Recent increase looks like addition stock coming onto the market.		
Actual rent below Market Rent				42%			
BCG Rent Policy							
Formerly Homeless		25%	of income plus CRA	Property Specific Requirements for June 2012			
Low Income		30%	of income plus CRA				
Furniture		3%	of income				
The RTA rental median represents all properties in South Brisbane some of which will not be new and the amenity provided is likely to vary by including car parking not including furniture							
For the purposes of this analysis the median rent will be used as a proxy for market rent and is not adjusted to add a % for furniture, deduct an amount for the lack of car parking or adjust for varying amenity							

Appendix 3: Building Value

BGC Building Market Value Assessment			
Annual Market Rent	11%	2,006,092	From Attachment 4
Agency Fees		220,670	Allows for GST and substitutes Agency Fee for staff costs
Estimated actual building cost including land		49,200,000	From Attachment 6
Estimated Rental Yield in South Brisbane		6.10%	Source : Realestate.com
Market Rent as percentage of Value		4.08%	Market Rent before expenses divided by building value
Low Income and Formerly Homeless Rental Yield		2.36%	Actual Rent before expenses divided by building value
Value capitalising existing Tenant rent on South Brisbane Yields		19,034,525	
Value on Market Rents on South Brisbane Yields		32,886,754	
Add comercial rents	60,000		Micah
Ground floor 373 sqmtr at 400 psm	149,200		Ground floor
	24,595		Functions based on historic income
		233,795	
<i>Source: Hooker adverts on web for two spaces at \$450 psm and Nexus advert on web site for 67 sq at 420 psq partially fitout 77 Hope Street. Used \$400 to be conservative</i>			
Market Capitalisation rate estimate for location		12.50%	May be lower depening on ability to sell with development approval concerns.
Commercial rent building value		1,870,360	
Total Building value with Commercial			
Actual residential rent and commercial rent		20,904,885	
Market residential rent and commercial rent		34,757,114	
Market Tenancy Management Fees		246,388	
Approximate Tenancy Management Costs in CGQ			
Expenses in 2014		1,675,601	
Less: Project		(80,000)	
Less: Depreciation		(153,555)	
Less: Property Costs		(393,216)	
		1,048,830	
Multiple of Market fee		4.2568	

Appendix 4: Sinking fund project for DHPW

DHPW Projected Position		Forecast										
Sinking Fund for Building		2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	
Contribution needed for future maintenance and asset replacement		597,271	627,134	658,491	691,415	725,986	762,285	800,400	840,420	882,441	926,563	7,512,406
Expected cash cost		262,993	336,872	294,510	371,402	354,210	1,039,845	380,484	702,077	401,575	1,108,178	5,252,146
Projected Sinking Fund Balance			664,657	1,050,212	1,392,880	1,788,443	1,535,859	1,982,000	2,147,878	2,657,657	2,506,400	
Source : Leary report 15 October 2012 for CGB												

Appendix 5 (a): Forecast for Common Ground Queensland

Common Ground Brisbane Projected Position	CPI for Forecast	Data Source	Actual		Forecast							
			2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Operating Income												
Fundraising & Donations	2.50%	1	52,563	3,739	3,832	3,928	4,026	4,127	4,230	4,336	4,444	4,555
Rental	2.50%	1	1,111,058	1,256,635	1,288,051	1,320,252	1,353,258	1,387,089	1,421,766	1,457,310	1,493,743	1,531,087
Utility Revenue	2.50%	1		97,547	99,986	102,486	105,048	107,674	110,366	113,125	115,953	118,852
Membership and Other Revenue	2.50%	1	31,432	39,435	40,421	41,432	42,468	43,530	44,618	45,733	46,876	48,048
Operating Revenue			1,195,053	1,397,356	1,432,290	1,468,098	1,504,800	1,542,420	1,580,980	1,620,504	1,661,016	1,702,542
Expenditure												
Employee Expense	3.00%	1	851,900	727,125	748,939	771,407	794,549	818,385	842,937	868,225	894,272	921,100
Project Expense		3	0	80,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Operational Expenses	2.50%	1	302,411	177,637	182,078	186,630	191,296	196,078	200,980	206,005	211,155	216,434
Tenancy Expenses	2.50%	1	147,981	144,068	147,670	151,362	155,146	159,025	163,001	167,076	171,253	175,534
Property Expenses	2.50%	1	163,949	393,216	403,046	413,122	423,450	434,036	444,887	456,009	467,409	479,094
Depreciation	1.00%	1	152,345	153,555	155,091	156,642	158,208	159,790	161,388	163,002	164,632	166,278
Expenditure			1,618,586	1,675,601	1,636,824	1,679,163	1,722,649	1,767,314	1,813,193	1,860,317	1,908,721	1,958,440
Surplus (Deficit) before Grant Funding			(423,533)	(278,245)	(204,534)	(211,065)	(217,849)	(224,894)	(232,213)	(239,813)	(247,705)	(255,898)
Grants		1	520,710	249,322								
Surplus (Deficit) for Year			97,177	(28,923)	(204,534)	(211,065)	(217,849)	(224,894)	(232,213)	(239,813)	(247,705)	(255,898)
Add back Depreciation	1.00%	Estimate	152,345	153,555	155,091	156,642	158,208	159,790	161,388	163,002	164,632	166,278
Estimated Cash Flow			249,522	124,632	(49,443)	(54,423)	(59,641)	(65,104)	(70,825)	(76,811)	(83,073)	(89,620)
Cash Position based on forecast expenditure before adjusting for Long Term property costs using a sinking fund approach. Assuming no other use of funds.				1,276,407	1,226,964	1,172,541	1,112,900	1,047,796	976,971	900,160	817,087	727,467

Data Sources :

1. Common Ground Queensland Financial Statements with minor adjustments for Contingent
2. Leary & Partners Limited Capital Replacement Plan dated 11 February 2015
3. One off adjustment for Employment Program

Appendix 5 (b):Forecast for Common Ground Queensland

Common Ground Brisbane Projected Position Adjusted Operating Position for long term Costs				Actual		Forecast							
				2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Operating Surplus (Deficit) before Grant Funding	Attachment	7 (a)		(423,533)	(278,245)	(204,534)	(211,065)	(217,849)	(224,894)	(232,213)	(239,813)	(247,705)	(255,898)
Remove Depreciation					153,555	155,091	156,642	158,208	159,790	161,388	163,002	164,632	166,278
Add QS requirements for Capital Fitout Replacement		2			(85,044)	(88,446)	(91,984)	(95,663)	(99,490)	(103,469)	(107,608)	(111,912)	(116,389)
Adjusted Operating Position before Grants					(209,734)	(137,889)	(146,407)	(155,304)	(164,594)	(174,294)	(184,419)	(194,985)	(206,009)
Adjusted Cash Position													
Add - QS requirements for Capital Fitout Replacement		2			85,044	88,446	91,984	95,663	99,490	103,469	107,608	111,912	116,389
Deduct - QS estimated Spend for Capital Fitout Replacement		2			(6,676)	(7,010)	(39,163)	(44,259)	(70,606)	(59,456)	(204,500)	(42,043)	(393,647)
Adjusted Cash Flow					(131,366)	(56,453)	(93,586)	(103,900)	(135,710)	(130,281)	(281,311)	(125,116)	(483,267)
Adjusted Cumulative Cash					1,276,407	1,219,954	1,126,368	1,022,468	886,758	756,477	475,166	350,050	(133,217)

Data Sources :

1. Common Ground Queensland Financial Statements with minor adjustments for Contigent Expenses in 2013
2. Leary & Partners Limited Capital Replacement Plan dated 11 February 2015
3. One off adjustment for Employment Program

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