



common
ground

QUEENSLAND
ending homelessness

ANNUAL REPORT
2015 – 2016

BUILDING INCLUSIVE
COMMUNITIES

“I love my little place –
I embrace it.
It’s beautiful.”

Cheryl
Brisbane Common Ground tenant





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COMMON GROUND QUEENSLAND

Our vision is to end homelessness in the communities in which we operate.

Our mission is to create supportive housing solutions through effective public, private and community partnerships.



CHAIR'S REPORT

Welcome to our 2015-2016 Common Ground Queensland annual report.

This is my first annual report as Chairman of the Common Ground Queensland Board having joined the Board in August 2015 and taken up the Chairmanship from January 2016.

This year has been a time of significant change for the Board with valued and long-serving members, Karyn Walsh, Penny Tarrant and Natasha Doherty moving on. We have been fortunate to secure the appointment of Mark Fenton, Joanna Spanjaard and Deanna Nott and continue to enjoy the benefits of having Linda Apelt and Mark Lightfoot as seasoned directors. May I express my gratitude firstly for the service of those directors who have now moved on and secondly for those who have agreed to either continue on with us or begin to give us the benefits of their time and extensive capability. I am confident the new Board composition is well placed to further Common Ground Queensland's mission of providing supportive housing services.

In this past year the Board has reflected on the performance and ongoing suitability of services offered by Common Ground Queensland and has concluded that our vision to end homelessness

continues to be effective and relevant. Our Chief Executive Officer, Sonya Keep elaborates in more detail in her report; however the Board has been most gratified by the outcomes of evaluation research conducted at Brisbane Common Ground by the University of Queensland. The evaluation confirms that Common Ground Queensland services are valued by service users and present value for money for our Queensland Government partners. We are grateful to the Department of Housing and Public Works for commissioning this study and to the researchers at the University of Queensland for their diligence in executing the task.

The reformed Common Ground Queensland Board is mindful of some of the member's newness to the Common Ground Queensland governance task and to the supportive housing space. With this in mind we have collectively committed ourselves to refresh our strategic priorities for this coming



year, based on past priorities, with the aim of developing a 3 to 5 year long-term strategy by July 2017 once the Board has had a chance to consolidate. I am grateful to my director colleagues for their embrace of this prudent and cautious approach to mapping a future for Common Ground Queensland. For the current year we will focus our strategic energies on relationships, growth and maintaining the efficacy of our existing operations.

In the last 12 months, the Common Ground Queensland Board has invested heavily in refining the quality and completeness of our governance systems and practice. We have been ably assisted in this task by our Company Secretary Amanda Boland, whose assistance is greatly appreciated. I am comfortable that Common Ground Queensland's skills-based Board and sub-committee structure equips us well to continue to guide our service across the coming year.

Part of my own early learning since joining Common Ground Queensland has been around the philosophy of partnership through which we function. We would not be us without the relationships we have built with our supportive housing partners at the Queensland Department of Housing and Public Works, Micah Projects and Grocon. These partnerships are essential for creating the complete supportive housing package.

The Common Ground Queensland Board is profoundly aware of the fact that service only happens through the commitment of people and in our case those people are our staff. Thanks to our CEO Sonya Keep and her team for their efforts across the year. The organisation's performance is a testament to your efforts and diligence.

And finally I wish to express my appreciation for the trust placed in Common Ground Queensland by our tenants. This is the ultimate partnership that 'makes real' all that Common Ground Queensland and

our service partners are able to do. Know that we hold that trust dear.

Peter Pearce
Chairman
Common Ground Queensland Ltd.



CEO'S REPORT

A home is more than just shelter; it's a place that you identify with, a place you feel safe, a place to belong. In the past year Common Ground Queensland's board, staff, partners, volunteers and supporters have demonstrated their ongoing commitment to building an inclusive community of homes at Brisbane Common Ground.

We've also been busy researching and identifying opportunities to expand and adapt supportive housing to meet the needs of others who find it difficult to access and sustain housing.

Our 15/16 annual report highlights the people, projects and partnerships that have contributed to the successful outcomes of our building community and the development of a local evidence base that validates the investment in our supportive housing model. I would like to thank our tenants, staff and supporters who have shared their stories and experiences with us for inclusion in this report. While the following pages provide a detailed recount of the years activities I have noted some of the highlights below.

In April this year the Department of Housing and Public Works released the final report on the evaluation of Brisbane Common Ground conducted by the University of

Queensland's Institute for Social Science Research. The evaluation determined that the Common Ground model of supportive housing which offers safe, affordable, long term housing linked to support services is effective in ending people's experiences of homelessness. The researchers stated that the housing outcomes were overwhelmingly positive and were able to be achieved by tenants across different genders and cultural backgrounds. In addition to outcomes for tenants, the research considered the cost effectiveness of the initiative; accessing Queensland Government administrative data to identify tenants' use of emergency and crisis services in the year preceding and subsequent to being housed. This analysis determined that providing supportive housing resulted in reduced service usage and an associated costs saving averaging \$13,100 per person per year. This local evidence adds to the international evidence which demonstrates positive outcomes



for tenants and a cost effective investment that strengthens our commitment to the principles of supportive housing practice.

These outcomes are also a testament to the value of our collaboration with Micah Projects, our supportive housing partner. The University of Queensland's evaluation report recognised the importance of our shared vision and commitment to evidence based practice in the delivery of supportive housing. During the 15/16 year we have worked together with Micah Projects to conduct our own research into the housing and support needs of vulnerable families and the development of a supportive housing model to keep families together. Our project was funded by the Queensland Charitable Foundation, supported by the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services and included contributions from the Department of Housing and Public Works as well as many

community organisations who are currently working to support families in crisis. The full report of our proposed model and potential cost savings to government; 'Families Caught in the Homelessness and Child Protection Cycle: A Supportive Housing Model for Keeping Families Together' is available on the Common Ground Queensland website.

In April this year we also completed the installation of our Colour, Community & Hope Mosaic Sculpture Project. This is the final phase of 'Our Common Spaces' Project which over a two and a half year period has delivered a backyard garden and seating area, a fitness and wellbeing centre and now an iconic public art feature. The project has significantly added value and amenity to our building and could not have been achieved without the collaboration between tenants, volunteers, donors and the community. I would specifically like to thank the Brisbane City Council and Queensland TAFE Brisbane for their support of the mosaic art component of the project.

The opening of Rise @ Common Ground, our fitness and wellbeing centre in November 2015 has been welcomed by tenants as a valuable addition to our building. We are extremely grateful to Iridium Health who provide pro bono personalised training to our tenants two times a day, five days a week under the coordination of Rise Industries. Griffith University are currently working with our tenants, Iridium Health and Rise Industries to understand and evaluate the impact this service has on participant's health and wellbeing.

While our place making activities are important facets of our work, the core focus of our work is always to deliver high quality, well maintained, safe, affordable and stable housing to our tenants and to assist them to sustain that housing. The responses from our tenant satisfaction survey and

tenancy statistics demonstrate the success we have continued to achieve in our property and tenancy operations this year at Brisbane Common Ground. Our stable, skilled and professional workforce, which includes tenants, is a key component of our ability to deliver quality services in the areas of housing, property and maintenance management, function room hire, concierge and security, employment and training support and place making.

The Common Ground Queensland Board continues to provide a strong foundation and direction for the work that we do. I would like to thank all of our Directors for the leadership and support they have provided to me and my team over the last 12 months. I would like to acknowledge the contribution of long serving Directors Karyn Walsh and Penny Tarrant who stood down from the Board this year after being involved from the inception of the organisation. I would also like to warmly welcome our new Directors including our Chair Mr Peter Pearce and thank Ms Linda Apelt who stood down from the Chair role but continues to be involved as a Director.

In the coming year we will be focussing on communicating the outcomes of the evaluation and seeking support from individuals and organisations who want to add their voice to our call to end homelessness. I encourage you to go to our website and join as a supporter of Common Ground Queensland. In addition we will continue to work with our current partners and the community to respond to the needs of individuals and families who will benefit from improved access to safe, affordable, stable housing and support services.

Sonya Keep

Sonya Keep
CEO
Common Ground Queensland



Brisbane Common Ground Evaluation

In April 2016 the Department of Housing and Public Works publicly released the Brisbane Common Ground Evaluation: Final Report. The report details the findings of research undertaken by the University of Queensland's Institute of Social Science Research to examine whether the Brisbane Common Ground initiative has been successful in assisting tenants to maintain secure housing and improve health, wellbeing, social and economic outcomes. The Department of Housing and Public Works proposed to use the outcomes of the evaluation to inform the State's future investment decisions, service system improvements, policy and program development as well as contribute to the national evidence around leading practice for ending homelessness.

The evaluation analysed four dimensions of the project including the implementation of the model, a post occupancy building review, tenant outcomes and cost effectiveness. The research team undertook a multi-methodological approach incorporating literature reviews, analysis of source documents, qualitative interviews with tenants and stakeholders, a two wave longitudinal tenant survey and analysis of government administrative data.

The final report details the following key findings from the research:

FORMATIVE EVALUATION

- Brisbane Common Ground was implemented as intended and purposefully targeted people with experiences of chronic homelessness.
- Stakeholders have enhanced the implementation through their shared vision, ability to translate supportive housing evidence into practice that effectively responds to the tenant cohort and ability to establish a home for tenants.

- The effectiveness of the supportive housing service is enhanced through clear, close and positive professional relationships between housing and support providers.
- Tenants rated Brisbane Common Ground staff in extremely positive ways.

POST OCCUPANCY REVIEW

- Tenants reported overwhelmingly high rates of satisfaction with multiple dimensions of their housing. Nearly all tenants described Brisbane Common Ground as their home.
- Tenants described the building as safe and highly valued the concierge and onsite support that attributed to the safety.
- Tenants were concerned with some anti-social behaviour in communal areas and immediately outside the building – Brisbane Common Ground staff have taken action to address the problems.
- There is no evidence that Brisbane Common Ground is stigmatised, or perceived negatively by immediate neighbours.

TENANT OUTCOMES

- Brisbane Common Ground has removed barriers for people experiencing chronic homelessness with support needs to access and sustain housing.
- Modest improvements in training and labour market participation and increased perceptions of training and employment opportunities since being housed.





- Improved access to physical and mental health and access to health care.
- Improved satisfaction with life and mental wellbeing over a 12 month period.

COST OFFSETS

Researchers accessed Queensland Government administrative data to understand tenants' usage and costs of emergency and crisis services in the year prior to being housed at Brisbane Common Ground and the first twelve months of their tenancy. The costs of providing supportive housing were also analysed. The analysis identified that the costs of supportive housing and services for twelve months is \$13,100 less per person per year than leaving people chronically homeless and accessing crisis services.

In addition to key findings the evaluation report identifies the following key learnings:

- Supportive housing can assist people with chronic experiences of homelessness and support needs to make immediate exits from homelessness to secure housing and to sustain that housing.
- When stable and affordable housing with linked voluntary support is available, assertions about an individuals need to be 'housing ready' are made redundant.
- Similarly positive outcomes and high levels of satisfaction are achieved by Indigenous and non-Indigenous tenants and tenants of different genders and ages.
- The unified approach of housing and support providers is a key determiner in the success of Brisbane Common Ground.
- Providing a safe living environment for vulnerable tenants is critical.
- The friendships, informal support, activities and built form at Brisbane Common Ground contribute to positive tenant outcomes.
- Tenants value a proactive and assertive response by staff to the negative behaviour of other tenants.
- Housing outcomes are unambiguously positive.

It is difficult to demonstrate the profound practice challenges and resources required to enable some tenants to achieve these outcomes.

- Non-housing outcomes take longer to materialise but continued practice efforts should be actively pursued to achieve non-housing outcomes.
- Brisbane Common Ground is associated with a reduction in crisis and emergency service use that, even when the cost of the supportive housing program are included, constitutes a cost offset of \$13,100 per person per year.

The researchers concluded that 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.

A full copy of the evaluation report is available from our website.



2015/16 Tenant Satisfaction Survey

(University of Queensland's Institute for Social Science Research)

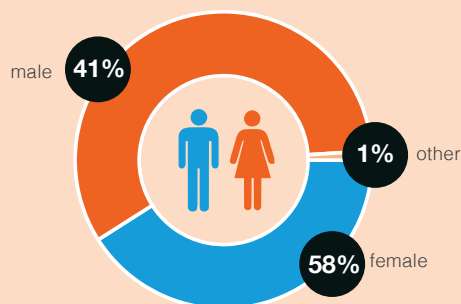
76

tenants responded
to our Tenant
Satisfaction Survey

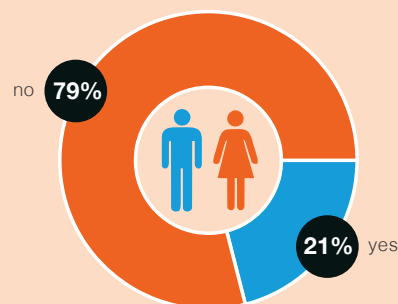
58%

respondents are
formerly homeless
tenants

Gender



Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander



Housing

I am pleased and satisfied with my housing and feel settled



I am satisfied with the safety of the building



I am satisfied with the design and layout of my unit



Legend agree neutral disagree

Staffing

I am treated with respect and dignity by CGQ staff



Concierge staff provide a safe environment



Concierge staff provide a welcoming environment



Legend agree neutral disagree

Employment, training and volunteering program

I have found the Employment program beneficial

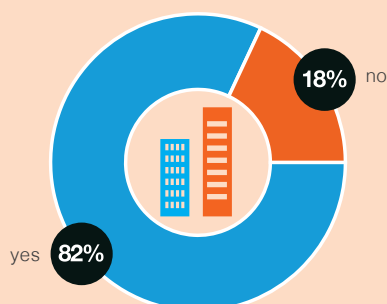


The employment program has increased the likelihood of me finding a job

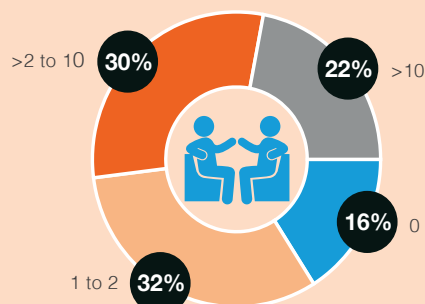


Legend agree neutral disagree

Do you feel that Brisbane Common Ground is your home?



How many tenants are your friends?



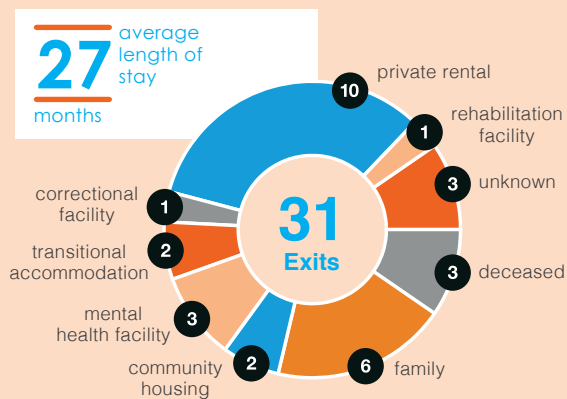
A Year of Achievement

Tenancy statistics	
Bad Debts 0.13%	target <1.5%
Rent Foregone 0.24%	target <4%
Vacancy Rate 0.51%	target <5%
Uncollected Rent at 30 June 0.09%	target <5%
Evasion Rate 3.4%	target <7%

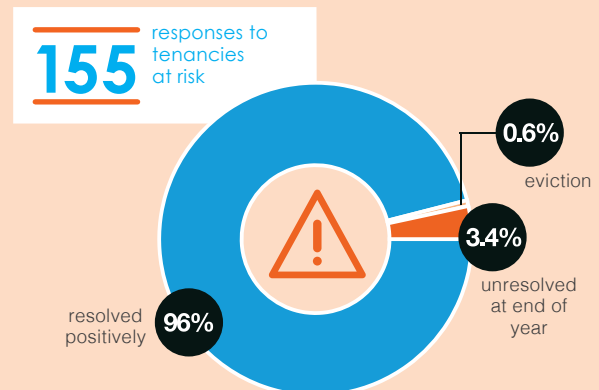
Our tenants as at 30 June



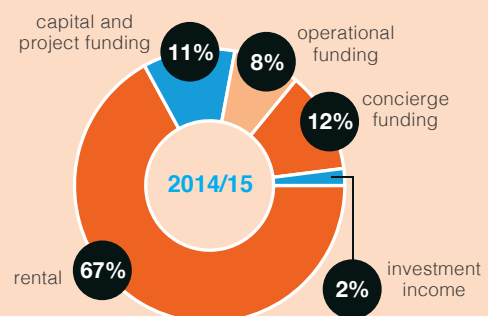
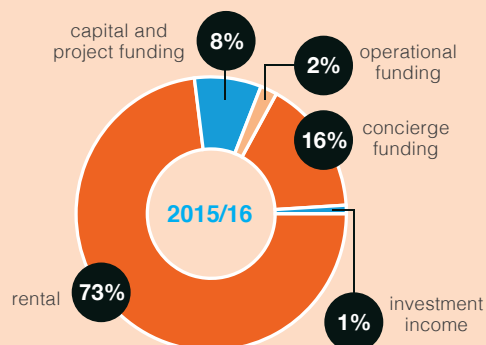
Tenants exiting in 2015/16



Tenancies at risk



Income





Colour, Community & Hope – Mosaic Sculpture Project

After two and a half years of planning and development, we are proud to unveil the completed Colour, Community & Hope – Mosaic Sculpture Project; a mosaic masterpiece comprising over 5000 handmade tiles. The intricacies of this piece can only truly be appreciated close up – so if you find yourself in the area, we encourage you to drop by and explore the story. You won't be disappointed.

Curious to know how this project came about? Wondering who made all of those tiles? Well, getting from A to Z is a story in itself and one we're delighted to share.

Our journey began in late 2013 when we embarked on an exciting exercise with the tenants of Brisbane Common Ground to explore ideas on improving safety and amenity in the public walkway that intersects our building. We affectionately call this 'Our Lane' because it connects Hope Street and Fleet Lane.

Back then, the existing concrete platform at the Hope Street entrance of the walkway was being used as an informal seat and congregation area and had become a pivotal spot for loitering and other anti-social behaviour

such as fighting and public drinking. An escalation of these incidents spurred us to seek a positive and inclusive solution to address the public safety issues that were impacting our tenants, our neighbours and passers-by.

Following a four month collaborative planning process facilitated by Sonia Kirby from Establish Consulting, the idea of installing a piece of public art within the walkway became the preferred solution for enhancing the space. Approximately 71% of tenants (from a survey response rate of 29%) supported the idea! Tenants informed us they wanted an artwork that was positive, with bright colours, that promoted ownership and made the space inviting and appealing to the public and that was representative and



iconic of 'Hope' and 'Home'. Tenants also told us they still wanted a place to sit and meet and requested the underutilised lawn at the rear of the building be converted into a functional and aesthetic backyard with undercover seating and landscaping. We made it a priority to ensure this alternative seating was in place before the concrete platform was repurposed.

After investing 12 months in building partnerships and sourcing a suitable funding stream, the Colour, Community & Hope Mosaic Sculpture Project was born. It involves the installation of over 5000 handmade tiles and glass mosaics laid onto an underlying hebel form to create a colourful, engaging and tactile artwork which celebrates the Kurilpa area's connection with the Brisbane River and the Brisbane Common Ground community.

The project is the fruition of a unique collaboration between artistic managers, Stephanie Outridge Field and John Fitz-Walter, tenant artists, Common Ground Queensland, Queensland TAFE Brisbane (South Bank Campus), Brisbane City Council, Lotus Place and community volunteers. Dean Miscamble from CeramicaMandala completed the installation. Productive discussions with TAFE's Director for Creative Arts and Digital Design, Carla Reading also led to the project being included in the 2015 first semester Sculpture Module of the Certificate III Visual Arts Program which one of our lead tenant artists, Ann O'Sullivan attended.

The initial phase of the project was funded through the Brisbane City Council's Suburban Crime Prevention Grant Program with art workshop facilities and kilns generously resourced by Queensland TAFE Brisbane. Additional funding was sourced from community sponsors including the Brisbane Ekibin Lions Club, Rotary Club of Forest Lake, Grill'd South Bank and Open Door Foundation. Substantial in-kind contributions were also provided by Stephanie Outridge Field, Lotus Place, Common Ground Queensland and members of the general public.

The finished sculpture is an iconic symbol of the Brisbane Common Ground building community and significantly adds to the aesthetic amenity of 'Our Lane' and the Kurilpa area. It is also a tribute to the working partnership and collaboration of the many people and organisations which have brought the project to life and a practical demonstration of precinct based placemaking. Well done to everyone involved – it was worth the wait!



Our Employment, Training and Volunteering Program

Two years in and our Employment, Training and Volunteering (ETV) Program is still going strong; the catalyst for wonderful and positive change in the lives of many of the tenants at Brisbane Common Ground. The program is inspiring an air of possibility with an array of exciting and innovative workshops and training packages as well as employment, business and volunteering opportunities which are available to anyone living in the building. The program has already assisted over 60 tenants, many of whom are supported on an ongoing basis

as the program evolves and their needs change.

COURSES AND TRAINING

In our continuing effort to find the 'best fit' courses for tenants to ensure sustainable outcomes, we discovered Epic Assist Education who are a new and unique training provider that offers a flexible approach to teaching and learning. Four tenants and one external student are currently enrolled in our second Certificate II in Business Administration course which is run in-house. Another of our blossoming tenants is enjoying her Certificate II in

Community Services with the support of her Epic personal mentor, Beau. Beau and Kellie are of a similar age and both love the Broncos! The course has been tailored to Kellie's learning and study style with Kellie already having completed two modules. Kellie is keen to follow a career in Child Care and this course has been the perfect pathway for her to achieve her dream.

After being inspired by the success of our first group of Business Administration graduates, Peter Evans from the Department of Housing and Public

Works made available a number of short term AO2 Administration Officer placements within their Market Development and Programs Division. Two tenants have taken up the opportunity to further develop their new skills within the department.

We are continuing to work alongside Queensland TAFE Brisbane (South Bank Campus) and their Small Business Solutions Division who have facilitated two Certificate III in Micro Business courses in-house at Brisbane Common Ground. As a result, five budding entrepreneurs are currently at different stages of developing their small business ideas and some are working together on joint ventures to get their businesses up and running. We are planning a Mastermind Program later in the year and will be inviting a range of guest speakers to continue to inspire

our new entrepreneurs to achieve their goals. Well done team, you totally rock!!

In house this year, we are focussing on building the function room hire business, targeting the corporate sector with a separate website dedicated to advertising our rooms. With the anticipated increase in business, we envisage that there will be more employment opportunities for tenants who wish to get involved.

WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAM

With the rollout of the National Work Experience Programme by the Federal Government in October 2015, we have started to build relationships with a number of businesses interested in providing tenants work experience opportunities. This will enable participants to showcase their skills and get a foot in the door.



ETV 2015-16 ACHIEVEMENTS

- Relationships with seven local businesses who are offering employment and volunteering opportunities to tenants.
- Relationships with two training providers to offer tailored training opportunities to tenants.
- There were a total of 126 attendances in work ready workshops and one on one training sessions.
- 14 tenants engaged in or have completed formal training to assist them in gaining employment.
- Two structured volunteering positions were made available to tenants of Brisbane Common Ground this year and 13 work experience placements in hospitality are currently being offered through local businesses.
- Five tenants have increased their hours of work or gained employment and another five in the process of setting up their own small businesses.



A New Chapter



Tesfit's Story

Tesfit explains that Common Ground Queensland's Employment, Training and Volunteering Program helped him start a new chapter in his life.

"I was looking for an opportunity to study but I didn't know which way to start," he recalls.

In April 2015 Tesfit enrolled in his first course; a Certificate II in

Business Administration that was run on-site at Brisbane Common Ground. "It was very easy and helpful to be supported within the building. The course gave me experience in Microsoft Word, Excel and customer service. I completed that one and then I enrolled in the Certificate III Business Administration on-campus at Southbank TAFE and I completed that one as well," says Tesfit.

Tesfit shares he was able to fit the study in around his cleaning work commitments at a local school as he works before and after school hours. "Living at Brisbane Common Ground makes it easy for me to get to work, it is close to everything."

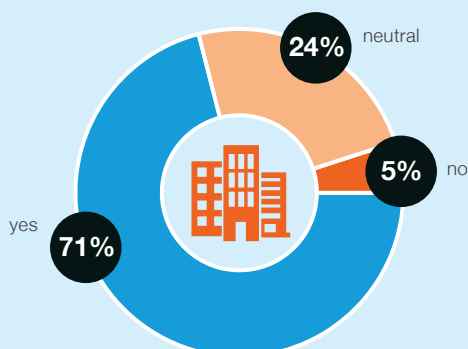
Tesfit's new skills have also provided him with an opportunity to engage in work experience with Common Ground Queensland where he coordinated the data entry for the tenant exit survey. "I learn best when I have face to face contact. If someone can introduce me to a job and give me instruction, I can do it. I just need practice," says Tesfit. "Back in Eritrea, I did a Diploma in Business Education and I have some experience in that field. I enjoy it, but I find writing in English is still the most difficult – that's why I need to work hard," he adds.

Tesfit says he is keen to continue with further studies in the future but for now, wants to concentrate on getting more work experience.

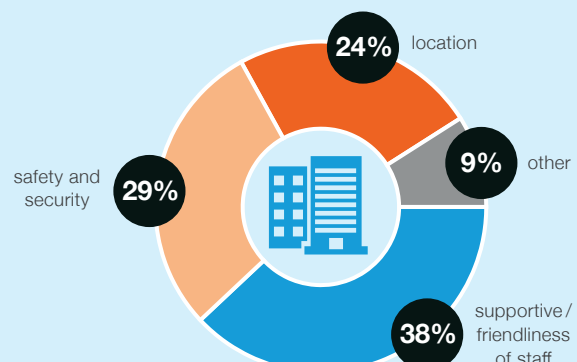
Tenant Exit Survey – Snapshot

In November 2015, Common Ground Queensland undertook an analysis of tenant exit survey data collected over an 18 month period. Here is a snapshot of the results.

In general, I enjoyed living at Brisbane Common Ground



What did you like most about living at Brisbane Common Ground?





“We are so grateful to our volunteers, their skills and generosity have made a real difference.”

Sonya Keep
CEO

The Intranet Project

It has always been part of Common Ground Queensland's growth strategy to adopt an internal intranet which enables tenants and the tenancy team to communicate via the free Wi-Fi service within the building.

Late last year we were approached by the QUT Real World Placement Program who facilitated a Skilled Volunteering Expo. The forum provided an opportunity for not-for-profits to pitch projects to qualified students who were interested in gaining valuable work experience and utilise their newly acquired skills.

We presented our intranet project at the expo and had interest from a number of IT and project

management students who were keen to be involved.

Projects such as this take time to implement and with our students also eager to gain paid employment after their years of study there have been a number of changes on the team over the project timeline.

Each of our current team members has been working very hard on their particular area of interest and we are now starting to see the fruits of their labour. With IT and project management skills, Scott Winks is heading the project and with his expertise has been able to unravel its complexities to develop a simple process to build and install the intranet. In the next stage this will include valuable input from tenants and staff so that we can hone and further develop the site to make sure it delivers an excellent service for all users.

Once all the bugs have been ironed out (there are always bugs!) and we're ready to launch, we will be providing training to staff and a small number of interested tenants who will then be able to share this knowledge with other tenants to make sure that everyone can use the site effectively.

A heartfelt thank you to our students who have given their valuable time to the project, it is a pleasure working with such bright young minds.

Koji Nishimoto, Shirin Azizmohammad, Jacob McDonald, Annie Tan, Lynnette Xu and Scott Winks (Intranet Project Team).

Back on Track

Cheryl's Story

"I came to Brisbane Common Ground nearly three years ago and it was the best move I ever made because it put my life back on track," says Cheryl. "I was in private rental and had a bit of a landlord from hell and unfortunately I had to get out of there. Then I ended up in a halfway house," she continues. Cheryl remembers the uncertainty she felt during this time and is openly appreciative of the case worker who introduced her to Brisbane Common Ground. "She was brilliant. She brought me down here one day and she said you might just like it and... I did like it," she laughs warmly.

"In the beginning it was a little bit hard for me, but I've got used to the swing of things now. I love my little place – I embrace it. It's beautiful."

Cheryl talks animatedly about the vocational opportunities she has pursued during her tenancy at Brisbane Common Ground. "I've been very fortunate," she says. "I did the Certificate II Business Administration course that TAFE ran in the building which led me to have a three month extended contract with the Department of Housing and Public Works. I loved it, I absolutely loved it," Cheryl enthuses. "It was admin work



and I was helping a lot of different people from personal assistants to managers to executive staff. I learnt so much, it was amazing," she adds. Cheryl has nothing but admiration for the departmental staff she worked with "I can't believe how passionate the staff are; these are the right people for the right job," she firmly states.

Cheryl also enjoys the recreational aspects of Brisbane Common Ground and is actively involved in the Absolutely Everybody Choir which rehearses in the building every Friday. "The choir is run by the School of Hard Knocks. We've got a wonderful group and even performed at QPAC last year," says Cheryl proudly. When the School started up a Music Theatre group called Rhythm of Life mid-last year, Cheryl was keen to join it as well. "We've done Oliver and the Wizard of Oz and at the end of the year I believe we will be doing Mary Poppins. I can't sing to save myself, but I like it," says Cheryl cheerfully.

In addition to her pursuits at Brisbane Common Ground, Cheryl is actively engaged within the local community. "I've been with the Brisbane Ekibin Lions Club now for three years and I've been Secretary for two of those years," says Cheryl. "I was thrown into the job and had to learn quickly. Luckily, I'm a quick learner – you can show me something once and I write everything down – that's the way I learn." Cheryl says her involvement with the club is very rewarding and gives her the opportunity to do a variety of things. "This year I entered the Personality Quest which raises money for Lions Medical Research. I raised \$6000. We had lots of sausage sizzles, we sold flowers, we had a lot of raffles and all sorts of things. The club was right behind me," shares Cheryl. "I came fourth, so I was pretty proud of myself."

Cheryl was also instrumental in securing a \$500 Club donation to sponsor Common Ground



Queensland's recently completed Colour, Community and Hope Mosaic Sculpture and states that the Brisbane Ekibin Lions Club was happy to support such a great community project. "There are so many beautiful tiles," she says. "We have lots left over as well, so I hope we can have another project."

It is obvious from talking to Cheryl that she is a true participant in life. "I fill up my days. In my spare time I make birthday cards – I do them in 3D. It's a lot of work. I've been so busy though, that I haven't made one card in about 6 months," she observes. "My grandchildren also take up my time."

Cheryl is also considering doing another course through Common Ground Queensland's Employment, Training and Volunteering Program while she is in between jobs. "I'm 62 now, but I can't see myself retiring. I've just got my learner's licence again after not driving for ten years because I've noticed that a lot of jobs require you to have a licence. They say if you don't use it, you lose it," Cheryl says with conviction. "I'd like to do the Certificate III in Business Administration just to keep going. Something will come up, it always does."



"I came to Brisbane Common Ground nearly three years ago and it was the best move I ever made because it put my life back on track."



Volunteering with Common Ground Queensland

Michael Nycyk, one of our valued volunteers says he answered Common Ground Queensland's call for a face to face tutor because he has enjoyed tutoring students with mental health issues in the past and wanted to take his tutoring further. Michael enjoys education and has been volunteering at Brisbane Common Ground supporting one of our tenants, Arne for just over a year. Michael says it is incredibly rewarding to help Arne develop his literacy and gets a real buzz when Arne shows him a complex recipe he has typed out. "Arne's pronunciation of difficult words and recognition of plurals has really improved," beams Michael. "His improvement has also been noted by the Head Chef at the Archive Hotel where Arne works casually," adds Deb Jones, Common Ground Queensland's Employment, Training and Volunteering Coordinator.

Michael has qualifications in a number of areas including a Masters in Internet Studies but found himself gravitating toward Digital Literacy and how people use technology. Michael has been flexible in his work with Arne, fitting in with Arne's schedule and tailoring the tutoring to Arne's learning style and personality. Arne really values the time he spends with Michael and says he has learnt a lot from him over the year including improving his computer skills.





A Musician at Heart

Elvira's Story

Elvira is one of Brisbane Common Ground's original tenants. "I moved here four years ago," says Elvira. "At first I was hesitant due to the fact that there is very limited parking available and I've never lived in this type of accommodation before. It's the fear of the unknown. But I'm very happy to be living here now," she adds.

"What I've found is that there are advantages. I can see the positive side. Because my immediate family are all overseas it feels as though I've found a second home, a second family. The support that everyone offers is really great," Elvira affirms. "I've made friends and that is one important aspect of living here. I like being here. It's another chapter."

Elvira enjoys her independence and says with the support that she receives at Brisbane Common Ground she feels secure and stable. "It's good to have 24 hour 7 day security – it makes a difference. I feel OK as a woman living by myself

here." Elvira also finds the building's proximity to the city and public transport makes it easy for her to access services and amenities.

"I work as a Patient Services Assistant with a team of very dedicated doctors and nurses in a dialysis unit. I have a background in nursing and health care," she shares. "I find that taking the bus is very convenient for me to get to work at a nearby hospital."

Most importantly, Elvira emphasises the sense of community she has found through her involvement in the Hope Street Music Group which rehearses at Brisbane Common Ground each week. "I have a musical background. Growing up in the Philippines, music is always a part of our education from day one. My grandfather used to play bandurria and violin in a band and we were always surrounded by music." Elvira explains she had put this aspect of her life on hold for many years after she got married and moved to Australia.

"My musical times stopped, it was a different life altogether," she recalls. "Now as I've gotten older, it is good to have music again. I sing and play the guitar and piano." Elvira believes the music program coordinated by The Hive provides tenants with a wonderful opportunity for further learning and self-expression and has given her the confidence to step out and sing in public. "The music group has grown over time and is constantly improving," she says.

You will often find Elvira singing and playing the piano in the foyer, sometimes solo and sometimes accompanied by other tenant musicians. Their music breathes life into the building and adds a dimension of joy and soul to the Brisbane Common Ground community.

Supportive Housing Coordination Team

The on-site partnership between Common Ground Queensland and Micah Projects is one of the cornerstones of the success of the Brisbane Common Ground Supportive Housing Program. In this partnership, Common Ground Queensland performs the tenancy and property management and Micah Projects performs the on-site support. Though each organisation's roles are very different, there is a shared commitment to facilitate tenants' access to safe, secure and affordable housing and most importantly a dedicated joint effort to assist tenants to sustain their tenancies and achieve greater self-reliance. This shared vision is recorded in a Deed of Cooperation and underpins the partnership at every level; from operations through to governance.

At a very practical level, the aspects of this partnership are managed by the Supportive Housing Coordination Team. This team meets formally once a week and informally each weekday to discuss and problem-solve a range of issues related to the sustainment of tenancies.

"I'd say that the meetings we have are the heartbeat, the kind of main hub of the building and the connection place of the services," says Micah Projects' Senior Service Coordinator, Andy Johnson. "It's where issues are aired in an orderly way, in an open way – it's been the same since we started."

Paul Naudi, Micah Projects' Service Coordinator believes consistency and good communication is the key to the partnership. "It's worked since day one. We all have our roles to play. The weekly meeting is a lot more formal, it's minuted and actioned, but then every weekday we also contact each other for the handover in the morning to discuss incidents, sign-ups, interviews and day to day activity."

These sentiments are echoed by Natasha Rodrigues, Micah Projects' Supportive Housing Team Leader. "It's really crucial for us to have access to the tenancy and property management team and to meet with them on a regular basis. It's pivotal for sustaining tenancies," states Natasha. "The proactiveness of both teams helps us to address issues before they become a crisis or get to a stage where they are not manageable."

"We're working towards the same outcome. Different organisations on the same team."

Derek Taylor
Common Ground
Queensland
Tenancy Manager



Derek Taylor, Common Ground Queensland's Tenancy Manager emphasises that the regular meetings strengthen the relationships between the two organisations and help keep everyone on the same page. "We're working towards the same outcome. Different organisations on the same team," says Derek. "The collective team holds a consistent standard. Decisions are made together."

Trust is also essential, according to Janice Walters, Common Ground Queensland's Rental and Reporting Manager. "There's a common understanding on the personality level as well as the professional level. It gets easier the longer we work with each other," acknowledges Janice. "There's no threat of being misunderstood because we know why we do the things we are doing. We can raise issues comfortably with the Micah Team and vice versa." "It's a good platform to negotiate sustaining tenancies and it works really well," adds Raechelle Coaker, Common Ground Queensland's Property and Tenancy Officer.

Both teams highlight how critical the weekly meetings are to promoting an inter-organisational culture which is based on cooperation and mutual respect. "The meetings emphasise that it's not just one team's responsibility to fix problems. We work together on it – it's a joint thing. Because we're all in it together," says Andy.

The demonstration speaks louder than words with 96% of 'at risk' tenancies resolved successfully in 2015-16 and a further 3.4% in the process of being resolved. "We've had the same team now for three years and it really helps tenants when they know who to deal with. It's our experience that tenants feel more secure when they know that their issues will be responded to with consistency and stability," says Janice.

Supportive Housing Principles

The Common Ground Model of supportive housing is a proven and cost effective solution to end homelessness that is based on a set of validated principles. Supportive housing can be delivered in single site high or low density developments or in scattered housing sites.

Brisbane Common Ground is a single site, high density supportive housing initiative that has been purposefully designed, developed and delivered to incorporate the key principles that underpin successful housing outcomes.

DESIGN

A thoughtfully designed and well-maintained positive home environment that includes community spaces and opportunities for the wider community to participate. An asset for the whole community.

PERMANENCY & AFFORDABILITY

Housing is permanent, affordable and self-contained with rent calculated as a percentage of income.

TENANCY MIX

There is a mix of tenants with a proportion having experienced

homelessness and some who have not. The mix ensures a vibrant and diverse building community.

SAFETY

A Concierge service is provided 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to ensure a welcoming but controlled access to the building.

SERVICES FOR TENANTS

An on-site support provider offers a holistic, tenancy-focused service to those who require support to remain housed. This includes individual support, health services and links to other community and mainstream services. The Property and Tenancy Manager maintains the safety and amenity of the building, educates tenants on their rights and responsibilities and works in partnership with the support provider and tenants to sustain tenancies.

SOCIAL INCLUSION

Each element of supportive housing aims to create the greatest possible degree of empowerment and independence for individuals as well as a thriving community for tenants and neighbours.

HOME

You come to heal and think of solutions.

You come to see and reflect.

You come to warm your body and soul.

You invite people and the ones you love.

Home is what you refer to, when asked "where are you from" you write down beside, "what is your address question?"

What if a home you never had.

Abdul Khaliq Ibrahim
Brisbane Common Ground tenant



“You have to try.
You just have to keep
trying. Just pick away at
the rock – eventually there
will be some change.
My mum taught
me that.”

More Than Just A Home

Dean's Story

Dean recollects how things have changed since Brisbane Common Ground opened four years ago. “When I first moved into the building in late 2012, it was a pretty wild, wild west place. But now a lot of people who have moved in have started to find their feet; they came here with a lot of issues, but now they have started to settle down and get along with each other.”

Dean talks openly about the difficulties of being homeless or housed inappropriately, the feeling of being unsafe, insecure and not belonging and remembers how happy he was to find a home again. Dean said he found himself homeless a few years ago when his share-house became unsafe due to alcohol-fueled violence. “I wasn’t going to stick around anymore.

I packed my car and drove off,” he says with conviction. With no friends in Brisbane, Dean sought shelter in crisis accommodation and then moved to a hostel in the inner-city. “I asked not to be placed in a hostel where there were drinking problems,” he says. “The first place I got housed was completely unsuitable. From sun up to sun down the other tenants sat in the common lounge and kitchen and drank wine. I’d walk out of my room and there were people lying on the kitchen table sleeping. I think I lasted eight weeks.”

Dean shares that it was his Counsellor that pointed him in the right direction. “When I went to see my Drug and Alcohol Counsellor she said ‘Look out that window – look across there – see that white building’ and she pointed out this building. She said ‘You need to get

into that building. That’s where you want to be. It’s going to have every service you’ll ever need and there will be people there to help you’.”

Dean says he immediately took steps to register with the Department of Housing and Public Works and was sent for an interview with the Brisbane Homelessness Centre. “Then I waited and I waited. I was so worried I wasn’t going to get in. I said to my Counsellor, what if I don’t get in, what if they say no and she had to really reassure me.” Dean remembers how happy he was when he was offered a unit at Brisbane Common Ground. “I was so rapt. To me this is a beautiful building, it’s all brand new. I like nice things; I like to have the place nice.” Dean says the standard of the building was very different to other places he had experienced. “I have lived in other men’s hostels

in Brisbane and they are atrocious and dirty. Once I paid \$189 a week for a room that was as big as my bathroom. It had sub-standard bedding and a little round sink in the corner and the kitchen had a film of dirty grease and grime everywhere. I thought to myself – isn't there an agency out there that goes and spot checks all these hostels to see if they're being run correctly or cleanly?" Looking back, Dean says he is so grateful for his Counsellor's help and support to find Brisbane Common Ground.

So what does Dean think about Brisbane Common Ground nearly four years on? According to Dean he still loves his home and the fact that it is so close to everything he needs, but he also has a realistic view of living in a high density environment. Dean highlights how important it is to take extra care to be considerate to each other. "We all have rights, but we also have to respect other people's rights – it's about give and take, you know. That's the only issue I have at times," he says.

Dean is a firm believer that it takes courage and persistence to transform destructive habits or make positive life choices. "You have to try. You just have to keep trying. Just pick away at the rock – eventually there will be some change. My mum taught me that."

Dean also thinks it must be hard on the staff sometimes to take care of the issues in the building and to juggle all the competing demands. But he is quick to point out that he feels safe and secure because of the 24/7 concierge service and says that even though there are people with substance-abuse problems living in the building there is a code of behavior that tenants need to abide by.

Brisbane Common Ground is more than just a home to Dean. "I've also started to work with Common Ground

Queensland in the Function Rooms which is quite good – I like doing that work. It gets me out of my room, doing something. It also gives me responsibility and its going along quite nicely. Sometimes it gets quiet, but other times it gets full on – it's good." Dean says he started as a Volunteer about two and a half years ago, but is now a Casual Employee and works between four to six shifts each fortnight.

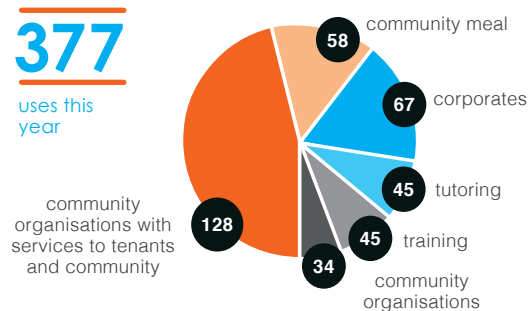
Finally Dean shares that he has made some good friends in the building. "I didn't know anybody in the building when I moved in. Now I've got some good friends – there are a lot of lovely people here."

Tenant employment hours

Tenant employment hours	
Servicing of function rooms	397 hrs
Maintenance	663 hrs
Total	1060 hrs

Function room statistics

25% increase on 2014/15 revenue



Function Room Team: Nilima Harjal, Dean Rogers and Lisa McComb



Rise @ Common Ground

It's nearly one year since the Rise @ Common Ground Fitness and Wellbeing Centre opened its doors and the response has been amazing. More than 30 tenants have injected their positive energy into the Centre to create an inclusive and dynamic hub.

At no cost to tenants, Exercise Physiologists, Tim Douge and Alanah Dobinson from Iridium Health run 10 supervised movement sessions each week under the coordination of Rise Industries' Director, David Hodge.

Tim and Alanah's professional approach ensures that each tenant's health and mobility capacity is fully assessed to ensure individualised programs are safe and health-wise. Assessment includes an initial movement consult, in which Tim and Alanah discuss each tenant's personal and medical situations and program goals. Tenants then complete low-intensity movement assessments such as flexibility, balance, strength and aerobic capacity. Medical markers such as blood pressure are captured and if necessary, a tenant's GP will also be consulted.

Tim and Alanah believe everyone deserves access to good health and advocate that Rise @ Common Ground provides a supportive environment in which tenants can prioritise their mental and physical health. "Exercise can be a life saver for people who experience mental,

emotional and physical distress," says Alanah passionately. "We design our sessions to include people from all areas of life, through body movement and socialising. We encourage tenants to recall their own exercises, understand the importance of good techniques, understand their posture and overall, understand the thousands of benefits that moving the body can create. We also screen for other issues that may not have been addressed and require referrals elsewhere, such as eating disorders, heart pains or other anomalies," she adds.

The centre is fully equipped with mats, weights, balance equipment, a stationery bike and a suspension training set thanks to the goodwill and generosity of ex-board member Phil Heraghty and his wife Rose and the Community Grants Program at Suez Environment.

Alanah says the Centre has generated rapport between tenants and offers an inclusive environment for fun and friendship. "When tenants enter the Centre for a session, they generally begin chatting about their day with each other and the clinicians. Tenants continue chatting during warm up and then decide collaboratively on exercises for the session. Sometimes tenants prefer the session to be relaxed and other times they request it to be more challenging. Some tenants also choose to complete their own movement session."

Tenants exercise to music and at their preferred intensity whilst being supervised by Tim or Alanah. The session ends with a cool-down, a debrief with each other and a piece of fruit to top it off.

Tim and Alanah say it's a real honour to be working with the tenants who attend the sessions at Rise @ Common Ground. Alanah is keen to mention a few 'stand-outs' over the year. "One tenant lives with rheumatoid arthritis and several other conditions, with the pain being so excruciating that injections in hospital are necessary. This tenant has progressed through most of the pain using movement as therapy and has also developed a social outlet in the gym. Now she is amazing at bouncing an AFL ball, with a record 250 bounces without dropping the ball! She also tracks her own progress with a book and coloured textas to make progress graphs and ticks off exercises as she completes them! And she brings her stuffed animals to work out with her."

Alanah continues "Another tenant is legally blind and agreed to start a chain of movement sessions called, 'Being Brendon'. Residents were led by Brendon to experience one hour without vision, which was a learning experience around how the body functions without vision and how it can compensate with its' other amazing senses. Tenants used tea towels to cover their eyes whilst trekking through the Brisbane

Common Ground gardens and walk-way following just a piece of string and the clinicians' guidance. Tenants reported feeling more grateful for their bodies, especially for their sight, at the end of the exciting adventure."

Recently Tim and Alanah have been fortunate enough to receive funding to supplement their community work at Rise @ Common Ground from corporate sponsors, Resort Brokers Australia and Aria Property Group who believe in the value of the program. "These companies will allow Iridium Health to sustain the client-centred care it provides to Rise @ Common Ground and we thank them profusely for their generosity and support," says Tim.

The centre has also recently undergone a mini make-over, with tenants creating a goal wall with coloured hand prints to outline their one year goals. This colourful, inspirational wall displays goals such as 'Being more patient,' 'Being able to balance to stop falls occurring' and 'Find a job.' "Tenants are gently encouraged to collectively pursue their goals each day during their sessions when they see their art piece," says Alanah.

So what's next? The goal for the future program is to offer one-on-one sessions as well as group sessions to provide an even higher level of client-centred care. There is also the potential for university students from QUT to facilitate some sessions under the direction of Iridium Health, which according to Tim and Alanah would benefit all involved. "We will continue to collaborate with David Hodge and Common Ground Queensland to provide the best care possible, creating self-efficacy and good health amongst all who attend," states Alanah with commitment.

If you are interested in becoming a Rise @ Common Ground sponsor, please contact Common Ground Queensland for more information.

Griffith University Research Study

In collaboration with Rise Industries and Iridium Health, Griffith University are conducting a subjective research study on the positive impacts of healthy living and exercise on participants' wellbeing and social connectedness.

The study incorporates two phases, a process evaluation and an impact evaluation.

"Participants are becoming more independent and are improving in multiple physical and psychosocial areas. It's been incredible to be able to watch participants take charge of their health and fitness and the benefits are endless".

Melanie Plugge
Researcher
Masters of Public Health
Griffith University

The process evaluation was completed in January 2016. This phase of the research incorporated mixed data collection methods including observation reports, attendance records and participant and staff interviews. 24 tenants participated in the exercise sessions over the eight week evaluation period. There were 160 total attendances. On average, two to three persons attended a session at any one time. The evaluation explored and documented the implementation process, the program's reach, the appropriateness of activities and resources, participation and perceived challenges and opportunities. Recommendations were also developed to inform future interventions.

The evaluation determined that the space was adequate and sufficient

and the variety of equipment was appropriate to meet the various needs and capabilities of participants. Generally, participants listened to trainer direction, adhered well to instruction and were consistent with their attendance. Participants expressed enjoyment of sessions and gratitude for trainers' individualised care as well as appreciation of the social inclusion facilitated by sessions.

"I feel cheerful and positive after today. I feel like I'm rebuilding my life," stated one participant.

"I love how caring people are here at the sessions compared to most gyms. Here people smile and joke and are friendly and you can tell they genuinely care about you," another participant shared.

The main barriers to attendance included mental and physical health concerns, substance abuse and other individual priorities.

The study has now moved into the impact evaluation phase following approval from the Griffith University Ethical Review Board in May 2016 and will run until August 2016. This phase of the research seeks to answer the research question: What is the impact of participation in an on-site group fitness intervention on physical, psychological and social wellbeing of people with a history of homelessness/at risk of homelessness? Data collection measures include pre/post quantitative survey data, pre/post biological marker measurements as well as participant interviews. This evaluation aims to measure the impact of the exercise facility on participants' mental/physical health and sense of social connectedness.

A Flair for the Creative

Sussana's Story

Sussana shares that when she moved into Brisbane Common Ground she was at a low point in her life. "I wasn't open to anything – I wasn't open to life. I accepted my lot and that was it. I was just surviving." Sussana candidly discusses the effect that housing instability had on her life. "Even before I was homeless, I had to move every year or two because the rent would go up, it's always been difficult."

Sussana recalls that she got really down about being out of the workforce for a couple of years. "I have a Bachelor Degree in Psychology and I used to work in the areas of mental health, domestic violence and disabilities," Sussana recalls. "But all I had was work – I gave everything and then I crashed. That was the problem. I definitely hit rock bottom and just didn't care anymore – I lost myself I guess. I felt like I was always running and I had to find somewhere to stop and deal with my own stuff and that's what living at Brisbane Common Ground has given me."

15 months later, Sussana says she is now more open and knows that

things can get better. "I just thought I could either sit in my room and get more depressed or do something. I started the cooking program and swimming just to get me out of the house and all of that really helped."

And that was just the start. Sussana has since completed an on-site Certificate II in Business Administration and Certificate III in Micro Business offered through Common Ground Queensland's Employment, Training and Volunteering Program. Sussana explains that she almost quit, but the program staff found a solution for every excuse she came up with, so that in the end she had no choice but to keep going. "There was nothing really holding me back," she admits. "They were so patient and tolerant. It's genuine and you can tell."

Sussana is certain that the culture and environment at Brisbane Common Ground has played a big role in helping her to regain her enthusiasm and purpose.

"I understand people have issues and barriers, mental health and addictions, so I know that makes it difficult, but at least they're in an environment that when they're ready they'll have that support." Sussana adds, "Everyone here is amazing. It's just the little things along the way. If I was living somewhere else, I wouldn't get this support or have these opportunities, so I'm really grateful. I'm overwhelmed by it actually – it brings me to tears."

When you ask Sussana what's next, her eyes light up as she discusses her first steps towards setting up her own candle making business. She's already started to

"Everyone here is amazing. It's just the little things along the way."

explore local outlets to sell her products.

"I've chosen to call my business 'Hope Candles',

not because of the street name, but because

no matter where I end up I will always remember the people from Common Ground Queensland and Micah Projects that supported me so much – for giving me room to grieve and find something to look forward to; some hope for a better future." Sussana also talks about a desire to work with domestic violence services again. "I enjoy working with people – it helps me to forget about my own problems. Now I've got more energy for other people because I'm replenished – I'm filling up and I've got enough to give out."





“I am one of the original tenants and came here when the building first opened.”

An Independent Life

Malcolm's Story

Malcolm shares that Brisbane Common Ground is his first home away from home. “I lived with my adopted parents and my other four brothers up until I moved here four years ago,” says Malcolm. “I am one of the original tenants and came here when the building first opened.”

Malcolm explains that it was lucky that he got the place when he did, because the day after he had his first interview, his mum had a mini stroke. His parents ended up having to sell the family home and move into a retirement village. “Mum is 82 and Dad is 84,” shares Malcolm. “I like it here, but I’m still missing where I used to live in Moorooka,” he adds nostalgically. Even though he misses his old home, Malcolm does think that moving into his own place has given him more independence. “When I lived at home, mum did all the cooking. Here, I’ve learnt how to cook my own meals. I’ve also made some friends here.”

Malcolm says it is still easy for him to catch a train to work at Rocklea where he has worked as a Packer for Wesley Mission for the last 10 years. “I catch the train from South Brisbane. It takes about 20 minutes – it’s not that far.” Malcolm enjoys his work and interacting with his fellow co-workers. “There are about 60 or 90 of us working there, but not all at once. Some work five days, some work three, some work four, some work two and one guy works only one day.”

On weekends Malcolm looks forward to tenpin bowling every Saturday at Cannon Hill with his regular team, though he reckons he’s been off his game for the last couple of weeks. “I’ve just been worried about one

of my friend’s mother – she’s had an accident and is quite unwell. Her daughter and I went to primary school together.” But all in all, Malcolm says he’s a pretty experienced player and shares that his ten pin bowling has given him the opportunity to travel around the state to take part in the Disability League Competition.

Malcolm also likes to visit his parents at Sunnybank every few weeks. “Mum has a walker, so it’s a bit hard for her to get around. But Mum is the only one who cuts my beard,” Malcolm laughs. “She’s got an old pair of clippers, old shears. Three of my brothers have got beards and mum always trims them. So I need to visit my mum cause I need to get this done,” Malcolm says with a big grin as he tugs on his beard.





Community in Practice



Common Ground Canberra Opening



AHI Tenant Participation & Engagement Professional Practice Seminar

Community Connections

COMMON GROUND CANBERRA OPENING

Common Ground Queensland's CEO Sonya Keep and the CEO of Micah Projects, Karyn Walsh joined the festivities in Canberra on the 3rd July, 2015 to celebrate the official launch of Common Ground Canberra.

The new supportive housing development situated at Gungahlin comprises 40 one-bedroom units and provides accommodation to people who have been chronically homeless as well as people who are on low incomes. 24/7 security, counsellors and support workers are provided on-site.

The project was predominately funded by the ACT Government, the Commonwealth Government and The Snow Foundation. Community and business sponsorship and donations also played a significant role in bringing the project to life. Congratulations Common Ground Canberra – it's wonderful to see another great Supportive Housing initiative get off the ground!

COMMUNITY IN PRACTICE

The Common Ground Community of Practice is a group of operational staff members from both the tenancy management and support services, who represent all of the Common Ground organisations within Australia.

The peer support group meets via monthly teleconferences and annual get-togethers to discuss practice matters. Real examples of events that happen at the various buildings are used to open dialogue on effective response strategies and to inform the development of policies and procedures.

The group has provided a valuable resource for newer Common Grounds (Canberra being the latest addition) to prepare for launch and hone their processes in the early days. In May 2016, the group convened in Adelaide, to help celebrate their 10th anniversary and begin work on production of a common set of principles, policies and practices.

AHI TENANT PARTICIPATION & ENGAGEMENT PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE SEMINAR

We were honoured to be invited to share our story, 'Home, Community, Hope – Our Common Spaces Project' at the Australasian Housing Institute (AHI) Tenant Participation and Engagement Professional Practice Seminar held in Brisbane on 23rd June, 2016.

Brisbane Common Ground tenants, Ann O'Sullivan and Leona Wallace paired up with Common Ground Queensland's CEO, Sonya Keep and Project Officer, Rikki Pieters to take the audience on a placemaking journey which spanned two and a half years and culminated in the transformation of three under-purposed ground floor areas at Brisbane Common Ground.

Seminar participants were completely inspired by Ann and Leona's perspectives on how the project provided real opportunities for tenant participation, self-development and community connection. It also allowed us to pause and reflect on the collective determination and collaborative partnerships that made the project possible.



SOCIAL PROCUREMENT

In August last year, the Queensland Government held its very first Social Procurement Forum and Market Day at the Brisbane Exhibition and Convention Centre. Whilst we were unable to attend the Forum, tenants and staff from Common Ground Queensland hosted a market stall showcasing our function room business which at the time employed seven people.

Social procurement is when organisations or individuals who choose to buy a good or a service from a social enterprise, are essentially purchasing a social outcome. In the case of Common Ground Queensland, any organisation choosing to use our function rooms to hold their event or workshop, in essence, is providing employment opportunities for tenants at Brisbane Common Ground.

The Market Day gave us the opportunity to network with other social enterprises, find out what is happening at the cutting edge of social procurement and be part of this growing community.

BRISBANE OPEN HOUSE

Following the great response we received last year, Brisbane Common Ground opened its doors again to the general public as part of the 2015 Brisbane Open

House – Unlock Your City Program. We were privileged to join 90 other contemporary and historic buildings in this once a year event held in October.

Staff and tenants volunteered to become tour guides for the day and welcomed 61 curious visitors to the building. Many visitors positively commented on the building's design and amenity and left with a greater appreciation of the function Brisbane Common Ground provides within the community. We are always overwhelmed by the pride tenants display when they get an opportunity to share their home with others in the community. We extend a big thankyou to everyone who helped out on the day!

TENANT CHRISTMAS BBQ

On Monday 7th of December the Common Ground Queensland Board and Staff hosted a Christmas celebration for the tenants of Brisbane Common Ground.

The 13th floor garden and function room provided the perfect venue for more than 80 tenants, neighbours, volunteers, staff and supporters who enjoyed the festivities and fabulous food.

Common Ground Queensland would like to thank Phyllis Paterson (Micah Projects), who cooked a

magnificent BBQ dinner for all our guests and Mark Lightfoot, (Common Ground Queensland Director), who kindly donated the top quality steak.

It was a fantastic evening with great food, music and conversation.

ROTARY BBQ

On a sunny Saturday morning back in January, The Rotary Club of Forest Lake generously sponsored a sausage sizzle at Masters Springfield to raise money for our Colour, Community & Hope – Mosaic Sculpture Project. A few of us rolled out of bed and rolled up our sleeves to help out on the stall. It was a lot of fun and we were full of admiration for this group of people who consistently volunteer their time to make a difference in their communities!



Our Board

PETER PEARCE CHAIRMAN

Peter currently works as a General Manager in the aero-medical retrieval industry and as a non-executive director in the private acute health care industry. Peter has over 30 years' experience in not-for-profit governance with organisations working in employment, homelessness, housing, child and family support, acute health care and child care. Peter has worked in senior roles in aged care, health, politics, public service, business development and general management. Peter is a fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and has completed the advanced company director's diploma. Peter holds a Masters degree in Public Sector Management and other qualifications in social science and business. Peter has just recently completed a Masters in Ethics and Legal Studies.

MARK FENTON DEPUTY CHAIRMAN

Mark joined the Board in 2015 and is the chair of the Audit and

Risk Committee. Mark has more than 12 years of experience as a company director and has served on the Boards of Queensland Ballet Company and John Paul College Limited. Mark chaired the Arts Investment Advisory Board that provided strategic and funding advice to the Queensland government. Mark is a director for the UQ International House Foundation Limited and is a State Councillor for the Queensland Alliance for Mental Health Inc. Mark is a finance executive with over 20 years of experience, is a fellow with CPA Australia and a graduate member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. Mark has worked for businesses in the professional services, manufacturing, retirement living, retail and membership services sectors.

LINDA APELT

Linda has over thirty years of progressive experience in corporate environments including fourteen years as a Director-General of large, complex State Government human services organisations. Linda has

significant experience in leading large scale organisational changes and developing and implementing complex public policy reforms. Linda has managed service delivery systems and multibillion dollar budgets for service provision and capital works projects. Linda has served as a non-Executive Director on a range of Boards and has also chaired a range of national and State based Committees and Boards of Management as an Executive Director. Linda is an Adjunct Professor in the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences. Her research interests focus around political science and in particular, housing and disability policy reform in Australia. Professional qualifications include Graduate of the Australian Institute of Directors, Masters of Education Studies from the University of Queensland and post graduate qualifications in Counselling and a Bachelor of Education from Queensland University of Technology.

MARK LIGHTFOOT

Mark is a Partner in the Banking and Financial Services Group of

HWL Ebsworth. His clients include major Australian Banks and financial institutions. Mark's experience includes documenting and advising on the structuring of a range of debt finance transactions including property development and investment finance, construction and project financing, and equipment finance. Mark also has significant experience in securities enforcement and work-outs and advising financial institutions regarding pre-enforcement strategies. Mark regularly undertakes significant pre-lending reviews and security due diligence on behalf of his financier clients. In addition to acting for financial institutions, Mark also regularly acts for several corporate clients with respect to their project finance requirements.

JOANNA SPANJAARD

Joanna is a Director with Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu and is the national leader of their risk transformation solution. Joanna has over 20 years' experience in risk management developing, implementing and providing assurance over all aspects of risk management including risk frameworks, risk appetite, risk maturity diagnostics, risk governance, culture and operating models. Joanna has deep experience in many industry sectors including not for profits, health, public safety, energy, mining and water and regularly facilitates emerging, strategic and operational risk workshops with Boards and senior executives. Joanna is a mechanical engineer and is also a Board Member of the Industry Advisory Board, Electrical Engineering at the University of Queensland.

DEANNA NOTT

Deanna has extensive communication, marketing and public relations experience in both the private and public sectors.

Prior to launching her firm Wings Public Relations, specialising in media relations and government communication, Deanna gained a high profile in south-east Queensland and beyond as Logan City Council's head of media and communication. Deanna spent 20 years working as a communications specialist within the Department of Defence before her move into local government. Deanna is renowned for her passion, love of crafting the perfect pitch and devotion to excellence.

Deanna also serves as a Royal Australian Air Force Squadron Leader Reservist, joining in 1994. In November 2012 she was awarded an Australian Defence Force Silver Level Commendation for her efforts in promoting the benefits of Reserve service to the Australian community.

In September 2014, Deanna was appointed to the Public Relations Institute of Australia Queensland Council and is an active mentor and supporter of young PR specialists.

Deanna holds an undergraduate degree in Arts from Bond University, a Master of Defence Studies from the University of New South Wales and is also a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.



Our Team

The staff of Common Ground Queensland

From left: Brad Shepherd, Janice Walters, Deb Jones, Erin Smith, Rikki Pieters, Kathleen Burgen, Sonya Keep, Derek Taylor, Michael Murphy.

Common Ground Queensland team members not pictured above: Emma Dorge, Justin McDonald, Saleem Shahzad, Jai Houltham, Andrew Fausa, Joseph Paasi, Mohsin Ahmed, Raechelle Coaker, Anthony Hernandez, James Eria, James Hall, Dean Rogers, Lisa McComb and Nilima Harjal.

Thank You

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Brisbane Ekibin Lions Club
Deloitte
Department of Communities,
Child Safety and Disability Services
Department of Housing and Public Works
Grill'd Southbank
Grocon
Iridium Health
Lotus Place
Open Door Foundation
Queensland Community Foundation
Rotary Club of Forest Lake
Stephanie Outridge Field
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Partners and Affiliates

Australasian Housing Institute
Business South Bank
Clemente
Community Housing Providers Queensland
Griffith University
Grocon
Iridium Health
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Q Shelter
QCOSS
Queensland Police Services
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Employment, Training and Volunteering Project Supporters

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Sophie Marsh, Nia Training Faculty
Suited to Success
Wes Leake, Business Blessings
Yael Tsvieli Reis, For a Change Hypnotherapy and NLP

Join Us to Make a Difference

When you support Common Ground Queensland, you add your voice to our call to end homelessness.

Visit commongroundqld.org.au/supporters and become an official supporter of the Common Ground Queensland vision.

We'll keep you informed of all our projects and successes and invite you to share in our amazing journey.





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OFFICE 15 Hope St, South Brisbane, QLD, 4101 | POSTAL ADDRESS PO Box 3180, South Brisbane BC, QLD, 4101
EMAIL admin@commongroundqld.org.au | PHONE (07) 3370 8320 | WEBSITE www.commongroundqld.org.au