



common
ground

QUEENSLAND
ending homelessness

ANNUAL REPORT 2016 - 2017

HOME - COMMUNITY - HOPE

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.

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 onsite support provider offers a holistic, tenancy-focused service to those who require support to remain housed.

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.



Pictured: Lisa McComb

Background art exhibition 'Tangled Up In Blue' by John Doherty, Hope St Cafe.

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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.



Welcome to our
2016-2017
Common Ground
Queensland
Annual Report.

Chair's report

We complete this year in the knowledge that very soon into our next year Common Ground Queensland will mark the end of our fifth year in service at Brisbane Common Ground. That will be a major milestone for us as an organisation, for the people we serve at Brisbane Common Ground and for the Queensland Government, on whose behalf we are engaged to do what we do at Brisbane Common Ground. It will be a moment in our history that we would not have achieved without the diligent contributions of an array of partners, most notably Micah Projects, Deloitte, HWL Ebsworth Lawyers and Grocon. We are now moving prudently but with adventure into the next five years, finding new ways to serve in new and established partnerships but always remembering those partnerships that enabled our first five years and will always be embedded in our foundations.

The past year has seen more change for the Board with the departure of a most valued and long-serving member Linda Apelt. Linda served with Common Ground Queensland as Chair of the Board during a time of significant change; holding together the threads while ensuring necessary changes were made, always with skill,

equanimity and good grace and always with regard for the humanity of it all. Thank you Linda and please stay in touch.

We have been fortunate to secure the appointment of Michael Ryall, Arabella Douglas and Christine Grose and continue to enjoy the benefits of having Mark Lightfoot, Joanna Spanjaard, Deanna Nott and Mark Fenton as seasoned directors. May I express my gratitude to all of the Common Ground Queensland Directors, new and established, for their work in the past year. I am confident the Board is well placed to further Common Ground Queensland's vision to end homelessness.

In my last report for the 2015/16 year, I noted the Board had resolved to refresh a holding over approach to strategy for a year and to develop a new three to five-year strategic plan for commencement at the beginning of the 2016/17 year. We have managed to keep faith with this commitment, have completed our strategic review and developed a new three year plan which has been initiated at turn over to the new financial year. We are indebted to Giselle Hodgson of Deloitte for her pro bono assistance with completing this important work.



Our new plan focuses our efforts in the following three areas:

- **Purposeful Growth:** Growth that advances us towards our vision of ending homelessness.
- **Operational Efficacy:** Providing services, in partnership with others, that are sustainable, value for money and that genuinely meet the needs of those we serve so that we can say we are ending homelessness one person at a time.
- **Relational Integrity:** Creating partnerships and community support for the development and delivery of supportive housing solutions.

In the past 12 months, the Common Ground Queensland Board continued refining the quality and completeness of our governance systems and practice. For this year past we have focused particularly on our risk management 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 continues to equip us well to guide our service across the coming year.

In the past year and as we become more aware of the need for vigilance to maintain quality and relevance as our service ages, the Board has spent considerable time examining data on completed tenancies, tenant surveys and other indicators that might flag areas of need to change. In the course of that ongoing examination we have begun a deep dive into the practice and policy dimensions of our engagement with tenants living with addiction. With experience under our belt, we are keen to better understand the impacts that supportive housing has in effecting long-term change in the lives of our tenants. We are also invested in learning more about the patterns that may impede successful outcomes. We trust the deep dive will provide insight and direction on how we can moderate our services and practice accordingly.

It is mandatory for a Chairman's report to note the Board's thanks to the CEO and staff and so I do here but it's not a perfunctory thanks at all. In the wash up of the year past I have had the pleasure of conducting our CEO's annual performance review which included surveying Directors and internal and external stakeholders.

It is thoroughly gratifying to observe the esteem in which our CEO Sonya Keep is held by our partners in government, from other community service organisations and by staff. I also gratefully acknowledge the efforts of our staff at Common Ground Queensland, particularly that of Michael Murphy and his building management team, Erin Smith for her work supporting the Board and our committees and Rikki Pieters for her policy advice and analysis. The organisation's performance is a testament to you and your colleagues' efforts and diligence.

Now finally and as a repeat of sentiments expressed in my last report, I wish to state 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

On the eve of completing our fifth year of operations at Brisbane Common Ground, I am pleased to report that across our organisation and our partners, there is both a sense of achievement and a keen anticipation of new opportunities on the horizon. During this past year we have accomplished much on a number of elements of the Brisbane Common Ground initiative.

In terms of the building and amenity for our tenants, we realised the completion of the 'finishing touches' to the Brisbane Common Ground building. In September we celebrated the final stage of Our Common Spaces Project with the official opening of our public art installation, the mosaic sculpture that adorns the Hope Street entrance to the cross-block link to Fleet Lane. This was a significant achievement after two and a half years of planning, fundraising, collaboration and creation by our tenants, staff, supporters and community organisations to deliver the appealing backyard seating and garden area, the fitness centre and finally, the impressive mosaic sculpture.

In terms of the overall financial performance of Brisbane Common Ground as an innovative mixed-use supportive housing initiative, we have secured long-term leases with

two entities for the two ground floor commercial tenancies located in the building podium. These spaces will now provide services and benefits to the community through the Inclusive Health Centre and a social enterprise; the Hope St Café and will be operated by consortia with relevant expertise in community services, health and education. We welcome our commercial tenants and their contribution to delivering on the original vision for Brisbane Common Ground to be an 'asset for the whole community'.

As an organisation, Common Ground Queensland's long-term viability and capacity to contribute to the goal of ending homelessness was enhanced by the extension to 2021 of our lease of Brisbane Common Ground from the Department of Housing and Public Works. We are grateful to the department and the Queensland Government for the opportunity to continue to offer property and tenancy management in a supportive housing model, for their ongoing commitment to supportive housing and their confidence in our organisation.

As a service delivery organisation, it is vital that our services match and meet our tenants' needs and contribute to their wellbeing and quality of life. I am delighted to report

Thank you for
your interest in
Common Ground
Queensland,
our 2016-2017
Annual Report
and the work we
are doing to end
homelessness
through
supportive
housing.



that, in this year's annual survey of tenant satisfaction, the high levels of satisfaction in previous surveys has continued, with tenants reporting high levels of satisfaction with our staff, the amenity and safety of the building and their connection to Brisbane Common Ground as 'home'.

The development of a new strategic plan earlier this year was a valuable opportunity for our Board and staff to reflect on the journey so far, as well as to plan for the future. As our organisation has matured, we have developed significant expertise in delivering supportive housing, created systems and processes to underpin a quality service to tenants and strengthened our commitment to working in partnership to deliver more sustainable and cost-effective solutions to ending homelessness. Common Ground Queensland is now well placed to move into its next phase and our new strategic plan challenges us to deliver on the growth potential of our organisation.

Our achievements to date and our confidence in the future are a direct reflection of the passion, skills and commitment of the people involved in and with our organisation and the alignment of our collective values. Our commitment to our mission is championed by our Board of Directors who work in a voluntary capacity to govern and guide our organisation while also providing pro bono advice

and resources to support the work of our staff. I thank them for their expertise and contribution. In particular I extend heartfelt gratitude to Board Chair Peter Pearce who so generously makes himself available and consistently offers me considered, practical and intelligent advice.

Our ability to develop and deliver on our expertise in supportive housing reflects to a great extent our capacity to attract and retain high calibre staff. At 30 June 2017, after five years of operations, the average term of service in our tenancy and property management team is 4.2 years and 3.3 years for our maintenance team. Our in-house concierge team was only established in August 2014 and currently reports two years average length of service. Our staffing team is complemented by seven tenants who work as part of our maintenance and function room management teams. The experience, diversity and continuity of our staffing along with favourable results in staff engagement survey indicate a high level of commitment, cohesion and satisfaction that flows through into our work with tenants and is evidenced in the high levels of tenant satisfaction.

The positive outcomes for tenants are also jointly attributable to the work of our supportive housing partner Micah Projects. I would like to thank their Supportive Housing team for the expertise and commitment they bring

to Brisbane Common Ground. Iridium Health has continued to provide personalised fitness coaching to our tenants on a pro bono basis this year. We are very grateful to Tim Douge for continuing to offer this wonderful service to our tenants.

The most important indicator of success is our ability to offer permanent, safe and affordable homes to our tenants. It is the real life stories that demonstrate most clearly the simple and extensive range of benefits that many of us take for granted. In this year's report we are showcasing the stories of several long term tenants who are valued members of our community. They have kindly offered to share with us what home means to them and how they have benefited from living at Brisbane Common Ground. I would like to thank them and all of our tenants for the community they have created.

For me it is a privilege to work alongside people who inspire me to serve people who inspire us all. I hope you enjoy reading our 2016/17 Annual Report and that you will feel inspired to support us in our goal to end homelessness.

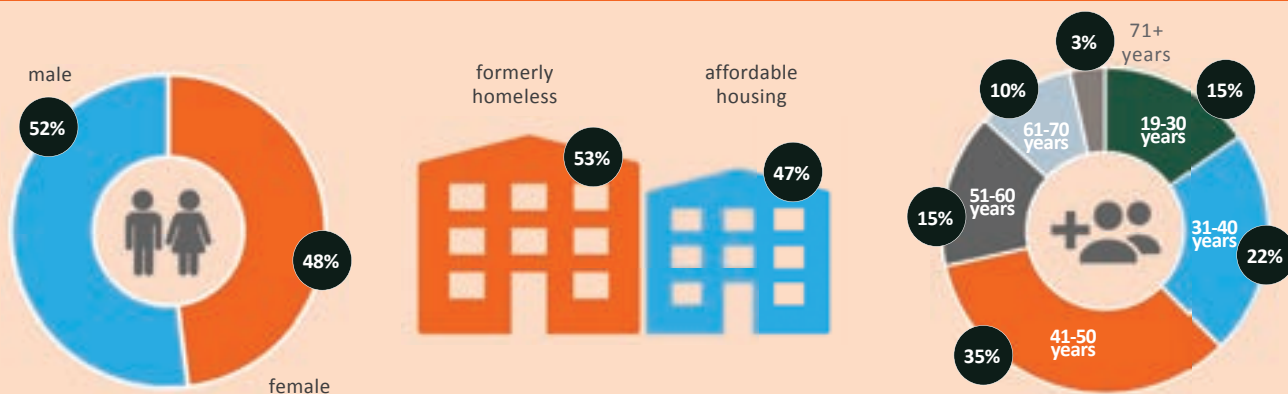
Sonya Keep
CEO
Common Ground Queensland Ltd

Year of achievement

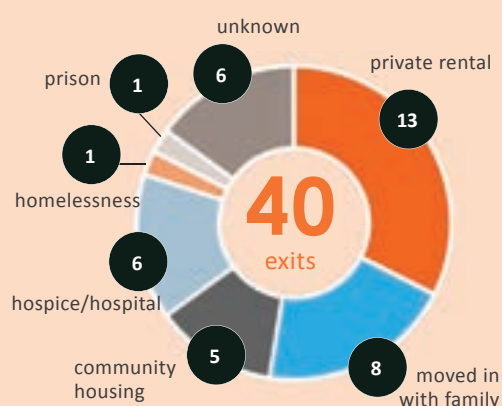
Key performance indicators

Tenancy Statistics	Target	2016/17	2015/16
Bad Debts	<1.5%	0.25%	0.13%
Rent Foregone	<4%	1.84%	0.24%
Vacancy Rate	<5%	2.38%	0.51%
Uncollected Rent	<5%	0.14%	0.09%
Eviction Rate	<7%	3.31%	3.4%
Evictions to Homelessness	0	0	-

Our tenants as at 30 June 2017



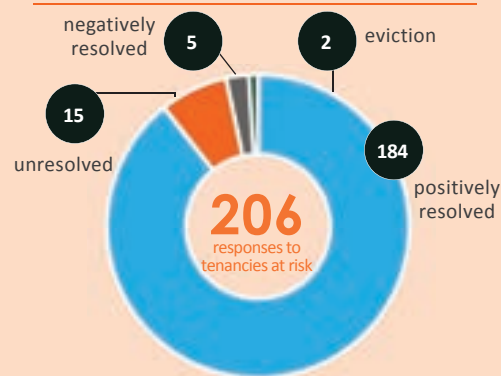
Tenant exits in 2016/17



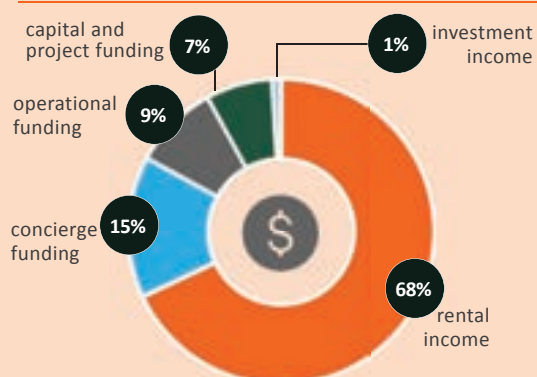
22 months

average length of stay for tenants who have exited

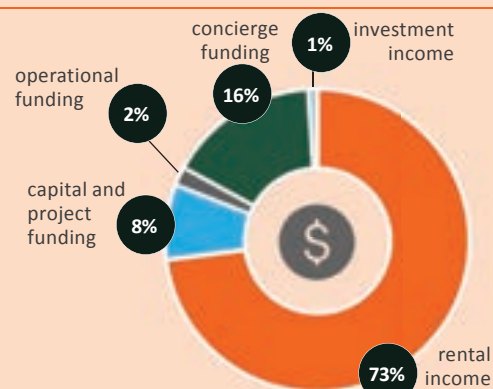
Tenancies at risk



Income as at 30 June 2017



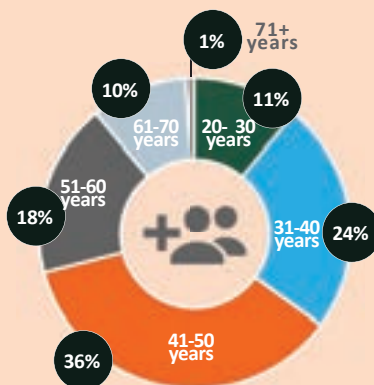
Income as at 30 June 2016



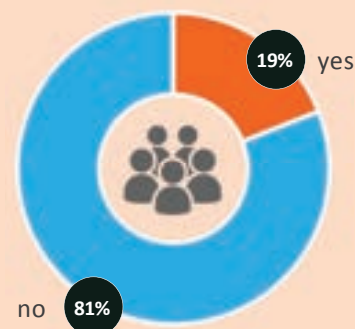
2016-2017 tenant satisfaction survey



Age demographic



Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander



Housing

I feel Brisbane Common Ground is my home



I am satisfied with my housing



I am satisfied with the layout of my unit



I am satisfied with the safety at Brisbane Common Ground



Legend agree/yes neutral disagree/no

Staffing

I am treated with respect and dignity by Common Ground Queensland Staff



Common Ground Queensland concierge staff provide a safe environment



Common Ground Queensland concierge staff provide a welcoming environment



I am treated with respect and dignity by maintenance staff and tradespeople

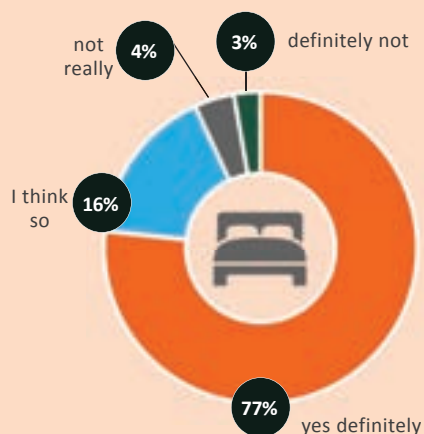


I am satisfied with the concierge service

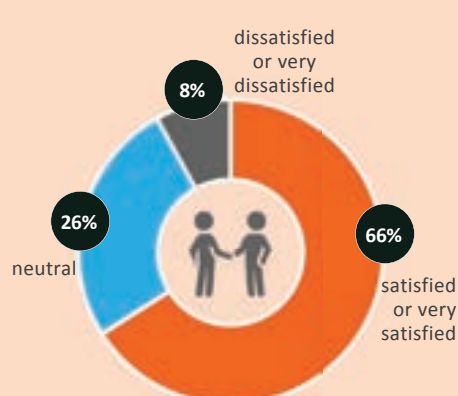


Legend agree/yes neutral disagree/no

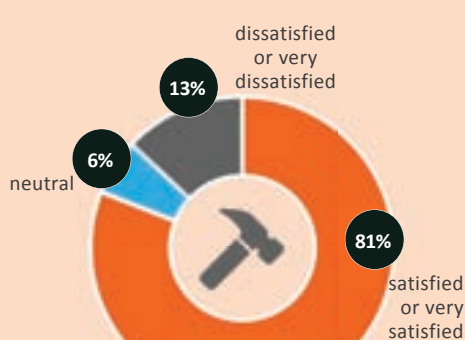
I feel settled in my housing at Brisbane Common Ground



Other tenants are good neighbours



I am satisfied with the responses to maintenance





Colour, community & hope

Mosaic opening

We were thrilled to have so many friends, supporters and tenants help us celebrate the official opening of our Colour, Community & Hope Mosaic Sculpture in September last year.

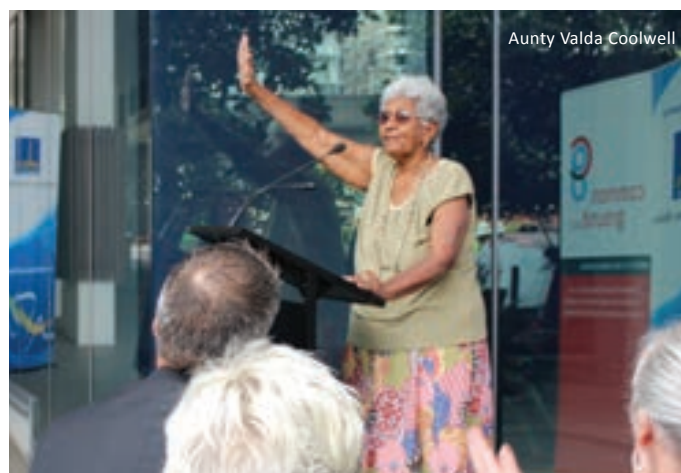
Over 5000 handmade tiles and glass mosaics were used to create the colourful and engaging artwork that pays tribute to the Kurilpa area's connection with the Brisbane River and the diversity of the Brisbane Common Ground community.

Councillor Matthew Bourke, Chairman of Lifestyle and Community Services officiated at the opening. The sculpture was unveiled by Councillor Bourke, Carla Reading (Director Creative Arts and Digital Design – TAFE Queensland Brisbane), Stephanie Outridge Field (lead artistic manager), Ann O'Sullivan (lead tenant artist) and Peter Pearce (Common Ground Queensland Chairman). Acknowledgement of Country was warmly delivered by Aunty Valda Coolwell.

The project was kick-started with funding by Brisbane City Council's Suburban Crime Prevention Grant Program. Workshop facilities and kilns were generously offered by TAFE Queensland Brisbane. Community sponsors including Brisbane Ekibin Lions Club, Rotary Forest Lake, Grill'd Southbank, Open Door Foundation and Stephanie Outridge Field added their support along the way.

The sculpture however, would not have come to fruition without the fantastic work and collaboration between artistic managers Stephanie Outridge Field and John Fitz-Walter, tenant artists, Lotus Place, TAFE Queensland Brisbane students, CeramicaMandala, Common Ground Queensland staff and members of the general public. The finished piece has brought new life into the public walkway, adding a splash of colour and vibrancy.

"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"! says Rikki Pieters, Project Officer, Common Ground Queensland.



Aunty Valda Coolwell





Left to right: Ann O'Sullivan and Cheryl Desmarais

Odd fish project

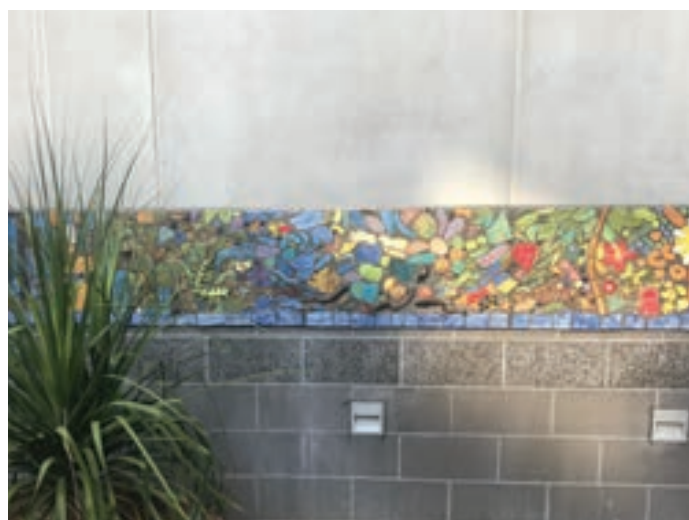
Tiles, tiles and more tiles.

This tenant-led project is a natural follow-on from the Colour, Community & Hope Mosaic Sculpture. The question on everyone's lips was ... "What are we going to do with all of these leftover tiles"? The solution was inevitable – let's do another mosaic!

A small group of tenants initially came together to brainstorm ideas and dreamt up the concept of creating an interconnected mosaic panel series for the backyard area. They invited John-Fitz-Walter, Micah Projects Art Facilitator to share the adventure. Since then, other tenants have joined in along the way. The Odd Fish Project started to take shape over the months with each odd tile finding a place in the emerging landscape that flows from the city, to the sea, to the trees. As the viewer journeys through each scene they are invited to explore their feelings, memories and experiences of city life, nature and the interplay between the two. Every panel holds its own beauty; the structure and symmetry of built form, the myriad of colour and diversity of aquatic life, the abundance and fertility of flowers and trees under a radiant sun, the twisting river that ribbons around the Kurilpa Peninsula and binds the scenes together.

Each artist has added their own signature to the project. Ann's gold squares capture the sun reflecting off high rise windows. Martin's crystal clear marbles are interspersed like water droplets. "We've grouped similar tiles together to create communities," shares John. "There's a community of jellyfish, a community of odd fish, a community of birds. Things seem to work better in communities. We've also included words like happiness and energy to add to the narrative".

The mosaic has been recently installed in the backyard area.





A home for me and Charlotte

Tanya's story

Tanya candidly shares that she was escaping domestic violence before she moved into Brisbane Common Ground. With the help of the 139 Club, she was able to secure safe accommodation in the building and settle into a new life. "I moved into a small unit in September, 2012 with my cat, Charlotte," says Tanya. "I'd be silly to move from here. I now have a larger studio apartment which suits me better. I have a lot of friends here and the rent's quite reasonable. A lot of the apartments around here are expensive and won't let you have pets, so I wouldn't be allowed to have Charlotte".

Tanya's love of cats is apparent. "I've always had a cat," says Tanya. "I had another cat called Katrina, but she was unwell and passed away. I found Charlotte in a pet shop. She's a black ragdoll cross. Before I moved in, they reassured me I could have a cat. I'm a lot happier when I have a cat. It helps with my depression". Tanya explains that she just started going to the Cat Café in Annerley. "It's easy for me to catch a bus there," she states. "The Cat Café has about eight cats and even though I have my own cat, I like spending time talking to other cats. It's my hobby," she grins. "They all have their own character and their own sense of humour".

Tanya says she also values the friendships she's formed at Brisbane Common Ground. "We catch up for coffee and dinner when we're not too busy". Even though Tanya admits it's still easy for her to get intimidated by certain people, she sticks with the friends in the building she knows and feels safe with. "I've made a lot of bad choices," says Tanya. "But my good friend says she's proud of me that I've got my own place and don't live with ratbags anymore".

Most importantly Tanya has created a home for herself and Charlotte. Her walls are decorated with photos that remind her of meaningful connections in her life. "Photos have always been important to me ever since I was three years old," she reflects. "I have photos of all my friends in the building, good memories, people that used to live in the building and animals that have passed away or I've had to give away. They're my life".





Left to right: Rosanne Haggerty and Sonya Keep

Rosanne Haggerty's visit

Common Ground Queensland hosted an afternoon tea with Rosanne Haggerty, the President and CEO of US-based Community Solutions during her Brisbane visit to support the launch of the 500 Lives, 500 Homes initiative; 'Housing First Roadmap to Ending Homelessness'.

Rosanne is an internationally recognised leader in the development of supportive housing and research-based practices that end homelessness and is the pioneer of the successful New York City Common Ground supportive housing model upon which Brisbane Common Ground is based.

Rosanne first visited Brisbane Common Ground in 2011 while the building was still under construction. So, you can imagine, we were very excited to be able to share our progress five years on.

During her visit, Rosanne had the opportunity to meet with a number of Brisbane Common Ground tenants and to hear firsthand the difference that safe, secure and affordable housing has made in their lives. Tenants expressed their appreciation through song, poetry and artwork. It was a heartfelt afternoon and a wonderful reminder of the journey that we have all taken to come this far.

"Common Ground Queensland has taken the strongest elements of our original supportive housing model and improved on them. The beautiful design of the Hope Street building, the attentive management, outstanding support services provided by Micah Projects, exciting partnerships with local institutions and the deep commitment of residents to creating a strong community show what's possible when leaders come together to end homelessness".

Rosanne Haggerty
President & CEO Community Solutions
Founder, Common Ground

Housing first: A roadmap to ending homelessness in Brisbane

Launched in August 2016, 'Housing First: A roadmap to ending homelessness in Brisbane' (the Roadmap) builds on the successful work undertaken by the Brisbane community through 500 Lives 500 Homes; a campaign launched in 2014 to house 500 homeless or vulnerably housed families and individuals over three years.

Underpinned by the Housing First framework, the Roadmap outlines five (5) strategies to end homelessness:

1. Know who's homeless and what they need;
2. Implement a coordinated entry system;
3. Line up supply;
4. Keep people housed; and
5. Integrate healthcare and include Mental Health.

Common Ground Queensland is proud to be a partner in the 500 Lives 500 Homes campaign and is committed to working collaboratively to break the cycle of homelessness for families, young people and adults in our community. As at March 2017, the campaign has assisted 207 families and 373 people to end their homelessness (580 households) and has achieved it's collective goal by 100%.

Work experience with Common Ground Queensland

As part of completing my Bachelor of Business degree at CQ University in Rockhampton, I had the opportunity to engage in work experience. It was Common Ground Queensland's vision of working to create supportive housing solutions to end homelessness that cemented my decision to temporarily move to Brisbane for a four week placement.

During my time with Common Ground Queensland, I worked with employees and tenants to raise the organisation's public profile through social media presence and engagement. My time with Common Ground Queensland provided me with an insight into public relations and media and communications work. It also exposed me to the wonderful work being carried out by the organisation. I have been lucky enough since the completion of my work experience to continue working with Common Ground Queensland as their Media Officer.



A new groove

Adrian's story

This year marks five years since Adrian moved into Brisbane Common Ground, making him one of our original tenants. Adrian first heard about Brisbane Common Ground through a friend. At the time Adrian was working in the entertainment industry as a musician and was looking for a place to live. He'd previously owned his own apartment, but due to unavoidable hardship he'd forfeited it and was in temporary accommodation. "I wasn't homeless from street level," he explains. "It was more like a low to middle class, low income situation. I was attracted to the features of Brisbane Common Ground," he says. "I think it's the safest place I have ever lived. I was also attracted to the melting pot of housing local people and artists who have contributed to the local fabric of society". Since moving in Adrian has transitioned from the music industry to full time work. "I live on a really good floor and I think I have really stabilised through the social environment of living in this building and its support network," he smiles.





A warm return

Vivian's story

Vivian first moved into Brisbane Common Ground towards the end of 2012 but only stayed for a year. He says even though he made some good friends in the building, he had to leave to look after his mum when she got sick. Vivian returned to Brisbane Common Ground for the second time about six months ago. He says he came back because his mum had decided to live in Townsville with family and everyone was missing him at Brisbane Common Ground. He recounts he received a warm welcome when he moved back in. "They said, Uncle Viv you're back! This time don't leave – stay," laughs Vivian.

Vivian tells a good yarn. His storytelling weaves backwards and forwards through his life, a rich tapestry of past, present and times to come. One story merges into the next; flashbacks to his youth, footy clubs and gridiron glory, the importance of family, painting, music, crocodile hunting up north, people he's loved and lost along the way, encounters with the spirit world and things unknown.

A Bundjalung man, Vivian says he's lived locally for a long time. "Since I was a baby boy," he shares. "I lived near Lang Park until I lost my grandparents in the 90s. Did you know, there used to be a graveyard there, before it turned into Lang Park? On the football field. Sometimes you can feel the hands coming out," he says with a chill in his voice.

Vivian started playing football as a teenager, but moved down south to play gridiron when he was about 17. He says after he snapped one of his cousin's kneecaps on the field, he didn't want to play anymore. "They were all big fellas and I was only a small fella, but I was too fast for them," he recalls. "They said, why don't you tackle cuz? I said, nah...I just don't wanna hurt no one".

Vivian reckons now he's back at Brisbane Common Ground, it's time for him to take it easy and look after his health. He says he can't play the didgeridoo anymore because of a throat injury and he needs to take medication for his arthritis and other complaints. But he's keen to keep his art going and is talking with a few of the uncles and brothers in the building about painting a large canvas together. "I told mum I'm gonna stay for as long as I can," he grins.

*"They said, Uncle Viv
you're back! This time
don't leave – stay,"*





Left to right: Nilima Harjal, Kellie Williams, Tim Douge (Iridium Health) and Brendon Donohue

Fresh faces for Rise @ Common Ground

The efforts from participants at the Rise @ Common Ground gym this year can be summarised in three words - Youth, Energy and Ownership.

Over the past year, we have engaged with a number of exercise physiology students from the Queensland University of Technology (QUT). Accredited Exercise Physiologists are qualified to help people manage long term health conditions and disabilities through the prescription of exercise. Given the complex needs and histories of some Common Ground tenants, the gym is often the ideal environment to foster positive habits that provide long term benefits. As a profession, exercise physiology aims to increase the self-management skills of an individual so they can live their life to the fullest without health restrictions.

Many tenants tried the gym during its first year of operation. Often it was their first time in such a facility. Interestingly, several tenants have transitioned from using the gym as a 'healthy novelty' to taking ownership of the goals and outcomes of their fitness programs. This has seen collaboration with General Practitioners, specialists and other allied health professionals and a strong commitment of each participant to their health. The energetic and supportive environment the gym provides is fostered by the tenants who encourage each other to achieve their goals no matter how big or small. This has been particularly inspiring for a number of new Brisbane Common Ground tenants who made their way down to the gym.

Our students have been particularly helpful and found the experience very beneficial for their own development not to mention being favourites with the residents. Their enthusiasm and encouragement has brought a fresh level of interest from many of our regular gym goers.

Brent from QUT says:

"Brisbane Common Ground is a great inclusive environment that strives to provide care to those that need it. The gym

makes a huge difference from a social standpoint as well as contributing to physical and mental health".

There are some standout performers this year who have taken big strides to improve their health. Kellie is our most dedicated attendee. Using exercise, Kellie has progressed to a point where her arthritis no longer stops her from socialising and enjoying her hobbies. She calls the gym her safe place and always leaves with a smile.

Nilima has made a concerted effort this year to improve her mobility and strength to stay independent and youthful. She now has an exercise program loaded onto her phone so she can stay active wherever she goes.

A number of other tenants have used the gym from a rehabilitation perspective to recover from surgeries, injury and even chemotherapy.

Rick from QUT says:

"Brisbane Common Ground and its healthcare connections are a vital part of both the involved and outlying community. Interaction in a positive and supportive environment did wonders for each person I personally interacted with and I hope it continues to stand strong and provide a helping hand to those that need it".

In combination with the newly added Inclusive Health Clinic we are sure that the gym will continue to be an energetic hub for community wellbeing.

by Tim Douge, Director,
Iridium Health.



Griffith University research study

Earlier this year, researchers from Griffith University completed a research study that investigated the impact of group fitness intervention on wellbeing of individuals who have experienced homelessness or disadvantage. The study found that the Rise @ Common Ground exercise initiative was effective in improving participants' physical, psychological and social wellbeing.

The study used a two group, non-randomised pre-test/post-test design using both quantitative and qualitative methods to compare findings between intervention participants (10 tenants) and those who did not attend exercise sessions (comparison group) (10 tenants). Of the total 20 participants, seven were male and 13 were female. Ages ranged between 18 and 69 with a mean range of 42 years.

Despite the small sample size, the quantitative research component demonstrated more positive changes in the participant group for measured outcomes, such as general wellbeing, psychological and social wellbeing, self-efficacy and self-esteem. The greatest difference in change between the two conditions was noted for self-esteem, which supports the large body of research that claims self-esteem levels are frequently higher for individuals who engage in exercise.

Qualitative interview responses revealed that generally participants from the intervention group felt positive about the exercise sessions. Some placed value on the physical

health benefits, some enjoyed the social connectedness elements and others saw it as a chance to rehabilitate and grow stronger mentally and spiritually. Participants expressed appreciation for the proximity of the fitness facility and commented that the sessions provided them with a focus and something to do. Participants also commented on the pride they took in the gym space.

Overall the findings support that group exercise increases general wellbeing levels and can improve the quality of life for individuals who have experienced homelessness or disadvantage.

The research has informed the Master Thesis submission prepared by Melanie Plugge for the award of the Master of International Public Health at Griffith University.

Participant Quotes

"I just love going to the gym, that's all. It makes me feel good about myself".

"I do feel refreshed (after). I feel a sense of wellbeing. It made me feel like I could do it".

"It's an opportunity to move, get happy, grow stronger, to grow more resilient against the outside world and it was instrumental for me getting my life back. It's helped me rediscover how great I felt when I was in my 20s and exercising".

Getting stronger everyday by Kellie Williams

I have been going to the gym every morning and afternoon since it first opened two years ago.

When I first started going to the gym, the very first exercise I was doing was 'thumb to finger touches', which, I can now say, are pretty easy.

I remember when I started going to the gym I found it difficult to do the exercise due to having rheumatoid arthritis.

But now that I am getting stronger, I am able to do harder exercises.

Tim has really helped me to improve my health and get stronger everyday.



Tim Douge (Iridium Health) and Kellie Williams



Moving forward

Lisa's story

2017 marks Lisa's fifth year at Brisbane Common Ground.

"I was in rehab for alcohol abuse and I was very fortunate that there was a nurse there that was quite proactive in helping people find places. She helped me to apply," says Lisa. "I was working part-time at the rehab (facility) as a cook. They were putting pressure on me to leave, as I'd been there about six months, but I had nowhere to go. So I virtually would have been homeless".

Lisa says she was really impressed with the quality of the building and her unit when she came for her first inspection. "It was brand new, with a great view of the river. It looked nice and modern and finished and I moved in a few days after that," she reflects.

Lisa is now in her final year of a Bachelor of Marine Science and Management degree.

"When I moved in here, I continued working as a cook at the rehab. I started doing runs and things like that, like Mother's Day Classics and I'm doing my first half marathon this August. I think exercise was a good outlet for my thoughts and to get rid of some pent up energy. It was really strange...

in 2013, the year after I moved in I looked into some dive courses. I had a taste of diving up in Cairns once. They had a payment plan, so I just paid it off as I went along. I fell in love with the underwater world. I've always had a love for the ocean. I met a girl on a trip who was studying and she said 'You should do it'. So I did! I applied two weeks before the applications closed. I had a bit of help and I got in and here I am nearly finished," says Lisa proudly.

"Actually, the diving taught me to breathe," says Lisa. "People kept saying to me 'Just do breathing. Breathe in. Breathe out'. I couldn't do it. But when you get down there and you're fumbling and things aren't working you just breathe in, breathe out really slowly and everything calms and off you go and you're all relaxed".

Lisa shares that she's learnt a lot in her course about how things are connected. "The land, the sea, the microscopic world, the mangroves and their importance, the wetlands," she lists. "It makes you more aware of when people are building stuff. You think oh my God, they're destroying more things that we'll need".

Lisa's studies have also given her direct exposure to the global impacts of marine pollution and the consequences it has on a range of species, including those that make up our food chain. Lisa has participated in research projects at North Stradbroke Island, Coffs Harbour National Marine Science Centre and Heron Island. Earlier this year she jumped at the life-changing opportunity to work alongside locals in Bali to support the implementation of a sustainable coral reef management project.

"I applied for a scholarship to develop a training program for a marine debris survey. I was over there for three weeks. We did the baseline for the very first sub-tidal marine debris survey using 25-metre long transects," informs Lisa. "The villagers used to do cyanide fishing and then someone showed them a different way because the coral was dying and a lot of fish died before they could be exported. They now use nets. They've also developed a program for coral cultivation; growing coral from nubs," she adds.

Lisa is particularly fascinated by the life cycles of coral reefs and is keen to learn more about



these fragile ecosystems. “We were fortunate enough to see coral spawn in the research tanks on Heron Island. It’s very exciting,” says Lisa enthusiastically. “It’s like an orange colour, it’s very oily because they’re released in their egg and sperm sacks. Around about the seventh day they’re ready to settle on the substrate and start growing if they don’t die when they’re washed away by the currents”. Lisa is excited about returning to Heron Island in the near future to continue to assist with the coral research project.

Lisa says Brisbane Common Ground has given her a place to find her feet. “It’s given me an independence, a solid ground to stand on, a place to come home to. No one can bother me here. I can do my own thing. I don’t have to share a bathroom or anything with anybody else. There’s a lot to be said for independent living and the freedom to do your own thing and not to be harassed by anybody else. It’s safe,” says Lisa with a catch in her throat.



Lisa observes that the Brisbane Common Ground community has stabilised over the years. “I think that people have

this feeling of independence and it boosts self-esteem. You walk into this lovely building that’s right by the river. Southbank is your backyard. I mean, the location is absolutely amazing. I think there’s a quality of lifestyle that actually helps settle people down,” she says.

“Home is really important. Signing your guests in can be a little bit hard, but you understand why and any good friend will understand too. If they don’t want to come here because they don’t want to be signed in, then they’re not worthy of being your friend as far as I’m concerned,” jokes Lisa.

Lisa feels that having a stable foundation and a sense of security has helped her to step into her life and build on her successes. “It’s a major security,” says Lisa. “I’ve taken small steps and if I’ve taken a step too far and I get a bit overwhelmed, then I’ll step back a bit. But I cannot and I won’t go backwards; not anymore,” she adds determinedly. “My life is way too good...too good. My family life. My two girls, they look up to me. I’m in a good place”.

With her course nearing completion, Lisa has started to think about her next steps. “I graduate in December. I’d like to go on and do an Honours and maybe get my PHD. It’s just given me so much experience. Even though I still doubt myself and get scared to take

the next step somehow I find myself doing it and landing on my feet and getting opportunities and grabbing hold of them and just doing it,” says Lisa. “I don’t know what’s going to happen. I just have to trust that I’m good within myself and I’m happy and that if I’m doing what I’m loving, then everything’s going to work out fine. If I could tell anybody anything, I’d say just keep doing things and stumble across what you like and just keep doing it, because then you find your happiness and you find who you are. That’s how it works for me”.

“It’s given me an independence, a solid ground to stand on, a place to come home to.”



A marvel-lous life

Scott's story

Scott started calling Brisbane Common Ground home in January 2013. "I used to live in a hostel. I was there for years," Scott recalls. "The hostel owner wasn't very nice and used to swear at people and the guy I was sharing a room with was always wearing my clothes," he adds. Scott says his support worker helped him to make the move and his aunty helped him to fill in all the forms.

Scott now enjoys the freedom of having his own home. "I can invite my friends over," he says proudly. He also has a safe place to keep his extensive collection of "Marvel" paraphernalia including figurines, posters, fridge magnets and comic books. Scott's enthusiasm for superheroes is infectious and he's always keen to chat about the most recent addition to his collection. "I've just got a new Hellboy poster which I've put up and my friend just gave me a Spiderman poster. I also bought a new Ironman hat which is waterproof. I've got a Batman poster and a Joker poster," boasts Scott. "But Iron Man is my favourite".

Scott is keen to point out that he never misses an opportunity to catch the latest "Marvel" blockbuster on the big screen. "I'm going with my brother to see the new Spiderman movie this weekend. I don't want to miss out on that," he states with conviction.

But there's more to Scott than just superheroes and comic books. During the week, Scott's work at the Wesley Mission Packaging Centre keeps him busy. "I've been working there 10 years," says Scott. "I pack hairpins and other things. I wash cars. That's hard work," he laughs.

Though Scott likes his work, it's the weekends he really looks forward to. "I go to Movie World or Dreamworld every second weekend, I've got an annual pass for Dreamworld," says Scott excitedly. "I went to Dreamworld last weekend with my friend.

I went on the dodgem cars three times, the vintage train and saw the animals and I bought a Star Wars hat".

Scott's good-natured attitude and zest for life is an inspiration to us all.



"I can invite my friends over."



Hope Street Café

Welcome to our commercial tenants

Hope Street Café

The Hope Street Café is a not-for-profit social enterprise run by Micah Projects in partnership with TAFE Queensland.

The Hope Street Café is a community hub encouraging community connection and meaningful engagement through creative arts exhibitions and social inclusion events. We provide opportunities for people facing significant barriers to employment to learn new skills and gain hands-on experience in the hospitality industry before building supported pathways to employment and a sustainable livelihood.

Why not drop in for a delicious meal, coffee or organic tea? Or join us for a local art show, live music performance or craft activity. We have spaces for meetings and functions to cater for any event, simply call us to make a booking.

Please go to www.hopestreetcafe.com.au to see how you can eat and drink, connect and create, in support of a diverse and inclusive local neighbourhood.

Hope Street Café

Shop 1, 15 Hope Street, South Brisbane Q 4101
0437 972 472
info@hopestreetcafe.com.au
www.hopestreetcafe.com.au

Opening Hours:

Monday – Saturday | 5:30am – 2:00pm
Sunday | 8:00am – 1:00pm

Inclusive Health Clinic

The Inclusive Health Clinic is committed to ensuring that every person, regardless of their circumstances, has access to quality physical, dental, mental health and holistic healthcare services irrespective of their ability to pay.

The Inclusive Health Clinic has been developed in collaboration with partners but it is operated by a new not-for-profit company; Inclusive Health Partnerships Ltd which is a social enterprise joint venture between Micah Projects and The Buddhist Compassion Relief Tzu Chi Foundation.

The initial opening of the Inclusive Health Clinic has only been made possible through innovative partnerships which have developed over a ten year period under the umbrella of Inclusive Health Partnerships.

The partners are:

- Mater Misericordiae Ltd
- St Vincent's Private Hospital, Brisbane
- The Buddhist Compassion Relief Tzu Chi Foundation
- Micah Projects

To make an appointment please contact the Inclusive Health Clinic.

Inclusive Health Clinic

Shop 2 & 3, 15 Hope Street, South Brisbane Q 4101
07 3013 6050
PO Box 3449, South Brisbane Q 4101
admin@inclusivehealthclinic.org.au
www.inclusivehealthclinic.org.au



Maintenance Team

Back left to right: Mohsin Ahmed, Justin Layfield and Michael Murphy
Front left to right: Kathleen Burgen, Joseph Moji and Wendy Marsh

Tenant employment became a feature of Common Ground Queensland's staffing model in 2015 in response to the growing demand for our function room hire.

Tenant employment initiative

Two years on, Common Ground Queensland's in-house tenant employment initiative is well and truly embedded at Brisbane Common Ground and has expanded to include maintenance roles.

"We currently employ seven tenants to help us resource operations within the building," says Common Ground Queensland Administration Manager, Erin Smith. "Four team members to support the function room hire and three on our maintenance crew".

"In actual fact, you can go right back to the start," recalls Common Ground Queensland Operations Manager, Michael Murphy. "A number of tenants used to volunteer in the building and employment was a natural progression as opportunities became available".

"In the function rooms, we had Dean Rogers start with us back in October 2013. He was a volunteer," adds Erin. "Dean was doing some small set ups and pack downs and then as the function rooms started to get busier we had to look at how we could resource the growth. Employing tenants was our preference as we saw it as a win-win situation. We were able to provide more service to the

function rooms and tenants were able to pick up some casual work and gain experience".

Michael sees that there are multiple benefits to employing tenants. "Obviously the tenants receive an income, but they also have a sense of responsibility and take pride in the building. They become part of the team".

Brisbane Common Ground tenant, Lisa McComb says she has benefited enormously from being part of the Function Room Hire Team. "It's non-disruptive to my studies, it's convenient and flexible and the staff are great to work with".

This general sentiment is shared by Dean. "I started volunteering in the function rooms and then moved to employment in April 2015 when the business started to build. That was a good change. I enjoy the extra money, having something to do and being able to work close to home".

Friendships and support on the job are what Wendy Marsh values most. Wendy recently transitioned from an external cleaning contract with SEED Park and Property Maintenance to become a permanent member of our in-house maintenance team.



Function Team
Left to right: Nilima Harjal, Lisa McComb, Erin Smith, Dean Rogers and Catherine Rietberg

"I enjoy working with my colleague, Kathleen Burgen and Common Ground Queensland are very supportive. My job gives me something to look forward to," says Wendy.

Tenant co-worker, Justin Layfield says he also values being part of the Common Ground Queensland team. "I enjoy all aspects of the job," shares Justin, "But I enjoy working with the maintenance staff and the office team most of all".

On a candid note, our newest function room employee, Cate Rietberg says she's thankful for the ability to participate. "Working keeps the depression at bay and sometimes shoots it dead. I have worked on and off for years navigating hard times and

mental illness and my life is always better and more fun when I'm busy working," admits Cate. "I don't have to travel far to be on-site," she laughs. "Short shifts are a blessing".

For Nilima Harjal, the highlight of working in the Function Room is preparing her mindset before a shift. "I am reminded of Benjamin Franklin's saying... "By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail," quotes Nilima. "It's a great learning experience. I've learnt a lot. I have learnt something everytime I do a shift. I even learn from my mistakes," grins Nilima.

Erin says that healthy boundaries ensure the arrangement works well. "We are keenly aware of the importance of keeping employment-

related matters and tenancy and property related matters separate," assures Erin. "At the same time we foster a sense of inclusion and team building. It's a fine balance, but one we've been able to successfully navigate. As an employer, we have developed flexible strategies to support our tenant employees to become productive and valued members of our team".

"Learning about tenants' life stories and building rapport on the job gives me a huge sense of satisfaction," says Common Ground Queensland Maintenance Supervisor, Kathleen Burgen. "Working together works on so many levels".

Building information

909

Maintenance tasks

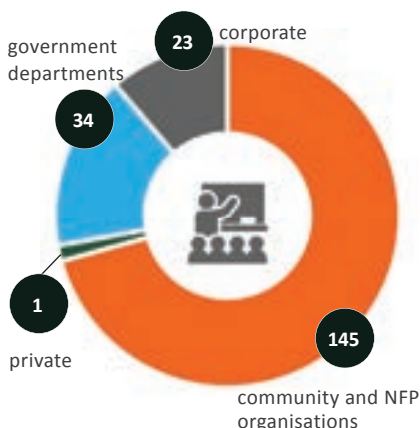
98%

completed within stated response times

Function room bookings

203

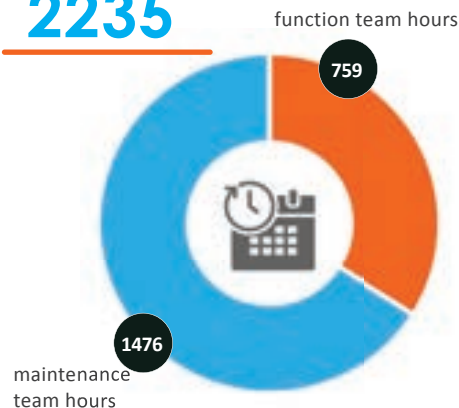
Function room bookings



Tenant employment hours

Total tenant employment hours in 2016/2017

2235





Appetite for life

Nilima's story

After a rough start in Australia which left Nilima without a roof over her head she is now in her third year at Brisbane Common Ground.

"I love being here," she smiles.

"I feel very safe, the staff support and look after me and the security system is also a big thing".

Before moving in Nilima was shown around by a friend who was living in the building.

"I was very impressed by the whole setup," she giggles. "Luckily for me there was a vacancy. When the time is right, things happen," she says confidently. "I am a very big believer in time".

Prior to Nilima's move to Australia she had a successful media career. Nilima worked as a radio presenter in India and at one point won a competition to work for BBC in London. "I was the one selected out of all of India," she says proudly. Nilima also received a fellowship to Canada as a Professor of Media Studies for the University of Western Ontario. "That was another milestone in my life. I won that fellowship because of the paper I submitted, they loved it," she says glowingly.

After a very satisfying career and extensive travels which she says took her to some amazing locations including Saudi Arabia and Bhutan, Nilima was looking forward to her retirement in Australia with family. Destiny, however, had something else in store. "I had dreams of having a very comfortable retired life like a granny which all women dream of, but that was not to be," she says shaking her head. "After two years I had to move to Brisbane Common Ground and start my life afresh". This tipped the scales for Nilima, but due to her positive attitude she says she wasn't greatly affected. "I got into the system of Brisbane Common Ground as smoothly as a fish would get into water," she affirms. "Finding the positive in the

negativity of your life is the biggest blessing and every day I count my blessings".

Since moving to Brisbane Common Ground Nilima has made a lot of new friends who now feel like family. "I don't have a family in this country, but I never felt like I don't have a family by being here," she explains.

Nilima also attends church where she has developed another close group of friends who feel like family. "They love me and I have some church children," she laughs. "I like to keep company with creative people and those who are different in their own way because it inspires me and makes me happy". Nilima is a unique soul with an insatiable appetite for life. A prolific artist, she also enjoys cooking her favourite Indian cuisine and volunteering with the Red Cross.

Aside from friends, church, volunteering and an array of hobbies, Nilima likes to keep active at the onsite gym and teaches yoga, which is refreshing for a lady who is almost 65 years old. "Five years for Common Ground and 65 years for Nilima," she says cheekily.



Left to right: Leona Wallace and Ann O'Sullivan

Edible rooftop garden

Did you know that Brisbane Common Ground has an edible rooftop garden located on the thirteenth floor? This productive green space supports a diversity of organic seasonal herbs, vegetables and fruit that tenants can harvest to supplement their weekly shop.

Irrigated through rainfall and an integrated rooftop tank watering system, the garden's hydrological inputs are largely self-sufficient. Other sustainability features include portable worm farms, compost bins and protective seedling covers made from recycled containers.

The environmental advantages of rooftop gardens are increasingly being recognised. Site specific benefits include improved insulation and reduced energy costs. At a city-wide level, rooftop gardens can contribute to lower urban air temperatures, reduced run-off and improved water quality and reduced noise and air pollution. They can also provide important habitat for wildlife such as insects and birds.

In addition to the environmental benefits, our rooftop garden enriches the Brisbane Common Ground community by providing tenants with a quiet place to

enjoy the greenery as well as the opportunity to participate in growing and tending a food garden.

Melissa Smrecnik from Micah Projects' Hive Social Inclusion Team coordinates a weekly gardening bee every Wednesday. Tenants have the opportunity to learn about organic gardening, sustainable practices and the nutritional content of the food that's grown. Herbal teas are currently a hot topic. The working bees are designed to plant the seeds of self-sufficiency and provide a stepping stone to greater individual and community sustainability. Gardening knowledge is also transferred into the kitchen or garden BBQ where tenants are encouraged to experiment with flavours and shown how to incorporate the food that is grown into easy recipes.



"For me, the garden not only represents a place for tenants to learn about self-sufficiency and healthy organic food, but is also horticultural therapy. Gardening provides an opportunity for both physical and psychological wellbeing. It is a therapy that is especially good for stress reduction that works to help individuals to 'get out of their heads' by participating in such a grounding activity."

Melissa Smrecnik, Micah Projects' Hive Social Inclusion Team



Essential attributes for concierge

An open mind. Quick thinking. Good active listening skills. Good problem solving skills.

A sense of humour. Take the time to greet everyone. Learn names and find something in common to build rapport.

Anthony Hernandez, CGQ Concierge Officer

Brisbane Common Ground concierge A warm welcome with a sense of security

The Concierge service is an integral part of the Common Ground supportive housing model and is jointly delivered at Brisbane Common Ground by Common Ground Queensland (CGQ) and Micah Projects. Each organisation is responsible for delivering an aspect of the service. Common Ground Queensland oversees all activities relating to the delivery of concierge and security services within the building while Micah Projects delivers support services to tenants through proactive engagement.

Operating 24/7, the Concierge service is the 'face' of Brisbane Common Ground. Visitor sign-in, tenant support, building security, first responder, customer service; these are just some of the functions our joint Concierge team perform on a daily basis. You can imagine with 146 residential units, two function rooms and two commercial spaces, life at Brisbane Common Ground can get quite busy. No two minutes are the same, no two days are alike. Maintaining a professional, friendly and calm manner while responding to a diversity of competing requests and situations requires a certain level of maturity and responsibility. These qualities are considered essential for both

security and tenant services personnel and Common Ground Queensland (CGQ) and Micah Projects select their Concierge teams accordingly.

"The Concierge service is in line with the supportive housing model and it provides a secure environment for our tenants and guests. The Concierge desk in general provides a meeting point for visitors to access the building and an opportunity for tenants to seek assistance," says Common Ground Queensland Operations Manager, Michael Murphy. "The primary focus for our Concierge team is to maintain a secure and welcoming environment, while the primary focus for Micah Projects' Concierge team is to support tenants. The two teams have different functions but complement and assist each other".

"In mid-2014 Common Ground Queensland took over the Concierge security function from an external provider. Managing it in-house has been beneficial on a number of levels," explains Michael. "We've been able to retain a core group of staff for several years and that familiarity is a great benefit for the tenants. They feel a lot more secure and feel that the Concierge security staff are there to help them. Another advantage is



service:

being able to focus training on what we feel as an organisation is required. When we do hire new Concierge security staff we look for experience, good social and communication skills, IT skills, good presentation and an understanding or willingness to embrace the supportive housing model”.

“I believe the Concierge service offers multiple points of value,” says CGQ Concierge Officer, James Hall. “I think we represent a sense of safety and order. Concierge will always be there to lend a hand in any case. With that start, we become part of the community. Tenants know our schedule better than we do sometimes and look forward to greeting us”.

“The safety and wellbeing of tenants are our prime concerns,” affirms Micah Projects’ Supportive Housing Team Leader, Natasha Rodrigues. “The Concierge allows tenants to access our service anytime they need assistance and is the first port of call for tenants. By phone, through intercom, in person, the tenants can contact the concierge 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, for anything - from an emergency to a minor need”.

What attributes do you think are essential for your role?

A sense of empathy for those within the community combined with an ability to gain voluntary cooperation through effective communication and mutual respect.

Greig Cross, CGQ Concierge Officer

Good customer service and being able to quickly adapt to complex incidents or situations. Stay calm and remain objective.

Tino Fernandes, Micah Projects Tenant Service Worker

Being able to talk to people from all walks of life and the ability to meet people where they are at in a non-judgemental way. Creative thinking. Being able to learn new skills. Interpersonal skills and the ability to remain calm.

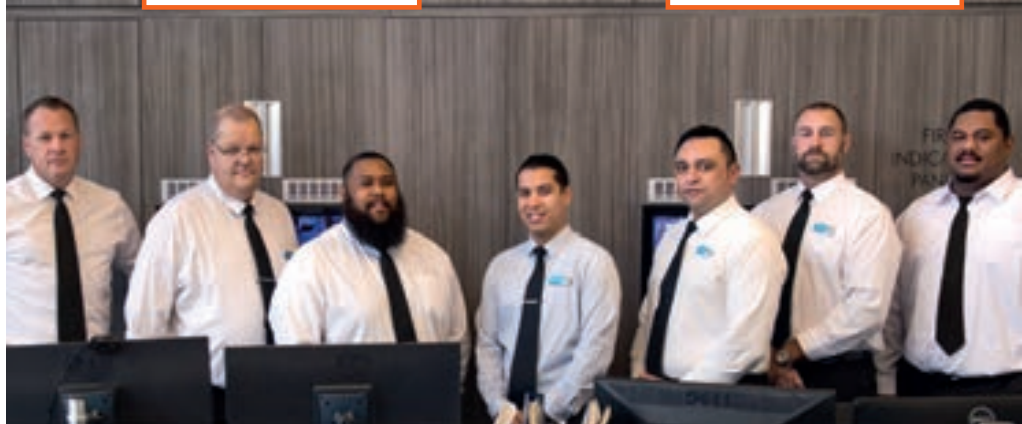
Tracey Huxley, Micah Projects Tenant Service Worker

24,101

visitors to Brisbane
Common Ground
between July 2016
and June 2017

2883

times tenant assistance
was provided by CGQ
concierge between
July 2016 and June
2017





Left to right: Sonya Keep CEO Common Ground Queensland, Mick de Brenni MP Minister Housing and Public Works and Steve Williams Marist180.



Community connections

Community in Practice

On the 28th and 29th June 2017, Melbourne Common Ground hosted the annual Common Ground Community in Practice working forum. The event was facilitated by Felicity Reynolds, CEO of the Mercy Foundation and attended by tenancy and support operational staff from Canberra Common Ground (ACT), Brisbane Common Ground (QLD), Common Ground Sydney (NSW), Common Ground Adelaide (SA), Common Ground Tasmania (TAS) and Elizabeth Street Common Ground (Melbourne, VIC).

The event provided an opportunity for organisations to share their progress, major challenges and successes for the year. Congratulations are in order for Common Ground Adelaide who recently merged with Housing Choices and were granted the management rights for an additional 800 social and affordable housing properties. Our friends in South Australia reported that the expansion has provided opportunities for staff to branch out to projects outside of the traditional Common Ground umbrella.

Common Ground Tasmania reported they are also undergoing significant change in the wake of their merger with the Salvation Army.

Key topics for the two day event included tenant engagement, concierge, vacancies, allocations and the ins and outs of tenancy management.

"It was reassuring to hear the shared experience of all Common-Grounders. It is evident that the dedication to the model is universal throughout the times despite the diversity in size and type of organisation running each site," says Derek Taylor, Tenancy Manager, Common Ground Queensland.

Brisbane Open House

Brisbane Common Ground opened its doors again for the 2016 Brisbane Open House – Unlock Your City Program for the third year running. We had the pleasure of showing 90 visitors through the building on Saturday, 8th October 2016, an increase from 61 the previous year. We would like to extend a big thankyou to all the staff and tenants who volunteered to play tour guide on the day. It was a huge success and we were once again heartened by the positive feedback we received from members of the general public who took time out of their busy weekend to learn more about Brisbane Common Ground and the benefits supportive housing can make within our communities.



Tenant Christmas BBQ

Each year Common Ground Queensland hosts a Christmas BBQ for tenants, staff, volunteers, neighbours

and supporters. It's a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the year past and make good cheer!

A lot of preparation goes into the event. Thumbs up to Phyllis Patterson from Micah Projects for the superb catering and Erin Smith from Common Ground Queensland for organising this special gathering. We also extend our appreciation to Common Ground Queensland supporter, Simone Halley and all of the staff and directors for donning their aprons and tongs and helping out on the day.

I think we can all agree that the burgers are better at Brisbane Common Ground!



Homelessness Hackathon

Common Ground Queensland had the absolute pleasure of hosting Australia's first Homelessness Hackathon in June this year in partnership with RiverCity Labs, Marist180, Orange Sky Laundry, QUT Creative Industries and Incus Group. The event brought the Brisbane business and tech community together to identify and develop sustainable solutions for people at risk of or experiencing homelessness. It was a unification of creativity and goodwill from a diverse group of



participants and organisations.

Hats off to Steve Williams from Marist180 for coordinating the Hackathon, the Queensland Department of Housing and Public Works for sponsoring the project under the Dignity First Fund, all of the innovators, creators and volunteers who made the weekend event possible, the judging panel and Minister Mick de Brenni for his attendance, support and generous invitation for all Hackathon participants to pitch their ideas at Parliament House in the near future.

Well done everyone involved!



Judging panel left to right:

Sonya Keep CEO, Common Ground Queensland, Peta Ellis CEO, River City Labs, Monica Bradley Director, Purposeful Capital and Kylie Low Founder, Joining Hands



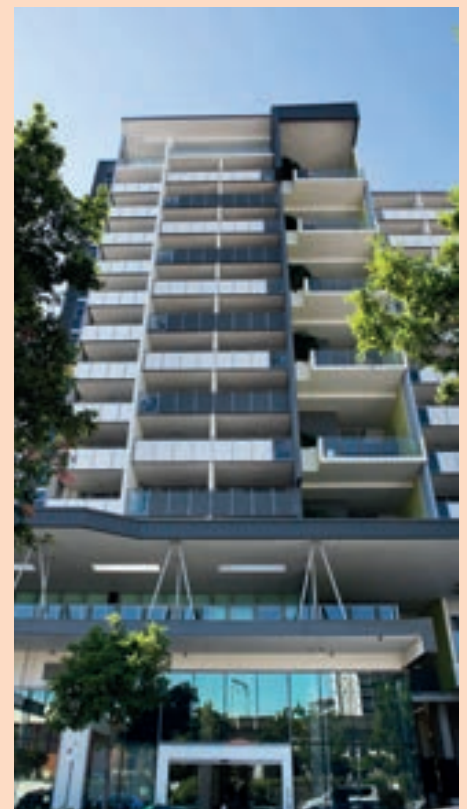
Brisbane Common Ground turns five

It's hard to believe Brisbane Common Ground opened its doors five years ago.

Our first tenants moved into the building in July, 2012. Five years on, many of our original tenants are still with us.

Over the years, Brisbane Common Ground has become an integral and accepted part of the local neighbourhood. With more than 2000 visitors each month, the building is a thriving community in itself.

We would like to extend a heartfelt thankyou to all of the tenants, staff, directors and guests who helped us to celebrate our milestone anniversary. We would especially like to thank Micah Projects for co-hosting this event with us. The weather was perfect for a rooftop garden BBQ and of course, there was cake!!





Back left to right: Deanna Nott, Arabella Douglas, Christine Grose and Amanda Boland (Company Secretary)
Front left to right: Mark Fenton, Peter Pearce and Michael Ryall
Not pictured: Joanna Spanjaard and Mark Lightfoot

Board of Directors

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. He is a fellow of the Governance Institute of Australia and the Australian Institute of Company Directors and has completed the advanced company director's diploma. Peter holds Masters degrees in Public Sector Management and Ethics & Legal Studies and other qualifications in social science and business.

Mark Fenton, Deputy Chairman

Mark joined the Board in 2015 and is the chair of the Audit and Risk Committee. Mark has more than 13 year's 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 and Deputy Chairman of Common Ground Queensland Ltd,

UQ International House Foundation Ltd and the Queensland Alliance for Mental Health Ltd. Mark is a finance executive with over 24 years of experience, is a fellow with CPA Australia and a graduate member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. Mark is the Chief Financial Officer for Endeavour Foundation and has worked as a finance executive for businesses in the professional services, manufacturing, retirement living, retail and membership services sectors.

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 Partner with Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu and is the national leader of their risk transformation solution. She 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. She is a mechanical engineer and is also a Board Member of the Industry Advisory Board, Electrical Engineering, 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 making stories 'newsworthy', Deanna gained a high profile in South East Queensland and beyond as Logan City Council's head of media and communication by developing award-winning campaigns designed to change perceptions of the city located between Brisbane and the

Gold Coast. 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's energy and expertise in the communication field has led to key roles in the public sector, including appointment as Aide-De-Camp to the Governor of South Australia.

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.

Arabella Douglas

Arabella is a Minyunbal woman from Fingal Head and her country straddles Yugambah country (South East Queensland) and the Bundjalung country (Far North NSW). Arabella is from the Gold Coast with traditional links between the Logan River and the Tweed River, respectively.

Arabella is a environment and planning lawyer having worked in the areas of social and environmental sustainability, resources and housing as a Senior Development and Environmental Lawyer, Government Adviser, Senior Executive of Public and Corporate Sector. Arabella acts as Principle and Board Director focusing on large-scale infrastructure, environment and planning, social and economic sustainability and strategic business improvement in the area of social impacts bonds and social return on investment.

Arabella is the inaugural winner of the Chief Executive Women's Scholarship 2012 for Women in Leadership (AGSM – CEW) and was admitted to the Supreme Court of NSW as well as the High Court of Australia and is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. Arabella holds the following qualifications, BA. LL.B GDLP BBus(Hons)(FirstClass) GAICD.

Michael Ryall

Michael Ryall is the Chief Financial Officer for an international property development company and has over 20 years' experience in hospitality and property organisations in Australia, the UK and the Middle East. Over this time, he has developed an expertise in community and property management, financial management and reporting, governance, business management and project management.

Michael has been actively involved in the property development and strata management industries in South East Queensland. He has contributed through membership of sub-committees with the Queensland branch of the UDIA in reviewing and producing position papers on draft legislation such as *Property Occupations Act* and *Body Corporate and Community Management Act* and has spoken at an annual conference of the Community Association Institute in the USA regarding the strata management industry in Australia.

Michael is a Chartered Accountant, is a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors, a member of the Financial Executive Institute of Australia and a Fellow of the Institute of Place Management in the UK. Michael holds qualifications in Strata Management and Hotel Management, has a Masters of Professional Accounting and post graduate qualifications in Applied Finance.

Christine Grose

Christine Grose has over three decades of direct service delivery and management experience in the community sector - in particular in the areas of homelessness and youth at risk.

Christine has served on the 4 Walls (later Compass Queensland) Board as well as numerous other community Management Committees throughout her career. Her focus for her voluntary and paid work is on implementing structural change and supporting community capacity-building, in the service of social justice.

Christine currently works as a Client Services Manager with a medium-sized Community Services organisation in South East Queensland.



Joanna Spanjaard



Mark Lightfoot



Back left to right: James Hall, Rikki Pieters, Erin Smith and Derek Taylor
Front left to right: Michael Murphy, Sonya Keep, Emma Dorge, Raechelle Coaker and Janice Walters

Common Ground Queensland staff experience

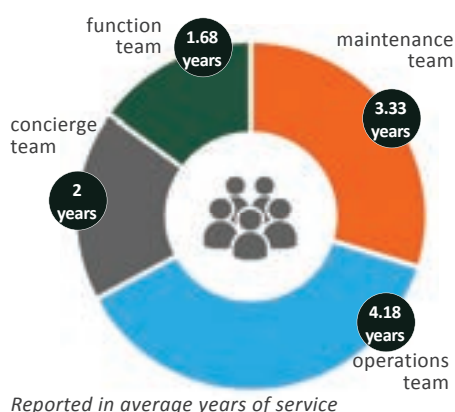
Michael Murphy

Michael Murphy has been a key member of the Common Ground Queensland team for almost six years. In his role as Operations Manager, Michael has seen the organisation go from strength to strength. “It’s been a journey,” says Michael. “Initially I oversaw the development of the property and asset management systems and worked closely with Grocon during the construction of Brisbane Common Ground. Now I manage all aspects of the building’s maintenance and security operations, it’s a big task and it keeps me busy.” Michael says he has a great team to help him keep the building in top shape, including a number of tenant employees. “Knowing that I can play a part in positively impacting a person’s lifestyle by providing a good quality environment gives me a sense of fulfilment,” he shares.

Kathleen Burgen

Recently, promoted to Maintenance Supervisor, Kathleen Burgen has been an integral part of the Common Ground Queensland maintenance team for just over five years. Kathleen says she has seen many changes occur at Brisbane Common Ground over that time, including the addition of tenant art work and the opening of the onsite gym. “My position has given me the opportunity to study and do extra training, which has been a highlight,” shares Kathleen. “Since I started working with Common Ground Queensland I have become an accredited Workplace Health and Safety Officer and have obtained my Working at Heights ticket as well”. Kathleen says she enjoys the variety of work her role offers and gets job satisfaction knowing that her work is appreciated by others. “I feel like I am making a difference every day when I come to work – it’s something I really value”.

Staff tenure by function



Staff engagement survey results

Focus Area	Positive Response	Neutral Response	Negative Response
Professional development	81%	10%	9%
Engagement with role	88%	7%	5%
Resilience and adaptability	82%	13%	5%
Management and decision making	88%	6%	6%
Remuneration	93%	0%	7%
Team dynamics	88%	7%	5%
Workplace environment and culture	96%	2%	2%
Working in partnership	80%	11%	9%



Thankyou

Common Ground Queensland would like to thank and recognise the following individuals and organisations who have invested in our initiatives and outcomes throughout the year.

Investment through Volunteering

Alison Cook
Ann O'Sullivan
Annie Tan
Brendon Donahue
Cameron Doo
Cheryl Desmarais
Elvira Couper
Georgia Dawson
Gleem Gerroch
Jacob McDonald
Kellie Williams
Kenneth Pene
Koji Nishimoto
Lynnette Xu
Michael Nycyk
Pawandeep Sandhu
Robert Perrier
Rod Smith
Scott Winks
Seema Bharti
Shannon Rodgers
Shirin Azizmohammad
Simone Halley
Stephen Hartley
Sussana Alexis
Tony Maclot

Investment through in-kind and financial support

Deloitte
Department of Housing and Public Works
Iridium Health
Martin Rady
Tony Beresford-Smith, Practical Business Support

Partners and Affiliates

139 Club
Australasian Housing Institute
Business South Bank
Clemente
Community Housing Providers Queensland
Griffith University
Grocon
Iridium Health
Ladder Project Foundation
Micah Projects
Q Shelter
QCOSS
Queensland Police Services
Rise Industries
School of Hard Knocks
Seed Parks and Property Maintenance
Songlines Community Choir
TAFE Queensland Brisbane – South Bank

2017-2020 strategic plan



Strategic Focus

Purposeful Growth

Grow supportive housing supply

Generate discretionary income to support growth and sustainability

Relational Integrity

Create partnerships to develop and deliver solutions to homelessness

Increase community awareness and support for addressing and ending homelessness

Operational Efficacy

Deliver best practice supportive housing tenancy and property management

Enable tenancy sustainment through evidence based practice

Develop organisational systems that support effective service delivery and growth



Supporter program

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 Common Ground Queensland.

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





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QUEENSLAND
ending homelessness

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