



# Housing First: A Roadmap

## Housing First

A roadmap to ending homelessness in Brisbane

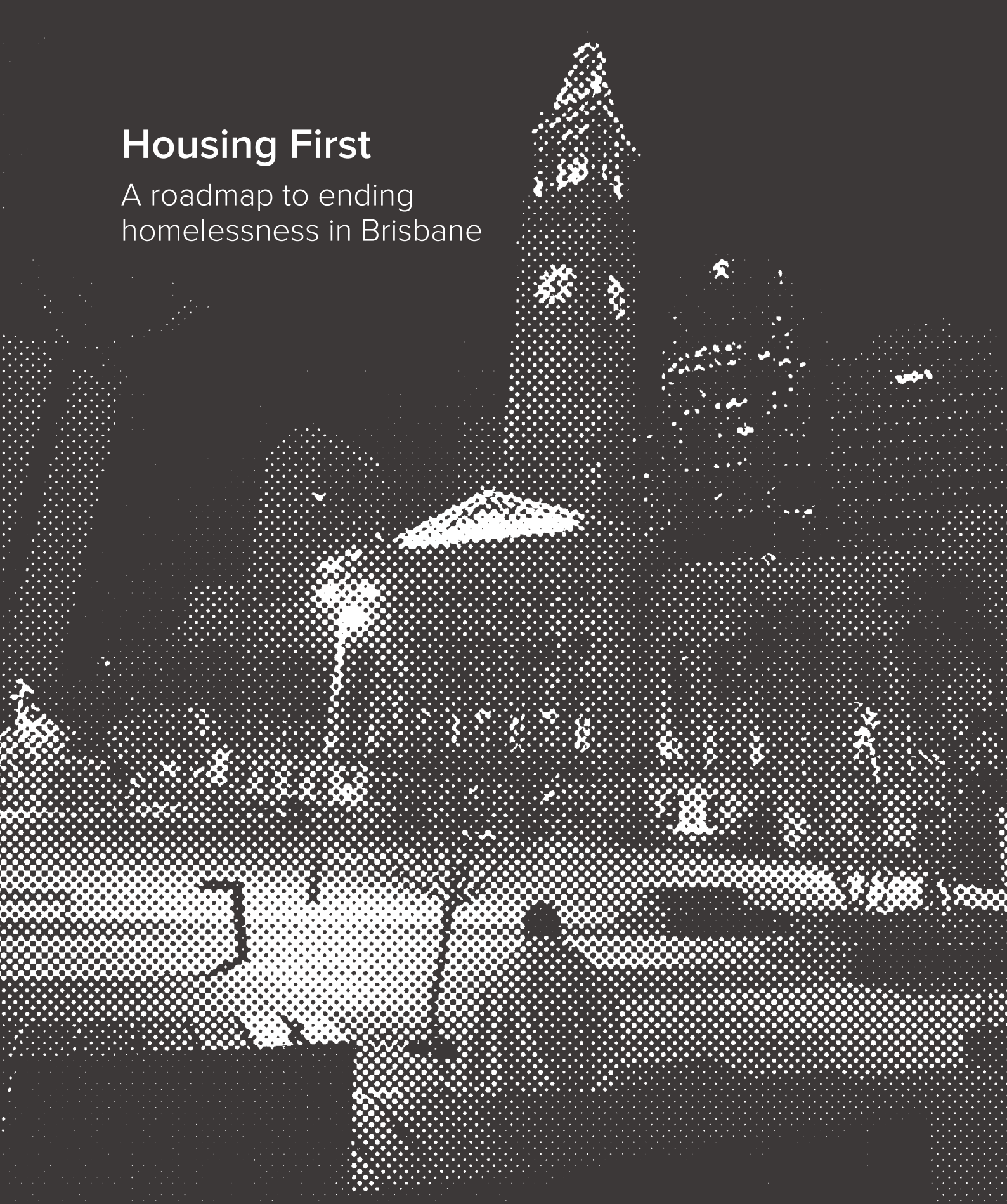


Ending homelessness  
in Brisbane one person,  
one family at a time



# Housing First

A roadmap to ending homelessness in Brisbane



Ending homelessness  
in Brisbane one person,  
one family at a time

Photography: Patrick Hamilton



August 2016

**Acknowledgements**

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We acknowledge all partners and stakeholders who contributed to this Housing First Roadmap, specifically:

Lisa Siganto and Andrew Hamilton, Social Scaffolding  
Briannon Stevens, Intuit Works  
Maria Leebeek, Janelle Kwong and Ross Westoby and  
Micah Projects Backbone and Communications Team

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# Housing First

## A Roadmap to ending homelessness in Brisbane

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### Partners

- Anglicare SQ, Homelessness Services for Women and Children
- Australian Red Cross
- Big Issue
- Brisbane Housing Company
- Brisbane Youth Service
- Centacare
- CheckUP
- Churches of Christ Care Housing Services
- Common Ground Queensland
- Footprints in Brisbane
- Gateway Community Group Inc
- Homeless Health Outreach Team, Queensland Health
- Institute for Urban Indigenous Health
- Kyabra Community Association
- Local Government Association of Queensland
- Mater Health Services
- Micah Projects
- New Farm Neighbourhood Centre
- Nexxt
- Ozcare
- PHN Brisbane South
- PHN Brisbane North
- Queensland Council of Social Services
- Queensland Department of Housing and Public Works
- Queensland Injectors' Health Network
- Queensland Police Service
- Queensland Public Interest Law Clearing House
- Salvation Army
- Services Collaborating for Young People
- Silky Oaks
- Southside Community Care Inc
- St Vincent De Paul Society
- Supported Accommodation Providers Association Inc
- Tzu Chi Foundation
- Wesley Mission Brisbane



Artwork: Coming Together by Luke Roma, Rocky Boy, Jagalingu Man from Rockhampton Region  
This painting represents all Indigenous and Non Indigenous Australians coming together without malice or discrimination.

### Our commitment to Reconciliation

We acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (First Peoples) of Australia as the traditional owners and custodians of this land and that this was never ceded at any time by them. We acknowledge the impact of colonisation on the First Peoples and the trauma this inflicted on their lives, their culture and their rights to live on their traditional lands. We acknowledge and support their rights to self-determination, land and culture.

We acknowledge the over representation of First Australians (children and young people, adults and families) who experience homelessness.

The 500 Lives 500 Homes partners are committed to working with Indigenous leaders, agencies and communities to ensure First Peoples have a home and are connected to family, culture and community.

We are especially committed to ensuring children can have a home with their families.



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## Preamble

Homelessness has devastating and lifelong impacts on adults and children, and significant community costs. A permanent end to homelessness in Brisbane can and should be a reality, but no single organisation can achieve this in isolation. This Roadmap provides a practical action plan for government and non-government agencies, businesses and individual citizens to work together, so a permanent end to homelessness is a reality.

This Roadmap builds on the successful work undertaken by the Brisbane community through 500 Lives 500 Homes, a campaign launched in 2014 to break the cycle of homelessness for 500 individuals and families who are homeless or vulnerably housed. The campaign demonstrates how we can work together to end homelessness for people in Brisbane, with 410 adults and families with children, housed in the first two years.

This *Housing First Roadmap to Ending Homelessness* is a culmination of consultations and planning with stakeholders across our community as well as international partners from Canada and the USA between October 2015 and April 2016. Together we established five key strategies, for ending homelessness in Brisbane and these form the critical elements of this Roadmap.

The Roadmap brings together our knowledge of what works, from our experience as a community through 500 Lives 500 Homes, and the evidence and experiences from communities around the world. The Housing First framework at its core, underpins the five strategies, to ensure housing is the solution to ending homelessness, without exception or preconditions.

The five strategies in this Roadmap call on the Brisbane community, to know each homeless and vulnerably housed person, by name. We must understand individual health, housing and support needs, so we can prioritise appropriately to provide the best response for each person and family. The Roadmap directs teams to work quickly in a coordinated manner, to respond to crises, to prevent people from becoming homeless and to support people to access housing, create a home, and sustain their home.

Although the strategies in this Roadmap, are proven, we know from experience, when applied by a single organisation, their reach is limited. A Roadmap adopted across a community has amplified outcomes, transforming the isolated impact of one organisation into the collective impact of a responsive, cohesive system to end homelessness for one individual, one family at a time.



People sleeping rough in inner-city Brisbane.



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## Homelessness in Brisbane

**From birth to death, homelessness happens.** While the circumstances, surrounding each adult and child's experience of homelessness, are neither linear nor homogenous, threads of commonality emerge. Loss of employment, mental illness, physical health conditions, traumatic events such as domestic and family violence, accidents, natural disaster, and a host of other life circumstances, may lead to housing stress. This stress can escalate into loss of housing, isolation from family and friends, further emotional and financial hardship, and ultimately perpetuate into a cycle of homelessness.

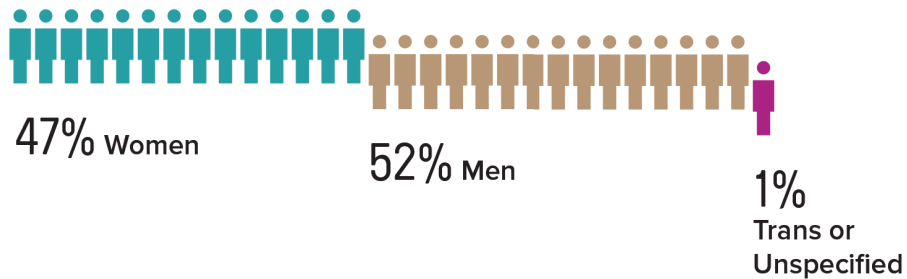
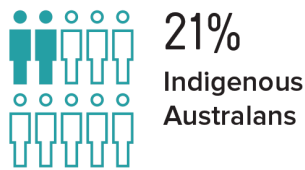
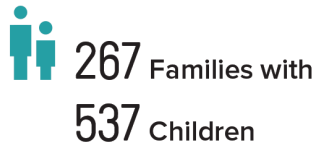
Systemic failures, such as those resulting from transitions out of the child protection, health or justice systems, and structural factors, such as lack of affordable housing, discrimination and rising cost pressures, also result in episodic or entrenched homelessness for the most disadvantaged.

### 500 Lives 500 Homes Registry Weeks

500 Lives 500 Homes is a community-wide collaborative effort to break the cycle of homelessness for families, young people and adults in our community. The campaign began with a community-wide Registry fortnight in March-April 2014, where we undertook to know each homeless person by name and survey their individual health, housing and support needs.

At the last census, 7395 people aged 18 or over were homeless or vulnerably housed in Brisbane. 4324 people were homeless, including 168 sleeping rough or in improvised dwellings.

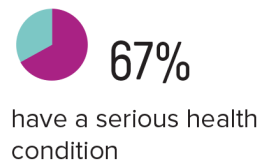
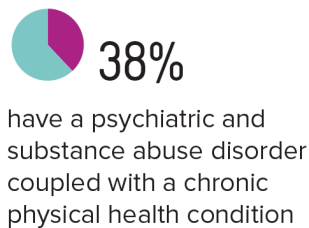
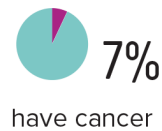
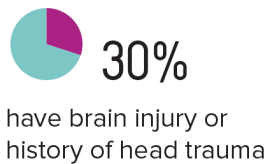
Population Surveyed: March – April 2014



Vulnerability: March – April 2014

People have  
spent an  
average of

**6 Years  
Homeless**





Brisbane city during  
50 Lives 50 Homes  
registry week in  
June 2010.

*Photography:  
Patrick Hamilton*



## The costs of homelessness in Brisbane

Homelessness occurs across the life course, and carries devastating human and economic costs. Homelessness does not discriminate between families with children, and adults young and old. Homelessness is rooted in complex social challenges such as housing affordability, poverty, domestic violence, trauma and abuse. It is also a consequence of discrimination and poor supports for people with disability and mental illness, and Indigenous Australians. Despite this complexity, homelessness is solvable. Solving homelessness requires a whole of community response. A plan owned by the community, can help to get there.

**Brisbane needs a pathway to end homelessness that is actionable, community owned and evidence based.**

Community action must also include government. The Government funds programs and interventions, which cut across a range of factors influencing homelessness. Targeted co-ordination is required, to direct programs toward the needs of an individual or a family experiencing homelessness. Community action needs co-ordination, and co-ordination requires funding – government, should provide the funding. The success of the 500 Lives 500 Homes campaign is due to this co-ordination.

### Human costs and human rights

Homelessness is not a choice. Insecure housing, transience and rough sleeping is stressful and has devastating physical and psychological consequences for children and adults. These consequences last a lifetime, causing chronic illness, addiction, and psychological trauma. The realities of living on the streets, in poverty and in crisis, intersect with discrimination and complex healthcare systems, to create

barriers to accessing primary health care, which further exacerbates the impacts of homelessness.

Access to safe and secure housing is one of the most basic human rights. Without housing, people also risk their rights to privacy, safety and dignity.

Watching from a distance and thinking we are not involved, is not an option. As a community, when we witness and do nothing about vulnerable people losing their housing, we unknowingly deny their basic human rights, at an enormous economic and human cost to the entire community.

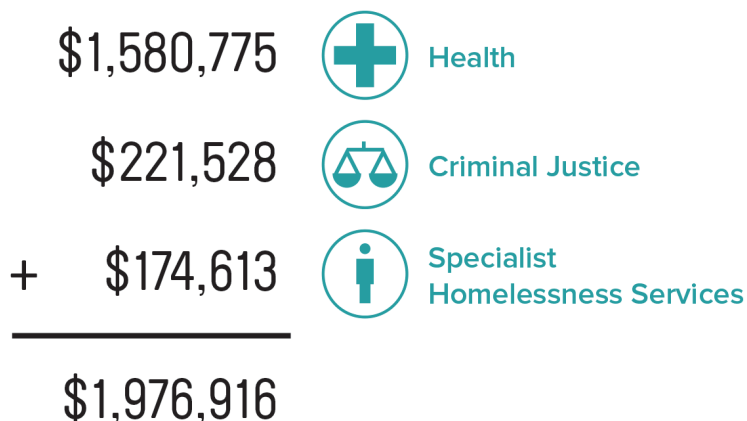
### Economic costs

People experiencing homelessness have frequent interactions with high-cost acute care or emergency services, involvement with police and court systems. The overall cost, to our crisis housing, health and justice systems, of keeping people homeless in Brisbane, is very high.

An analysis of the health costs of the 961 people interviewed for 500 Lives 500 Homes Registry Weeks was a staggering \$7.75m

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#### Annual costs of 41 people experiencing homelessness in Brisbane



Source: Brisbane Common Ground Evaluation: Final Report, 2015, ISSR, University of Queensland

A temporary shelter  
in Brisbane City.

Photography:  
Jo Bennett



## A Roadmap for Ending Homelessness in Brisbane

### Homelessness is solvable!

We know what works to end homelessness, based on evidence from other communities who have successfully worked towards solving homelessness, and our own experience in implementing these approaches in Brisbane.

Ending homelessness involves:

1. Preventing first time or episodic homelessness;
2. Responding to crises as they occur, in the shortest possible time; and
3. Sustaining tenancies

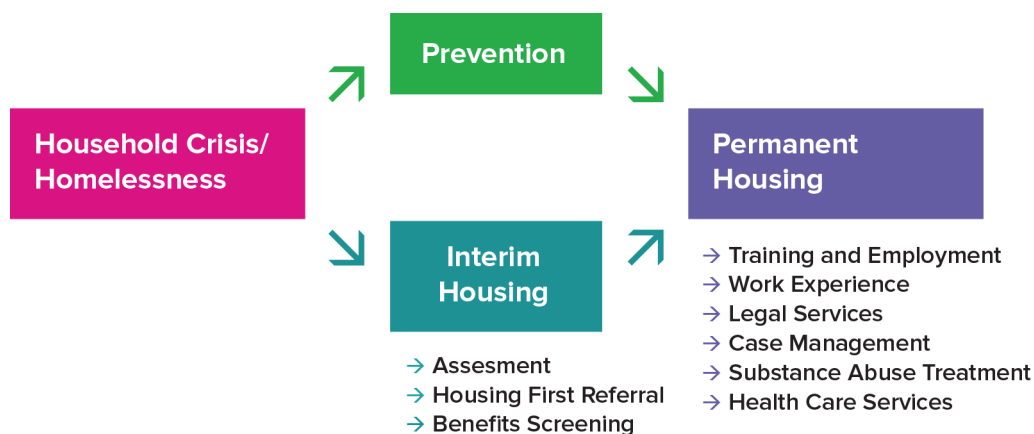


Figure 2: 'Ending homelessness involves', adapted from Getting Housed, Staying Housed, Chicago

## Ending Homelessness

### >> Involves

- |  |  |                                  |
|--|--|----------------------------------|
| <b>1</b><br>Preventing first time or episodic homelessness | <b>2</b><br>responding to crises as they occur in the shortest possible time | <b>3</b><br>sustaining tenancies |
|--|--|----------------------------------|

### >> by using 5 strategies

- |   |  |                            |
|---|--|----------------------------|
| <b>1</b><br>Know who's there and what they need | <b>2</b><br>Implement a coordinated entry system | <b>3</b><br>Line up supply |
| <b>4</b><br>Keep people housed                  | <b>5</b><br>Integrate health                     |                            |

### >> across the full life course

Antenatal    Infancy & Parenting    Childhood    Youth    Adulthood    Old Age

### >> matched to needs

Disability    Mental Health    Domestic Violence  
.....  
Indigenous    Chronic Health  
.....  
Aged Care    Substance Use  
.....

“When you’re on the street the future doesn’t look good, but here there’s a bit of hope.” Robert.

*Photography:  
Katie Bennett*



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## Shifting to a Housing First system for Brisbane

### About Housing First

Housing First replaces the traditional approach to homelessness, where people are supported in crisis and transitional housing, to become ‘housing ready’, meeting conditions such as undertaking rehabilitation or psychiatric treatment, before they can be considered for long-term housing.

In contrast, a Housing First approach emphasises that a homeless individual’s or family’s primary need is to obtain stable housing, and other issues affecting the household should be addressed once housing is obtained. With the Housing First approach, services work together to link people with affordable housing, healthcare and the community services they need to sustain their tenancy and improve their quality of life.

The Brisbane community must work together to create a system in which every entity has a common goal of moving people in to long-term housing quickly and linking them to the supports they need to thrive.

### **Recommendation**

The Queensland Government develop a Housing First Strategic plan to inform housing supply and investment in services, with cross-departmental commitment to implementation.



### Community Goals

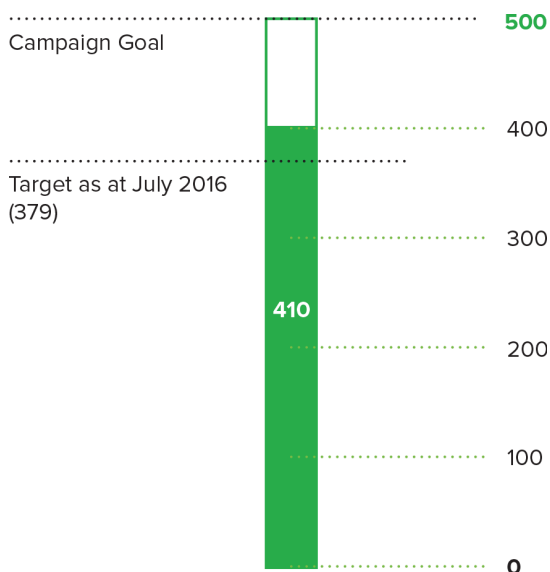
Brisbane has a coordinated system of prevention, crisis, housing and sustaining tenancy services with a common goal of ending homelessness in Brisbane.

The system responds quickly to prevent homelessness and support people out of homelessness, by matching each individual and family to permanent housing and necessary supports.

Continue to collaborate and progress change across service systems which are integral to pathways in and out of homelessness, including justice, health, housing, aged care, families, child safety, and domestic violence.

### 500 Lives, 500 Homes

In 2014, a coalition of government and non-government agencies set a goal to house 500 individuals and families over 3 years. Since then we have applied Housing First principles to assist 142 families and 268 people to end their homelessness (410 households), as at July 2016. We are on target to achieve our collective goal of ending homelessness for 500 individuals and family groups by 2017.



### Housing First approaches end homelessness

A National evaluation of Street to Home programs across Australia concluded:

*People with chronic experiences of rough sleeping and social and health problems in addition to their homelessness were able to exit homelessness and sustain housing over a 12-month period. Consistent with an emerging*

*body of evidence from the United States, the Australian research demonstrates that the problems that occur disproportionately among homeless populations or indeed even problems that [constitute] causes of homelessness did not need to be addressed prior to people accessing and sustaining (for 12 months) secure housing.*

Street to Home assertive outreach van.




Brisbane's **Street to Home** program has successfully engaged with people who have been chronically homeless using a Housing First approach to support people to move directly to permanent housing. In the past 12 months, 111 people have been housed, with 91% sustaining their housing.

*“Brisbane’s Street to Home service has (1) systematically targeted, identified and engaged people sleeping rough with experiences of chronic homelessness and multiple exclusions; (2) assisted a large number of people to move directly from ‘the streets’ into secure housing, and (3) directly provided ongoing services that have contributed to high rates of tenancy sustainment and thus exits from homelessness”*

**Brisbane Common Ground** (supportive housing for people who have experienced homelessness in a Housing First model) eviction rate for formerly homeless tenants was a low 2.8% in 2014.

*“Brisbane Common Ground is successful in (1) enabling people with chronic experiences of homelessness and support needs to access housing, and (2) providing the necessary supports that people need so that they stay housed”*



Internationally, the 100,000 Homes Campaign (USA) has had a major impact on efforts to end homeless. The campaign housed more than 100,000 homeless Americans by supporting communities to shift to a Housing First approach.

*“The campaign has also helped establish the credibility of a Housing First approach by demonstrating both the severity of the public health needs of people experiencing homelessness and the positive impact permanent housing can have on people’s lives”*

### Housing First is cost effective for Brisbane

A 2013 research project in to the cost effectiveness of Housing First in Brisbane, found the overall cost to the health, justice and community service systems, reduced substantially as individuals transitioned from homelessness to housing. This was due largely to the reduction in use of justice services, with the cost to police and courts dropping from an average \$8,719 per person per annum to just \$2,172.<sup>1</sup>

In Brisbane, Micah Projects<sup>2</sup> evaluated the Homeless to Home healthcare after-hours service where nurses worked with an outreach team of housing focused community workers where the ‘Housing First’ approach was embedded to get clients housed. The evaluation estimated an avoidance of **\$6.9M** in hospital and emergency department costs for an investment of \$500,000.

The Hope Street Brisbane Common Ground supportive housing evaluation<sup>3</sup> found a **\$1.24M** cost savings per annum across health, corrections and specialist homelessness services.

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1 A Housing First approach to homelessness in Brisbane; Sustaining tenancies and the cost effectiveness of support services.

2 An Economic Evaluation of the Homeless to Home Healthcare After-Hours service; Professor Luke Connelly

3 Brisbane Common Ground Evaluation: Final Report, 2015, ISSR, University of Queensland

Paul from the Street to Home team interviewing people during 500 Lives 500 Homes Registry fortnight, April 2014.

*Photography: Patrick Hamilton*



## Strategy 1

### Know who's homeless and what they need

We cannot end homelessness in Brisbane until every homeless adult, child and young person is known by name by someone who has carefully assessed their health and housing needs. Person-specific data is the key to ending homelessness. Applying this data across a system ensures we match each person to the best available housing and supports they need to end their homelessness.

#### **Recommendations**

The Queensland Government commit to ongoing funding for assertive outreach under the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness.

The Queensland Government invest in implementation of the VI-SPDAT, a common tool which collects personal information for each person who is homeless or at risk and which enables us to match people with the best available housing and supports.

#### **Community Goals**

We proactively identify who is homeless or at risk of homelessness in Brisbane, and the specific housing, health, legal and community supports each person needs.

We have assertive outreach services across Brisbane with the tools to identify, screen and respond to people who are homeless and at risk.



## The VI-SPDAT

The Vulnerability Index-Service Prioritisation Tool (VI-SPDAT) has been used in Brisbane since 2010. The VI-SPDAT is an evidence-based pre-screening, or triage tool that is designed to be used by all providers within a community. It can quickly assess the health and social needs of homeless people, identify the ‘acuity’ of their support needs, and therefore match them with the most appropriate support and housing interventions that are available. This prevents intensive and costly supports going to those who might simply require affordable housing and short-term supports to exit homelessness. And it ensures we can prioritise those who need the most support to sustain tenancies.

The VI-SPDAT has been used as a key component of the 500 Lives 500 Homes campaign, with 2297 people known by name as well as their specific health, housing and support needs.

## Street to Home – Assertive Outreach to Brisbane’s homeless population

Brisbane’s Street to Home program provides support to people who are sleeping rough or experiencing chronic homelessness to move into long term housing. The Street to Home team proactively monitor and engage with people sleeping rough in Brisbane, and use the VI-SPDAT to identify each person’s housing and support needs. An evaluation of Street to Home<sup>4</sup> found,

“Street to Home has successfully identified and engaged with a rough sleeping population that have experienced multiple combined years of homelessness and who report health, social problems and exclusion in addition to homelessness.”

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<sup>4</sup> An Evaluation of Brisbane Street to Home: Final Report (2013), ISSR, University of Queensland



“It was a major win for us, the moment we were able to walk out of that hotel room.”  
Katrina Parson.

*Photography:  
Craig Holmes*



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## Strategy 2

### Implement a coordinated entry system

In a coordinated system, assistance is allocated as effectively as possible, and is easily accessible no matter where or how people present. People who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness move through the system faster because they are prioritised for and access the most appropriate supports for their needs, and we reduce new entries into homelessness by identifying and responding quickly to individuals and families who require homelessness prevention services.

#### **Recommendation**

The Queensland Government endorse a localised coordinated entry and assessment approach, and resource local regions to use tools, processes and systems that enable community-based performance management and planning.

#### **Community Goals**

500 Lives 500 Homes partners have begun to implement a coordinated entry system across government and non-government agencies and establishes processes needed for agencies to prioritise and match housing and supports with individuals and families who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Work is underway with initiatives such as Pathways, Frequent Presenters and the Inner Metro South Care Coordination Panel.

Ensure processes for coordinated entry include agencies outside of homelessness and housing who discharge people to insecure housing or who are an alternative contact point for people who are homeless or at risk e.g. Hospitals, Domestic Violence services, Police, Corrections.

Ensure people have access to legal services, and access to justice systems to ensure rights and entitlements are protected.

An investment is made in data measurement and analysis using information systems and clearly defined measures aligned with the goal of ending homelessness in Brisbane through a Housing First approach.

### **Benefits of Coordinated Entry Systems**

In the United States, Coordinated Entry Systems are now a requirement of systems under their HUD Continuum of Care. Most are in the early phases of implementation, however one of the first communities to implement a Coordinated Entry System, Los Angeles, has evaluated their Coordinated Entry System<sup>5</sup> and list the benefits as:

- Existing partnerships are more focused on serving priority populations
- Increased coordination among organisations that had previously competed for resources
- Universal access to services so that no person is left out of the system.
- New partnerships formed, including outside the 'usual suspects'
- Resources are maximized when people with the highest needs are matched with the most intensive resources
- Some housing providers have found that filling takes fewer resources than maintaining waiting lists
- Improved decision making for system level funders.

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<sup>5</sup> A Coordinated Entry System for Los Angeles: Lessons from Early Implementation Evaluation of the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation Chronic Homelessness Initiative (2015)

“I love the place, especially when there’s people outside. You can be with people and if you don’t want to be with people you can go in your room and you can’t hear anything at all.”  
Brisbane Common Ground tenant Ruby.

*Photography:  
Katie Bennett*



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## Strategy 3

### Line up supply

We cannot end homelessness while the supply of housing does not match the demand. We know that there is under-utilised stock in Brisbane, however we also know that demand currently far exceeds supply. We need to work together to create more housing that matches what is needed, and engage the whole community in innovative solutions to our supply problem.

#### **Recommendation**

Queensland Government establish a Social and Affordable Housing Trust fund to increase the supply of affordable and social housing with 30% of stock being assigned to supportive housing. The NSW Government has invested \$1.1 billion in the Social and Affordable Housing Fund to deliver 3000 additional social and affordable homes in metropolitan and regional NSW, together with integrated support services.

#### **Community Goals**

Brisbane has a clearer picture of the gap between demand and stock availability, and a plan to meet this gap within 10 years.

Identify and release under-utilised and available housing stock in Brisbane to the social and affordable housing markets.

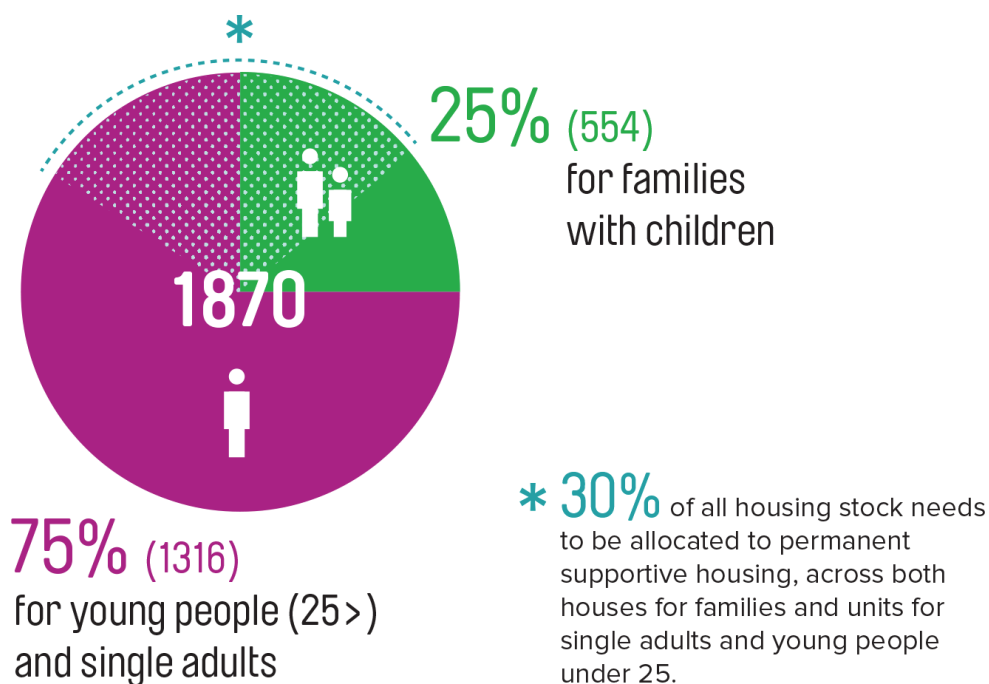
Queensland government and non-government housing providers work together to ensure that management of current stock delivers the right distribution and mix of stock (location, bedrooms, security, accessibility and affordability) for families, young people, and those with high support and/or safety needs.

Ensure that we retain and increase our stock of housing suitable for families with children in the Brisbane metropolitan area and not replace existing houses with 1 and 2 bedroom units.

We repurpose homelessness transitional housing to permanent supportive housing.

### Indicators of Demand

The 500 Lives 500 Homes campaign has demonstrated that despite our best efforts, access to housing is the greatest barrier to ending homelessness for individuals and families. Data sourced from 500 Lives 500 Homes indicates a total **current demand of 1870 dwellings**, with a mix of dwelling types needed.



Brisbane Common  
Ground Chef Phyllis  
with Brendon in his  
BCG unit.

*Photography:  
Mark Crocker*



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## Strategy 4

### Keep people housed

Without investment in support matched with housing, we cannot break the cycle of homelessness for individuals and families with short-term and ongoing support needs to stay housed. Supportive housing is an innovative and proven solution to help people who face the most complex challenges to live with stability, autonomy and dignity.

#### **Recommendations**

The Queensland Government in partnership with non-government organisations establish a Supportive Housing Taskforce for Brisbane to focus on unmet need in supply of housing and supports to sustain tenancy. The Taskforce will need cross departmental commitment to design, implement, and evaluate programs to benefit the range of populations needing supportive housing.

The Queensland Government commits to ongoing funding for the National Partnership Agreement on homelessness, and plans for the the impacts of loss of services to high need and vulnerable populations due to the roll out of NDIS and the ceasing of block funded programs.

#### **Community Goals**

That we have an emerging picture of unmet support needs in Brisbane for prevention, assertive outreach, rapid re-housing, specialist family or mental health supports, sustaining tenancy, and supportive housing, and a plan to meet those needs.



We have the right mix of rapid re-housing supports, outreach sustaining tenancy services and supportive housing services, to work with people in private, community or social housing whose support needs impact on their ability to sustain a tenancy.

We establish permanent supportive housing for families with children that integrates a child development, education and training approach alongside sustaining tenancy goals for those with highest need.

We have established supportive housing for specific vulnerable target populations including young people, people with disabilities especially those ageing in Level 3 supported accommodation, and people with mental illness or dual diagnosis.

### Supportive Housing in Brisbane

Supportive housing involves the intentional and long-term connection of secure and affordable housing, with support focused on tenancy sustainment and coordinated access, to other specialised and community-based services.

**Brisbane Common Ground** is a partnership between Common Ground Queensland and Micah Projects. It is an innovative, purpose-built building with 146 units and a mix of tenants who have experienced chronic homelessness and people on low incomes. The evaluation of Brisbane Common Ground<sup>6</sup> demonstrated that supportive housing can have both human and economic benefits. Key findings include:

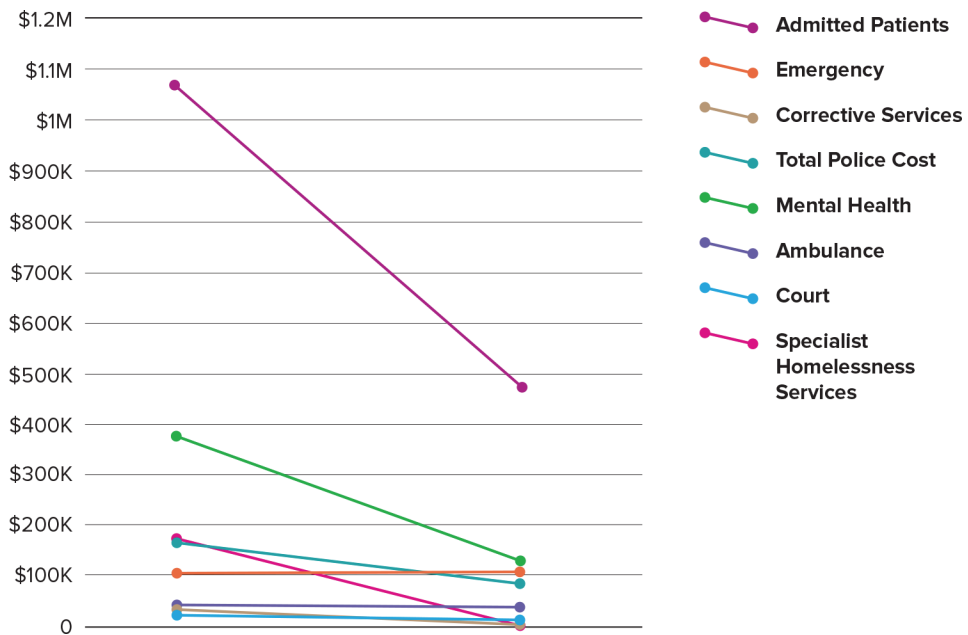
- Most tenants reported improvements in satisfaction with life and mental wellbeing.
- Brisbane Common Ground removed barriers for people experiencing chronic homelessness with support needs to access housing and fostered the conditions to sustain housing.
- A 12-month tenancy at Common Ground reduces the annual cost of Queensland Government services by \$13,100 per person.
- The evaluation of Brisbane Common Ground demonstrates the need to scale up supportive housing initiatives to end homelessness; the model is replicable, cost effective and improves outcomes for tenants.

**Street to Home** provides scattered site supportive housing to rough sleepers by providing outreach support to tenants living in public housing in partnership with the Department of Housing and community housing providers. Currently supporting 62 tenants.

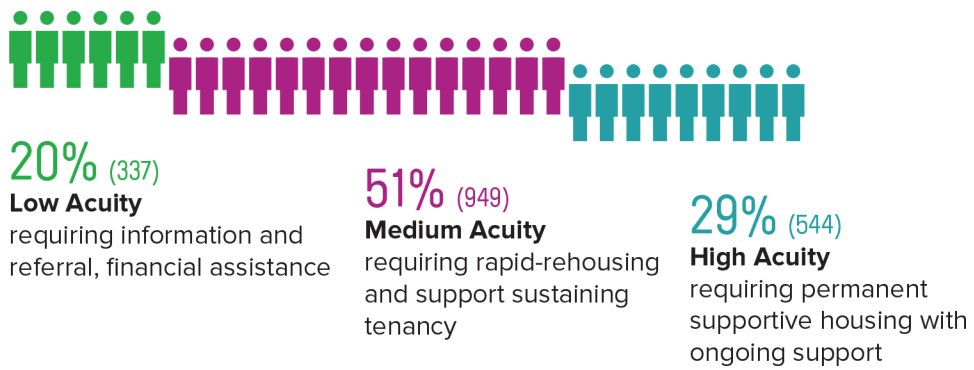
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<sup>6</sup> Brisbane Common Ground Evaluation: Final Report (2015) ISSR, University of Queensland

**Cost of providing services pre and post tenancy commencement at Brisbane Common Ground**



**Indicators of current Demand for Support**



Data sourced from 500 Lives 500 Homes

Brisbane Common  
Ground.

Photography:  
Katie Bennett



### Indicators of unmet need for permanent supportive housing



**132** supportive housing units  
for for young people

We currently do not have permanent supportive housing targeted for young people in Brisbane. Youth Foyers are a successful model of supportive housing for young people.



**118** supportive housing dwellings  
for families with children

There is no permanent supportive housing that meets the needs of families with complex barriers to staying housed. A successful model would include early childhood, education, training and family support, alongside tenancy supports and permanent housing.<sup>7</sup>



**449** supportive housing units  
for adults over 25

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<sup>7</sup> For more information about how supportive housing can work for families in Brisbane see Brisbane Common Ground Evaluation: Final Report and Micah Projects Business Case Keeping Families Together Report



### Indicators of Demand for permanent supportive housing for people with complex health needs.

Over a three year period Brisbane South Primary Healthcare Network reported that 769 people at intake had unmet accommodation needs, and of this group, 269 people (35.21%) had unmet needs in three or more of physical health, psychotic symptoms, psychological distress, alcohol and drug problems. This population require permanent supportive housing integrated with ongoing clinical supports to enable their exit from homelessness and improvement in wellbeing.

Arif, Brisbane  
Common Ground  
Integrated Nursing  
Service Clinical Nurse  
with a BCG tenant.

*Photography:  
Katie Bennett*



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## Strategy 5

### Integrate healthcare and include Mental Health

There is strong evidence of a compounding negative relationship between homelessness and mental and physical health and of high health care costs associated with homelessness. The best outcomes for government and individuals are found in supporting people to access primary health care that are linked with community outreach services and housing.

#### **Recommendation**

Invest \$20M across Queensland in the creation of a Community Services Innovative Health Fund for the delivery of responsive and targeted high quality health care services, to vulnerable people including homeless, to reduce health inequalities and costs.

#### **Community Goals**

Embed multidisciplinary clinical teams within community assertive outreach programs for responding to substance use, mental health and primary healthcare needs.

Establish an integrated healthcare clinic to address primary health care, mental health and substance use.

Implement medical respite for people with chronic disease and palliative care.

Pilot the Pathways to Housing model, adapted to the Australian context.

Allocate permanent housing to people with psychiatric, substance use, and chronic health conditions linked with healthcare and case management supports.



Improving discharge planning from hospitals for people who are homeless or vulnerably housed, with multiple and complex health and social support needs.

Improve health responses integrated with community services to survivors of domestic violence.

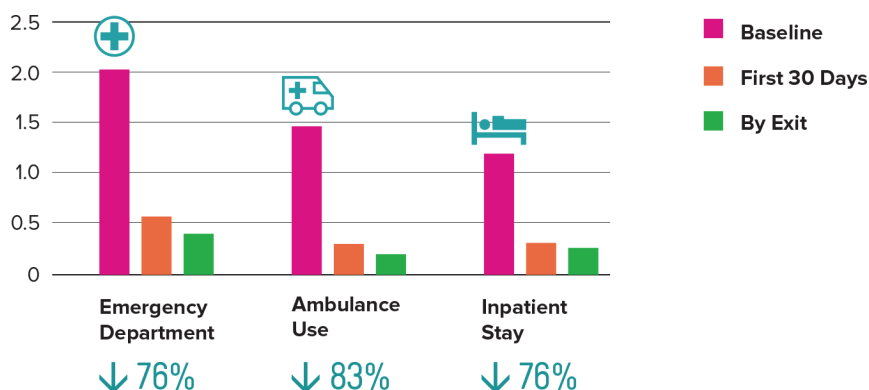
### Demonstrated Results from integrating healthcare and housing first approaches

#### Housing Plus Healthcare – Admission and Discharge Pilot project

Pathways is a post-hospital discharge service, designed to provide person-centered admission and discharge planning, care coordination, direct nursing and housing assistance, in the community.

**Hospital admissions:** Prevented unnecessary hospital re(admissions and (re)presentations to the accident and emergency departments

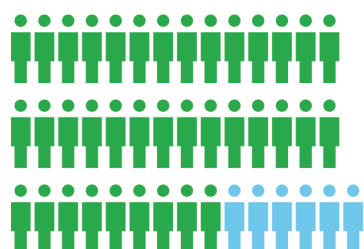
#### Average Number of Usages



**Housing:** The majority of people at entry to the service identified the hospital as their main accommodation type followed by rough-sleeping and couch-surfing at the point of entry to Pathways.

At the point of exit from the service this shifted to more stable forms of housing with no one sleeping rough.

#### Number Housed upon exiting Pathways



Exiting Pathways  
**40/46 HOUSED\***  
 in more secure forms  
 of accommodation

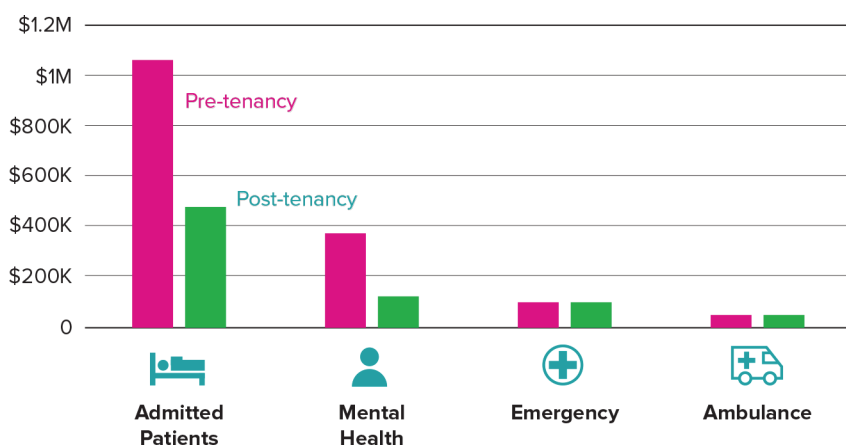
\* An audit of public housing applications in January 2016 identified an additional 8 people secured public housing not long after exiting Pathways.

### Homeless to Home Healthcare After Hours Service

The service is provided through a collaborative approach where nurses work in conjunction with a Housing First assertive outreach team.

An economic evaluation of the service<sup>8</sup> reported that the annual net social benefit is between 12.61M and 13.06M

### Common Ground Queensland Savings in health system costs for 41 tenants



Source; Brisbane Common Ground Evaluation: Final Report (2015) ISSR, University of Queensland

Brisbane data is supported by new research from Western Australia<sup>9</sup> that has demonstrated a reduction in health system costs of \$4,846 person per year with the provision of public housing and support.

<sup>8</sup> An Economic Evaluation of the Homeless to Home Healthcare After-Hours service; Professor Luke Connelly

<sup>9</sup> What are the health, social and economic benefits of providing public housing and support to formerly homeless people? (2016) AHURI

“It didn’t matter what obstacle we were faced with, the Family Support and Advocacy Team seemed to find a way to get around it.” Elisa. Elizah, Amenda, and Ellidon with their Mother Elisa.

*Photography:  
Katie Bennett*



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## Concluding Comments

We have practical experience and hard data to prove we can end homelessness in Brisbane while saving millions of dollars and hundreds of lives.

Moving to a Housing First approach is fundamental to this Roadmap for Brisbane. If we do not believe housing is the only and best solution to homelessness, we will continue to see people trapped in chronic homelessness.

The strategies in this Roadmap involve planning, collaboration and coordination between multiple government agencies, non-government organisations and the private sector. They also require Queensland Government leadership and investment.

We can no longer afford to work alone. Our commitment and collective action can end homelessness in Brisbane, one person, one family at a time.



The document  
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