

Housing & Support Ending Homeless Experience in Brisbane

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During National Homeless Persons' Week, one organisation is marking the success of a campaign aiming to house people of Brisbane who are chronically homeless.

The 50 Lives 50 Homes campaign was launched by lead agency Micah Projects in June 2010 with an initial goal of housing 50 people whose health and length of time spent homeless has made them vulnerable.

Since then a total of 332 people sleeping rough have been registered by the campaign. 89 people (27%) have now been housed in public and community managed housing.

"Most individuals continue to be supported in their housing to assist them to meet the requirements of their tenancies and access the healthcare and support services they need to not become homeless again", says Karyn Walsh, Micah Projects Coordinator.

"The campaign works to the Housing First principle: first you must house people, then you can support them to address their issues such as mental illness, poor health, disability and addiction", says Karyn.

"The next step for the people who have been housed is to invest in home-based clinical health services supporting people in the management of their significant health issues, be they physical, mental and/or behavioural. While our Street to Home workers are doing a fantastic job, supporting people at home requires the efforts of additional professional support", says Karyn.

An indication of the effectiveness of the campaign in assisting us to identify the most vulnerable has been the reality that five people who were housed this last year have since died. We knew to expect this – that some people were just too old and too sick. But the dignity of a home and an address was afforded to them before they passed away", says Karyn.

50 Lives 50 Homes is a collaborative effort between several government and community housing, healthcare and support agencies. Campaign partners include the Queensland Government Department of Communities Housing and Homelessness Services, 4Walls, Homeless Health Outreach Team, Mater Health Services and St Vincent de Paul Housing Services and Micah Projects Street to Home service.

"It's only because these organisations are working together that we are able to successfully match housing and services to the individuals who need them", says Karyn.

National Homeless Persons' Week runs from 1-7 August. Micah Projects is marking National Homeless Persons' Week with the following events:

- Wednesday 3 August 12pm - BBQ hosted by St Peter Claver College at Brisbane Homelessness Service Centre, 62 Peel St, South Brisbane
- Thursday 4 August 11am-1pm - Children and Families Photographic Exhibition at Caterpillar House, 111 Vulture St, West End
- Friday 5 August 12:30pm - Kevin Rudd's electoral office will host Kevin's Community BBQ at Brisbane Homelessness Service Centre, 62 Peel St, South Brisbane

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