



Brisbane Common Ground

October 2024

Contents

Executive Summary	2
Unpacking a systemic problem	9
The origins of long-term homelessness begin in childhood	10
For Queenslanders experiencing chronic homelessness, the system isn't working	11
Homelessness in Queensland is growing	15
Keeping people on the streets costs more than housing them	16
Just how valuable is Brisbane Common Ground?	17
Value beyond a bed	18
A whole-of-system approach to Brisbane Common Ground's benefits	19
Benefits categorisation	20

Executive Summary

It's been almost 40 years since Commonwealth and State Governments in Australia signed the first Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) Agreement.¹ Four decades and more than 400,000 social housing dwellings later; our country has made significant progress in providing homes for some of our most vulnerable people.²

Today, social housing is a critical social infrastructure within Australia – creating genuine impact on the lives of many, every day. However, there remains a cohort of people for whom the typical constructs of social housing alone are not enough. This cohort – people who have experienced chronic homelessness – are often overlooked and are unable to sustain a tenancy without access to support.

People who face chronic homelessness experience entrenched disadvantage and have been failed over their entire lives by the complex systems of our society and economy – including safety nets. These system failures transform homelessness from a temporary state to a chronic condition.

In the absence of wrap-around supports, people who have experienced chronic homelessness struggle to maintain social housing, or even gain access to it. Mental or physical disability can pose a barrier to the administrative burden required to get on the social housing wait list and can reduce one's ability to maintain their place on the list over time.

Even when provided with housing, people who experience chronic homelessness can struggle to manage. For example, a history of trauma can result in behaviour which degrades a tenant's ability to maintain social housing. Problematic substance use – in many cases borne as a coping mechanism associated with trauma – can also reduce the prospects of a person maintaining a social housing tenancy.

Importantly, these conditions compound. Amplifying their impacts on the individual and their situation, and ultimately create further barriers to accessing, or maintaining, social housing.

These conditions which impact people who have experienced chronic homelessness have been exacerbated due to an inability to access assistance and continue to embed this cohort in a place of homelessness, helplessness and insecurity.

The lack of access to medical support, social isolation and insecurity of homelessness imposes significant costs on those who have faced chronic homelessness. This cohort is at risk of premature death, with the average life expectancy 22 to 33 years lower than the general population, and those years tend to be of poor quality of life.³

The costs of chronic homelessness are not confined to the individual. Without effective support, the chronically homeless frequently depend on high-cost services over

prolonged periods – such as emergency department services. These costs weigh on society as a whole, and do not work towards a solution to the underlying problems facing people who have experienced chronic homelessness.

These costs are only set to increase, as the challenges of chronic homelessness are exacerbated by current economic conditions. As the cost-of-living crisis pushes housing further out of reach, the level of homelessness across Australia continues to grow.

Growth in demand for specialist homelessness services suggests that the overall number of Queenslanders experiencing homelessness has grown by 22% over five years.⁴

Homelessness has significantly outpaced population growth over the last five years, a trend which has only become starker since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Increasing pressure on social housing results in growing holes in the safety nets intended to support those in need. The current level of social infrastructure cannot cater to all those who need support and has limited capacity to support those with the highest needs.

The need for a targeted, dignified solution has never been clearer.

Brisbane Common Ground's (BCG) goal is to end homelessness one person at a time with the community in which they operate, through the provision of subsidised housing and wrap-around services known as supportive housing.⁵

Supportive housing is a dedicated solution for those who have been systematically failed, are highly vulnerable, and have complex needs that our current systems are not equipped for.

BCG is distinct in its solution to social housing, providing homes which are secure, long-term, safe and affordable, and include targeted wrap-around support services.

Providing a whole-of-system approach, this model achieves measurable benefits by catering to the distinct and varied ways in which people who have experienced chronic homelessness have been disadvantaged.

Brisbane Common Ground's supportive housing model is a long-term solution, designed to address the conditions that perpetuate chronic homelessness. Brisbane Common Ground works alongside social housing to ensure that more Queenslanders have a safety net, and the chance to feel safe, secure and well.

This report develops an economic framework to measure and explain how Brisbane Common Ground's provision of supportive housing benefits the chronically homeless, broader society, and government (including taxpayers).

Supportive housing delivers more than just a bed – the coordinated and whole-of-system approach generates diverse benefits from health to social cohesion.

As a cohort of people who are not well captured in census, and frequently find themselves slipping between the cracks of separate government services – this report has aimed to shed a clear light on them and the challenges that they face.

This report captures the magnitude of economic benefits, covering dividends to both the system and individual tenants and has found that...

...improvements to an individual's health, safety and social cohesion outcomes due to BCG generates \$203,700 in economic and social benefits per tenant, over their lifetime.



Brisbane Common Ground

The BCG model uses a Housing First approach to provide safe, affordable housing, with minimum exclusion criteria, as long as needed, to offer stability for individuals to rebuild their lives.

Brisbane Common Ground and Micah Projects worked in conjunction with Common Ground New York to adapt their supportive housing model to the Queensland context. This is an evidence-backed and well-used approach in the US, first established by Rosanne Haggerty.

The BCG model differentiates itself by utilising a unique model which is tailored to support and provide for people experiencing chronic homelessness.

KEY PRINCIPLES OF THE BCG MODEL



A HOUSING FIRST APPROACH

This approach recognises that the biggest barrier to a permanent solution to the homelessness condition is to provide people experiencing homelessness with a home first. Only after this stability is provided can other factors, such as mental health, be supported. This is different to other forms of social housing, which is typically Treatment First – requiring tenants to be made ‘housing ready’ before being given a home.



SECURE AND AFFORDABLE, FOR AS LONG AS NEEDED

Housing is affordable, with rent calculated based on income. Housing is secure for as long as needed, providing consistent stability to support people formerly experiencing homelessness over time.



EMBEDDED SUPPORT SERVICES

24/7 on-site security, health and social services are all embedded within the building – providing constant and easy access to essential support. Using these services or doing anything other than complying with tenancy law, however, is not a condition of being housed.



SEPARATION OF TENANCY AND SUPPORT PROVIDERS

To foster trust and ensure that the organisations tenants are seeking help from are not the same as those who collect their rent.

Note: The results presented in this document are relevant only to Brisbane Common Ground as it provides supportive housing aligned to the above principles. Other forms of social housing that do not meet this criteria are not reflected in the benefits presented.

Chronic homelessness is a system failure

Chronic homelessness can be understood as **just one symptom of a reduced capacity to interact with the complex systems, institutions and norms** that govern our society and economy, brought about by a lifetime of compounding disadvantage and trauma.



A UNIQUE COHORT WITH UNIQUE NEEDS

This cohort of people have experienced **entrenched disadvantage**, characterised by trauma and disability which have placed **social housing out of reach**.



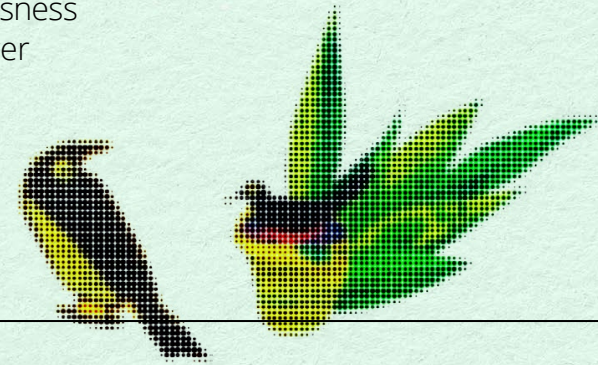
THE SYSTEM ISN'T WORKING

Safety nets – intended to catch the most vulnerable – **remain inaccessible** to people experiencing long-term homelessness.



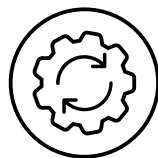
HOMELESSNESS IS INCREASING

Homelessness is growing **faster than wider population growth** - the number of Queenslanders experiencing homelessness has grown by 22% over five years.⁶



Approach to benefits estimation

The benefits delivered by Brisbane Common Ground are broad and reach beyond just the individual. In order to estimate the total value of Brisbane Common Ground, the benefits delivered have been conceptualised in two ways:



Benefits to the system

Brisbane Common Ground's provision of supportive housing represents a cost-effective solution to support the chronically homeless. This provides benefits to the system, as the chronically homeless are less dependent on government services, such as emergency department services.

⦿ **Fiscal cost offset** of supportive housing as a result of reduced usage of crisis government services whilst homeless.

⦿ **10-year avoided fiscal cost of homelessness** due to supportive housing, comparing the risk of return to homelessness when in social housing.



Benefits to the individual

Brisbane Common Ground not only effectively supports the chronically homeless access and sustain safe and secure housing, but it delivers a range of benefits for the individual. These benefits have been split into three broad categories, each using an **avoided cost approach**:

- **Health benefits:** Avoided cost of impacts to life expectancy or quality of life as a result of improved health.
- **Social cohesion:** Wellbeing outcomes as a result of reduced loneliness, delivered through community and social cohesion.
- **Safety and security:** The benefits derived from avoided consequences of insecurity, such as exposure to violence.

⦿ **Chronic illness:** The avoided cost of heart failure due to diabetes, as a result of the intensive support provided by supportive housing.

⦿ **Substance use:** Including alcohol consumption, and illicit substance use (amphetamines and cannabis), the avoided cost of the impact of substance use to quality of life.

⦿ **Loneliness:** This approach takes an avoided cost approach to health costs of loneliness, as it impacts the prevalence of disease.

⦿ **Exposure to violence:** this benefit utilises an avoided cost approach to the health impacts of exposure to assault whilst homeless.

⦿ **Domestic and family violence:** the avoided cost of the health impacts of DFV, as supportive housing provides another option for those DFV survivors who would have returned to violent partners.

Benefit to the individual:

\$203,700

per tenant who experienced chronic homelessness



Benefit to the system:

\$17,500

per tenant who experienced chronic homelessness

Improvements to an individual's health, safety and social cohesion outcomes due to BCG generates **\$203,700 in economic and social benefits per tenant, over their lifetime.**

These benefits are experienced by the individual, as supportive housing improves the quality of life and wellbeing of tenants, and consist of:



Health benefits as a result of improved life expectancy and quality of life due to access to reduced alcohol and illicit substance use.



Safety benefits as a result of reduced exposure to violence and physical assault due to the security provided by Brisbane Common Ground.



Social cohesion benefits as a result of reduced loneliness due to the social engagement delivered by Brisbane Common Ground.

The provision of housing for the those experiencing chronic homelessness avoids the higher costs of homelessness. These benefits are experienced by the wider Brisbane community and government.

This figure represents the **cost savings to government** due to reduction in use and cost of government services.⁷

Note: Additional monetised benefit streams can be found on Page 21. Benefit categories described here only account for the specific streams with the highest benefit, given that individual calculations are generally not additive due to interrelated factors.

\$455,800ⁱ

in cost savings to government over a ten year period, based on a representative cohort of previously chronically homeless tenants. Brisbane Common Ground's improved tenancy sustainment reduces the likelihood of that cohort's return to homeless, compared to social housing.



REDUCING THE FISCAL BURDEN OF HOMELESSNESS

By improving housing stability, and reducing the risk of return to homelessness, BCG delivers cost savings to government.



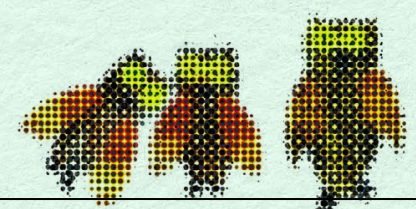
BCG AS A SOLUTION

Brisbane Common Ground helps sustain tenancies for longer, **reducing the risk of re-entry into homelessness.**



REVOLVING DOOR TENANTS

This cohort of people cannot maintain a tenancy, and frequently **cycle between homelessness and social housing.**



i. This figure is a Net Present Value (NPV), calculated over a ten-year period and discounted at a 7% discount rate.

Unpacking a systemic problem



DEFINING THE PROBLEM

The origins of long-term homelessness begin in childhood

Like most places, Queensland has a cohort of people who are long-term homeless. This cohort experiences a distinct form of social and economic disadvantage, which typically begins with a **traumatic childhood (87%)¹**.

Examples of trauma reported among long-term homeless people include:

- **Physical abuse:** Over 75% have been physically assaulted during their lives²
- **Sexual abuse:** 52% have been sexually abused³
- **State care:** A significant proportion of long-term homeless people have entered the Child Protection System during their life, with estimates ranging from 19 – 40% (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are over-represented in this cohort)⁴
- **Chronic health condition and problematic alcohol use:** Over 90% will develop a chronic health condition or alcohol problem⁵

As such, the challenges faced by long-term homeless people go far beyond the most visible indicator of their disadvantage – a lack of housing.

Rather, the condition of long-term homelessness can be understood as just one symptom of a reduced capacity to interact with the complex systems, institutions and norms that govern our society and economy, brought about by a lifetime of compounding trauma.



Defining long-term (or chronic) homelessness

Homelessness is a complex and varied form of disadvantage, that does not have a universally agreed definition. In Australia, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) definition of homelessness is adopted by the sector to measure and explain homelessness trends ^{6,7}:

When a person does not have suitable accommodation alternatives they are considered homeless if their current living arrangement:

- *is in a dwelling that is inadequate; or*
- *has no tenure, or if their initial tenure is short and not extendable; or*
- *does not allow them to have control of, and access to space for social relations.*

Within the broader category of homelessness, there is a subset of people whose experience of homelessness is both **persistent and is characterised by rooflessness or 'rough sleeping'⁸**.

This subset of people is the target cohort for Brisbane Common Ground, and unless otherwise specified, is the cohort referred to throughout this study.

DEFINING THE PROBLEM

For Queenslanders experiencing chronic homelessness, the system isn't working

Chronic homelessness as a 'system failure'

The Federal Government spends over \$200 billion on welfare payments every year⁹. In Queensland, the State Government is dedicating a further \$3.1 billion to housing and homelessness initiatives under the *Homes for Queenslanders* plan¹⁰.

These spending commitments suggest a strong community preference to address disadvantage, however they also raise the question: *why is anybody still living on the streets?*

A large part of the answer lies in the failure of systems, including social safety nets, to adequately connect with and meet the specific needs of long-term homeless people.

Without understanding this system failure, efforts to address homelessness will not meaningfully respond to the drivers of this phenomenon – leading to interventions that are less effective and higher cost.



DEFINING THE PROBLEM

System failure prevents homeless people from meeting their basic needs

Safety nets – intended to catch the most vulnerable – remain inaccessible to long-term homeless people



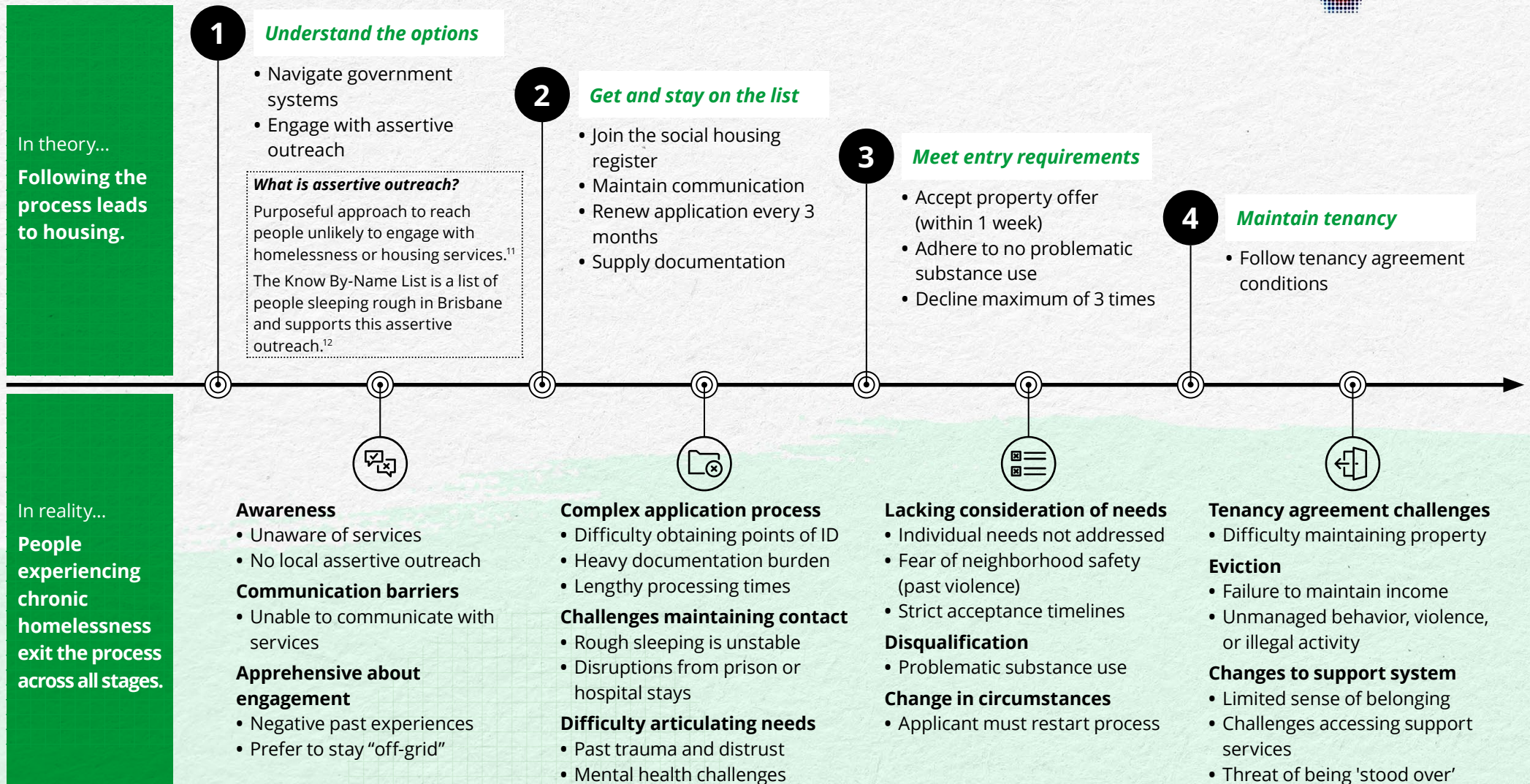
Figure 1: System failure to support long-term homeless people across six categories of essential need

Essential need	System / safety net	How system/s fail for the chronically homeless
Income	Centrelink	Application process too complex; requires a physical address/identification; complex conditions to maintain access once granted
Housing	Department of Housing; community housing providers; homeless shelters	Applicants fall off public housing waiting list; cannot meet or sustain conditions for public housing tenancy (i.e., drug/alcohol free)
Health	Medicare; Queensland Health	Barriers to access (social, economic, physical), especially preventative care
Rehabilitation (drug and alcohol)	Support workers (funded through health system); family and friends	Unsupportive environment for rehabilitation; specialist treatment for alcohol and drug use is significantly under-resourced
Security	Police; community; housing	High exposure to unsafe situations; traumatic experiences with authorities; social barriers to accessing police support
Community	Neighbourhood; community groups; sports clubs; workplace	Unstable living situation makes social participation impossible

Source: Deloitte Access Economics, based on literature review and stakeholder consultations

PROBLEM IN FOCUS

Why do the chronically homeless fall off the list?



Hurdles at every step lead to the chronically homeless exiting the process.

People experiencing chronic homelessness face systemic barriers when trying to access social housing. These barriers are driven not only by the complexity and rigor of the application process but also by the severe disadvantage faced from the outset, such as unfamiliarity with services, mental health, and unstable living conditions.

The Brisbane Common Ground model aims to mitigate many of these issues to provide a more sustainable pathway out of chronic homelessness.



Source: Deloitte Access Economics, based on literature review and stakeholder consultations

DEFINING THE PROBLEM

Homelessness in Queensland is growing

A significant and growing problem

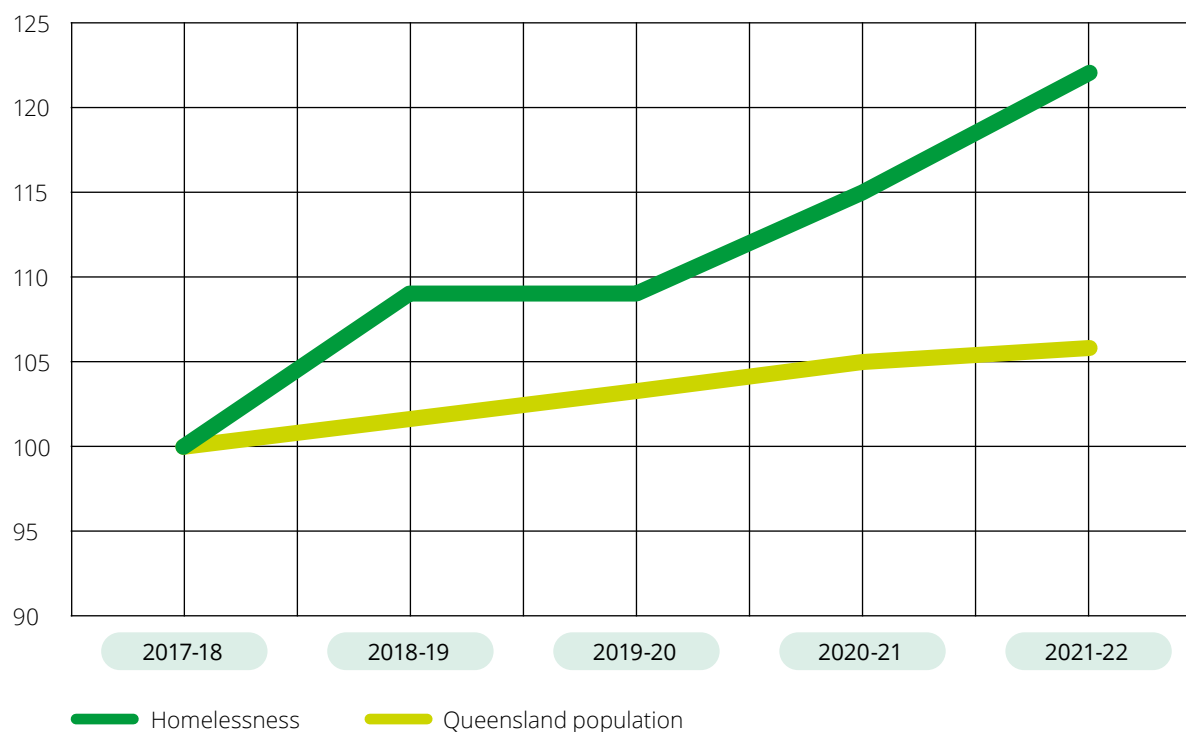
Despite investments in homelessness initiatives by governments, homelessness is rising faster than population growth, leading to more people living on the streets every year.

Growth in demand for specialist homelessness services suggests that the overall number of homeless people in Queensland has grown by 22% over five years¹³. While this growth likely includes a large cohort of people experiencing acute hardship due to rising housing costs, it has significant implications for long-term homelessness:

- **Growth of the long-term homeless cohort over time:** As greater numbers of people experience any form of homelessness – including temporary homelessness – those among this group who cannot access suitable accommodation over the medium-term may find themselves chronically homeless.
- **Competition for resources:** Higher demand for homelessness services overall risks a situation where long-term homeless people face even greater barriers to accessing resources and social supports including housing and health services.

As homelessness grows in Queensland, this will impose higher and higher costs on both the system and the individuals affected.

Figure 3: Demand for specialist homelessness services over five years (indexed)



Source: QCOSS, based on AIHW monthly SHSC statistics

DEFINING THE PROBLEM

Keeping people on the streets costs more than housing them

Unpacking the costs of homelessness

There is extensive literature on the costs of homelessness, and the avoided costs (or benefits) associated with interventions to support homeless people. In this analysis, the costs of homelessness are grouped into two broad categories:

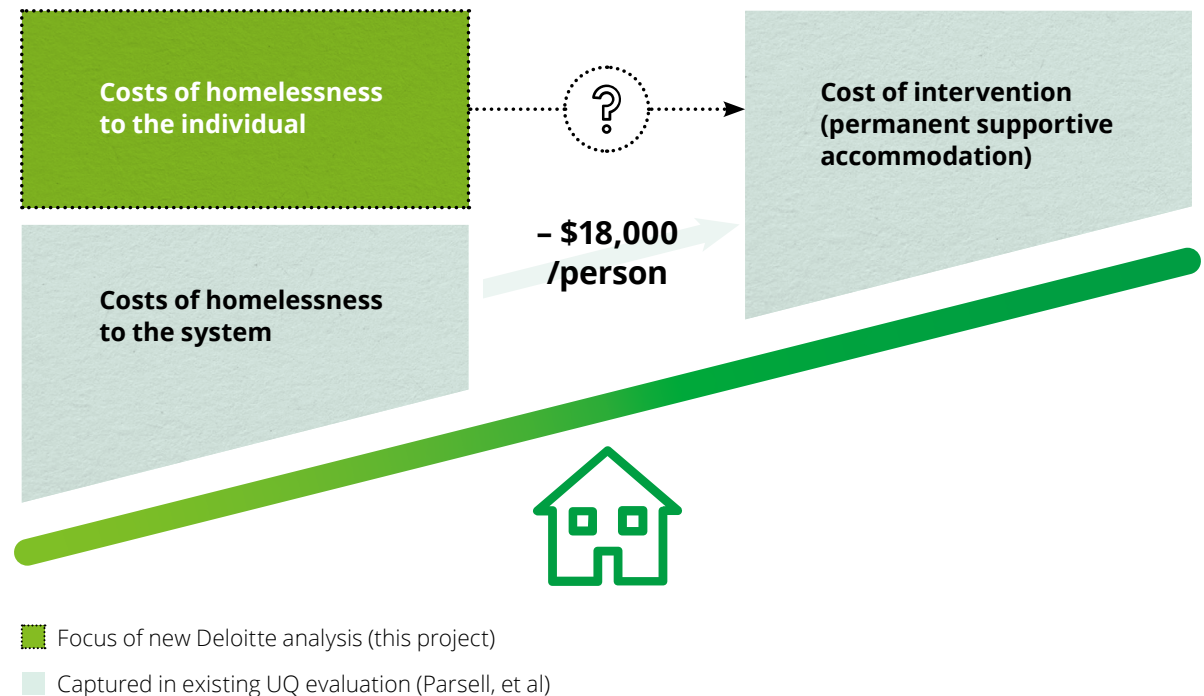
- **Costs to the system:** Homeless people interact with government agencies at a higher rate than non-homeless people, expending operational time and resources. For example, homeless people are admitted to hospital due to acute health issues, which would not have occurred if they had access to preventative care.

A previous evaluation by UQ researchers found that the reduction in these costs associated with a person's entry into Brisbane Common Ground resulted in a total saving to the system of \$18,000 per tenant, including the cost of overheads to deliver the Brisbane Common Ground supportive housing model¹⁴.

- **Costs to the individual:** Homeless people experience a range of costs associated with homelessness, including poorer health outcomes, loneliness, and physical danger from violence. These costs are the focus of the analysis undertaken for this project.

The literature already establishes that the **cost to the system of keeping people on the streets is higher than providing supportive housing** – this study goes a step further in asking **how supportive housing benefits the individual tenant**.

Figure 4: Representation of the trade-off between the costs of homelessness and the costs of intervention (Brisbane Common Ground supportive housing model)



Source: Parsell, et al.

Just how valuable is Brisbane Common Ground?



JUST HOW VALUABLE IS BRISBANE COMMON GROUND?

Value beyond a bed

The value of Brisbane Common Ground to the chronically homeless, the Brisbane community, and to government, simply cannot be overstated. Current economic conditions have shed light on the homelessness challenge facing Queensland, with growing numbers of families and individuals finding themselves unable to afford market-rate housing.

However, what often remains overlooked are those who experience such entrenched disadvantage and vulnerability that homelessness has become a chronic condition.

It is this cohort of people who have faced systematic disadvantage across their lives - leading to homelessness - and continue to face entrenched disadvantage, which prevents access to the pathways out of homelessness. Specifically, the confluence of disability, trauma, problematic substance use, physical and mental health challenges (amongst other factors) compounds with persistent adversity, creating barriers to the ability to care for oneself and access to social housing.

As a result, there is a need to specifically target this cohort, which currently are not being effectively supported by social housing and mainstream services. An effective solution requires a bespoke, co-ordinated effort that provides targeted supports that goes beyond what any siloed government service can provide.

Supportive housing has been well-established to deliver this solution - providing a whole-of-system approach which effectively caters to the various aspects in which the chronically homeless are disadvantaged, ensuring that all needs are catered for to enable positive outcomes.

Further, supportive housing delivers a long-term approach to a chronic problem - acknowledging that many of the underlying reasons for chronic homelessness are complex and interrelated, requiring continued support over an extended period to generate improved outcomes.

Significant work has also been done to establish the costs of homelessness in comparison to that of the solution. Overwhelmingly, from extensive studies in the US on supportive housing¹, and thorough analysis on Brisbane Common Ground², it has been found that the cost of homelessness to government far outweighs the cost of supportive housing, on a per tenant basis. The effectiveness of supportive housing as a holistic intervention results in reduced use of government services across various areas, such as health and justice.

This is a costly problem to have, but not a costly problem to solve.

The benefits of supportive housing go beyond the reduced interactions with government services. Supportive housing presents a dignified solution to the systematic failure to

support a cohort of people who are currently unable to access the government services designed to help them.

This solution not only acts as an intervention to house the chronically homeless, but it represents an opportunity to create the conditions for autonomous living and participation in the community. Facilitated through the profound benefits it creates by supporting the health outcomes of individuals with complex needs, enabling community and connection, and providing safety and security.

The centralised provision of multiple services to cater to the needs of people facing chronic homelessness also creates efficiency compared to the siloed provisions of individual government services. This 'co-ordination benefit' generates savings for government, as a co-ordinated approach to responding to multiple needs in an integrated manner is more effective.

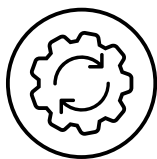
These benefits are significant, but also hard to define. As such, the true value of supportive housing has been often undervalued by focusing solely on the direct fiscal benefits. Whilst cost savings to government are important and significant, there is a need to reflect the full benefit supportive housing delivers to people experiencing chronic homelessness and wider society.



JUST HOW VALUABLE IS BRISBANE COMMON GROUND?

A whole-of-system approach to Brisbane Common Ground's benefits

The benefits delivered by Brisbane Common Ground are broad and reach beyond just the individual. In order to estimate the total value of Brisbane Common Ground, the benefits delivered have been conceptualised in two ways:



Benefits to the system

Brisbane Common Ground's provision of supportive housing represents a cost-effective solution to support the chronically homeless. This provides benefits to the system, as the chronically homeless are less dependent on government services, such as emergency department services.

Further, supportive housing delivers an efficient solution to the co-ordination of systems required to effectively respond to the needs of the chronically homeless. By centralising and distributing these services, Brisbane Common Ground delivers an additional co-ordination benefit which generates additional savings for government.



Benefits to the individual

Brisbane Common Ground not only effectively supports the chronically homeless access and sustain safe and secure housing, but it delivers a range of benefits for the individual. These benefits have been split into three broad categories:

- **Health benefits:** Improvements to life expectancy or quality of life as a result of improved health.
- **Social cohesion:** Wellbeing outcomes as a result of reduced loneliness, delivered through community and social cohesion.
- **Safety and security:** The benefits derived from avoided consequences of insecurity, such as exposure to violence.

Across benefits to the system and benefits to the individual, Brisbane Common Ground generates significant value through several different ways.

Some of the benefits explored in this report can be quantified, to highlight the magnitude of impact Brisbane Common Ground has. However, there are a large array of qualitative benefits that equally creates significant value, but are intangible and not monetisable. An overview to some of the identified qualitative benefits and estimated quantitative benefits can be found on page 20.

JUST HOW VALUABLE IS BRISBANE COMMON GROUND?

Benefits Categorisation

Benefit category	Benefit stream	
Fiscal Benefits	The avoided cost of health service interactions	Quantified
	The avoided cost of justice service interactions	Quantified
	The avoided cost of homelessness service interactions	Quantified
Health Benefits	The avoided loss of life due to chronic illness	Quantified
	Avoided loss of life due to problematic substance use	Quantified
	The avoided cost of mental illness, such as schizophrenia	
	The avoided loss of life due to suicide	
Safety and Security Benefits	The avoided cost exposure to assault and violence	Quantified
	The avoided cost of pain and suffering from DFV	Quantified
	The avoided cost of unsupported perpetrators returning to victims	
Social Cohesion Benefits	The avoided cost of loneliness	Quantified
	The avoided cost of hopelessness	
	The avoided cost of the alienation of the homeless	
	The benefit of improved autonomy	

Brisbane Common Ground has a profound impact on its tenants, and the community in which it operates. Where possible, these benefits have been quantified in order to accurately articulate the magnitude of impact for each benefit stream.

Quantification presented in this analysis, however, will ultimately be an underrepresentation due to the number of benefits that could not be quantified due to three key reasons:

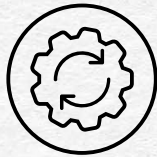
- 1. Data limitations** due to 1) infancy of supportive housing in Australia and limited studies in the US, and 2) analysis of complex health characteristics require longitudinal studies over extended periods.
- 2. Interrelated factors** inherent to homelessness complicate analysis on one specific factor. For example, mental health is correlated with physical health and substance use – impeding identification of the impact of a single factor.
- 3. Qualitative benefits** are significant and have broad impacts which can profoundly change the way tenants, and the broader community, lives.

At its heart, Brisbane Common Ground provides its tenants with stability, which is a necessary condition for further life improvements, such as the ability to regain autonomy. The ability to be dependent and make choices that can improve the direction of one's life is a huge benefit, which while not monetisable, can entirely change a life for the better.

Brisbane Common Ground's benefits also amplify beyond the individual – a clear example of this is the avoided cost of unsupported perpetrators returning to victims, or instilling violence on new victims. Brisbane Common Ground provides a safe space in which past perpetrators can resolve the underlying challenges that manifest in violence. As a result, Brisbane Common Ground not only generates benefits for the tenant, but also creates wider societal benefits through reduced violence.

JUST HOW VALUABLE IS BRISBANE COMMON GROUND?

The System and Individual Benefits of Brisbane Common Ground



Benefits to the system

\$17,500 per tenant who experienced chronic homelessnessⁱⁱ



Brisbane Common Ground's provision of supportive housing delivers cost savings to the Government – **saving \$17,500 per tenant housed.**

\$455,800 for a notional cohort of tenantsⁱⁱⁱ



Supportive housing helps sustain tenancies for longer, reducing the risk of re-entry into homelessness. As a result, for a representative cohort of previously chronically homeless tenants, Brisbane Common Ground's provision of **supportive housing generates \$455,800 in cost savings to government** over a ten year period, compared to social housing.

ii. This figure represents the value derived after the first year of tenancy at BCG.

iii. This figure is a Net Present Value (NPV), calculated over a ten-year period and discounted at a 7% discount rate.

iv. All benefits to the individual values represents the lifetime avoided cost per tenant.

v. Note that this overarching figure consists of the health benefits due to reduced substance use, safety benefits from avoided cost of injury, and social cohesion benefits from reduced loneliness.



Benefits to the individual

\$203,700 per tenant who experienced chronic homelessness^{iv,v}



Improved access to medical support for tenants with chronic illness can mean improved life expectancy. This generates **\$3,300 in health benefits** per previously chronically homeless tenant.

Access to mental health support and stable housing can help tenants reduce their use of alcohol and illicit substances. By reducing alcohol and illicit substance use, this generates **\$187,300 in health benefits through improved quality of life** per previously chronically homeless tenant.



Exposure to violence and injury is reduced for tenants as part of the Brisbane Common Ground model. This can generate **\$13,000 in avoided costs of injury from physical assault** per previously chronically homeless tenant.

The safety and security delivered by Brisbane Common Ground can reduce the risk of DFV survivors returning to violent partners. This can generate **\$2,700 in avoided pain, suffering and premature mortality** per previously chronically homeless tenant.



Social cohesion is integral to the Brisbane Common Ground model, helping to reduce loneliness amongst tenants. This can generate **\$3,400 in avoided costs of loneliness** per previously chronically homeless tenant.



JUST HOW VALUABLE IS BRISBANE COMMON GROUND?

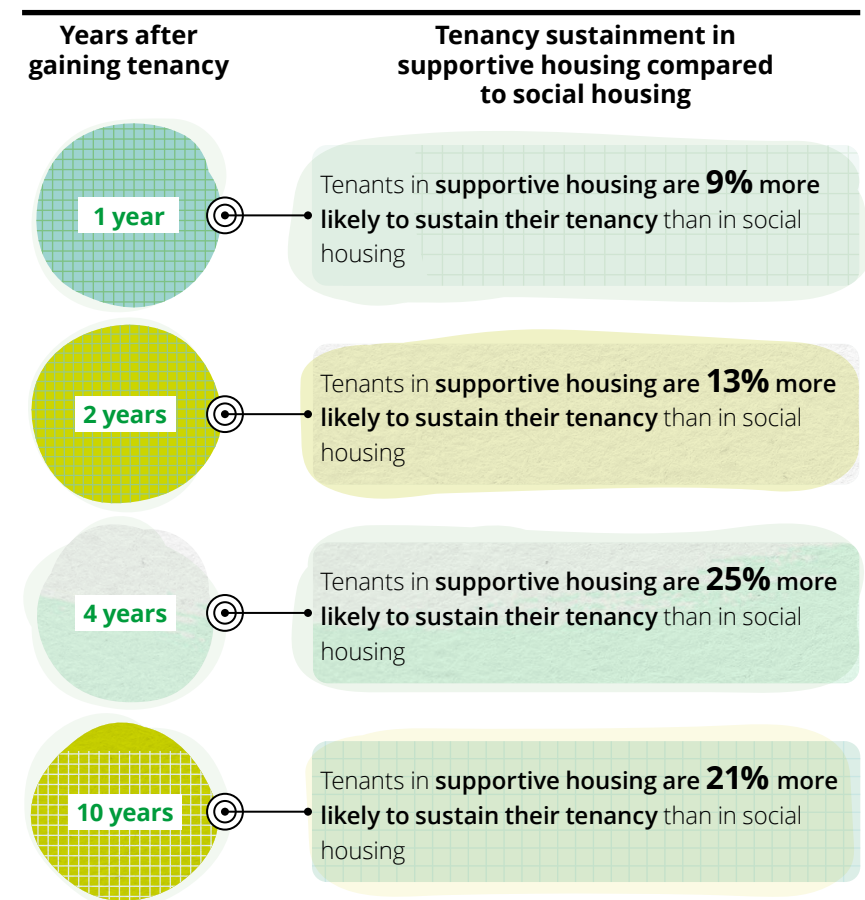
It costs more to keep someone homeless than to provide them with the support they need to live autonomously

Rather than cost the government, each tenant supported at Brisbane Common Ground saves the government almost \$17,500 per tenant, each year.³

People who have experienced chronic homelessness are often severely disadvantaged, with disability or having experienced trauma. As a result, they need extensive support and face barriers to accessing it. This leads to frequent and costly use of crisis government services, such as health, homelessness and justice services.⁴ However, use of crisis services cannot create permanent improvements or impacts for the chronically homeless and are, as such, often an ineffective response without a coordinated intervention. Brisbane Common Ground provides this 'co-ordination benefit' – a multifaceted approach, removing barriers and improving the effectiveness of interventions which in turn delivers significant cost savings to the government.

The cost savings of supportive housing are not, however, isolated to comparisons with homelessness. Supportive housing enhances housing stability, with wrap-around supports producing broad outcomes, such as health and social cohesion benefits, which all work towards better tenancy sustainment. BCG's improved tenancy sustainment reduces the likelihood of the return to homeless, compared to social housing. As such, for a representative cohort of previously chronically homeless tenants, **BCG generates \$455,800^{vi} in cost savings to government over a ten year period, compared to social housing^{vii}.**

In contrast, tenants with complex needs, such as behavioural issues resulting from mental illness and trauma, in social housing may be more likely to early exit due to struggles with self-care, property maintenance, and tenancy management. These tenants risk becoming "revolving door tenants", who cannot maintain a tenancy, and frequently cycle between homelessness and housed in social housing.⁵



vi. This figure is a Net Present Value (NPV), calculated over a ten-year period and discounted at a 7% discount rate.

vii. Note that this is a conservative estimate, as it draws on data from tenancy sustainment's amongst a notional social housing cohort. It does not directly compare the tenancy sustainment for vulnerable persons with complex needs in social housing to when in supportive housing.



JUST HOW VALUABLE IS BRISBANE COMMON GROUND?

Homelessness exacerbates health conditions of vulnerable individuals, degrading quality of life and increasing the risk of premature mortality

Brisbane Common Ground offers stable housing and access to physical and mental health services through the Health & Wellness Hub and on-site nurse. This **stability and permanency supports consistent medical support and medication**, improving health outcomes, such as life expectancy, for tenants with chronic illness.

Tenants who have experienced chronic homelessness frequently face, or are kept in, homelessness as a result of debilitating chronic illness, such as heart disease or cancer.⁶ Such poor health can undermine a person's ability to care for themselves and maintain housing. As a result, **the health consequences of homelessness can also create barriers to accessing social housing**. Supportive housing effectively addresses these health needs with comprehensive support that enhances health interventions.

The problematic use of alcohol and illicit drugs amongst the homeless can exacerbate health conditions and lead to degraded quality of life or early mortality. However, problematic substance use is, largely, a symptom of homelessness with two-thirds of people who experience homeless and use alcohol and drugs reporting to have developed problems with substances following homelessness.⁷

Brisbane Common Ground helps tenants reduce substance use in a way that respects their independence and needs. Programs such as safe needle/syringe access, and referrals to external programs, support long-term reductions in substance use, improving the quality of life and life expectancy of tenants.



For the average chronically homeless tenant...

\$3,300

Improved access to medical support for tenants with chronic illness can mean improved life expectancy. This generates **\$3,300 in health benefits** per previously chronically homeless tenant.

\$187,300

Access to health support and stable housing can help tenants reduce their use of alcohol and illicit substances. By reducing alcohol and illicit substance use, this generates **\$187,300 in health benefits through improved quality of life** per previously chronically homeless tenant.



JUST HOW VALUABLE IS BRISBANE COMMON GROUND?

The constant feeling of being unsafe is endemic to the experience of homelessness

Safety and security is core to Brisbane Common Ground's offering, with 24/7 building security allowing tenants control over who enters their space. **The persistent feeling of insecurity has a significant toll on most who experience homelessness.**⁸ Without stable housing, individuals face constant physical, emotional, and mental risks.

The physical lack of safety for people experiencing homelessness can lead to exposure to violence and injury.⁹ As such, persistent insecurity can have a toll on mental health, quality of life and wellbeing. Trauma from violent experiences can also hinder the transition from a space of constant exposure to violence and crime, to that of security – risking return to homelessness. Additionally, the vulnerability of people experiencing homelessness can lead to exploitation, with bullying and harassment forcing some to leave their tenancy.

Security is particularly beneficial for those who have faced domestic and family violence in the past, establishing a secure environment away from perpetrators and reducing the risk of return to violent family or partners.

Domestic violence is a leading cause of homelessness, especially amongst women and children.¹⁰ The combined impacts of homelessness, trauma and insecurity can have significant implications for long-term health and wellbeing, including increased risk of premature mortality.

As such, the safety provided by Brisbane Common Ground greatly impacts all tenants by reducing their exposure to violence and injury. Having a place to call home, that cannot be taken by force or manipulation presents substantial benefits that can only be partially captured here.



For the average chronically homeless tenant...

\$13,000

Exposure to violence and injury is reduced for tenants as part of the Brisbane Common Ground model. This can generate **\$13,000 in avoided costs of injury from physical assault** per previously chronically homeless tenant.

\$2,700

The safety and security delivered by Brisbane Common Ground can reduce the risk of DFV survivors returning to violent partners. This can generate **\$2,700 in avoided pain, suffering and premature mortality** per previously chronically homeless tenant.



JUST HOW VALUABLE IS BRISBANE COMMON GROUND?

Social isolation and loneliness is entrenched through homelessness

Community and social cohesion are central to the Brisbane Common Ground model, with planned social activities that foster greater connection within the building and with the community. This stability and support helps tenants build connections with family, friends, and neighbours, reducing feelings of loneliness and isolation. Brisbane Common Ground also works to reduce stigma associated with chronic homelessness, enhancing tenants' well-being by mitigating the health effects of social isolation.

Separation from family and friends often contributes to homelessness, making it harder for vulnerable persons to find help when faced with unforeseen disruption to their lives, such as lost employment or ended tenancies.¹¹ This **social isolation and loneliness is only further entrenched through homelessness and can lead to stigma and discrimination.**

Loneliness and isolation impact both mental and physical health¹², leading to deterioration of well-being, psychological distress, and premature mortality. Loneliness can also hinder access to social housing as the lack of community support and connections can make the administrative burden of navigating government systems overwhelming. This is further exacerbated when coupled with disabilities or health conditions that present barriers to seeking help from government services.



For the average chronically homeless tenant...

\$3,400

Social cohesion is integral to the Brisbane Common Ground model, helping to reduce loneliness amongst tenants. This can generate **\$3,400 in avoided costs of loneliness** per previously chronically homeless tenant.

Remedying hopelessness

The feeling of hopelessness can be a significant risk factor for mental and behavioural disorders. This feeling can be exacerbated by stressful life events, such as becoming homeless, and can manifest in anti-social behaviour, such as aggression.

However, Brisbane Common Ground's approach to community and social cohesion helps to reduce this feeling amongst tenants, curtailing the negative consequences of hopelessness. This provides benefits to both the individual, alongside the general community as the prevalence of violence can be reduced.

APPENDIX 1

Endnotes

Executive Summary

1. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, (2010), Government-funded specialist homelessness services: SAAP National Data Collection annual report 2008-09 Australia. Cat. no. HOU 219, <https://www.aihw.gov.au/getmedia/bdd85a43-9ce3-4b71-960c-ec091d8f302c/supported-accommodation-assistance-program-2008-09.pdf.aspx>
2. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, (2024), Housing assistance in Australia 2024, <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/housing-assistance/housing-assistance-in-australia/contents/social-housing-dwellings>
3. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, (2024), Health of people experiencing homelessness, <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/australias-health/health-of-people-experiencing-homelessness>
4. H. "Pawson, A. Clarke, J. Moore, R. van den Nouwelant, M. Ng, (2023), A blueprint to tackle Queensland's housing crisis, <https://www.qcoss.org.au/publication/report-a-blueprint-to-tackle-queenslands-housing-crisis/>
5. Common Ground Queensland (2024), About Us, <https://commongroundqld.org.au/about-us/>
6. H. "Pawson, A. Clarke, J. Moore, R. van den Nouwelant, M. Ng, (2023), A blueprint to tackle Queensland's housing crisis, <https://www.qcoss.org.au/publication/report-a-blueprint-to-tackle-queenslands-housing-crisis/>
7. C. Parsell, M. Petersen, O. Moutou, D. Culhane, E. Lucio, A. Dick, (2015), Evaluation of the Brisbane Brisbane Common Ground Initiative, The University of Queensland Institute for Social Science Research. Retrieved from: <https://commongroundqld.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/2015-UQ-ISSR020387-Final-Report.pdf>

Unpacking a systemic problem

1. G. Johnson, et al, 2011, Long-term homelessness: Understanding the challenge – 12 month outcomes from the Journey to Social Inclusion pilot program, Sacred Heart Mission, <https://www.sacredheartmission.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/j2si-long-term-homelessness-12-month-evaluation-2011.pdf>.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. P. Flatau, et al, 2013, Lifetime and intergenerational experiences of homelessness in Australia, AHURI, Final Report No. 200, https://www.ahuri.edu.au/sites/default/files/migration/documents/AHURI_Final_Report_No200_Lifetime-and-intergenerational-experiences-of-homelessness-in-Australia.pdf.
5. Ibid.
6. ABS, (2012) A Statistical Definition of Homelessness, Catalogue No 4922.0, Retrieved from: <https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Latestproducts/4922.0Main%20Features22012?opendocument&tabname=Summary&prodno=4922.0&issue=2012&num=&view=>
7. Homelessness Australia, (2024), About Homelessness, <https://homelessnessaustralia.org.au/about-homelessness/>
8. C. Parsell, M. Petersen, O. Moutou, D. Culhane, E. Lucio, A. Dick, (2015), Evaluation of the Brisbane Common Ground Initiative, The University of Queensland Institute for Social Science Research. Retrieved from: <https://commongroundqld.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/2015-UQ-ISSR020387-Final-Report.pdf>
9. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, (2023), Welfare expenditure, <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/australias-welfare/welfare-expenditure>
10. Department of Housing, Local Government, Planning and Public Works, (2024), Increasing social housing supply, <https://www.housing.qld.gov.au/initiatives/increasing-social-housing-supply>
11. Council to Homeless Persons, (2019), Assertive Outreach Resource, <https://chp.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Assertive-outreach-resource.pdf>
12. Brisbane Zero, (2024), Know By-Name List, <https://www.brisbanezero.org.au/media/ljgno0nw/by-name-list-brisbane-zero-facsheets-2022-23.pdf>
13. H. Pawson, A. Clarke, J. Moore, R. van den Nouwelant, M. Ng, (2023), A blueprint to tackle Queensland's housing crisis, <https://www.qcoss.org.au/publication/report-a-blueprint-to-tackle-queenslands-housing-crisis/>
14. C. Parsell, M. Petersen, O. Moutou, D. Culhane, E. Lucio, A. Dick, (2015), Evaluation of the Brisbane Brisbane Common Ground Initiative, The University of Queensland Institute for Social Science Research. Retrieved from: <https://commongroundqld.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/2015-UQ-ISSR020387-Final-Report.pdf>

Just how valuable is Brisbane Common Ground?

1. S. Lim, T., Singh, G. Hall, S. Walters, and L. Gould, (2018), Impact of a New York City Supportive Housing Program on Housing Stability and Preventable Health Care among Homeless Families, *Health Services Research*. 53(5): 3437-3454. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6153151/>; Y. Peng et al. (2020), Permanent Supportive Housing with Housing First to Reduce Homelessness and Promote Health among Homeless Population with Disability: A Community Guide Systematic Review. *Journal of Public Health Management Practice*. 26(5): 404-411. DOI:10.1097/PHH.0000000000001219.
2. C. Parsell, M. Petersen, O. Moutou, D. Culhane, E. Lucio, A. Dick, (2015), Evaluation of the Brisbane Brisbane Common Ground Initiative, The University of Queensland Institute for Social Science Research. Retrieved from: <https://commongroundqld.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/2015-UQ-ISSR020387-Final-Report.pdf>
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. T. Seelig, M. O'Flaherty, M. Haynes, and H. Han, (2008), Housing consumption patterns and earnings behaviour of income support recipients over time, Final Report No. 118. Retrieved from: <https://www.ahuri.edu.au/research/final-reports/118>
6. Brisbane Zero, (2024), Reducing Homelessness. Retrieved from: <https://www.brisbanezero.org.au/reduce>
7. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, (2024), Alcohol, tobacco & other drugs in Australia, Retrieved from: <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/alcohol/alcohol-tobacco-other-drugs-australia/contents/priority-populations/people-experiencing-homelessness>
8. H. Hsu, J. Simon, B. Henwood, S. Wenzel, and J. Couture, (2016), Location, Location, Location: Perceptions of Safety and Security Among Formerly Homeless Persons Transitioned to Permanent Supportive Housing, *Journal Of the Society for Social Research*. 7(1): 65-88. DOI: 10.1086/685034.
9. R. Petering, W. La Motte-Ker, and S. Wenzel, (2019), Changes in Physical Assault Among Adults Moving into Permanent Supportive Housing, *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*. 36(15-15). DOI: 10.1177/0886260519844775.
10. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, (2020), Specialist homelessness services annual report 2019-20, Retrieved from: <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/homelessness-services/shs-annual-report-2019-20/contents/client-groups>
11. Y. Yuan, K. Knight., J. Weeks, S. King, P. Olsen, and M. Kushel. Loneliness amongst homeless-experienced older adults with cognitive or functional impairments: qualitative findings from the HOPE HOME study, *BMC Public Health*. 24: 549. DOI: 10.1186/s12889-024-18052-5. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC10885402/>
12. Ibid

Acknowledgments

Deloitte Access Economics acknowledges and thanks all who have contributed to the development of this report.

We would like to thank Dr Cameron Parsell, at the University of Queensland, for his knowledge, expertise and guidance throughout the development of this report.

We would also like to thank Karyn Walsh, Chief Executive Officer at Micah Projects, for providing insights into homelessness in the Queensland context.

We thank Liz Drapa and Kim Keaton, from the Corporation for Supportive Housing, for the insights shared on the supportive housing model and its implementation in the US context.

Finally, we would like to thank the residents of Brisbane Common Ground.

Contact Us



Claire Ibrahim

Partner, Deloitte Access Economics
cibrahim@deloitte.com.au



Rebecca Roberts

Partner, Strategy Consulting
rebroberts@deloitte.com.au



Limitation of our work

General use restriction

This report is prepared solely for the internal use of Brisbane Common Ground. This report is not intended to and should not be used or relied upon by anyone else and we accept no duty of care to any other person or entity. The report has been prepared for the purpose set out in our contract. You should not refer to or use our name or the advice for any other purpose.

Deloitte refers to one or more of Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu Limited ("DTTL"), its global network of member firms, and their related entities (collectively, the "Deloitte organisation"). DTTL (also referred to as "Deloitte Global") and each of its member firms and related entities are legally separate and independent entities, which cannot obligate or bind each other in respect of third parties. DTTL and each DTTL member firm and related entity is liable only for its own acts and omissions, and not those of each other. DTTL does not provide services to clients. Please see www.deloitte.com/about to learn more.

Deloitte is a leading global provider of audit and assurance, consulting, financial advisory, risk advisory, tax and related services. Our global network of member firms and related entities in more than 150 countries and territories (collectively, the "Deloitte organisation" serves four out of five Fortune Global 500® companies. Learn how Deloitte's approximately 312,000 people make an impact that matters at www.deloitte.com.

Deloitte Asia Pacific

Deloitte Asia Pacific Limited is a company limited by guarantee and a member firm of DTTL. Members of Deloitte Asia Pacific Limited and their related entities, each of which are separate and independent legal entities, provide services from more than 100 cities across the region, including Auckland, Bangkok, Beijing, Hanoi, Hong Kong, Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur, Manila, Melbourne, Osaka, Seoul, Shanghai, Singapore, Sydney, Taipei and Tokyo.

Deloitte Australia

The Australian partnership of Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu is a member of Deloitte Asia Pacific Limited and the Deloitte organisation. As one of Australia's leading professional services firms, Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu and its affiliates provide audit, tax, consulting, risk advisory, and financial advisory services through approximately 8000 people across the country. Focused on the creation of value and growth, and known as an employer of choice for innovative human resources programs, we are dedicated to helping our clients and our people excel. For more information, please visit our web site at <https://www2.deloitte.com/au/en.html>.

Liability limited by a scheme approved under Professional Standards Legislation.
Member of Deloitte Asia Pacific Limited and the Deloitte organisation.