



## 6<sup>th</sup> Newsletter 2013

### Common Ground Canberra

**Welcome to the 6th newsletter** of Common Ground Canberra.

#### From the Board

The ACT Government has established a Reference Group consisting of some of the members of the Common Ground Board, ACT Government representatives and an independent community member to progress the Common Ground development for Canberra. There is a strong commitment to this from the ACT Government. The responsible Minister, Shane Rattenbury, has taken a strong personal interest in making sure it gets off the ground.

The committee has been considering a selection of possible sites for the development, and has now agreed on a preferred site that will be highly suitable, near to community facilities and public transport links. It is available now, which means that building can start once the essential preliminaries such as surveys, site works and building plans are done. Work on the architectural brief has already started.

The Common Ground Canberra Board anticipates that the ACT Government will make announcements about the

project in the forthcoming ACT Budget, and until then there is not much more detail that we can provide because of budget confidentiality. However, it would be fair to say that significant progress has been made recently and that the Common Ground project is finally moving towards becoming a reality.

#### Three Short Films on Homelessness in Canberra launched

With recent census data showing the rate of **homelessness** in the ACT has jumped by 70 per cent in the past five years, the reality of homelessness in Canberra has been exposed in three short films which were premiered in November 2012.

The films are by award-winning Melbourne film-makers Mike Hill and Sue Collins, best known for their highly acclaimed film on palliative care called 'Life Before Death'.

The national premier – hosted by Andrew Leigh MP and the Common Ground Canberra – was held 27 November 2012 at Parliament House, Canberra.



The films will be used to raise awareness of the campaign to end homelessness in Canberra.

“With generous support from Thyne Reid Foundation, these three short films were commissioned to highlight the plight of those who find themselves homelessness in the ACT and to raise awareness and support for the Common Ground Canberra housing project,” said Diane Kargas AM, a Director on the Common Ground Canberra Board which is behind the project.

It is hoped Canberra’s social media community will get behind the project with the three films are available on You Tube and the Documentary Australia Foundation. There are links from our website

[www.commongroundcanberra.org.au](http://www.commongroundcanberra.org.au)

Ms Kargas explained that much has been said about homelessness in Canberra and the region over the last few years.

“We are told that the chronic causes of homelessness are often; mental illness, marriage breakdown, low income and the difficulty in keeping employment, but since the GFC we are seeing a new level of poverty being housing stress.”



Including Richard Brown, Liz Dawson and Diane Kargas at the film launch

The first of three documentary films features Richard and Danielle struggling on a daily basis against homelessness in our nation's capital.

In the second film, the well-known head of Lifeline in Canberra, Mike Zissler, is the guinea pig in a social experiment that plucks a Canberra resident out of their comfort zone, strips them of their finery and deposits them on the streets without a phone, money and no way to reach friends or family members. Where do they turn? How do they feel? What do they learn?

The final film is a multi-dimensional investigation of the problem, presenting a clear roadmap on how to solve homelessness in Canberra.

Diane Kargas explained that the Common Ground model is a positive solution to homelessness and stresses that the model needs the support of Government, business and philanthropic individuals to make it happen.

“Our program to help end homelessness in Canberra will deliver permanent, supportive accommodation to previously homeless people and those on low incomes. Not only will it fill a growing need for secure and safe accommodation for those who are most vulnerable, but it will help ease the housing affordability crisis for people on low incomes.”

Ms Kargas said that the key to the success of the project is “a collaborative approach between government, the community and private sector.”



"We have worked closely with the ACT Government to develop a feasibility study for the project, which has demonstrated a clear need for a program of this kind in Canberra. Further funding has been set aside to look at the next steps.

Our partnership with the ACT Government, business and the community will be critical to the success of the project. While the ACT Government and others have shown strong support for the project to date, what is now needed is a commitment from Government to fund the capital development. This will provide a solid basis for attracting further financial and other support from the private sector, philanthropic organisations and community members,," she said.



Shane Rattenbury MLA and Liz Dawson at the Parliament House launch of the Common Ground films

## Thank you for supporting Common Ground Canberra

### How to Donate

Send a cheque directly to GreaterGood, The Capital Region Community Foundation for the Common Ground Gift Fund, attention to the Public Trustee of the ACT, PO Box 221, Civic Square, ACT, 2608.

Provide your name and address for a receipt to be sent **OR**

Donate to Common Ground Canberra through *Hands Across Canberra* - **Click on the icon below:**



## Fundraising Support from ComStat Printing and Design at the Bungers and Mosh Concert Bungendore November 2012



Joe Mann presenting a cheque for \$665.00 to Liz Dawson

Liz said "I was surprised and delighted when Joe Mann, who has a printing business Comstat with his wife Marianne, offered to run the Bungers and Mosh Festival, two days and nights of bands giving their time and expertise to raise money for Common Ground Canberra. It took place in Bungendore, and Joe and his team donated \$665.00 to help Common Ground Canberra." Liz noted that this was the beginning of a great relationship with ComStat Printing.



## Canberra Quilters Inc.

After meeting with Liz Dawson in March 2013, the Canberra Quilters gave Liz a beautiful quilt to raffle and a cheque \$455.70 to support Common Ground Canberra, we thank them for their generosity.

## WHY HOUSING HOMELESS PEOPLE IN COMMON GROUND SAVES THE GOVERNMENT MONEY

Anyone can become homeless. When chronically homeless people have their own supported home, they stop recycling around other accommodation services as they may have done for up to 20 years. The Australian Common Ground Alliance has found that a night's accommodation for a homeless person in Melbourne costs:

- Common Ground **\$63.00**
- Crisis accommodation **\$133.00**
- Prison **\$276.00**
- Emergency Room **\$439.00**
- Mental Health bed **\$702.00**
- Hospital bed **\$1,100.00**

## How you can help

As a team we are looking for sponsors and service providers for the project to provide for the onsite concierge to keep residents, staff and the community safe and for a range of services to support the residents.

We need many people involved who wish to see our homeless and low income people safely housed in their own home in Canberra.

This project is very meaningful and will be hugely rewarding. It is already attracting a large number of people to be involved. Why not you?

Give time, share marketing ideas, write stories, assist with resources, letter box drop, or simply help spread the word to others in the Canberra community!

Write, email or talk to your local and Federal member about the need to address homelessness in our community.

Join our website at:

<http://www.commongroundcanberra.org.au>

## Who to contact

For further information, please contact the following Board members:

Stephen Bartos, Chair  
Mobile: 0423 808 313  
Email: [stephen.bartos@aciltasman.com.au](mailto:stephen.bartos@aciltasman.com.au)

Jon Lovell, Director  
Mobile: 0418 499 157  
Email: [jon.lovell@ashurst.com](mailto:jon.lovell@ashurst.com)

Liz Dawson, Director  
Mobile: 0438 815 273  
Email: [e.dawson@netspeed.com.au](mailto:e.dawson@netspeed.com.au)

Diane Kargas AM, Director  
Mobile: 0407 742 108  
Email: [brayhome@tpg.com.au](mailto:brayhome@tpg.com.au)

