

grounded

COMMON
GROUND



Saving
more
than a
smile



In the
spot-
light



Mellor
Street
continues
celebration

Brand new
baby
brand new
home



Maria's Message...

Over the past two years the Common Ground Board has been working on ways to enable the organisation to grow and become more sustainable so we can continue to provide housing and support for South Australians in need long into the future.

I can now share some very exciting news. Common Ground Adelaide Ltd is joining forces with Housing Choices Australia – one of the nation's largest and most respected affordable housing providers.

This move increases our capacity to help people out of homelessness. It will not mean any changes for tenants. Our board, our staff, our brand, our presence in South Australia and most importantly, our services,

will remain the same.

What will change is our ability to tender for housing projects. We will now be in a better position to tender; to gain funding and ultimately, help more people who face homelessness.

The new arrangements provide Common Ground Adelaide with a strong role in the national parent company and the CGA Board has successfully achieved its two primary aims: ensuring CGA remains true to the initial purpose of its founders, and ensuring South Australian funding remains in South Australia for local projects.

Importantly, HCA shares our priority in supporting vulnerable people into safe, stable, decent housing and our commitment to growth. In fact, HCA's significant experience and strong track

record in supporting people with mental illnesses and those with disabilities will benefit us greatly as we continue to strive to help people dealing with these challenges to improve their lives. Common Ground was established by the State Government nine years ago with the support, hard work and commitment of some of the most respected and successful members of our business and corporate community. Our founding sponsor Santos and its investment has been critical to our establishment in SA. It is a privilege to be leading this organisation as we take the next step.

Maria Palumbo
Chief Executive Officer
Common Ground Adelaide

Saving more than a smile.

Seeing a dentist can cause most of us anxiety, even at the best of times. For the most disadvantaged people in our community, the cost - together with feelings of shame and embarrassment – often prevents them from getting the treatment they need compounding dental issues and affecting their overall health and wellbeing. The Dental Outreach Program, run out of Common Ground, is helping change this.

"Some of these people have never seen a dentist in their lives and many, for a long time," Margie Steffens, Manager of the Outreach Program, said. "Often, it's not just their dental



Amanda Drewer (dental assistant) and Margie Steffens at work.

health that is suffering, it's their whole health and wellbeing, their confidence and even employment prospects."

For Sue Watson, the success of the Outreach program can't be underestimated.

"It saved my life," Sue, who was fitted out with a top and bottom plate, said.

"I had been putting off seeing people, going for jobs, just going to the shops because I was embarrassed.

"I lived on chocolate because I couldn't eat anything else. Then I was worried about choking. "My life has changed so much. I'm bubbly and out there. I'm so grateful."

The Dental Outreach Program began operating in September 2011. Largely, the Clinic now relies on fundraising to support its operations. Among initiatives is the annual sleepout involving Adelaide University dental students on May 15.

To support the dental clinic or donate, email margie.steffens@adelaide.edu.au or phone 0467 812 966. To make an appointment, ring 8205 1600.

Mellor Street celebration continues.



Maria Palumbo, Santos, Lou Dello with Minister, Zoe Bettison.

With Thanks... Late last year, Common Ground held a thank you event for sponsors, partners and supporters. The evening was an opportunity for new friends and old to come together to hear about how Common Ground is helping people to rebuild their lives through housing. It also provided the chance for guests to tour the new Mellor Street apartment block including four apartments furnished by Le Cornu. Formalities comprised speeches from Lou Dello, General Manager Santos and two very special guests – Common Ground tenant Guy and Shinae, the daughter of another resident who talked about their experiences with the organisation and its impact on their lives.



The new Mellor Street apartments.



City workers at the Open Day.

Open house. More than 100 people took the opportunity to visit the new development as part of the Common Ground Mellor Street Open Day. Visitors included staff from Shelter SA; Adelaide City Council, various State Government departments, Life Without Barriers as well as Common Ground residents from Light Square and Franklin Street.



Part of the cleansing ceremony at the Mellor street building.

A healing process. Traditional healers from Anangu Ngangkari Tjutaku conducted a cleansing ceremony at the Mellor Street building. Staff and CGA tenants attended the smoking ceremony which was held before tenants moved into the apartments. The healers said they experienced a strong spiritual sense of strength, wellness and happiness in the building.

In the spotlight...



Cooking with David, Damien, Mark (Case Manager), Michelle, Tahlia and Lil.

Mark Krusynski has been a Case Manager at Common Ground for the past three years.

What does your role involve?

I support tenants who have experienced or been at risk of homelessness to maintain – and make the most of – their tenancy and improve their lives.. Sometimes it is working through a crisis with clients and other times it includes helping them to explore and work towards their dreams and aspirations.

My role often involves referring clients to other services so it's crucial I stay up to date with the different organisations and programs available to help them.

What makes Common Ground special?

Having tenancy management and support services provided by the same organisation allows a holistic approach

to working with tenants. Another important element of Common Ground's success comes from the amazing network of close partnerships with other organisations who provide opportunities for tenants on-site.

Our community is rich in wisdom, humour, generosity and stories of triumph over adversity.

What do you do in your spare time?

I enjoy being with my family, collecting musical instruments, going on road trips to country town op shops and attempting small scale building projects.



Sarah with baby Sebastian.

Brand new baby. Brand new home.

Moving into Mellor Street meant even more to Sarah Reardon than most people. The 21 year-old welcomed her baby boy, Sebastian, into the world just a few weeks before shifting into her new apartment. Sarah said living in the city made life a lot easier

with transport close by and most places she needed to get to, including Sturt Street Children's Centre and School, within walking distance. "I have a new lease on life. I have somewhere stable to raise my son and I'm happy about that."



Common Ground tenant, Jayar and Case Manager Lincoln Ogden.

Moving to a new patch.

The Common Ground community garden is moving. The 'Garden' as it has affectionately become known, will soon have a new home facing Franklin Street. The Conservation Council holds the licence for the land and has its offices located in the

building being renovated above the garden space. The Conservation Council has been working with Common Ground and a range of local community groups and individuals on plans to make the new garden a place which can

continue to be enjoyed by CGA residents and neighbours as well as the broader community. Many thanks to the Common Ground tenants who have volunteered their time to prepare for the move including re-potting plants.

New adventures in Alice.

Last month, Common Ground farewelled Sally Langton, Executive Manager, Operations.

Sally is taking up a new role as Chief Executive Officer, Central Australian Affordable Housing Company in Alice Springs.

Over the past four years at Common Ground, Sally has helped many people and will be missed by tenants, staff, community partners and supporters alike.



Sally with Common Ground supporter, The Honourable Mark Parnell MLC.



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A tribute to Nikie.



Late last year, Common Ground tenant Nikie Chellos passed away. Nikie, who lived at the Franklin Street apartments, died after being diagnosed with cancer a few months before. She was a

keen writer and had been instrumental in helping set up the Common Ground community garden. Nikie will always be remembered fondly by everyone at Common Ground. A friend to all.

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08 8205 1600

79 Light Square, Adelaide, SA 5000

commongroundadelaide.org.au