MEDIA RELEASE

10 November 2017

INNOVATIVE DIGITAL SENIORS PROJECT WINS STATE UDIA AWARD

A giant 3-D art project that allows seniors to plan social outings with the click of button has won a coveted 2017 UDIA Queensland Mitchell Brandtman Award for Excellence.

Social Buttons was created for Caggara House, an award-winning apartment complex for over 55s, developed by BHC Creating Liveable Communities (previously Brisbane Housing Company) in partnership with the Queensland Department of Housing and Public Works.

The colourful project, installed in the lobby of the Mt Gravatt apartment development, features three over-sized digital buttons that light up with scrolling text when pushed, allowing residents to select from a range of social events and choose 'where' and 'when' using the buttons.

The most popular choice becomes that month's outing and the details are automatically texted to residents' phones.

BHC CEO Stuart Lummis said the novel social buttons project, part art and part tech, was a fun and playful way for neighbours to connect with each other.

"The Social Buttons have acted as a real catalyst for positive social interaction and led to friendships forming quickly, something that may otherwise not have happened so readily," Mr Lummis said.

"Caggara House has brought together seniors from all walks of life, and this project has not only helped forge a strong community, but also given tenants an increased sense of pride in their new home."

The Social Buttons were created by designer Jason Grant from Inkahoots, who involved residents in a series of vibrant workshops to engage them in art and brainstorm ideas for the digital installation.

"In a nutshell, it's a combination of super graphic, interactive web-based installation, and relational art work, focussed on the process of bringing people together," Mr Grant said.

Despite strong competition, the project won the UDIA Wildcard Award, the judges impressed with the project's innovation and cost-effectiveness, promotion of tenant engagement and contribution to community and social infrastructure.

Caggara House tenant Marlene Jarvis, 69, said the digital installation had been the focal point of social activity since it was unveiled in August last year.

"I've embraced it. I'm not on Facebook or the internet, but it's really simple to use," Ms Jarvis said.

"I've quite often hit the buttons to see what social options come up. It does lead to social outings; we've been to some lovely lunches. I've definitely come to know people in the complex through using the buttons."

'Social Buttons' is the latest design innovation at the $15-million dollar Caggara House complex which opened in February 2015.

The overall development has also earned both a coveted UDIA QLD Award for Excellence and an Australian Institute of Architects State Architecture Award for residential multiple housing design.

The 57-unit complex on Bothwell Street has allowed 60 seniors to transition from government housing that had become too big for their changed needs into new, modern accessible one-bedroom units.

"Caggara House has freed up larger government homes for families in need and provided this group of seniors with a much more liveable purpose-built home that is still located in their familiar community," Mr Lummis said.

"Social Buttons epitomises the innovation that's possible in affordable housing and reflects BHC's goal to provide not just a roof for those in need, but quality housing which is enhanced by a dynamic genuine community."

And that's a sentiment echoed by residents.

"I feel very proud to live here," Ms Jarvis said. "I love that it's so modern, I love the Social Buttons, and I can use public transport to get to all of my appointments and into the city. It's wonderful."

ENDS

For more information, please contact:

Calvin Garrett
BHC Strategic Projects Manager
Phone: 3307 3009
calvin.garrett@bhcl.com.au