

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

9 October 2015

### **APARTMENTS WITH HEART OPEN TO BRISBANE**

Unemployed and on the verge of homelessness just five years ago, Glenis Wilkinson says an innovative affordable housing project in the centre of Brisbane helped turn her life around.

With access to a stable home, Glenis has now built a budding career as a yoga instructor and even runs classes onsite for other Green Square apartment tenants, many of whom she says come from similarly dire circumstances as herself.

“Let’s face it, most people living here have had something unfortunate happen in their lives,” Glenis said.

“For many of us, Green Square has been life-changing. It provides us with somewhere to rebuild, recoup, reconsider our lives and retrain for the future.

“The sense of camaraderie here is just amazing, the open spaces are perfectly set up to allow for the ebb and flow of interactions between different people; but the apartments provide for private and personal time if that’s what you need too.”

This weekend Green Square will become the first affordable housing development to feature in Brisbane Open House, an annual event that opens the city’s most impressive buildings to the public.

Unveiled in 2010, the 80-unit development was specifically built by affordable housing provider BHC to provide accommodation for people that are either homeless or at risk of becoming so.

However, a range of stunning features – including a striking internal atrium, hanging gardens and a strong emphasis on energy efficiency – sets this building apart from many other community and social housing developments.

Importantly, its two lower levels also feature a range of community services, including Visible Ink Valley, a space for young people to collaborate on artistic endeavours.

The building has even garnered international recognition, with a short-listing last year in the prestigious World Architecture Festival awards.

BHC CEO David Cant said opening Green Square's doors would help tackle destructive myths around affordable housing.

"Community and social housing can have negative connotations in the public mind and in the media which only serve to stigmatise and alienate tenants," Mr Cant said.

"We want people to see that affordable housing apartments can be beautiful, warm and engaging and are home to close-knit communities and neighbours, just like any other type of development.

"We know that well-designed buildings are vital in developing a sense of belonging, and this greatly assists the well-being of the people that live in them.

"Green Square supports this philosophy by balancing a need for privacy with communal living and enables trust to evolve gradually.

"We believe it is an important and successful example of affordable housing design in Australia and we're proud to show it off."

***CAPTION:*** Green Square's striking internal atrium, hanging gardens and a strong emphasis on energy efficiency sets it building apart from other community and social housing developments.

**ENDS**

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