

## MEDIA RELEASE

### PLATFORM 70 THROWS LIFELINE TO STREET HOMELESS

**For immediate release**

**5 August 2014**

Platform 70, an innovative program established three years ago to house and support street homeless people in inner Sydney, has a 85% success rate in sustained housing tenancies and is helping the chronic homeless to rebuild their lives.

The program has housed 105 rough sleepers in homes in the inner Sydney region since its inception in 2011, with just 16 tenancies unsuccessful. Secure, stable housing has also enabled some tenants to access medical care, reunite with family, resume education and get jobs.

Leading community housing provider Bridge Housing partnered with non-government mental health organisation Neami National to deliver the program under the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness with funding from the NSW and Federal Governments.

A baseline evaluation of Platform 70 by the National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre, at the University of NSW, showed that two key strengths of the program are its immediate access to permanent homes via the private rental market and the wrap-around support services that maximise tenants' chances of maintaining their tenancies. A final evaluation is due later this year.

Today Bridge joined Platform 70 tenants and project partners at Redfern Town Hall to celebrate the milestone of housing more than 100 tenants over the life of the program. Tony Tuhoro, who has been housed for over two years, is singing at the event.

Bridge CEO John Nicolades says: "The sustainability rate of this project compares with the best homeless and housing first programs in the world. In practical terms, it means that people who are often regarded as the most challenging to lift out of homelessness are starting to get their lives back on track and rejoin the community."

Neami National NSW Manager Sylvia Grant said: "Platform 70 demonstrates that the combination of local housing and wrap around support services work to mutual benefit by giving the homeless a safe home while they address the other issues in their lives."

Among the non-housing outcomes for tenants accessing its Way2Home support are: 10 have entered into further education, 12 are working, 6 are participating in abstinence programs, 11 have gained access to their children, 17 are undergoing medical treatment and 22 are accessing mainstream support.

81% of tenants are in advance of their rent and total arrears stand at just 2.4%. 71% remain in the original property they were offered, a promising turnover rate in the private rental market.

Platform 70 is a good news story in Homeless Persons' Week, coordinated by Homelessness Australia to highlight the plight of homeless Australians. The project would not have been possible without the involvement of Metro Community Housing Cooperative, St George Community Housing, Hume Community Housing, Link Housing, North Coast Community Housing, the City of Sydney and the 90 Homes for 90 Lives project.

The following case studies illustrate how Platform 70 has helped individuals:

**James**

James spent seven years rough sleeping in Town Hall station and used opiates and alcohol daily. He suffered a spinal injury and lost the use of his legs. On leaving hospital after several months, he was housed in Bondi through Platform 70. He is now stable on a methadone program and walking again unaided after months of rehabilitation.

**Sam**

Sam was a long-term rough sleeper until he was found a home in the eastern suburbs under Platform 70. Since being housed, he has begun a course at the Oznam Learning Centre to help him pay off his debts and enrolled in a bridging program that led to employment at a high-end hotel. Having passed his trial period, he is now employed as a full time permanent.

**Ben**

Since being housed in North Sydney under Platform 70, Ben has reconnected with his family in Queensland, stayed off drugs and alcohol, attended a vocational course to work in his CV and now enjoys stable employment. He aims to put his criminal past behind him and reach the stage where his previous convictions are no longer on the record in New South Wales.

**Background**

**Bridge Housing**

Bridge Housing is a registered not for profit community housing provider that manages over 1600 tenancies for people on low and moderate incomes, across inner metropolitan area of Sydney. For more information please visit [www.bridgehousing.org.au](http://www.bridgehousing.org.au)

**Neami Way2Home**

Neami Way2Home provides wrap around support to help clients to sustain their tenancies. Way2Home was established in April 2010 and is operated by Neami National, a not-government organisation with funding from the City of Sydney and the NSW Department of Family and Community Services.

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