

Spring Wrap

From the **CEO's Desk**

I hope this newsletter finds you well.

Coronavirus (COVID-19) continues to dominate our lives and the media – with never-ending updates regarding “hot spots”, border closures and testing outcomes. Over the last several months, many people have been impacted by fear, anxiety and panic about coronavirus. Indeed, many in our community have been in a heightened state of anxiety and struggling to manage the uncertainty surrounding the possible spread and impact of COVID-19.

I think it's important to note that it's ok to feel overwhelmed and fearful of things that appear beyond our control. Mental wellbeing is important. Through talking to a range of people and organisations over recent months – I've observed that feeling anxious or stressed is normal. Importantly, I've also learnt that you are not alone.

There are services that can help support you during these times including:

Lifeline – **13 11 14**
Beyond Blue – **1300 22 4636**
DV Connect – **1800 811 811**
1800RESPECT – **1800 73 77 3**

Since the initial COVID-19 restrictions were put in place in March, we have been working hard to ensure our key services can continue to be delivered. Like many other organisations, we've had to adapt our services to keep our tenants safe. Information regarding some of these changes is outlined later in this newsletter.

Now - more than ever – we need to look after each other. We are committed to supporting all of our tenants to sustain their tenancy through these challenging times. Please continue to show our staff respect and courtesy in all your tenancy-related dealings – we remain here for you.

Keep safe and healthy
Craig



Broke but not Broken

In 2019, BRIC partnered with Communiy to offer a weekly art group at the Spring Hill Boarding House. The group produced artwork that culminated in the 'Broke not Broken' exhibition currently presented at the Glen Road accommodation in Toowong.

The group explored diverse themes including:

- Connection/ isolation
- Growth/ loss
- Light / shadow
- Chaos/ conformity
- Life/ death

Artists also shared personal stories of identity, stigma, and their hopes for the future.

You can view all the artwork and more from other programmes at:

<https://communiy.org.au/art-gallery/#Broke-not-Broken>



BETWEEN PLACES by WARA



DEMON ANGELS by WARA



BOXER

Broke not Broken

Exhibition at
Glen Road.

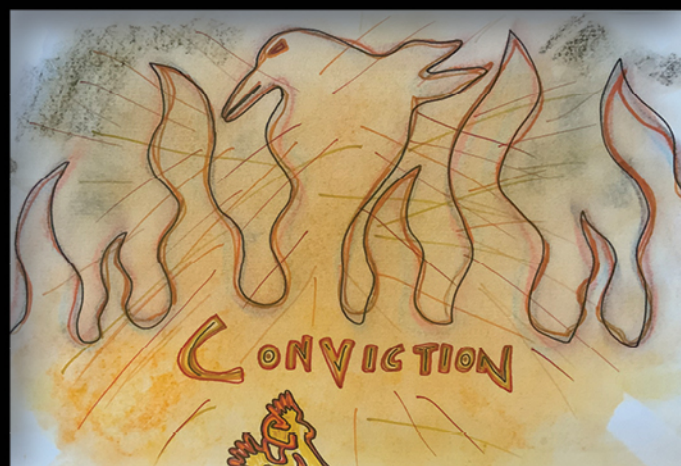


Thank you

To all the wonderful artists, Tanya Burkhardt,
Art Therapist and Community



SPIRIT FIRE



CONVICTION

Art helps healing

Six years ago Larance had a break down, he was semi-homeless at the time.

With assisted support, Larance moved into Bric Housing's Spring Hill boarding house in late 2018.

Larance joined the Art and Music Groups - not just for something to do. He says "I enjoy art...I just let it flow, it's a therapy, brings out my creative side."

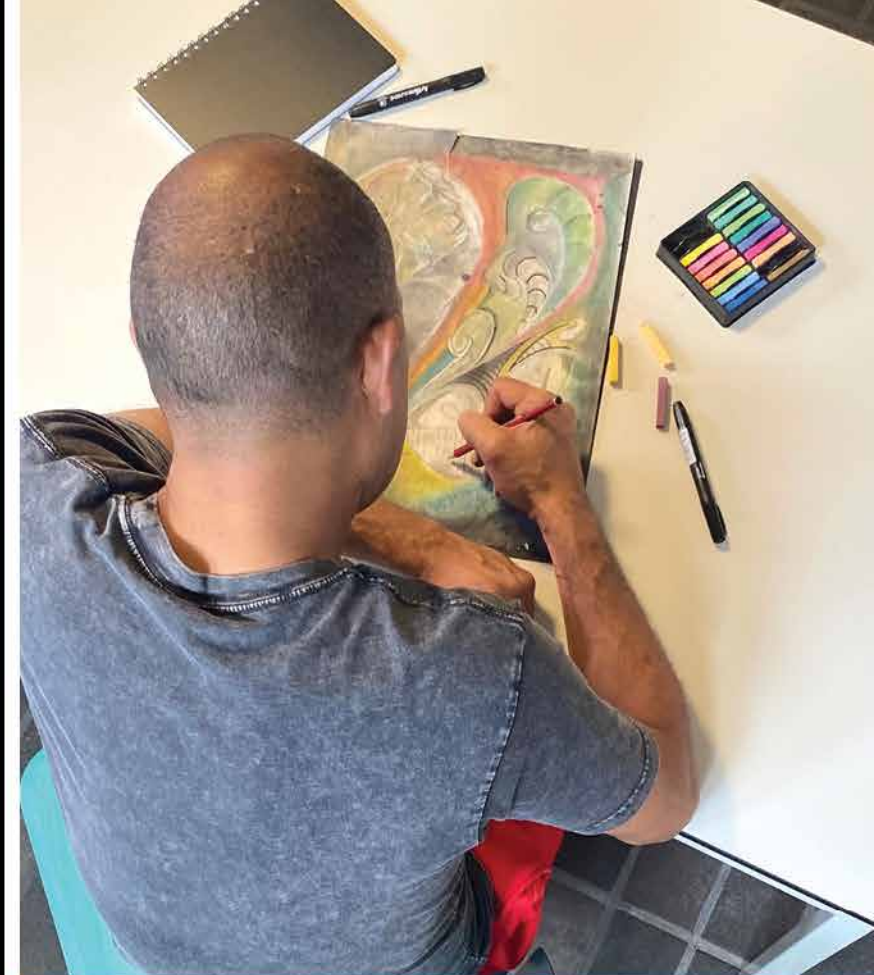
"Getting into a routine every week on a Wednesday to attend the Art Group, stops me from going off the rails."

For Larance, "Painting helps me express my thoughts onto to paper. I feel better after I have been there".

"I enjoy art... it's a therapy, brings out my creative side"

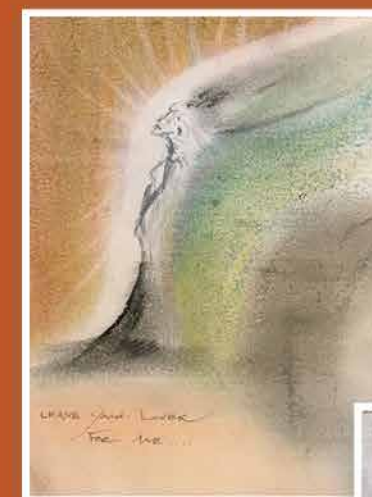
Through the government's COVID-19 response, Larance, along with more than 50 other residents of the Spring Hill boarding house, moved to Glen Rd where art continues to help them on their journey to greater independence.

We have many talented artists who have achieved a great sense of pride and confidence in sharing their work with others.

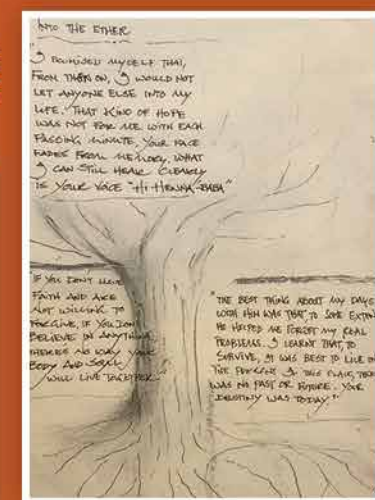


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Bric services to tenants **COVID update**

At Bric, we are working hard to ensure that we can maintain our services in a way that is safe for all. For a period, some non-urgent aspects of our services may need to change.

At this stage, our changed services are:

- Additional cleaning services in the common areas of boarding houses and a number of unit complexes, especially 'high traffic' areas such as lifts and entry doors.
- We have safety measures in place, including a requirement that staff and contractors observe all recommended health and safety measures if visiting a tenant's home or having face to face contact.
- Property inspections were put on hold but have now resumed. However, please let our staff know if you have any COVID related concerns about this.

What we ask of you, please:

- Provide your up-to-date contact details so we can keep you updated about our services.
- Please do not visit any Bric office without an appointment - the reception is closed.
- However, you can make an appointment to see us - or contact us by phone or email.
- Inform us if you or any member of your household has COVID-19 OR is experiencing flu like symptoms OR you have any reason to think you might have been exposed to COVID-19.

PLEASE NOTE we will be asking tenants several screening questions about your health before any maintenance contractor or staff visits your property.



Meet the team **Katrina Yasurek** Tenant Services Officer

- How long have you worked for Bric?
Just over 2 years
- What is your favourite part of your job?
Helping tenants achieve their goals and watching as individuals accomplish what they set out to do - whether it

be securing long term housing, being a good neighbour, paying off a debt or sprucing up their home or garden!

- Where did you grow up? **Florida, the sunshine state of the good old USA!**
- How do you like to relax? **I love to read in my hammock or listen to records while I cook old family recipes.**
- Do you have any pets? **I have 2 loving ginger cats and 1 mischievous little dog!**
- Do you have any secret talents or unusual hobbies? **Nothing too unusual, but I love baking bread, needlework and pickling veggies.**
- If you won lotto, what's the first thing you'd buy? **Probably little gifts for everyone I know and a boat, or two!**
- What was the best holiday you ever went on? **It's a close call between Homer, Alaska and Koh Tao, Thailand - very different destinations, but equally beautiful, relaxing and natural surrounds.**

Team **NEWS**

Welcome to:

Erin Coley and Johanna Hirvela, who have joined the team as Temporary Tenant Services Officers.

Rebecca Eunson, who is a student on placement from University of Queensland - Support Officer.

Welcome back Kristy Tirateli, who returned from maternity leave in March as Asset Services Team Leader (farewell to Chrystal Campbell, who was acting in that position).

Farewell to:

Donna McDonnell (Tenant Services Officer) - who moved up North to start a new chapter in her life.

Also...

Cameron Darling (Tenant Services Officer) is on secondment to Communify - in a role that supports individuals and families in temporary accommodation in the inner city to find longer term housing.



Staying well during COVID-19

Thanks to Lifeline for the following tips to stay well in these difficult times. Remember, you can call Lifeline 24 hours a day, any day, on 13 11 14.

The outbreak of the coronavirus COVID-19 has impacted people in varying ways on an international scale. It is understandable that during times like this, people may be feeling afraid, worried, anxious, and overwhelmed by the constantly changing alerts and media coverage regarding the spread of the virus.

While it is important to stay informed, the following are some mental health and wellbeing tips and strategies to continue looking after ourselves and each other during these difficult times.

Manage your exposure to media coverage

As this can increase feelings of fear and anxiety. Be mindful of sources of information and ensure you are accessing good quality and accurate information.

Follow a "calm yet cautious" approach

Do your best to remain calm and be mindful not to contribute to the widespread panic that can hinder efforts to positively manage the outbreak. Ensure you are following directives issued by the government, medical advice and observe good hygiene habits.

Show compassion and kindness to one another

These times of fear, isolation (both physical and social), and uncertainty are when it is most important that we strengthen our sense of community by connecting with and supporting each other. Remind ourselves that we can manage this much better together in solidarity and that COVID-19 doesn't discriminate - it can affect anyone regardless of age, gender, nationality, or ethnicity.

Actively manage your wellbeing

By maintaining routines where possible, connect with family and friends (even if not in person), staying physically active, eating nutritious foods and seeking additional support by contacting Lifeline or further professional support as required.

Pathways out of homelessness

Bric is pleased to be running a new tenant support program for tenants in our inner city Brisbane properties.

The support is being delivered by Community. It includes:

- support for at-risk tenants, including cleaning equipment and lifestyle skills, access to financial counselling, support to get an NDIS package, and referrals to mental and physical health services;
- one on one help to access employment, training courses and volunteering opportunities.

Bric is working together with Brisbane Housing Company and Community on this new support service.

We are pleased to build on the success of the training courses delivered at our Spring Hill boarding house.

“Once tenancies are stabilised and supports are in place, the program will assist tenants to build skills in vocational areas, including construction, business, housekeeping, hospitality and cleaning, as well as volunteering opportunities,” said Craig Brennan, CEO, Bric Housing.

We thank Brisbane City Council for its commitment to addressing the impacts of homelessness in Brisbane through the Pathways out of Homeless Grant Program. Brisbane City Council's Pathways out of Homelessness Grant Program is providing close to \$3 million over three years to enable new, innovative and sustainable solutions to address the growing community issue of homelessness in Brisbane.



The next step for Philippe

Although he had once worked as a chef, two years ago Philippe found himself homeless in Brisbane for several weeks. He got into crisis accommodation with Ozcare at Peel Street, and then found a room at Boundary Street with Bric.

Philippe enrolled in a Certificate I in Construction course being run at the boarding house, through a partnership between Bric and Reclink, and funded under Skilling Queenslanders for Work.

The traineeship was for six months and consisted of 2 days in the classroom and 3 days practical work – learning new skills such as painting, making furniture, and laying floors. There were practical construction projects at some of Bric's properties, including fencing, and constructing pergolas and seating areas.

Philippe completed the traineeship and graduated in March 2020, he was then ready

to look for work. However, just at that time, COVID hit and his plans were put on hold. Philippe by this time had moved into a Bric self-contained, furnished unit in Spring Hill.

After a period of settling into his accommodation, and as COVID restrictions have lifted, Bric and Community have supported Philippe through the tenant support project. Employment Pathways Coordinator Wendy Noble has worked with Philippe to find employment opportunities.

Philippe is a self-starter, he has always been proactive with his job search and interviews. This has led him to a chef's dream job, working for a company that provides catering for ambulance workers and firefighters. IU provide 180 meals a day - breakfast and lunch.

“Having a job has given me a sense of financial independence and confidence” says Philippe.



Property Inspections Q&A

Some tenants have asked for more information about property inspections. So here we explain about the different types of inspections, and what we use them for.

What are the different types of inspections?

- **'Routine' inspections** – these are carried out by your Tenant Services Officer, in order to check for any damage or repairs needed. This is an opportunity for tenants to point out any repairs or other issues to staff at the inspection.
- *Note: for properties headleased from a private owner, routine inspections usually also involve the real estate (or owner), as well as Bric staff*
- **'Property condition' inspections** – this is where Bric takes a longer term look at the structure and condition of the property.
- The full inspections are carried out by a qualified building inspector usually every 3 years. They assess building elements such as the roof and external structure, plumbing and electricals, bathrooms and kitchens, windows, doors etc.
- Our Asset Services Team also carry out property inspections to check on properties – these only take place if we are not doing a full Property Condition Inspection during the year.
- **Department of Housing inspections** – for buildings that are owned by the Department of Housing, they will also sometimes carry out their own inspections.

How often do inspections take place?

The full property condition inspections are every three years. The other inspections, especially routine inspections, are more frequent.

For private headleased properties (under the Community Rent Scheme), there are only 'routine' inspections, we do not conduct Property Condition inspections. The routine inspections for these properties are normally scheduled every three months.

However we guarantee all tenants that any inspection will be at least three months after the last one (this is a requirement under tenancy law).

What is the information used for?

We use the information collected from these inspections to program our planned maintenance works – which includes a ten year schedule of the work needed, and the cost. We have a business plan to ensure there are sufficient funds in future years to pay for all the works required to keep the properties up to standard.

Did you know?

Bric spends over \$1.5m a year on maintenance and repairs

Want to know more about property inspections for your home?

If you have any questions about inspections for where you live, please contact your Tenant Services Officer.

More information about other Bric services?

If there are other Bric services that we should feature in the next tenant newsletter, please email your Tenant Services Officer or info@bric.org.au

Bric contractors carry ID!

If a Bric contractor visits to carry out repairs, they should provide you with proof of identity – a Bric ID card – before they enter your home. This gives you the peace of mind that they are who they say they are, and that they are sent by Bric.



Paul's Story

The second chance that made a difference!

My name is Paul Nixon-Smith. I was first introduced to Bric Housing in January 2016. I became a Bric tenant and I lived at the Boarding House in Spring Hill from January 2016 until May 2018.

I was happy to have a place to stay but I had high hopes. I wanted to live well and to have a happy life. After many months, I decided that Boundary Street wasn't the place for me anymore. I didn't like my surroundings, I didn't talk to anyone. I decided to leave the Boarding house on my own choice.

After leaving the Boundary Street Boarding House, I went back onto the streets of Brisbane. I couch surfed for several months. To survive, I found some help through the Breakfast Club in Redcliffe. They helped me with food but not shelter. After a while of living on the street, I became sick again. I soon realised that I needed warmth, stability, security and somewhere to sleep.

In March or April 2019, I called for help with the Housing Office in Caboolture. I telephoned

Bric Housing asking for emergency housing assistance. I met with a Bric Housing lady, she helped me with a housing interview.

I am very happy to say I am a tenant of Bric Housing in Caboolture since April 2019. This is my place to live at this time, it has made a difference to me and my life. I have seen a lot of changes in the complex where I live. My unit is beautiful, I keep it nice and clean. I get along with other tenants. I am respectful, and I don't judge anyone.

I am currently studying three days per week. I am doing Certificate 3 in Retail here in Caboolture. It is my goal that I will find employment when I complete the course.

I don't have a car so I value my push bike which is my transport to get around everywhere. I love my dad who lives not too far away. I try and visit him often. I am very happy that Bric Housing was able to help me with my little place, giving me a second chance to be their tenant.

Thank you Bric Housing for helping me.



A new Human Rights Act for Queensland

Bric is committed to Queensland's Human Rights Act 2019, a new law containing 23 human rights for Queenslanders.

Bric has been working with the Queensland Human Rights Commission to look at the new rights and what they mean for community housing tenants.

Bric staff and staff from the Commission have worked together to look at different aspects of our service from a tenant perspective.

From this we aim to continue to improve our service to tenants, continue to apply a human rights lens in our service delivery whilst balancing other requirements such as the Residential Tenancies Act.

House to Home

Community have a wonderful team that helps people who might be at risk of losing their tenancies. The team have started to provide 'House to Home' packs to help tenants in social housing make their spaces feel more homely.

Depending on their needs, tenants are able to select household items like a microwave, sheets/pillows or cleaning supplies. The team then create gift baskets and deliver the items to homes.

Living on a limited income makes buying many everyday items a challenge. With a bit of support and encouragement, we're finding more people are able to keep their tenancies and stay in secure housing. We also love the opportunity to build connections and get to know the people in our community even better.

At the moment, this service is available to Bric tenants in inner Brisbane properties - contact your Tenant Services Officer for more information.



QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT
HUMAN RIGHTS

Brett's Journey

Brett has recently found a couple of days work as a welder and is hopeful that proves to be the first step toward secure employment and long-term housing. He's already walked a long journey. Brett became homeless and lived on the streets in Melbourne for two years before moving to Brisbane for the warmer climate and a new start in life. He comments, "I would have died on the streets in Melbourne".

After six months on the streets of Brisbane, Brett moved into 593 Boundary Street, Spring Hill. According to Brett, this was the best thing that had happened to him in many years. He was able to organise dental appointments to fix his teeth and started to feel more confident about himself.

Brett enrolled in a Certificate I in Construction course being run at the boarding house, through a partnership between Bric and Reclink, and funded under Skilling Queenslanders for Work.

Brett completed the traineeship and graduated in March

2020, and together with his previous Boilermaker apprenticeship, he was ready to look for work.

However, just at that time, COVID hit and his plans were put on hold.

After a period of settling in to the new accommodation, and as COVID restrictions have lifted, Bric and Community have supported Brett to complete his resume, locate and print his certificates with his qualifications and tickets,

through the tenant support project. Since June 2020 Brett has been walking the streets of Brisbane looking for work, and has recently found a couple of days work as a welder, with the hope that this turns into more work.

Brett's plan for the future is to secure full time work using his skills from the traineeship and combine them with his Boilermaker apprenticeship. His aspirations are to find himself secure housing in Brisbane, to reclaim his Driver Licence, buy a car, and increase his chances of sustaining employment.



6 great ways to spring into spring

The weather's changing. You can smell the blossoms and other spring flowers bursting into life.

Most importantly, the sun's shining and the temperature's rising!

Here's a few ideas to give you extra inspiration to spring into spring!

1. Get outdoors.

We're so lucky in Australia to have so many beautiful parks and outdoor spaces.

Whether you're into a gentle stroll or even a bit of a hike, there's something for you.

Roma Street Parklands or the sea front at Redcliffe are just two great possibilities for some fresh air and exercise.



2. Try a new sport/ exercise.

Spring is the perfect time to blow off the cobwebs and try something new.

It doesn't have to involve an expensive gym membership. You could join a walking group or sports team or just take a ball to the park. Maybe grab that old push bike that has been gathering dust and go for a ride?



3. Enjoy some spring fruit

Spring means some of our favourite fruits are starting to get pretty cheap - maybe take some for a healthy snack while you take a walk? Look out for strawberries, oranges, passion fruit, peaches and grapes on special offer at the shops!



4. Volunteer your time and skills.

Whether it's something you do regularly or as a once off, volunteer work can be extremely rewarding for yourself and your community.

Think about the types of things you're passionate about, your skills, the amount of time you can give, and look around your local community to find the best match.



5. Grab your camera or phone and start snapping.

It's amazing the quality photos we can take on our phones and Spring is the perfect time to get some gorgeous photos. If you need help, there's plenty of tips and tricks online about taking photos with your phone. Try an early start to catch the sunrise over the city or maybe head out to snap sunset on the Bay.



6. Dig in the dirt.

Many people find gardening really relaxing, and it can distract us from pain and problems. Maybe there's a communal garden or veggie patch that you could help out with? Or even start with a couple of plants on the windowsill.



a home • a life • a future

 **bric**
HOUSING