

A photograph of a stone cairn, a stack of eight stones of various colors and sizes, standing on a gravelly ground. The background features a grassy embankment and a grey concrete wall with white graffiti. The text 'HEALTH HOME HOPE' is overlaid in white, bold, sans-serif font on the left side of the image.

# HEALTH HOME HOPE

A  
photographic  
exhibition on  
housing and  
health

This booklet accompanies the in-person exhibition of the same name held at Vacant Assembly from 31 March to 2 April 2023.

We gratefully acknowledge that this exhibition was supported by the Australian Research Council through the Centre of Excellence for Children and Families over the Life Course [CE200100025]. We also thank Micah Projects for their financial support and in-kind contributions to make this exhibition possible.

Suggested citation: Plage, S., Perrier, R., Bubenik, A., Baker, K., Stambe, R., Kuskoff, E. & Parsell, C. (2023) *Health, Home, Hope - A photographic exhibition on housing and health*. The University of Queensland.



# HEALTH HOME HOPE

A  
photographic  
exhibition on  
housing and  
health

We see people in our communities exhibiting the visible markers of homelessness – sitting on a bench midday, rolled out on the sidewalk to sleep, or carrying their belongings as they go about their day. We see reports on the ‘housing affordability crisis’ in the daily news and are told that more and more people face losing their homes, or are unable to compete in the rental market. We see charitable organizations installing mattresses in car parks for rough sleepers or washing their clothes. We see homeless people portrayed as threatening figures in movies and TV shows lurking in the shadows at night as the main protagonist rushes to her home. All too often, the imagery of homelessness invokes passivity, deficiency, dependency and even danger.

This exhibition presents homelessness in a way that we do not usually see, through presentation of the things, practices, and relationships that enable survival. We encourage you to view these photographs and captions from a fresh perspective, and at the same time reflect upon assumptions of homelessness as strange and unfamiliar. The photographers in this exhibition are people who have all experienced homelessness. Here we see how they look after themselves and others, the formidable challenges they experience, and how they find ways to sustain hope in the face of unimaginable loss.

“Tell the story of what health looks and feels like, and what it means to you” is the prompt these contributors were given along with a digital camera. Contributors do not fit easily with

the imagery evoked in the opening paragraph. Many of them have families, jobs or studies, interests or hobbies, notable talents, and immense creative potential. Many also have chronic or acute conditions that affect their mental and physical health. Others have worked with government or non-government agencies for many years to cultivate routines and relations of care. They embraced the opportunity to share with others what it is like to have concerns and worries about health and the future while finding themselves living in crisis accommodation or permanent supportive housing, struggling to sustain a tenancy in social housing after long term street homelessness, or looking for their next place to stay after escaping domestic violence or losing a tenancy.

It is not the aim of this exhibition to romanticize people who have experienced homelessness and their lives. The photographs and accompanying captions evoke how homelessness and housing instability result in considerable suffering. Yet, they also tell stories of ingenuity and solidarity in the pursuit of health. This exhibition reimagines 'health' in the context of housing instability as something that is lived and done in relation with others.

What needs to be done to support the health of people who are unstably housed? This exhibition, drawing on the realities and creativity of people with lived experiences, aims to progress answers to this question.



There's no  
escaping it out  
there

When it's at home,  
well yeah,  
you close the  
door



Noticing,  
looking up





morning setup





the beginning of  
my day,

but what's in store?



MY HOME

my safe place  
nobody can get me here









Loss for words

struggling to understand what was going on,  
struggling to understand why he did what he did

a celebration of a  
new friendship.

I wanted to warn  
her of a violent ex  
partner

we spent 16 hours  
talking.





Gosh, it's hard

the different states





/07 14:10:02



2020/01/01 12:00:45



Landscaping the homeless





It's funny

she won't go  
anywhere  
else. She just  
scratches that  
M off. So I'm  
wondering why.

Is she calling me  
a hoe?



When you are  
homeless,  
a hammock

oh, it's such a  
godsend.





See that trolley  
there?

It had all my  
blankets and  
my duvet things  
and pillow

and, yeah,

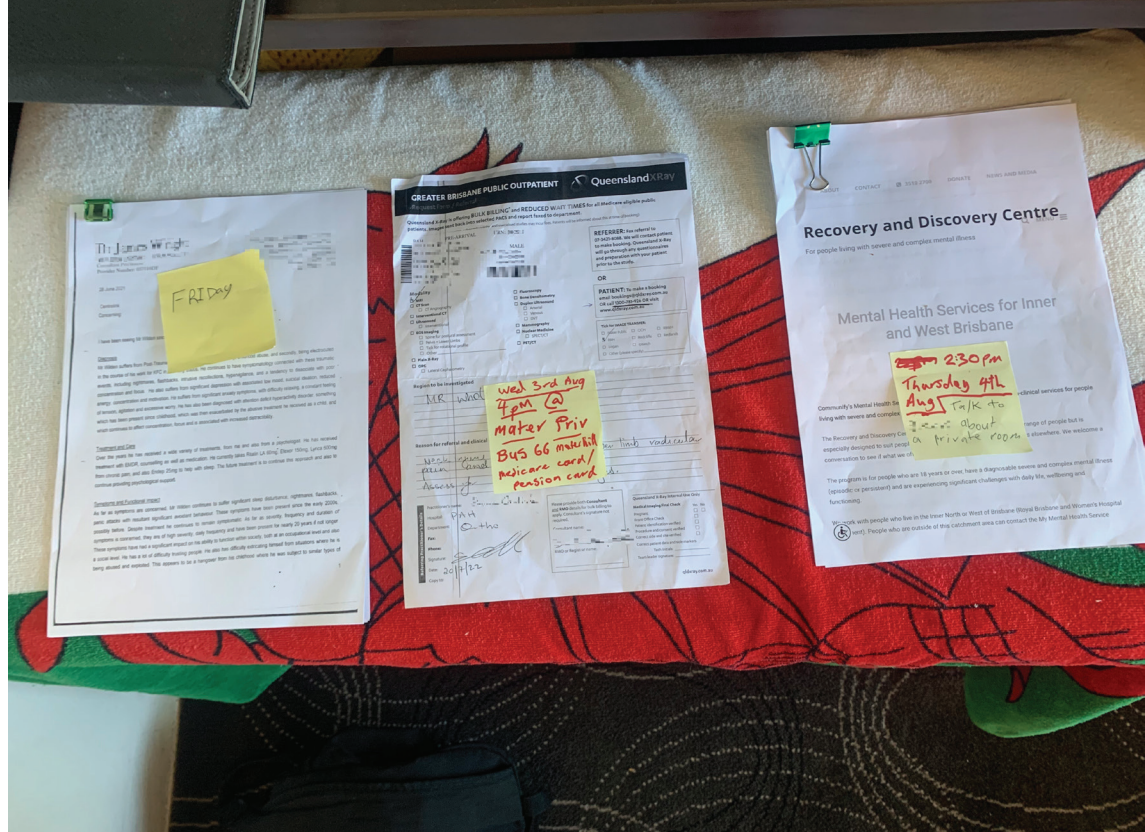
that was really  
good.



People give me paper and I just hoard that  
That was overwhelming for me.

All external services make the difference

just getting it started



So, what's happened to housing?

It hasn't become about housing people or giving people a home, it's been about investment.

it's just another market where people can buy and sell things and make a profit.

It's got nothing to do with living.

Yeah, The One.





a fire alarm

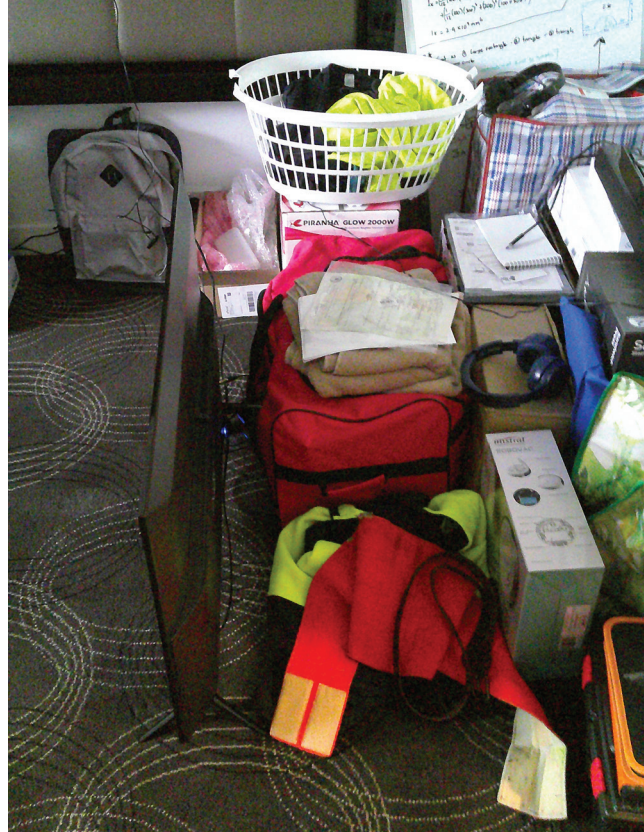
being in a building  
that simply isn't  
made to be  
accessible for  
persons with  
disabilities



It's never felt like home.

I've always known it was just a temporary thing,  
and at the drop of a hat that will all change

all my stuff that I have ready to move into my  
next place





health, the whole  
circle of it:

physically, you have  
to go there to get it

emotional, you  
have to care about  
yourself enough to  
take it

mental, is taking it  
and feeling good  
enough to get up  
and go and get the  
script





An affordable  
and available  
hour of self care  
a week



The making of my first,  
only cast,  
because a man broke  
my hand





The mental  
health pet





Good vs evil







some of the people  
do have little gas  
spooners. They  
cook out on the  
balcony. I thought  
about it,

but no

The last thing I  
need is to get  
kicked out of here





it's hard because it's not like you could take a photo of this issue.

If I had a mobility scooter or an electric wheelchair,  
I could be out there  
I could spend the whole day out there in the nice green park,  
listening to the birds,  
lots of sunshine,  
doing whatever I want to.

Yoga maybe.

Identity. I don't really know who I am.



2020/01/01 12:02:07



2020/01/01 12:02:49



That's me



Just looked from a distance

watch other people eat.

Yeah.



# WHAT'S ON IN JULY

**CELEBRATE YOUR WEDDING AT ROMA STREET PARKLAND**  
Combined of vibrant foliage, sweeping grasses and tranquil green space, Roma Street Parkland is an exquisite location to hold your wedding. It's also extremely convenient as it's located just minutes from the building restara area and nearby in Brisbane's CBD. There are five unique wedding venues of choice from ranging from intimate spaces to large capacity areas.  
For more information and to view the Roma Street Parkland Wedding Guide head to [www.brisbane.com.au](http://www.brisbane.com.au)

**THE SOUND SOCIETY**  
Relax, escape life's cares, and soothe your soul at the Sound Society - Roma Street's favourite free live music program. The Sound Society celebrates amazing talent, great music, good vibes, and forward progress on music. Pick a front or enter a dance battle! See the Sound Society and never miss out of exciting live performances performed by local artists.  
For more information, head to [thesoundsociety.com.au](http://thesoundsociety.com.au)

**KIDS COLLECTIVE**  
Engage your kids for free and enjoy themselves while you're out with the family. From art and science to outdoor games and fun village, designed to inspire, educate, and have fun. Kids Collective is a set up of fun activities and hands-on learning opportunities. Suitable for ages 3-12 years.  
For more information and to see the full program visit [kidscollective.com.au](http://kidscollective.com.au)

**GUIDED TOURS**  
Expand your knowledge for Roma Street Parkland history and heritage by joining one of the Parkland's experienced and knowledgeable volunteers on a guided tour. Learn about the botanical Rainforest and discover parts of the indigenous people for Roma Street Parkland, the Spectacular Gardens in Colin Campbell Place or the Factory and design at Roma Street Parkland.  
To book a guided tour, please visit [romastreetparkland.com.au](http://romastreetparkland.com.au)

For more details about What's On at Roma Street Parkland, visit the Information Booth at The Hub, or visit to [romastreetparkland.com.au](http://romastreetparkland.com.au)

ROMASTREETPARKLAND  
@romastreetparkland

Roma Street Parkland  
Established by a former Brisbane

FREE EVENT REGISTRATION TICKETS

 Roma Street Parkland

## AMPHITHEATRE PLAZA

-  The Hub 
-  Celebration Lawn
-  Security  
-  Carriage Shed  
-  Roma Street Train Station  
-  Carriage Deck
-  City
-  Sunset Glade 
-  Palm Tree Court
-  Wickham Terrace
-  Amphitheatre  
-  Spectacle Garden in Colin Campbell Place



oh, just makes  
me feel like I  
have smiling in  
my chest

It's in my  
presence.

I've got a  
connection to  
country and  
earthy sort of  
stuff.





meditation in  
action



this mentally ill,  
homeless man

almost like he's a  
ghost

If you ignore the  
problem long  
enough, it'll just  
solve itself.



Everybody there was her  
family for that one evening  
and it made her feel good.

birthday's difficult

Every year it's just like,  
"He's this old now."  
I've still got his 10th birthday  
present.  
I wonder what he looks like  
now,  
I wonder what sort of cake  
he got.

I don't know how to face so  
much loss.





Broken heart &  
family:

My heart's been  
shattered.

Things can be  
fixed  
with support  
and with love  
and with care.

Anything can be  
fixed.





## About the team



Dr **Stefanie Plage** is a Research Fellow at the Centre of Excellence for Children and Families over the Life Course at the School of Social Science, UQ. Her expertise is in qualitative research methods, including longitudinal and visual methods. She employs these methods to contribute to the sociology of emotions, and the sociology of health and illness. Email: [s.plage@uq.edu.au](mailto:s.plage@uq.edu.au)



**Robert Perrier** is an author and songwriter with a background in theatre and cultural events making. He has lived experience of social and community housing and is an advocate for the creation of formal mechanisms which guarantee tenants a role in decision-making around housing policy and practice.



Dr **Andrea Bubenik** is a Senior Lecturer in Art History and Curatorship at The University of Queensland. She has curated several exhibitions at the UQ Art Museum and is a regular contributor to public programming at QAGOMA. email: [a.bubenik@uq.edu.au](mailto:a.bubenik@uq.edu.au)





**Kirsten Baker** is a PhD Candidate at the Australian Research Centre in Complementary and Integrative Medicine, The University of Technology Sydney. Her thesis explores how the integration of health and social care can help meet complex needs and contribute to tackling health inequalities. She is also Wellness Services Co-Ordinator at the inclusive health clinic where this study was conducted. Email: [kirsten.baker@student.uts.edu.au](mailto:kirsten.baker@student.uts.edu.au)



Dr **Rose-Marie Stambe** is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow with the School of Social Sciences and the Centre for Policy Futures, UQ. Her expertise is in qualitative research methods, including ethnography. Rose's key research interest is in understanding how policy, institutional practices, and systems shape the experiences of people who are socially and economically marginalized and the possibilities for system transformation. Rose has researched in areas such as unemployment, homelessness, domestic and family violence, and mental health. Email: [r.stambe@uq.edu.au](mailto:r.stambe@uq.edu.au)



Dr **Ella Kuskoff** is a at the Centre of Excellence for Children and Families over the Life Course at the School of Social Science, UQ. Her research focuses on how experiences of multiple forms of disadvantage (including homelessness, domestic violence, and engagement in statutory child protection systems) coalesce and compound in complex and often detrimental ways. She is also interested in how people's experiences of these forms of disadvantage are situated within and impacted by broader structural, policy, and service provision contexts. Email: [e.kuskoff@uq.edu.au](mailto:e.kuskoff@uq.edu.au)



Prof **Cameron Parsell** is Professor of the Social Sciences at The University of Queensland. His primary areas of research are poverty, homelessness, social services, and charity. Email: [c.parsell@uq.edu.au](mailto:c.parsell@uq.edu.au)

Neither the exhibition nor this booklet would have been possible without the generous contributions of the people who participated in this study. Our appreciation for engaging in photography and captioning activities for this project continues to grow, even more so that these photographs and captions are now on public display. With their permission we thank these contributors here as: Ash, Drunk Koala, Ed, Elke, Jessie Morwood, Jeromy, John, Karen, Kenny, Lenny, Robert, and Zac. We equally extend our thanks to those contributors who chose to remain anonymous.

For further information about this study, please contact Stefanie Plage.  
Email: [s.plage@uq.edu.au](mailto:s.plage@uq.edu.au)



**Life Course Centre**

ARC Centre of Excellence for Children  
and Families over the Life Course



**THE UNIVERSITY  
OF QUEENSLAND**  
AUSTRALIA



