



BRISBANE COMMON GROUND

Analyses of Tenancy Sustainment & Exits at Brisbane Common Ground

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

This report presents analyses of tenancy sustainment and tenancy exit at Brisbane Common Ground (BCG). BCG is a model of permanent supportive housing (PSH). It aims to provide people with permanent exits from homelessness, as well as a source of affordable and long-term housing for people receiving low to moderate incomes. As a model of PSH, BCG integrates tenancy services with a range of community, social, and health support services. It is the integration of these services that is the hallmark of PSH. The integrated model pursues the objective of enabling people to sustain tenancies after exiting homelessness, including people who have experienced chronic homelessness and rough sleeping.

Located approximately one kilometre from Brisbane's Central Business District, the first tenants moved into BCG in July 2012, and the building was fully tenanted five months later in November. BCG has 146 apartments, including 135 studios and 11 one-bedroom accessible apartments. Approximately half of the properties are allocated to people on the basis of homelessness and need for ongoing support to sustain a tenancy, and the other approximate half is allocated to people receiving low-to-moderate incomes. As explained below, the findings presented in this report are based on analyses of tenancy data from the ten-year period between 2012 and 2022.

BCG is funded, delivered, and enabled through a collaborative model. The building is owned by the Queensland Government, and it was built with a combination of Commonwealth and Queensland Government funding. Similarly, the Commonwealth and Queensland Government funds the operation of the building through grants, Commonwealth Rent Assistance, and Specialist Homelessness Services funding. The Mater Hospital also provides funding for onsite integrated health care. The property is managed by Common Ground Queensland (CGQ). CGQ manage the 146 residential tenancies, in addition to two commercial properties located onsite. Micah Projects delivers onsite psychosocial and health support. Consistent with the principles outlined in the scholarly literature, the support (Micah Projects) and tenancy (CGQ) providers are distinct organisations, yet they form a close collaboration to deliver the PSH model. In addition to government funding, BCG was supported with philanthropic contributions: Grocon built BCG on a 'cost' (not profit) basis, and other companies likewise provided 'cost' contributions to help with construction and fit out.

Current knowledge base and questions

The Queensland Government funded an initial evaluation of BCG, conducted between 2014 and 2015, which provided important insights (Parsell et al. 2015). It found that for people who accessed BCG because of homelessness: (i) the vast majority of people sustained a tenancy for more than 12 months; (ii) people reported improvements in health and healthcare access after 12 months; (iii) there was little change in self-reported drug and alcohol use after 12 months, and similarly little change in participation in education, training, and the labour market; and (iv) BCG contributed to a cost-offset of approximately \$13,100 per tenant in the first year of their tenancy compared to the year prior when they were homeless, owing to a significant reduction in service use when living at BCG compared to when homeless (Parsell et al. 2017).

The evaluation results were significant, because they demonstrated that people with chronic experiences of homelessness who had not been able to access or sustain housing could indeed exit homelessness when provided PSH. The research showed that what is required to address homelessness is change to existing models of tenancy and support services, rather than assuming that people who are homeless can be changed to fit in with existing housing and support systems. The knowledge produced through the evaluation of BCG also raised further questions and provoked conversation about how a desirable or undesirable tenancy outcome could be determined.

Informed by the existing knowledge base, this research is guided by four aims:

1. To generate evidence on how exiting PSH, which by definition assumes permanency, can be considered a positive or negative outcome.
2. To identify what tenancy and support work is conducted to sustain tenancies, especially for people who experience significant tenancy problems that might otherwise lead to eviction.
3. To identify what tenancy and support work could take place to avert negative outcomes, such as forced exits or exits into homelessness.
4. To examine whether the PSH model work for all tenants, or is better suited to some more than others.

Some of these aims have been engaged in a recent Australian study examining exits and tenancy sustainment at Elizabeth Street Common Ground in Melbourne (Taylor and Johnson 2021). In this research, Taylor and Johnson (2021: 6) observed that sustaining a tenancy in PSH for people with experiences of chronic homelessness is a positive outcome, unless people “exit in obviously favourable circumstances”. They also note that, in PSH models where there is a mix of people being allocated tenancies because of past experiences of homelessness or low-to-moderate income, long tenancies are not necessarily an objective for low-to-moderate income tenants. Taylor and Johnson (2021) note that the literature draws a distinction between people who exit PSH into favourable opportunities elsewhere, or because of problems with their tenancy. They conclude that if people leave unfavourably, this is an indication that PSH “is not suited as long-term housing to everyone” (Taylor and Johnson 2021: 20).

The current research at BCG presented in this report extends the existing knowledge base. First, we quantitatively examine the circumstances of people with both positive and negative outcomes. The research recognises that leaving housing is part of many people’s typical housing trajectory over the life course. Second, we draw on qualitative interviews with tenancy and support providers to explore their practices and identify what contributed to positive outcomes and what could be done differently to prevent negative outcomes. Our research works from the premise that negative outcomes are not necessarily indicators that PSH is not suited to

some people. Rather, we argue and aim to demonstrate that negative outcomes can be averted through adjustments to selected tenancy and support practices, such as Sustaining Tenancy Plans.

The present research

Informed by the existing evidence for BCG and the gaps in knowledge, this study addresses four research questions:

1. How long do tenants stay at BCG?
2. How can tenancies at BCG be characterised as resulting in a negative or positive outcome?
3. Which tenants tend to experience positive outcomes and which tend to experience negative outcomes?
4. What does BCG do to promote positive tenant outcomes, and what could be done differently to ensure positive outcomes for all tenants?

Methodology

This research draws on a mixed-method research design. First, the analyses presented in this report make use of administrative, quantitative data collated and provided by CGQ. The data captures details on each individual BCG tenancy (n=417) since the initiative's inception in 2012.

These data include rich information on:

- the start and end date (if applicable) for each tenancy;
- the tenants' characteristics (e.g., their age, gender, and whether they identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander or as someone from a non-English-speaking background);
- their pre-tenancy circumstances (e.g., whether they were homeless or low-to-moderate income);
- their experiences and challenges during their tenancy (e.g., whether there were issues related to arrears, unit condition, or tenant behaviour);
- any interventions made by BCG to sustain tenancies (e.g., issuing a Breach Notice, developing a Sustaining Tenancy Plan, and developing an Acceptable Behaviour Agreement); and
- the exit circumstances of those whose tenancies ended (e.g., the formal method of notice and the tenant's subsequent housing conditions).

These data were analysed using a mix of univariate descriptive statistics (e.g., measures of central tendency and dispersion); bivariate descriptive statistics (e.g., mean comparisons and cross-tabulations); Kaplan Meier survival curves (to characterise and visualise the timing of tenancy exits); and multivariable logistic regression models (to understand the factors underpinning positive and negative outcomes).

Second, we conducted targeted qualitative interviews with tenancy providers and support providers (n=3). Qualitative interviews augmented the quantitative analyses by examining the practices of professionals designing and delivering the PSH model. The interviews sought to understand: (i) what tenancy and support staff did to contribute to tenancy sustainment; (ii) which practices were effective or ineffective at supporting tenants to sustain their tenancy; and (iii) how the tenancy and support provision model and practices could be enhanced to engage tenants experiencing challenges or who were at risk of eviction.

Limitations

There are a number of important limitations to report. This study does not draw on the experiences of tenants. Indeed, the study does not make any assertions about the first-hand experiences of people at BCG. We recommend that subsequent work engage with tenants so that they can play determining roles in developing the evidence about what constitutes success at BCG, and permanent supportive housing more broadly. Engaging with tenants will be important to understand in greater depth what successful and unsuccessful exits look like. Further, close empirical engagement with tenants will add to our understanding about what is done to achieve positive outcomes, including preventing eviction. The study is also limited by virtue of the absence of data that currently exists on people who exit BCG. Although we have good data on the reasons people leave, and some data on where people intend to go upon exit, we know little about people's housing and indeed life trajectories post-BCG. Assessing data on people's housing post-BCG would be important to better develop our knowledge about whether successful or unsuccessful outcomes were achieved. Moreover, longitudinal data on people who leave BCG would help further determine what enduring life outcomes BCG contributes to.

CHAPTER 2

ENTERING BRISBANE COMMON GROUND

Introduction

As a model of PSH that adopts a tenancy mix, BCG aims to allocate approximately 50% of tenancies to people who are experiencing rough sleeping (often chronic) and 50% of tenancies to people who receive low-to-moderate incomes who are not experiencing homelessness at the time of tenancy allocation. For people allocated due to experiencing homelessness, BCG draws on a range of referral pathways. In a joint process between the tenancy provider (CGQ) and the support provider (Micah Projects), people entering tenancies because of homelessness are assessed based on urgent need for housing (as assessed by the **Vulnerability Index Tool**), and a need for supports that do not readily exist in standard social housing or housing provided by the market. A property at BCG is thus allocated to a person sleeping rough when all other housing and accommodation options are deemed to be inaccessible and inappropriate. In this way, BCG often provides tenancies to people who are not only homeless, but who have also been excluded from housing for many years.

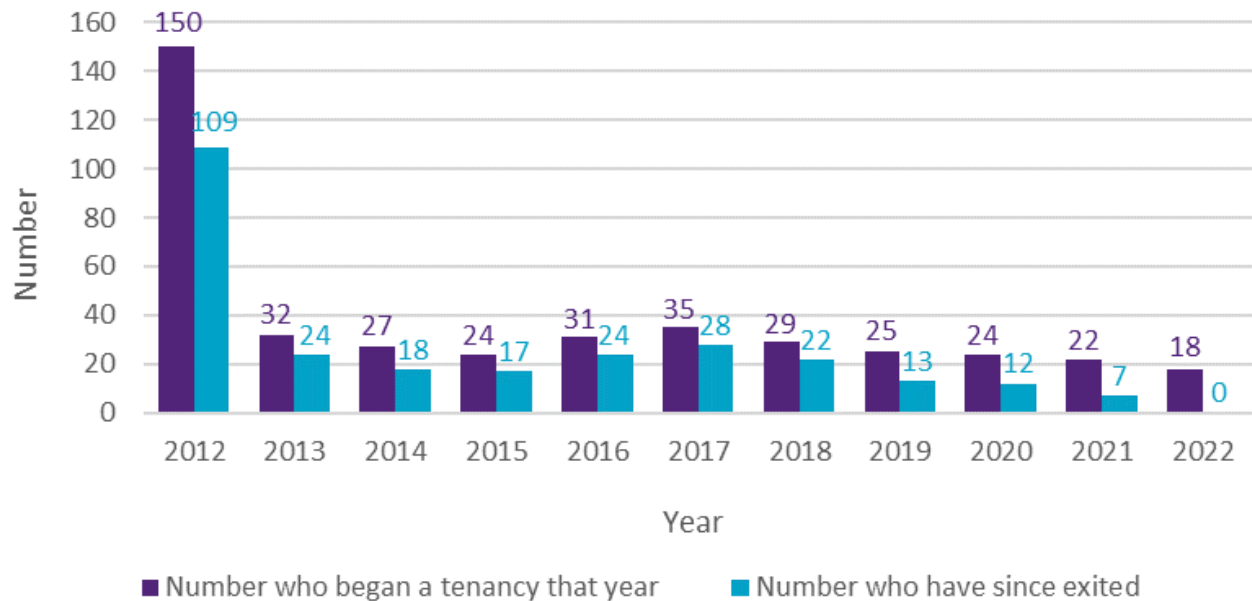
The **Vulnerability Index Tool** is an assessment tool designed to assist frontline workers who work with homeless clients to identify service needs and prioritise delivery of services to clients who are at the highest risk. The Tool is designed to inform case management and improve clients' long-term housing stability outcomes (Community Solutions 2015).



Tenancy allocations

Figure 1 presents descriptive statistics on the people who have entered and exited BCG between 2012 and 2022. In this figure, the numbers for each year denote how many of the people who enter BCG on that year have since exited (in any subsequent year up to 2022). For example, the numbers for 2012 indicate that, of the 150 people who started their tenancies in 2012, 109 have since exited. Overall, the results in Figure 1 demonstrate a consistent pattern of movement in and out of BCG. We can see that BCG achieved full capacity in the opening year, 2012. Beyond the first year, the data shows a similar number of people entering each year. For example, between 2013 and 2021 (the last year for which we have 12 months of data), an average 28 people entered BCG each year, with a range of 22 to 35.

Figure 1. Tenancy entries and exits by year



Again drawing on data from the ten years between 2012 and 2022, Figure 2 breaks the data down to look at tenancy allocations over ten years according to age, gender, identification as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander or as someone from a non-English-speaking background, and entry circumstances.

Figure 2. Tenancy allocations by tenant characteristics

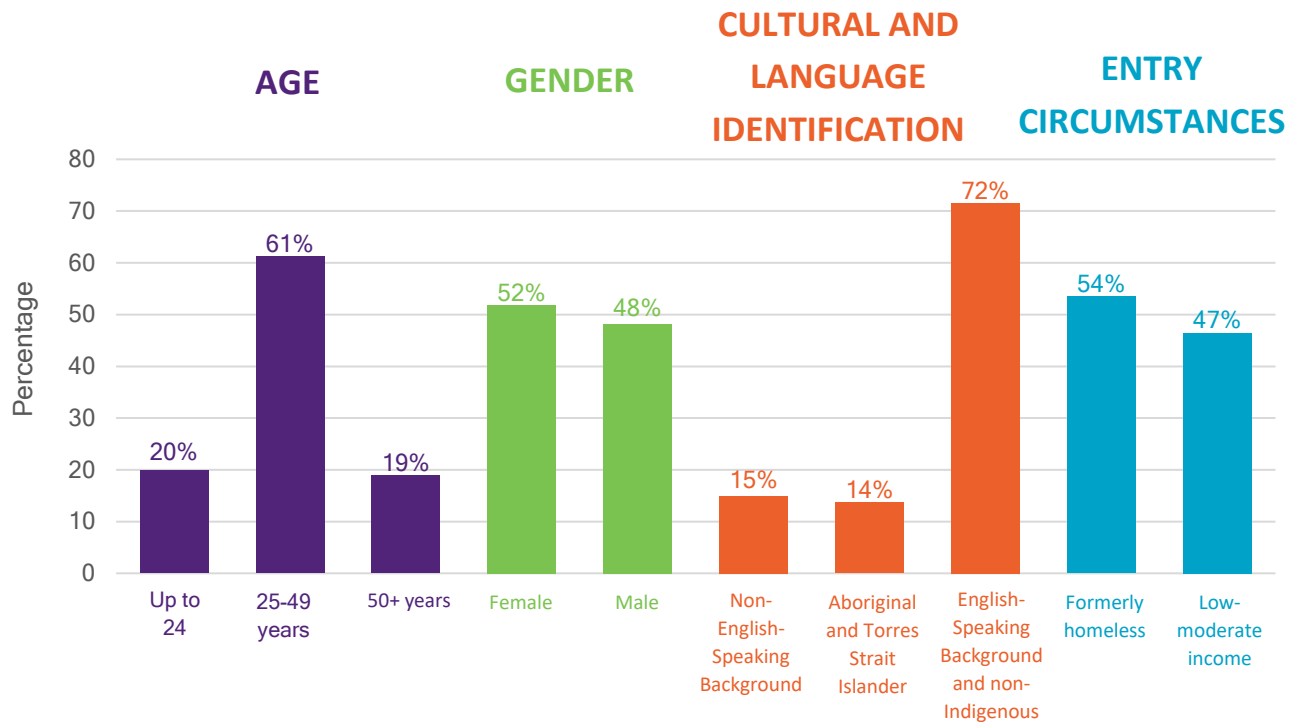


Figure 2 shows that the majority of tenancies are allocated to people aged 25-49 years (61%), with a relatively equal minority allocated to tenants aged up to 24 years (20%) and over 50 years (19%). A slightly greater percentage of tenancies are allocated to women (52%) compared to men (48%). In terms of cultural and language identification, tenants who are non-Indigenous and from English-speaking backgrounds are more likely to be allocated a tenancy (72%) compared to those from non-English speaking backgrounds (15%) and those who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (14%). A slightly greater percentage of tenancies are allocated to tenants who are formerly homeless (people sleeping rough) (54%) compared to those with low-to-moderate incomes (46%).

Tenancy duration, who stays, and who leaves

The administrative data at hand also allows us to conduct analyses on the typical duration of tenancies. The figures below summarise the distribution of all BCG tenancy durations, separating these by whether they have ended or not. These durations are visualised using kernel density plots, a technique that enables determining the most typical values (i.e., durations) in the data, and complemented by an array of descriptive statistics (mean, median, minimum, maximum).

Figure 3. Distributions of ongoing tenancy durations

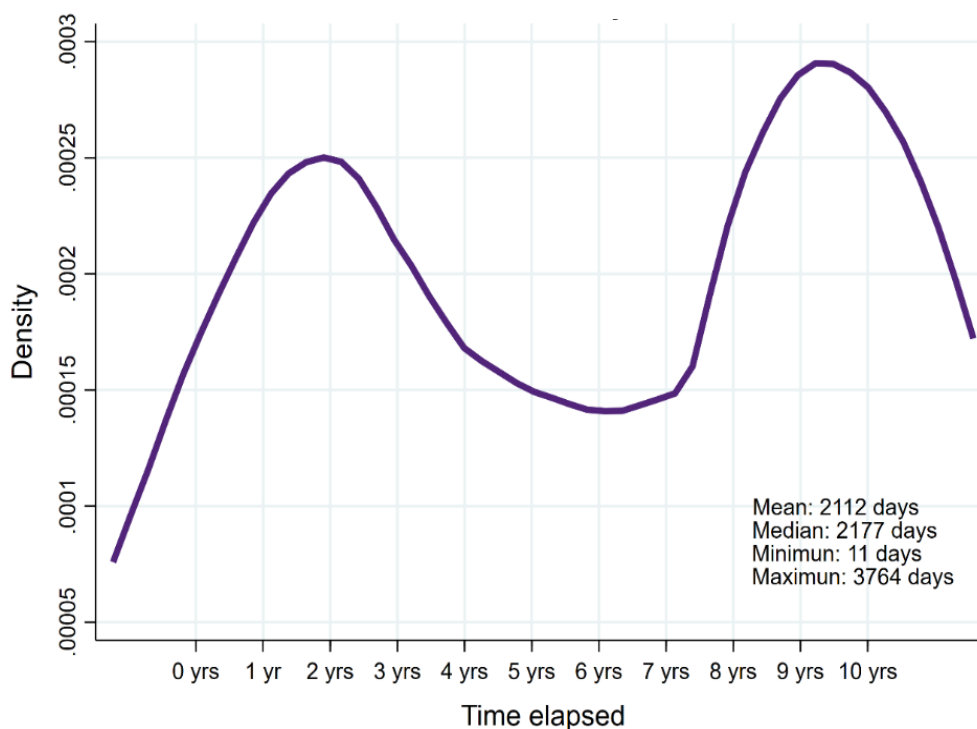
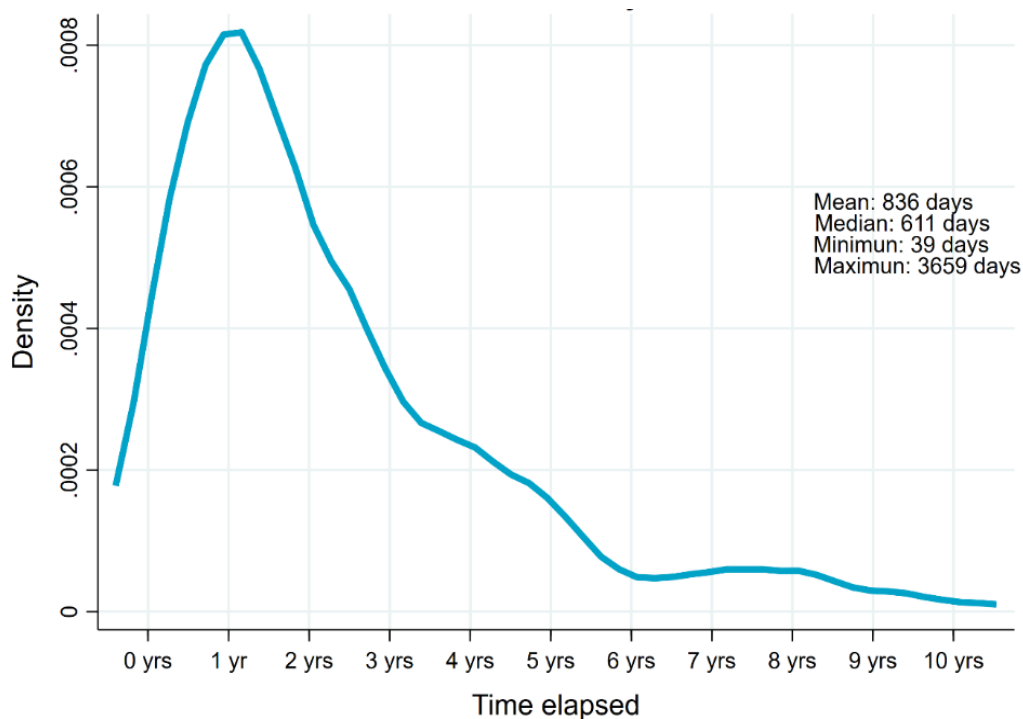


Figure 3 shows a kernel density plot summarising the duration of those tenancies that are ongoing (i.e., not yet ended). The distribution displayed in the graph indicates that most ongoing tenancies have been going for 1 to 3 years or 8 to 10 years. The mean duration of ongoing tenancies is 2,112 days (i.e., nearly 6 years), while the median duration is similar (2,177 days, or approx. 6 years). Of ongoing tenancies, the shortest at the time of data collection was less than two weeks (11 days) and the longest was 3,794 days (or just over 10 years).

Figure 4 shows a kernel density plot summarising the duration of tenancies that have ended. The distribution displayed in the graph indicates that most tenancies that have ended lasted for around 1 year. The mean duration of ended tenancies is 836 days (i.e., just over 2 years), while the median duration is 611 days (i.e., approx. 1.5 years). Of ended tenancies, the shortest at the time of data collection was just over 1 month (39 days) and the longest was 3,659 days (about 10 years).

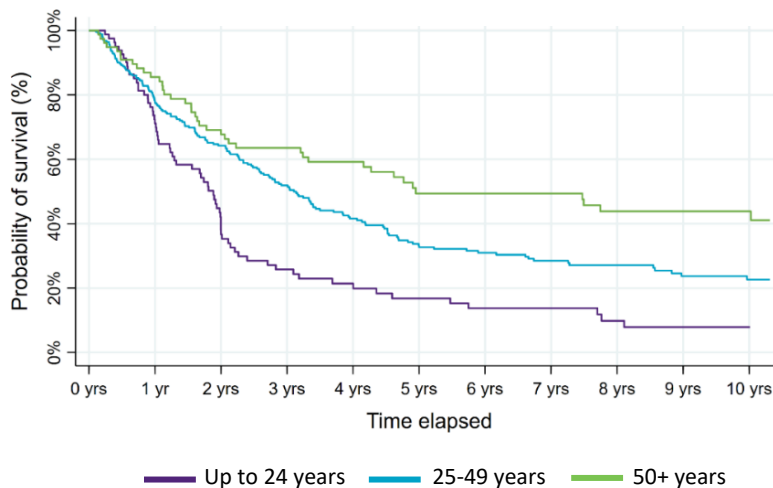
Figure 4. Distributions of ended tenancy durations



To gain a better understanding of the duration of BCG tenancies, we applied a series of Kaplan-Meier survival curves. These longitudinal analyses allow us to compare tenancy durations and the timing of exits across different groups, on the basis of age, gender, pre-entry housing circumstances, or cultural or language identification. In the resulting plots shown below, the Y (i.e., vertical) axis represents the % of individuals who remained housed at BCG, while the X (i.e., horizontal) axis represents the time elapsed since their entry date. Thus, steeper downward drops in the graph denote a higher likelihood to exit a tenancy.

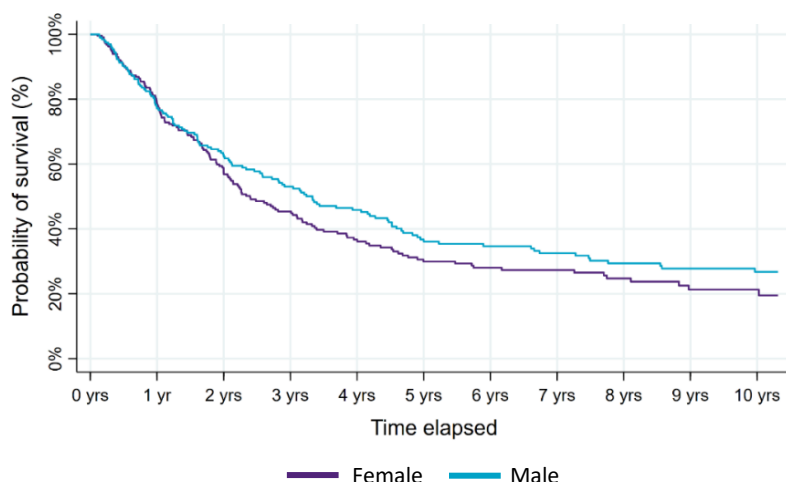
The first of these graphs, Figure 5, compares the duration of tenancies across cohorts defined by their age at entry into their BCG tenancies. The results reveal a greater likelihood to leave tenancies early amongst younger cohorts (particularly

Figure 5. Survival rate by age at tenancy entry



those aged under 24 years), and a lower likelihood amongst those aged over 50 years. For example, at 5 years from the beginning of the tenancy, the percentage of individuals who remained housed at BCG was 17% for those aged under 24 years, 33% for those aged 25–49 years, and 49% for those aged over 50 years.

Figure 6. Survival rate by gender at tenancy entry



The second of these graphs, Figure 6, compares the duration of tenancies by gender. The results reveal a greater likelihood to leave tenancies early amongst women, and a lower likelihood amongst men. For example, at 3 years from the beginning of the tenancy, the percentage of women who maintained their tenancies was 44%, compared to 53% of men.

The next graph, Figure 7, compares the duration of tenancies across cohorts defined by whether people identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander or as coming from a non-English-speaking background

background. The results reveal that, overall, tenants who do not identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander or as coming from a non-English-speaking background face a greater likelihood of leaving their tenancies early compared to those who do identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander or as someone from a non-English-speaking background. Tenants who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and tenants who identify as coming from a non-English-speaking background face similar survival rates for the first 4 years.

For example, at 6 years from the beginning of the tenancy, the percentage of individuals who remained housed at BCG was 44% for those who identify as coming from a non-English-speaking background, 31% for those who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, and 28% for those who identify as neither Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander nor non-English-speaking background.

The next graph, Figure 8, compares the duration of tenancies across cohorts defined by their circumstances at tenancy entry (i.e., homeless or low-to-moderate income). The results reveal similar

Figure 7. Survival rate by cultural and language identification at tenancy entry

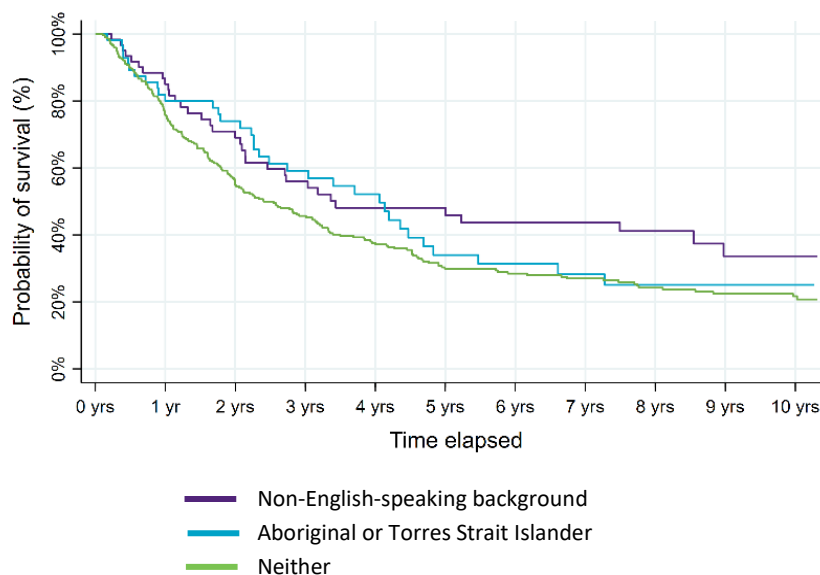
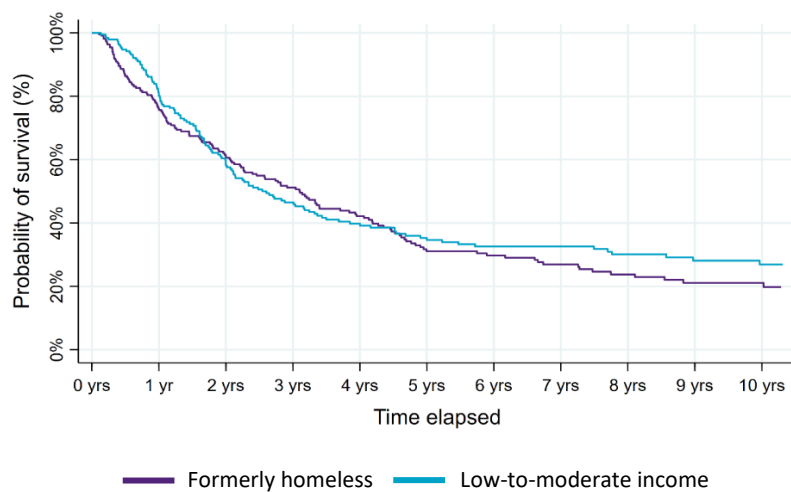


Figure 8. Survival rate by circumstances at tenancy entry



trajectories for both cohorts, with low-to-moderate income tenants being more likely to maintain their tenancies in the long term. For example, at 7 years from the beginning of the tenancy, the percentage of formerly homeless individuals who remained housed in the BCG was 27%, compared to 33% for tenants with a low-to-moderate income.

Together, these analyses show that the tenancy durations of people living in BCG are far from uniform. Tenants' length of stay varied greatly, and

factors such as demographic characteristics and entry circumstances were associated with their likelihood of exiting BCG, as well as the timing of their exits. In the following chapter, we explore the nature of the tenancies themselves, including the tenancy difficulties people faced, how tenants were supported to maintain their tenancies, and where tenants exited to.

CHAPTER 3

THE NATURE OF TENANCIES

Introduction

This chapter presents quantitative and qualitative data to illustrate key features of the nature of people's tenancies at BCG. Whereas Chapter 2 outlined data on people entering and exiting BCG, including the duration of their tenancies, this chapter extends the analysis to provide detail on how people's tenancies were characterised. The chapter describes and explores the nature of tenancies across four core domains: tenancy breaches, actions to respond to breaches, the formal reasons for exiting BCG, and exit pathways.

Issuing breaches

Breaches, formally referred to as 'Notice to remedy breach' (Form 11), are a formal mechanism from the Residential Tenancy Act. Breaches are issued when the tenancy manager believes that the tenant is non-compliant with the conditions of their tenancy agreement as outlined in the Residential Tenancy Act. If a tenant is issued a breach, they are required to address the problem in a timeframe specified by CGQ.

Breaches are issued to tenants for three reasons:

- **Rental arrears breach:** A tenant falls into rental arrears when they fail to pay their rent by the due date. If a tenant falls into rental arrears by more than 7 days, they are issued with a Notice to Remedy Breach (Common Ground Queensland 2020).
- **Unit condition issues:** A tenant may be issued with a Notice to Remedy Breach when the condition of their unit fails to uphold certain health and safety standards.
- **Behaviour notices:** Dangerous, illegal, or antisocial behaviours that interfere with staff or other residents' safety, privacy, or peace can lead to a Notice to Remedy Breach (Common Ground Queensland 2019).

We analysed the data to identify: (i) the percentage of all tenants who received any type of breach; (ii) the percentage of tenants who received each specific type of breach; and (iii) how this varied between tenants who remained housed at BCG versus those who exited.

Figure 9. Tenants with any type of breach notice

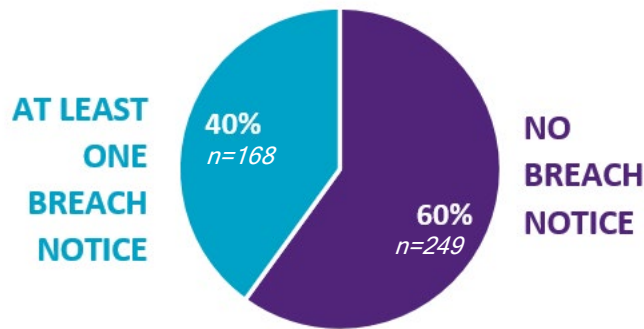
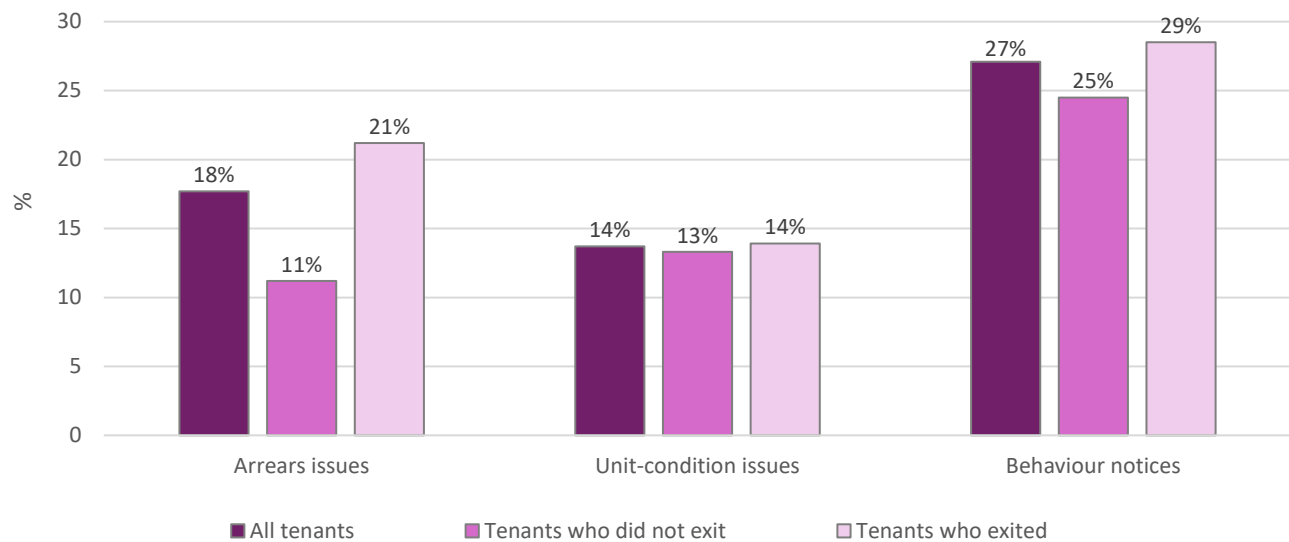


Figure 9 shows the percentage of tenants who have ever received any type of breach notice. As the graph demonstrates, a majority of tenants (60%) have never been issued with a breach notice.

Figure 10 provides a more in-depth look at the 40% of tenants who have received a breach notice by showing which types of breaches occurred and their distribution across all tenants, tenants who maintained their tenancies, and tenants who exited. As the figure shows, the most common tenancy breach involved in exiting is arrears issues. A much

higher percentage of exiting tenants had breaches for rent arrears (21%) compared to tenants who stayed (11%). A slightly higher percentage of exiting tenants (29%) also had behaviour notices compared to tenants who stayed (25%). Receiving a breach for unit-condition issues, on the other hand, was not strongly associated with exiting BCG (13% of tenants who stayed and 14% of tenants who exited received a breach for unit condition issues).

Figure 10. Type of tenancy breaches



It is important here to pause and reflect upon what follows the issuing of a breach. In particular, it is important to consider how a breach can be a mechanism to engage support to address the tenancy problem that the breach pertains to. Given that BCG aims to support people who exit rough sleeping to make sustainable exits from homelessness, it is reasonable to ask what actions are taken when a breach is issued to support a tenant to address the identified problems.

Figure 11 presents the formal mechanisms invoked to support tenants to rectify breaches. In particular, Figure 11 shows that many tenants of BCG received a breach (40% of all tenants). Further analyses shows that those who entered after homelessness were more likely to receive a breach (57%) than those who entered because of low-to-moderate income (22%). We found that a breach for rental arrears is associated with exiting, and, to a lesser extent, so is receiving a unit-condition breach. Importantly, Figure 11 also demonstrates that breaches were an impetus for support, particularly through engaging tenants in a Sustaining Tenancy Plan. A total of 82%

of tenants who received a breach were engaged with a Sustaining Tenancy Plan, with a further 5% of tenants who received a breach also being engaged in an acceptable behaviour agreement.

Responding to breaches

The understanding of breaches from tenancy and support staff at BCG dovetail with this quantitative data. Findings from our qualitative interviews corroborate that the primary means of assisting tenants in addressing issues identified through a breach is a **Sustaining Tenancy Plan**. A Sustaining Tenancy Plan can be instigated by either the tenancy or support provider, and it can be initiated either once a breach has been issued or prior to a breach. A Micah Projects representative described it as:

A Sustaining Tenancy Plan [is implemented] when there is an issued identified by [CGQ or Micah], often via feedback from tenants, and we feel three parties need to work on.

The professional services provider went on to say that the Sustaining Tenancy Plan “should be the absolute core of everything we do as sustaining tenancies is our priority.”

In practice, a Sustaining Tenancy Plan assumes many forms in terms of length and nature of engagement. In the first instance, the plan involves the support provider meeting with the tenant to discuss the concerns. This discussion may lead to long-term work between the support provider, the tenant, and even external services, such as mental-health professionals. BCG practitioners described working with the nuances of individual situations, behaviours, and contexts to devise individualised plans to implement strategies and activate supports

A **Sustaining Tenancy Plan** is the formal mechanism to initiate a type of intervention or support to disrupt the problems that are placing a tenancy at risk. Given that a breach can be the trigger toward formal eviction proceedings at QCAT (Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal), a Sustaining Tenancy Plan ultimately aims to reduce the likelihood of eviction.

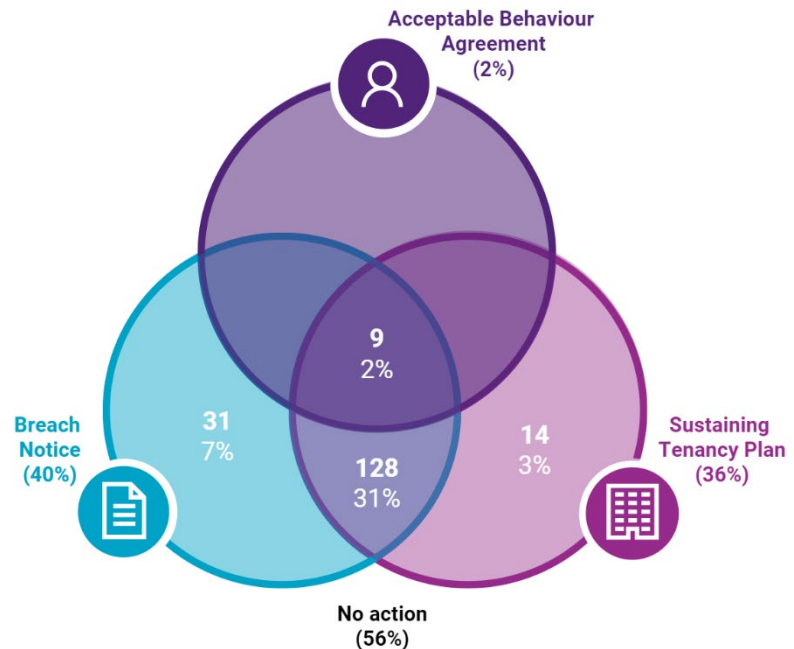


to encourage behavioural change. Tenant engagement with BCG staff is at the core of a Sustaining Tenancy Plan. However, on some occasions, tenants do not engage. Indeed, a Micah Projects practitioner noted that tenants often do not engage, suggesting:

We feel, broadly speaking the more likely you are to have challenging/anti-social behaviours the less likely you are to engage in the process.

Tenants may not, for example, respond to requests to meet to talk about establishing a Sustaining Tenancy Plan. In some rare circumstances, a Sustaining Tenancy Plan is opened and operationalised in the absence of the

Figure 11. Actions taken to remedy breaches



relevant tenant. Moreover, much of the support work provided by Micah Projects takes place outside of formal Sustaining Tenancy Plans.

There is an important reason why Sustaining Tenancy Plans can be initiated even when a tenant does not participate. BCG aims to permanently end homelessness for people, and thus the tenancy and support providers are committed to doing whatever is within their capacities to avoid tenants being evicted. This includes work to sustain a tenancy through addressing problems placing a tenancy at risk, even when the tenant is not a party to the Sustaining Tenancy Plan. Sometimes tenants do not understand the nature of the tenancy problem; indeed they may not accept that a tenancy problem exists, and thus they may be unwilling to engage in a Sustaining Tenancy Plan.

Corroborating our quantitative findings, both Micah Projects and CGQ practitioners described two core problems that result in breaches and risks of tenancy issues, and if left unresolved, the risk of eviction. These are rental arrears and behaviour issues. Rental arrears are the clearest problems to identify and evidence. Our interview participants explained that when rental arrears occur, it is often following a tenant removing the automated rent deduction from their income (Centrepay through the Australian Government, Services Australia). This is the clearest breach to evidence, in that there is an objective amount of rent due on an objectively defined date. Similarly, there is an objectively measured sum of money that is required to be recovered. Although there are likely to be extremely complex issues that might underpin the payment of rent, such as trauma and substance use, it is a straightforward process to identify the problem and set up a plan to pay off the debt.

Behaviour issues, particularly those behaviours that result in a breach (Behaviour Notice, see Figure 10), are less clear. There is often a disagreement between the tenant and the BCG practitioners about whether a behaviour problem has occurred, and thus disagreement about what – if anything – needs to change to remedy the problem. Both Micah Projects and CGQ practitioners argued that behaviour issues are primarily about a tenant's behaviour negatively impacting upon another tenant (or multiple tenants). This negative impact is described as one tenant making other tenants feel fearful or intimidated, especially through violence or threats of violence. It is CGQ that issues the breach as the tenancy provider, but a Micah Project representative pointed out that it is mostly other tenants that will make formal complaints about a tenants' behaviour that provokes CGQ issuing a breach for behaviour issues.

A Micah Projects practitioner explained that staff at BCG often view tenant behaviour differently than do tenants. The practitioner explained that, as PSH professionals, they are trained and paid to work with people experiencing problems that may place tenancies at risk, but for tenants, the behaviour of their neighbours can be annoying, or even threatening. The Micah Projects practitioner explained:

Relatively minor things such as verbal outbursts are little concern to us. But a neighbour does not have any of that context and may view the behaviour as a major impact on their life and pressure/feedback CGQ to take action.

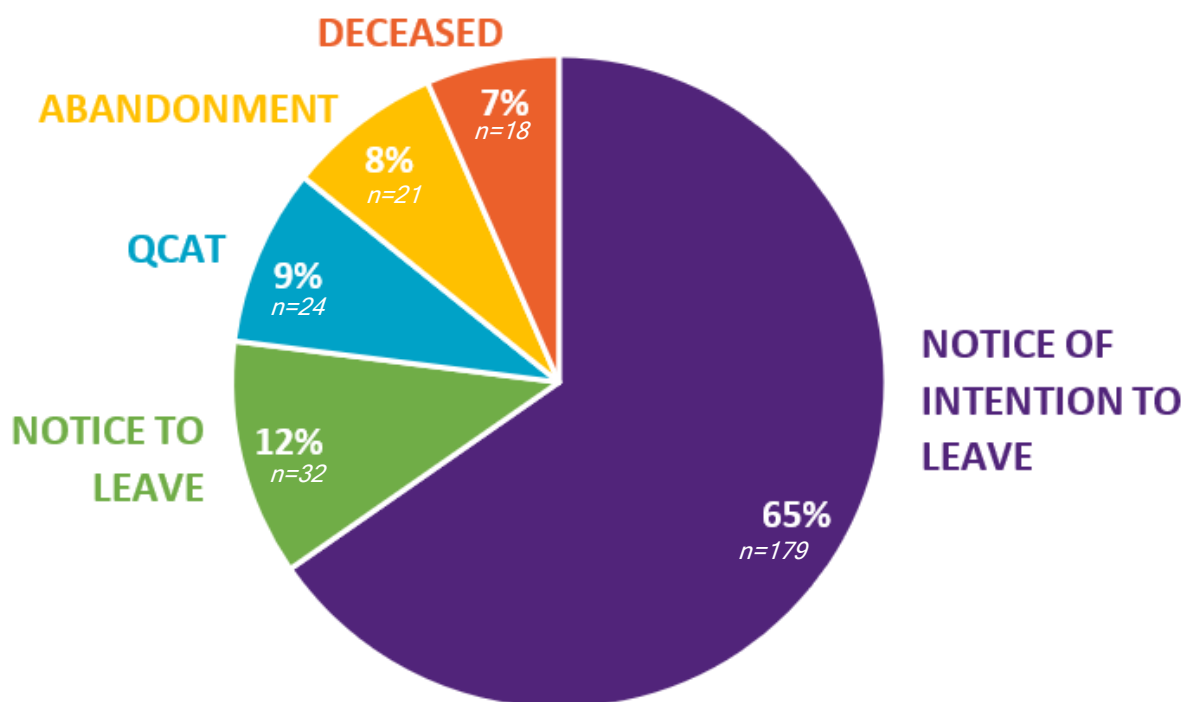
Behaviour issues and associated breaches underly the complexity of the work undertaken at BCG to sustain tenancies. The above quote illustrates the importance of support and tenancy staff helping tenants understand the perspectives and experiences of the tenant cohort, alongside understanding the tenancy expectations. Supporting tenants to change behaviours that cause other tenants to be fearful is challenging. Ideally, according to BCG practitioners, intervention, such as a Sustaining Tenancy Plan should be activated prior to issuing a breach for behavioural issues to reduce the shame and impact of punitive measures. BCG are committed to preventing

evictions, but on some occasions breaches for behaviour problems – which may ultimately lead to an eviction – may be the necessary means required to ensure other tenants’ right to a safe and secure environment. In this context, Sustaining Tenancy Plans are critical to realising BCG objectives. The large proportion of tenancies that are characterised as positive outcomes in the next chapter give a strong sense to the work that is conducted through Sustaining Tenancy Plans.

Exits: The why and the where

We now take a closer look at the data on exits. We focus on the reason why people exit BCG, and their pathways upon exit. As part of the ending to a tenancy, CGQ record the reason for exit from a selection of criteria (as shown in Figure 12, numbers rounded and do not add to 100%). Further, most people who exit provide information about the housing they will access after BCG (Figure 13). However, this does not happen in all circumstances, particularly if people abandon their property.

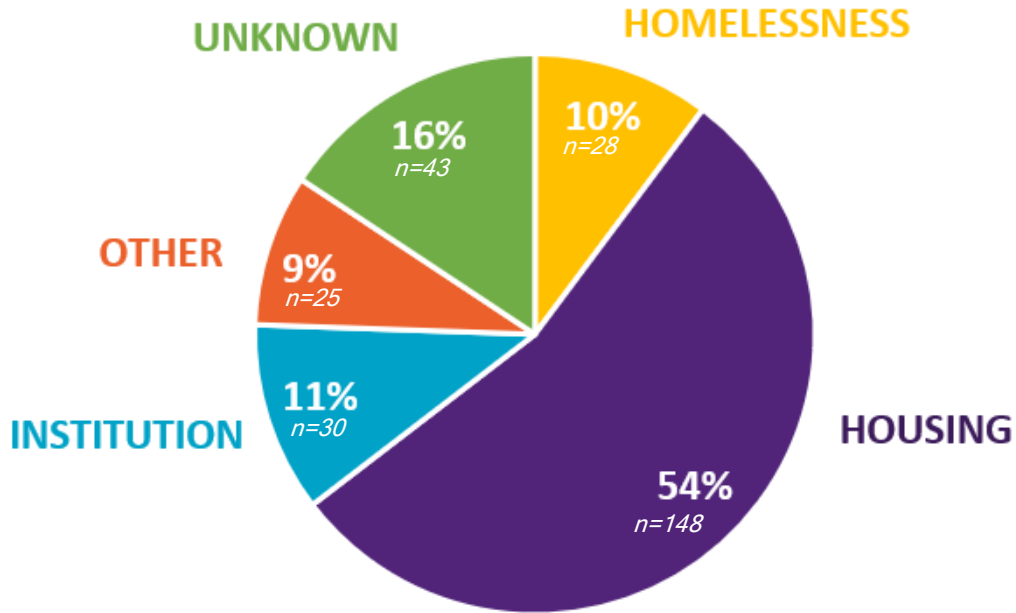
Figure 12. Reason for exit



At face value, Figure 12 suggests that of the 274 people who have exited BCG, the majority, some 65%, chose to leave (notice of intention). A relatively small percentage of people – 9% – were formally evicted through QCAT or left under overtly negative circumstances through a notice to leave issued by CGQ (12%). A small but non-insignificant proportion abandoned their property (9%). From the data on reasons for exit, it is not possible to conclusively draw assertions, but it can be provisionally assumed that abandonment, for some tenants at least, is associated with tenancy problems, including a limited understand of tenancy obligations and rights. Thus, through QCAT, notice to leave, or abandonment, it is probable that some 29% of tenants who exited did so under unfavourable circumstances.

Figure 13 presents data that addresses the question of where people exited upon leaving BCG. Based on the best data available, we can observe that most tenants, approximately 54%, exited BCG and gained other housing. A small proportion, about 10%, exited into homelessness. These two exit pathways, housing or homelessness, clearly indicate positive or negative outcomes. Yet there is a sizeable number of people for whom we cannot readily infer positive or negative outcomes based on their exit pathways. In addition to the 16% of people without exit data, it is not possible to conclude whether an institution outcome represents a positive or negative tenancy. Even if people exit to prison, this may be a custodial outcome that has no relationship to their housing.

Figure 13. Exit pathways



| HOUSING | HOMELESSNESS | INSTITUTION | OTHER | UNKNOWN |
|--|---|---|--|-----------|
| - Private rental - Home ownership - Social housing - Supported accom. - Family | - Boarding house - Caravan park - Crisis accom. - Rough sleeping | - Hospital - Nursing home - Prison - Rehab | - Travel - Deceased - Church group | - Unknown |

Moving to other institutions, such as nursing homes and health facilities, also provides insufficient detail to disentangle positive from negative outcomes. In the next chapter, we address these data gaps by providing a more nuanced picture of how positive and negative tenancies can be characterised with the available data, and identifying who was more likely to achieve them.

CHAPTER 4

POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE OUTCOMES

Introduction

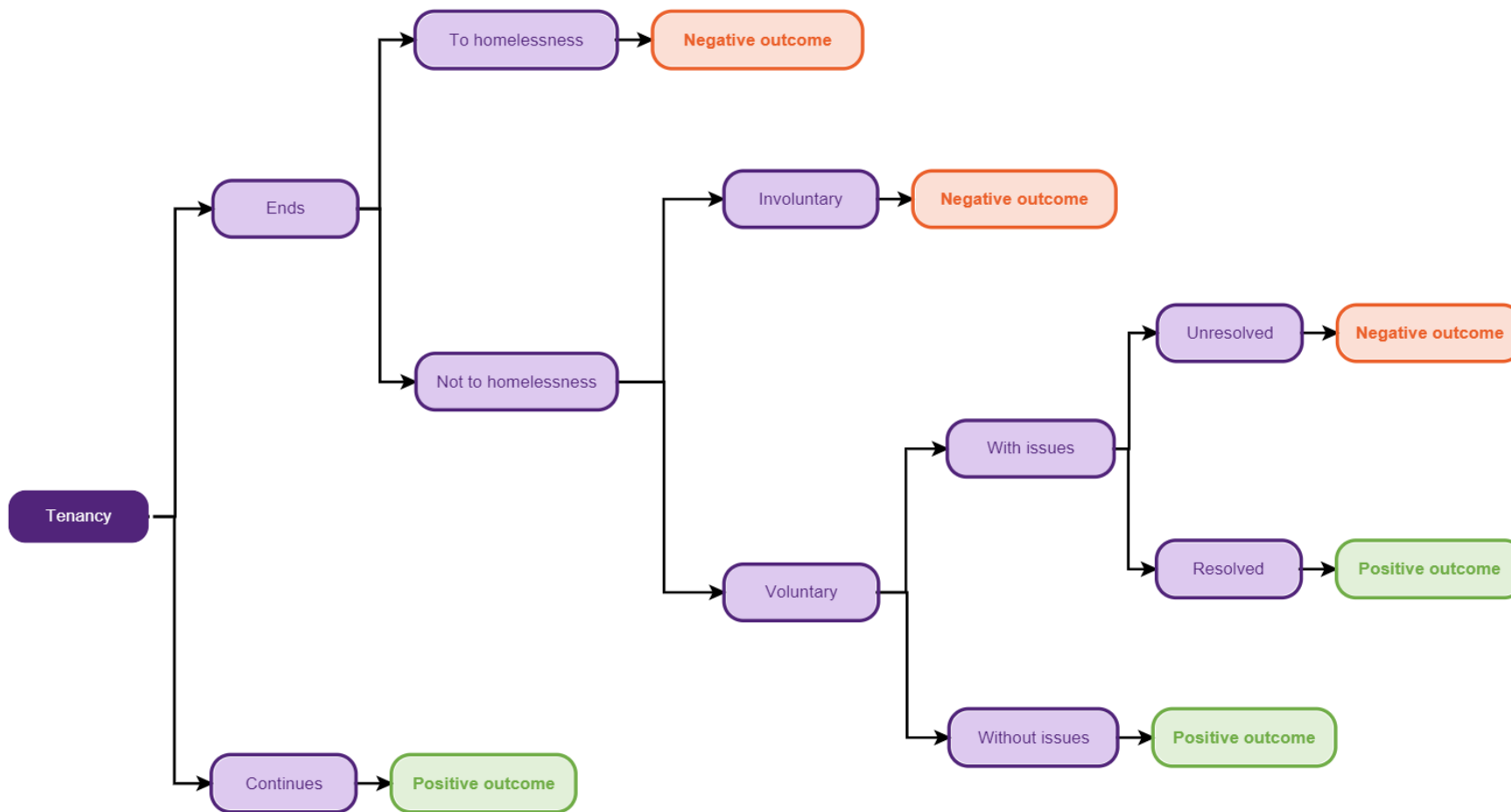
It is critical to develop a robust understanding of what constitutes positive outcomes and negative outcomes. This knowledge not only enables BCG and PSH models to identify success and challenges, but also provides a firm basis to alter practice, so that negative outcomes are avoided. This chapter aims to contribute to the conversation about what is a positive outcome and what is a negative outcome at BCG and, by implication, PSH more broadly. We then analyse the data to identify which tenants achieved a positive outcome and which tenants achieved a negative outcome.

We can reasonably assume that a negative outcome occurs when someone exits BCG (or any form of housing) through a formal eviction mandated by the courts or leaves BCG and enters homelessness. However, we have to this point not engaged in analysis or interpretation on what constitutes a positive or negative outcome for tenants at BCG. It is not the case that people exiting BCG always equates to a negative outcome. Nor is it the case that tenants' reasons for leaving, as presented in the previous chapter, are indicative of a positive or negative outcome. Rather, to better determine a positive or negative outcome, we can couple data on the reasons why people exit with additional information, such as the housing or homelessness status of people upon exit, along with information about whether breaches were remedied. Examining multiple data sources recognises that some tenants may experience an undesirable exit – such as receiving unremedied breaches – even though they are not formally evicted. Our analysis is likewise attuned to the work of both Micah Projects and CGQ practitioners to assist people sustain tenancies in light of challenges.

Positive and negative outcomes

To develop a framework to distinguish between positive and negative outcomes, we reviewed the literature and drew on the experiences of professionals working at BCG. As shown in Figure 14, we identified three pathways through which a tenant can experience a negative outcome, and three pathways through which a tenant can experience a positive outcome.

Figure 14. Positive and negative outcome framework



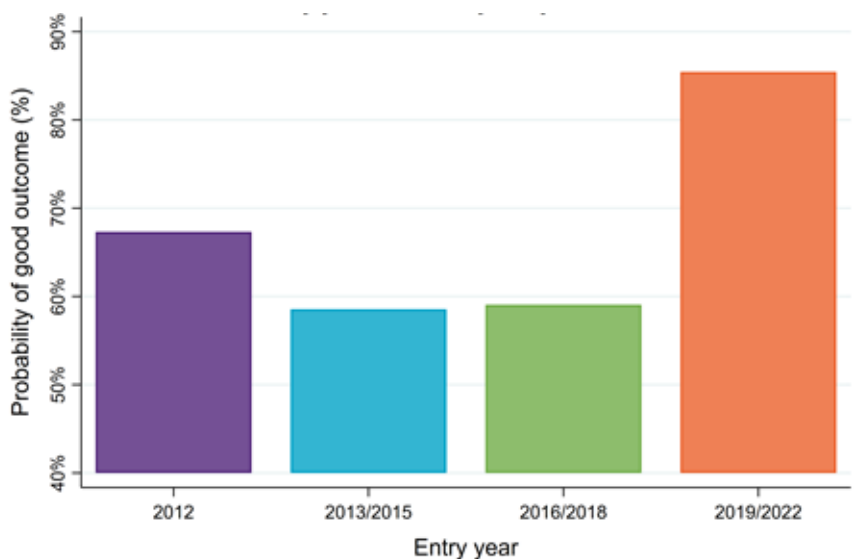
We conceptualise negative outcomes to include the end of a tenancy where a person: (i) enters homelessness, (ii) involuntarily leaves their tenancy, such that the tenancy provider initiates the exit process (issuing a Notice to Leave or progressing a QCAT process), or (iii) leaves with unresolved breaches (i.e., breaches that have not been remedied in the specified time-frame). The latter is important, as it takes account of what might otherwise appear as a voluntary and thus positive outcome. Yet unresolved breaches are likely to indicate a negative outcome, whereby a person is not leaving BCG of their own volition or experienced challenges that the PSH supports could not remedy. Positive outcomes are conceptualised as including a person who (i) does not exit BCG, (ii) exits voluntarily, not to homelessness, and without any breaches, or (iii) exits voluntarily, not to homelessness, and with any breaches remedied. Micah Projects representatives explained that positive outcomes where people leave BCG may be part of people forming new relationships, re-connecting with culture, child birth, and engaging with new employment opportunities. Although we do not have the quantitative data to substantiate the prevalence or nature, positive exist may be part of people’s successful life transitions.

Probabilities of positive and negative outcomes

Having developed a conceptual a model for identifying positive outcomes and negative outcomes within the context of BCG tenancies, here we present data to illustrate the probability of tenants experiencing either outcome. Descriptive statistics indicated that, of the 417 tenancies at BCG over the ten-year period, the majority could be characterised as involving a positive outcome. Specifically, 282 tenancies – or approximately 68% – meet the criteria for a positive outcome, whereas 135 tenancies – or approximately 32% – can be defined as involving negative outcomes.

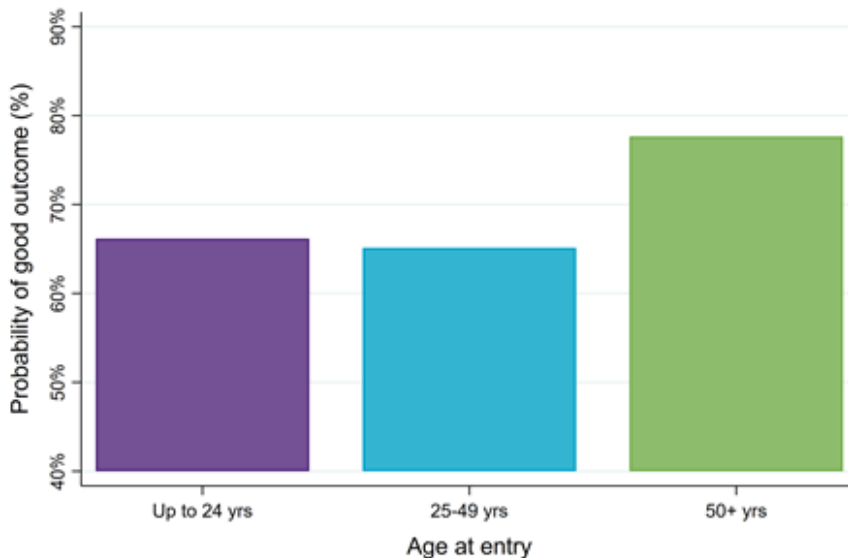
To better understand the factors promoting (or deterring) positive vs. negative outcomes, we fitted a multivariable logistic regression model. In this model, the outcome variable is the indicator of a positive outcome (value 1), compared to a negative outcome (value 0) described above. The explanatory variables are five characteristics of tenants, measured at the time of tenancy entry: entry year, age group, gender, identification as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander or as someone from a non-English-speaking background, and pre-tenancy housing circumstances. The results of these logistic regression models are more insightful than those of descriptive statistics, as the model coefficients yield the independent effects of each of the explanatory variables on the outcome – net of

Figure 15. Probability of a positive outcome by year of tenancy entry



the value of the other explanatory variables. This multivariable approach minimises the risk of confounding and increases the validity and robustness of the results and, as such, the conclusions drawn from them. To ease the interpretation of the regression models, we transformed the key results into marginal predicted probabilities and presented them graphically in Figures 15 to 19 below. In these figures, the Y (i.e., vertical) axis gives the predicted probability of a positive outcome amongst individuals in the cohorts captured within the bars represented in the X (i.e., horizontal) axis.

Figure 16. Probability of a positive outcome by age at tenancy entry



The first of these figures, Figure 15, compares the predicted probability of experiencing a positive outcome across individuals who were housed in different years. The results indicate that, *all else being equal*, those who began their tenancies in years 2019-2022 were particularly likely to experience a positive outcome (85%), followed by those who began their tenancies in year 2012 (69%) and, finally, those who began years 2016-2018 (59%) or 2013-2015 (58%).

The second of these figures, Figure 16, compares the predicted probability of experiencing a

positive tenancy outcome across individuals in different age groups. The results indicate that, all else being equal, those who are aged over 50 years at tenancy entry were particularly likely to experience a positive outcome (78%), with those aged up to 24 years (66%) and those aged 25-49 years (65%) being relatively less likely to do so.

The third of these figures, Figure 17, compares the predicted probability of experiencing a positive outcome according to tenants' gender. The results indicate that, all else being equal, women (70%) are more likely to experience a positive outcome compared to men (66%).

Next, Figure 18 compares the predicted probability of experiencing a positive outcome across individuals who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander or as someone from a non-English-speaking background and those who identify as neither. All else being equal, the results demonstrate that

Figure 17. Probability of a positive outcome by gender at tenancy entry

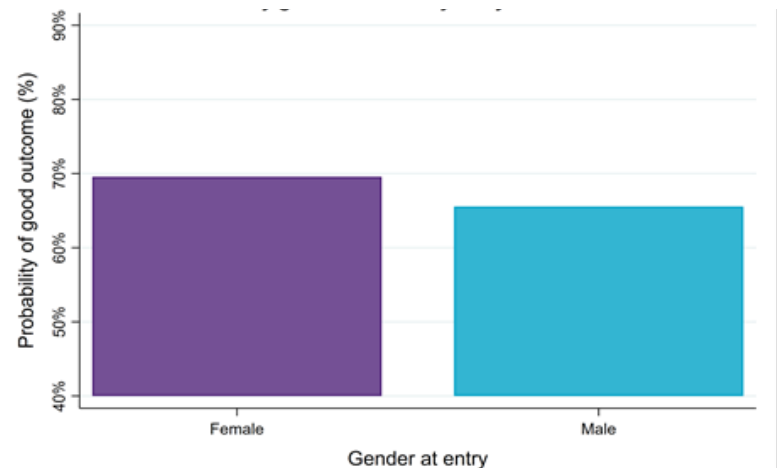


Figure 18. Probability of a positive outcome by cultural and language identification at tenancy entry

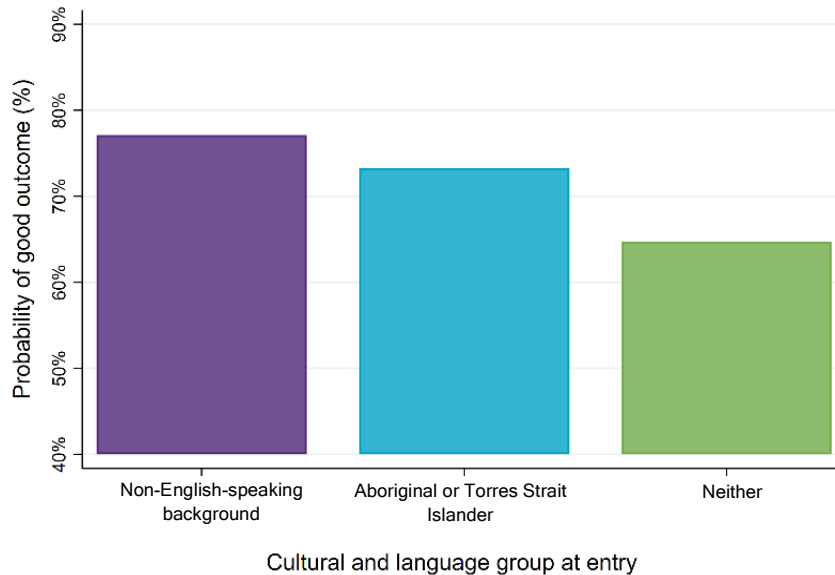
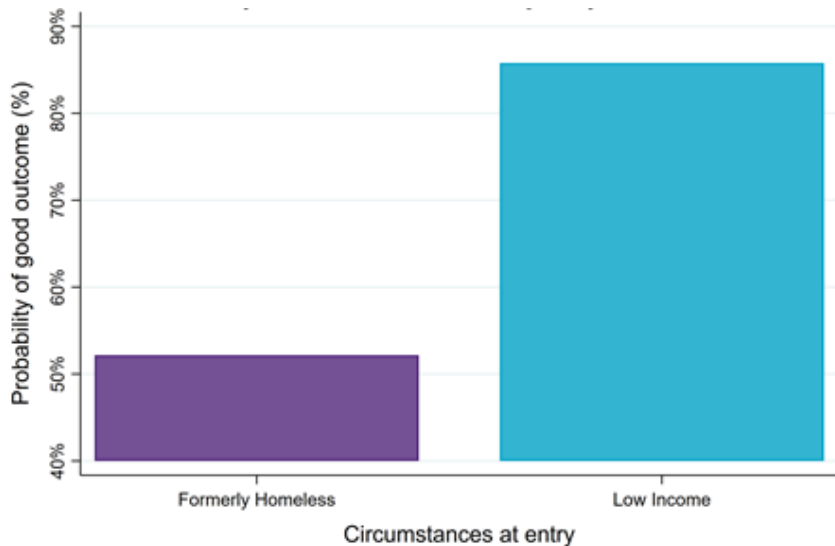


Figure 19. Probability of a positive outcome by circumstances at tenancy entry



tenants who identify as coming from a non-English-speaking background are the most likely to experience a positive outcome (77%), followed by those who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (73%) and, finally, those who identify as neither.

Last, Figure 19, shows the predicted probability of experiencing a positive outcome by tenants' housing circumstances at tenancy entry. All else being equal, the results indicate that tenants with a low to moderate income (86%) exhibit a substantially greater likelihood of experiencing a positive outcome compared to people who entered BCG because of homelessness (62%).

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Introduction

Reflecting on the operation of BCG over the first ten years, the data clearly demonstrate significant successes in line with the original vision for Queensland's first model of PSH. Drawing on a unique opportunity to analyse the complete dataset held by CGQ, along with in-depth interviews with both Micah Projects and CGQ practitioners, this report has provided evidence of the contributions achieved and the potential opportunities for enhancing the capacity of BCG to pioneer innovation moving forward.

Important among the findings identified in this research is that permanent supportive housing is critical to enable people to exit rough sleeping and improve their lives. The support services coupled with permanent and affordable housing are core. Examining the data closely, however, we can see that permanent supportive housing does not mean that all people will – or indeed ideally should – stay at BCG indefinitely. For a range of significant reasons, including – gaining employment, forming a relationship, having children, connecting with culture – people will leave BCG. Exiting BCG cannot only be seen as a positive feature of the life course and people's housing trajectories, but it is the permanent housing provided through BCG that enables these positive outcomes. Thus, we have found that 'permanent' housing is fundamental to the model, but permanent does not mean that people stay for ever. This research has contributed to a more nuanced understanding of what success and permanency mean at BCG and permanent supportive housing more broadly.

Summary of tenancy entries

- BCG has achieved a mix of allocating tenancies to people who are exiting homelessness (54%) and those who receive low-to-moderate incomes (47%).
- Women are slightly more likely (52%) to be allocated a tenancy compared to men (48%).
- BCG is an exit from homelessness and source of affordable housing for adults across the life course, including people aged 18-24 (20%), 25-49 (61%), and 50 and above (19%).
- The average duration of ongoing tenancies is nearly six years.
- The statistical average duration for ended tenancies is slightly over two years.

- 37 people remained housed for ten years or longer.

Summary of tenancy exits

- The likelihood of leaving BCG early varies by demographic factors and tenancy-allocation circumstances.
- Older people (aged 50 and above) are more likely to remain housed compared to younger people, especially those under 24 years.
- Compared to men, women are more likely to leave their tenancy early.
- People who do not identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander or as someone from a non-English-speaking background face a comparatively greater likelihood of leaving their tenancies early.
- Tenants with low-to-moderate incomes are slightly more likely to stay housed at BGC compared to those allocated a tenancy because of homelessness.
- Most people (65%) who exit tenancies do so voluntarily, through the submission to CGQ of a notice of intention to leave.
- Approximately one quarter of tenants exit in ways that are not – *prima face* – voluntary, including: formal eviction (9%), being issued by CGQ with a notice to leave (12%), or abandonment (8%).
- Based on the best available data provided to CGQ at the point of exit, 54% of tenants who leave BCG move to other housing, while 10% leave to homelessness.
- For 16% of people, their destination after exiting BCG remains unknown.

Summary of breaches and work to sustain tenancies

- 40% of all tenants have received at least one breach.
- The chances of being receiving a breach are not evenly distributed: 57% of tenants allocated housing because of homelessness received at least one breach; compared to 22% of tenants allocated housing because of low-to-moderate incomes.
- Breaches are issued for (i) rent arrears, (ii) unit condition, and (iii) behaviour issues; people who exit are more likely to have a breach for rent arrears (21%) compared to people who stay (11%).
- Breaches for behaviour problems are frequently issued because the behaviours or presence of one tenant negatively impacts upon another tenant.
- The majority of tenants who are issued a breach are supported through a Sustaining Tenancy Plan (82% of all people issued with a breach).
- Sustaining Tenancy Plans refer to the work done by the support and tenancy providers to address tenancy problems and to mitigate the risk of eviction.

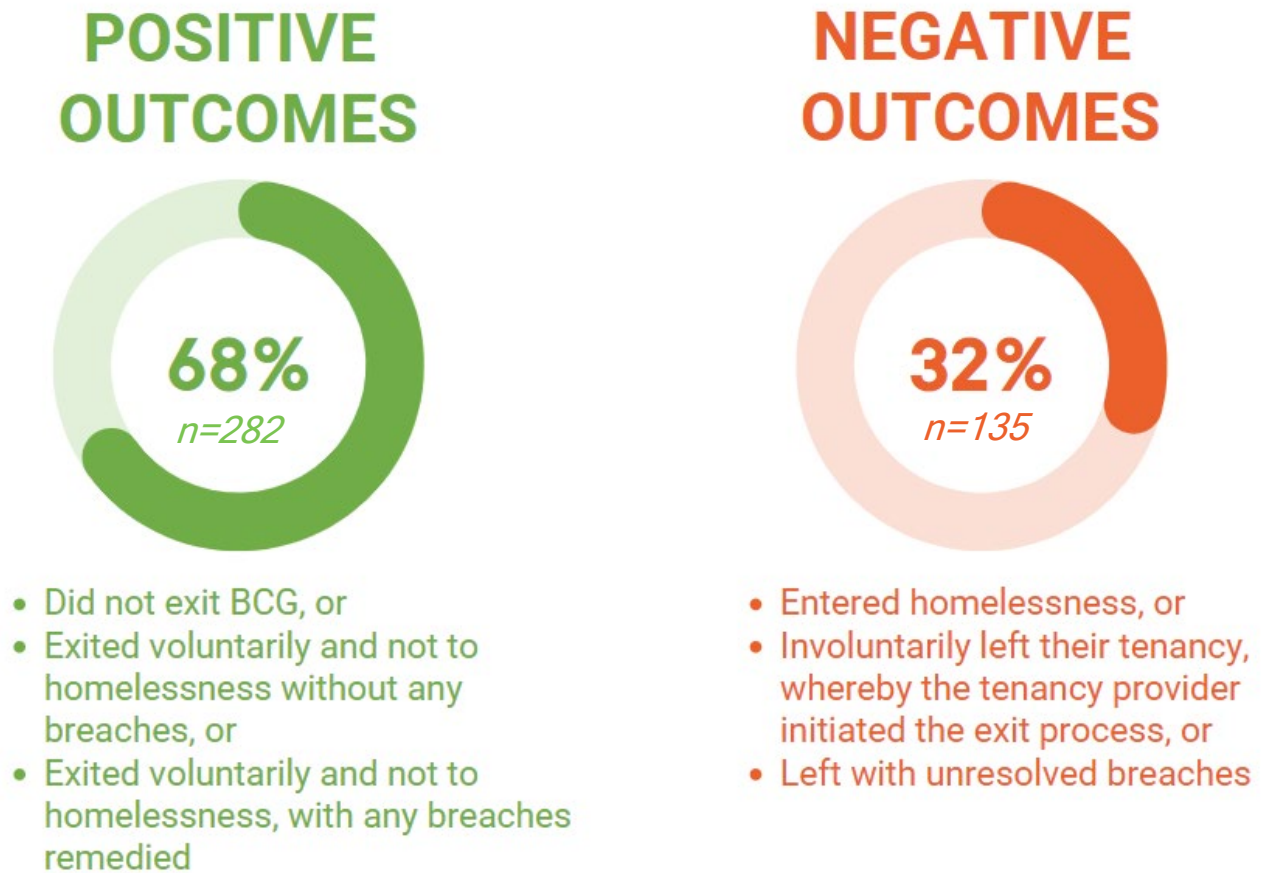
Summary of positive and negative outcomes

- In Queensland, as well as internationally, there is debate about what constitutes a positive or negative outcome in PSH. Some view staying as the only measure of a positive outcome, whereas others view staying (too long) as wasting a valuable resource that other people in the homeless population desperately need. Still others see leaving as a negative outcome, especially given the unaffordability of

housing in the broader housing sector and the complete absence of other PSH models in Queensland (and very few in Australia).

- Developing a more robust characterisation of positive and negative outcomes in BCG and PSH more broadly is needed to ensure that these judgements more meaningfully reflect people's experiences and aspirations. In this report, we have sought to contribute to this debate by proposing three means through which a positive outcome is achieved and three means through which a negative outcome is realised.
- Positive outcomes are conceptualised as including a person who (i) does not exit BCG, or (ii) exits voluntarily and not to homelessness without any breaches, or (iii) exits voluntarily and not to homelessness with any breaches remedied.
- A negative outcome includes the end of a tenancy where a person: (i) enters homelessness, or (ii) involuntarily leaves their tenancy, whereby the tenancy provider initiates the exit process, or (iii) leaves with unresolved breaches.
- The data demonstrates that most people experienced a positive tenancy outcome. Of the 417 tenancies at BCG since 2012, 282 tenancies – 68% – meet the criteria for a positive outcome, whereas 135 tenancies – 32% – can be characterised as involving a negative outcome.
- Those who are aged over 50 years at tenancy entry were particularly likely to experience a positive outcome (78%), with those aged up to 24 years (66%) and those aged 25-49 years (65%) being relatively less likely to do so.
- Women (70%) are more likely to experience a positive outcome compared to men (66%).
- Tenants who identify as someone from a non-English-speaking background are the most likely to experience a positive outcome (77%), followed by those who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (73%) and, finally, those who identify as neither.
- People allocated a tenancy because of low-to-moderate income (86%) exhibit a substantially greater likelihood of experiencing a positive outcome compared to people who entered BCG because of homelessness (62%).

Figure 20. Summary of positive and negative outcomes



Recommendations

What could be done differently? Addressing this question first requires acknowledging that BCG is indeed achieving its intended outcomes. The data presented in this report substantiates many successes. Here, we list a series of suggested refinements to the BCG model to increase its capacity to foster positive tenancy outcomes and to avert negative tenancy outcomes. This involves supporting people who do leave under involuntary and under sub-optimal circumstances, as well as engaging with tenants to identify their long-term aspirations.

The work conducted through the Sustaining Tenancy Plan no doubt has averted numerous evictions and negative outcomes more broadly. Averting breaches is significant, as a Micah Projects practitioner explained, because breaches often erode trust between staff and tenants. For some tenants, however, Sustaining Tenancy Plans do not achieve positive outcomes. It is important that prior to any tenant being issued with a breach, they are first given the opportunity to participate in a Sustaining Tenancy Plan. For tenants who have a Sustaining Tenancy Plan, yet the risks to their tenancy remain or become imminent, a higher level of intervention may be appropriate. For example, onsite support providers understand that some tenants do not engage with support

or their tenancy provider because of a range of health and personal reasons that likely require intervention for external professionals.

Further, although approximately half of all tenants are allocated a tenancy because of homelessness, far more than half of the tenant cohort receive formal support from BCG practitioners. The demand for support exceeds the funding for the provision of onsite support. At the organisational level, active efforts must be made to ensure that external service providers, which are often public institutions, provide tenants with the resources and intervention necessary to meet their needs and ultimately prevent eviction into negative outcomes. In this respect, averting evictions/forced exits requires BCG working to ensure that the broader service system is working to assist people who are most marginalised in society. Indeed, an eviction/forced exit is only going to exacerbate a person's marginalisation.

The two breaches associated with exiting BCG, rent arrears and behaviour notices, illustrate the complexity of averting eviction/forced exit, and they also offer ways forward. Preventing all evictions for rental arrears is challenging as people have the control over their income, including government benefits. Even if tenants have automatic rent deduction, through Centrepay for example, they are free to retract this automatic deduction without advised BCG. Indeed, BCG aims to provide normalised housing, and thus tenant autonomy and tenants' capacity to control their own income is central to the BCG vision. It is thus not viable or desirable to prevent evictions for rental arrears to trying to remove tenant autonomy. This research recommends that when CGQ becomes aware that a tenant is in rental arrears three steps should be actively instantly. First, CGQ should advise the tenant and do what can be done to address the rental arrears. Second, CGQ should advise Micah projects and support staff should actively engage with tenant about providing support and intervention to assist with rental arrears. Third, a Supporting Tenancy Plan should be established. No tenant should be breached for rental arrears (or issued any breach), without first BGC establishing a Sustaining Tenancy Plan. What is proposed here is not a panacea to prevention evictions for rental arrears, rather it is advice to continue and systematise the work that is done through Sustaining Tenancy Plans.

Breaches for behaviour are frequently issued because other tenants raise concerns about the conduct of their neighbours, including feeling threatened by them. In addition to the evidence in this research showing that Sustaining Tenancy Plans work to reduce evictions and undesirable exits, there may be opportunities for mediation and conflict-resolution interventions to address (some) of these behaviour issues. This may take the form of BCG support professionals undertaking mediation and conflict resolution training. Indeed, and as mentioned below, this possibility could be pursued through tenants themselves developing skills and strategies to resolve conflict (conflict experienced by themselves and others).

In addition to mediation and conflict resolution, we recommend examining what change might occur to enable greater tenant participation in BCG. Greater tenant participation may be a means for tenants to address some of the behaviours that lead to breaches and ultimately eviction/forced exit. Within the housing literature, there are numerous forms that tenant participation can assume, including tenants participating in the delivery and governance of housing owned by the state. Creating the practical and resource conditions for tenant participation requires a lot of work and commitment, especially given that conscious strategies need to be put in place to ensure that all tenants have the opportunity to participate if they choose to. One way to progress this idea would be to add a survey question in the next tenant survey to garner whether tenants are interested in greater participation. Although tenant participation can be seen as a normatively appealing idea because it represents tenants as capable individuals, there are many significant issues to think through. For example, tenants may be more willing than CGQ to evict people they see as problem tenants. Tenant participation needs to thus work from the premise of inclusion rather than exclusion.

Even under optimal conditions, there will always be some tenants who experience eviction/forced exits. It is important that there is a systematic process in place whereby the Queensland Government makes arrangements for alternative housing for this cohort of tenants. We recommend that whenever eviction/forced exit occurs, the Queensland Government has a clear and systematic approach to partnering with BCG to support those individuals leaving their tenancies. This may take the form of allocating the exiting BCG tenant a property in social housing, and then offering a suitable social housing tenant/applicant a tenancy at BCG.

Additionally, this study has also contributed to the conversation about positive and negative outcomes, but this initial conversation has not involved tenants. It is critical that tenants are engaged to develop the model of positive and negative outcomes. Tenant participation may take the form of tenants themselves progressing a research project to extend the work on what constitutes a successful tenancy.

Finally, to further advance knowledge about the successes and limitations of BCG and PSH (or indeed, social housing more broadly), it will be important to (i) collect systematic data on the circumstances surrounding people's exits (e.g., the reasons and the subsequent housing arrangements), and (ii) draw together other government data sources to identify people's housing and homelessness pathways in the weeks, months, and even years after exiting. These longitudinal and linked data will significantly contribute to advancing knowledge on what outcomes can be achieved by PSH, and what changes need to be made to more effectively assist people excluded from mainstream housing pathways. The Queensland Government, for example, holds a wealth of data on the housing and homelessness status of people post-BCG, in addition to a range of other data that identifies people's wellbeing (health, criminal justice). Accessing this data will help further the evidence base about what BCG represents in terms of contributing to long-term positive outcomes. Indeed, and finally, the evidence generated in this report, coupled with the previous BCG research projects, constitute an important evidence base. We recommend that the Queensland Government engage with this evidence, along with other peer reviewed research, to make policy decisions. The evidence, including the evidence presented in this report, provides an important framework for Queensland to extend permanent supportive housing at scale.

1

All tenants are to be given the opportunity to participate in a Sustaining Tenancy Plan *prior* to any tenant being issued with a breach. This is especially important for tenants who experience rent arrears.

2

BCG will significantly assist tenants further by enhancing relationships with stakeholders external to BCG. Important here are the relationships with Queensland Health, and mental health and drug and alcohol support in particular. BCG cannot provide all of this support, but rather it has a key role brokering the support within the mainstream system and continuing to assist tenants address the barriers to mainstream service access that they experience.

3

Tenants are afforded greater opportunities to participate in BCG. This may include, first, engaging with tenants to identify what participation they desire. Further, there is an important opportunity to develop a research project led by tenants where they can develop the knowledge presented here to determine what constitutes a successful (and unsuccessful) tenancy.

4

To make a commitment with tenants, the Queensland Government, and other relevant stakeholders that no one is exited from BCG into homelessness. This will require coordination with the Queensland Government and their strong assurances that alternative housing can be provided to prevent homelessness.

5

To develop a framework to draw on the evidence base to scale up and extend permanent supportive housing across Queensland. In addition, the Queensland Government should make available linked administrative longitudinal data to examine people's housing trajectories post-BCG and to identify BCG long term outcomes.

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