



MAKING DO: Redbank Plains resident David Dutton. Rob Williams

NEWS

Housing deal is good news for city's battlers



by [ANDREW KORNER](#)

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A NOT-FOR-PROFIT community housing initiative that helps more than 250 Ipswich families makes ends meet has significantly strengthened its foundations.

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Horizon Housing, which has created hundreds of affordable homes in the Ipswich region and manages 2400 across Queensland, has merged with Community Housing Limited, in a move that will provide a lifeline to battlers.

Horizon Housing CEO Jason Cubit said the combined force would manage more than 11,000 properties for low- to medium-income residents, with a support staff of 300 to help deliver vital services.

"The integration of Horizon Housing and CHL is an exciting new chapter, as it allows us to pool the expertise and resources critical to improving the lives of the most vulnerable members of the community," Mr Cubit said.

"Our initiatives don't only help families get by in the short-term but empower them to break the cycle of financial stress, aiding a transition into the private rental or property market."

Mr Cubit said Horizon and CHL worked by creating housing in affordable suburbs, with tenants getting a subsidy through the Federal Government National Rental Affordability Scheme.

In the case of younger renters, the scheme often allows them time to save up and purchase or rent a place on their own, which Mr Cubit said was the ultimate goal of Horizon and CHL.

CHL managing director Steve Bevington said the combined force created a powerful alliance to fight the problem recently highlighted by the latest Anglicare Rental Affordability Snapshot, which categorised three out of 67,365 rental properties listed in Australia as "affordable" for a single person on Newstart Allowance.

Mr Cubit said housing supply, the simple cost of buying or renting in today's market, and the number of people on low incomes in Ipswich meant putting a roof over people's heads was a big job.

"But we've heard heaps of great stories where people come in to one of our houses, save money and then buy a house of their own," he said.

'I could be sleeping in the car'

SINGLE pensioner David Dutton says he'd either be living out of his car or relying on his children for a roof over his head if not for Horizon Housing's intervention.

The long-term Ipswich resident has been a tenant of a Horizon managed house in Redbank Plains since 2014.

"My daughter was looking around for me and she found Horizon," Mr Dutton said.

"They had an open house and I went along and later on they called and said I got the house.

"I really like living there and in fact I've told them the only way they'll get me out of the place is in a box."

It's an arrangement which he estimates saves him about \$72 a week in rent costs which, while not sounding like much, makes a world of difference for Mr Dutton, who lost his wife a few years ago.

"I only get the pension," he said.

"Some weeks I go without having much to eat, but I get by.

"Without the subsidised rent, I'd be sleeping in my car or relying on my daughter, which I don't want to be doing."

Mr Dutton's rent is subsidised to the tune of about 20 per cent under the scheme, allowing him some leftover cash to pay the rising costs of electricity, water and car registration.

"It's like everything now - the cost of living is going up," he said. "And they gave us an \$8 a fortnight pension rise."