



Media Release

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Donation helps open doors on weekends for Brisbane's homeless

The state's largest drop in and support centre for the homeless, 139 Club, is set to extend services from five to seven days a week, as part of a 12-month pilot program thanks to a \$340,000 donation from Hand Heart Pocket the Charity of Freemasons Queensland.

Announced this morning in Fortitude Valley at a morning tea with some of the centre's clients, the donation will fund a pilot program that is expected to allow 139 Club to build on their efforts to provide better outcomes for the homeless.

139 Club Chief Executive Officer, Sara Harrup, said that the donation will make all the difference to their clients and support a broader strategy to make a long term, visible impact on homelessness in the river city through the expansion of services and innovative support.

"Homelessness is a daily struggle that doesn't go away on the weekends. Being open seven days will enable us to provide more continuity of support and reach those we may not reach on other days – meaning those sleeping rough in Brisbane will no longer be left to get by on their own over the weekend," Sarah said.

"139 Club has always been a home for the day for those without one and our ethos is to build resilience and promote dignity, increasing people's capacity to sustain a better life in the long term, with support to find suitable accommodation," she said.

From October, 139 Club will be able to provide essential services such as meals, showers, laundry facilities, day beds, and medical attention on Saturdays and Sundays as well as a scaled back version of individual case support for emergency situations. An increased focus on social inclusion such as leisure activities will also be implemented on weekends.

"We're very hopeful that this 12-month pilot program will provide us with the opportunity to secure longer-term funding to have a lasting impact on Brisbane's homeless," Sara said.

Those doing it tough agree. Angelo lives on the streets and is a frequent visitor at 139 Club. "Opening on the weekends will be like gold. It will help a lot of people - they are going hungry on the weekends. Now there will be a safe place to come, to get food, rest and friendship."

Grace, another person doing it tough, agrees. "It's a really great thing. It will help so much. I've just got out of a violent relationship and at 139 Club you feel safe - it's somewhere to talk to other people and feel ok."

Hand Heart Pocket Chief Executive Officer, Gary Mark, said that maximising the efforts of organisations that are at the coal face was central to the decision to provide funding to 139 Club.

"Support of the homeless and marginalised members of our community aligns with Hand Heart Pocket's values which are about alleviating suffering and misfortune to empower people to lead better lives," he said.

"Hand Heart Pocket is proud to support 139 Club, an organisation that is on our doorstep here in Fortitude Valley. This initiative has the potential to make a tangible difference for those impacted by homelessness in Brisbane and beyond," Gary said.

Hand Heart Pocket is the Charity of Freemasons Queensland and provides sustainable support that delivers positive outcomes by giving a hand up not a hand out to communities, to other charities and to individuals. It works with its network of Masonic Lodges to identify grassroots needs in local communities around Queensland.

For more information visit www.139club.com.au or www.handheartpocket.org.au

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