



Community Initiatives Resource Association

About the Resource Association

The Waiters Union has always been a non-formal community network, but over time we have come to recognise the need for a formal community organisation as an auspice for some of our community activities. Usually groups solve this problem by turning their non-formal community network into a formal community organisation, but in the move towards institutionalisation, they lose the very charisma of community. The free and flexible, strong but gentle spirit of the community that they started out with, ends up being bound hand and foot by rules and regulations and becoming a slave to the system that it sought to overthrow. So we decided that we would not institutionalise our community under any circumstances. Instead we set up a formal organisation as a parallel structure alongside the non-formal network, so that if anyone in the community needed an officially-recognised, legally-registered auspice for certain activities, they could use the Community Initiatives Resource Association.

To make sure the Resource Association only serves as an auspice for the Waiters Union, and does not have the power to co-opt the Waiters Union, it has been designed as a minimalist organisation with minimal power apart from its capacity to function as an official, legal auspice for the community.

Since its inception the Resource Association has provided an auspice for managing community property, providing compulsory public liability insurance, and supplying volunteers with the cover that they require for work for the dole programs. But by far the associations greatest role has been to help establish community programmes which needed legal backing for funding with maximum accountability, but minimal control. The Resource Association has helped establish dozens of community programs including the Creative Stress Solutions Project, the Inner City Citizens Advocacy Group, and the Praxis Community Cooperative.

Activities auspiced through the Resource Association

Activities the Waiters Union has auspiced through the Community Initiatives Resource Association include:

1. *The Kurilpa Pay the Rent Group* - a small group committed to building relationships with local Indigenous people on terms that do justice to an objective view of the history of colonisation.
2. *The West End Refugee Support Group* - an active group which sponsors and settles refugees, some under the Commonwealth Community Refugee Resettlement Scheme. Activities include meeting with individuals and families, liaison with government departments, a fortnightly sewing group

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- attended by about a 12 women and their children, and one or two group outings per year for about 30 people.
3. *Hazara Ethnic Society* - the Hazara are a persecuted minority from Afghanistan. We auspiced a \$10 000 grant to the Hazara Ethnic Society to better resource itself with office equipment and to provide the Hazara community in Brisbane with English literacy and numeracy classes.
 4. *The Reading and Writing Group* - an ongoing learning opportunity for people with disabilities living in local hostels, boarding houses and housing commission units to learn literacy, numeracy, and basic survival skills - from cooking to computers.
 5. *West End Youth Initiative* - this was a joint project between the Queensland Program Assisting Survivors of Torture and Trauma, the Mercy Family Services and Project Micah to involve young people in the development of leadership and peer education skills, and to develop a community that is more attentive to the needs of its young people.
 6. *Local Needs Project* - a project conducted by the Greenslopes State School Parents & Citizens Association to identify and meet the needs of people of non-English speaking backgrounds amongst students and their families.
 7. *Chill Out Programme* - this project supplemented the Local Needs project, which identified a lack of school holiday recreation options for students of non-English speaking backgrounds.
 8. *Passion Fruit Seeds Project* - we auspiced an earlier Connect Youth Action project, Seeds 2, assisting young artists to develop micro-enterprises. Passionfruit was a showcase at the Brisbane Powerhouse, also organised by Connect, of the artwork produced following Seeds 2.
 9. *Unemployed Persons Advocacy (Unempa)* - we auspiced a grant to Unempa to purchase a new photocopier.
 10. *Simple Options for Sustainability (SOS.)* - we auspiced Spiral Community Hub, then a local unincorporated group, to run a project producing an ethical consumer guide for West End .
 11. *House Centre* - a shared workspace and community resource centre located in a large old house at 69 Thomas Street, West End. We rent the premises, sub-let office space, and make meeting facilities available. Some of our co-tenants over the years have included:

TEAR Australia
Bicycle Queensland
Christian Blind Mission
Ethical Pest Management
Community Praxis Cooperative
Sustainable Gardening Services
Business Ethics Research Centre
House of Freedom Christian Community
Feral Arts Association Youth Video Project
Anglicare "A Place to Belong" Mental Health Project
Queensland Baptist Care Community Development Training Team

Other community groups who have used the House Centre as a meeting place include:

Project Hope
Catholic Worker
Justice Products

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Feminists for Life
West End Men's Group
Self Harm Support Group
The Refugee Sewing Group
Torres Strait Islanders' Choir
Refugee Airfare Loans Scheme
West End Housing Cooperative
West End Refugee Support Group
Atomic Oz Street Theatre Troupe
Cultural Heritage Education Programme

12. *Community Bus* - we own a Toyota Hiace twelve seater mini-bus which is available for use by not-for-profit groups and individuals for community-based activities. It is regularly used for community meals, community picnics, community fellowship and other activities, and has also been used by:

Red Cross
Open Minds
Wattle League
Brisbane Youth Service
Queensland Baptist Care
Vegetarian and Vegan Society
Brook Street Recreation Centre
Community Orientation Course
Spiral Community Hub Cooperative
Jubilee Community Care Association
Anglican Refugee & Migrant Services
Benarrawa Community Development Association
Brisbane City Council Community Development Team
Queensland Program of Assistance to Survivors of Torture and Trauma
Individuals organising activities for disadvantaged people from the local area (e.g. canoeing trips)