



## **About West End**

We live in West End. Greater West End, which includes West End, Hill End, Highgate Hill and South Brisbane, is located in a bend of the Brisbane River. Though it is only twenty minutes walk from the Queen Street Mall in the central business district of Brisbane there is very little through traffic. So our area has been able to develop a unique urban village identity against the background of the general suburban sprawl.

West End has a pretty stable population of about 15,000 people. Even though there are a lot of transients, there is a very large percentage of older long term residents, so the traditions in the neighbourhood are very well established.

In the middle of West End is Musgrave Park. In times gone by the river flats were known for their abundant food, so the original Aboriginal inhabitants used the park as a meeting place for tribal celebrations.

The arrival of successive waves of migrants from Mediterranean Europe, Latin America and Indo-China at the South Brisbane Railway Station, and the availability of great employment options in local factories and the greatest stock of cheap rental accommodation in Queensland, meant that West End became a thriving cosmopolitan centre.

Once you step onto Boundary Street that runs through the heart of West End you can feel the casual communitarian atmosphere that characterizes the area. Its in the anarchic crowds, wandering up and down the road, and its in the animated conversation breaking out of the coffee shops and bursting onto the sidewalks.

However, you don't have to look far to realize all is not well in West End. Many people live below the poverty line. Over 50% of the people live in rented accommodation, the price of which is continually escalating beyond their means to pay. The inner city area of which we are a part has the highest rate of robbery, the second highest rate of car theft, the third highest rate of break and enters, the fourth highest rate of sexual offences, and the highest rate of violent crime in the state, including murder, attempted murder, conspiracy to murder and manslaughter.

West End has very little through traffic and has a meeting place for people at the centre of the suburb which is within walking distance for just about everybody in the neighbourhood. It has a larger percentage of older residents, so that even though there are a lot of visitors coming and going, the traditions of the area are well established. The traditions in the area are not so much the Anglo Saxon or Anglo Celtic Aussie traditions, with an emphasis on the individual rather than the collective. The traditions in the area are more Aboriginal and migrant traditions, particularly Greek and Italian, and more recently Indo-Chinese, with an emphasis on family - not just the nuclear family, but the extended family - and of course the community.

Even though there is a lot of diversity in the locality there is also a lot of unity in the diversity, because, by and large, people have developed an attitude of tolerance, if not acceptance and respect, in order to survive in the inner city. However, even in

## **The Waiters Union**

# **About Us**

our locality, with the degree of tolerance that it has developed, there is still a lot to be done if we are going to get beyond a passive attitude of tolerance and bring about an active movement of acceptance and respect for one another which can create true community in our locality.

We believe we should be satisfied with nothing less than developing integral community in our locality which offers to all its members, regardless of class, colour or creed, significance, status and a sense of belonging and an incentive to care for one another. In order to help develop such community in our locality, a few friends started what we call - for want of another name - the 'Waiters Union.'