

MY HOME

NETWORK



DECEMBER 2023



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HEALTH



MALDON HOSPITAL

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MHN COMMUNITY FORUM

A big thank you to those of you who attended our forum Thursday 30th November
Thanks also to our wonderful speakers -Kaz Jennings, Margaret Griffen, Anna Johnson (on behalf of Kathryn Mc Goldrick) , Di Cox, Terry White, Alison Whitten and Mary-Faeth Chenery and those of you who helped with registration, bumping in and out, audio visual and recording the event, much appreciated.

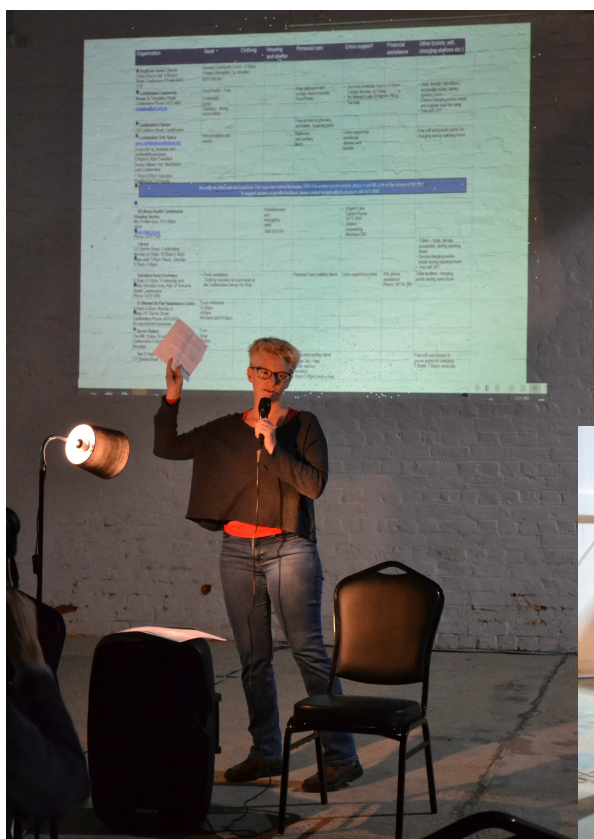
The feedback has been very positive, attendees felt it was very “inspiring and informative” and the group conversations after the speakers generated more action across the different initiatives discussed including:

- Anita Nelson and I will invite those who attended the RMIT workshop on collective housing models to get together in February to continue their conversation. Any others interested please get in touch cneilson@castlemainehealth.org.au
- Home Share coordinator connected with more community members interested in Home Share
- Increase communications with community including those on Home Share and vacant dwellings working group to inform and engage more with the community
- THOW working group to explore and build on advocacy on simplified planning schemes for small THOW clusters on vacant land, continue to inform those interested in THOW on land with existing dwelling and informing community on State Government Housing Statement granny flats update - secondary dwellings or granny flats won't require a planning permit if they're less than 60 square metres
- Solar bank -see brief attached -My Home Network is supporting the concept and will update you on the Shire's progress on collective advocacy for Federal funding to develop and implement a Solar Bank in Mount Alexander Shire

Will keep you updated across the various initiatives.

What you can do to support local housing action?

- Volunteer with Help At Hand activities-see attached
- Donate money to Help At Hand activities
- Consider if you know Home Share is for someone you know
- Do you know someone with a vacant dwelling who may be interested in releasing it as an affordable rental or transition housing?
- Support the Solar Bank concept - Anyone interested in joining a Solar Bank working group contact Terry White t.white@westnet.com.au
- Do you know someone with land within the township who could donate/sell it at subsidized rate for affordable housing?
- Join a MHN working group-Tiny Homes On Wheels (THOW), vacant dwellings, collective housing models, contact Kaz cneilson@castlemainehealth.org.au



Clockwise from top left: Kaz Neilson presents on the MHN, Mary Faeth Chenery presents on WINC Cohousing, Kez Jennings presents on the Help at Hand Flyer, Terry White presents on the Solar Bank and the Social Housing Retrofitting project



HOMESHARE

Mount Alexander Shire Homeshare aims to build social connections through housing and aims to improve personal wellbeing. A householder can exchange a room in their home for practical assistance and companionship. A Homesharer is able to provide 10-12 hours a week of support and companionship in exchange for affordable accommodation. Both parties benefit from the mutual exchange.

The operational manual is being finalised, based on the Dhelkaya values and principles of Health Care Rights and Person-Centred Care. This will form the basis for all program operations to ensure participant needs, rights and safety are at the centre of Homeshare.

We have a plan to get around to as many groups as possible to explain how homeshare can be a great lifestyle option.

If you are in a group that would like to talk about Homeshare at one of your meetings or if you are interested in Homeshare or know someone who is get in touch with Di Cox the Homeshare coordinator on the Homeshare email: homeshare@castlemainehealth.org.au or 0499309418.

If you want more information about Homeshare Mount Alexander and how it will work send us an email on homeshare@castlemainehealth.org.au

SOLAR BANK - SEE ATTACHED

There are around 1,500 renting householders in Mount Alexander who are suffering cost of living stresses because they can't access state subsidised rooftop solar energy. The risk and unfairness of this situation will increase as dangerously hot El Nino summer conditions require more power to keep homes cool.

This solar bank concept enables owners of large roofs in our community to lease or volunteer enough space on their roofs to host the solar panels needed to virtually meet the energy needs of all our renting neighbours.

FREE COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS LUNCH - SEE ATTACHED FLYER

Monday 25th December, 12.30pm to 2.00pm Castlemaine Town Hall, 25 Lyttleton Street (entry via Frederick Street)

Thanks to Castlemaine Community House and friends for organising -it's a wonderful event. Come alone or bring your family and friends.

You can also volunteer your time or make a donation.

WINC COHOUSING

At WINC – Older Women in Cohousing Inc. – we are totally focused on finishing the town planning application for our community in Castlemaine and have begun discussions with developer/builders. While we think we have enough members now to occupy the 31 small homes planned, we are aware that life circumstances can change and that not all women will be ready to buy their allocated home when the time comes to commit to the purchase.

We are inviting women who would like to be part of our community to join our waiting list so they will have the opportunity to buy, part-purchase or rent from either a social housing provider or a private owner, when a home becomes available.

Our members are women from the age of 50 and up who want to live and actively participate in a dynamic, connected and supportive cohousing community. We expect to start building next year. So, if living in older women's cohousing interests you, or if you know women who may be interested, more information can be found on our website winccohousing.org.au or please feel free to get in touch via info@winccohousing.org.au. Feel free to enquire even if you don't have all the money to buy outright.

We will also be holding an open house at the site from 11am-1pm 24 February next year. It would be great to see you there and talk through our project with you.

Thanks! Mary-Faeth

RETROFITTING FOR RESILIENCE

The final report from the Retrofitting for Resilience project is live! It is available for download on the CVGA website: <https://www.cvga.org.au/retrofitting-for-resilience.html> Based on the project's local interviews and desktop research, the report recommends a number of actions under seven themes:

- Risk awareness
- Retrofit information, engagement and access to services
- Motivations for action
- Financial incentives
- Retrofit market and implementation
- Neighbourhood- and community-scale retrofits
- Planning and building regulation

The project team (Castlemaine Institute, Central Victorian Greenhouse Alliance and ADAPT Loddon Mallee) is currently sharing the report with a range of audiences with the goal of bringing greater attention on the need for resilience to be incorporated into home retrofit programs and activities. In addition, the team is collaborating with project partners to progress some of the recommendations in the report, including publication of the home retrofits guide developed as part of the project. We are grateful for the contributions of all project collaborators, including reference group members and interviewees, for making this work possible!

For more information, contact alison.whitten@castlemaineinstitute.org.au

REGIONAL WORKER ACCOMMODATION FUND

The State government recently opened a Regional Workers Accommodation Fund for Expressions of Interest, closing 25th February 2024. Council will not itself be applying to the Fund and are working with stakeholders in our community along with Regional Development Victoria to identify the most viable candidate projects in the Shire.

The funding conditions are available at <https://www.drv.vic.gov.au/grants-and-programs/regional-worker-accommodation-fund> and any local organisations interested in applying are welcome to make contact with Clare Richards, Housing Solutions Broker at Council on 5471 1700 or affordablehousing@mountalexander.vic.gov.au to discuss your needs and proposal.

Unfortunately, funding cannot be used for retrofitting current housing stock (eg shop tops) or buying land - land has to be shovel ready.

TINY HOMES ON WHEELS (THOW)

The MHN THOW working group, continue to work, often through smaller group or one on one conversations, to ensure interested parties are well informed on THOW and the recent changes to the local law that allow a THOW on land with a permanent dwelling without a permit and to stay there indefinitely-see

[Caravans and tiny houses on wheels on private property | Mount Alexander Shire Council](#)

THOW, single or multiple, on vacant land within the town boundary requires a planning permit. We are interested in advocating for streamlining planning processes to enable this to happen and this may be of relevance to the recently released State Government Housing Statement which includes planning reforms.

For more information on THOWs see [Australian Tiny House Association – Supporting the Tiny House Sector in Australia](#)

ALLOCATION OF COUNCIL LAND IN MALDON & NEWSTEAD FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING FOR OLDER RESIDENTS TO WINTRINGHAM HOUSING

The consultation on proposed use of Council land in Maldon and Newstead for affordable housing for residents over 50 who are on the priority waitlist closed on the 18th of November. Our thanks go out to the many people who contributed to the consultation. The report is now complete and has gone to Council for consideration and decision.

The MHN and Dhelkaya Health housing team also provided a support letter to the consultation. As you are aware we have a shortage of diverse, affordable, secure, appropriate, sustainable housing to enable our valued elders to continue to live in community, close to family, friends and trusted support services as they get older. This proposal, if successful, would build on the local integrated approach to address this shortage.

VACANT DWELLINGS

The Victorian Government announced in October that it will extend its Melbourne based vacant property tax of 1% of Capital Improved Value (CIV) to regional areas.

Thanks to those in the vacant dwellings and advocacy working group who have been advocating for this over the last 12 months. We have also advocated that income generated will fund local housing initiatives however it's not clear if this is the case or tax will go into internal revenue. The simple definition of a vacant dwelling is one that was vacant for more than 6 months in the last calendar year.

[Victoria to expand vacant residential land tax across state in bid to increase housing supply | Victorian politics | The Guardian](#)

For more info on vacant property tax -[Vacant Residential Land Tax | State Revenue Office \(sro.vic.gov.au\)](#)

At a local community level in conversations with owners of vacant dwellings and real estates we are learning of common friction points to their release as affordable and transition housing.

- They have had negative experiences before renting their dwelling
- Cost of renovating/upgrading to comply with the new Tenancy Act standards introduced last year
- Heritage overlay that prevents renovation
- For vacant shop tops -lack of separate entrance/exit and fire exit

However we have had six vacant dwellings released as affordable rentals and three as transition housing.

If anyone knows someone who owns one or more of the 1,100 vacant dwellings in our Shire and thinks they may be up for a conversation regarding their release them as transition housing or affordable rentals please get in touch!

cneilson@castlemainehealth.org.au

Two more families are interested in releasing their vacant dwellings as transition housing -Yay!

STATE GOVERNMENT HOUSING STATEMENT

Here's the link to the State Housing Statement and related planning changes –

<https://www.vic.gov.au/housing-statement>

There is a lot of detail still to be clarified, we will possibly know more soon.

However secondary dwellings won't require a planning permit if they're less than 60 square metres !Will still need a building permit but no planning permit. And there will also be more permit exemptions for single dwellings for things like extensions to sheds and carports (p.11)

Single dwellings on lots bigger than 300 square metres, and not covered by an overlay, will no longer require a planning permit. Single dwellings on lots smaller than 300 square metres, where an overlay doesn't exist, will be ticked off within 10 days. (p.12)