

# MY HOME NETWORK



FEBRUARY 2024



TOGETHER AS

# Dhelkaya Health

OUR NEW BRAND LAUNCHES 2023

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## RESIDENT-LED COLLECTIVE - HOUSING WORKSHOP

Thanks to those of you who came along a couple of weeks ago to the My Home Network (MHN) and Castlemaine Free University (CFU) collective housing workshop at the Northern Arts Hotel.

Up to 40 people attended the event and participants included people who have experienced homelessness, along with those with lived experience of collective and cohousing models, renters, Tiny Homes On Wheels (THOW) owners, architects, and Homeshare advocates. People with expertise in building, planning and community land trust models also took part.

The collective expertise, interests and passions in the room was evident, with far-ranging conversations touching upon community land trusts, cohousing and collective housing models, collective multigenerational housing that enables people to age in place, affordable housing for young people, secondary dwellings and THOW villages.

There was also discussion about the need to look at innovative ways of financing different models to make sure those that don't have equity are included. The importance of ensuring rentals and social housing are part of collective model thinking was also recognised.

As one participant said "With soaring living and rental costs and a lack of available affordable housing, we need to work collectively to build on innovative ideas that increase affordable housing, address our community's housing needs and build social connection."

The conversation will be continuing Monday 25th March at the Northern Arts Hotel, 6-7.30pm , to tease out some realistic collective models that addressed the community's needs and could be achieved with the community expertise and resources.

In the mean time, relevant to our conversations:

- My Home Network (MHN) is presenting to Rotary to see how we continue to build on our work together
- The MHN Tiny Homes On Wheels w grp is meeting to talk more about THOW and modular homes villages, assisting matches of THOW owners/those interested in THOW and those offering land for THOW to go on next to their home etc
- Will try and get a Council planner to come to the next meeting
- The MHN vacant dwellings working group continues to engage with owners of the 1.100 vacant dwellings in our Shire to release them as affordable rentals or transition housing-get in touch with me if you wish more info on this
- The [State Government Housing Statement](https://www.vic.gov.au/housing-statement) <https://www.vic.gov.au/housing-statement> includes the encouraging of long term leases within the improvements to renters rights-not sure of what the detail is in that,
- And for more detail on the statements improvement on planning scheme streamlining on secondary dwellings (no planning permit needed if dwelling less than 60 square metres if no overlay) - for more details see [Secondary dwellings planning](https://www.vba.vic.gov.au/building/regulatory-framework/small-second-homes): <https://www.vba.vic.gov.au/building/regulatory-framework/small-second-homes>
- Someone is exploring rent to buy models-thank you!

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## RESIDENT-LED COLLECTIVE - HOUSING WORKSHOP (CONT.)

- And finally see attached for launch of Castlemaine Community Cooperative Wed 6th March 5.30-6.30 pm Town Hall who aims to collectively purchase local properties, providing a return on investment, taking them out of the speculative real estate market and putting them in the community's hands for good.



*Small group conversation on community land trust and collective and co-housing models*



*Participants mingling during the break*

## VISIT TO COLLECTIVE HOUSING MODEL - MURRNONG

Thanks to those who came to see Murrnong, a local body corporate in North Castlemaine, with five families sharing all infrastructure - rainwater, dam, water tanks, solar panels, wood lot, orchards, vegetable gardens, chooks, on common land. Four families have individual freehold title and one common dwelling is rented. I will organise another visit for those of you who expressed interest but couldn't come.



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## HOMESHARE



The work is proceeding:

- promotional materials are finalised and heading to print
- program procedures are approved
- promotional sessions are being set up
- interviews of potential homesharers have commenced

We are looking for Homeseekers and Homeproviders. Homeseekers will be over 18, can benefit from affordable housing, work or study locally, provide support and company for 10-12 hours a week to a Homeprovider and have the skills needed to share a house. Homeproviders will have a spare bedroom and other facilities to share, need practical support and/or companionship to live independently, and can share a house. Homeshare Mount Alexander will provide comprehensive assessment matching and support for Homeshare so it works for all parties.

If you are interested, please contact **Di Cox, the Homeshare Coordinator:**

**[Homeshare@castlemainehealth.org.au](mailto:Homeshare@castlemainehealth.org.au)**

Phone: 0499309418

## VACANT DWELLINGS

Vacant blocks of land not being used are now hitting the market due to the recent reduction in the land tax threshold to zero. Investors used to get a free hit for the first \$250,000, paying zero land tax until the land value raised above that price. That means they now have to pay \$1350 instead of \$400.

Accompanying this is the expansion of the Vacant Residential Land and dwelling tax, or the signposting of this beginning in Jan 2025. The Greens are keen to escalate the tax from 1 to 2% in the second year, then 3% in the 3rd year. So investors are throwing sites on the market before that tax hits. We're seeing more dwellings and sites hitting the market.

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## VACANT DWELLINGS (CONT.)

Our discussions with owners of vacant dwellings have resulted in seven 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](mailto:cneilson@castlemainehealth.org.au)

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

## ROUGH SLEEPER ACTION GROUP

- Are meeting every 6 weeks
- Use the meetings to catch up on clients who are high risk and to share resources, info, and fill any service gaps
- Have expressed high interest in the Advance to Zero initiative of the Australian Alliance to End Homelessness (AAEH) that supports local collaborative efforts to end homelessness, starting with rough sleeping - one community at a time

Organisations on the action group include, Mount Alexander Shire Council, Victoria Police, Salvation Army, Dhelkaya Health Housing team, Loddon Campaspe Community Legal Centre

## MODULAR HOMES

And a big thanks to Wade Roberts, a member of the vacant and tiny homes on wheels (THOW) working group who in this link [Minimum Viable Shelter](#) ([acquired-taste.net](http://acquired-taste.net)) is sharing his comprehensive thinking behind a “minimal viable subsistence shelter” based on three foundational principals:

- Modularity
- Portability
- Affordability

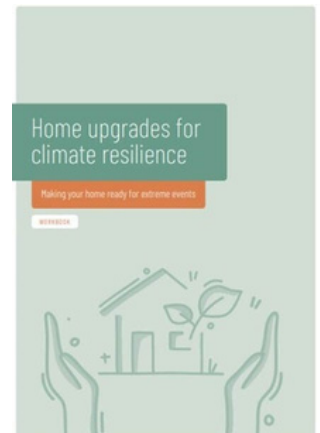
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## HOME UPGRADES FOR CLIMATE RESILIENCE

A great new resource has been developed for households in the Loddon Mallee region to help make homes and properties ready for extreme weather events.

[Home Upgrades for Climate Resilience Guide \(cvga.org.au\)](http://cvga.org.au)

The **Home Upgrades for Climate Resilience Workbook** aims to help households to assess how their home may perform in climate events such as fires, floods, storms, and extreme temperatures. The workbook identifies priority upgrades that households can undertake to make their home more resilient when these events occur)



## WINC COHOUSING - OLDER WOMEN IN COHOUSING

### Modelling our future

What do you do when you are waiting around for town planning approval for your community? You make models of the new homes of course, and you meet some newcomers who might also want to live there.

WINC hosted an information session on Saturday 24 February, and met 14 women who wanted to know more about our older women's cohousing community. They came from near and far – Castlemaine, Campbells Creek and Newstead, as well as Buxton, Alice Springs and Merimbula.

WINC will have 31 small homes – 4 or 5 for social housing, 4-6 for 'middle women' – those who have too many assets for social housing but not enough to buy in, and the remaining 20 or so for women who can fully purchase a home. The smallest homes are 50m<sup>2</sup> one bedroom, a slightly larger 65m<sup>2</sup> one bedroom, and an 80m<sup>2</sup> two bedroom home.

We are working with a potential developer-builder and following up on the many details needed to make this happen. Our local lawyer, Ian Bracken, is keeping us well versed on the infinite number of moving parts required to build a new community.

And yes, we have started to make very small cardboard models of the homes, which certainly challenges my somewhat rusty mathematical skills – how big is a baby grand piano at a scale of 1:40? Thank goodness Celia, our member-architect, made the piano as a demo (and it fits in my house!).

Thanks to everyone in MAS who has supported and encouraged us!



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## SOLAR BANK

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.

Mount Alexander Net Zero Working Group (MANZWG) is proposing that a local Solar Bank be built, owned and operated by the new State Electricity Commission (SEC) and installed on suitable State Government School, Hospital, Prison and Council roofs in our Shire.

Local renters could then lower their energy bills by buying a subsidised share in the SEC Shared Solar Bank and pay for it over time at no up front cost. In exchange for the energy generated by their leased solar panel shares, participating renters would receive discounts on their SEC electricity bills.

We are gathering support for their proposal and have spoken with State Government MP for Bendigo West Maree Edwards who is organising a meeting with the Victorian State Government Minister for Climate Action, Energy and Resources and State Electricity Commission, Lily D'Ambrosia, to discuss the proposal.

We have support from the following organisations thus far and waiting for replies from others:

1. The Castlemaine Secondary College Council
2. Dhelkaya Health
3. The Mount Alexander Sustainability Group
4. The West End Resilience Energy Group
5. Nalderun Education Aboriginal Corporation
6. Mount Alexander Shire Accommodation Respite Group (MASARG)



*Supporters of "Haystacks" solar bank in NSW*

## COUNCIL UPDATE ON AFFORDABLE HOUSING

[See Let's talk about affordable housing. | Shape Mount Alexander](#)

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## EVERYBODY'S HOME PETITION

Everybody's Home, a coalition of housing, homelessness and welfare organisations, has issued a petition lobbying the government about the need for affordable housing, based on data that indicates that negative gearing and capital gains on houses costs the government billions of dollars that could be spent on affordable housing instead.

Please consider signing the petition [Everybodyshome.com](http://Everybodyshome.com)