

MY HOME NETWORK



JANUARY 2024



TOGETHER AS

Dhelkaya Health

OUR NEW BRAND LAUNCHES 2023

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RESIDENT-LED COLLECTIVE - HOUSING WORKSHOP

The Resident-Led Collective Housing Workshop held with RMIT as a Castlemaine Free University session at Northern Arts Hotel on 8 November 2023 attracted a lot of interest. Thus, we are continuing the conversation Monday 12 February 6pm -7.30pm at Northern Arts Hotel for all interested in bringing their resources, ideas, expertise and networks to build on ideas/models you wish to progress, such as co-housing, community land trusts, purchasing land jointly, a tiny-house ecovillage, or any other model you would like to come along and propose.

Thanks to Anitra Nelson for her support in progressing these conversations and to the Northern Arts Hotel for hosting us.

We look forward to seeing you there. To register contact Kaz cneilson@castlemainehealth.org.au

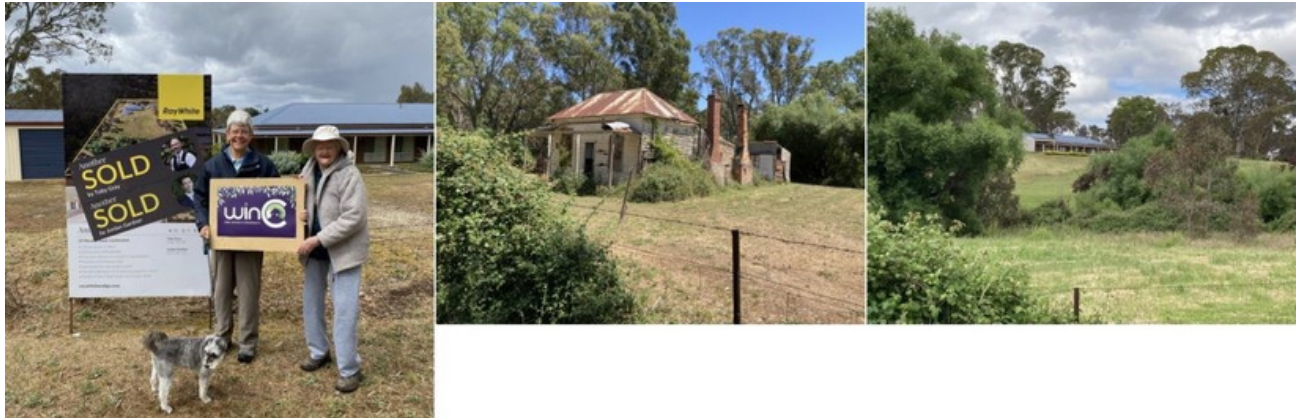


Pictured: Kathryn Mc Goldrick (MHN), Vera Hemkes (MHN), Christene Radford (Women's Shed), Johanna Winchcombe (Women's Shed and MHN), Andrew Cowell (MHN), Wade Roberts (MHN), Louise Cook-Tonkin (MHN), Alison Whitten (MHN and Castlemaine Institute), Isabella Shaw (MHN and WINC), Anitra Nelson (MHN and CFU), Liz Smith (WINC), Kerrily Jennings (MHN and Castlemaine Community House, Kaz Neilson (MHN) at Murrnong, a local housing model

WINC COHOUSING

Great news: the Town Planning Application for the WINC development at 19 Macafee Rd in Castlemaine, to build 31 homes and common facilities, was submitted to the Mt Alexander Shire Council Planning Department in the last month! Yahoo!

WINC are very grateful to those who have played a role in getting WINC to this point. For more info winccohousing.org.au



HOMESHARE

Homeshare 'back of house' is now set up, Yahoo! we have the selection and legal processes in place and are ready to set up some Homeshares. We are looking for homeseekers and homeproviders. Homeseekers will be over 18, can benefit from affordable housing, work or study locally, provide support for 10-12 hours a week to a home provider and have the skills needed to share a house. Homeproviders will have a spare bedroom and other facilities to share, need practical support or and 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. Express an interest via email or phone and we will provide further information. Di Cox is the Homeshare coordinator Homeshare@castlemainehealth.org.au Phone 0499 309 418 and leave a message.

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 please get in touch with Di see above.

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

Following the decision of Council in its December meeting to allocate Council land at 2A Canrobert St Newstead and 10 Steele St Maldon for affordable housing, Wintringham Housing will now commence seeking government funding to build and operate housing on both sites for older local people on the priority housing wait list. Timeframes for delivery of the housing are thus not known at this point, but Wintringham will engage with communities in their design process once funding is secured.

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](#)

It's great to see and hear of THOW owners and those interested in having a THOW where they live matching up and enabling this type of "collective housing". We know more THOW are being used as affordable housing.

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.

To discuss local context further contact Kaz cneilson@castlemainehealth.org.au

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



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.

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 \(sro.vic.gov.au\)](#)

We have approached landlords or real estate agents responsible for the leasing of 23 vacant shop tops in Castlemaine to see if any could be released as affordable rentals or transition housing:

- 2 shop tops are now being rented
- We are having conversations with 6 landlords
- The remaining 15 are deemed not suitable because:
 1. They are being used for storage
 2. They have had negative experiences before renting the shop top
 3. Cost of renovating/upgrading to comply with the new Tenancy Act standards introduced last year
 4. Heritage overlay that prevents renovation
 5. Lack of separate entrance/exit and fire exit

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

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

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

TENANTS RIGHTS WORKING GROUP

Thanks to those of you who have put up your hand to be on the tenants' rights working group - will convene this meeting soon. Anyone else interested please get in touch cneilson@castlemainehealth.org.au -Thanks !

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)
For more information please check out the following links:

[Secondary dwellings planning](#)

<https://www.vba.vic.gov.au/building/regulatory-framework/small-second-homes>

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)

As a follow on from the Housing Statement the State Government is now conducting a whole of government review of how we plan for the future of our communities. That review is underway now and the eventual outcome will be Plan Victoria. The Plan Victoria team will be engaging with communities in the first half of this year. To participate and if you would like to submit directly online please check out <https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/guides-and-resources/strategies-and-initiatives/developing-a-new-plan-for-victoria>

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.rdv.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.

WHAT CAN YOU 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
- 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, tenants working group, contact Kaz cneilson@castlemainehealth.org.au