

MY HOME NETWORK



MAY 2024



TOGETHER AS

Dhelkaya Health

OUR NEW BRAND LAUNCHES 2023

To learn more visit dhelkayahealth.org.au

TENANT'S RIGHTS WORKING GROUP

Thanks to Frankie, Liz, Deborah, Mellita, Delphine and Wade who are the tenants rights working group and currently assisting the West End Resilience Network (WER) in bringing their rental expertise to codesigning and delivering a local workshop on improving household energy efficiency and reducing electricity bills targeting tenants. It is hoped this workshop will happen mid-June so watch this space.

87% of our tenants cannot afford their rentals and the increasing costs of heating and cooling compounds this financial burden.

They are also working with Housing Justice of Arc Justice [Housing Help - ARC Justice](#) and the Residential Tenancies Commissioner to build on local tenants' rights advocacy.

See attached flyer on tenants rights that Housing Justice have developed and list of assistance tenants can access to help with electricity bills etc

Other important information:

- [Home - Tenants Victoria](#)
- [Home – Justice Connect](#) for free legal advice

We will be organizing a forum later June for tenants to improve awareness of their rights and to collate emerging issues and gaps.

Kaz also working with Victorian Council Of Social Services (VCOSS) on their health and energy nexus project looking at links between health impacts and energy poverty and vulnerability and ways of addressing these impacts [Tackling the energy-health nexus | VCOSS](#)



Tenant's rights working group with Alistar Robertson from WER

MOUNT ALEXANDER COMMUNITY LAND LTD (MACLL) AND MOUNT ALEXANDER AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST (MAAHT)

MACLL held a successful AGM at the Tap Room electing a new board-Yay!
Clare Richards MASC Housing Solutions Broker presented on the Mount Alexander Affordable Housing Trust (MAAHT) and how the MAAHT can in-principal be an avenue for MACLL.

Thanks to Doug Falconer, Jacqueline Brodie Hans, Grace McCaughey and others for their hard work developing MACLL and to Doug and Jacqueline for holding the MACLL governance structure for years and trying hard to get it off the ground.



Clare Richards, Jacqueline, Doug and community members at the MACLL AGM

HOMESHARE

We are now organising the first matches between Homeproviders and Homeseekers but we need more in each 'pool' to be able to respond in a timely way to demand.

When Homeseekers contact us needing a Homeshare they usually need it soon. To make that happen we need ready Homeproviders. It can take a number of weeks to help a Homeprovider get ready for a person to share their house. So if you have been thinking of registering yourself as Homeprovider, a person who has a spare bedroom, and could do with some extra company and help around the house, then now is the time to get your expression of interest in.



HOMESHARE (CONT.)

We do all the recruitment, screening matching and ongoing support to help make it a positive and mutually beneficial relationship for everyone. We have been getting very good feedback about our processes and our friendliness to everyone who makes contact.

To express an interest call Homeshare on 0499309418 or email homeshare@castlemainehealth.org.au for more information. [Homeshare - Dhelkaya Health](#)

COLLECTIVE HOUSING MODELS CONVERSATION UPDATE

Next collective housing model conversation **Monday 27th May 6-7.30pm Northern Arts Hotel**
Please RSVP to Kaz cneilson@castlemainehealth.org.au

Threads or actions emerging from conversations:

- Homeshare -see above
- Community Land Trust -will be followed up with conversations with Clare Richards re the Mount Alexander Affordable Housing Trust (MAAHT), see [Let's talk about affordable housing.\] Shape Mount Alexander](#)
 - and Jacqueline and Doug's Mount Alexander Community Land Ltd (MACLL) www.macll.org.au
- Building your own Tiny Homes On Wheels (THOW) etc through the Central Victorian Degrowth Group and others
- THOW/ modular homes cluster/village ideas and conversation that is happening with the THOW working group that intersects with these collective housing conversations
- Secondary dwellings - Victorian State Government housing statement [Secondary dwellings planning](#). A secondary dwelling less than 60 ms square and with no overlay no longer needs a planning permit. To check about overlays see-[Planning property report](#)
- You can check what planning is required for a particular piece of land via: [Mount Alexander Planning Scheme - Maps](#). It really depends on the piece of land, zoning, area and size of land. See head planner
- A MHN member Wade has developed the concept of a [Minimum Viable Shelter \(acquired-taste.net\)](#) based on three foundational principals:
 1. Modularity
 2. Portability
 3. Affordability

Poss cost of \$50,000. Wade wishes it to be open source, specific.

Please get in touch if you have expertise to progress this concept and or you are interested - cneilson@castlemainehealth.org.au

Others trying to find an ethical landlord who will donate/sell land at under market value



Collective housing conversations

MY HOME NETWORK WEBSITE

The new MHN webpage is now live but still under development.

[My Home Network - Dhelkaya Health](#)

OPENING DOORS RENTING FOR ALL

Opening Doors Renting For All photography exhibition was created for people with a disability, led by people with a disability that will guide you through the process of renting and connect you to information about the world of Real Estate. The exhibition ran last month for two weeks and Mount Alexander Shire Accommodation Respite Group's (MASARG) Jan Steen and Bev Vines, and Homeshare's Di Cox all spoke at the launch about their work.



Lot 19 exhibition curator Eliza Jane Gilchrist, Jan Steen, Di Cox, exhibition organisers and Bev Vines

ROUGH SLEEPER ACTION GROUP

Dhelkaya Health has a Housing Support team who work directly with homeless people living in our local shire. We connect them with support services and provide equipment such as swags, sleeping bags and phones to help them stay safe and connected. Dhelkaya Health is part of the Rough Sleeper Action Group, including Castlemaine Police, Mount Alexander Shire Council, Salvation Army, and ARC Justice, who work together to map out the scope of the problem and plan a coordinated approach to offer the most effective service to rough sleepers. If you want to help online donations are now possible through the Dhelkaya Health website: <https://dhelkayahealth.org.au/donate/community-wellbeing-donate/>

See attached Help At Hand flyer for formal and informal supports for those sleeping rough or in crisis.

HYGIENE/COMFORT STATION

MHN is participating in conversations with other local stakeholders led by Mount Alexander Shire Council (MASC) and Castlemaine Rotary scoping the need for and feasibility of a hygiene/comfort station for those sleeping rough or in housing crisis.

VACANT DWELLINGS

Our discussions with owners of vacant dwellings have resulted in eight 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)

One property owner encourages others to join her, saying

“Offering this kind of affordable rental is just such a simple, but life-changing way to be part of a community. We reckon houses are for living in. And ours is lived in and cared for, while the reduced rent covers our outgoing costs. We worked all this out directly with the resident/tenant, who we connected with through the local grapevine. She’s fantastic and we really value the relationship we’ve got with her.”

We’re approaching a few more shop top owners to see if they can release their vacant shop tops as affordable rentals -watch this space

TINY HOMES ON WHEELS WORKING GROUP

The working group has increased with interest and ideas coming from the collective housing models conversation.

Currently they are:

- Looking for land for a THOW village/cluster
- Developing idea of supporting people building their THOW, with salvaged materials, looking for a site under cover for building and sharing building skills
- Matching THOW owners with those interested in placing a THOW next to their home

Six families are interested in hosting a THOW next to their home/permanent dwelling- please see Kaz cneilson@castlemainehealth.org.au if you or someone you know has a THOW and is looking for a place to put it.

Sue Edmonds info@sueedmonds.com.au has kindly offered to assist in developing an arrangement/agreement between owner of the THOW and those hosting the THOW next to their permanent dwelling.

Next THOW meeting is **Tues 14th May 6-7.30pm at the Northern Arts Hotel**, please RSVP and I can send you a calendar invite.

For more information on THOWs see

[Australian Tiny House Association – Supporting the Tiny House Sector in Australia](#)
And [Fred's Tiny Houses & Trailers \(fredstinyhouses.com.au\)](http://fredstinyhouses.com.au)



Some of the THOW working group members

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. The resource was launched recently in Mount Alexander Shire - watch this space.

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



The Home Upgrades for Climate Resilience Workbook aims to help households, including rentals, 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 - OLDER WOMEN IN COHOUSING

Our cohousing community for women 50 and older, continues the journey toward the building process. We submitted the town planning application to Mount Alexander Shire Council back in January and we are looking forward to hearing on that in the fairly near future. Realistically, we are still probably almost 2 years away from moving in. I say that here as we do receive enquiries from women who need housing now, and sadly we can't help just yet.

WINC is a mixed tenure community, meaning that we will have homes for women of all income and asset levels. We're planning for 5 homes for women eligible for social housing, where these women will rent from a community housing provider [CHP] that will own the homes. We're talking with a CHP and hope it will be able to receive state government funding to buy these homes. Two of our current members are planning to rent from the CHP and we still have space for 3 more women eligible for social housing.

WINC also plans to assist members we call 'middle women' - women with too many assets for social housing and too few assets to fully buy a house at WINC. Many older women find themselves in the middle and they are particularly vulnerable to homelessness in the future. We are committed to finding a solution for them. Most of our middle women members have about half the amount needed to buy a home and need assistance to provide the rest, ideally through shared equity/shared ownership. WINC recently received a very generous anonymous donation of \$500,000 that will enable us to assist 3 of our middle women to buy their homes at WINC. We're now working to find funds for 2 more middle women members so we can have 5 homes with this form of shared ownership.

WINC - OLDER WOMEN IN COHOUSING (CONT.)

Members who can pay the full cost of ownership will buy the remaining 21 homes at WINC.

WINC's membership for the first purchase of homes is almost - but not quite - full. We also know we need to build a waiting list of members who will want to buy homes in WINC when, for one reason or another, homes come up for sale. We are holding information days every few months and inviting women who may be interested to come along and learn about WINC, meet some of the members and see the site.

Our next open day will run from **11am-1pm, Saturday 22 June at 19 Macafee Road, Castlemaine**. We'll talk about the community and how it works, show the plans and the site, talk about costs and answer questions. We will provide a light lunch and the opportunity to chat with current members.

If you would like to come to the information session, please get in touch with Mary-Faeth Chenery, WINC's president, via mary-faeth@winccohousing.org.au



WINC members in planning mode

COUNCIL UPDATE ON AFFORDABLE HOUSING

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

SOLAR BANK

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 SharedSolar 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 and further scoping the feasibility of this proposal and hoping to discuss this further with the Victorian State Government Minister for Climate Action, Energy and Resources and State Electricity Commission, Lily D'Ambrosia.