



**Dhelkaya
Health**

MY HOME NETWORK



JUNE 2024

HOMESHARE



A successful Homeshare community is built with community and organisational education, relationship building and processes that work and can be trusted.

12 months ago, we knew there were spare bedrooms and many people with assistance needs living alone along-side a housing affordability crisis in Mount Alexander. We didn't know how to establish a Homeshare community, or whether there would be any response from the community to support the idea.

Now we can see the seeds of our work beginning to grow. We have our first Homeshare match and more matches in the making-Yay!!

We have Homeseekers who can provide support and companionship and we continue to get requests from people who want to be homeproviders, who have space and a willingness to try sharing.

We do need more homeproviders to meet the Homeseeker demand but are confident that as word-of-mouth spreads about the benefits of homesharing, more people will come on board.

Anyone interested in being a homeprovider can contact Di for more information. There is no obligation or fee, all you need is a willingness to hear about how it works and decide if it is for you.

It is something you can explore now and set up for a time down the track.

If you would like Di to come and talk to your community group or want to express an interest call Di 0499309418 or email Homeshare@castlemainehealth.org.au and see Homeshare pamphlet attached

ROUGH SLEEPER ACTION GROUP AND SUPPORTING OTHERS IN HOUSING CRISIS

The rough sleeper action group (Dhelkaya Health Housing Team, MASC, Vic Pol, Arc Justice, MHN, Salvation Army) works together to improve the integrated supports for the 38 people sleeping rough in our Shire.

The MHN is also trying to find more affordable long-term rentals for local community members (mostly women) who are currently in month-to-month unaffordable leases which is very stressful.

We have found a few more affordable longer-term rentals for a few of these women but if anyone knows of options for the others-please get in touch: cneilson@castlemainehealth.org.au

FUNDRAISING FOR HOMELESS HAS IMMEDIATE IMPACT

Update from Adrienne Conway, Dhelkaya Health Fundraising Officer.

In the last MHN Update we published news of a \$2,000 donation raised at a Shedshaker Brewing event. The event saw a spontaneous auction of Kate Ceberano's artwork and gifts to raise money for local people sleeping rough in our community.

The donation went to Dhelkaya Health's Housing team, and it turns out the timing couldn't have been better. At the time of the donation there had been a pause in the supply of Backpack Beds, which are lightweight and durable beds designed specifically for people who are homeless.

The supply issue, which began during the COVID-19 pandemic, meant the Housing Services team were using less than ideal solutions. The team were thrilled to hear in May from Backpack Beds for Homeless that new stocks of the beds have now arrived.

Michael McMahon from the Housing Services team has built a great relationship for us as a partner agency with Backpack Beds and made them aware of our immediate need for the beds. In response the company increased our allocation from four beds to 12 beds in all.

The donation raised at the Shedshaker event meant we could confirm the order and pay immediately. The well considered design of these Backpack Beds makes them uniquely suited. They are lightweight and compact making them easy to carry, fire retardant, wind and waterproof, they have storage pockets and provide protection from mosquitoes. They save lives and offer dignity to those forced to sleep rough.

Thank you everyone for your support – this could not have happened without you!

Dhelkaya Health is continuing to fundraise for essential items, such as phones to enable those living rough to stay in touch with us and other service providers, and of course for more Backpack Beds.

If you want to make a difference for the most vulnerable in our community, please follow the link here [Donate Homelessness Support](#)

If you want to know more about Dhelkaya Health's fundraising please contact Adrienne Conway, Fundraising Officer, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday at aconway@castlemainehealth.org.au.

TENANTS WORKSHOP - HOW TO CREATE COMFORTABLE, COST-EFFECTIVE HOMES THIS WINTER

Everyone deserves an affordable, comfortable home. Unfortunately, this is not the case for many community members and especially tenants.

The cost of housing also includes cost of heating and cooling, and tenants often don't have the same opportunities to improve the energy efficiency of their rental or have equitable access to affordable renewable energy or renewable energy systems.

So, the local West End Resilience (WER) Network is putting on a free family friendly workshop for tenants to address some of these issues. They are able to assist in accessing resources, information and assistance to make rented housing more comfortable and cost effective.

Making simple changes can improve energy efficiency and make your home perform better in the heat and cold.

WER have delivered other workshops for homeowners that have been successful and now want to assist tenants. Come along to their FREE family friendly workshop Sat 15th June 2-4pm, West End Hall, View St, Castlemaine.

- You will learn how to lower energy/electricity and gas usage
- Which energy/electricity and gas providers are best value
- Connect you with your renting rights

See attached flyer for more details

WER have been assisted in shaping the content of this workshop by the expertise of the My Home Network tenants' rights working group who know what it is like to live in energy inefficient rentals and how to navigate what can be complex systems of assistance for renters.

To register visit www.westendresilience.org

TENANTS RIGHTS WORKING GROUP

are 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

TENANTS RIGHTS WORKING GROUP (CONT.)

Share your views on the new minimum energy efficiency and safety standards proposed for rental properties and rooming houses

[Minimum Standards for Rental Properties and Rooming Houses | Engage Victoria](#)

We will be organizing a forum later July for tenants to improve awareness of their rights and to collate emerging issues and gaps to share with the Minister of Consumer Affairs -watch this space.

MOUNT ALEXANDER COMMUNITY LAND LTD (MACLL)

The newly appointed MACLL board met recently. Thanks again to Doug Falconer, Jacqueline Brodie Hans, Grace Mc Caughey 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.

For more info - Karl Fitzgerald - karl@grounded.org.au



Newly appointed MACLL board members and community members at the MACLL AGM last month

MOUNT ALEXANDER AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST (MAAHT)

We have an opportunity to further discuss MAAHT (see attached summary diagram) with MASC Housing Solutions Broker Clare Richards Fri 14th June 11 am. I have sent an invite to those who have previously expressed an interest. Others interested in this discussion please get in touch.

MHN WEBSITE

The new MHN webpage - <https://dhehkayahealth.org.au/my-home-network/>

TINY HOMES ON WHEELS WORKING GROUP

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

Currently we are:

- Supporting those interested in buying a THOW
- Exploring options for a THOW village/cluster
- Assisting matching THOW owners with those interested in placing a THOW next to their home

Degrowth Central Victoria – Degrowth Central Victoria is keen to support people building their THOW, with salvaged materials and share building skills.

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 or they wish to accommodate someone with a THOW

Next THOW meeting is Tues 11th June 6-7.30pm pm 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)

*Kathryn McGoldrick's
THOW on the road!*



COLLECTIVE HOUSING MODELS CONVERSATION UPDATE

Thanks to everyone who has participated in these conversations.

Summary :

Principles of any collective housing model-affordable (25% of income), including rental and social housing options, inclusive and diverse and culturally safe for those with a disability, Indigenous Peoples, elders, LGBTQIA+ community members, young people, refugees and migrants.

Threads or actions emerging from conversations:

- Homeshare -see above
- Community Land Trust -see MACLL and MAAHT
- THOW -see above
- 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](#)
- Planning-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
- Kaz organizing meeting with MASC head planner to discuss option of a caravan park and other innovative collective housing models
- Those interested in committing to developing a collective housing model and developing a vision and looking for land get in touch with Louise cooktonkin@gmail.com

SALTGRASS PODCAST ON HOUSING

Local amazing podcaster Allie Hanly produced the following episodes on the housing crisis with interviews with various community members, community organisation representatives and Council representatives. As Allie said It has been a big project, but wonderful to explore these issues and talk to so many wonderful people. Thanks and congratulations to Allie for bringing it all together and crafting these podcasts.

Here are the links:

- [Episode 1](#) - What's the Problem?
- [Episode 2](#) - Building Together
- [Episode 3](#) - Creative Solutions

These three episodes were supported by RMIT University's Strategic Impact Fund, which supports interdisciplinary research translation through projects that bring together RMIT researchers, industry and community. You can also go to Ali's website saltgrasspodcast.com

HOUSING FOR REFUGEE FAMILY



Mount Alexander Refugee Support (MARS) Shout For Good is a group of local people will be sponsoring a refugee family to live in the Castlemaine area as part of the Community Refugee Integration and Settlement Pilot (CRISP), facilitated by Community Refugee Sponsorship Australia (CRSA).

We are hoping to welcome **a family of two adults and two children** to our community in the next 6-8 weeks. The family will receive support from our group as they settle into life in Australia. Our goal is to secure a long-term rental property. We also need a short-term option for the first 8 to 12 weeks. MARS will be able to pay for this initially. The family will be receiving Centrelink payments and will be able to pay rent of approximately \$400 a week once long-term accommodation is found.

If you know of short-term accommodation that would suit a family of four please let us know. Any ideas for long term housing would also be most welcome.
Please email us at crisp.mars@gmail.com and we will be in touch.



Members of MARS

WINC - OLDER WOMEN IN COHOUSING

WINC - invites you to our future home at 19 Macafee Rd, Castlemaine, Sat 22nd June, 11am -1pm (lunch provided), to meet WINC members and learn about our plans and processes to create a wonderful caring community with 31 small homes plus common facilities for women 50 and up.

We look forward to meeting you, showing you around the site, and sharing the architectural drawings and master plan. We'll also explain the process to become a member of WINC, and to join the waiting list for homes in the future. While we do now have almost enough members who want to buy or rent each of the planned homes (with the exception of several homes still available for women eligible for social housing and one two-bedroom unit), we expect that there could be some vacancies between now and when we buy in. We are also happy to encourage other groups of women who want to develop another cohousing community, perhaps nearby!

Please RSVP if you will be joining us on the 22nd. If you can't come this time but would like to attend the next open day, that's scheduled for the 26th of October 2024. Hope to see you soon, if you'd like to come.

Warm regards,
Mary-Faeth, President
WINC - Older Women in Cohousing Inc.
E: mary-faeth@winccohousing.org.au
M: 0428 481 754
FB: [@winccohousing](https://www.facebook.com/winccohousing) W: winccohousing.org.au

PS Please rug up if you are coming - it could be chilly where we will be gathering.

VACANT DWELLINGS

Our discussions with owners of vacant dwellings have resulted in nine vacant dwellings released as affordable rentals, 3 shop tops 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

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."

VACANT DWELLINGS (CONT.)

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

See update on details of Victorian property tax including opportunity to notify the State Revenue Office of vacant properties.

<https://www.premier.vic.gov.au/making-more-homes-available-victorians>