

MY HOME  
NETWORK



---

## VIGIL FOR OUR HOMELESS COMMUNITY MEMBERS

A big thank you to those of you who were able to come along and support the vigil for our homeless community members yesterday.

There were about 70 people attend, over 50 letters to the State Housing Minister signed, nearly \$500 in cash donations and many online donations for the Dhelkaya Health housing team and rough sleepers and the online national petition to the Federal Government signed by many people.

For those of you who weren't able to attend please find attached the letter we're sending to the State Housing Minister if you would like to sign and send it.

Here also is the Homeless Australia national petition to the Federal Government if you would like to sign this too - [Everybody's Home](#)

For MAINfm Able Radio interview by MAINfm radio host and MHN member Liz Scanlon with local tenants rights advocate Frankie Nugent and Michael McMahon Senior Housing Team worker, see audio file here - [MHN Interview](#)



*Michael McMahon, Dhelkaya Health Senior Housing Team worker addressing the crowd at the vigil*

---

## HOMESHARE

We have had an interesting August at Homeshare MA because we have found ourselves at the centre of attention for researchers and other communities aspiring to establish Homeshare.



We feel like we are on the front of a large national wave as the drivers that we all share continue to push people to find alternative forms of housing and support. Organisations from the Hunter, Brisbane, Adelaide, Auckland, Sydney and Perth were all represented at the last Homeshare Australia New Zealand Alliance (HANZA) community of practice meeting where we discussed how to keep local Homeshare's sustainable. The key answers were in community ownership of Homesharing, and the Mount Alexander approach was highlighted as a model to take note of. We have been asked to speak to communities in Gippsland, Hepburn, and Gisborne, all communities like ours that are working towards local solutions for a whole host of social challenges. However closer to home we are still needing to be innovative and keep learning to keep this Homeshare moving.

We can see that the promotion and education we are doing is working for Homeseekers. Everyday another person rings to request shared housing through Homeshare. But we still do not have enough Homeproviders to meet the demand. We estimate that if we had 10 approved Homeproviders then we would have the learning platform and community involvement to keep Homeshare alive and well supported for many years here. 10 is a small number but it would be a significant community of people who would build a better foundation knowledge of how to share housing at any age, because that is what Homeshare is about. It enables people to build relationships with others and live richer lives. The more people that do it, the more it will catch on.

Homeshare is organising monthly 'coffee mornings' on the first Monday of the month 10am-12noon at Castlemaine Community House for current homesharers and for any interested community member to meet and learn from each other about the Homeshare experience. We are keen to find and support homeproviders so if you have a spare room and are willing to join others to meet some wonderful new people come along and talk to us. If you are involved in a group we can also still come to you to discuss Homeshare.

Contact Di on 0499309418 or [Homeshare@castlemainehealth.org.au](mailto:Homeshare@castlemainehealth.org.au) or go to [Homeshare - Dhelkaya Health](#) to find out more

*Homeshare working group: Kaz Neilson, Martha Ruth Hills, Di Cox, Margaret Ollerton, Jo Middleton, Hanza Representative Meg Montague and Prue Denner (Jan Steen absent)*



---

## TENANTS RIGHTS WORKING GROUP

We are holding a Tenants Rights forum Wednesday 11th September 6-8 pm at the Northern Arts Hotel Castlemaine to raise awareness of tenants rights, support tenants in ensuring these rights are complied with and to capture emerging issues/gaps for tenants regarding their rights and the rental systems to share with Consumer Affairs Victoria.

Renters and Housing Union (RAHU), Housing Justice, Rental Tenancy Commissioner and lived experience of tenancy are speaking at the forum  
See attached flyer for more info.

Also see measures by State Government to improve accountability of real estates and landlords [Taskforce To Crack Down On Dodgy Rentals | Premier](#)

In the meantime -some info on your rights

### Your rental minimum standards rights

All Victorians should have access to a fair and safe rental market. If your rental agreement started after 29 March 2021, your rental provider (landlord) must [ensure their property meets minimum standards](#) before you move in.

If you've identified an advertised rental property that doesn't meet minimum standards, [report it](#). If you've already signed the contract but haven't moved in yet, you can:

- end the agreement immediately, or
- move in and request [urgent repairs](#).
- 

If your home falls below the minimum standards during your agreement, request that your rental provider make urgent repairs. Your provider must also arrange regular [gas and electrical safety checks](#) and fix and pay for any broken [smoke alarms](#).

Contact us using our [complaint form](#) if your rental provider or agent hasn't organised a timely repair.

Visit [our website](#) to learn about:

- the [14 categories of minimum standards](#)
- renters' rights
- rental providers' responsibilities
- [repairs](#)
- [gas and electrical safety](#)
- [smoke alarms and fire safety](#)

---

## FUNDING FOR MHN COORDINATOR ROLE

The MHN Coordinator role is now a permanent position - thanks to Dhelkaya Health for their commitment to this role and the work of the My Home Network.

## PLAN FOR VICTORIA

Hello,

In August, community groups across Victoria are invited to participate in one of two online sessions with a senior planner to hear more about the Victorian Government's largest-ever engagement program – [Plan for Victoria](#).

### Why is this important?

Organisations and groups like yours play a critical role in supporting local communities – and we need your help to make sure the issues that matter most in your community are considered in our final plan.

### What are the community webinars?

The meet a planner webinars are free online sessions for community groups. The free 45-minute sessions cover:

- Guidance on how to make a submission
- Content on the issues that matter most to you (e.g. housing, jobs, livability and the environment) which can be selected when you register
- Engagement snapshot (February 2024 – August 2024) - 'eight Big Ideas' which have been identified from over 9,000 pieces of feedback and 850 hours of conversation

### Event details

Dates/Times: Monday 19th August 2024 at 10am – 11am OR Tuesday 20th August 2024 at 7pm-8pm

Location: Online webinar

An MS teams invite will be provided once you have registered to attend

Please register to attend this webinar by [clicking this link](#)

**RSVP by Friday 16th August 2024**

### More on Plan for Victoria

The Department of Transport and Planning is developing a new plan for Victoria to guide future growth and change over the next 30 years. We need your help to ensure that this plan reflects the views and needs of communities across that state before submissions close on Friday 30 August. Right now, we are asking all Victorians to share feedback on 'eight Big Ideas' by completing our [survey](#) or [uploading a submission](#).

Please contact us if you have any questions – [planforvictoria@transport.vic.gov.au](mailto:planforvictoria@transport.vic.gov.au)

Plan for Victoria Team

Department of Transport and Planning

---

## TINY HOMES ON WHEELS (THOW) WORKING GROUP

We are having conversations with Council regarding approved onsite waste management systems and rental arrangements (not Air b n bs) being allowed under the local THOW law. We are also keen to explore the feasibility of THOW clusters or villages.

In the mean time a big thanks to Shannon Schultz of Fred's Tiny Houses for setting up this database and listings page (a bit like an online community notice board) to help people:

- find a place to park their Tiny Homes On Wheels (THOW) or
- find a THOW to be parked on your land next to your home or
- find someone to occupy your THOW.

Database page: <https://fredstinyhouses.com.au/tiny-house-and-land-offers-in-mount-alexander-shire-vic-database/>

!

Make a listing page:

[Make a Listing of Your Tiny House or Land – Fred's Tiny Houses \(fredstinyhouses.com.au\)](https://fredstinyhouses.com.au/make-a-listing-of-your-tiny-house-or-land)

Please spread the word!

The MHN THOW working group are working to optimise the appropriate uptake of THOW as affordable housing.

We have drafted a summary guide to a THOW contract/agreement between a THOW occupier and the owner of the land and permanent dwelling where the THOW is located.

So please get in touch if you wish to discuss anything further: [cneilson@castlemainehealth.org.au](mailto:cneilson@castlemainehealth.org.au)

### Candid Tiny House Podcast - The Advocacy Season

A six part documentary series on how our local community rallied together and successfully changed tiny house local laws. There are 6 Episodes in total:

1. Intro
2. First Attempt at Changing Local Tiny House Laws
3. New Campaign, New Strategies
4. Insights from Inside the Council
5. How To Change Tiny House Laws in Your Area
6. Uptake, Obstacles and the Future



Listen wherever you get your podcasts - Popular platforms are Apple Podcasts and Spotify. Subscribe to Candid Tiny House in your app so you get a new episode every Friday.

Shannon Schultz - (03) 5472 2130 9am - 3pm weekdays [shannon@fredstinyhouses.com.au](mailto:shannon@fredstinyhouses.com.au)



*Some members of the THOW working group - Martin Hurley, Wade Roberts, Shannon Schultz, Stephen Lumb, Kathryn McGoldrick, Johanna Winchcombe, Kaz Neilson and Michael Johnstone – (some being a THOW!)*

---

## FUNDRAISING FOR HOMELESS

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](#)

Thank you everyone for your support – this cannot happen without you!

## MOUNT ALEXANDER AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST - MAAHT

A big thank you to all who submitted EOIs for the MAAHT Advisory Committee – Council will be able to contact applicants from early September regarding the shortlist, and outcomes of the appointments will be known as of the Council meeting 10th September.

## HOUSING FOR REFUGEE FAMILY



Mount Alexander Refugee Support (MARS) 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 have been matched to a family from Syria, comprising two adults and three primary school aged children, who we are hoping to welcome to our community in September or October. 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 five please let us know. Any ideas for long term housing would also be most welcome. Please email us at [crisp.mars@gmail.com](mailto:crisp.mars@gmail.com) and we will be in touch.



*Members of MARS*

---

## AIR BNB'S

Great report by Grounded [Grounded Community Land Trusts](#) which looks at the impact of Short-Term Rental (STR) on communities in Australia's tier one tourism towns.

The report recommends an innovative cap 'n trade approach to rebalance the market towards long term trends. [Airbnb Cap 'n Trade Explainer - Grounded](#)

The Airbnb cap n trade system is covered in [ABC article](#), [the Business](#) and NOW [CH9 news](#).

Thurs July 4th, 6pm is [an event discussing the policy](#) and how it can help reduce the rate of change in our communities, whilst adding resilience through Community Land Trusts.

Our Shire has a lower air b n b percentage to long term rentals and occupied dwellings than some other shires but this report and advocacy is significant in an integrated approach to addressing the housing crisis.

We have 1300 rentals, approx. 330 air b n bs and 8,400 occupied dwellings.

## 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](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 will be requesting a meeting with Council to discuss sending letters to MAS residents requesting those owning vacant dwellings consider releasing them as affordable rentals or transition housing.



---

## MHN SUPPORTING OTHER HOUSING NETWORKS

We are supporting the development and action of other housing networks in the Hunter Valley, Macedon Ranges Shire, Hepburn Shire, East Gippsland and City of Greater Bendigo.

## REVIEW OF MY HOME NETWORK

I will send out a survey soon to request your honest feedback on the MHN  
Happy to have face to face discussions as well.