

MY HOME  
NETWORK



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## TENANTS RIGHTS FORUM - LEARN, ENGAGE AND EMPOWER

The mad hail and storms last Wednesday evening didn't stop people attending our Tenants Rights forum where guest speakers, tenants and other community members shared their collective expertise, passion and commitment to improve tenants rights, their compliance and make the structural change required to achieve housing and social justice.

Thanks to Frankie, Wade, Liz and Deborah of the MHN tenants rights working group for organising this event.



The forum featured a diverse line-up of speakers, including Deb Pach from the MHN tenants rights working group, local tenants, Residential Tenancy Commissioner Dr. Heather Holst, Leah Slattery from ARC Justice, and Harry Millward from the Renters and Housing Union (RAHU) -the largest housing union in Australia. The event also included a Q&A session, providing attendees with the opportunity to raise issues and concerns.

These were compiled and will be shared with Consumer Affairs as part of the State Government's new task force aimed at improving landlord and real estate accountability.

Local tenants speakers Frankie Nugent and Wade Roberts shared their vulnerability and injustices they experience as tenants, the impacts on their mental health and their expertise and insights in navigating the rental systems.



As one attendee said "That was very moving, it takes courage to share such vulnerability but it's a necessary element to making way for others to speak up or even feel safe to attend such a meaningful event"

"Personally it made me feel less alone as a renter, a person/family in insecure housing and more able to address all the inequities our community and individuals are facing around housing."

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## TENANTS RIGHTS FORUM (CONT.)

Leah Slattery said “I was very pleased to see the level of community engagement in rental and housing issues - quite fortifying!”

Many of the attendees are joining the MHN tenants rights working group and hope to form a local branch of RAHU and continue to work with Housing Justice and the Residential Tenancy Commissioner.

If you want to join the tenants rights working group or wish to chat more-see Kaz [cneilson@castlemainehealth.org.au](mailto:cneilson@castlemainehealth.org.au)



## 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 arrived this week.**

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 have 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 up to \$520 a week once long-term accommodation is found.

**If you know of any long-term accommodation that would suit a family of five, please let us know. Please email us at [crisp.mars@gmail.com](mailto:crisp.mars@gmail.com) and we will be in touch. Thank you!**

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## HOMESHARE



Homeshare is undertaking a promotion blitz to encourage more people to take up Homesharing. You will hear about us on the radio, in the papers and at the movies generally about the shire. We are holding monthly information sessions so people can find out more about Homeshare, how it works and why it's good for our health.

Homeshare is based on research evidence that shows people who share housing have better wellbeing than people who live alone. And therefore, we want to encourage more people to give sharing a go for their wellbeing at any age. Homesharing is not only a better use of existing resources, but it also helps us to remain flexible and adaptive. Sharing helps us learn from people that we share with that there are different ways of seeing things, doing things, understanding things. Sharing helps us adapt. Starting to share in younger old age is a good idea because we are more adaptable to change than in our older old age.

Have you looked around your house and thought it would be good to have a bit more interaction, someone to share a meal with, more everyday conversation and connection with others? Homeshare is a housing solution and an at home social support solution. It comprises the mutual exchange of support for housing. One party has low level support needs, lives alone and is adaptable enough to share their home with an unrelated adult. The other party has connections to this area, needs somewhere to live, and is able build healthy relationships with others. 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. See attached info**

We are keen to find and support homeproviders, so if you have a spare room and are willing 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) to find out more



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## COUNCIL HOMELESSNESS COORDINATOR

Please see link below from Mel Fowler of MASC regarding the MASC Homelessness Project Officer  
Please share with your networks,

<https://www.mountalexander.vic.gov.au/Council/Work-with-us/Current-vacancies/Homelessness-Project-Officer>

## MEET THE CANDIDATES EVENT FOR LOCAL COUNCIL ELECTIONS - SUNDAY 29 SEPTEMBER, THEATRE ROYAL 11AM-1PM

The candidates will be asked questions on housing

See info below

Please share with your networks.

- Humanitix Registration page: <https://events.humanitix.com/mount-alexander-meet-the-candidates-2024>

Socials!

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/meetthecandidatesmtalex/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/meetthecandidatesmtalexander/>

## PLAN FOR VICTORIA

Thanks to those of you who submitted individual submissions to Plan Victoria and those of you who contributed to our collective MHN submission.

Let's see what transpires out of this community consultation.

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## 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.

**We reckon there are more than 50 families who are building THOW or living THOW after the local law changes last year.**

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

## 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!

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## EXPLORING BIOREGIONALISM WEBINAR RECORDING

The exploring bioregionalism: Can bioregionalism solve our housing crisis? recording from this webinar is now available on the AELA website [here](#)

FYI this webinar includes slides and references to Castlemaine eco-collaborative communities: Murrnong, WiNC and the Open Field Co-Living Homestead

**EXPLORING BIOREGIONALISM:  
Can bioregionalism solve our housing crisis?**

*with Elena Pereyra, Anitra Nelson &  
Greenprints Host: Dr Michelle Maloney*

**FREE WEBINAR – BOOKINGS ESSENTIAL**  
29 August 2024 @ 12noon to 1.30pm AEST  
[events.humanitix.com/aela-29aug](https://events.humanitix.com/aela-29aug)

**greenprints**  
[www.greenprints.org.au](http://www.greenprints.org.au)  
An initiative of the Australian Earth Laws Alliance

## 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)

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## VACANT DWELLINGS (CONT.)

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 Mount Alexander Shire residents requesting those owning vacant dwellings consider releasing them as affordable rentals or transition housing.

## MOUNT ALEXANDER COMMUNITY LAND LTD (MACLL)

Save the date - MACLL is holding a Blue Sky Session, Thurs Oct 31st, 6pm. Venue TBC. We will be discussing potential pathways moving forward and look forward to your input.

We have been busy working on a new website. Let's make things happen!

For more info [john.shone@foodcircle.com.au](mailto:john.shone@foodcircle.com.au)

## MOUNT ALEXANDER AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST (MAAHT)

Delphine Laboureau-Ormancey, Gary McClure, Jacqui Watt, Laura Keogh, Liam Wilkinson and Natasha Williams were appointed to the Advisory Committee of the Mount Alexander Affordable Housing Trust.

Jacqui Watt was appointed as Interim Chair of the Advisory Committee for the first 6 months of its existence.

For other info see [Mount Alexander Affordable Housing Trust | Shape Mount Alexander](#)

## RMIT WORKSHOPS POSTPONED

For those of you who were interested in the series of RMIT workshops Sept-Nov 2024 on legal, financial, visioning, design process aspects of community led collective housing models, unfortunately, they are not going ahead this year but hopefully will be rescheduled in 2025.

The organisers invite potential participants to complete a quick survey to assist in refining workshop topics. Access the [survey here](#).