

MY HOME  
NETWORK



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## MY HOME NETWORK COMMUNITY FORUM

### THURSDAY 15 MAY 7-9PM, CASTLEMAINE TOWN HALL

Who knows what will happen in the election but we can gather, affirm, update and build on our collective local action to address the housing crisis and build community.

Please share attached flyer with your networks.

If anyone can help with:

- Bumping in -5pm onwards
- Bumping out-9pm onwards
- Scribing forum actions
- Registration desk

I would be very grateful - please get in touch

THANK YOU!

## PUBLIC HOUSING MOVABLE UNITS

<https://www.housing.vic.gov.au/public-housing-movable-units>

If you're over 55, and or identify with a disability, on the Victorian Housing Register, receive ongoing support from the Department of Housing or a registered community service provider and are a permanent Australian resident, you can apply - moveable units can be placed in the backyard of a friend's or neighbour's house. See link above for more info.

## CITY OF GREATER BENDIGO HOME EMPOWERMENT - HOUSEHOLD ENERGY EFFICIENCY PROGRAMME - SEE ATTACHED FOR MORE DETAILS

The first events are ready for registration below, with more to come

- [Energy Efficiency Planning Session](#) – Sunday May 4<sup>th</sup>, Old Church on the Hill – in person session to help people plan, understand what might work for their home/context.
- 8 short online sessions (also being screened at the Bendigo library & recording shared):
  - [Energy efficiency for Renters](#) – May 19
  - [Master class on Draught proofing](#) – June 2
  - [Efficient Heating and Cooling Systems](#) – June 17
  - [Insulate for Home Comfort](#) – 7 July
  - [Intro to Heat pumps](#) – 22 July
  - [Solar and batteries 101](#) – 4 August
  - [Electric vehicles/bikes & novated leasing](#) – 1 Sept
- Future events will be posted in our [enewsletter](#) or found [here](#), and include energy bill drop in sessions, open homes, and hearing from locals.

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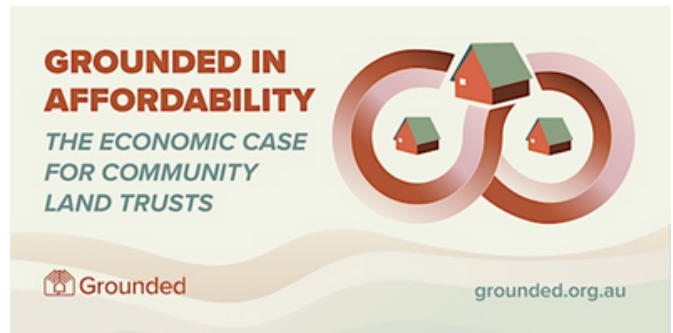
## MHN SUBMISSION TO THE MOUNT ALEXANDER SHIRE COUNCIL (MASC) PLAN

See plan attached.

## RECORDING OF LAUNCH OF GROUNDED'S REPORT ON THE ECONOMIC CASE FOR COMMUNITY LAND TRUSTS

For those of you who couldn't attend the launch, [here is the Youtube recording](#) and a [copy of the slides too](#).

Karl Fitzgerald, Director of Grounded is a local and on the Mount Alexander Community Land Ltd (MACLL) Board.



## PLAN FOR VICTORIA

[The plan](#) has interlinked objectives around housing, employment and equity, environmental sustainability, thriving suburbs and towns, First Nations Peoples' self determination. We were part of the consultation process - see p 30 on the plan for the 4,500 houses to be built in the next 30 years in our Shire - not sure how much social housing is to be included, trying to find out.

## TENANTS' RIGHTS WORKING GROUP

### **MHN and West End Resilience (WER) Video on Rental energy efficiency,**

A huge thanks to Warwick Jones who very kindly donated his time and wonderful expertise in making the following video based on the content of a workshop we did with the local West End Resilience Network (WER) on tenants' rights, rental energy efficiency and understanding and reducing your rental utilities bills and accessing supports and concessions.

[My Home Network - Rental Energy Efficiency \[English\] on Vimeo](#)

Thanks too to Deb Pach, Frankie Nugent, Barry Murfett, Wade Roberts and West End Resilience Network for their time and expertise. It was great working with you all!

This video will soon be uploaded onto the WER website [WEST END RESILIENCE](#).

It has already been well received regionally and statewide. Libraries and some Councils are keen to roll the subtitled version on public screens and refugee and migrant communities wish it translated in various languages.

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## TENANTS' RIGHTS WORKING GROUP (CONT.)

The tenants' rights working group aims to:

- Support all voices equitably in a coalition manner which supports renters in Mount Alexander Shire.
- Build awareness of tenants' rights amongst tenants, landlords and real estates/property development networks.
- Advocate for affordability across a broad scope of potential new frameworks for tenants.
- Advocate for and assist with information on improving rental energy efficiency,
- Advocate for structural change so that renters have equitable access to affordable renewable energy
- Build awareness of energy efficiency rebates, subsidies and other incentives for landlords so that tenants may be comfortable in their homes
- Break down the stigma associated with rentals

We are holding tenants' rights information stalls in our Shire building on raising awareness of tenants' rights, supports and compliance to those rights and collating issues faced by renters and sharing that with Consumer Affairs and the Residential Tenancies Commissioner. If you see us at the Wesley Market, outside Shed Shaker Open Mic or outside the small IGA come and say hello!



*Fiona, Frankie, Deb, Kaz and Inez on the Tenants' Rights and Housing stalls*

We also share information on other aspects of the local housing work, letters to State Housing Minister to sign, template letter to owners of vacant dwellings, Homeshare etc etc

We continue to work with [Renters And Housing Union \(RAHU\)](#), [Housing Justice](#) and the Residential Tenancy Commissioner and are encouraging tenants to engage with the State Government to improve accountability of real estates and landlords.

[Taskforce To Crack Down On Dodgy Rentals | Premier](#)

Also linking in with ACT crew [Better Renting](#)

[General enquiry - Consumer Affairs Victoria](#)

For minimum standards not being met when a property is being let: [Your details](#) | [Report an issue with an advertised rental property](#).

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## TENANTS RIGHTS WORKING GROUP (CONT.)

There is another one for complaints but needs the renter to have tried to resolve it with the owner/their agent before Consumer Affairs will usually get involved:

[What is your complaint about? | Make a complaint](#) Also linking in with ACT crew [Better Renting](#)

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)

## HOMESHARE

Heading towards two years for Homeshare Mount Alexander we are enjoying reflecting on what we are doing well and what we can do better.

Two years seems a long time from where we stand but HANZA, our mentor organisation, says that Homeshare initiatives take 3-5 years to be fully embedded in communities. Vermont in the USA has been operating for 40 Years and One Roof Two Ages has been organising Homeshares in Belgium for 16 years.

Compared to those we are early stage, and yet we are doing very well. We now have 4 homeshares in progress ranging from 2-6 months. That's 450 days of affordable housing and daily companionship using the resources we have.

At our gathering on 12<sup>th</sup> February, current Homesharers said that we had built trust in the community, our processes were transparent, supportive and reliable, and that the experience of Homesharing was overwhelmingly positive. We think that feedback is based on how we have established Homeshare here. Homeshare is integrated into Dhelkaya Health, embedded in the community and linked nationally and internationally to Homeshare through HANZA.

Our ongoing connections with community organisations, clubs and networks, build the culture of sharing houses at any age and develop the necessary relationships for people to be curious about how Homeshare can help them.

Homeshare was an initiative of My Home Network and we continue to feel like we are one part of a greater community strategy to address as best we can, affordable housing and aging well. In this community the needs in both areas are particularly high.

We welcome phone calls or emails from people who would like to talk about how Homeshare can help them, there is no obligation beyond the first call. Homeseekers are seeking affordable housing and are open and supportive towards others. Homeproviders have available rooms, low level assistance needs and would enjoy the company of others in their home. We look forward to hearing from you contact Di Cox: [homeshare@castlemainehealth.org.au](mailto:homeshare@castlemainehealth.org.au) or 0499309418



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## ROOMS TO RENT IN SHARED LIVING ENVIRONMENT

Open Fields [Open Field Co-Living Homestead](#) | [Castlemaine VIC](#) | [Facebook](#) have some rooms coming up for rent soon for those who are looking for either temporary or permanent housing in a multi-generational shared living environment in Muckleford

Medium south facing room with built-in robes is \$205 for a single / \$220 for a couple per week including bills.

Large north facing room with built-in robes is \$225 single / \$255 for a couple per week including bills.

Email [nicolabeatrix@gmail.com](mailto:nicolabeatrix@gmail.com) if interested

## OLDER WOMEN IN COHOUSING INC - WINC

The WINC vision of a sustainable 31-home cohousing community for older women in Castlemaine continues to forge ahead, with the group recently signing an agreement with a developer for the groundbreaking project.

We are now waiting on final costings for individual homes so we can determine the best approach to building the homes in the most affordable and sustainable way. We are having to come up with creative and courageous solutions to overcome the challenges of rising building costs and the large expenses attached to borrowing big amounts of money.

We are truly breaking new ground, on many fronts, and we will find a way!

For anyone interested in joining us, we still have 2 homes available for sale – a 65m<sup>2</sup> one-bedroom and an 80m<sup>2</sup> two-bedroom. If you'd like to talk about WINC and these homes, please contact Mary-Faeth on [mary-faeth@winccohousing.org.au](mailto:mary-faeth@winccohousing.org.au).

Meanwhile around 16 WINC women pulled on their toughest gardening gloves, shirts and pants last week to tackle the remaining pockets of blackberries around the creek at the bottom of our site on Macafee Road.

For many years, the small waterway has been overrun by blackberries and other weeds, clogging it to a murky standstill. But WINC women are committed to clearing it out and seeing the water flow once again. With picks, chainsaws, hoes and rakes in hand, our recent working bee spectacularly showed what can be achieved when we work together.

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## OLDER WOMEN IN COHOUSING INC - WING (CONT.)



*Before*



*After*

## SECONDARY DWELLINGS

Thanks for your enquiries about new planning scheme amendments for secondary dwellings  
Please see this information: [Small second homes](#)

We're trying to find out how many secondary dwellings in our Shire as well as regionally have been approved after the Housing Statement planning scheme amendment exempting, in certain conditions the need for a planning permit for secondary dwellings.

## VACANT DWELLINGS

**Our discussions with owners of vacant dwellings have now resulted in thirteen vacant dwellings released as affordable rentals! Yay! and 3 shop tops released as affordable rentals.** We do vacant dwelling letter box dropping using a letter template that requests the owners to consider releasing their vacant dwelling as an affordable rental and exploring what the barriers to their release are. We have had better traction through trusted connectors who know owners of vacant dwellings and using the letter as a guide to our conversation with the vacant dwelling owner. Thank you for checking in your neighbourhoods or within your social circles for connections with owners of vacant dwellings - it takes a village!

**As you know our community is in desperate need for more affordable rentals so 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 tenant who now has a rental she can more afford (20% of her income) said

***“It was a huge weight off my shoulders, I felt I could breathe again”***

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 have requested a deputation with Council to update them on our MHN work and hopefully discuss sending letters to Mount Alexander Shire residents requesting those owning vacant dwellings consider releasing them as affordable rentals or transition housing. All candidates at a Council Election Candidates Forum last year publicly committed to assisting us engage with owners of vacant dwellings.

[ABC- experts advocate for release of vacant dwellings as affordable housing](#)

[Housing crisis leaves Victorian town Castlemaine with just 10 homes to rent - ABC News](#)

## TINY HOMES ON WHEELS (THOW) WORKING GROUP

The MHN THOW working group is working to optimise the appropriate uptake of THOW as affordable housing. Thank you to owners of THOW for sharing their learnings and expertise with others. We are also exploring what other Councils and State Governments have done to address some grey areas within THOW local laws.

Really appreciate having the collective expertise of Kathryn Mc Goldrick (THOW owner), Rachel Goldlust (planning expertise), Johanna Winchcombe (THOW expertise), Shannon Schultz of Freds Tiny Homes and Stephen Lumb (architect) in our THOW research and advocacy-see photo below

We have developed a summary guide to a THOW agreement between a THOW occupier and the owner of the land and permanent dwelling where the THOW is located. We are also assisting matching THOW owners or occupiers with those who have land with a permanent dwelling where the THOW can be placed.

We recognise that for a number of community members who are not eligible to be on the Victorian Housing Register (VHR) , who cannot afford a secondary dwelling and are in rental stress, THOW are an affordable housing option.





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## TINY HOMES ON WHEELS (THOW) WORKING GROUP (CONT.)

We have recently had an increase in requests for information on THOW from elder women.

If you are trying to

- 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.

please get in touch with Kaz [cneilson@castlemainehealth.org.au](mailto:cneilson@castlemainehealth.org.au)



Another local Tiny Home on Wheels

*“Living in a tiny house has given us so much more perspective and appreciation for what really matters. The smaller space means we we prioritise what is essential and meaningful. We live completely off grid and it’s feels great to know we have reduced our impact on the environment and reliance on the services. We have to be more conscious of how we use water, electricity and even our time. Nothing can describe the sense of accomplishment of having built a home that is fully our own. “*

## COUNCIL COMMUNITY CONSULTATION ON THEIR REVIEW OF THEIR MANAGEMENT OF THE MALDON CARAVAN PARK

[Maldon Caravan Park | Shape Mount Alexander](#)

Please find attached our submission to this Council community consultation

## FUNDRAISING FOR UNHOUSED

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](#)**

Thankyou everyone for your support - this cannot happen without you!

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## ROUGH SLEEPER ACTION GROUP

The MHN is convening the local rough sleeper action group and more organisations have joined this group to work together to improve integrated supports and advocacy for rough sleepers.

We'll been focusing on keeping them warm and safe in winter as well as the ongoing advocacy for safe, affordable, appropriate housing for them.

Thank you to those community members who have assisted with appropriately connecting and engaging with rough sleepers and assisting them with linking them in with formal and informal supports through the Help at Hand flyer, getting food and other essentials - much appreciated.

## MOUNT ALEXANDER AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST (MAAHT)

The trust is here to meet our communities affordable rental housing needs in perpetuity (that is, forever). Part of the committee's work includes looking at **residential and town zone land** opportunities for the trust, on which it could deliver affordable rental housing.

There are some criteria we're looking for in the land, so if you or someone you know may have something please get in touch and we can discuss [affordablehousing@mountalexander.vic.gov.au](mailto:affordablehousing@mountalexander.vic.gov.au)

## JOB OPPORTUNITY - REGIONAL COLLABORATION AND IMPROVING REGIONAL RENTER SUPPORTS

ARC Justice will lead a two-year project, collaborating with the six regional community legal centres and in turn their local community and health networks, to explore the challenges with the existing service system supporting renters, and identify short and long term improvements. It's an exciting collaborative project that will culminate in a Regional Housing Summit in late 2026.

Please share the [Project Lead job opportunity](#) with your networks or particular people who come to mind. ARC Justice are open to flexible work arrangements, and are aiming to attract someone experienced in systems design, building strong networks and ideally with an understanding of existing supports for Victorian renters.

Kate Clohesy is the contact for anyone seeking to learn more about the project. Kate's details are in the link above.