



**Dhelkaya
Health**

MY HOME NETWORK



OCTOBER 2025

DHELKAYA HEALTH HOUSING SERVICES FUNDRAISER

Liz Stringer concert at Theatre Royal, November 23 - donations to Dhelkaya Health housing services, including My Home Network and Mount Alexander Homeshare.

Off the back of the London launch of her latest album, *The Second High*, venerated Australian songwriter [Liz Stringer](#) is set to return Down Under for an extended run of shows beginning in October.

A long-time advocate for social equity, Liz began to use her platform to highlight the issues faced by young and disadvantaged people experiencing housing instability and sleeping rough in Australia after a successful fundraising show for Wombat at Melbourne's Thornbury Theatre in late 2021.



Audiences of this new concert tour will be given the opportunity to donate their chosen amount to a local community support organisation using QR codes at each show, to which Liz will also donate personally. At her Castlemaine concert, Sunday 23rd November 2.30 pm these donations will go to Dhelkaya Health's housing services, including My Home Network and Mount Alexander Homeshare. [Click here for further information and Tickets.](#)

We're very grateful for Liz and her team getting in touch and this very kind contribution.

ROUGH SLEEPER ACTION GROUP

The MHN is convening the local rough sleeper action group, a collaboration of organisations who work together to improve integrated supports and advocacy for the rough sleepers in our Shire who number approximately 28.

Action group members include the Castlemaine Library, Castlemaine Community House, Mount Alexander Shire Council Homelessness Coordinator, Mount Alexander Shire Council Access and Support/Care Finder, Castlemaine Police, Dhelkaya Health Housing Team, Dhelkaya Community Health, Sac O Suds Laundrette, Parks Victoria, Haven Home Safe, Castlemaine Church of Christ, Salvation Army, Uniting Church and Anglican Church.

Please see updated *Help at Hand* flyer attached and at [Help at Hand – Castlemaine Community House](#)

ENERGY EFFICIENCY INCLUDING FOR RENTALS

As you know the cost of housing also includes the cost of heating and cooling and those in lower quality housing pay a disproportionate burden, sometimes up to 5 or 6 times that of someone in a more energy efficient house.

My Home Network is part of the Victorian Council of Social Services [Health Energy Nexus Project](#) which raises awareness of the mental and physical health impacts of not being able to heat and cool your home adequately and advocates for systemic change.



Deb, Alistair, Barry, Kaz & Frankie who developed the video, with their props.

We have also been supporting ongoing [VCOSS advocacy](#) on energy efficiency minimum standards for rentals to improve on the State Government [New minimum energy efficiency and safety standards for rental properties and rooming houses - Consumer Affairs Victoria](#).

On this topic, a wee reminder of our [My Home Network and West End Resilience video](#) on low/no cost rental energy efficiency, tenancy supports and reducing your electricity and gas bills.

TINY HOMES ON WHEELS (THOW) WORKING GROUP

The My Home Network THOW working group:

- shares information and supports people interested in THOW, including with sharing THOW owner/occupier expertise
- support matching those who own or occupy a THOW with those who have a suitable location for a THOW
- advocates with others such as the Australian Tiny House Association (ATHA) for clear, consistent and practical regulations and policy frameworks at the local, state and national levels
- is exploring THOW as a “caretaker” model and the possibility of THOW small clusters on vacant land

Thanks to those of you who completed our survey - we had 113 responses and gleaned interesting and useful information which will inform our advocacy and work priorities. Will keep you updated.

We have been linking in and supporting a developing housing network in East Gippsland. They are making a video on how, as a community and with Council, we favourably changed the THOW local law and where things are at now.



THOW working group members at work

ADVOCACY

We will keep you updated with any outcomes from our recommendations to State MP for Bendigo West and our deputation with Mount Alexander Shire Council.

POOR QUALITY HOUSING FOR PACIFIC AUSTRALIA LABOUR MOBILITY (PALM) WORKERS

Here is a [report](#) which explores poor quality housing experienced by Pacific Australia Labour Mobility scheme (PALM) workers and makes recommendations on improving their accommodation.

TENANTS RIGHTS WORKING GROUP

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 tenant's 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 stigma associated with rentals

Some useful links:

[Strengthening rights for renters](#) | vic.gov.au

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

[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](#)

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](#)

THE HAVEN FOUNDATION: INTEGRATED SOCIAL HOUSING AND SUPPORT - HAVEN CASTLEMAINE | MIND AUSTRALIA

You may have seen this 14-unit social housing development being built in Railway Ave, Castlemaine.

A reminder that applications are open and are invited from people who:

- are experiencing mental health challenges
- are aged between 18-64 years of age
- have the financial means to pay for rent and utilities
- have an NDIS package to fund housing support
- are willing to sign a residential tenancy agreement with The Haven Foundation
- are on or eligible for the Victorian Housing Register.

For more information and to apply [see this link](#)

VACANT DWELLINGS

We have had one more vacant dwelling released as an affordable rental so now have had fifteen vacant dwellings released as affordable rentals! Yay! and there are 4 shop tops as affordable rentals.

We engage with owners 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 use 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 and using our letter template as a guide to start the conversation about them releasing their vacant dwellings as an affordable rental - it takes a village!

RENTALS NEEDED

We know that there are not enough affordable rentals in our Shire but there are 1200 vacant dwellings - under-utilised housing.

Many of our community members are looking for an affordable rental. In particular there are two single Mums with young people who both need a rental in the next few weeks.

If anyone has a vacant dwelling or knows the owner of a vacant dwelling that may be up for a conversation about releasing it as an affordable rental, please get in touch.

Thank you to those of you who are trying to assist with this, much appreciated.

MY HOME NETWORK STALLS

We are holding My Home Network stalls in our Shire building on raising awareness of tenant's rights, supports and compliance to those rights and collating issues faced by renters and sharing that with Consumer Affairs and the Residential Tenancies Commissioner.

We also share information on other aspects of the local housing work, letters to State Housing Minister and Federal MP for Bendigo Lisa Chesters to sign, template letter to owners of vacant dwellings, Homeshare etc.

If you see us at the Wesley Market or outside the small IGA come and say hello!



TENANTS IN COMMON

Some local community members are exploring the tenants in common model as an affordable collective housing model option.

Tenants in Common is when two or more people own shares in a property. The shares can be equal or unequal in any percentage and can be changed over time. The shares are treated similarly to shares in a company.

For example, when an owner dies, their share is an asset of the deceased estate and can be dealt with by their executor or administrator. If you transfer property (in the form of your share) to anyone else you will have to pay stamp duty, regardless of whether it is your principal place of residence. It is recommended that a joint venture agreement is made that will outline what each person is responsible for and what is to be done if there is a disagreement.

For example: If one person wants to sell, having an agreement can protect both parties. You may want a first right of refusal for example. Meaning you have the first right to buy out their share. Also, like a company, you can dissolve the agreement and create a new structure to describe the ownership of the land title that reflects the equity each party holds in the houses on that land.

Overall, Tenants in Common is a way of separating the cost of the land from the cost of the buildings, while giving both parties security in ownership of a part of the title.

NOTE: this is a summary of the concept, please take professional legal advice before taking any action along these lines.

MOUNT ALEXANDER AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST (MAAHT)

A big step forward for the Mount Alexander Affordable Housing Trust.

Appointing a Trustee - The Mount Alexander Affordable Housing Trust (MAAHT, or the Trust) has reached an exciting milestone in its development. Council is now inviting applications from suitably qualified organisations to take on the role of Trustee for the Mount Alexander Affordable Housing Trust.

Once appointed, the Trustee will establish the Trust as an independent entity within our community. Under the Trustee's leadership, the Trust will work to address the unmet rental housing needs in our community.

Request for Proposal - Council is conducting a Request for Proposal (RFP) through our formal tender process to select the Trustee. Interested organisations can register at no cost to access the RFP documentation. The RFP documents provide comprehensive information to support the preparation and submission of proposals.

The RFP is now live on Vendor Panel and will close on 28 November at 2:00pm.

[Access the RFP documentation on VendorPanel.](#)

Tax-Deductible Donations - We are also preparing to accept tax-deductible donations for the Trust and expect to share further updates later this year. All of us remain deeply committed to addressing housing stress in our community and continue to pursue practical, sustainable solutions to meet local housing needs.

HOMESHARE

Homeshare Mount Alexander is pleased to welcome Helena Holmes to the team. Helena has already brought new energy to the team and is getting out and about to meet the Homeshare community.

HMA now has 3 matches heading for 12 months and 1 match commencing the one 1-month trial. We have 2 homeseekers looking for matches and one homeprovider looking for a house-mate.

The benefits for all parties of the current matches are clear. Homeproviders have regular company, feel a lot safer at home, have healthy meals and help with transport or help getting it organised. Homeseekers are keeping jobs, building connections, finishing courses and generally living somewhere comfortable and secure. Our experience matches all of the international and national research that shows that well-resourced programs with transparent procedures focusing on safety and relationships result in well-functioning Homeshares. Challenges for Homesharers in the research are also similar to our challenges. People do take time to get to know each other but Homesharers learn to adapt old patterns to new situations. The benefits far outweigh the effort involved.



HOMESHARE (CONT.)

We have Homeshare opportunities coming up.

If you are into Glee Club, know your music, enjoy art, can cook, and want to live close to town in a bedroom with ensuite, in an energy-efficient house, you could be just the person to be a house mate for 30-year-old Ned. Ned was born with different abilities, all of which are on show in his house and out in the community on public murals and able radio. One thing that Ned misses is informal social time at home with a house mate. Ned has lots of stories to share if you are the fortunate person to share his house. If you are interested or know someone who could be, get in touch with Di or Helena at 0499 309 418 or homeshare@castlemainehealth.org.au

We are also looking for a Homeprovider for a first year out nurse who has 2 lovable Border Collies. If you have a house with a well secured yard and could benefit from having a young person around the house get in touch with Di or Helena at 0499 309 418 or homeshare@castlemainehealth.org.au

We are always on the lookout for people who would benefit from sharing their home. If you live alone, have a spare bedroom and would like to be more sociable at home give us a call to discuss further. 0499 309 418 or homeshare@castlemainehealth.org.au