

# MY HOME NETWORK



NOVEMBER 2023



TOGETHER AS

# Dhelkaya Health

OUR NEW BRAND LAUNCHES 2023

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## MHN COMMUNITY FORUM

We are having a MHN face to face community forum to update the community on your amazing collaborative, place-based work and to be inspired, maintain a sense of collective agency, mobilise and galvanise.

**Thursday 30th November 6.30pm for 7pm start -9pm at the Goods Shed, Kennedy St, Castlemaine.**

We'll hear about our local responses to the housing crisis:

Local Help at Hand, Rough Sleeper Action Group, Home Share, release of vacant dwellings as affordable rentals or transition housing, Tiny Homes On Wheels, social housing retrofitting, climate resilient housing, WINC older women in co-housing, collective advocacy and more...

## HOMESHARE

From Di Cox Home Share coordinator:

We now have 8 expressions of interest from potential homesharers awaiting information and further discussion.

Di presented the history and processes to date at a National Homeshare Community of Practice this week. Other communities in SA, NSW, WA and QLD expressed their awe of the work done by MHN and Dhelkaya Health in getting Homeshare operational in Mount Alexander.

MHN /Homeshare working group met twice in October to discuss procedures and Homeshare language.

The idea of a big launch has been put aside until 2024 where instead we will celebrate our success. Right now, the focus is on raising community awareness, getting the processes right, and providing guidance and support to get homeshares going.

The logo and promotional material is underway. Watch this space for that material.

The operational manual is in progress, based on the Dhelkaya values and principles of Health Care Rights and Person-Centred Care. This will form the basis for all program operations to ensure participant needs, rights and safety are at the centre of Homeshare.

We have a plan to get around to as many groups as possible to explain how homeshare can be a great lifestyle option. If you are in a group that would like to talk about homeshare at one of your meetings let us know on the Homeshare email: [homeshare@castlemainehealth.org.au](mailto:homeshare@castlemainehealth.org.au)

If you want more information about Homeshare Mount Alexander and how it will work send us an email on [homeshare@castlemainehealth.org.au](mailto:homeshare@castlemainehealth.org.au)

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## ALLOCATION OF COUNCIL LAND IN MALDON AND NEWSTEAD FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING FOR OLDER RESIDENTS TO WINTRINGHAM HOUSING-

Council are consulting community about allocating 49 year peppercorn leases to Wintringham Housing who would then apply for funding under the upcoming Regional funding round. They would, if successful in the consultation and subsequent grant application, build and operate housing for older local residents who are on the Victorian Housing Register on these sites.

As you are aware we have a shortage of diverse, affordable, secure, appropriate, sustainable housing to enable our valued elders to continue to live in community, close to family, friends and trusted support services as they get older. This proposal, if successful, would build on the local integrated approach to address this shortage.

Please support this proposal - the Council paper and consult details are on <https://shape.mountalexander.vic.gov.au/affordable-housing>

Clare Richards, Council housing solutions broker can be contacted regarding this consultation via [affordablehousing@mountalexander.vic.gov.au](mailto:affordablehousing@mountalexander.vic.gov.au)

Deadline for submissions is Wednesday 15th November

## VACANT DWELLINGS

The Victorian Government announced earlier this month that it will extend its Melbourne based vacant property tax of 1% of Capital Improved Value (CIV) to regional areas.

Thanks to those in the vacant dwellings and advocacy working group who have been advocating for this over the last 12 months. We have also advocated that income generated will fund local housing initiatives however it's not clear if this is the case or tax will go into internal revenue.

The simple definition of a vacant dwelling is one that was vacant for more than 6 months in the last calendar year.

[Victoria to expand vacant residential land tax across state in bid to increase housing supply | Victorian politics | The Guardian](#)

For more info on vacant property tax -[Vacant Residential Land Tax | State Revenue Office \(sro.vic.gov.au\)](#)

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At a local community level in conversations with owners of vacant dwellings and real estates we are learning of common friction points to their release as affordable and transition housing.

- They have had negative experiences before renting their dwelling
- Cost of renovating/upgrading to comply with the new Tenancy Act standards introduced last year
- Heritage overlay that prevents renovation
- For vacant shop tops -lack of separate entrance/exit and fire exit



*Some members of the vacant dwelling working group*

However we have had five vacant dwellings 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! Email [cneilson@castlemainehealth.org.au](mailto:cneilson@castlemainehealth.org.au)

Two more families are interested in releasing their vacant dwellings as transition housing -Yay!

## ENGAGING WITH LOCAL REAL ESTATE AGENTS

Members of the vacant dwellings working group have been engaging with our local real estate agents updating them on the work of the MHN and gauging their interest in assisting with:

- referral of renter clients to the Home Share program
- encouraging their clients selling property to make a tax-deductible donation on the sale of their property to local housing initiatives
- accessing accommodation that could be crisis and transition housing,
- knowledge of any vacant shop tops that could be released as affordable rentals or transition housing
- supporting a not-for-profit real estate

There has been interest in referrals of renter clients to the Home Share program and community members interested in making a tax-deductible donation on the sale of their property to local housing initiatives.

A special thanks to Margaret Griffen for her work in engaging with our local real estate agents.

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## HELP AT HAND FLYER

Please find attached the wonderful Help At Hand flyer explaining support services and help at hand for those community members who are unhoused and sleeping rough.

Hard copies are available at the Castlemaine Community House. Feel free to start printing out and sharing. digital versions are here: <https://cch.org.au/helpathand/>

Thanks to Kez and team at the Community House, Mel Fowler and other staff at Council and other members of the Mount Alexander Connectors (MAC) for producing this resource and to all those providing help at hand.

## STATE HOUSING STATEMENT

Thanks to those of you who met with Council Housing Solutions Broker Clare Richards to unpack the recently released State Housing Statement and see what we need to do collaboratively to optimise the outcomes from this statement and what further advocacy is needed regarding our concerns or the gaps we identify.

Here's the link to the State Housing Statement and related planning changes – <https://www.vic.gov.au/housing-statement>

There is a lot of detail still to be clarified, we will possibly know more after end of November.

**However secondary dwellings or granny flats won't require a planning permit if they're less than 60 square metres ! Will still need a building permit but no planning permit. And there will also be more permit exemptions for single dwellings for things like extensions to sheds and carports (p.11)**

**Single dwellings on lots bigger than 300 square metres, and not covered by an overlay, will no longer require a planning permit. Single dwellings on lots smaller than 300 square metres, where an overlay doesn't exist, will be ticked off within 10 days. (p.12)**

Not sure when planning permit change will start to be implemented-watch this space.

## RMIT WORKSHOP ON COLLECTIVE HOUSING MODELS - WEDNESDAY 8TH NOVEMBER

Thanks to those of you who are attending or have attended this workshop. The organisers were impressed with the numbers registered.

Unfortunately, I couldn't attend but look forward to hearing of the outcomes.

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## SUBMISSION TO THE NATIONAL HOMELESSNESS & HOUSING PLAN

Thanks to those who have contributed to the collective MHN submission- the Dhelkaya Health housing team, Kevin Saide, Michael Johnson -the MHN Nalderun representative, Alison Whitten of the Castlemaine Institute, Mount Alexander Shire Accommodation Respite Group (MASARG), Anitra Nelson and lived experience of homelessness.

Please see the final submission attached.

## WINC COHOUSING

WINCCohousing – Older Women in Cohousing continues to push ahead to create its 32 small home community in Castlemaine. We are finalising the town planning application and hope to submit it soon. We have begun to meet with potential developers and builders so it can be all systems go when permission comes through.



*WINC members on the land where they will create their community*

As WINC now has enough members to fill all its units, we are beginning to develop our 'next-in-line' list of members who would like to buy in when a home becomes available. We held an explorers' open house on Saturday 28 October and talked through our plans with around 8 prospective members.

WINC's vision of creating a cohousing community by and for older women who want to live in a positive and vibrant community and grow old joyfully together continues to attract wider community interest.

We are included in a wonderful new documentary called The Great Separation now showing on SBS On Demand. It's about loneliness and how the usual way of building homes creates a great separation in the name of privacy and security at the expense of community and wellbeing. It is highly recommended viewing.

WINC looks forward to joining a long tradition of intentional communities, including several already established in Mount Alexander Shire. We are working to learn more, and recently had a terrific visit to Murrnong, almost our neighbour in Castlemaine, a small eco village community that has been going since 2003. Thanks to Kaz for hosting us!

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## TINY HOMES ON WHEELS (THOW)

The MHN THOW working group, continue to work, often through smaller group or one on one conversations, to ensure interested parties are well informed on THOW and the recent changes to the local law that allow a THOW on land with a permanent dwelling without a permit and to stay there indefinitely - see

[Caravans and tiny houses on wheels on private property | Mount Alexander Shire Council](#)

THOW, single or multiple, on vacant land within the town boundary requires a planning permit. We are interested in advocating for streamlining planning processes to enable this to happen and this may be of relevance to the recently released State Government Housing Statement which includes planning reforms.

## 16 DAYS OF PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN (PVAW) 25TH NOVEMBER TO 10TH DECEMBER

As you know women over the age of 55 are the increasing demographic of homeless people. The drivers of this are gender inequality and family violence.

Each year there is a campaign about challenging gender inequality, sexist attitudes towards and about women, gender stereotypes and violence against women.

Dhelkaya Health and Council will be holding 16 days of PVAW activities-watch this space and see [Women's Health Loddon Mallee - Health, Wellbeing and Equity \(whlm.org.au\)](#) for more information

## COUNCIL NEIGHBOURHOOD CHARACTER AND HOUSING STRATEGY

Thanks to Council Housing Solutions Broker Clare Richards and Lauren Watt Council Coordinator of Strategic Planning and those of you who attended a MHN meeting with them regarding our feedback to this draft strategy.

## FEDERAL MP ADVOCACY AFTER MHN THREE TIERS GOVERNMENT HOUSING FORUM

See attached letter of response from Minister for Climate Change and Energy Chris Bowen to Lisa Chester's letter conveying matters raised during and after our Housing Forum.

## SPREAD THE WORD

The MHN is supporting the development of similar housing networks in Macedon Ranges and Hepburn Shires, Hunter Valley in NSW and Geelong.