

BENEFITS OF CO-OP LIVING

SUMMARY REPORT



Who are we

We are the Engagement Co-ordinators (ECs), there are nine of us. We are all members of co-ops who all live in co-op housing and are committed to making sure that co-op member voices are heard. We have been provided with support and training to assist in a new approach from CEHL to engage with members.

Benefit of Co-op living update

Engagement Coordinators led conversations with co-ops and members across Victoria to explore 'the benefits of living in a CEHL co-op'. This included asking members for feedback on the two draft documents, the CEHL Outcomes Framework (OF) and the Member Value Statement (MVS).

- The Outcomes Framework sets out the vision of how CEHL and the co-ops could work together. It also outlines key things to measure, so we know if we are working towards achieving our vision.
- The Member Value Statement outlines the value that co-ops can provide to their members and that CEHL can provide to the member co-ops.

What you helped us achieve

83 members attended the 'community conversation events' we hosted in June. Following the events, each co-op was provided with a Conversation Pack to enable them to provide feedback.

- Members who attended events reported that they valued connecting with other members/co-ops, being able to speak their mind, 'being heard' and feeling an increased sense of hope. A few members wanted more forums with open agendas.
- Of the people who completed an event evaluation, all agreed that their input was heard, one member was neutral. All agreed that:
 - the events were well facilitated
 - information was clear and relevant
 - they were satisfied with the event.
- Members submitted pink enquiry cards, which were followed up by CEHL team members. Fifty-seven enquiries were registered and responded to.
- The events and conversations with co-ops led to CEHL receiving 73 Conversation Packs by early August. This included 32 from co-ops and 41 from individual members. Feedback was received from 55 out of 97 co-ops (57% of co-ops).

This is a great result and CEHL is very grateful for your contributions and the rich feedback you all provided.

We have worked to make sense of the feedback to develop finalised documents from this process.

What we heard from you on the benefits of co-op living

The most mentioned changes in people's lives and benefits from co-op living were:

- **1st** Secure housing
- **2nd** Affordable housing – however there were some opposing views to this suggesting affordability has diminished for some recently
- **3rd** Members being connected with each other – “friendships”
- **4th** Suitability of housing – that housing is meeting the needs and preferences of members
- **5th** Development of new skills

Many other benefits were mentioned including but not limited to feeling connected to the community, feeling safe, feeling healthy and families benefiting from the stability of co-op housing.

What we heard about the Outcomes Framework (OF)

60% of Conversation Packs broadly agreed with the OF, with only 4% expressing they didn't. 11% expressed mixed views and 25% did not respond to the question.

Some members said the OF was “aspirational” and “good on paper, hoping good in practice”.

Changes have been added to the final version of the OF based on member feedback. This included grouping outcomes around three key areas to measure:

1. Effective partnership between CEHL and co-ops
2. Strong co-ops
3. Individual member wellbeing.

To view the final revised OF, please visit the CEHL website [here](#).

What we heard about the Member Value Statement (MVS)

61% of Conversation Packs indicated the MVS is a useful tool with only 3% expressing it isn't, 14% had mixed views and 22% didn't respond to questions on MVS.

Members expressed a preference for the name to be changed from Member Value Proposition to Member Value Statement. There was also a strong preference to remove the 'Fee for service' line as it was not seen as additional 'value' provided, as the co-ops are having to pay for it.

Member feedback suggested additional language be added to the document including accountability, affordable and secure housing and communication.

To view the final revised MVS, please visit the CEHL website [here](#).

Other issues raised by members

There was a significant amount of feedback on a wide range of issues that are important to members. The top issues included:

- The existing relationship with CEHL, with many indicating that trust needed to be rebuilt
- Internal challenges within co-ops, struggling to 'work well together'
- More member support from CEHL needed on a range of issues
- Challenges regarding co-op participation, with key members feeling “over worked/burdened”
- Rent and affordability
- New member selection
- CEHL governance including calls for increased accountability and transparency
- CEHL communication with/between co-ops.

How CEHL is addressing this member feedback

CEHL has taken all feedback onboard and is working to address key issues. Key actions include:

- Exploring ways to strengthen co-op and member voice
- Holding regular regional events, to listen members and consult on key decisions
- Delivering 'hot topic' online information sessions, responding to member enquiries
- Hosting the 'Better Together' conference on 31 March 2023, focusing on core co-op skills, member participation and connecting the co-op community
- Providing training for new member selection, managing conflict and core co-op skills
- refining the co-op member applicant lists provided to co-ops
- Tracking and responding to feedback and complaints, a 48-hour response and resolution within 30-days
- Seeking options to increase funds for maintenance

Visit CEHL [website](#) for more information.

Next Steps

The Outcomes Framework and the Member Value Statement are now finalised. These revised documents will go to the CEHL Board for endorsement.

The CEHL Engagement Team will lead the implementation of the Outcome Framework and measuring progress towards the vision of achieving an 'effective partnership, strong co-ops and individual member wellbeing'.

Who to contact for more information

For further information about the project or to be connected with an Engagement Coordinator, contact Mel on 9208 0838 or EngagementCoordinator@cehl.com.au