

CO-OPERATIVELY SPEAKING

2017 ISSUE 03



ACTIVE MEMBERS THRIVING CO-OPS

Influencing Our Program

CEHL Conference 2017

Featuring . . .

Active Members, Thriving Co-ops Conference Overview
Honouring co-op members - nominations open
Member stories
What can we learn from Canadian co-ops?

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PG 3
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+ much more

We love to hear your stories email newsletter@cehl.com.au

I am writing to you as Deputy Chair while Karren Walker is away.

For those who could attend our recent conference ‘Active Members, Thriving Co-ops’ was a delight and an inspiration. So many members traveled far and took time off work to be there – and hearing diverse perspectives was what made the sessions so great. Over half of all our co-ops were represented on the day. I thank all of you who could attend in person, and those co-ops who could send a delegate along.

In coming months, we have more opportunities to discuss the topics raised at the conference. CEHL and co-ops have some very important Program issues to resolve together soon. The CEHL Board is ultimately responsible and accountable for key Program decisions and we are very keen to ensure that we hear co-op voices in our considerations. We have 30 years of strong foundations to build on, and a commitment to work together to secure the future of our unique co-operative program.



Managing Director's Report

Stephen Nash, Managing Director

Over the next two years there is some very important work that CEHL and co-ops need to do together to ensure the future program is dynamic, viable and growing to meet members changing needs as they age, and addresses emerging needs in the community. We developed our Program Principles together and these will guide future decisions.

It was fantastic to see so many people attend this recent conference as a check in on some key issues and to start work on others. I really appreciate the commitment of co-op members to find a way to attend and to engage so actively in these important discussions. As I said in my wrap up, the annual CEHL program conference is one of the major highlights of the year for me. I find it truly inspiring to see co-op members actively engaged with CEHL and each other to share information, provide feedback and discuss the key program questions in front of us.

This edition of Co-operatively Speaking will outline the key program issues ahead and how your co-op can be heard.

Like you, I am looking forward to hearing about Karren's explorations of UK co-op housing when she returns and I am sure she will be keen to share her discoveries in future editions of Co-operatively Speaking. It has been my pleasure to write to you this ‘Deputy Chair’ column.

I look forward to hearing your voice in important Program developments over the coming months.



Heidi Lee
Deputy Chair CEHL

I was pleased to present, seek feedback and discuss with members two key issues;

1. The need for a rent review and the call for expressions of interest for co-op members to be part of a Rent Model Advisory Group
2. The recently announced Victorian Government initiatives and the likely considerations and timelines for the CEHL Board to decide whether or not to participate

There were specific questions asked during the conference that I committed to answering in a communication to the whole program. Responses will be posted on the [Have your say page](#) on the website and co-ops sent the link.

I need to stress the importance for your co-op to read, understand, discuss and provide feedback on the key issues through the various processes outlined in this edition of *Co-operatively Speaking*.

I look forward to your input which will inform key CEHL Board decisions about the Program.

Stephen Nash
CEHL Managing Director

HONOURING MEMBERS – NOMINATIONS NOW OPEN

Since 2008 the CEHL Board has honoured members who have made an outstanding contribution to our housing Program.

To be among this distinguished group of members you must:

- Have been a member of a CEHL co-op for a minimum of five years
- Be of ‘good standing’ within your co-op, considering, but not exclusive to, such elements as fulfilment of all participation requirements, currency of rent payments and maintenance of their property, throughout their membership
- have made an outstanding contribution to the wider CEHL Program beyond your own co-op; usually this will be demonstrated by contributions to other co-ops, involvement in regional associations and forums, membership of CEHL committees or the CEHL Board.

In previous years we have had many great nominations from co-operatives keen to recognise their members in this special way. Anyone nominated should feel immensely proud that their work and contribution is recognised by others.

NOMINATIONS NOW OPEN

Recipients will be announced at the CEHL Annual General Meeting in November.

Download a nomination form at www.cehl.com.au and return to CEHL by 30 September, 2017

Name	Co-op	Year
Trish Britten	Goulburn Valley	2008
Val Date	Carinya	2008
Millie Connelly	Kellor	2008
Carol Fountain	Opola	2008
Charles Barry	Tee Pae	2009
Marg Craigie	Eastern View	2009
Sandra Silvey	Southerners	2010
Pat Finegan	Ithaca	2011
Jenny Makar	Thomson River	2012
Ron Howell	Bayside	2014
Iain Walker	Earth	2014
Rhonda Jaruga	Southerners	2015
Jean McVilly	Access	2016



SUNNY DAYS IN SUNRAYSIA

Myself and my three young daughters were introduced to Sunraysia Common Equity Rental Housing Co-op by a fellow member just over a year ago now. Shortly after we met, a house became available and we were very lucky to be selected.

Since being a member of Sunraysia Co-op, I am able to provide a safe, long term affordable beautiful home for my daughters on a lovely suburban street.

Nothing has ever felt more like home to us. We love being part of a supportive group that have been so kind to my daughters and I. What a great program to be in and a part of.

Kylee Hipwell
Sunraysia Co-op
Daughters Tulleah, Charlie and Evah

CEHL Conference 2017 Overview

CEHL held its annual member conference on Friday 18 August at the Melbourne Exhibition and Convention Centre. Members met to discuss and key Program issues.

A highlight of the conference was the key note speech delivered by Melina Morrison, CEO of the Business Council of Co-operatives and Mutuals who shared her passion for co-ops and called members to action to become champions of the co-op model.

Detailed analysis of the feedback gained from the Q&A's, workings and open space forum is underway. A summary of the feedback will be posted on the website along with presentations, and co-op secretaries will be notified when it's available.

For a snapshot of the conference sessions, read on . . .

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Melina Morrison, CEO, [Business Council of Co-operatives and Mutuals](#) gave a passionate speech about the contribution mutuals and co-ops make to communities around the world.

"We know that eight in ten Australians are a member of a co-op or mutual. Sadly, they've been hiding in plain sight for too long," Melina said, giving insight into the co-operative and mutual sector globally and in Australia.

Melina believes co-ops are 'getting our groove on', experiencing a renaissance gaining political attention and financial support from government. Melina highlighted the progress the BCCM has made in establishing federal bipartisan support for a Parliamentary Friends of Mutuals and co-ops, contributing to a Senate inquiry into the mutuals and co-op sector and achieving impact through their recommendations.

"Co-ops are getting our 'groove on' .. experiencing a renaissance, gaining political attention and financial support from government.

I encourage you, the members of your co-op, to be champions for the co-op sector and grow awareness in our communities. "

Melina Morrison, CEO, BCCM



Melina Morrison and Stephen Nash

Melina encouraged co-op members to be the champions of the co-op model, co-operate with other co-ops and grow awareness in our communities about the benefits and impact of co-ops.

The slides and video Melina shared at the conference are on the CEHL website.

PROGRAM REVENUE & COSTS Q&A

Stephen Nash presented an overview of the key considerations from the Program Revenue and Costs background papers (Revenue and Costs). The papers provide the context and a place to begin a deeper conversation that will be held with co-ops regarding future program viability starting with a review of the current rent model.

Stephen announced that the CEHL Board have requested a Rent Model Advisory Group (RMAG) be appointed to consult with co-ops and provide a recommended revised rent model to the Board in September 2018. The RMAG will be made up of

- co-op member representatives
- an independent chair, and
- independent financial advisor

Applications from co-op members who are interested in being part of the Rent Model Advisory Group are open until 29 September 2017.

Once established, the RMAG will develop opportunities for co-ops to input into the process.

Co-op members were keen to have more questions answered but time did not allow. The good news is that all the questions have been recorded and will be passed on to the Rent Model Advisory Group. The conference was just the start of the Rent Model Review conversation.

For more information on the Rent Model Review go to [Have your say](#) on the CEHL website, you can also download the Cost and Revenue background papers see the links panel for details.

GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES Q&A

Stephen Nash presented an overview of State Government Initiatives Homes for Victorians and the Victorian Housing Register (VHR) which is a single state-wide register for all public and community housing applications. He outlined the key considerations the CEHL Board will be discussing to determine whether to opt-in to the VHR.

Stephen highlighted the fact that timelines have been changing. CEHL is involved in the VHR Working Group and there are some key considerations of the central register for our Co-operative Housing Program.

You are encouraged to give your feedback on the key considerations.

Voice your comments on the [Have your say](#) page on the website www.cehl.com.au regarding the Victorian Housing Register which will be provided to the CEHL Board for consideration on whether to opt-in to the Victorian Housing Register.



Nicola Foxworthy, Program Director; Brad Hosking, Corporate Director Stephen Nash, Managing Director

WORKSHOP: ENGAGEMENT REVIEW

Members had the opportunity to review and provide feedback on the types of engagement and communication tools that CEHL currently use. The feedback received was diverse, reflecting the different personal preferences of co-ops members who contributed. Some common themes that emerged included:

- ideas and suggestions for future training topics
- opportunities to make better use of technology, particularly for engagement with non-metro co-ops
- greater opportunities for cross-collaboration between co-ops and with CEHL, particularly at Regional Forums



Co-op members 'sticker dot voting' for their most preferred method of being kept informed and involved, 'engaged'.

More detailed analysis will be undertaken, which will inform the 2018 engagement calendar and future engagement planning more generally. CEHL is committed to this being an ongoing conversation, as we continue to strive to provide accessible opportunities for member co-ops to influence the Program. If you would like to contribute more ideas, complete the [Engagement Review Survey on Have your say](#)

WORKSHOP: DRAFT PARTICIPATION POLICY

The Participation Policy Principles workshops held at the CEHL Conference were a great success. Each principle was discussed by a number of co-op members and overall feedback was positive.

The feedback from the workshop is being collated and will be presented to the Participation Policy Advisory Group (PPAG) for consideration in the development of a draft Participation Policy. Co-ops and members will have an opportunity to provide feedback on the final draft on the [Have Your Say](#) page on the CEHL website between 4 September and 16 October, before going to the CEHL Board for its approval at the October Board meeting (25 October).



Co-op members at the Draft Participation Policy Workshop

LINKS

www.bccm.coop

Running a co-op resources www.getmutual.coop

Have your say www.cehl.com.au

ACTIVE MEMBERS

THRIVING CO-OPS

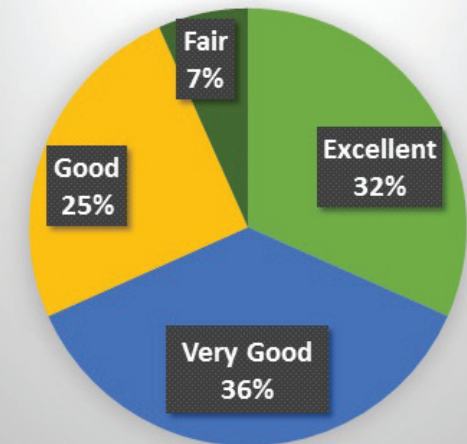
Influencing Our Program

It was very interesting.
I learned so much about co-op.



103
Conference
attendees

Overall, how do you rate the
2017 CEHL Conference?



More Q&A time.
More networking time
for co-ops to interact.



Get more
members to
attend.

Great day,
less workshops
worked well.

Did not know
all notes were
on the website.

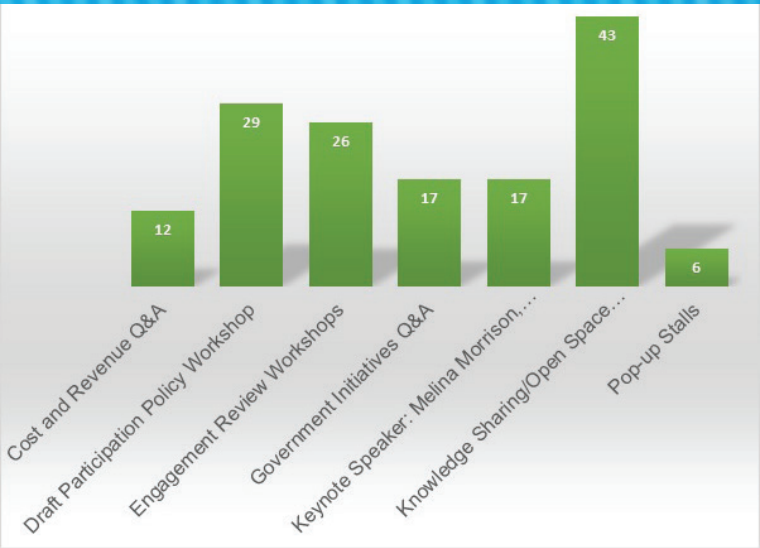


I learned a lot from other co-ops.
The sharing was wonderful and useful.



Move it around between
melbourne and regional areas.

Which session did you value most?*



* respondents could select more than one option

Co-op Members Have Their Say

The Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) has received a wealth of feedback from co-op members during the latest round of the Policy Consultation Cycle. In fact, it's been our best ever response, with a huge amount of feedback helping to develop the policies that were being considered. We've been very excited and greatly appreciate the high level of response, the effort, and the knowledge that members have contributed.

These policies and procedure now replace the relevant CEHL Program Directives, as well as any best practice advice that concerned these topics.

Program Policies and Procedures APPROVED by the Board

POLICY NAME	THIS POLICY COVERS
Tenancy and Housing Complaints and Appeals Program Policy	Management of tenancy and housing complaints and appeals within the Program
Leave of Occupancy by the Tenant Program Policy	The circumstances in which a tenant may be granted a leave of occupancy from their property
Appropriate Use of Property Program Policy	The acceptable use of residential properties within the Program
Ending a Tenancy (Landlord Initiated) Procedure	Best practice advice that sits under the Ending a Tenancy (Landlord Initiated) Program Policy

Program Policies and Procedures - Re-considered/ Deferred/ Withdrawn

- Response to the Loss of Membership by a Co-op Member. Strong feedback was received through the consultation round. PAC determined that, based on the feedback received, it could not recommend the policy in its current form and requested that further development work be undertaken.
- Tenancy and Housing Complaints and Appeals Policy and Ending a Tenancy (Tenant Initiated) Procedure has been deferred to the next meeting.
- Leave of Occupancy by the Tenant Program Procedure was considered to be unnecessary by PAC and it was withdrawn.

Program Policies guide us all and are important to the decision-making and future direction of the Program. It is therefore vital that the views of co-ops and members are reflected in their development.

The July – August policy consultation cycle was cancelled in order to give co-ops and members time to attend and prepare for the conference. The next policy consultation cycle (and online survey for your responses) runs from 5 October to 16 November.

Please have your say when this new round begins by reviewing the draft policies and completing the survey on the Policy Consultation page of the CEHL website.

For all the approved Policies and Procedures, go to the *Policies and Procedures* page under the *Co-op Resource Centre* tab of the CEHL website.

LINKS

[Policy Consultation](#)
www.cehl.com.au/policy-consultation

[Policies & Procedures](#)
www.cehl.com.au/policies-fact-sheets

What is Have your say?

Have your say is one of the ways members of the CEHL housing community can contribute to decisions that shape our housing Program.

Learn about new projects and give feedback online.

- To get started, click on a project listed as open, select the blue Sign-Up button to start sharing your views in the Forum, download information and complete surveys.
- Projects seeking member input include:
- Rent Model Review
 - Participation Policy
 - Engagement Review
 - Victorian Housing Register

Have your say . . .

Click the Have your say link
www.cehl.com.au



Have your say is a great way members of our housing community can understand and contribute to decisions that shape our housing programs. Learn about new projects and give feedback. To get started, click on a project listed as open, select the blue Sign-Up button to start sharing your views.



Rent Model Review
07 July 2017 - 18 August to 29 September...



Participation Policy
15 June 2017 - 18 to 25 August - Online s...



Engagement Review
17 August 2017 - 18 to 25 August 2017 - O...



Victorian housing register
17 August 2017 - Groups provide feedback...

A New Economy

CEHL hosted a film night at Cinema Nova in Carlton on 17 August.

Over 80 people attended to watch the Canadian documentary that explores how a grassroots movement of new enterprises can tackle complex social and environmental challenges.

After the film CEHL Co-op Development Co-ordinator Antony McMullen hosted a discussion regarding some of the key themes from the film, with Melina Morrison, CEO of the Business Council of Co-operatives and Mutuals, Joanna Battersby, CEO of Supported Independent Living Co-operative and Stephen Nash, Managing Director of Common Equity Housing Ltd and members of the audience.

A New Economy showcases a range of businesses, including a housing co-op, a small craft-brew co-op, an open source hardware lab, and an urban agriculture social enterprise, exploring how life-changing businesses can be and the challenges they face.



A thumbs-ups from the audience at the New Econmy film night

LINKS

[Have your say](#) www.cehl.com.au/

[A New Economy](#) www.aneweconomy.ca/

Handy Guide to Annual General Meetings

CEHL's Annual General meeting (AGM) is on Saturday 25th November, the venue is yet to be confirmed.

Here is a quick run-down on Annual General Meetings (AGM) and CEHL's procedures, plus a handy checklist (right) to make sure your co-op is ready and organised to attend and vote on your co-ops behalf, at the CEHL AGM in November.

What is an AGM?

An Annual General Meeting is a meeting of the members of an incorporated association which must be held once during each calendar year.

The Annual General Meeting must be organised in accordance with law, using the procedures outlined in the organisation's rules. The Members must be notified of the date, time and place of the meeting and be given a Proxy Form.

At an AGM, records of the last AGM are agreed. A presentation of the financial accounts for the past financial year and other general business items are provided. The Chairperson and Managing Directors present their Annual Report. Members vote to elect co-op Directors to the CEHL Board. CEHL Scholarships and CEHL Honour Board Awards also form part of the proceedings at the AGM.

Co-op Directors Nominating for Board Positions

Around mid-September a memo with supporting paperwork is sent to co-ops inviting Directors to nominate for a CEHL Board Position. Every year Board positions are available. If there are more nominations for the CEHL Board than positions available, then Board members are voted in by members through an election. If there are less or equal nominations for the positions vacant, a vote is not required.

Role of Members at AGM

Each co-op is a shareholder of Common Equity Housing Limited and entitled to vote, one vote per co-op.

What is Quorum?

A quorum is the minimum number of members required for the meeting to proceed. A quorum at a CEHL AGM is 25% of voting members.

What is a Proxy Vote?

A proxy vote is when someone else is appointed to act on behalf of your co-op on the day, because none of your members are available to attend and represent your co-op at the meeting. The Appointed Proxy is either instructed to vote in accordance with your direction or to be given the authority to cast votes as they see fit, on the day of the meeting. Co-op directors can choose a representative from another co-op who is attending, or generally the Chair of the Meeting is appointed to vote on your behalf at the CEHL AGM.

CEHL AGM ready Checklist

- ✓ Notify members of the date, time and place of the AGM (sent by CEHL to Co-op Secretaries in September)
- ✓ Establish if any of your co-op members will attend the AGM
- ✓ Agree at your co-op meeting who will be your representative to vote on all matters at the CEHL AGM
- ✓ If none of your co-ops members attend the AGM, complete a Proxy Form so your co-ops vote will count on the day
- ✓ Return all necessary paperwork/Proxy Form in the timelines requested

Getting to the AGM

- ✓ Communicate with your members or co-ops in your region to car pool to the AGM
- ✓ Discuss travel plans and reimbursements based on where your co-op is located
- ✓ Let CEHL know if you are taking up any of the remote co-op travel opportunities
- ✓ Enjoy the day and being part of the AGM democratic process!

Voting at the AGM

- ✓ REMEMBER on the day the appointed voting member must register and receive a voting slip at the registration desk
- ✓ When asked for a vote hold up your voting card and when required put your vote in the ballot box

LINKS

Annual General Meeting info:
www.consumer.vic.gov.au/clubs-and-fundraising/incorporated-associations/running-an-incorporated-association/meetings

TAC Update

As the Training Advisory Committee (TAC) members left the CEHL office in Richmond after our last meeting, we realised we were all heading for the train station so we continued the conversation that had begun inside. Yes, we all realised, there are many things in common in our co-ops; and we sat together on the train planning and thinking aloud.

As Chair (Elizabeth Ellen), I can see TAC has achieved a lot in 2017, including the 'Roles and Responsibilities of a Director' Workbook which will be released soon. Producing a practical and enjoyable workbook has been a fantastic experience and a lively collaboration between the TAC members and the Co-operative Development and Strategy Team (CDS). I invite you to take a look and workshop an exercise at your next co-op meeting; and please contact any of us if you have questions about the workbook.

Our next challenge is developing the training calendar for 2018. In September, TAC will be workshopping ideas for enjoyable and practical skills-based training. Our training ideas include financial management, maintenance management, running effective meetings and communication skills including how to manage conflict within a group.

If you or your co-op have any ideas about the type of training you would like to see developed, please



get in touch with your TAC representative by the 20th September. This way we can include everyone's ideas as we develop the training calendar.

Thank you for your many comments and interests. The current members of TAC are John Harrison (Eureka area); Eve Racan (North West area); Teresa Koronczewski, (South East area); Gayle Carley (Gippsland area); Sharon Quinn (North area); and myself, Elizabeth Ellen (Geelong area).

Elizabeth Ellen
Kakadu Co-op

TAC are seeking new members to represent the Peninsula, Shepparton and Bendigo areas. If you are interested in becoming a TAC member please call [Jenni Dwyer](mailto:Jenni.Dwyer@cehl.com.au), Team Leader, Co-operative Development Strategy Team on 9208 0839.

Under the Greentree

CEHL has updated its information storage and processing into one business management system, called - Greentree.

Information regarding tenancies, properties and finances is now stored and processed in one centralised secure database. While the system went live on the 3rd of July, it was the culmination of a year-long, whole of organisation project to ensure the system would meet all CEHL requirements and enable the transfer of information that was previously stored in multiple databases.

With data centralised in one system CEHL is now better able to provide co-ops with the information they need about tenancies, properties and finances.

There is a lot for CEHL employees to learn about the new system. There may be some delays with standard tasks, we appreciate member's patience as employees get more familiar with Greentree.

The CEHL Scholarship program is now open!

Are you aged 16+?

Planning on studying in 2018?

Apply now for the CEHL Scholarship Program and you could receive a \$2,000 scholarship towards your Apprenticeship or TAFE or University course.

A total of nine scholarships are awarded. Two scholarships are awarded in each of the following categories:

- Certificate Level (including apprenticeships and traineeships);
- Diploma and Advanced Diploma;
- Undergraduate;
- Postgraduate;

Plus...

- Helen Tyndall memorial scholarship for applicants studying Business Administration, Information Technology or Commerce at any level.

The aim of the scholarship is to encourage people living in the Co-op Program to access educational opportunities. Scholarships are awarded to applicants where it will positively and significantly impact on their lives.

CEHL has helped many people with their educational aspirations over the years, including young Apprentices in a variety of trades, people enrolling for Diplomas and Degrees at the start of their careers, and older people aiming for Masters Degrees and PhDs.

Applicants are invited to submit an Impact Statement describing what benefit the scholarship will have on their life. All applicants need to provide documentation to verify eligibility and commitment to study. Application forms can be downloaded from www.cehl.com.au or call 1800 353 669 and speak with Nikita.

Scholarship winners are also expected to attend the CEHL AGM in 2018 to formally receive their awards.

We invite applications from all people across our co-op housing community who are intending to study in 2018.

Applications must be received by **9am on Monday 29 January 2018**. Successful applicants will receive scholarship funds prior to the commencement of studies in 2018.



*Where there's a will
there's a way*

Kendall Billington, CEHL Scholarship recipient used the grant to undertake a Certificate IV in Beauty Therapy, with the end goal of starting a mobile hairdressing and braiding business.

Kendall recently wrote to CEHL giving an update on her progress,

"I have completed the first eight units within my training plan along with two short courses on braiding hair and applying eyelash extensions. I'm slowly purchasing tools for my kits as well as for my future business, my hair tool kit is awesome."

"I have thoroughly enjoyed my studies thus far, and my favourite unit has been Body Massages."

Kendall has put her newly learnt skills into practice at festivals and events including SunFest, a community festival in Sunbury, a Runway event and a Beauty & Hair Expo, as well as participating in training workshops.

Kendall is taking a short break from her studies until the new-year as she has found two days a week too tiring due to her disability.

"I am aiming to recommence my studies refreshed with a revised training plan for one day per-week in 2018, which will be more manageable. As I said in my application, I never give up, I always find a way to achieve my goals."

Kendall Billington



Lawrence is a talented artist and member of our co-op housing program. Lawrence created this painting when he moved into Lakewood in 2010. Lawrence felt it represented the values at Lakewood.

SHARONS' STORY



I joined the co-op about 12 years ago. I was living in one bedroom with my son & couldn't find accommodation. It was a tough time. I received a phone call to go for an interview. I was so excited. I got the house and was so appreciative. It gave us security, and not having to move all the time is great. I've filled several director roles to help out, it gave me confidence and the feeling of being accepted. I can't thank the co-op enough as my family were given a house we call home. I'm in the Bellarine Co-op now and work with a wonderful group of people.

*Sharon Wadeson
Bellarine Co-op
+ new NAG Member*

Circuit Replacement Pilot Review

The Circuit Replacement Pilot was completed on 30 June 2017. The work completed by the seven volunteer co-ops was invaluable. Each co-op provided essential feedback in relation to the software, Property Me.

During the pilot stage, it became clear that some elements of the product did not fit our needs. Therefore, it has been decided that we will not move forward with this product.

Thank you to all the co-ops who volunteered to be part of the pilot, taking the time to do the training required to rigorously test the program for our needs.

WHAT'S NEXT?

This means we must go back to find another product to replace Circuit. The project is continuing and aims to identify another solution.

We will keep you up-to-date with any further developments.

*Aimie Meier
CEHL Finance Team Leader*

Canadian Study Tour

I was recently in the US to visit family, so took the opportunity to include a short study tour to visit Canadian housing co-ops. There are more than 2,200 housing co-ops in Canada, and more than 91,000 co-op dwellings.

I spent five days sharing with and learning from housing co-op organisations in Ottawa, Toronto and Vancouver. It was busy. I attended two events, five meetings and one site tour. I especially enjoyed the opportunity to attend the annual picnic and Diversity Scholarship Awards.

The Canadian Housing Federation (CHF) British Columbia holds a social event for their member co-ops and CHF Toronto's Diversity Scholarship Awards night, where the impressive co-op contributions of almost 50 members, most of

them young people, were acknowledged with a scholarship to support their future studies.

Talking to co-op members and resource organisations like the Co-operative Housing Federation (CHF) highlighted some very familiar challenges. Like our program, Canadian co-ops are working to ensure participation requirements respond to changing co-op and member requirements. For the Canadian program, this has led to important discussions about the difference between co-op 'governance' – co-op decision making, policy setting and long term planning and co-op 'management' – the delivery of required tenancy and maintenance functions.



Canadian Housing Federation British Columbia, annual summer celebration for members

An increasing number of Canadian co-ops are finding that focusing on co-op policy setting and long term planning is the best use of member's energy and commitment, and enables them to control the requirements for the delivery of the housing services they out-source.

The Canadian program is bigger and older than CEHL's program and it's clear that there are many useful learnings we can take from their experience.

Five days is not nearly long enough to do that effectively, but I came away having started some interesting conversations and built some relationships between Canadian organisations and CEHL that we'll continue to develop.

Nicola Foxworthy
CEHL Program Director

LINKS

Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada
www.chfcanada.coop

United Nations Sustainable Development Goals
www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/



Co-operative Federation of Toronto Diversity Scholarship Awards

What Can We Learn from Canadian Housing Co-operatives?

The Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada (CHF) has around 900 member co-ops and its national conference is combined with its AGM at an enormous gathering each year. This year, it was in Niagara Falls.

The housing co-ops in Canada are mostly townhouses and apartment developments, and there are commonly 40-150 dwellings in each co-op. Few co-ops are self-managed, and most pay their own mortgages and hold title to properties – so the context is quite different to our CERC or CMC models. The big challenges facing the co-op sector involve securing appropriate government subsidy for low-income members and budgeting for long-term maintenance.

While we may think of these 40 plus member co-ops as already large, given the funding and management model that is prevalent in Canada, there is a strong push from CHF to support co-ops amalgamating. CHF has already created two 'Compass' co-ops that can incorporate co-operatives that are not functioning. This way the total of co-operative housing does not diminish if some co-ops are unable to perform their functions for a period. This is not unlike our intentions with CEHL's Direct Tenancies.

At the co-op level, the ever-present desire to educate and engage members was the subject of many workshops and even more conversations at the conference! Many of

the new ideas for member engagement were based on co-op members living side-by-side, starting, for example, a gardening club in common gardens.

David Spackman (from CHF) and I co-presented a members' workshop on sustainable co-operatives. We showed a range of green building and property management techniques to make homes more comfortable and affordable. I emphasised the benefit of interaction between cooperatives, which is an important concept for CEHL in our Program.

After spending a month immersing myself in the Canadian co-operatives scene, I am particularly inspired by a few initiatives on our horizon and already underway:

1. Co-operatives are recognising and committing to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, and I look forward to seeing the housing co-op sector's solution to climate change, energy, food and water security issues.
2. Local communities are empowering themselves to meet their own needs, such as aging neighbours (members), aging building stock, micro-finance and local enterprises.
3. A deeper engagement with the traditional custodians of our land – recognising that taking responsibility for environment brings meaning to our lives in a

way that nothing else does.

Thank you to Common Equity Housing and DesignInc Melbourne Architects for making this trip possible.

Thank you to my community for looking after my family while I was away.

Thank you most of all to Chris, Elle and Raina for everything you do, every day.

Heidi Lee
Earth Co-op



Hugh Garner Housing Co-op, one of the co-ops Heidi visited

Calling CEHL

Phone 03 9208 0800
 Freecall 1800 353 669
 Email info@cehl.com.au
 Fax 03 9429 1799
 Freefax 1800 635 936

Who to contact

	I am a CERC Member	I am a CMC Member or VicWide Tenant
URGENT REPAIRS	Your CERC Maintenance Director	CEHL Business hours 9208 0800 CEHL After hours 0417 102 414
Maintenance		Your CEHL Maintenance Co-ordinator
Tenancy	Your Co-op Rent Officer, Treasurer or Secretary	Your CEHL Tenancy Co-ordinator
Property	Your CEHL Property Officer	
Finance Book Keeping Rent Review / Household Information Form Audit services Compliance Co-op rebates Confirm eligibility	Your CEHL Finance Officer	
Accounts Rent + bills paid to CEHL	accounts@cehl.com.au	

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

For more event information go to www.cehl.com.au

21 September	TAC Committee Meeting
22 September	PAC Committee Meeting
27 September	CEHL Board Meeting
25 October	CEHL Board Meeting
25 November	CEHL AGM
29 November	CEHL Board Meeting
REGIONAL FORUMS	
4 December	Gippsland Regional Forum
5 December	Metro South Regional Forum
6 December	Ballarat Regional Forum
	Bendigo Regional Forum
7 December	Geelong Regional Forum
	Shepparton Regional Forum
	Peninsula Regional Forum
12 December	Metro West Regional Forum
13 December	Metro North Regional Forum
14 December	TAC Committee Meeting
15 December	PAC Committee Meeting
20 December	CEHL Board Meeting

CEHL Offices

CENTRAL

Level 1
 112 Balmain St
 Richmond
 VIC 3121

GEELONG

192a Myers St
 Geelong
 VIC 3220

Send us your stories, images, article ideas to
newsletter@cehl.com.au