

CO-OPERATIVELY SPEAKING

2017 ISSUE 01

Congratulations - Scholarship recipients!

This year we were delighted to receive eleven outstanding applications across all qualification levels. We were especially pleased to hear from people undertaking Certificate and Diploma level courses.

Each year, CEHL provides eight scholarships worth \$2,000 each, to people living in our co-ops who wish to further their education. The scholarships are awarded to people demonstrating the positive influence a scholarship will have on their lives. Best wishes to all our scholars embarking on furthering their skills and education.



Pictured left to right: Kendall, Lila, Sheena, Mark of Endeavour, Mark of Phoenix with his children Kaylen 7 and Alex 5.

Certificate Scholars

Kendall of Satellite CERC - *Certificate IV in Beauty Therapy*. Kendall plans to use her qualification to start a mobile hairdressing and braiding business.

Lila of Diamond Valley - *Certificate IV in Accounting*. CERC Treasurer for 9 years. Lila is working toward achieving a qualification in accountancy and to progress into a paid accountancy position.

Madison of SolarCity CERC - *Certificate IV in Education Support*. Madison is working toward a qualification in Education Support with the aim of volunteering to help indigenous communities with their learning.

Diploma Scholars

Sheena of Ithaca CERC - *Diploma in Community Services/Mental Health*. Sheena is working towards creating a safe and inclusive community, free of crime and prisons.

Danielle of Geelong West CERC - *Diploma in Community Services*. Danielle recently volunteered with Barwon Health in palliative care, and is inspired to seek a career in making a positive difference in the lives of others as a social worker in a palliative care environment.

Undergraduate Scholars

Lesley of Canadian Place - *Dual Bachelor in Arts & Management* (final year). Lesley is a survivor of the Black Saturday fires - mentors young people entering university and wants to work in Community Services.

Mark of Endeavour CERC - *Bachelor of Business & Commerce (Accountancy)* (final year). Mark's ambition is to become a practising accountant.

Postgraduate Scholars

Mark of Phoenix CERC - *Postgraduate Certificate in Palliative Care*. Mark has ten years in nursing including palliative care, and wants to upskill to further benefit patients and their families.

Letter from the Chair

Welcome to 2017!

Hoping you all enjoyed a wonderful festive season and have been enjoying the lovely warm weather.

The year has kicked off for the CEHL Board with a great Saturday spent contextualising the CEHL 2020 Strategic Plan, and establishing the priority of activities to support our 7 Strategic Pathways. The work ahead will build on the existing strong foundations of the co-operative housing program, as well as seek ways to harness existing organisational value to foster growth.

Again this year we will be seeking your input into actioning two key pieces of work, the Program Participation Policy and the Rent Review. We need to better understand and articulate the range of views across the program in order to develop appropriate frameworks to progress these matters so our co-operative housing program remains sustainable into the future. The Program Principles will also guide us in this work.

We have received feedback from you in our recent Tenant Satisfaction Surveys, and through the FDP processes showing that there is a desire for more targeted training, and you will have noticed that there is now training being offered through the Regional Forums.

It is wonderful to have started with the initial offering of training to better understand the Roles & Responsibilities of Co-op Directors. Getting to grips with Co-op governance can be one of the hurdles in supporting the long-term well-being of each of our individual co-ops, and I hope you will find the increased focus on this throughout 2017 to be beneficial.

I look forward to being on this journey with you!

Yours in co-operation
Karren Walker, CEHL Chairperson



Managing Director's Report - 2017 Priorities



I hope 2017 has started well for you, your family and co-op.

I have had great feedback from co-op members about how valuable they have found the recent training sessions focused on the roles and responsibilities of co-op directors. We are refreshing all our training

materials and look forward to providing further training throughout the year.

CEHL's Board Chair launched the new Strategic Plan at our AGM in November 2016. In order to meet the strategic priorities, the CEHL Executive Team and Managers have drafted a Business Plan for the CEHL Board that identifies a series of projects for the next eighteen months.

Priority work with co-ops during 2017 includes:

- Co-op Engagement Calendar
- Participation Policy consultation with co-ops
- Program policy feedback and implementation
- Future Directions Project (FDP) embedded across the Program
- Co-op Training Plan

- Circuit replacement
- Member portal (online system to improve connectivity with CEHL)
- Begin exploring new co-op models

The team at CEHL is looking forward to working with you this year on all of these activities in addition to continuing to work in partnership to deliver the Co-operative Housing Program.

There are a number of important projects occurring in the background during 2017 which will continue to improve our efficiency. They include:

- Core systems project - will maximise our IT system, integrating our financial, property and co-op data to enable CEHL to provide more efficient services to co-ops and their members.
- Embed Project Management framework - will ensure a consistent approach to planning and delivering projects.
- Improved data analysis and reporting - will enable better monitoring and decision making.

I am looking forward to reporting to you on our progress against the CEHL 2020 Strategic Plan.

Stephen Nash, Managing Director

Co-op Director Regional Training

February marked the start of the Regional Training for 2017.

The Co-op Development Team have rolled out the training endorsed by the Training and Advisory Committee (TAC) on the *Role and Responsibilities of Co-op Directors*.

The sessions were well attended, with members enthusiastically discussing the key themes of governance and succession planning.

The training sessions provided an opportunity for members to discuss what their co-op does well and to brainstorm different approaches to shared challenges.

Jenni Dwyer
Co-op Development & Strategy Team Leader



Metro West Regional Training

PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

"It was helpful hearing other co-ops ideas and broadening our perspective and knowing we all have shared experiences."

"The training was refreshing and informative."

Created an environment of people working together."

"As a long term co-op member the session nudged my memory."

"We got to hear the voices of all members present, not just the loudest."

"A good reminder that being a Director is a role too. It isn't just about the office bearer role that often goes along with being a director."



Dandenong Regional Training

Goodbye and good luck to Kiera Taylor

Kiera was a Tenancy Co-ordinator and regular contributor to Co-operatively Speaking. Kiera has gone on to pursue a writing career, where, no doubt she will shine.



Circuit Replacement Update

CEHL is happy to announce that we will be piloting a new software program to replace Circuit.

After a series of regional workshops, and direct responses from co-ops, we have been able to match most of the user requirements with a software program called *Property Me*.

Property Me scored highest in the user requirements set out by CEHL and member Co-ops, with the added benefit of including property and tenant management. CEHL have also been able to work with *Property Me* to negotiate a significant discount to the listed price of the product.



Program Testing

The next step is to conduct a pilot to test *Property Me* to iron out any issues which might occur while using the program in the co-op environment and to ensure CEHL employees are trained sufficiently in order to undertake a roll-out.

Many co-ops have already offered to be part of the pilot and we thank everyone for their excitement. We will be in touch with those co-ops to attend training sessions and start the pilot in March 2017.

If *Property Me* passes the evaluation through the pilot stage, we will offering it for a wider roll-out to all co-ops.

If you have any questions about the Circuit Replacement Project, please email Aimie Meier at circuit@cehl.com.au

Aimie Meier
Finance Team Leader

JOURNEY OF THE HIF

What's a HIF?

A HIF is the Household Information Form – it's the form you fill in to update your household make up and income details.

Information collected in the HIF is used to calculate rents for the coming year. EVERY household must complete the form, it's a Program and regulatory requirement.

It starts in November

The whole rent review process starts in November each year with a review of the Rent Policy Manual, which sets out the rents for CEHL properties.

Next step is finalising the letters, and printing current details in the HIF.



Getting the HIF to you

The Finance Team co-ordinated the HIF mail-out this year, making sure all the right forms go to the right people.

There are over 2,100 households in our Program – that's a lot of forms that are collated, stuffed in envelopes and mailed out!



Receiving forms and data entry

The data entry starts as soon as the forms come back into the office and the Finance Team update all the details of the 5,250 people in our Program – that's a lot of information!

Finishes in June

Once all the information is updated in our system the rents are calculated then households and co-ops are notified.

All records are filed and stored securely. Job done until the process starts all over again in November!

Participation Policy - We want to hear from YOU!

We hear a lot of concerns about participation. We are looking forward to working with you to create a new understanding and policy regarding participation in our Program.

Developing a participation policy requires thorough discussions with co-ops and members. The *Participation Policy Engagement Plan* circulated in December sets out the engagement activities to support these important discussions. These activities are your opportunity to have a say and contribute to building a shared understanding of what participation in our Program means.

You can help shape the Participation Policy

Attend a workshop

A series of regional workshops will take place from 15-24 May, where member's will discuss the opportunities and challenges that participation presents.

See the calendar on the back page of *Co-operatively Speaking* and the CEHL website for details.

Complete a Survey

A survey will also be conducted in May for members who are unable to attend one of the workshops.

Want more information?

Expect an invitation in your letterbox this March with further details about the workshops.

Read the *Participation Discussion Paper*, available on the front page of www.cehl.com.au



Andrew Bartlett
Program Development Manager



Eureka Christmas



We attended the Eureka Christmas BBQ Dinner on the 7th December 2016. Thank you to CEHL for the supplies and Margaret, Kate and Fay for supplying the sweets. We all had a wonderful night.

There were quite a few other CERC members from Stock-aders, Victory and Southerners.

Hope you all had a Merry Christmas and a wonderful New Year 2017.

Pictured (left to right) David Spenceley from Futures and John Cooper from Serenity CERC.

David Spenceley & John Cooper
Eureka Regional Association

Plants that are Poisonous to Pets



It can be hard to know what plants are the best to use for a pet friendly garden.

I've prepared a list of plants to AVOID. Some plants are *poisonous* meaning they can harm your pet. Others are *toxic*, these can kill! Be careful when choosing plants for your garden.

Alium (the onion family) onions, garlic, chives - bulbs and leaves are toxic to cats.

Nerium Oleander (Oleander) - all parts are extremely toxic.

Arum (Cuckoo Pint) - all parts are very poisonous.

Diffenbachia (Dumb Cane) - toxic to domestic pets.

Philodendron (Heart Leaf Philodendron) - toxic to cats.

Fatsia (Japanese Fatsia Aralia) - berries are poisonous.

Fatshedera (Ivy Tree) and *Hedera Helix* (English ivy) - toxic to domestic pets.

Rhododendron (Rhododendron Azalea) - poisonous to domestic pets.

Cyclamen Corms - poisonous to domestic pets.

Primula ssp (Primulas) - all parts including pollen can cause dermatitis and skin irritation.

Conium (Hemlock) - all parts, even when dry are toxic to all animals and humans.

Caesia Vittata (Blue Grass Lily) - all parts poisonous, toxic to domestic pets.

Colchicum Autumnale (Autumn Crocus) - poisonous to pets.

Convallaria Majus (Lily of the Valley) - all parts poisonous to

domestic pets.

Hyacinthoides Non-Scripta (English Bluebell) - fresh bulbs and mucilage are poisonous.

Hyacinthus Orientalis (Hyacinth) - all parts, especially bulbs are poisonous.

Muscari Armeniacum (Grape Hyacinth) - bulbs are poisonous.

Tulipa Hybridus (Tulip) - leaves, petals and outer layers of bulbs are poisonous.

John Harrison
Southerners CERC



Supporting Independent Living Co-operative

Creating homes for people with disabilities under the NDIS (National Disability Insurance Scheme).



In October 2016, a new co-operative was formed, Supporting Independent Living Co-operative.

SILC's purpose is to connect families who are looking to set up family-governed housing co-operative using NDIS packages of support.

What is a family-governed housing model?

It's about people with disabilities, their families and support staff working together to create a home so people with disabilities can live in a home of their choice, with the people they want to and have the right type of support.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Parent Forum in Melbourne, 9 March 2017
www.silc.coop/events

Watch You Tube clip on how SILC works in practice
<http://youtu.be/uuqYq2QojS0>

Call Jo Battersby, SILC CEO, Joanna@silc.coop
Ph: 0414 366 190 www.silc.coop

Future Directions Project (FDP) Update

The Future Directions Project (FDP) is on track as per the activity timeline.

Go to www.cehl.com.au and click on 'Future Directions Project' under the heading 'Special Projects' on the front page of the website, for the most up-to-date information.

Note: CEHL previously referred to Co-ops according to 'FDP regions'. To simplify and ensure consistency, CEHL will now only refer to Co-op regions according to their 'Regional Forum' area.

Timeline



DEC 2016

Activity

Co-ops from Pilot 1 + 2 received their draft *Co-op Plan*



FEB 2017

All remaining co-ops who have sent in their *FDP Workbook* will receive their draft *Co-op Plan*



MARCH

Invitations sent to Co-op Secretaries for co-ops yet to have their launch/workshop

FDP Project Update sent to Co-op Secretaries



APRIL 2017

FDP workshops

New faces at CEHL!!



Name: Heather Wearne

Role: Co-op Development Co-ordinator

About me: *I have coordinated transitional housing for eighteen years at Home-Ground/ Launch Housing and come from a recent stint working with an owners corporation.*

What I'm looking forward to at CEHL: *I'm looking forward to meeting and working with different co-ops from various parts of Victoria and learning your story.*



Name: Charmaine White

Role: Asset Services Team Leader

About me: *I've worked in the community housing sector for over fifteen years in a number of areas including tenancy, maintenance contracts, property, project and asset management.*

What I'm looking forward to at CEHL: *Working with co-ops is very new to me. I'm looking forward to learning more about them and how they work*

My interests: *I love being in the outdoors and bush-walking and have slowly been exploring different parts of Victoria.*

NEED FINANCIAL ADVICE?

MoneySmart is a financial guidance website from the Australian Securities & Investment Commission (ASIC). It gives free impartial financial guidance and links to the right organisations that can help you when you need it most.

PROBLEMS PAYING YOUR UTILITY BILLS?

Here are some tips from MoneySmart on what to do if you are struggling to pay your utility bills from MoneySmart.

- Contact your provider
- Apply for a rebate or voucher
- See a financial counsellor
- Smooth out your bills - some companies allow you to make regular, smaller payments so you don't end up with a large amount to pay at one time.
- Make a complaint - if your utility provider won't help you, you can complain to one of the Ombudsman – Telecommunications or Energy and Water
- Reduce your usage

For more detailed information and links to services call **1300 300 630** or go to the MoneySmart website.

LINKS

www.moneysmart.gov.au

www.moneysmart.gov.au/managing-your-money/managing-debts/trouble-with-debt/problems-paying-your-utility-bills

30 Years of CEHL



before + 1980'S
TRAILBLAZERS



1990'S
SECURITY - FAMILY - EMPOWERMENT

At the 30 Year Celebration in November 2016 co-op members were asked to sum up their decade, captioned here under each photo. Relive the 30 Year celebration by watching stories from members www.cehl.com.au/video

CEHL Co-op Engagement Review

A strength of our housing program is the ability for co-ops and members to play a role in shaping how the Program is managed. This is done through consultation with co-ops and members.

An important goal for CEHL in 2017 is to develop an effective approach to how CEHL engages and consults with co-ops and members. That will provide a mix of opportunities that better meet the needs of co-ops and the Program.

WE ARE LISTENING AND TAKING ACTION

Co-op members have already provided CEHL with some feedback on ways to improve our approach to co-op and member engagement, in summary;

Co-ops and members want:

- Plenty of notice about when engagement/consultation activities are planned; and
- A clear understanding of the purpose of each activity and what is expected from members.

This feedback led to the creation of the *2017 Engagement Calendar*, which was sent to all households in December 2016 outlining all engagement activities planned for the year.

HOW CAN WE DO BETTER?

To continue to improve the way we engage with co-operatives and members, we will be reviewing how effective the current engagement/consultation methods are. Some of the ways we consult with members are through memos, newsletter, forums workshops, training, conference, online/website etc.

The review will include discussion with members about creating an engagement approach that:

- Respects the different roles and responsibilities of co-ops and CEHL;
- Strengthens the partnership that exists between co-ops and CEHL;
- Is accessible to as broad a representation across the program as possible; and
- Looks at the responsibility CEHL has to provide meaningful engagement opportunities and, equally, the responsibility for co-ops to take up these opportunities.

The feedback from the review will be used to inform engagement planning for 2018 and beyond.

More details regarding the *Co-op Engagement Review* will be posted on the CEHL website 'Special Projects' on www.cehl.com.au

Andrew Bartlett, Program Development Manager



2000-2010
RESILIENCE



2010+
COMMUNITY - SECURITY - HARMONY

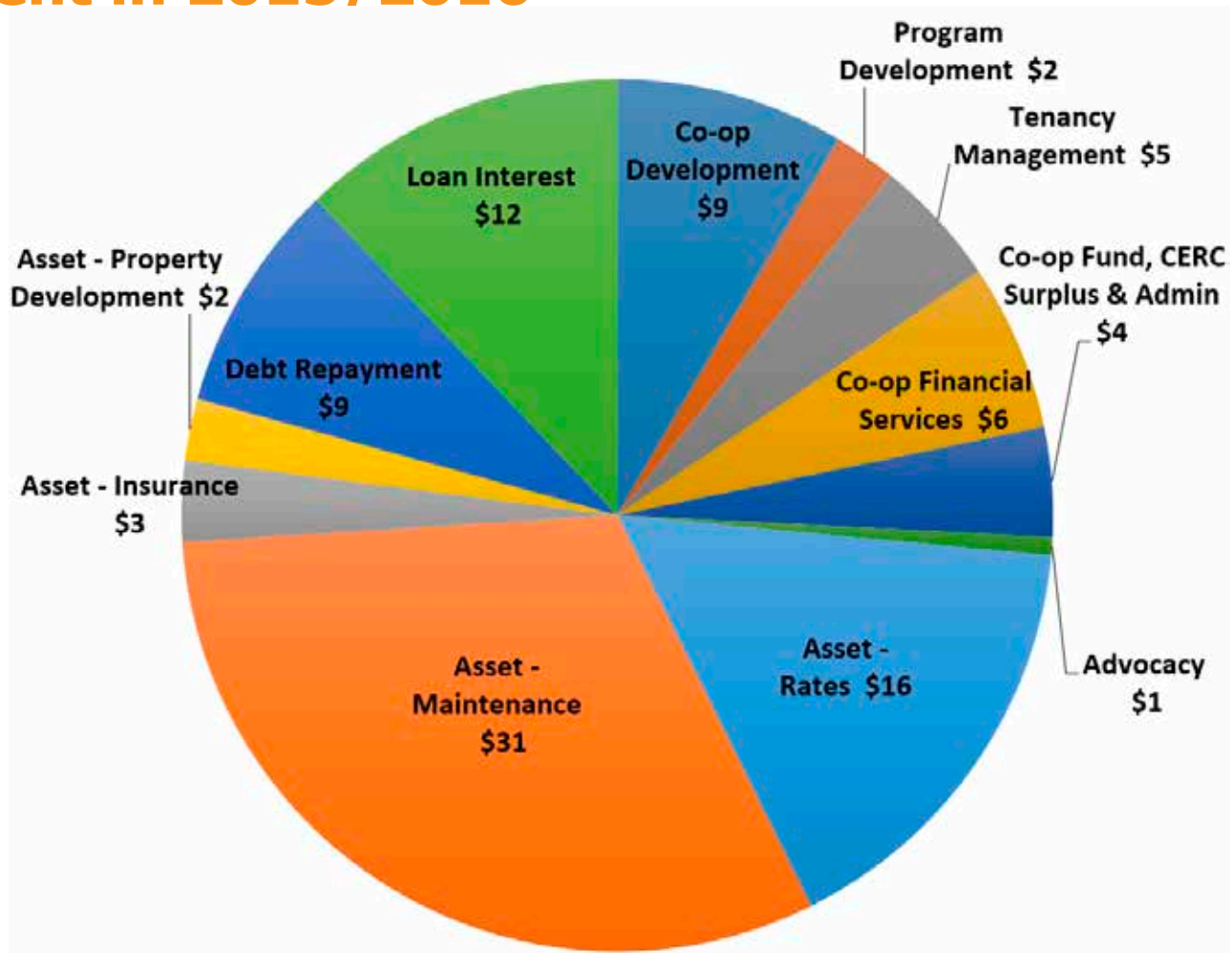
WHO TO CONTACT AT CEHL - FOR SUPPORT OR ISSUES

| TYPE of QUERY | URGENT REPAIRS | | CO-OP Development + Training | PROPERTY | TENANCY + MAINTENANCE | ACCOUNTS | |
|----------------|--------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|--|--|---|---|
| | | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maintenance planning + delivery - 3rd schedule work - Inspections | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Book keeping - Co-op rent review - Confirm eligibility - Audit services - Compliance - Co-op rebates | Rent + bills paid to CEHL |
| WHO TO CONTACT | CERC Member | CMC + VicWide Tenancy | Your Co-op Development Co-ordinator | Your Co-op Property Officer | <p>CERC TENANCY - your Co-op Rents Officer, Treasurer or Secretary</p> <p>CERC MAINTENANCE - Maintenance Director</p> <p>CMC's + VicWide – your Tenancy Co-ordinator or Maintenance at CEHL</p> | Your Co-op Finance Officer | <p>Vatsalya Bohra</p> <p>9208 0814</p> <p>accounts@cehl.com.au</p> |
| | Your CERC Maintenance Director | CEHL BH: 9208 0800 After Hours 0417 102 414 | | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|--|------------------------|--|---|---|--|---|
| Concerned about a response or service you receive? Raise the issue with . . . | RAISE ISSUE with . . . | <p>Jenni Dwyer Co-op Development Team Leader 9208 0839 jenni@cehl.com.au</p> <p>OR</p> <p>9208 0856 karen@cehl.com.au Karen Fixsen Co-op Development Team Leader</p> | <p>Charmaine White Asset Services Team Leader 9208 0867 charmaine@cehl.com.au</p> | <p>CMC + VicWide MAINTENANCE</p> <p>Narelle Cook Maintenance Team Leader 9208 0841 narelle@cehl.com.au</p> | <p>CMC + VicWide TENANCY</p> <p>Melissa Pope Housing Services Team Leader 9208 0850 melissa@cehl.com.au</p> | <p>Aimie Meier Finance Team Leader 9208 0804 aimie@cehl.com.au</p> |
| Issue still not resolved? Contact the Manager . . . | RAISE ISSUE | <p>Darina Seal Co-op Development & Strategy Manager 9208 0805 darina@cehl.com.au</p> | <p>Meg George Asset Manager 9208 0864 meg.g@cehl.com.au</p> | <p>CMC + VicWide MAINTENANCE</p> <p>Meg George Asset Manager 9208 0864 meg.g@cehl.com.au</p> | <p>CMC + VicWide TENANCY</p> <p>Ruth Pearce Housing Services Manager 9208 0849 ruth@cehl.com.au</p> | <p>Timothy Dart Finance Manager 9208 0800 timothy@cehl.com.au</p> |

For a printable version visit the Contact Us page on www.cehl.com.au

Where every \$100 of Program Income went in 2015/2016



The Financial Report given at the AGM (in November 2016) detailed how funds were allocated across the areas required to run and maintain our housing program. To simplify, the pie chart above shows how every \$100 of income is shared.

Total Program income for the year 2015/2016 was \$25 million, which is mostly made up of rent income.

How funds were shared

- Just over half of Program Income goes toward program assets. These are the costs associated with maintaining properties these are: asset maintenance \$31 + rates and water supply charges \$16 + insurance \$3 + property development \$2 = \$52
- The next most significant amount goes to Co-op and Program Development and services: co-op development \$9 + co-op financial services \$6 + tenancy management \$5, program development \$2 = \$22
- Program Income that contributes to reducing loans and the payment of interest: loan interest \$12 + debt repayment \$9 = \$21 in every \$100 of Program income.
- Co-ops retained \$4 after rates and co-op maintenance.
- Advocacy \$1 relates to the promotion of the Program and our work with government and partners.

*Brad Hosking
Corporate Director*

Asset Management Update

The Asset Management Team has had a busy year so far, with no signs of slowing down!

We have already completed more than 1,000 responsive and cyclical jobs on the CMC and VicWide portfolios and cyclical works are well underway for the year.

Third Schedule works have been completed on 65 properties so far this year, with works in progress on an additional 38 properties and works approved for another 50 properties.

While the FDP process is underway, we are focusing on issues that may present health and safety risks as well as backlog works.

We have inspected 972 properties in the new system, as well as 15 common areas. These inspections are identifying works and feeding into our plans.



BEFORE



AFTER: larger vanity, replace bath with new shower

Renewal Standards & Third Schedule Planning

In addition to our usual maintenance work, we have drafted Renewal Standards to help guide how we do Third Schedule works and create a more consistent approach. This is a

fairly technical document, linking to the various relevant regulations, but also includes guiding principles. A summary will be published on the CEHL website shortly.

As we plan Third Schedule works increasingly ahead, we are seeking feedback from you about the best way to negotiate the timing of delivery. We understand that co-ops need to be able to plan their budgets, works programs, and access in advance. Where we identify several Third Schedule projects that should occur in the coming period, this can be challenging on a tight budget.

If you'd like to provide feedback on how we can facilitate this planning, we'll be posting a link on the website, and seeking feedback directly from Maintenance Directors.

*Meg George
Asset Manager*

Expression of Interest for Solar Assessment Project

CEHL has been involved in a community housing sector-wide project to build an understanding of viable solar options on apartment blocks. We now have an opportunity to participate in a possible second phase of the project that focusses on standalone houses.

If the project is successfully funded, we will use the opportunity to gain a better understanding of viable solar options and how the Program can support procurement and installation. This will be a great opportunity to understand the likely costs and the likely power savings that we can apply to the range of properties within our Program.

We are applying for assessments of at least five properties per region. We will need a range that represents the various types of properties and locations across the program and will offer participation on a first come first served basis.

Participants will need to be able to provide power bills and accommodate an inspection of their property.



If we are successful in our application, the project will commence in August 2017.

If you are interested in participating, please email solar@cehl.com.au

*Meg George
Asset Manager*

CEHL MARCH Regional Forum

- **Key Conversation:**
Effective Communication
- **Co-op Program Updates and Upcoming Events**
- **CEHL / Co-op Engagement Plan**
- **Committee Updates:**
 - Training Advisory Committee (TAC)
 - Policy Advisory Committee (PAC)
 - Newsletter Advisory Committee (NAG)
- **General Questions and Discussions**



CASTLEMAINE STATE FESTIVAL

17-26
MARCH
2017



Sam from Forest CERC is involved in the Castlemaine State Festival and invites everyone to be part of this community event.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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

| | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| 01 March | Bendigo Regional Forum |
| | Ballarat Regional Forum |
| 02 March | Geelong Regional Forum |
| | Shepparton Regional Forum |
| | Peninsula Regional Forum |
| 06 March | Gippsland Regional Forum |
| 07 March | Metro West Regional Forum |
| | Metro South East Regional Forum |
| 08 March | Metro North Regional Forum |
| 17 March | Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) |
| 23 March | Training Advisory Committee (TAC) |
| 29 March | CEHL Board Meeting |
| 5 April | Newsletter Advisory Group Meeting (NAG) |
| 26 April | CEHL Board Meeting |
| PARTICIPATION WORKSHOPS 6.30-8PM | |
| 15 May | Gippsland: Morewell Bowls Club |
| | Geelong: St Mary's |
| 16 May | Peninsula: Mt Martha House |
| 17 May | Ballarat: South Community Hub |
| 18 May | Shepparton: RSL |
| | Metro North: Northcote Town Hall |
| 22 May | Bendigo: RSL |
| 23 May | Metro South: East Herbert St |
| 24 May | Metro West: Melton Library |
| 31 May | CEHL Board Meeting |
| 01 June | Geelong Regional Forum |
| | Shepparton Regional Forum |
| | Peninsula Regional Forum |
| 05 June | Gippsland Regional Forum |
| 06 June | Metro South East Regional Forum |
| 07 June | Ballarat Regional Forum |
| | Bendigo Regional Forum |
| 13 June | Metro West Regional Forum |
| 14 June | Metro North Regional Forum |
| 22 June | Training Advisory Committee (TAC) |
| 28 June | CEHL Board Meeting |

We invite all members to forward their stories, images, article ideas to
newsletter@cehl.com.au