

CO-OPERATIVELY SPEAKING

2018 ISSUE 02

Sunny days are here again

Nikki and Karey of Stockbridge Co-op love listening to the sound of rain on their rooftop, a sound that last year filled them with dread.

Early in 2017 after a major storm hit Melbourne, the roof of Nikki and Karey's home was partially torn off causing significant damage to their kitchen and sunroom at the side and rear of the house.

"It was like a waterfall inside," said Nikki.

Major works were undertaken to replace the damaged roof, ceiling, kitchen and windows in the sunroom at the back of the house.

"I've got back to growing and cooking our own food. I've got so much more storage in the kitchen, I even bought myself some new pots and pans," shared Nikki.

CEHL's property management team and Property Officers have been hard at work in the past twelve months upgrading and repairing homes like Nikki and Karey's, right across the housing program.



Nikki and Karey's refurbished kitchen and sunroom



Stockbridge Co-op Member Nikki

In the last financial year the property management team have completed more major construction works (Third Schedule) than ever before.

As you can imagine each upgrade project requires a significant amount of collaboration between CEHL and Co-op Directors, as well as the co-ordination needed to organise all the builders and tradies to get the job done. The Asset Team as worked hard to create systems and processes to deliver asset outcomes on the available funds.

Co-ops are encouraged to speak to their Property Officers if they need advice on managing maintenance issues.

"We are really pleased with the result, and I love my new kitchen, it's my domain," said Nikki.

**A Silent Transformation Film
+
CEHL Conference**

Coming up 14 + 15 June . . .

Letter from the Chair



Hi and welcome to another great edition of Co-operatively Speaking!

Well, 2018 is certainly progressing apace. No doubt your co-ops' letterbox/email inbox has been actively receiving information and opportunities to

have your say about the rent model consultations, policy drafts, heater recalls, and opportunities to pilot a new allocations approach in some of our regions.

Our Co-op Housing Program is founded on the International Principles of Co-operation, requiring members to have a voice, and respectfully use it. Since embarking on the development of the Program Principles about two years ago, you will have noticed a shift in how CEHL and co-ops are seeking ways to enable program stakeholders to have an increasingly equitable opportunity to have a say. Taking the time to participate in our co-ops' good governance making transparent and informed decisions, and at a Program level through taking the time to respond to important consultations such as workshops, discussions, surveys etc.

The Rent Model Advisory Group (RMAG) is the current 'big consultation' item on which we need to share our thoughts, experience and knowledge. Thanks to those of you who have taken the time to attend a workshop or respond to the survey. If you are yet to have your co-op's voice is included, please ensure you do so! The CEHL Board recently received a briefing from the RMAG Chair who confirmed the capacity and work of the RMAG to date, and their belief in the value of this process, feedback which heartens the CEHL Board Directors and affirms for us, that we are on the right track in delivering on partnership beyond the rhetoric.

The upcoming Engagement Review is another important consultation to be active in. The Board wants to hear about which elements of our Program you seek to influence, how this might be activated, and what capacity needs to be supported to enable real and appropriate member influence.

You will hear more about this in the coming months, so please start the discussion about what Program engagement means for you at your co-op meetings. Think about how we work collaboratively, with the good of all our members at the forefront in our conversations.

I can see a vibrant item for our co-op meeting agenda's, and a topic which I hope elicits the warm fuzzy feelings of co-operation in us all.

The CEHL Co-op Conference will be upon us soon. Get the 15th of June in your diary now! I'm excited to be there to talk with you about how we make this a truly co-op led program and how the empowering and inclusive elements of co-operative living will continue to provide secure and appropriate affordable housing for our diverse communities.

Come along and be part of the discussion on key issues relevant for all current and future co-operators!!

Until then, thank-you for your diligent efforts in your co-ops and for partnering with CEHL and each other on the amazing co-op housing journey.

In Co-operation, Karren Walker
CEHL Chairperson

Managing Directors Report

The recent Community Housing Industry Association (CHIA) Conference keynote speaker gave informed insight into what the Canadians did, behind the scenes, to encourage their government to take serious action on housing affordability.

The public debate and disquiet about housing affordability in Canada has been very similar to here. Public concern and media attention focused on the reality that emerging generations are struggling to afford housing, both rental and home ownership.

Local business associations started speaking out on the economic impact of the lack of affordable housing, and an unprecedented alliance emerged across sectors that don't traditionally campaign together.

Their key message was simple and effective:

the lack of affordable housing impacts the health of the economy and the health of the community

A comprehensive package of reforms and \$40 billion budget commitment was made and now the sectors are busily working on implementation.

This inspiring example made me reflect on what we can do in this state election year to promote co-operative housing as a key part of the solution to Victoria's housing affordability challenges and the embarrassing and devastating fact that Victoria now has the lowest proportion of social housing in Australia.

I am actively working with our peak body Community Housing Industry Association of Victoria (CHIA Vic) and with Housing Association CEOs to develop solutions and seek a new approach to partnering with government.

In the meantime, the Victorian Government has nearly finalised the key frameworks and will soon invite Housing Associations and Housing Providers to opt-in to the Victorian Housing Register. Currently there is no specified deadline to decide, so we will have time to engage with co-ops at the upcoming CEHL Conference about the opportunities and concerns with the revised policy approach.

I am aware that many co-ops are making progress with your Future Direction Plans. This important work, when completed, will inform our property portfolio planning including acquisitions and developments in each region. If you find that your co-op needs help to complete this work, please contact your Co-op Development Co-ordinator for assistance.



The new CEHL website is now up and running and I look forward to this being key tool which will provide more meaningful resources to co-ops.

You will hear a key theme throughout this year about the desire for the Housing Program to be more co-op led, this is a genuine commitment by the CEHL Board. Currently we have incomplete, informal and contradictory information about how, when and what co-ops want to be engaged about Program decisions. Through the upcoming *Engagement Review* you will be able to shape what and how much engagement will be essential to be a truly co-op led program. Your co-op input into this project will provide a roadmap for how we work together and continue to shape and grow this amazing Housing Program.

Stephen Nash
CEHL Managing Director

Coming up . . .



Thursday 14 June 2018, 6.30 - 8.30pm

Cinema Nova, 380 Lygon Street Carlton

CEHL Conference Attendees FREE or \$10 waged \$5 concession

Film followed by panel discussion with Canadian film maker Anton Smolski and special guests from Australian co-ops.



Friday 15 June 2018, 9am-6pm

NEW VENUE

Crowne Plaza Melbourne, 1-5 Spencer Street, Melbourne

See page 5 for more details

Register for Film + Conference via
www.cehl.com.au

TAC Three Member's Perspectives . . .

Sharon Quinn Metro North region representative

My name is Sharon and I joined the Training Advisory Committee TAC about five years ago. I am an original member of my co-op having been a member for 25 years.

I was drawn to TAC because the training at the time was really boring, in a classroom setting and was not getting the attendance needed.

My first year was a bit 'hit and miss' as no-one really knew what was wanted or expected. Once work started on the New Member Workbook we were off like a bushfire. We are so proud of the final outcome, each of us having our say in what went into the workbook.

We are now working on the basics needed for understanding co-op roles and have put together the Director's Training Workbook, while we are now in the process of finalising the Roles and Responsibilities of Office Bearers.

The workbooks are written so that members can go through them at co-op meetings or in a small group.

It's really satisfying to see that the workbooks are being used. We accept that it will be a slow process, but are confident that what we have created workbooks that are easy for everyone to understand.

Gayle Carley Voice of Gippsland representative

I have been on TAC for 12 months now and I am really enjoying the experience and the friendships I have formed. I have been in my property and co-op for about 16 years, and have gained quite a considerable amount of experience.

I am now Chairperson of TAC and would like to help any new person to join our committee by passing on the information I have gained during my time.

It is nice to know we are now able, as members of TAC to come to CEHL in our own time and have the use of its facilities to prepare the material for our next committee meetings.

As a committee we have really worked hard to bring out new workbooks, and are pleased to know that co-op members are able to fully understand what the training is all about.

Thank you for allowing me to be part of this committee.

John Harrison Ballarat region representative

After several years on TAC I ask myself why am I still involved!

I am still here because I am passionate about training and communication.

Training produces confident functioning members of a group. I'm part of the team that is training our newer members to enable them to run their groups (co-ops) better and we (TAC) are creating user-friendly training packages.

I feel those of us who have been on TAC for a long time have been able to pass on our experience to others who are just starting out in their co-ordinating roles.

LINKS

Contact TAC
training@cehl.com.au

Low-Cost Computers

Computerbank Victoria is a self-funded volunteer run not-for-profit organisation that provides desktops and laptop computers to concession card holders, students and community groups to assist to cross the digital and economic divide in Australia.

Computerbank resells, refurbished, donated, low cost desk top computers with the lot, includes:

- Keyboard
- Monitor
- Mouse
- Cords
- User guide
- Internet ready
- Word processing and a range of FREE programs.



Computerbank's Ubuntu operating system and software comes with a built-in firewall and virus protection software. Ubuntu is one of the most secure operating systems around.

PLEASE NOTE: The offer does not include Microsoft Windows. If you need Microsoft Windows, eg: to run Circuit program you would need to purchase it separately.

COST

✓ Desktops from \$40 - \$140
For concession card holders
50% more for everyone else

✓ Laptops from \$100
For concession holders ONLY

WARRANTY

All desktop computers have a six month back to base warranty if Ubuntu Linux operating system is installed. Laptops have a three month warranty.

Who is eligible for a low-cost computer?

- ✓ Concession card holders need an Australian Commonwealth Concession Card, a Health Care Card or a Student Card
- ✓ Not-for-profit groups, such as co-operatives

Mark Dowling
Co-op Development Co-ordinator

LINKS

Computerbank Tel: 9600 9161
www.computerbank.org.au
www.ubuntu.com/desktop/features

CEHL CONFERENCE 2018

ACHIEVING A CO-OP LED PROGRAM



Friday 15 June 2018 9am to 6pm

NEW VENUE

Crowne Plaza Melbourne, 1-5 Spencer Street, Melbourne

(On the same side of the Yarra river as Southern Cross Station.)

It's that time of year again for co-op members to gather, discuss and take part in important discussions about the Program's future and to network and share knowledge.

Conference Topics:

- What does being a Co-op Led Program mean?
- Rent Model Review
- Co-op Knowledge Sharing
- Interactive workshops on:
 - Website and member portal
 - Active membership
 - Member selection

For the full program and to register for the conference go to the CEHL website.

Register www.cehl.com.au
9208 0838

+ Complimentary ticket to
A Silent Transformation film night
See page 3 or the website for more information.

Scholarship recipients . . . What are you up to now?

Did you or a family member receive a CEHL Scholarship in the past?

We'd love to hear from you. What are you up to now?

Call or email Sandra Castro, Communications Manager on 9208 0803 sandra@cehl.com.au



CEHL Training Review

Earlier in the year co-op members were surveyed to get feedback on training delivered by CEHL in 2017. This feedback will be used to help plan and improve the provision and delivery of training.

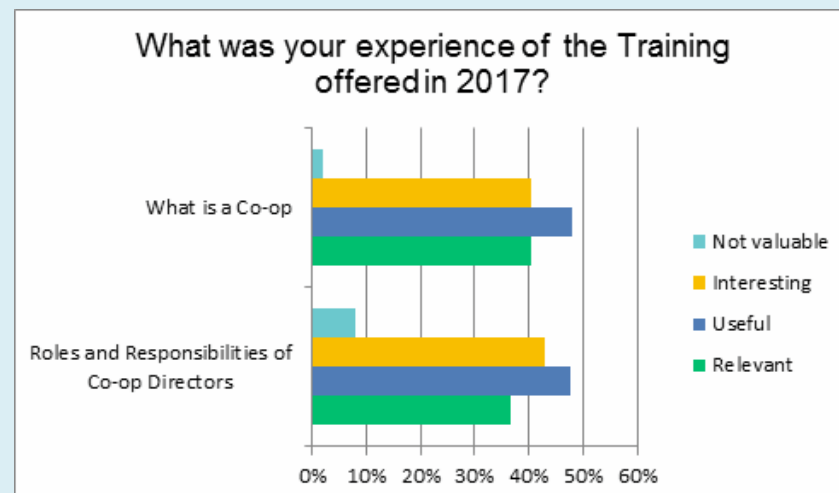
The survey responses have been used to develop a set of recommendations to guide planning for future training. The recommendations are as follows . . .

281 people completed the survey

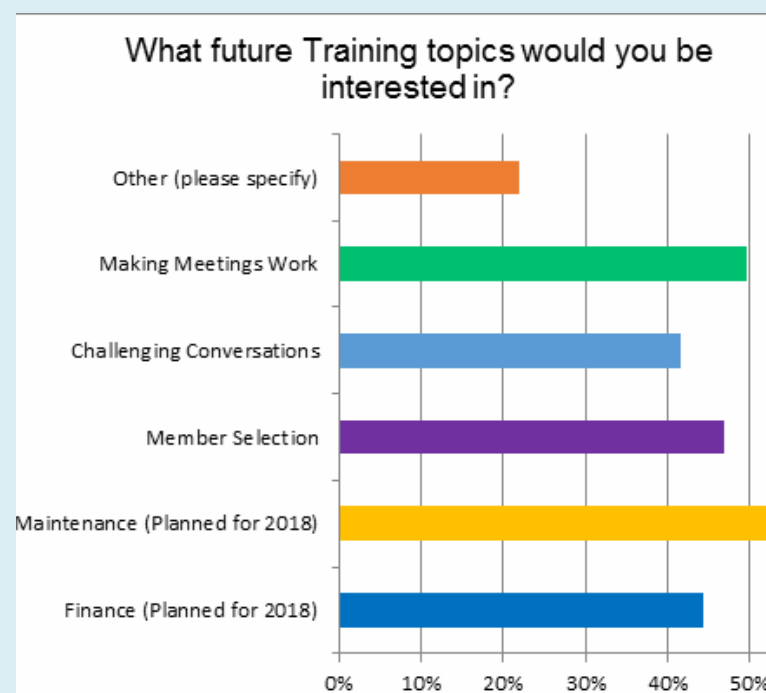
66% of survey respondents had not attended a training session

Findings

- High level of interest in training
- Strong support for the training program offered in 2017
- *What is a Co-op and Roles and Responsibilities of Co-op Directors*
- Most respondents intend to participate in further training planned for 2018
- Workbooks valued as a reference resource



4. CEHL and Co-ops work together to identify how we can each ensure that co-op members are supported to build and maintain up-to-date skills and knowledge
5. CEHL and Co-ops work together explore ways to build a culture within co-ops that supports participa-



Top 2 reasons why survey respondents have been unable to attend training

1. Had other commitments
2. Date and time inconvenient

Top 3 ideas from survey respondents to increase training attendance

1. More variety of days and times for training
2. More local venues
3. More notice of upcoming training events

Training Recommendations

1. Face-to-face training sessions planned for 2018 to proceed
2. Future training sessions to include:
 - More detailed information about the content of planned training
 - Early notice of upcoming training sessions, issued as widely as possible
 - Reminders sent to registered attendees
 - Content to incorporate Plain English and practical applications
 - Opportunities for member involvement in delivery be explored
3. CEHL to explore ways to increase access to training for co-ops and their members

tion in training and remains open to new ideas and continuous improvement

6. The Office Bearer's Workbook, currently in production, be completed and distributed, with request for specific feedback and a further review be conducted in September 2018 to identify how CEHL workbooks are utilised
7. No further workbooks be produced until feedback on the two prior workbooks is received and analysed
8. CEHL to explore ways to grow training capacity including facilitator training, content design and potential partnerships with external training providers, especially in relation to online delivery options, resource production and access to related accredited training



Be Connected is an Australia wide initiative to empower all Australians to thrive in a digital world.

Be Connected has online learning resources as well as a Network of community partners - the Be Connected Network - who offer in-person support so you can develop your digital skills and confidence.

Any local organisation can join the Network for free, and as a Network Partner, you have access to resources, collaboration opportunities, and grant funding ranging from \$1,500 to \$50,000

Discover how being online can add new skills and experience to your life.

LINKS

Call the Be Connected helpline on **1300 795 897**

Use the resources
<https://beconnected.esafety.gov.au/>

Find out about the grants
<https://www.beconnectednetwork.org.au/Grant-Program>

Co-ops Nurturing Leadership Skills

Growing up in Castlegreen Housing Co-operative, Ontario, Canada Sarah Jensen can't remember a time before she started volunteering. At 7, she was sweeping up after community events. At 14, she became the co-op's Community Garden Coordinator, and at 18, she became the youngest person ever to join her co-op's Board of Directors.

She credits her involvement to the support and mentorship of her fellow co-op members: "I've felt the support of my community more times than I can count, and I honestly believe that the aspect of encouragement and belief in other people is one of the most amazing things about cooperatives."

In order to help other youth get involved like she has, she also created a Youth Committee at Castlegreen. "Sarah continues to recruit youth in our community and encourages many to become engaged in our co-operative. We are very happy to have Sarah a part of Castlegreen Co-op and strongly support all of her efforts," says Sharon McKinnon, Castlegreen's General Manager.

Castlegreen is a 215-unit townhouse-style co-op in Thunder Bay, Ontario, which features a community centre, basketball court, ice rink, arboretum, computer lab, community garden, and a pick-up point for the Good Food Box Program. The co-op publishes a monthly newsletter and often brings members together for activities ranging from pancake breakfasts to clothing swaps.



Sarah Jensen

After getting started volunteering in her co-op, Sarah started to get involved in the wider co-op movement. After attending the Ontario Co-operative Association's Co-operative Young Leaders program (CYL), Sarah began volunteering with the Northwestern Ontario Regional Manager for On Co-op. She has been managing the regional Facebook page, as well as speaking at high schools about

co-ops, and attending local co-op business seminars and conferences.

It's clear that by nurturing Sarah's leadership abilities and sense of community, Castlegreen Housing Co-op has developed a lifelong co-op advocate in Sarah Jensen.

As she puts it, "I don't think anything can be more special than the place your co-op takes in your heart."

Co-ops in Canada

The Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year. They are featuring stories about co-op members across Canada in their monthly e-bulletins and kindly granted permission to print this article in Co-operatively Speaking.

LINKS

Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada
chfcanada.coop
www.castlegreen.on.ca



Like a local . . .

What excites you about your local area?

Share your top tips about your local region.

Send your local tips and ideas to newsletter@cehl.com.au



Co-op Resources

Resources

Overview

Program framework

Policies and Procedures

Co-op Governance

People

Property

Finance

CEHL Services

Links

CEHL's New Website

We've launched our new website, we're excited to introduce you to our new look.

We wanted to give the website a fresh vibrant look to reflect the fresh vibrant people in our Housing Program!

We designed the site to make it more accessible and easier to find information.

If you are looking for a particular item or topic but aren't quite sure where it is, use the Search function. It's quite a powerful tool and should help you find what you need - quickly. It's located at the top left of the webpage.



We know most people who visit our website are interested in applying for housing, so we have provided more information about:

- What co-op housing is, so applicants know what they are applying for and can be sure it's the right choice for them
- What it's like to be a co-op member and the commitment required of an active member
- Improved Expression of Interest process, providing more information about active membership and commitment of time to co-op activities

Where to find . . .

Have your say

Links you to CEHL's Program Projects and member discussion forum where you can find out and have your say about projects that affect the Housing Program, including information about the current policy consultation.

Contact

Here you will find an up-to-date list of CEHL Contacts and the co-op they are assigned work with according to their role. The list includes your Co-op Development Co-ordinators, Property Officers, Financial Services Officers, Tenancy Co-ordinators and Arrears Management contacts.

- **Request maintenance - in the Contact section**
For Community Managed Co-ops or direct tenants - VicWide, go to Maintenance and Urgent Repairs on the **Contact** page to request maintenance or find out more information to trouble-shoot maintenance issues.

Co-op Resources

The Co-op Resources menu is on the top right of the website, next to the members symbol. From here you can access policies, information and documents that are useful in running a co-op.

Each Co-op Director has been emailed a handy guide to the website. We encourage you to share and explore more about the website at a co-op meeting.

Your feedback helps us improve . .

We love getting your feedback. Tell us what you think about the website so we can keep on improving. Email Communications Manager sandra@cehl.com.au

In the meantime enjoy exploring! www.cehl.com.au

Medicinal Herbs



Dr John Harrison Apothecary

Please consult your General Practitioner before taking any of these or other medicinal herbs to ensure they are not contraindicated with any medication you might be taking.

Aloe vera
Parts used leaves, externally for skin irritations, rashes as well as for mild sunburn.

Calendula officinalis
Parts used Petals digestive tonic, externally skin treatments, wounds, burns, and beauty treatments.

Chamomiles Roman form
Chamaemelum nobile, or the German form *Matricaria recutita*
Parts used Flowers as a mild sedative, calms nausea, external use for itches, inflamed skin and rashes.

Ginger Zingiber officinale
Parts used Root system, calms some forms of nausea, indigestion and colic, possibly lowers cholesterol.

Hops Humulus lupulus
Parts used Female flowers, as a mild sedative, calming, helps improve sleep.

Lavender Lavendula angustifolia or officinalis
Parts used Flowers, may be used for oil or oil mixed with water (lavender water) for perfume, relaxing baths, or showers, use lavender water for sleep pillows and insect repellent. Avoid applying oil to skin as it may cause burns.

Lemon balm Melissa officinalis
Parts used Leaves as a digestive tonic or a calming drink.

Rose hip Rosa sp.
Parts used Hips/herps which are the seed pods. Seeds can be used as diuretic, oil from hips can be used as a skin treatment, and the juice is used for Vitamin C.

Dr John Harrison Apothecary
(Herb Doctor)
Southerners Co-op



Dear Editorial Team,

Congrats on another interesting issue.

Loved your front page story, (Issue 1, 2018 *Earth Co-op Event Success*) and the fact that you continue to support further education.

All the best for 2018.

Janny Ryan
Direct Tenant, formerly of Carlton Co-op

Winter is coming . . .

Make sure you are getting the best deal from your energy supplier.

The Victorian Government have set up an independent energy comparison site to help you save on bills.

LINKS
Victorian Energy Compare
136 186 or for an interpreter
<https://compare.switchon.vic.gov.au/>



Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) Update

The CEHL Board endorsed the following policies at its meeting on the 28th March 2018

PROGRAM POLICY / PROCEDURE NAME	COVERS
Bedroom Allocation Program Policy	Sets out how bedrooms are allocated in the establishment of a new tenancy within the Program.
Exemptions Program Policy	Provides the framework for how a decision to grant an exemption to a Program Policy will be made.
Internal Tenancy Transfer Procedure	Assists co-ops in managing internal tenancy transfers.

Policy Consultation next round July - August
The next round of Policy Consultation runs from the 5th July to 16th August 2018. See the Policy Consultation on the Have your say section of the website for more details

LINKS
Have your say - Quarterly Policy Consultation
<https://yourview.cehl.com.au/policy-consultation>

Rent Model Review UPDATE

The month of April saw nine rent model review workshops held across the state.

These were engaging and lively discussions that provided the Rent Model Advisory Group (RMAG) with valuable feedback from members as it continues to work towards the development of recommendations for a revised rent model that will go to the CEHL Board in September 2018.

Your next opportunity to consider and provide feedback RMAG's work will be at the CEHL Conference on Friday, 15 June.

In the meantime, to keep up-to-date with the Rent Model Review, click on the Have Your Say button on the CEHL website and go to the Rent Model Review page.

LINKS
Rent Model Review information on **Have your say**
<https://yourview.cehl.com.au/>

Swimming and Spa Pools – Building Regulation Changes

There have been a number of changes to Building Regulations this year which are effective from 2nd June 2018. In Victoria, the design, construction and installation of swimming and spa pools and their safety barriers are subject to strict building requirements and require a permit. A permit must be obtained prior to any work going ahead.

If a tenant member wishes to install a pool or spa or make any other modification, they must complete a Tenant Funded Modification Request Form and forward it to their co-op for



approval, and then forward to CEHL for consideration. Requests for pools and spas are however unlikely to be approved because of the significant safety and compliance obligations involved.

If a pool has been installed without going through this process and appropriate safety barriers have not been installed, it must be emptied immediately as it will be in breach of the regulations! The relevant Council may be contacted to inspect the pool to assess its compliance.

LINKS
Victorian Building Authority
<http://www.vba.vic.gov.au/consumers/swimming-pools>



We love when our colleagues kids come to the office with Mum or Dad in the school holidays. Paige, a regular holiday helper, drew a picture for the newsletter of her 'Perfect Home'. Paige said,

"What makes my home perfect, is that it has my brother, my Mum and my Dad in it!"

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

For up to date event and venue details go to www.cehl.com.au
CEHL 1800 353 669

21 May	RMAG Advisory Group	Regional Training	
30 May	CEHL Board Meeting	6 August	Bendigo Training
4 June	RMAG Advisory Group	6 August	Gippsland Training
14 June	A Silent Transformation Film night	7 August	Metro South Training
15 June	CEHL Conference	8 August	Ballarat Training
21 June	TAC Committee Meeting	8 August	Peninsula Training
27 June	CEHL Board Meeting	9 August	Geelong Training
9 July	RMAG Advisory Group	9 August	Shepparton Training
15 July to 16 Aug	Policy Consultation	14 August	Metro West Training
25 July	CEHL Board Meeting	15 August	Metro North Training

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