

CO-OPERATIVELY SPEAKING

2018 ISSUE 03

Achieving a Co-op Led Program

Innovative ideas and new information was exchanged throughout a jam-packed day at the 2018 CEHL Conference - *Achieving a Co-op Led Program* in Melbourne on 15 June 2018.

The event was attended by 84 co-op members representing 42 different co-ops from across Victoria, as well as two people on the 'expression of interest list' who were keen to learn more about co-ops and the Program.

Two key topic presentations; the *Rent Model Review* and the *Engagement Review* were filmed on the day, and members are encouraged to watch the short videos to find out more about these important Program topics.

Feedback on the day indicated that attendees thought the conference was a resounding success, co-ops were happy to network, share ideas and input into the development of the Program.



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

Letter from the Chair



Hi & Thank you to everyone who came along and made our 2018 CEHL Conference our best one yet! It is always so special to be in the room among fellow ‘co-operators’ to share our stories and listen to others who truly understand and appreciate the gift – and challenges – of our

unique housing program.

The CEHL Film night, the evening prior to the Conference was also an inspiring evening. It was a privilege to share the stage with ORICOOP and Earthworker and we strongly encourage everyone to watch *A Silent Transformation*, click on the link via the CEHL website. Hearing the journeys of cooperatives from other countries always helps us feel connected to the global cooperative movement, and see how our local efforts in cooperation can have broad reaching benefit.

While you are on the website (also on pages 4 and 5 of the newsletter), check out the fabulous and fun pictorial descriptor of our Co-op Program. In continuing the conversations with our member co-ops about how to best enable your real and effective influence in Program direction and decisions, the Board was keen we had a commonly understood overview of the foundations of the

Co-op Program, the environment in which we operate, the equally important roles and responsibilities, and the way in which, through our partnership over 30 years, we can build on these foundations for future success and further opportunity. The pictograph will be one tool through which our Program can be expressed, so please take a few moments to delve into the diagram.

The Board fully support the process that Jeanette Pope and *Engagement Review* team are using to listen to co-op voices and ensure that CEHL is using the best methods to engage with our member co-ops.

The sessions on the *Rent Model Review* at the Conference were lively, and definitely made us work through some quite complex concepts. We want to hear from all co-ops in the Program, this is a real opportunity for meaningful input into decisions which will need to be made to ensure co-op and CEHL viability now, and over the coming decades.

We know it is a really busy time for you all, the Board are absolutely genuine in desiring a truly Member-led Program, one which expresses in real and lively ways the International Co-operative and our Program Principles. Without the efforts on your part to pull together your co-ops responses, we simply don’t hear all the voices out there, so we thank-you in advance for making the time to articulate your responses to these important Program matters, we can’t wait to hear from you all!

In Co-operation, Karren Walker, CEHL Chairperson and Heidi Lee, Deputy Chair

Managing Directors Report

Thank you to the many co-op members that made time to come along and contribute to the recent CEHL Conference - *Achieving a Co-op Led Program*. It was wonderful to speak to many of the regular conference attendees and meet co-op members attending for the first time. The conference is an important way to engage with co-op members about key Program issues, and a valuable forum for co-op members to meet and network with other co-ops. It is certainly a highlight for CEHL employees, the insights and feedback are valuable in informing our work.

Rent Model Advisory Group (RMAG) co-op consultation

Thanks to the co-op members of RMAG. There has been a great deal of important work done in analysing the issues associated with rent model and proposing the draft recommendations. I hope co-ops take the time to discuss the RMAG considerations and recommendations in depth. If you require any assistance or clarification,

speak to your *Co-op Development Co-ordinator*. You can also access all the information and documents on the *Rent Model Review* page on *Have Your Say* on the website.

Engagement Review

It is a busy time for giving feedback and sharing your co-op view on important Program topics. We appreciate those co-ops who have already responded to the *Engagement Review Survey* and encourage everyone to take the time to watch and listen to the *Pathway to a Co-op Led Program video* recorded at the conference, you can find it on the CEHL website in the *Have Your Say* page. In the video, the CEHL Board Chair, Karren Walker, and Deputy Chair, Heidi Lee, speak about the CEHL Board’s commitment to listen to co-ops and find



Referral Service

Need support to keep your housing or co-op membership? CEHL have partnered with Launch Housing to offer all co-op members and CEHL tenants a referral service that can link people to support services.

Patrick Moore from *Launch Housing* is now working with CEHL to provide members and tenants with referral to support services. The support services available can assist in many aspects of daily life including financial counselling, health or disability services, family relationships, etc.

You do not need to be facing a housing crisis to access this service.

Confidentiality & Consent

Any contact you make directly with Patrick is confidential and information will not be shared between Launch Housing and CEHL, or your co-operative without your consent.

Program Policy referral to a Support Agency

This service is provided in accordance with

the CEHL Program Policy Referral to a Support Agency.

CEHL and member co-ops strive to sustain tenancies and minimise evictions by ensuring that tenants and members can access appropriate support agencies.

Where CEHL is aware of a risk to your tenancy or membership, your consent will be sought to exchange information between CEHL & Launch Housing so that you can be referred to services that may help you to maintain your security in our Program.

Your consent *may not* be required where there is an immediate risk to your health, safety or welfare in accordance with Privacy law.

About Launch Housing



Launch Housing is an independent community agency that provides specialist housing and support services to thousands of people in metropolitan Melbourne.

WHO CAN ACCESS THE SERVICE . . .

- All co-op members
- All CEHL tenants

CONTACT DETAILS

Patrick Moore 0400 409 655

Patrick.Moore@launchhousing.org.au

Managing Director’s Report continued . .

ways to encourage more active program engagement. Please find time within your co-op to participate in the *Engagement Review* discussions to tell us how, and what you want to be engaged and contribute to.

Victorian Housing Register (VHR) update

At the time of writing there is no update from the Victorian Government about the final VHR framework. When further information is available, will inform co-ops and update the *Victorian Housing Register* page on the *Have Your Say* section of the website.

Stephen Nash, CEHL Managing Director

LINKS

Have Your Say <https://yourview.cehl.com.au/>



What is Voice?

This question has been asked several times..

For almost 30 years Voice has been a group of members from co-ops throughout the Gippsland region who get together at monthly meetings to share.

Voice is a great source for co-op members to share and gain knowledge about how the co-op program works and how other co-ops deal with issues that arise, which could possibly help other co-ops resolve similar issues of their own.

With so many changes happening at CEHL we feel it is valuable to be able to interact with other co-op members in our region in a relaxed environment, giving us all the opportunity to discuss and learn together.

We are also fortunate to have representatives from the PAC, NAG and TAC committees who attend our meetings and keep us up to date on any issues concerning co-ops and their members.

All our members have the opportunity to have direct contact with CEHL staff members during the regional forums and information sessions/workshops held several times a year.

With our 30 Year anniversary approaching fast we are now in the process of organising an event to celebrate those years. With this in mind, we are calling on all past and present Voice members for help.

If you have any memorabilia such as minutes or photos we would very much appreciate you contacting us please email:

voice_of_gippsland@hotmail.com
or
kaygriffiths6@hotmail.com

We will endeavour to respond all emails promptly.

Voice members feel the ongoing friendships formed between past and present members from a variety of co-ops is rewarding to each and every one of us.

Calling all South Western Region Co-ops . .

CERC members in the South Western region have been meeting informally, with a view to reinvigorating co-operation in our Programme.

Our aim is to:

- share local information
- support each other
- to reach out to other co-operatives in the area

The meetings are held bimonthly in the hall of All Saints Anglican Church 113 Noble St. Newtown (Geelong) at 7pm.

Remaining meetings for this year:

Wednesday 4th July

Wednesday 5th September

Wednesday 7th November

All CERC members are welcome to attend.

Enquiries:
Shirley 5244 3961 or
0418 141 228



EARTHWORKER COOPERATIVE

Building Economic Democracy

Earthworker Cooperative is a volunteer-driven organisation that facilitates the formation of worker-owned cooperatives in sustainable industries.

We have a particular focus on areas that have traditionally been dependent on jobs in the fossil-fuel industry. If we are to transition to a more sustainable economy, we must build dignified jobs in clean energy industries now.

Recognising that the climate crisis demands we make radical changes as a country and as a planet, we want to ensure that no one is left behind as we make these transitions.

Our network of co-operatives currently consists of *Earthworker Energy Manufacturing Cooperative*, a solar-hot water system manufacturer based in Morwell, and *Redgum Cleaning Cooperative*, a green-cleaning worker-cooperative based in Melbourne.

Other worker-owned cooperatives are in the pipeline, including a hemp cooperative and a home maintenance cooperative, contact Mason at citycirclepainters@gmail.com for more details.

Worker-owned cooperatives are not appealing to many traditional private investors because decision-making power stays with the workers. Thus, we have raised nearly all of our capital through small contributions by ordinary people. As our worker-cooperatives generate more income, the surplus will be used to capitalise new cooperatives, helping to build up the network.

LINKS

www.earthworkercooperative.com.au
www.earthworkerenergy.coop
www.redgumcleaning.coop



In celebration of International Day of Co-operatives, 7 July 2018, CEHL shared a film about the transformative power of the co-operative enterprise model *A Silent Transformation*.

All are encouraged to watch the film.

A Silent Transformation link
<https://vimeo.com/269253439>
Password: **AST**

The International Co-operative Alliance spans the globe. Find out more about the international co-op community, their activities and resources.

<https://www.ica.coop/en>



Pictured above, discussion panel from left to right- Antony McMullin, CEHL Co-op Development Coordinator, Carolyn Suggate Director of ORICoop, Heidi Lee Earth Co-op member and CEHL Deputy Chair and Dan Musil, Secretary of Earthworker.

CEHL Film Night - A Silent Transformation

CEHL's screening of *A Silent Transformation* at Cinema Nova on Thursday 14 June was a resounding success, over seventy people enjoyed the film and discussion that followed. For more details read the news item on www.cehl.com.au



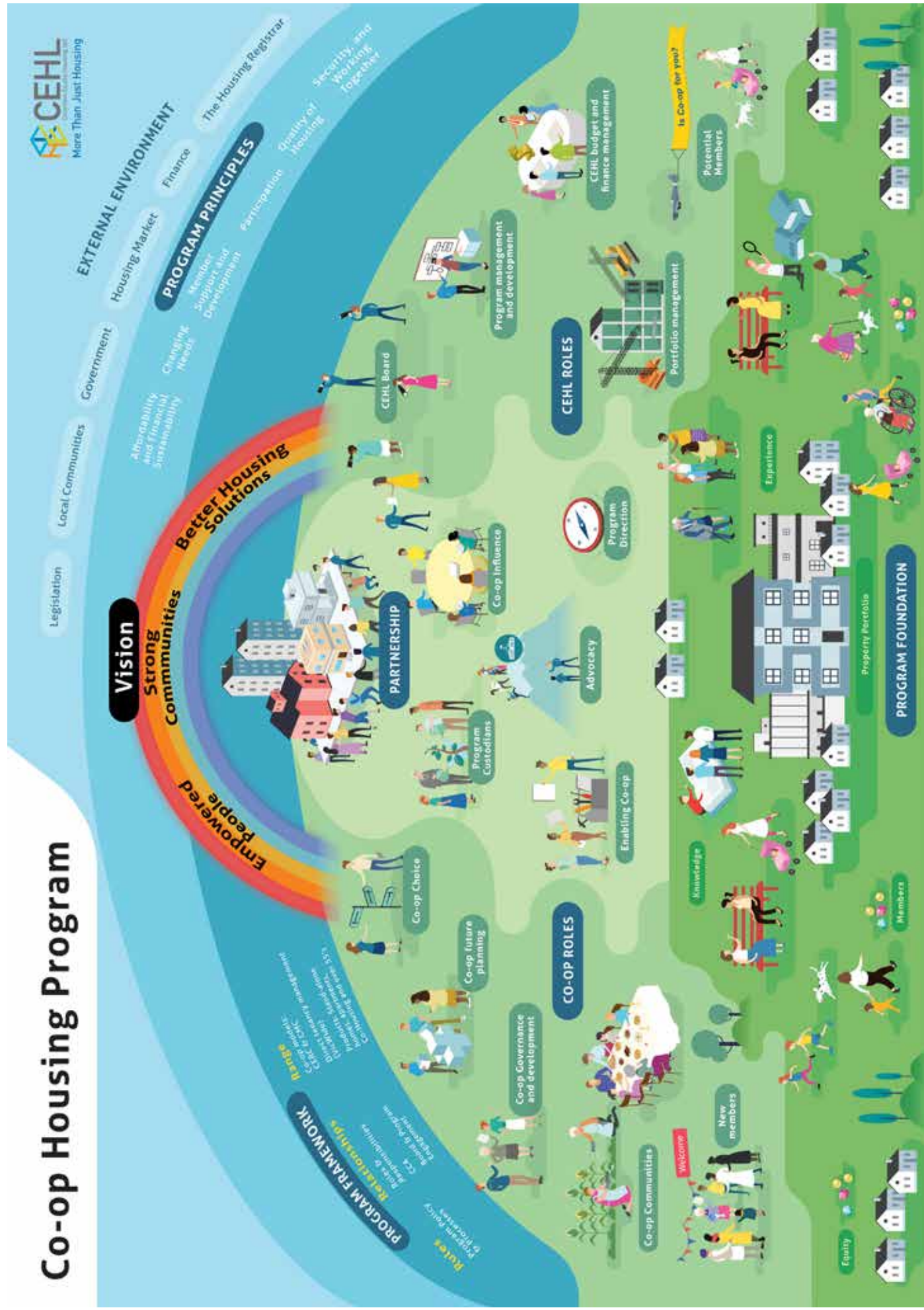
Scholarship Graduate . . .

Congratulations Lila from Diamond Valley/Whittlesea Community Managed Co-op, graduating with a Certificate IV in Accounting. Lila is the Treasurer in her co-op!

Did you or a family member receive a CEHL Scholarship in the past? We'd love to hear from you.

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

Co-op Housing Program



The image above is a visual representation of one way the Co-op Housing Program can be described, to help with our discussions about Program Engagement. Log on to <https://yourview.cehl.com.au/> and select 'Program Engagement' to download a copy of the image.

Program Engagement Review

Co-op Housing Program

As we start the *Program Engagement Review* it's important that we have a shared understanding of what the Program is, and that we have a common way to talk about it.

So, we've developed a visual tool which brings together the important parts of the Program.

There are four fundamental aspects of the Program: the foundations built over the past thirty years; the environment the Program operates within; the roles that co-ops and CEHL have; and the partnership roles we share together.

FOUNDATIONS

It is our responsibility to build on these strong foundations, and to ensure that all Program resources are used for the benefit of members now and into the future.

EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

While the operating environment creates the boundaries for the Program, there are enormous opportunities for the Program to change and grow within them as well.

We have over \$800 million of equity that was made possible through subsidies Government provided. In return we have significant obligations to ensure we look after this equity, alongside ensuring we are compliant with legislation and regulations.

Pathway to a Co-op Led Program

The CEHL Board is committed to delivering a co-op led program. Together over the last 30 years we have built a large co-op program. It is amazing what we have achieved. And we can do more.

We are committed to the international principle that co-operatives are led by members, who actively participate in setting policies and making decisions. The CEHL Board want to make sure you are still driving us forward. We want to regularly check-in to make sure we hear your voices to plan for our future and deliver the things that are important to you.

First we are seeking your feedback about what works and what doesn't for co-ops.

SURVEY

We are doing this through a survey of each co-op. The feedback will be analysed and options will be put back to you to consider.

WORKSHOPS

We will run workshops to co-design any changes we could make. So far we have heard some great ideas about how we can improve service and communication, but also how we might look at improving benefits (like solar or concessions) and advocate for more housing.

Go to www.cehl.com.au and follow the 'Have your Say' and 'Program Engagement' links to the survey and tools to support your co-op's conversations. To be a truly Co-op Led Program we want to be confident that we've heard your voices!

ROLES

Co-ops and CEHL have different Program roles. As long as it's within the Program Principles and Framework, co-ops can choose how they wish to undertake their roles in a way that is unique, and reflects the strengths and wishes of members.

CEHL's primary role is as enabler of the Program. The CEHL Board is ultimately responsible and accountable for key Program decisions informed by co-op views.

The collective effort of co-ops in partnership and together with CEHL delivers the Program. The Program changes over time, to reflect changing co-op needs and new challenges and opportunities in the external environment. Co-ops have the right and the opportunity to influence and shape Program direction.

This is one way that Program can be described, and we're sure you each have your own version, so it's just a starting place to help us with our discussions together about becoming *A Co-op Led Program*.



Circuit Replacement

You may be wondering, what happened to the Circuit Replacement project..?

You would be right in thinking that it has gone a little quiet.

After the rigorous testing undertaken by co-op bookkeeping volunteers last year, the program was found unable to meet co-op or CEHL's needs.

Unfortunately, we have not been able to identify an alternative product that fits our requirements at this time.

We are looking into other bookkeeping programs in order to weigh up options about creating a program that suits our needs.

Until we find a suitable program we will continue to use Circuit. Co-op Treasurers and Bookkeepers should have received their 2018-19 Circuit file during the month of June.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to email aimie@cehl.com.au

**Claim your
\$50
power saving
bonus**

The Victorian Government's \$50 Power Saving Bonus payment is available from 1 July to 31 December 2018.

To claim your bonus go to compare.energy.vic.gov.au



Top 4 ways to save money on electricity

1. Compare your retailer

There are many ways to compare your retailer to the rest of the market. The easiest way is to chat with neighbours, family, and friends or support worker and see what kind of a deal they have found. Use a comparison service such as the Victorian Government website compare.energy.vic.gov.au who also offer a \$50 rebate see details below.

It really does pay to see what the right plan is for you. Just don't forget to mention rebates such as low income or health rebates.

2. Clean or replace filters

Clean and or replace your filters regularly, this will support smooth and efficient running of your appliances. An easy example of this is a clothes dryer when the fluff builds up in the filter. This slows down the flow of air and can sometimes take twice as long to dry your clothes and cost you twice as much as well!

3. Understand your energy bill

Get to know what's on your energy bill, things such as daily supply charges, Kilowatts per Hour (KWH), pay on time discounts, fees, charges, not to mention usage and averages. These can all sometimes get quite confusing, however a little time invested in this area could end up saving you quite a lot.

4. Use energy efficient appliances

According to the Australian Government website on energy savings, energy efficient appliances account for up to 30% of your home energy use.

More and more we are using appliances to make our lives easy. Therefore consideration for efficient appliances is important, it is equally as important to use the appliances we already have efficiently, i.e. a warm wash uses up to 5 times more energy than a cold wash. Using energy efficient lighting will also save you money as they use less power and generally last a lot longer.

LINKS

Victorian Energy Compare
<https://compare.energy.vic.gov.au/>



Using your Split System efficiently

The CEHL Maintenance Services Team has been doing some research into the efficient operation of systems.

If used appropriately they are one of the most energy efficient methods of heating and cooling your home.

If you operate and maintain your split system wisely, you can reduce your heating costs and still be comfortable.

- 1. Minimise the area to be heated or cooled** by closing doors to areas of your home you're not using.
- 2. Set your thermostat between 18°C and 20°C for Winter and 24-26°C in Summer.** Every degree higher or lower can increase your bill by up to 10%
- 3. Don't leave your heater on** - It's far cheaper to turn your heater off while you're out or overnight while sleeping, and on again when you return or wake up in the morning.
- 4. Clean the filters** on your split system every 3 weeks to ensure they are working efficiently (details on how to do this are in the instruction manual).

LINKS

<http://www.sustainability.vic.gov.au/You-and-Your-Home/Save-energy/Heating/Use-your-heating-system-efficiently>

Rent Model Review UPDATE

The Rent Model Advisory Group (RMAG) were pleased to see so many co-ops engaged in discussions about the Rent Model Review at the CEHL conference on 15th June (photo below taken at the conference).



Your responses have helped the Advisory Group to draft a set of recommendations which they hope to submit to the CEHL Board in late October.

Copies of the *Draft Rent Model Recommendations* and a set of background papers have been sent to all co-operatives, they are also available on the *Have Your Say* section of the CEHL website.

Before submitting these recommendations to the CEHL Board, RMAG is seeking feedback from each co-op via the *Rent Model Review Recommendations Feedback Survey*.

YOUR FEEDBACK REQUIRED - VIA SURVEY

The survey can also be accessed on the *Have Your Say* page of the CEHL website and a paper version of the survey was included with the *Draft Recommendations* documents sent to each co-op.

The survey can be completed **online by 10th September 2018**. If you prefer to submit your co-op responses by mail, the survey will need to reach CEHL offices by **3rd September by post**.

If your co-op needs further information, or would like assistance to plan discussions in your co-op about the recommendations, please contact your Co-op Development Co-ordinator at CEHL on 9208 0800.

LINKS

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

Member Portal

Work has well and truly started on the 'member portal'.

What's a member portal?

It's an area of the website where people in the CEHL Housing Program, co-op members and direct tenants, can login to access information relevant to them.

Why do we need a portal?

- It will be more convenient for people in the CEHL Housing Program to update and access information more easily
- It will enable co-ops and CEHL to share information more easily
- enable CEHL to provide more timely and up-to-date information
- reduce operational costs eg: on average CEHL spends \$5,000 a month on postage!
- It can adapt and change to our needs over time

What will I be able to do in the portal?

When the portal is activated later in the year you will be able to:

- access information relevant to you
 - view CEHL memos
 - view your rent statement (if you receive from CEHL)
 - read and share *Co-operatively Speaking* articles
- update your contact details
- complete the Household Information Form
- update household income details if they change
- direct access to comment and share information on *Have Your Say*
- Register for events / forums / workshops
- Complete surveys

Over time we will be developing more functionality.

Is my information safe?

The security and safety of your information is a high priority for CEHL, we manage your 'data' according to the relevant State and Commonwealth Privacy laws. See the [CEHL Privacy statement](#) for more information.

The portal has a secure firewall, it's like a filing cabinet that only people with authorised access 'a key', (which is your own special password, which you will create) can open. Regular tests are undertaken to ensure the system can block any 'illegal' attempts to access information.



We need your help . . .

It's time for co-ops to shine!

We all play a role in the success and uptake of the portal we need your help to get it right and make it a useful tool that you will use.

Our aim is to get as many people in our Housing Program as we can in this first year logging on, using the portal our short term goal is to get 25% of members updating their Household information via the member portal in 2019!

Could YOU be your Co-op's Champion . . ?

We are looking for a 'Co-op Champion' in every co-op to help your members use the portal and get online.

This is a voluntary role to support the members of your own co-op or region.

Co-op Champions receive training

Skills required:

- willingness to learn and help others
- know how to find information on a website
- have access to a computer or tablet and the internet

Time required

September 2018 to February 2019
- estimated 2 hours training
- up to 5 hours supporting your co-op members (this will vary per co-op)

See [Have Your Say Portal Project](#) for more information or call Sandra on 9208 0803, send your Co-op approved Co-op Champion details to sandra@cehl.com.au by 23 August 2018

www.cehl.com.au

Our new website is up and running - have you seen it yet?

Get online and check it out, you can easily access via a smart phone, tablet or the old fashioned way, on a computer!
Tell us what you think about the website so we can keep improving, email Communications Manager Sandra Castro sandra@cehl.com.au

Thank-you

Eyrie Co-op member Anette is extremely pleased with the major works recently completed on her home. The new roof, windows and insulation have already made a significant difference to Anette.

An Invitation to Observe Policy Advisory Committee

PAC is excited to extend an invitation to all co-op members to attend the September PAC meeting as observers.

The PAC meeting will be held on 10:30 to 2:30pm Friday the 14th of September 2018, at the CEHL Boardroom.

To register your interest contact Peter Sleeman via email at peters@cehl.com.au
In your email please provide your name and co-op and a sentence as to what you would like to get out of attending PAC as an observer.



"The roofing team is a showcase in good workplace relations. Calm, respectful, well coordinated teamwork. They turn up on time and power through the work."

New windows at the front have made a noticeable difference to the temperature inside the house... (pictured above)

Thank you Brad, and thank you Asset Management Team! "

Anette

Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) Update

PAC recently sent four Policy items to the Board for their consideration in their June meeting. The items below have been approved by the CEHL Board and are available on the website.

PROGRAM POLICY / PROCEDURE NAME	THIS POLICY COVERS . . .
Strategic Leasing of CEHL Housing Stock Program Policy DRAFT	The circumstances in which CEHL may strategically lease a small number of properties not currently allocated to co-ops in the private rental market.
Program Response Changing Housing Needs Program Policy DRAFT	CEHL's and co-ops' obligations to respond to a co-op member's changing housing needs.
Program Policy Ending a Tenancy (Landlord initiated) AMENDED FINAL DRAFT	<i>The Ending a Tenancy (Landlord Initiated) Program Policy</i> was approved by the Board in February 2017. In the subsequent application of the policy, feedback has been received that the policy could: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• better address the implementation challenges of ending a tenancy• more clearly detail the responsibilities of co-ops and CEHL The revised draft policy seeks to address this feedback.
Leave of Occupancy Procedure DRAFT	The procedure that accompanies the <i>Leave of Occupancy Policy</i> .

Policy Consultation current round July - August

The current 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>

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

For up to date event and venue details go to **What's on** on the website
www.cehl.com.au CEHL 1800 353 669

13 August + 10 September	RMAG Advisory Group	Regional Training - Maintenance	
29 August 26 September 31 October 21 November	CEHL Board Meeting	6 August	Bendigo Gippsland
20 September 13 December	Training Advisory Committee Meeting	7 August	Metro South
14 September 13 December	Policy Advisory Committee Meeting	8 August	Ballarat Peninsula
15 July to 16 Aug	Policy Consultation	9 August	Geelong Shepparton
7 November	Newsletter Advisory Group Meeting	14 August	Metro West
24 November	Annual General Meeting	15 August	Metro North
Regional Forum			
3 September 3 December	Gippsland	6 September 6 December	Shepparton Geelong
4 September 4 December	Metro South East	11 September 11 December	Metro West
5 September 5 December	Peninsula Bendigo Ballarat	12 September 12 December	Metro North

Garden of Friendship

Author unknown

When I feel a bit lonely, or just a bit low.
 To lighten my spirits out gardening I go.
 It's a garden of friendships, each plant that I tend
 Reminds me of someone and each one a friend.
 When I gaze on the beauty, friend's faces I see
 And I think of the plants they have given to me.
 The bulbs and the seedlings, the cuttings and all
 If it wasn't for friends I'd have no garden at all.
 In my garden of friendship, midst colour and scent
 My friends are all with me and I am content.

Shared by John Harrison, Southerners Co-op

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