



A framework for expanding Homeshare across Victoria: Principles, practice and standards for a safe, scalable statewide model

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About HANZA

Homeshare Australia and New Zealand Alliance (HANZA) is the peak body for Homeshare programs across Australia and New Zealand. HANZA promotes, advocates for, and supports homesharing as a professionally facilitated, mutually beneficial living arrangement that provides companionship, support, and affordable accommodation. We support shared living arrangements that benefit individuals and strengthen community well-being. HANZA is a member of the Homeshare International Network.

www.hanza.org.au

About this document

This document leverages over 20-years' applied experience implementing Homeshare programs in Australia, as well as drawing on academic reviews and literature reviews of Homeshare programs in Australia and internationally.

These draft principles and system requirements are intended to guide the development of a safe, scalable and sustainable Homeshare Framework in Victoria, consistent with Recommendation 30 of the Parliament of Victoria Legislative Assembly Environment and Planning Committee Inquiry into the Supply of Homes in Regional Victoria. The core principles and requirements have been developed by HANZA, in consultation with key stakeholders and partners in delivering Homeshare, based on:

- HANZA's national practice experience
- Program evidence from prior and existing programs in Victoria
- Emerging regional practice across Australia
- Established international Homeshare models
- Relevant housing, ageing, disability and prevention policy literature.

Homeshare has the potential to contribute both to ageing in place outcomes and to improved housing affordability and utilisation of existing housing stock, particularly in regional communities.

Homeshare brings together people across the community, with householders—including older people and people with disability—sharing their homes with home seekers who may include workers, students, and people experiencing housing insecurity.

These flexible, supported arrangements enable people to remain living in their communities while strengthening social connection and cohesion.

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Definitions

Supported homeshare - Refers to homesharing models that are facilitated by a third-party organisation, that assesses, screens, matches, introduces, supports and monitors the homesharing arrangement. The term 'homeshare' as used in this document applies specifically to 'supported homeshare' arrangements, unless explicitly stated otherwise.

Self-directed homeshare - Refers to homesharing arrangements that individual homeowners and homeseekers establish for themselves, without the support of a third-party Homeshare specialist. These 'self-directed homeshare' arrangements may benefit from the public resources provided by HANZA or other third-parties implementing 'supported homeshare arrangements', however it is the intention of this document and HANZA's work more broadly, to resource 'supported homeshare' programs.

Householder/s - The person with a house and spare room that voluntarily chooses to enter a homesharing relationship, and host a 'home seeker'.

Homeseeker/s - The person who is seeking a home to live in, usually as a result of housing instability.

Matches - Both householders and homeseekers, once they have entered a supported homeshare arrangement.

Homeshare auspicing organisation - The organisation that administers and delivers a supported Homeshare program in a specific location.

FRAMEWORK PRINCIPLES

The principles are the pre-requisites that enable supported homesharing programs to be successful. It is recommended that these principles are central to the development and implementation of a Homeshare framework for Victoria.

Principle 1: Mutual benefit, choice and reciprocity

Homeshare is built on voluntary, mutually beneficial relationships that respond to the needs, preferences and circumstances of both householders and home seekers.

At its core, Homeshare is a reciprocal arrangement in which each participant both contributes and benefits. This mutuality is central to the effectiveness, integrity and sustainability of Homeshare.

A Homeshare Framework for Victoria must be grounded in participant choice, autonomy and person-centred practice, recognising that people engage in Homeshare for a range of reasons, including housing, companionship, contribution and support.

Homeshare programs must support:

- informed consent by all participants
- choice and control in entering, shaping and ending arrangements
- flexibility of arrangements to reflect individual needs and changing circumstances
- recognition of diverse motivations and contributions
- clear, shared agreements that are developed, understood and adapted by both parties, with appropriate support from the auspicing organisation

Principle 2 – Safety and safeguarding

Homeshare arrangements must be designed and supported to ensure the safety, wellbeing and rights of all participants.

Safety and safeguarding are essential to building trust and enabling positive, sustainable Homeshare relationships. This requires a proactive and proportionate approach to risk, responsive to individual circumstances, while maintaining participant choice, autonomy and dignity.

A Homeshare Framework for Victoria must establish clear safeguarding expectations and practices, with particular attention to risks that may arise in the context of ageing, disability, housing insecurity and other forms of vulnerability, for both householders and home seekers.

Homeshare is not a substitute for formal care or support services. While arrangements may include low-level, informal support—such as companionship or assistance with everyday tasks—any formal support needs must be identified, assessed and met independently of the Homeshare arrangement.

Homeshare auspicing organisations must be appropriately resourced and supported to assess participant suitability, identify support needs, and ensure that arrangements are safe and sustainable.

In practice, upholding safety and safeguarding requires:

- clear assessment processes, including confirming that any formal support needs are met outside the Homeshare arrangement
- appropriate screening and risk assessment of all participants
- thoughtful and compatible matching processes
- clear, documented agreements outlining roles, expectations, boundaries and supports in scope
- guidance on ending arrangements, including clear exit pathways and contractual provisions
- ongoing monitoring and support, including regular check-ins
- clear risk management frameworks, including mitigation strategies and response pathways

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- alignment with safeguarding best practice
- access to independent guidance, advice and escalation pathways, including from a central third-party body

International Homeshare practice demonstrates that facilitated programs with structured screening, matching and ongoing support produce safer and more sustainable outcomes than informal arrangements.¹

Principle 3 — Locally grounded, systems connected, consistent statewide

Homeshare programs should be locally responsive and place-based, while operating within a consistent statewide framework and quality expectations. This includes:

- regional tailoring
- consistent minimum requirements
- support for smaller communities
- avoidance of over-centralisation

Evidence from mature Homeshare jurisdictions indicates that locally delivered models operating within a shared understanding of minimum requirements provides the strongest foundation for safe expansion.²

Homeshare works best when embedded within local communities and community organisations, that have social capital and trust in the local community; connection to prospective householders and homeseekers; and existing systems infrastructure and supports to leverage in the management of homesharing arrangements. This includes:

- local government
- health services
- community housing

¹ Homeshare International; National Shared Housing Resource Center - international Homeshare guidance and practice resources.

² North American and UK Homeshare program experience, including Vermont Homeshare and related shared housing networks.

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- aged care providers
- disability and community organisations.

Australian and international experience demonstrates that cross-sector partnerships strengthen referrals, participant safety and program sustainability.³ In addition to housing outcomes, Homeshare programs internationally have been shown to strengthen social connection, intergenerational exchange and community cohesion.⁴

A statewide Community of Practice should be established to support Homeshare programs through shared learning, collaboration and dissemination of evidence-based practice resources. This could build on and integrate with HANZA's existing national Community of Practice for Homeshare providers, enabling Victorian programs to benefit from established national infrastructure, cross-jurisdictional learning and sector-wide capability development.

Principle 4 — Prevention and early intervention focus

Homeshare should be positioned as a longer-term, preventative, early intervention approach that supports a housing stability and ageing-in-place strategy, rather than a crisis response.

A Homeshare Framework for Victoria should seek to address:

- **Precarious housing circumstances of home seekers** - with the intention to (temporarily) address their housing instability, avoid reliance on public housing and homelessness services, and support them in their pathway into the housing market.
- **Social and informal support needs of homeowners** to keep them thriving in their homes. These needs may vary significantly depending on the individual's circumstances. Homeshare has predominantly been used as an approach to support older people to 'age-in-place' and reduce reliance on public aged care systems for matters that can be addressed through social support. However it has also been adapted to the contexts of homeowners with disability, or who are carers of family members with disability to address their needs, and families with children with low level support needs.

³ Australian and international integrated care and place-based service literature; HANZA member practice experience.

⁴ International Homeshare program outcomes relating to social connection, intergenerational exchange and community cohesion.

Homeshare is not designed to replace formal care or crisis housing responses. Instead, it complements these systems by addressing needs earlier and reducing pressure on more intensive services.

Better utilisation of existing housing stock is increasingly recognised in Australian policy analysis as part of the response to housing pressures and population ageing.⁵

A prevention and early intervention focus would include the following:

- targeting people at risk of housing stress or isolation
- alignment with ageing-in-place policy
- integration with regional workforce and housing strategies
- avoidance of costs associated with system crisis responses

Homeshare principles have been adapted by hosting organisations to respond to rapid onset disasters - such as housing loss due to bushfires⁶. Whilst Victoria may well benefit from expanded understanding of homesharing arrangements and availability of homesharing resources in disaster contexts, it is recommended that a Homeshare Framework for Victoria focuses on longer-term, preventative approaches that simultaneously address housing instability and homelessness for homeseekers.

Principle 5 — Housing affordability and supply optimisation

Homeshare should be recognised and positioned as a practical housing affordability and supply optimisation solution making better use of existing housing stock while supporting diverse household needs.

Homeshare programs internationally have demonstrated their capacity to expand affordable housing options while supporting ageing in place and community connection.⁷

⁵ Productivity Commission: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare - analysis related to housing utilisation, ageing and housing pressures.

⁶ A recent example of this is the application of Homeshare Mount Alexander's principles and policies to Dhelkaya Health's coordination of temporary housing solutions as a result of the Harcourt fires in early 2026. However, these were provided as guidance only for residents to enter into self-directed homesharing arrangements, rather than supported Homeshare, with oversight from Homeshare Mount Alexander.

⁷ North American and UK Homeshare practice, including Homeshare Vermont and related shared housing networks A Framework for Expanding Homeshare Across Victoria: Principles, practice and standards for a safe, scalable statewide model

Homeshare also aligns with growing international interest in better use of existing housing stock (“housing sufficiency”) as a sustainable response to housing pressures.⁸

A Homeshare Framework for Victoria would align with state housing and regional development strategies, contribute to broader housing system responses and assist in:

- increasing access to affordable housing options for home seekers. This is at a significantly reduced cost compared to other temporary housing solutions for both home seekers individually and for Government
- improving utilisation of under-occupied dwellings
- supporting key workers and other low- to moderate-income home seekers in regional areas where housing affordability and availability constrain workforce participation and community sustainability
- enabling inclusive housing options, including people living with a disability
- and other cohorts seeking community-based living

Principle 6 — Community readiness and local stewardship

All communities where housing vulnerability exists could benefit from Homeshare programs. However, there are community cultures and environments that may make communities more accepting and open to the concept.

Successful Homeshare programs depend on strong local engagement, trust and readiness. Expansion should prioritise communities where there is demonstrated interest, partnership commitment and organisational capability to support safe implementation.

A staged approach to a statewide roll-out could be adopted to prioritise communities and host organisations where Homeshare is established. This is in order to maximise the success of a Homeshare program in Victoria.

The attributes that these communities could have, include:

- established community organisations and groups that support programs aligned to Homesharing
- an established retirement community with the capacity for volunteering and community engagement

⁸ Daniel Fuhrhop - work on housing sufficiency and better utilisation of existing housing stock.

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- existing social capital and infrastructure for community awareness and engagement activities
- active community groups and community engagement activities, that can be leveraged for promotion of Homeshare
- strong patterns of engagement in relevant community activities
- trusted local host organisations
- appropriate demographic profile to recruit homesharers

These pre-conditions will lead to a quicker roll out and uptake of Homeshare programs, that are expected - over time - to contribute to wider awareness of the model. This requires consistent efforts throughout the delivery the Homeshare Framework for Victoria to:

- assess community readiness before establishing new programs
- build local partnerships and referral pathways
- support community awareness and engagement
- enable staged and demand-led growth.

Experience from Australian programs, including Homeshare Mount Alexander⁹ and emerging regional initiatives such as Hunter Homeshare¹⁰, highlights the importance of local stewardship in achieving safe and sustainable outcomes.¹¹

Principle 7 — Scalable and sustainable

The framework should support the safe, staged and sustainable expansion of Homeshare across Victoria.

Scaling should be measured and supported, ensuring that growth does not compromise safety, quality or program integrity.

This would include:

- an appropriate and sustainable funding model
- workforce and capability support
- digital tools and systems

⁹ See <https://dhelkayahealth.org.au/homeshare/>

¹⁰ See <https://embracepp.org.au/projects/hunter-homeshare/>

¹¹ HANZA member program experience including Homeshare Mount Alexander and emerging regional Homeshare initiatives.

- staged expansion

Experience from mature Homeshare jurisdictions demonstrates that incremental, supported scaling is critical to maintaining safety, quality and long-term sustainability.

REQUIREMENTS OF A STATEWIDE FRAMEWORK

A statewide approach to implementing and expanding Homeshare programs across Victoria must address these following requirements to enable success.

1 — Resourced, central coordination body

A statewide, centralised coordination body for overseeing good governance, standardising practice and providing centralised technical support and guidance to Homeshare programs across Victoria.

A resourced body that is independent to regional Homeshare programs, would support collective learning and continual improvement, through the gathering and dissemination of best practice resources and evidence-based learning and insights. It would support the standardisation of governance practices - as supported by evidence - whilst allowing for regional differential applications of the Homeshare model.

The Homeshare coordination body would enable and enhance the uptake of Homeshare, through the provision of centralised technical support and resources, and increase the efficiency and effectiveness of all Homeshare programs across Victoria. It would support a Community of Practice of Homeshare programs, bringing localised Homeshare coordinators together to support their program's learning and development.

The centralised body may also support the adherence to the framework principles and the delivery of:

- Requirement 2: Independent program coordination and promotion
- Requirement 3: Guidance standards for program and practice quality
- Requirement 4: Minimum safeguarding and screening standards
- Requirement 5: Clear participant agreements and expectations
- Requirement 7: Explicit support for regional implementation
- Requirement 8: Centralised data capturing, monitoring and evaluation

This body should be resourced with appropriately qualified staffing to implement statewide coordination activities. It is recommended that at least 1 FTE Homeshare Lead be employed.

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HANZA has established systems, processes, training resources and a national Community of Practice that position it as a key partner to support implementation, capability-building and quality development across Homeshare initiatives.

2 — Independent program coordination and promotion

Each Homeshare program - through the auspicing organisation - must be resourced by a Homeshare Coordinator to at least 1 full time equivalent (FTE) role on commencement, with skills and experience appropriate to promoting and developing the program, engaging participants and overseeing the delivery of the program.

This varied and hands-on role requires advanced skills, including but not limited to:

- community development skills and experience
- relationship management skills
- communications and awareness raising
- non-clinical case work supervision
- participant assessment and matching
- support coordination
- monitoring and evaluation.

This clearly defined position, would be responsible for all stages of the Homeshare relationship between homesharers, as well as the engagement of prospective homeowners and home seekers.

Evidence from North American and UK programs indicates that facilitated Homeshare models with dedicated coordination and promotional capability achieve significantly better safety and sustainability outcomes than informal matching approaches.¹²

The coordination function must be delivered by an organisation with demonstrated alignment to the purpose and values of Homeshare and with the capability to uphold safeguarding and quality standards.

It is important to note that this function extends beyond administration, and draws on community program development skills, to engage with stakeholders and raise awareness of the program within the community.

It is recommended that staffing is increased as the program grows, with the intention of having 2FTE roles in each locally based Homeshare program by year 3 of implementation.

¹² Homeshare international; National Shared Housing Resource Center - international Homeshare guidance and practice resources.

3 — Guidance standards for program and practice quality

A Homeshare Framework for Victoria should establish the minimum practice requirements to ensure consistency in program implementation. This would include minimum requirements, methodology guidance and practice principles.

Whilst allowing for flexibility to meet contextual and localised needs, successful Homeshare programs all follow a similar, staged structure. It is expected that guidance and requirements would be available for all stages of program delivery, including:

Promote: Raise awareness of the program through communications, marketing and community engagement.

Recruit: Encourage householders and home seekers to join the program, through a relationship management approach.

Assess: Appraise the suitability of applicants for the Homeshare program, against participation criteria

Screen: Conduct standardised screening and safeguarding checks. (See also 4 - Minimum safeguarding and screening standards)

Match: Introduce householders and home seekers that could be suitable as homesharers, to explore whether they wish to voluntarily enter into a homesharing arrangement. If there is agreement, provide support for formalising successful matches.

Support: Oversee the homeshare arrangement and the implications for both householders and homeseekers, through regular check-ins. There will be more frequent check-ins (e.g. weekly) at the start of matches.

Monitor: Provide reviews of both individual homesharing arrangements and the program overall, including the analysis of data and emerging trends, and application of a continual improvement approach to the program.

HANZA is well positioned to contribute to the development of a statewide approach drawing on existing guidance and through providing support to locally-based Homeshare hosting organisations and coordinators.

Homeshare coordinators may be accountable for all stages of implementation (as per 2 - *Independent program coordination and promotion*) and these roles should be well-resourced with the appropriate skills and experiences to manage the diverse portfolio.

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4 — Minimum safeguarding and screening standards

Safeguarding is central to a supported Homeshare approach. The Framework must include proportionate but robust minimum requirements for participating Homeshare host organisations screening homeowners and home seekers.

This includes but is not limited to requiring the following mandatory checks and assurance processes:

- identity verification
- reference checks
- appropriate checks, such as police checks, working with children checks (if applicable)
- appropriate insurance cover
- a Homeshare agreement or contract is in place between the householder and home seeker
- risk assessment processes
- ongoing monitoring, by the supported Homeshare auspice organisation.

Requirements should be fit-for-purpose and proportionate, particularly for regional implementation.

5 — Clear participant agreements and expectations

All Homeshare arrangements must be supported by:

- written agreements
- clearly defined expectations
- dispute resolution pathways
- exit processes

Clear agreements are recognised internationally as essential to protecting both householders and home seekers.¹³

6 — Sustainable funding for delivery and coordination

Homeshare provides low-cost housing supply — but not zero-cost to coordinate. As housing support and specialist homelessness services are Government funded, the alternate investment in, and expansion of Homeshare would contribute to a reduction in other public housing and homelessness expenditure.

Multi-year investment is essential to ensure safety, quality and scalability and to realise the housing affordability benefits of Homeshare at scale.¹⁴

A minimum of 3-years of initial program and central coordination funding would be required to enable Homeshare to be expanded across Victoria in up to three regional locations.

This funding would support:

- Recruitment of local program implementation staff, and a statewide lead
- Development of guidance and requirements
- Implementation of standardised approaches and capability building support, to enable safeguards and enhance program quality
- Continual improvement practice, monitoring, evaluation and learning
- Capability building across the Victoria

7 — Explicit support for regional implementation

The framework should support the application of Homeshare models across urban, regional and rural settings in Victoria. However, it should explicitly address and overcome implementation challenges in regional and rural Victoria through:

- flexible delivery models

¹³ Homeshare International — core principles of mutually beneficial Homeshare arrangements. See www.homeshare.org

¹⁴ North American and UK Homeshare practice, including Homeshare Vermont and related shared housing networks. A Framework for Expanding Homeshare Across Victoria: Principles, practice and standards for a safe, scalable statewide model

- support for smaller communities
- recognition of workforce constraints
- partnership with health services and local government

Particular attention should be given to cohorts experiencing housing stress in regional communities, including older people, key workers and people with disability. This reflects the particular housing and service dynamics in regional Victoria identified in the Parliamentary Inquiry.¹⁵

It is recommended that Homeshare expansion begins in regional Victoria as there is increased housing stress and housing shortages, and increased awareness of existing Homeshare models.

8 — Centralised data capturing, monitoring and evaluation

The framework should support ongoing data collection, evaluation and continuous improvement. This is to enhance locally based Homeshare programs and support the appropriate expansion of homesharing to other locations across Victoria that face housing shortages, ageing populations, or with high populations of people at risk of housing instability.

International Homeshare networks emphasise the importance of consistent but proportionate data collection to support program quality and policy confidence.¹⁶

Data capturing, monitoring and evaluation should:

- be centralised to scale-up learnings on a statewide level, whilst also implemented locally to identify and respond to specific program trends
- enable consistent core data collection across all Homeshare programs (through a centralised approach)
- ensure data collection requirements are proportionate to the capacity of small, regional Homeshare programs

¹⁵ Victorian Government (November 2025) Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry into the Supply of Homes in Regional Victoria. Available at: <https://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/regionalhousing>

¹⁶ Homeshare International; National Shared Housing Resource Center — international Homeshare program guidance and practice resources

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- implement a shared outcomes framework to support outcomes and impact measurement, in addition to output data collection
 - support research partnerships and external evaluation to enhance evaluation and program quality and capability
-

References and Practice Resources

- Australian and international integrated care and place-based service literature.
- Daniel Fuhrhop — work on housing sufficiency and better utilisation of existing housing stock.
- HANZA practice guidance and operational resources.
- Homeshare International — core principles and international practice resources.
- Homeshare International; National Shared Housing Resource Center — international Homeshare program guidance and practice resources.
- International Homeshare program outcomes relating to social connection, intergenerational exchange and community cohesion.
- North American and UK Homeshare practice, including Homeshare Vermont's partnership based implementation model and related shared housing networks.
- Productivity Commission; Australian Institute of Health and Welfare — analysis relating to housing utilisation, ageing and housing pressures.
- Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry into the Supply of Homes in Regional Victoria.

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