

# Local action plan 2022-2023

Paving the Way Forward  
North Melbourne



# Acknowledgements

## **Acknowledgement of traditional owners**

We are proud to acknowledge the Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung people as the traditional owners of the land on which the North Melbourne public housing estate stands.

We offer our deepest respect to elders – past, present and emerging.

## **Acknowledgement of the North Melbourne public housing community**

It has been a great privilege for the Paving the Way Forward team to work closely with so many residents in the North Melbourne public housing community.

Their courage, knowledge and strength is inspiring.  
This work would not have been possible without them.

We extend our gratitude to residents for their willingness and trust in sharing the personal experiences and ideas that have been so important to the success of this work.

Paving the Way Forward acknowledges the longstanding commitment of the many community- and resident-led organisations working alongside residents that will persevere long after this plan is implemented.

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2022 Harmony Day at the North Melbourne public housing estate

# Summary

The North Melbourne public housing estate community is a well-connected, diverse community. Close to Melbourne's CBD, the community is well positioned to enjoy what inner-city life has to offer. It has many strengths and a deep sense of pride. But the community faces challenges to do with unemployment, maintenance in their homes and on the estate, a lack of involvement in decisions that affect them, safety and accessing services.

In 2021, the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (the department) set up the Paving the Way Forward (PTWF) initiative. The aim was to find better ways of working with residents at the Flemington and North Melbourne public housing estates. The department wanted to work in partnership to:

- solve local issues
- build on local strengths
- change the way government and community interact.

Over the past year, residents of the North Melbourne estate and the PTWF team have worked together on a plan. The result is this *North Melbourne local action plan 2022–23*.

Residents raised their ideas and shared their experiences by:

- welcoming pop-up conversations at the entrance of their homes
- taking part in co-design workshops and resident action groups
- solving complex issues in focus groups
- going to community events with their neighbours
- putting their ideas into action through the PTWF community grants program (refer to Appendix 2).

The department partnered with community organisations – known collectively as the North Melbourne Community Partner – to develop and roll out the plan. These organisations included North Melbourne Language and Learning, Mission Australia and Drummond Street Services.

This plan transforms the needs, ideas and goals of residents into **five focus areas** and **65 achievable actions**.

These will have positive and lasting effects through **partnerships, targeted funding** and **promotion**. Actions started rolling out in January 2022. Most are due to be done by mid-2023, and others soon after. Together, the actions in this plan will have an ongoing impact by:

- building community capacity
- supporting resident employment and self-determination
- developing lasting local partnerships.

Overall, the plan highlights the collective voices of the North Melbourne public housing estate community, captures their experiences, hopes and aspirations. It outlines the early actions and responses already underway and key partners that will work with the community to pave the way forward for a better future.

# North Melbourne local action plan 2022-23 overview

This plan transforms the needs, ideas and goals of residents into



The actions set out in this plan are based on community feedback from 2021–22.

Under each focus area, the plan outlines:

- **What we heard** from residents about the issues they experience
- **What residents want** to see change, their ideas and aspirations
- **What we will achieve** in this focus area
- **What we will do** to address these aspirations, needs and issues. Many of these ideas have been co-developed with residents, and are being delivered in partnership with residents, community organisations, the local council and other partners.



### Local actions

- Establish resident action group
- Involvement in designing resident decision-making models
- Education session on government workings
- Grants, community leadership, and governance training
- Local council participation
- Develop a resident-led organisation
- Consultation between residents and stakeholders
- Feedback box
- Young people podcast

## Communication and participation

### Our goal

- Residents have increased confidence in engaging in decision-making
- Residents are involved in the key decisions that impact their home, neighbourhood and services
- Residents participate in and own solutions for the issues that they see as the most pressing

## Maintenance and amenity

### Our goal

- Residents have increased knowledge of tenancy and neighbourhood management
- Property and tenancy management are timely and responsive to resident needs

### Local actions

- Maintenance and housing education series
- New resident welcome pack
- Regular estate walk-arounds
- Simplify housing information
- Trial an annual renters conference
- Improve community facilities access
- Remove unknown vehicles
- Parking adherence improvement
- Improve digital experience for maintenance requests
- Test different communication methods with residents

### Local actions

- Pampas Street courtyard update
- Pampas Street community room activation
- Increase litter facilities
- Seek opportunities for Sutton Street playground upgrade
- Improve signage
- Support resident creativity
- Promote grant opportunities
- PTWF grants program
- Wi-fi benches
- Community days
- North Melbourne cooking project
- Community art project
- Community groups networking
- Community outings
- Identify women, youth and student spaces
- Identify additional community spaces
- Seek opportunities to upgrade Alfred Street basketball court
- Explore secure bicycle parking

## Community connection and spaces

### Our goal

- Improved management of shared spaces to the benefit of residents
- Residents build their social and community connections creating stronger communities



## Safety, health and wellbeing

### Our goal

- Improved communication between services and residents
- Residents are able to access the right service at the right time
- Residents feel safe in their homes and neighbourhood

### Local actions

- Health outreach program
- Mental health program
- Health and wellbeing programs
- Health information sessions
- Parent-led playgroup
- Primary after-school activities
- Intergenerational playgroup
- Youth activities
- Map and promote local services
- Services fair
- Women's health and safety awareness
- Crime prevention assessment
- Improve lighting
- Community safety forum
- Culturally appropriate swimming
- Promote women's wellbeing
- Better information sharing
- Neighbourhood networking
- Support for parents
- Legal education and support
- Financial literacy workshops

## Employment and education

### Our goal

- Residents have increased awareness and access to the support they need to find work and training
- Residents have access to more employment pathways and job opportunities in the local area which match their career aspirations, available hours, and cultural needs

### Local actions

- Engage, map and identify employment priorities
- Small business and enterprise support
- Develop and implement a targeted employment plan
- Promote employment access
- Support employment initiatives for residents
- Help young people find their first job
- Link residents with Department of Education and Training

## Our community

The North Melbourne public housing estate is home to a diverse multicultural community who live within the five high-rise towers and other surrounding accommodation.

About 1,295 people live across about 630 properties in the North Melbourne estate.

### We are diverse

Over half of the residents come from culturally diverse backgrounds. Somalia, Ethiopia and China are the top three countries of birth after Australia.

### We are home to both young and old

40 per cent of all households on the North Melbourne estate include children or young people. Elderly single people are the most common household type, making up 39 per cent of all households.

### Many of us have lived here for a long time

More than 60 per cent of all residents have lived in the North Melbourne estate for six or more years.


### We are close to many services and public transport

The North Melbourne estate is close to several health and community services. Public transport is easily accessible from the estate.







## What residents say ...



**'The best thing about living at the North Melbourne public housing estate is the sense of community belonging. Just being one with people from the diverse cultures that live here. I feel that I fit in here, North Melbourne is where I grew up, its where my family and friends live – its where I want to be. I wouldn't change it for anything else. My friends are my brothers. When I have a problem, I feel that I have a web of protection from this community. I am proud to live in public housing and the North Melbourne Estate. There are issues here, but we also have a lot of things to be proud of.'**



**'We were living in the suburbs before moving to the estate three years ago. My mum was lonely in the suburbs, and no one looked like us. Now we feel part of a community and connected. We feel more comfortable and like we belong here.'**



**'There are a lot of problems here on the estate although I feel that the work that has been done with the community recently, due to the hard lockdown, has highlighted some of the issues that have gone unnoticed by the broader Victorian community. There have been steps to solve the issues and the local action planning process has shined a light on our voice. Now, I hope the decision makers are more open to consulting and hearing the voice of the people that live here before making decisions that affect us.'**



## Our engagement approach

Residents told us that a broad, inclusive and tailored approach was needed to ensure that we engaged with and heard from as much of the community as possible.

To achieve this, we adopted the following principles of engagement:

- **Facilitate resident-empowerment and self-determination** – create opportunities for residents to lead and ensure residents are involved in decisions that affect them.
- **Trauma-informed** – recognise trauma and the impact on individuals and community; focus on safety, choice and building trust.
- **Capacity building** – taking a strengths-based approach, enabling residents and our team to ‘climb the engagement ladder’.
- **Continuous improvement** – learning, adapting and testing our approach in response to what’s working and what’s not.
- **Accessible** – provide support for residents to take part; organise a range of activities to meet people where they are at.

# How residents have shaped the plan

The plan has been developed with residents and the community. PTWF strove to hear from as many residents as possible, offering support to help residents take part and organised a range of activities.

A significant number of North Melbourne residents have taken part through a range of ways.

## Community conversations and events



PTWF has hosted many community conversations, focus groups and events. These events included community BBQs, online forums, in-person focus groups and pop-up conversations in the foyers of each building. These events aimed to discuss the strengths, needs and opportunities of the residents. The feedback and ideas gathered through these activities helped shape the plan.

## Resident action groups

More than 70 residents have taken part in PTWF resident action groups. The groups are led by residents, local community partners and the PTWF team.

Between October 2021 and January 2022, there were five groups, each focusing on an opportunity area. These opportunity areas were highlighted through community engagement in early 2021. They were:

- COVID Response
- Communications
- Maintenance
- Community Spaces
- Flemington Redevelopment and Carpark.



Both Flemington and North Melbourne residents participated in these groups.

In March 2022, the North Melbourne Resident Action Group was established. This group includes more than 20 dedicated residents who are supporting this plan, building on the ideas and initiatives developed by the 2021 resident action groups.

The North Melbourne Resident Action Group will continue to meet monthly until June 2023. PTWF will report to this group on the progress of this plan.

## Older persons workshops



PTWF ran a series of Tai Chi classes and board-game sessions with older people from the North Melbourne estate. This was an opportunity to reconnect after two years of lockdowns and hear about opportunities that would make the estate better for older people. These workshops have informed this plan.

## Youth workshops



In March and April 2022, PTWF hosted two workshops with young people from the North Melbourne estate. 20 residents aged between 15 and 28 years of age took part in these workshops. Participants shared their views on key issues affecting them and other young people on the estate. The young people's views have shaped the priorities for the PTWF program. Many of their ideas have been included in this plan.

## Employment co-design workshops



In April and May 2022, 30 employment stakeholders took part in three co-design workshops. This group included state and local government representatives, community-led organisations and public housing residents. These workshops helped inform a shared vision and strategy to improve job opportunities for residents. This vision and strategy are summarised under the 'Employment and education' focus area in this plan.

## Community grants

In July 2021, PTWF invited community organisations, groups and residents to apply for grants to deliver projects that help create healthy, happy neighbourhoods. 24 community-led projects were funded including:



- \$10,000 for a pop-up after-school play program to help children recover from the impacts of COVID-19 and remote learning
- \$4,750 for the Resident Skills Development Project to offer residents nationally recognised training, credentials and valuable work experience
- \$4,400 for a digital literacy course for refugee and asylum seeker women to provide students with practical skills to confidently live, learn and work.

These grants allowed community members to put their ideas into action and start to deliver activities that align with the focus areas in the plan. A full list of the awarded grants is included in Appendix 2.



## Focus areas

# 1. Communication and participation

### What we heard



**'Sometimes I feel that we are treated as second-class citizens'**

**'There is a lack of transparency and trust between residents and the department'**

**'We need more opportunities to express what we want and need and participate in decision making'**

### What residents want

- More opportunities to be involved in decisions on their tenancies and communities
- More opportunities to give feedback to the local housing office and Homes Victoria
- To build and develop community leadership and grant-writing skills
- Support to run community projects and turn ideas into actions
- Opportunities for young people and older people to have a voice
- An improved relationship with relevant City of Melbourne and state government departments
- Consultation opportunities into urban redevelopments near the estates
- Regular updates on how their feedback has been actioned

## What we will achieve

- Residents have increased confidence in engaging in decision-making
- Residents are involved in the key decisions that impact their home, neighbourhood and services
- Residents participate in and own solutions for the issues that they see as the most pressing

## How we will do it

Local actions	What will be done
<b>Establish resident action group</b>	Establish a North Melbourne Resident Action Group in 2022 to follow on from the first series of action groups in 2021; this group will help develop and roll out the plan
<b>Involvement in designing resident decision-making models</b>	North Melbourne Resident Action Group involvement in the state-wide design of the empowered resident decision-making models for Homes Victoria (refer to Appendix 3 for more information)
<b>Education session on government workings</b>	Community education sessions to develop an understanding of how government works
<b>Grants, community leadership, and governance training</b>	Grants writing and community leadership training Community governance training on how to start and run a community organisation
<b>Local council participation</b>	Support to take part in local council meetings
<b>Develop a resident-led organisation</b>	Support in starting a resident-led organisation for the North Melbourne public housing estate to address community issues
<b>Consultation between residents and stakeholders</b>	Help to organise community consultations between residents and other stakeholders
<b>Feedback box</b>	Trial a feedback and suggestion box at the base of Canning Street
<b>Young people podcast</b>	Podcast training for young people



## Who will do it:

Residents, PTWF, North Melbourne Resident Action Group, North Melbourne Community Partner, resident- and community-led organisations, the department, City of Melbourne, Homes Victoria, North Melbourne Language and Learning, Non Profit Training, National Ethnic and Multicultural Broadcasters' Council (NEMBC), training providers

## Funding:

PTWF local action plan funding, Co-contributions: community organisations and PTWF, other government funding, PTWF community grants



## 2. Maintenance and amenity

### What we heard



**'There is a lack of accountability with cleaners – some don't do a good job'**

**'I have made requests to have stuff fixed – no one has come yet ... I know it's hard because of lockdowns but I would like a timeframe'**

**'Responses are inconsistent – when you are late on rent, communication is immediate, but if you ask about maintenance, you get no response'**

### What residents want

- Faster responses to maintenance and repair requests and regular progress updates
- Better communications between Homes Victoria and residents (concise, simple and available in multiple languages)
- A mobile app for maintenance requests
- A safety audit for trip hazards
- Better cleaning on the estates
- Shorter Housing Call Centre wait times and clear escalation points
- Transparency on how decisions are made that affect them
- Improved contractor performance measures and standards
- Accountability for contractors on the estate
- Removal of abandoned vehicles from the estate
- Solar panels for cheaper electricity
- Gas stoves for culturally appropriate cooking
- Improved customer services and improved trust with the local housing office
- To stop residents parking in the designated emergency services parking spaces
- To communicate with the local housing office via SMS and WhatsApp
- To have appropriate heating and cooling and to understand the application process

### What we will achieve

- Residents have increased knowledge of tenancy and neighbourhood management
- Property and tenancy management are timely and responsive to resident needs

### How we'll do it

Local actions	What will be done
<b>Maintenance and housing education series</b>	Hold an education series on property maintenance (including repairs) for residents
<b>New resident welcome pack</b>	Develop a new welcome pack for new residents moving into the estate
<b>Regular estate walk-arounds</b>	Organise regular estate walk-arounds with local housing office and residents
<b>Simplify housing information</b>	Simplify housing information and improve its readability
<b>Trial an annual renters conference</b>	Trial a housing residents conference with local housing office and residents
<b>Improve community facilities access</b>	Revise the community facilities allocation process to make it more user-friendly
<b>Remove unknown vehicles</b>	Remove abandoned vehicles from the estate
<b>Parking adherence improvement</b>	Introduce strategies for following parking rules
<b>Improve the digital experience of maintenance requests</b>	Review the user experience to find ways to be more user-friendly and allow residents to view and follow up on their maintenance request progress Pilot the maintenance reporting application that is under development
<b>Diverse communications</b>	Test different communication methods with residents



### Who will do it:

Residents, PTWF, North Melbourne Resident Action Group, resident- and community-led organisations, the department, Homes Victoria, Victorian Public Tenants Association, City of Melbourne, Victoria Police

### Funding:

PTWF local action plan funding, other government funding, currently seeking possibilities



## 3. Employment and education

### What we heard

**'Coordination needs to be done to navigate this highly saturated market'**

**'My aim is to help my daughter and my son learn more because education is very important to the people in the future'**

**'I need to know there is support available to help me in preparing my application, especially if I am unclear what to do'**

### What residents want

- Better coordination between the department, local employment agencies, the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions, the Department of Education and Training and targeted employment services to maximise job opportunities for residents
- More understanding and awareness of education, training and employment systems
- Better job-readiness skills
- Job opportunities that match people's skills and career goals – qualifications and experience (including overseas) are considered more in eligibility criteria
- The ability to undertake job-specific education and training
- Better pathways into jobs including more (paid) work experience, networking and volunteer opportunities
- More targeted support for young people, women, parents and people with disability
- More opportunities for residents to be employed by government agencies (in particular Homes Victoria)
- Strong relationships with local employers
- Appropriate evaluation of funded job programs to ensure they reflect the needs of residents, job opportunities and market conditions
- Change the school zoning for the North Melbourne public housing estate – residents would like to attend North Melbourne Primary School and University High School
- Business and enterprise support
- Changes to other services that support pathways to paid work – for example, childcare costs and hours that align more with employer expectations and the needs of residents, especially for women and parents



## What we will achieve

- Residents have increased awareness and access to the support they need to find work and training
- Residents have access to more employment pathways and job opportunities in the local area which match their career aspirations, available hours, and cultural needs

## How we'll do it

Local actions	What will be done
<b>Engage, map and identify employment priorities</b>	Engage residents, local services, community groups, community leaders and state/local government to better understand the job needs and goals of residents Map jobs and skills services operating nearby, and identify priorities to deliver these as part of this local action plan
<b>Small business and enterprise support</b>	Organise ways for current and aspiring business owners to get basic business skills and support with business and tax processes
<b>Develop and implement a targeted employment plan*</b>	Develop and roll out a targeted employment plan, uniquely informed by and designed for residents to maximise opportunities for job and education pathways (refer to Appendix 1 – FAQs)
<b>Promote employment access</b>	Promote and increase access to existing services and opportunities by hosting community events to build connections between residents and local services/employers, co-locating services or hosting drop-in sessions in places accessed by community Promote local job, skills and training opportunities through community channels
<b>Support employment initiatives for residents</b>	Support job initiatives that are based on previous and future engagement Fill gaps in existing services and programs Expand existing programs with positive job and training outcomes for residents
<b>Help young people find their first job</b>	Implement First Jobs Project - a community-based program that is designed to help young people find their first job.
<b>Link residents with Department of Education and Training</b>	Support residents to connect with Department of Education and Training to discuss and understand current school zoning for the estate

\* The Target Employment Plan will be informed by further engagement and will provide supplementary information and actions.



## Who will do it:

Residents, PTWF, North Melbourne Resident Action Group, resident - and community-led organisations, the department, Homes Victoria, City of Melbourne, Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions, Department of Education and Training, Victorian Skills Authority, training providers, Jobs Victoria, local employers, industry and private sector stakeholders, local community groups, Brotherhood of St Laurence, Cultivating Community

## Funding:

PTWF local action plan funding, other government funding, PTWF community grants, targeted employment funds



## 4. Safety, health and wellbeing



What we heard

What residents want

- To be aware of the supports and services available to them
- Information on aged care services, carer supports and the NDIS
- More health and wellbeing activities on the estate
- Services located on the estate (for example, employment, legal and family support)
- Culturally appropriate mental health support
- Access to affordable recreational facilities
- More activities for seniors (for example, board games and gentle exercise)
- Activities for parents to connect and support with challenging children's and young people's behaviour

**'There needs to be a better inter-agency approach'**

**'It's good when services meet you where you are, like the Health Concierges'**

**'We need to get children involved in positive activities so that they avoid any anti-social behaviour'**

- After-school activities for children
- Intergenerational activities
- Activities for young people
- Culturally appropriate physical activities for women
- Improved lighting on the estate
- Improve safety on the estate
- Better relationships and connection with emergency services
- Women's-only swimming and culturally appropriate swimming lessons
- Help with legal issues
- Financial and budgeting help

**What we will achieve**

- Improved communication between services and residents
- Residents are able to access the right service at the right time
- Residents feel safe in their homes and neighbourhood

**How we'll do it**

Local actions	What will be done
<b>Health outreach program</b>	Organise a medical and dental outreach program on the estate to improve accessibility and uptake
<b>Mental health program</b>	Design a culturally appropriate mental health program and connect with programs to address the stigma of mental health
<b>Health and wellbeing program</b>	Hold activities to support resident health and wellbeing
<b>Health information sessions</b>	Hold health seminars and information sessions
<b>Parent-led playgroup</b>	Set up a North Melbourne estate parent-led playgroup
<b>Primary after-school activities</b>	Implement an after-school program for primary school children
<b>Intergenerational playgroup</b>	Trial an intergenerational playgroup
<b>Youth activities</b>	Afterschool and Saturday night program for youth
<b>Map and promote local services</b>	Develop a local service map to help residents find services and increase residents' awareness about local services
<b>Services fair</b>	Hold a services fair – a day to get to know services in the area
<b>Women's health and safety awareness</b>	Information sessions and workshops to increase awareness on women's health and safety
<b>Crime prevention assessment</b>	Undertake a Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design assessment to help reduce crime
<b>Improve lighting</b>	Identify poorly lit areas and generally improve lighting on the estate
<b>Community safety forum</b>	Hold a community safety forum
<b>Culturally appropriate swimming</b>	Increase opportunities for culturally appropriate swimming and lessons
<b>Women's wellbeing</b>	Support women's programs and wellbeing activities
<b>Better information sharing</b>	Strengthen information sharing on what's happening locally
<b>Neighbourhood networking</b>	Weekly neighbourhood networking drop-ins
<b>Support for parents</b>	Culturally appropriate parenting workshops and opportunities to network with education support services
<b>Legal education and support</b>	Connect residents to local legal services for legal support and to understand their rights and responsibilities
<b>Financial literacy workshops</b>	Financial literacy, budgeting, tax and benefits workshops



**Who will do it:**

Residents, PTWF, North Melbourne Resident Action Group, North Melbourne Community Partner, resident- and community-led organisations, the department, Department of Health, Family Safety Victoria, Ubuntu, the Huddle, Drummond Street Services, cohealth, Victoria Police, the Venny, Talowadaag, North Melbourne Language and Learning, Inner Melbourne Community Legal, Moonee Valley Legal Service, City of Melbourne, North Melbourne Agency Collective, North Melbourne Community Centre

**Funding:**

PTWF local action plan funding, other government funding, Co-contributions: community organisations and PTWF, PTWF community grants, currently seeking possibilities



## 5. Community connection and spaces

### What we heard



**'We need to improve the safety of the playgrounds'**

**'Residents should be given priority use of community rooms'**

**'We want more opportunities to connect with our neighbours and community'**

### What residents want

- More drinking fountains, BBQs, bike-fixing stations, bins and litter facilities on the estate
- Better gardens, playgrounds and outdoor furniture, and more shade
- Priority access to community rooms on the estate
- Exclusive Pampas Street common room use for 9 Pampas Street residents
- Upgrade and refresh of the community rooms on the estate
- More community spaces
- To clean up the rubbish and litter around the estate
- Access to a community kitchen and opportunities to cook, connect and share recipes
- Safe and secure bike parking – bikes are often stolen and so residents use the laundries or hallways as a secure alternative
- A creative hub and skills development in the creative industries
- Support for community events and activities for community connection
- Networking opportunities for local community groups
- An upgrade to the North Melbourne Community Centre and improved soccer field
- Access to free wi-fi and digital devices
- Outdoor gym equipment
- Office space for resident-led organisations
- A quiet place to study on the estate
- More space for young people to gather
- Excursions, regular outings and camps
- Opportunities to celebrate the diverse cultures of people who live on the estate
- Support for residents who have been through the justice system
- Driving education programs and subsidised lessons to help refugees learn how to drive

**What we will achieve**

- Shared spaces are better managed to the benefit of residents
- Residents build social and community connections, creating stronger communities

**How we'll do it**

Local actions	What will be done
<b>Pampas courtyard update</b>	Upgrade the Pampas Street courtyard
<b>Pampas Street community room activation</b>	Revitalise and activate the Pampas Street community room
<b>Increase litter facilities</b>	Install more rubbish bins and litter facilities on the estate
<b>Seek opportunities for Sutton Street playground upgrade</b>	Develop options for Sutton Street playground upgrades
<b>Improve signage</b>	Improve signage around the estate to improve awareness
<b>Support resident creativity</b>	Secure extra space for creative collaboration Increase access to creative equipment for use Creative industries skills development courses
<b>Promote grant opportunities</b>	Link residents to annual grants that fund multicultural and community events
<b>PTWF grants program</b>	PTWF-funded small grants to resident-led and community organisations to turn their ideas into action (refer to Appendix 2 for the list of recipients)
<b>Wi-fi benches</b>	Trial wi-fi benches on the estate
<b>Community days</b>	Support community celebration and activity days such as Harmony Day and Clean Up Australia Day
<b>North Melbourne cooking project</b>	Hold a community cooking project for cooking skills development and community connection
<b>Community art project</b>	Community art projects for residents
<b>Community groups networking</b>	Trial a local community groups network
<b>Community outings</b>	Support community excursions and regular outings
<b>Identify women, youth and student spaces</b>	Identify and create spaces for women, youth and students on the estate
<b>Identify additional community spaces</b>	Identify more opportunities for more community spaces
<b>Seek opportunities to upgrade Alfred Street basketball court</b>	Seek opportunities to turn the Alfred Street half court into full basketball court
<b>Explore secure bicycle parking</b>	Explore secure bicycle parking options on the estate



**Who will do it:**

Residents, resident- and community-led organisations, North Melbourne Resident Action Group, PTWF, North Melbourne Community Partner, the department, City of Melbourne, Homes Victoria, Cultivating Community, Flemington and North Melbourne community leaders network, North Melbourne Language and Learning, The Salvation Army, The Huddle, Ubuntu, cohealth, North Melbourne Community Centre, Drummond Street Services

**Funding:**

PTWF local action plan funding, other government funding, Co-contributions: community organisations and PTWF, PTWF community grants, currently seeking possibilities, targeted employment funds

# How the plan will be implemented

## Resident empowerment and self-determination

To truly see improvements for the North Melbourne public housing estate, residents and resident-led organisations need to be given the opportunity to lead. PTWF is dedicated to working alongside residents and resident-led organisations and building community capacity. PTWF is a facilitator and convenor to joining-up government programs and efforts, building partnerships with the community sector and engaging residents in decision making about the future of their community. PTWF will support the plan in the following ways:

### Partnerships



- PTWF is partnering with residents, community organisations, service providers and other stakeholders to link residents with services and programs that benefit and support this plan
- PTWF continues to encourage and support residents to get involved and build strong relationships, to ensure these partnerships and connections carry on into the future

### Funding



The plan will be funded in the following ways:

- **PTWF local action plan funding** – \$500,000 to help deliver the plan at North Melbourne
- **Other government funding** – funding contributed from the department and/or other state government departments
- **Co-contributions: community organisations and PTWF** – where PTWF and a community organisation have agreed to contribute jointly for initiatives
- **PTWF community grants** – grants funds from the 2021 PTWF grants program
- **Currently seeking possibilities** – PTWF will work with government to source other funding
- **Targeted employment funds** – \$1.5 million over three years for jobs, education and training pathways

### Promotion



- Some ideas raised by residents will need a sustained long-term focus and the cooperation and support of many partners to implement
- PTWF will work with government to promote currently unfunded resident priorities and actions for investment
- PTWF promotes opportunities with community organisations

## Moving forward

The Victorian government recognises the importance of a purposeful and unified effort that allows for partnership and innovation. This has helped foster trust and build strong relationships at every step.

Although programs come and go, the plan builds pathways that ensure this work will continue. It will do this by embedding its lessons into government processes, setting up community-led projects and empowering residents through knowledge. The structures set in place by this plan will allow residents to continue to work closely with government on various decisions and opportunities that affect them.

This significant work between residents, government and community partners will see the many shared ideas and approaches continue to lead to better outcomes and pave the way forward for a better future.



# Appendix 1: Frequently asked questions

## What is Paving the Way Forward?

Paving the Way Forward (PTWF) is an initiative of the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (the department). Since 2021, the PTWF team has been working with Flemington and North Melbourne public housing residents, local government and delivery partners to ensure residents have input into the decisions affecting their homes, neighbourhoods and services. PTWF in North Melbourne was delivered in partnership with North Melbourne Language and Learning, Mission Australia and Drummond Street Services – known as the North Melbourne Community Partner.

So far, the program has:

- organised community engagement activities to understand community needs, priorities and goals
- supported 24 community-led projects with the Community Grants Program
- worked with residents and partners to develop and start delivering the North Melbourne local action plan
- involved residents in decisions that affect them through resident action groups.

## How can residents be involved in the future?

PTWF has begun and will keep working with residents and partners to get the outcomes listed in this plan. There will be opportunities for residents to take part, give feedback and hold us accountable for delivering these actions.

### Sign up to our newsletter and WhatsApp group

Find out what's happening in the community and receive updates on the plan through the PTWF email newsletter and WhatsApp group. [Email the PTWF team](mailto:pavingthewayforwardNMF@dhhs.vic.gov.au) <pavingthewayforwardNMF@dhhs.vic.gov.au> to sign up.

### Join the North Melbourne Resident Action Group

Become a member of the North Melbourne Resident Action Group. Meetings are held monthly to report on progress. They offer an opportunity for all residents to share information and to give feedback and ideas.

### Take part in or lead an activity

The activities, services and events outlined in the plan are designed with and for North Melbourne public housing estate residents. Opportunities to take part will be advertised via posters, flyers, text messages and the PTWF newsletter and WhatsApp group. There will be opportunities to join health and wellbeing activities, attend service information sessions, and much more.

Also, if you would like to help run an activity or develop your own idea for a project that aligns with this plan, [email the PTWF team](mailto:pavingthewayforwardNMF@dhhs.vic.gov.au) <pavingthewayforwardNMF@dhhs.vic.gov.au>.

### Take part in the evaluation

PTWF will be evaluated to understand how well the program has achieved its aims. Over the next 12 months, residents will have opportunities to have input into this evaluation.

### Talk to a team member

For more information about Paving the Way Forward or to discuss any aspects of this plan, [email the PTWF team](mailto:pavingthewayforwardNMF@dhhs.vic.gov.au) <pavingthewayforwardNMF@dhhs.vic.gov.au>.



## **What was the role of the North Melbourne Community Partner in developing the North Melbourne local action plan?**

The North Melbourne Community Partner was first funded under PTWF for 12 months to help the North Melbourne public housing community develop the North Melbourne local action plan 2022–23. It was also charged with delivering community engagement activities, capacity building and co-designed initiatives with estate residents. This period ended on 30 September 2022. From then, the plan will continue to roll out through the broader PTWF program. PTWF will keep building on the important work of the community partner and other organisations involved in the estate’s broader service network. The department’s PTWF team will stay the primary contact for the PTWF program and plan.

For more information on PTWF or to discuss any aspects of the plan, [email the PTWF team](mailto:pavingthewayforwardNMF@dhhs.vic.gov.au) <pavingthewayforwardNMF@dhhs.vic.gov.au>.

## **What will happen after 30 June 2023?**

The department will move to the next phase of the PTWF program from 30 June 2023. Uncompleted aspects and some elements of the plan will continue to be delivered after this date. The department will continue its important work of helping to create local job and education pathways for residents on the estate until mid-2025 as part of the targeted employment action plan being developed for the North Melbourne and Flemington estates.

## **What will happen to the North Melbourne Resident Action Group?**

The North Melbourne Resident Action Group is set to run until 30 June 2023. The PTWF Community Engagement team will continue to handle the administration tasks until then. Importantly, the action group will continue to be co-chaired by residents. Work is underway to develop empowered renter decision-making models. Once finalised the action group will participate in these state-wide models.

## **Will PTWF be evaluated?**

Government has engaged the consulting firm Clear Horizon for an independent evaluation of the program. This will help government, community and residents decide if the program was as effective as it could have been. It will also help shape future similar

programs. The evaluation will include speaking to local service providers, the PTWF community partners and residents. PTWF will also work with action group members to co-design an action plan progress update process. This will include working with the action groups to understand the barriers and the support needed to deliver the actions.

## **When will the Flemington and North Melbourne targeted employment plan be ready?**

Throughout the consultation, residents consistently raised the need for tailored education and job pathways for community. As such, a key deliverable for PTWF is developing and rolling out a targeted employment plan that will drive inclusive job opportunities for residents. Like much of the PTWF work, it will recognise the considerable work and leadership of what has come before, including that of long-established resident lead employment brokers and community groups. The plan will support employment, training and upskilling of residents by organising connections across government, community and services to improve coordination and leverage government investment. The PTWF Employment and Projects Lead will finalise the Flemington and North Melbourne targeted employment plan by mid 2023.

## Appendix 2: 2021 PTWF community-led grant recipients

In 2021, the program received 52 applications and awarded 24 community grants totalling \$163,000.

These are detailed below.



### Focus area 1: Communications and participation

Project name	Applicant/auspice organisation	Project overview
<b>'Fikirrada of Poetry' Workshop</b>	North Melbourne resident with auspice from North Melbourne Language and Learning	An opportunity to have a voice, to creatively express frustrations, to articulate concerns and to get involved in creating solutions for the issues experienced during lockdown.



### Focus area 3: Employment and education

Project name	Applicant/auspice organisation	Project overview
<b>African Australian Careers Expo</b>	Ubuntu Project	A one-day career expo specifically for African young people. It aimed to increase education achievement and engagement and improve social connection and community participation.
<b>Resident Skills Development Project</b>	Young Australian People	This project aimed to address the need for opportunities for youths in the two estates to gain nationally recognised training and credentials and to gain valuable work experience in volunteer work that offers pathways to jobs.
<b>Digital Literacy –Refugee and Asylum Seeker Women</b>	River Nile Learning Centre	This project piloted a digital literacy program. The project was for culturally diverse women who live at the Flemington and North Melbourne public housing estates.
<b>Building and Construction Pathways Project</b>	Mental Health Wellbeing Foundation	The purpose of the project was to provide job and training opportunities for 20 youth in the African community of the two estates to enter the building and construction sector via the Certificate II in Building and Construction pathways program.

 Focus area 4: Safety, health and wellbeing

Project name	Applicant/auspice organisation	Project overview
<b>Playblocks North Melbourne</b>	The Venny	The project delivered a pop-up play program at the base of the North Melbourne housing estate.
<b>Playblocks Flemington</b>	The Venny	The project will deliver a pop-up play program at the base of the Flemington estate.
<b>Mum and I Summer Holiday Program</b>	Somali Community inc.	The project aimed to address the impacts of COVID-19 lockdowns on the mental health and wellbeing of young mothers and their children living in the two estates, delivering several school holiday excursions.
<b>African Young Women Health and Fitness</b>	Inspire Community Action Network Inc [iCAN]	Young African women were offered access to sport and recreation initiatives that strengthen their mind, body and soul. A female personal trainer motivated and encouraged women in the community to become fit, healthy and active.
<b>Keeping Fit with IMAAP</b>	Inner Melbourne African Australian Partnership (IMAAP)	The aim of this project was physical fitness and wellbeing for young people living in the estates. The project trained the youth in North Melbourne and Flemington to gain skills in self-discipline to keep them fit and healthy beyond the project.
<b>L2R Dance</b>	L2R Dance	This project provides a 10-week hip-hop dance program for young people in North Melbourne and Flemington.
<b>Multicultural Women-Only Swimming Program</b>	Eritrean Australia Community Association Inc	This project encouraged community connection and healing and promotes health and water safety for the women of the Eritrean community living in the estates.
<b>Health and Wellbeing</b>	Vietnamese Women Association; auspiced by Vietnamese Community in Australia – Vic	The project focused on improving fitness, social inclusion, awareness and encouraging conversation among residents and the wider community while promoting greater self-confidence and a way to have fun with exercise that will have immediate and long-term health benefits.
<b>Growing Debney Meadows Mother's Group</b>	Edmund Rice Community and Refugee Services	The purpose of this project was to expand the mother's group to provide more activities. Building on the current Mother's English Language group, the project will offer the women the opportunity to develop skills in event planning and project management and to run the grant project activities.
<b>African Women's Wellbeing Group</b>	African Women's Wellbeing Group auspice by United Through Football	Project aimed at a young African cohort, mostly Eritrean women, to learn to swim in a culturally safe and appropriate environment.

## Appendix 2: 2021 PTWF community-led grant recipients (cont)

### Focus area 5: Community connection and spaces

Project name	Applicant/auspice organisation	Project overview
<b>Melrose St Wellbeing Garden</b>	159 Melrose Street Garden Group with auspice from the Salvation Army	The garden project updated and improved the garden area of 159 Melrose Street to become a more inviting space where residents and visitors can enjoy spending time.
<b>Flemington Estate Engagement</b>	Moonee Valley Legal Services	Senior Citizen Engagement and Youth Block Party at the Flemington estate.
<b>Young Local Emerging Artist Program</b>	Kushitic Productions with auspice from Ubuntu Project	This project focused on creative arts as a way for female youth in the two estates to tackle social issues. The workshops offered a platform for the youth to unpack social issues, share stories, express feelings, discuss and find solutions.
<b>Recognition, Reward, Relaxation</b>	Eritrean Young Mother's Group with auspice from Farnham Street Neighbourhood Learning Centre	This project focused on healing and resilience and the social and emotional wellbeing of the residents living in the estates, with emphasis on the young mother's group in the Eritrean community.  The project offers the daytrips, activities and information sessions on topics such as health and wellbeing and the COVID-19 vaccine.
<b>Sewing with Love</b>	Residents of 159 Melrose St with auspice from the Salvation Army North Melbourne	This is a resident-led project focusing on healing and resilience, community connection, education and pride.  Funding paid for equipment and running the sewing workshops.
<b>Women's Connection Program</b>	Resident of North Melbourne estate with auspice from Young Australian People	The project focused on improving mental health, social connections and community participation.  A several-week program with mind exercise, physical fitness and creative arts activity workshops.
<b>Dancing Together</b>	Resident of the North Melbourne estate, auspiced by cohealth	The project promoted community pride and connection within the communities in the North Melbourne and Flemington high rises. Dancers within the communities taught several dance workshops of African and South Asian traditional dancing.
<b>Harmony Festival</b>	Vietnamese Community Australia – Vic	One-day event full of activities for children and parents to participate.  The event had many cohorts in the community taking part in a multicultural entertainment program and children's activities and cultural exhibitions.
<b>Community Members Social and Emotional Wellbeing</b>	Eritrean Jeberti Community in Australia	The project focused on supporting members of the Eritrean Jeberti community in the Flemington and North Melbourne towers with social and emotional issues experienced during the pandemic. It used recreational activities including BBQs in parks and supported children with necessary aged-focused wellbeing.

## Appendix 3: Empowered renter decision-making models

The empowered renter decision-making models is one part of the evolution and growth of PTWF and other initiatives. It aims to provide a number of options or approaches that will enable renters in public housing to lead (where appropriate), participate in and take ownership of decision-making processes that impact their homes and the places they live. The models will promote a sense of shared accountability, making their implementation more sustainable. There are many benefits of involving people with lived experience in decision-making.

Renter's voice has been the focus of several initiatives of Homes Victoria and the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing. These include community capacity building initiatives in North Richmond and South Melbourne estates and our own PTWF in North Melbourne and Flemington. In all of these initiatives, renters have expressed their desire and demonstrated the benefit of having their voices heard and ideas acted on.

The project will develop various accessible models to harness the insights of renters' lived experiences, skills and knowledge of place. By using leading practice examples and working with our renters and other stakeholders, renters can take part in the models in a way that suits them. Implementing these models will lead to better decisions that improve outcomes for renters. Experience has shown that authentically involving people in decisions builds trust, develops a sense of shared accountability and improves service outcomes. This results in more connected, safer and well-maintained communities in social housing.

The project will be developed in three phases:

### **Phase 1:** Develop the models

– May 2022 to January 2023

- Internal and external research
- Develop and endorse project principles
- Stakeholder engagement to inform activities that would support the project principles, the models and to consider implementation
- Approve models to be trialled

### **Phase 2:** Trial and refine the models

– February 2023 to September 2023

- Establish trial sites (× 3)
- Trial sites to confirm the elements of the model to be tested
- Test and refine models
- Identify internal elements of the model such as reporting on maintenance performance
- Test and refine internal elements of the model

### **Phase 3:** Further rollout

– September 2023 to June 2024

- Establish sites
- Sites to confirm the elements of the models to implement
- Support sites to implement models
- Identify other internal opportunities to support the model

Renters and other stakeholders will take part in developing the project (phase 1) by informing and agreeing on the project principles, suggesting activities that bring the principles to life, reviewing and amending the final models and exploring ways to implement. There will be more opportunities for renters and other stakeholders' input in phases 2 and 3.

# Appendix 4: North Melbourne local action plan progress report

The list below provides an update on the progress of the actions within the *North Melbourne local action plan*. The status of each action is allocated a colour to indicate its progress. Refer to the key below for details. This information was updated on 10 October 2022.

## Progress report by focus area

### Communication and participation

Action	Status
Establish resident action group	Complete
Involvement in designing resident decision-making model	In progress
Education session on government workings	In progress
Grants, community leadership, and governance training	In progress
Local council participation	In progress
Resident-led organisation	In progress
Consultation between residents and stakeholders	In progress
Feedback box	In progress
Young people podcast	Complete

### Maintenance and amenity

Action	Status
Maintenance and housing education series	In progress
New resident welcome pack	In progress
Regular estate walk-arounds	In progress
Simplify housing information	In progress
Trial an annual renters conference	In progress
Improve community facilities access	In progress
Remove unknown vehicles	In progress
Parking adherence improvement	In progress
Improve digital experience for maintenance requests	In progress
Test different communication methods with residents	Complete

### Employment and education

Action	Status
Engage, map and identify employment priorities	In progress
Small business and enterprise support	Not yet begun
Develop and implement a targeted employment plan	Not yet begun
Promote employment access	In progress
Support employment initiatives for residents	In progress
Help young people find their first job	In progress
Link residents with Department of Education and Training	In progress

Key	
<b>Complete</b>	The action has been completed
<b>In progress</b>	The action is currently in progress
<b>Not yet begun</b>	The action has not yet begun
<b>Currently seeking opportunities</b>	The action is yet to be assigned an owner or funding source

## Progress report by focus area

### Safety, health and wellbeing

Action	Status
Health outreach program	In progress
Mental health program	In progress
Health and wellbeing programs	In progress
Health information sessions	In progress
Parent-led playgroup	In progress
Primary after-school activities	In progress
Intergenerational playgroup	In progress
Youth activities	In progress
Map and promote local services	In progress
Services fair	Complete
Women's health and safety awareness	Not yet begun
Crime prevention assessment	Complete
Improve lighting	In progress
Community safety forum	In progress
Culturally appropriate swimming	Complete
Promote women's wellbeing	Complete
Better information sharing	In progress
Neighbourhood networking	In progress
Support for parents	In progress
Legal education and support	In progress
Financial literacy workshops	In progress

### Community connection and spaces

Action	Status
Pampas Street courtyard update	Not yet begun
Pampas Street community room activation	Not yet begun
Increase litter facilities	In progress
Seek opportunities to for Sutton Street playground upgrade	Currently seeking opportunities
Improve signage	In progress
Support resident creativity	In progress
Promote grant opportunities	In progress
PTWF grants program	Complete
Wi-fi benches	Not yet begun
Community days	In progress
North Melbourne cooking project	In progress
Community art project	Not yet begun
Community group networking	In progress
Community outings	In progress
Identify women, youth and student spaces	In progress
Identify additional community spaces	In progress
Seek opportunities to upgrade Alfred Street basketball court	Currently seeking opportunities
Explore secure bicycle parking	Currently seeking opportunities

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email the Paving the Way Forward team  
<PavingTheWayForwardNMF@dhhs.vic.gov.au>.

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