

High Life Expo '24

Evaluation Report





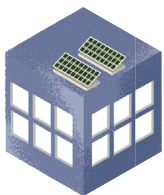
This report was developed on Aboriginal lands of the Dja Dja Wurrung and Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation, whose sovereignty was never ceded.

We recognise that First Nations people have deep knowledge and experience of resilience and sustainability that is critical to heal country, people, and communities. Despite the ongoing impacts of colonisation, First Nations people are still generously sharing knowledge and working towards reconciliation and treaty. For this, we pay our respects and deep thanks to First Nations elders past and present, and extend this to all First Nations people. We endeavour to learn from and lift up First Nations expertise in our work.

We all live, work and play on Aboriginal land. 1% of our income is paid to Traditional Owners. We encourage everyone to Pay the Rent.

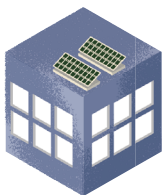
Let Me Be Frank is a member of 1% for the Planet. We donate 1% of our annual income to environmental organisations. We are proud to be part of a global network that is accelerating smart environmental giving.

Disclaimer: This document and the information it contains was current at the date of publication and may not reflect events or circumstances which occurred at a later date. The content of this document was developed using the best available information and in good faith. Let Me Be Frank and our collaborators cannot be held liable for the accuracy of the information presented in this document.



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2024 High Life Expo recap

The Expo sold out and feedback from attendees, partners, sponsors, speakers, and suppliers has been overwhelmingly positive.

On the day of the Expo, a number of attendees sought out Let Me Be Frank staff to personally thank them for driving the Expo. There was a strong sense of delight and relief from attendees that they and their specific needs were being "seen".

"I've finally found my people!" said one attendee. Many attendees expressed that they felt less alone and more supported in their challenges related to strata living.

The sustainability information provided was highly valued and was motivational for attendees. But a clear (and expected) need from owners corporation / committee members emerged for more information, support, tools, and templates to help them navigate and manage the complexity of strata buildings, living, and communities.

The majority of exhibitors and speakers expressed an interest in returning if another Expo was held in the future.

In addition to the events, the High Life Expo developed an Australian-first free website dedicated to sustainability in strata. The website centralises a range of existing resources, and houses the new resources developed as part of, or to support, the Expo. It also acts as a soft referral service where apartment owners and strata managers can find suppliers.

This in itself is a significant asset that can be used by the strata sector and partner councils to support their communities.

In addition, there is now a 500+ strong mailing list of people with a special interest in sustainability and strata.



Click the picture to play the High Life Expo recap video or [watch it on YouTube](#)

2024 High Life Expo recap

The Expo was a great demonstration of collaboration and resource pooling. The Expo was only possible thanks to the combined efforts of councils, the strata sector, community members, community groups / organisations, not for profits, small businesses, and larger enterprises.

About the Expo

The Expo was for people who live in or own apartments and units, and the people that help manage them. It aimed to support them to drive sustainability, resilience, and adaptation solutions in their homes and buildings.

The Expo was held on 1 June in Naarm (Melbourne) and included:

- A supplier showcase
- In-person seminars
- Online seminar series

Attendees learned how to make apartments, apartment buildings, and units more comfortable, efficient, healthy, and lovely to live in. They:

- Heard from sustainability and strata experts
- Learned from other owners corporations, apartment owners, and residents
- Met quality suppliers and installers of energy efficiency and sustainable products
- Found out about government rebates

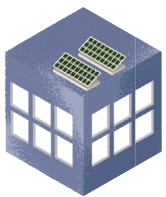
Attendees choose the topics that matter most to them:

- EVs and charging
- Solar and renewable energy
- Electrification
- Thermal comfort
- Double glazing
- Decision making in strata
- Planting for cooling
- Energy efficiency
- Apartment living for renters
- Better waste management
- Building community



Photo by [Matto Lucas Photography](#)





Thank you for making it happen!

The Expo was only possible thanks to the generous support of our partners, sponsors, stallholders, speakers, and volunteer crew. Let Me Be Frank would like to thank everyone who generously put time, energy, knowledge, and funds towards the Expo.



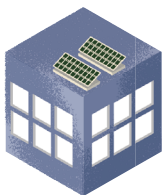
A special thank you to all our speakers for volunteering their time!

We'd like to send an extra special thank you to all the hard working strata committee members who shared their stories on the day and/or in case studies for the benefit of others.



Another special thank you goes out to Julie McLean, Janette Corcoran, and Nicholas Abbey who spent countless hours supporting the Expo programming.





The Expo by numbers

The main event

The in-person High Life Expo event was held on Saturday 1 June at RACV City Club in the Naarm (Melbourne) CBD.



1,102
registrations



623
attendees



38
exhibitors



6
seminar
sessions



15
volunteers



24
speakers



Photo by [Matto Lucas Photography](#)

The Expo by numbers

Online seminars

The online events were scheduled to allow participation beyond those available to attend the main physical event.

Three online seminars were held, one before the main Expo and two afterwards:

Waste not: how to reduce and optimise waste management and recycling in apartment buildings	Mon 20 May	60 attendees 67 watched
Naturally cool: planting for cooling, beautification, and connection in apartment buildings	Wed 12 July	43 attendees 45 watched
Getting to yes! Navigating good decision-making in owners corporations	Mon 17 July	78 attendees 30 watched

Note: Statistics collated on 8 July 2024. Watch numbers for the videos continue to rise. The first seminar has accumulated more watches, however it has been live for much longer than the later sessions.



573
registrations



181
attendees



142
watched
videos



3
seminar
sessions



9
speakers



4.4/5
average
rating for
sessions

The Expo by numbers



Photo by [Matto Lucas Photography](#)

Roles of registrants

Below is a breakdown of registrations by role.

Please note that some registrants opted out of completing this field, while others logged multiple roles (e.g. they are an OC manager who also owned a strata titled property)

OC Manager - 75

Own a strata investment property - 93

Strata owner occupier - 508

Strata renter - 77

Facilities Manager - 28

Other- 178

Registrations from partner council municipalities

Merri-bek - 97

Yarra - 108

Stonnington - 48

Boroondara - 94

Darebin - 74

Melbourne - 301

Port Phillip - 190

The spread of registrations differs significantly from council to council. This is likely due to:

- The number of strata titled buildings in each municipality
- Whether there is a history of working in strata
- Level of engagement from community groups

For example, Melbourne and Port Phillip have a very high proportion of strata and a long history of working in this space.

The Expo by numbers

Resources created

In addition to the events, many resources have been created and centralised for ongoing reference by apartment owners, council officers, and strata managers.

Since the Expo, we have continued to grow the online resources, and new case studies are still being created in order to meet our funding agreement with the gold partners.

We hope councils and the strata sector continue to refer their communities and clients to these resources, to help sustain the conversation and support for people seeking to make change in their apartment or building.



New
brand



11
case studies
developed



12,445
visits to the
new website



967 views
of Australia's
only free
sustainable
strata library

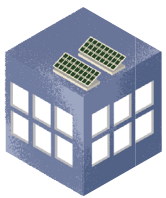


534
subscribers



3 additional
videos,
watched 39
times





Participant feedback

Feedback was collected via four surveys, one for the main Expo and one for each of the online sessions.

In addition to the formal evaluation process, many people came to find Let Me Be Frank staff and Expo volunteers to thank them for the day and express their gratitude for being among people who "got it". There was a strong sense of attendees feeling less alone in their work to improve their buildings and communities.

A number of emails were also received thanking us all for making the High Life Expo happen.

High Life Expo survey results

Q1. If the High Life Expo was held again next year, are you likely to attend? (122 respondents)

Overwhelmingly, respondents reported they would attend a future Expo.



Q2. How valuable was the Supplier Showcase to you?

The Supplier Showcase scored 4.1/5

Q3. How valuable were the Seminar Sessions?

The Seminar Sessions scored 4.3/5

Participant feedback



Q4. What was the best thing about the High Life Expo?

Three strong themes emerged:

High quality, relevant information delivered in a friendly accessible way. People appreciated:

- The diversity and relevance of the information presented
- The opportunity to meet speakers and stallholders to have specific questions answered
- Hearing from both experts and owners
- The opportunity to learn and get inspired

The opportunity to network with and learn from people who "get it". People appreciated:

- The opportunity for one-on-one conversations and meeting people in person
- Interacting with people who have shared experiences and are seeking similar outcomes

Learning more about how strata works and the opportunities for community. People appreciated:

- Discussing the why and how of building community
- Getting to know more about owners rights/obligations, and the broader industry

In addition there were many positive comments about how well the event was organised, the excellent facilitation of the seminars, and the convenience of the venue.

"I'm an owner/occupier in a lot of 9 townhouses in outer suburban Melbourne, I learnt more than I expected and most enjoyed the seminar with Tim and Maurice."

"The seminars offered valuable insights and tips on vertical living, especially from the viewpoint of owners and committee members."

"The real stories shared by real people of their real experiences with electrification and retrofits."

"Having an event focused on apartments was so valuable as it is often difficult to source."

"An inspiring and motivating space that makes me feel empowered to build community in my apartment complex!"

"I really enjoyed meeting people with shared experiences as well as suppliers I have been in contact with over the past 5 years"

"I felt welcomed and the atmosphere was great"

Participant feedback

Q5. What could be improved if the Expo ran again?

By far the common piece of feedback was that attendees wanted access to tea, coffee and food (either paid or free). This is great feedback, relatively easy to implement, and reinforces the quality of the rest of the event.

There was less alignment across the other feedback, which is presented by theme below.

Venue and overall logistics

- Larger venue and a larger overall event
- More space for relaxed networking
- More support to navigate and understand what was on when

Supplier showcase

- More and a greater diversity of exhibitors
- Group the showcase to make it easier to navigate

Seminars

- More time for Q&A and general information sharing
- No concurrent sessions so everyone can attend everything
- More topics covered
- More time for the sessions

Other

- Greater access to information before and after the event (e.g. podcasts, videos, slides, contact details of speakers and stallholders, online discussion board)
- More about general strata issues, the mechanics of strata, advocacy and legislation

Q6. What topics would you like covered in future events?

Most of the topics people would like covered in the future were actually covered at this Expo. This may indicate that people wanted more on the topic, or that the three main components of the Expo (online seminars, in-person seminars and the supplier showcase) made it overwhelming for people to find all that was available to them.

The next most common need was for more information about strata regulation and operational matters, including:

- Financial management, including insurance
- How to run an effective owners corporation – roles, responsibilities, governance
- How to find effective owners corporation managers and work well together
- Common strata issues like cladding, water leaks, black mould, waste

- Longterm planning, including maintenance, strategic, and community planning
- Managing legal matters, including defects
- How to advocate for better outcomes for strata communities

Other common additional topics:

- Transport, including car share, bike parking, car stacker
- Government funding and incentives for owners corporations and individual apartments
- Water
- Resilience of infrastructure and the community
- DIY
- Updates on the topics and technology covered in the 2024 Expo
- More people talking about what is happening in their building

Participant feedback

Q.7 Have you looked at the Resources section of the High Life Expo website?

No – 11%

No but I intend to – 65%

Yes, there was lots of useful information there – 17%

Yes, but I'd like to see more resources created – 7%

We can see that most people had or were intending to access these resources. It's important that everyone associated with the Expo continues to remind their networks of these resources.

8. What support do you or your owners corporation need to continue to improve sustainability and resilience?

The needs fell into six main categories:

Education and information

- More easily available, relevant, and timely information
- Tools and templates to use
- Having specific questions answered

Funding

- Easy access to funding and incentives designed for owners corporations

Owners corporation and committee support

- Induction and education on strata living and governance
- Managing conflict and the "soft skills" needed
- Roles and responsibilities of the committee and strata managers
- Project management and funding in owners corporations
- Understand the role of the owners corporation manager, and how to find a good one
- Recruiting more owners/tenants to help run the building and deliver projects
- Legislation interpretation

Support to convince/educate others in the OC

- Materials to help promote initiatives within the owners corporation (particularly in the lead up to voting)
- Expert presentations to committees

- More case studies and business cases, including financial implications
- How to engage with, and get alignment within, the owners corporation. Tools to support this engagement, particularly with owners who live off site

Legislation and advocacy

- Legislation that encourages sustainability
- Less red tape and better legislation

Suppliers and groups

- Recommendations to trusted suppliers
- Introductions to community groups that can provide support
- Where to go for advice on larger or more complex projects (e.g. whole of building electrification)

Participant feedback

Online seminar survey results - Waste not

Q1. Overall, how valuable was the seminar to you?

Waste not scored 4.2/5.

Q2. What was the best thing about the seminar?

- Hearing about the challenges in large MUDS
- Learning new information

Q3. What would have made the session better?

- More time for Q&A
- More information about external contractors

"Loved Alice's Case Study of The Rochester"

"I came to know about the new way of reducing carbon foot print through the session"

"The many options for recycling, I was not aware of some of these"

"Understand some tips for setting up an effective waste room"



Photo by [Matto Lucas Photography](#)

Participant feedback

Online seminar survey results - Naturally cool

Q1. Overall, how valuable was the seminar to you?

Naturally cool scored 4.6/5.

Q2. What was the best thing about the seminar?

- Project examples, case studies and photos
- Diversity of small and large projects presented
- Expert speakers
- Loved the combo and pace of the presentations
- Links to resources
- Technical information e.g. soil depth, flood mitigation
- Structure and pace of the session

Q3. What would have made the session better?

- More time for the presentations
- Maybe step by-step-guide to setting up community garden with more discussion of variety of scenarios
- More focus on balconies and individual gardening in apartment buildings
- More diversity in the examples provided

"Getting ideas for my apartment. Great photos."

"Lots of resources and good real life examples"

"I enjoyed understanding smaller scale jobs you could do with your own apartment and all the way through to the process for such a large project like the Docklands project."

"How succinct, informative and passionate the speakers were on their topics"

"Loved the garden ideas at the personal and building level"



Photo by Matto Lucas Photography

Participant feedback

Online seminar survey results - Getting to Yes!

Q1. Overall, how valuable was the seminar to you?

Getting to Yes scored 4.5/5.

Q2. What was the best thing about the seminar?

- Best practice tips and expert advice
- Q&A
- Validation that living and participating in a strata community is complex
- Learning about the resources available
- Explanation of the decision-making and governance processes for strata
- It was all great

Q3. What would have made the session better?

By far the strongest suggestions for this session was to make it longer, and allow even more time for Q&A. This was despite the session already being 90 minutes (the other online sessions were only 60 mins).

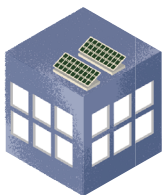
- Encourage participants to answer questions too, peer-to-peer questions
- Opportunity to connection with presenters and other attendees after the session or on-line discussion forum
- There was a little too much in the session
- Though the Co-housing example was interesting it perhaps added too much information to a topic that is already jam packed
- Hold it at a different time in the evening

"Hearing about the problems that the strata managers face and learning about co-housing. I learned a lot and feel energised in helping support this community adopt more sustainable options."

"All three speakers were clear and concise and had loads of helpful information. I thought we were an OK OC but I think we can and should do a lot better - now I have the resources to explore further."

"Hearing from people with knowledge and experience in a succinct format."

"The video recording! There was so much info, it's difficult to remember it all. The video enables us to refer back to it, e.g. when a specific issue arises. A searchable transcript is even better!"



Stallholder, speaker, & sponsor feedback

Feedback was collected via an email thanking people for their participation and asking for frank feedback.

What stallholders, speakers, and sponsors appreciated

- Clarity of communications
- Organisation pre-Expo
- Excellent networking
- Attendees were deeply engaged and asked excellent questions
- Being busy all day with potential customers / community members
- Great energy in the room
- Enjoyed feeling part of a bigger picture

Suggestions for improvement

- Avoid sharing exhibition spaces as it confused attendees
- Better organisation regarding stallholders entering the venue, early delivery of stall materials, and navigating set up
- Produce localised case studies earlier to support promotions
- More promotions in Council areas that don't have an historic link to strata work
- The cocktail tables were too high to display things effectively
- Stallholders missed the opportunity to attend the seminar sessions as they were busy talking to attendees
- Include strata topics not related sustainability to draw a bigger crowd and therefore spread the sustainability message to more people. Topics suggested by strata managers included: building safety & security, building infrastructure compliance & maintenance, community building & engagement, technology & software, and building insurance
- More food for stallholders, volunteers and presenters as it ran out
- Cover fire risk in apartment buildings
- Better management of people entering and exiting during the seminars - this was distracting
- More promotion of partner Councils



"We are excited for the future as the Expo proved by all the feedback that we got that we are on the right track with our new aluminium retrofit system that is close to being something we can offer."

"Amazing day, you guys should be proud of what you've created!"

"It was an extraordinarily professional expo – probably the best we have attended – with ALL the details covered. The communication was clear and concise. We understood what was required at each step."

"We had an absolute ball. We met many great people and have picked up some other events/places to visit."

"It was great exposure for us, and we appreciate the opportunity you gave us to be involved."

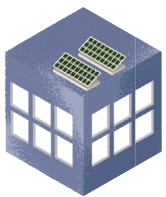
"The Expo was awesome I'd love to participate again next year or at any other events you hold, if there is room for me!"

"Congratulations on the success of High Life Expo! It was a fantastic event, and we were thrilled to be a part of it."

"By coming together we were able to offer our residents exponentially more – a much more extensive program, with a much wider reach, than we would have ever been able to do on our own as a single council. There was lots of energy and enthusiasm around the venue throughout the day."

"A HUGE congratulations to you both on your successful delivery of the High Life expo. I know how challenging these events can be to pull off, and you made it look so effortless and smooth!"





The listening post

The Owners' Corporation Network (OCN) and Strata Community Association (SCA) Victoria kindly ran the 'Listening Post' at the High Life Expo.

This initiative gathered insights from Expo attendees – owners, tenants and committee members – regarding their most pressing issues and desires for change within the residential strata sector.

OCN are still working on the full analysis, however [Dr Janette Corcoran](#) (OCN Director) has generously written an initial summary based on her experience on the listening post and data review.

Attendees were invited to complete the statement, "If I could change one thing in residential strata, it would be...".

The responses highlighted a variety of challenges and aspirations that resonate across Melbourne's residential strata sector, ranging from improved governance to better education.

One recurring theme was the call for greater transparency in strata management. Many attendees expressed frustrations with opaque financial dealings and the lack of accessible information regarding expenses, particularly compliance costs like fire management.

"It's about knowing where our money goes," remarked one attendee, reflecting a widespread sentiment that clarity in financial matters would alleviate mistrust and empower owners to make informed decisions.

Another critical concern was the need for better education. Whether educating new committee members on their roles and responsibilities or informing new apartment owners about the complexities of strata living, there was a consensus that knowledge gaps contribute to misunderstandings and inefficiencies.

"We need more than just volunteers; we need educated volunteers," noted a participant, underscoring the importance of structured learning to effectively navigate the intricacies of strata governance.

Sustainability also emerged as a pressing issue, with calls for initiatives (such as rooftop gardens and solar energy solutions) purposely tailored to residential strata. Attendees expressed frustration over bureaucratic hurdles and inadequate support from government bodies at both the state and council levels.

The listening post

“We want to contribute to sustainability, but the system isn’t accommodating,” said one resident, highlighting the desire for streamlined processes that support environmentally friendly initiatives in multi-owned properties.

Governance issues were also addressed. Concerns ranged from the influence of powerful individuals to the challenge of achieving a quorum at meetings. “One person shouldn’t wield so much power,” emphasised a resident, advocating for fairer decision-making processes that reflect the collective interests of all.

Emergency preparedness in high-rise buildings was another critical topic. Several residents expressed unease over the lack of comprehensive evacuation plans and training. “Safety should be a top priority,” remarked a concerned owner, urging for standardised protocols to ensure residents’ safety during emergencies.

As discussions continue and recommendations are collated, there is hope that these voices will be heard by policymakers, who can help create conditions for a more harmonious and well-informed strata living experience in Melbourne.

As one participant aptly summarised, “It’s not just about changing one thing; it’s about creating a framework where transparency, sustainability, and community wellbeing thrive together.”

While the Listening Post was just one component, the Expo’s success lies in helping pave the way for constructive solutions that enhance the quality of life within Melbourne’s diverse strata communities.

New barriers to electrification uncovered

Many of our partner councils currently have a big focus on supporting their communities to electrify everything.

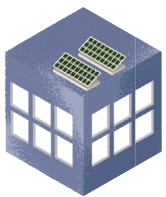
The High Life Expo has surfaced a new barrier to electrification. There seems to be a significant amount of older, low and mid-rise apartment buildings that do not have adequate power supply to their building. They cannot electrify without working with their electricity distributor to upgrade transformers – a very costly exercise. Anecdotal evidences suggests these buildings also need wiring and switchboard upgrades within their property to facilitate electrification.

Initial investigation by owners indicates that just to do the basic upgrades to facilitate electrification might cost tens of thousands, potentially running over one hundred thousand dollars. These residents are also struggling to find the technical advice and accurate costings for upgrades.

The real scale and cost of these barriers is currently unknown. However, four buildings we approached for case studies have encountered this issue, suggesting it is relatively common.

Research is needed to understand these barriers, and advocacy to State Government will likely be required to help understand and resolve the problem.





Marketing summary

High Life Expo marketing was a joint effort.

Alongside Let Me Be Frank's investment in marketing, councils, partners, sponsors, stallholders and speakers all promoted through their channels.

All council partners received access to the marketing log, where they could see what marketing was being undertaken, as well as log their marketing activities.

What is presented in this report reflects what went into the log. Without a doubt, much more marketing was delivered – particularly by councils – than is captured here.

Let Me Be Frank's primary marketing activities

- Presented at the SCA National Senior Leaders Forum for strata managers
- High Life Expo website (from February)
- Presented at SCA Vic's 'Power Up Your Apartments: Solar Grants & Sustainable Strata Strategies' online seminar for strata managers
- Presented at GBCA LG Forum
- Regular LinkedIn posts
- Regular Instagram posts
- Regular Facebook posts
- Facebook advertising March – May
- Instagram advertising March – May
- Email request to promote to all Neighbourhood Houses in partner council regions
- Email request to promote to all community environment groups in council partner regions
- KISS FM what's on listing
- Email request to promote to all residents groups in council partner regions
- Let Me Be Frank ebulletin
- Promotions via 23 relevant Facebook groups
- Flyers and posters
- Bank Australia ebulletin article and [blog](#)
- The Fifth Estate what's on listing
- Cities People Love social media
- 2 ads across May in each of The Local Paper Southern Cross, North-West, and Northern editions
- The Local Paper Southern Cross article May 22 edition
- Brunswick Tool Library ebulletin
- YEF ebulletin
- YIMBY ebulletin
- [Design Files](#) article
- Cities People Love articles (post Expo – yet to be published)

Marketing summary

The poster for High Life Expo '24 features a stylized illustration of a modern apartment building with a green roof, surrounded by trees and people walking. The title 'High Life Expo '24' is in large, bold, green letters. Below the title, the text 'Let's talk about life in apartments!' is followed by a list of topics: Electric vehicle charging, Solar and renewable energy, Electrification, Double glazing, Keeping warm, staying cool, Decision making in strata, Renter solutions, Community, and Better waste management. A QR code is on the left, and the text 'Presented by local councils, sustainability experts & the strata industry' is at the bottom. The bottom of the poster has three colored boxes: 'SAT 1 JUNE' (blue), 'IT'S FREE' (yellow), and 'BOOK AT [HIGHLIFEEXPO.AU](https://highlifeexpo.au)' (green).

High Life Expo '24

Let's talk about life in apartments!

Electric vehicle charging • Solar and renewable energy • Electrification • Double glazing • Keeping warm, staying cool • Decision making in strata • Renter solutions • Community • Better waste management •

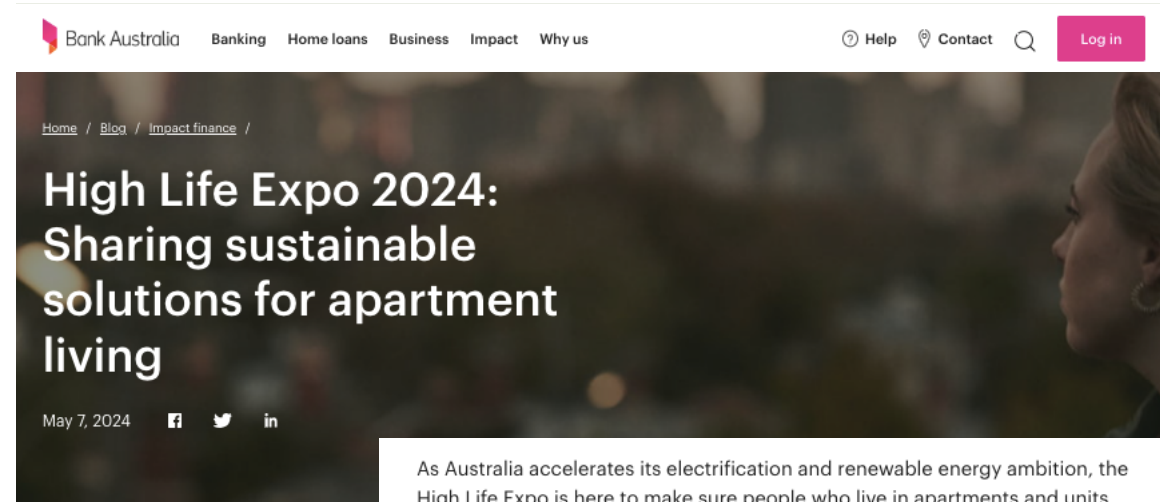
Presented by local councils, sustainability experts & the strata industry

SAT 1 JUNE **IT'S FREE** **BOOK AT [HIGHLIFEEXPO.AU](https://highlifeexpo.au)**

Ads were placed in The Local Paper – Southern Cross edition (Boroondara, Melbourne, Port Phillip, Stonnington), North-West edition (Merri-bek), Northern edition (Darebin)

Reported partner, sponsor, and supporters marketing activities

- The Knight ebulletin x 3
- SCA Vic social media posts (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn)
- SCA Vic email bulletin
- SCA Vic website
- Solar Victoria ebulletin
- OCN ebulletin
- OCN what's on listing
- Merri-bek Climate Coalition Google Group
- Climate Action Merri-bek e-news
- Zero Carbon Merri-bek website event listing
- Merri-bek City Council website listing
- Eco e-news
- Port Phillip eNewsletter
- [Docklands News](#) articles x 3 (thanks to OCN)
- Yarra Environment e-news x 2
- Yarra News
- City of Yarra Facebook post and Instagram post
- City of Yarra Solar for Apartments info session
- City of Yarra poster and flyer distribution (North Fitzroy Library, Fitzroy Library, Collingwood Library, Richmond Town Hall, Collingwood Town Hall, Strata Community Association VIC event)
- City of Yarra What's On listing
- City of Yarra Yarra MUD newsletter
- City of Yarra Sustainable House Day open homes x 3
- City of Yarra direct email to Unlocking Sustainable Strata participants, stakeholders, and launch event attendees
- City of Melbourne Intranet
- City of Melbourne urban forest and circular economy teams promotions
- City of Melbourne e-bulletin
- City of Melbourne poster and flyer distribution (Kensington community room, North Melbourne Recreation Centre, Jean McKendry Neighbourhood Centre, Kathleen Syme Library and Community Centre, East Melbourne library, South Melbourne library, Docklands library, Naarm Nargu library)



The Knight News - May 2024.

1 May 2024

Welcome back to The Knight News.

We hope you have been enjoying Melbourne's transition to Autumn and the beautiful clarity and colours of this season.

In this issue we share a reminder on payment methods, news of our recent volunteering day, some team milestones, and some inspiration from some particularly community-minded OCs.

Don't forget, [High Life Expo](#) is happening next month (1 June). It's your chance to speak with sustainability suppliers and experts and learn all about improving livability in your apartment. We'll be set up as part of the Supplier Showcase, we hope to see you there!

We'll be in touch again soon with our favourite announcement of the year - our [Australian Knight Award](#), keep an eye out for that.

Until then, happy reading.

What is the High Life Expo?

"In inner Melbourne, 79% of our homes are medium and high density. People living in these homes are absolutely being left behind in terms of the energy transition," says Kate Nicolazzo. Rather than wait for the problem to fix itself, Kate and the team at [Let Me Be Frank](#) founded [High Life Expo](#) - a sustainability info day aimed at anyone who lives in apartments or units.

"We've got really big goals in terms of electrification and renewable energy uptake in Australia," explains Kate, director of [Let Me Be Frank](#). "Yet there are a distinct lack of tailored programs aimed at apartment and unit living." Additionally, residents of these spaces are more likely to be renters, on lower incomes or to come from culturally diverse backgrounds, adding extra layers of complexities and vulnerabilities. [High Life Expo](#) aims to bridge the divide between apartment and unit renters, owners, strata managers and the sustainability sector to share knowledge and come up with solutions.



INTERIORS

Renovation Diaries: A Sustainable DIY Apartment Transformation

After purchasing a dark, cramped 'hot box' apartment in Brunswick West, [Shaun Tompkins](#) decided it needed a full renovation. But to keep to his budget and ensure the home was as sustainable as possible, he took on most of the project DIY-style!

With some cost-saving hacks like renting power tools from a local tool library, and some lucky finds on Facebook marketplace, Shaun completely transformed the tiny 42-square-metre pad by himself.

See exactly how he did it, and his top tips for renovating on a budget below!

Written by Emily Holgate | Photography by [Amelia Stanwix](#)



↑ [Yabby](#) tapware. [Buildmat](#) sink. [IKEA](#) cabinetry with custom cut by [PlyCo](#).

High Life Expo, June 1: elevating apartment living in Melbourne



Docklands Representative Group | 1st May, 2024



Melbourne is known for its fascination with home improvement shows, but for too long, apartment dwellers have felt left out of the conversation.

Events like the recent Home Show at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre (MCEC) purport to showcase the latest trends in home improvements.

Such events, however, predominantly cater to the needs of standalone houses, with many exhibits focusing on space-hungry items such as decks, water tanks, and internal lifts. Overlooked are the unique challenges and opportunities of apartment living.

And the irony was not lost that such home shows take place amid the dense backdrop of towering residential buildings, which are now a feature of Melbourne's skyline!

Notably, it is against this backdrop that the High Life Expo emerges as a beacon.

Scheduled for Saturday, June 1, this expo is tailor-made for apartment owners and residents, addressing their specific needs and aspirations.

The theme of sustainability takes centre stage at the High Life Expo, with exhibits focused on making apartments and residential buildings not only comfortable and efficient but also healthier and "lovely to live in!"

Topics range from EVs and charging to solar and renewable energy, from double glazing to better waste management, with community building within apartment complexes also included.

HighLife Expo: listening to the voices of residential strata



Dr Janette Corcoran | 25th June, 2024



The recent HighLife Expo featured a range of activities, including webinars, stalls, and forums – along with a Listening Post.

Operated by the Owners' Corporation Network (OCN) and Strata Community Association (SCA) Victoria, [this initiative gathered insights from expo attendees](#) – owners, tenants and committee members – regarding their most pressing issues and desires for change within the residential strata sector.

High Life Expo '24

SATURDAY 1 JUNE **HIGHLIFEEXPO.AU**

RACV City club, 501 Bourke St, Melbourne

Sustainability and resilience solutions for your apartment and owners corporation.



High Life Expo '24

HIGHLIFEEXPO.AU

SATURDAY 1 JUNE

RACV CITY CLUB

Sustainability and resilience solutions for your apartment and owners corporation.

Hear from experts and talk to suppliers about:

- EVs and charging
- Upgrading to all-electric
- Solar and renewable energy
- Creating community
- Decision making in strata
- Apartment living for renters
- Efficiency and thermal comfort
- Recycling and circular economy solutions
- And lots more!

Apartment or unit owners and renters, strata managers, and facility managers – the High Life Expo is for you!



TICKETS ARE FREE • BOOKINGS ESSENTIAL



Hosts

LET ME BE FRANK.

strata community association vic

Partners and sponsors

MELBOURNE BUILDING MANAGEMENT



City of STONNINGTON

ELECTRIFY BOROONDARA

The Knight

BOROONDARA

CITY OF DAREBIN

Merri-bek City Council

YARRA

Planet Earth Cleaning

CITY OF PHILLIPS

Solar Victoria

CITY OF MELBOURNE

ocn

Engine Property Group Active Utilities

Marketing summary

Website stats

There have been 12,445 visits to the High Life Expo website this year.

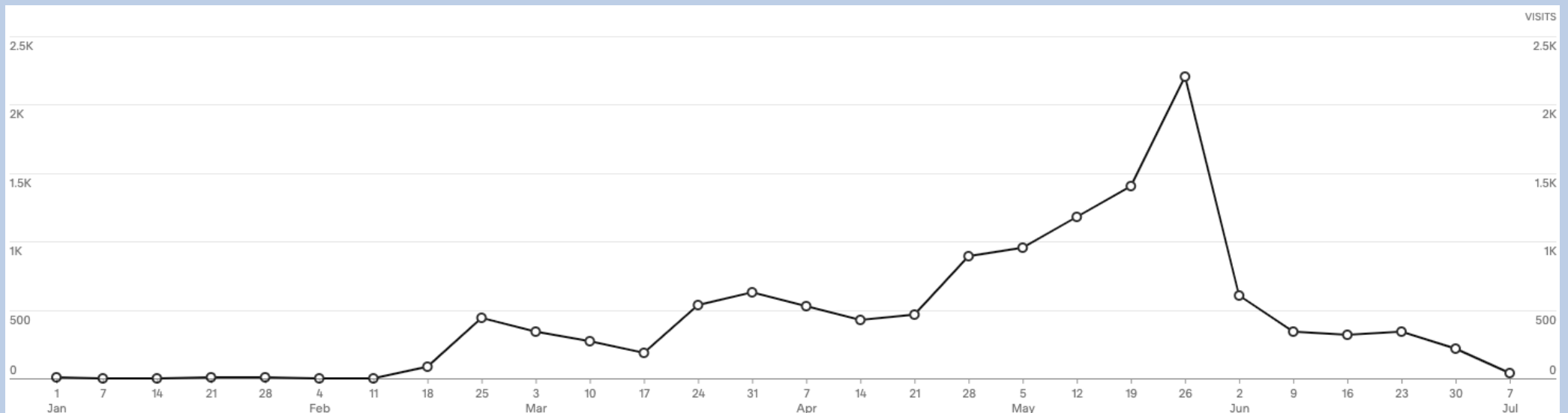
The graph below shows the distribution of visits, peaking around the time of the Expo. In the month following the Expo, hundreds of people continue to visit the site each week to access videos, presenter slides, and other resources.

The website is most commonly accessed through a direct link (7,564 visits). This indicates that promotions driving people to the website are effective.

Google (1,364) and Facebook (1,339) are the next most common ways people access the site.

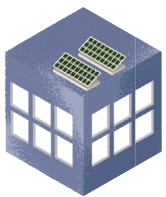
Of the social media platforms, Facebook is by far the most effective at driving people to the website, followed by LinkedIn, and then Instagram:

- Facebook 1,339 visits
- LinkedIn 221 visits
- Instagram 160 visits



Distribution of visits to highlifeexpo.au





Financial report

For transparency, and to help us all consider future strata work, we have provided a financial breakdown for the Expo.

The Expo was a delight to run. We feel proud of our collective capacity to deliver an event that clearly provided huge value to those who attended.

The Expo was only possible thanks to our partners and sponsors, plus a huge amount of in-kind work from Let Me Be Frank (LMBF), and also from representatives of Strata Communities Association, Owners Corporation Network, Cohousing Australia, and of course the apartment owners who spoke and/or shared their stories in case studies.

The Expo continues to draw on LMBF resources as we finalise the evaluation, complete case studies, and explore future possibilities.

Income: \$116,700

- \$107,000 - Sponsorship (\$60k from Councils + \$47k from others)
- \$4,200 - video
- \$5,500 - Stall holders

Expenses: \$212,637

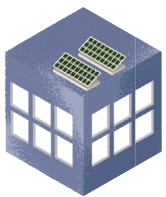
- \$16,266 - Venue
- \$6,500 - Brand
- \$5,210 - Photography / Videography
- \$3,573 - Advertising and printing
- \$2,269 - Stationary / Misc
- \$2,500 - Catering
- \$2,834 - Donations (1% for the Planet + 1% to Pay the Rent + Launch Housing)
- \$1,200 - Carbon Offsets
- \$172,285 - Staff costs (Amy, Kate & Lucy)

Net Position: **-\$95,937**

Facilitating participation for community organisations and services

Community groups and organisations play an important role in sustainability and in strata initiatives. As do community service organisations. In recognition, we facilitated participation within the means of each organisation:

- Electrify Boroondara: in-kind silver sponsor (provided event staff and seminar hosts)
- Owners Corporation Network: in-kind silver sponsor (provided event staff, programming advice, and ran the listening post)
- Fire Rescue Victoria: free stall in the supplier showcase
- Neighbourhood Watch: free stall in the supplier showcase
- Electrify Yarra: free stall in the supplier showcase
- Cohousing Australia: free stall in the supplier showcase



Let Me Be Frank Reflections

Based on feedback received to date, and our experience running the Expo, Let Me Be Frank has documented implementation suggestions if another similar event was held.

Because this was the first Expo of its kind, it was challenging to foresee the level of engagement from possible stallholders, speakers, and attendees. This made picking a venue and organising logistics a bit tricky. While we feel the Expo was a great success, there are things we'd like to do differently in the future.

Programming

- Develop a speakers proposal process, along with a targeted invitation process
- Consider how more interactivity could be built into sessions, and opportunities for other organisations to run workshops/ sessions as part of the program
- Consider how more Q&A could be built into sessions
- Broaden the Expo to include issues beyond sustainability, but keep sustainability at the heart of the event
- Strengthen the process for selecting Supplier Showcase exhibitors, including a clear opening and closing date for applications
- Shift online sessions to start at 7pm
- Consider the idea of including a rapid-fire strata innovations session

Promotions

- A dedicated social media person to capture the event and post live at the event, including a post about each supplier, partner, and sponsor
- Outline a clear marketing agreement with sponsors and stallholders, so there are shared expectations about promotions and the support required
- Councils without strong existing community sustainability or strata networks may need additional promotional support
- Work with a communications agency / provider to boost promotional capacity and overall reach

Let Me Be Frank Reflections

Financial

- Additional funding is required if the Expo is to run again
- Include budget for carbon offsetting for attendees (this year LMBF paid for the offsets)
- There are significant costs to maintain the website, inquiries, and communications between events. Include these costs into future budgets
- Work with councils to determine the best funding models for councils to contribute fairly
- Revisit how case study development is funded

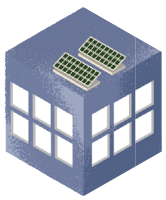
Venue and logistics

- If the event was run again, the optimum time would be mid October 2025
- A larger venue with more capacity to scale is required, so booking can remain open as the drop off rate was larger than expected
- Conduct a dry run of bump in prior to the event
- Must have easy access to food, tea, and coffee that attendees can purchase
- Require additional catering for stallholders, volunteers, and speakers
- Consider a 9:30am event start
- Program 45 minutes between doors opening and session 1
- Align the close of the last seminar session with close of Expo
- Have a limited number of printed programs behind the registration desk for those who aren't comfortable with an online program
- Improved online program and map

- Retain but simplify name tag process
- Involve more diverse exhibitors in the Supplier Showcase. Group the exhibitors to make it easier for attendees to find what they are looking for
- Larger seminar rooms, so there is less disturbance when people are entering or exiting while sessions are happening
- If the Expo becomes a regular event, purchase volunteer bibs/ vests that volunteers can wear and be used again each year, to avoid waste from unwanted t-shirts
- Improved way finding signage
- Larger registration area
- Improve ticketing process for stallholders, speakers, and volunteers
- Set up a kids space (drawing, play dough, Lego, books, potentially in partnership with council library/ies), so kids are occupied and adults feel more able to spend time engaging with the Expo content
- Host drinks in the greenroom at the end of the Expo to allow for more networking between the exhibitors, speakers, sponsors and partners
- Deeper consideration of diversity and inclusion e.g. Auslan interpreting, Welcome to Country

Other

- There is a clear need for more tools, templates, fact sheets etc. Funding ongoing materials development and sourcing the required expertise is a challenge
- There is a role for State Government in this work. How can we best engage them



Where to from here?

We are working with Expo partners and sponsors to consider where the High Life Expo goes from here.

If you have thoughts, suggestions or offers related to future High Life Expo events, feel free to contact us:

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Photo by [Matto Lucas Photography](#)



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