

TOIORA HIGH STREET COHOUSING

MEMBERSHIP AGREEMENT

High Street / 7 Montpellier Street, Dunedin

This **Agreement** is binding on all members of the Toiora High Street Cohousing Community. This is in accordance with the **Agreement to Enter a Covenant** and **Deed of Covenant** signed by current purchasers and is a Condition of Sale for subsequent purchasers.

Vision Statement

Our vision is to create an urban cohousing neighbourhood, which promotes social and environmental sustainability, based on respect and shared responsibilities.

- Through robust eco-design and layout, establish a cohesive community which fosters wellbeing, diversity and the right use of resources.
- Develop and foster a thriving living environment, which uses clear communication, decision-making and conflict resolution guidelines that promote tolerance, safety, respect and co-operation.

Toiora High Street Cohousing Kaupapa

- a) It is the intention of members to form and live at the Toiora High Street Cohousing Community in a manner which supports the Vision Statement.
- b) This cohousing community is based on the concept of cohousing as described in **Creating Cohousing: Building Sustainable Communities (2011)** by Kathryn McCamant and Charles Durrett.
- c) Resident Management. Members shall manage the property themselves, making decisions of common concern at Group meetings, using the Group Decision Making Process.
- d) Non-Hierarchical Structure. Responsibility for decisions shall be shared by members.
- e) Common Facilities. Common areas are intended for daily use to supplement private living areas. Members may form committees to maintain and administer the use of common facilities if required.
- f) Community Group Meetings. Unit occupants, or at least one adult member occupying each unit, shall be required to participate in regular Toiora Cohousing Group meetings. Unit Owners are responsible for ensuring at least one person from their unit participates by making attendance a requirement for tenants. The frequency of meetings and minimum requirements for participation are set at meetings from time to time and notified to the Community.

Membership

Every resident 18 years or over, and every non-resident owner, is a member of Toiora Cohousing Group. Residents over 12 years, and neighbours on the old High Street School property footprint, may voluntarily be a member of Toiora Cohousing Group. All tenants as named on the tenancy agreement become members within 14 days of moving in.

New members must complete an induction process which includes:

- Visiting the property during an Open Day or a personal guided tour.
- Attending an induction workshop.
- Reading the book *Creating Cohousing: Building Sustainable Communities*.
- Signing either a Deed of Covenant (owner) or a copy of this Agreement (tenant).
- Signing the *High Street Cohousing Child Protection Policy And Declaration*.

All members are entitled to participate in decision making at Toiora through the Group Decision Making Process as described in Schedule 1.

Members are obliged to:

- attend Group meetings.
- participate in operating committees.
- contribute to community working bees.
- help prepare shared meals.
- contribute to the day-to-day running of common property
- adhere to Group Rules relating to common facilities.
- promptly pay any fees which may from time to time be levied by The Group.

Membership ceases when a unit is sold, or, for tenants, on the day they move out.

Group Rules

Caring Rules

All occupiers are expected to consider how their actions may have an impact on others. The following points outline the current (15 August 2020) ways that the Group has agreed will help us care for each other:

- **Smoking** Toiora aspires to be a smoke-free environment. Smoking/vaping is not permitted in common areas.
- **Noise** Residents should not make any noise which is likely to interfere with the quiet enjoyment of the property by others. In particular, we must observe quietness from 11:00pm to 7:00am.
- **Odours** Residents should not allow any unpleasant odours to permeate into spaces used by others. Worm farms with lids and Bokashi bins can be used in private outdoor areas so long as they are kept tidy. Otherwise, use the designated composting bins set up for common use.
- **Firearms** Toiora aspires to be a firearms free neighbourhood, and firearms should be stored off site.

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- **Pets** We welcome the inclusion of pets in our neighbourhood. Pet owners are expected to take all reasonable measures to ensure that their pet is not a nuisance to others. Pets are not allowed in the Common House. Pet owners are responsible for promptly removing any waste/droppings from their pet on common property, and for repairing any damage caused by their pet. Due to the potential impact of large numbers of cats and dogs living on the property, prior consent from the Group will be required to keep a cat or dog. It is the intention of the Group that, over time, dog and cat numbers may be reduced via a sinking lid policy.
 - **On-site business** The primary use of all units is residential. Occupiers may use the unit to run a business, upon notification to the Body Corporate. Business employees, clients and visitors must use the private entrance from the street to enter the unit, except for units which do not have a private street entrance.
 - **Fencing** Owners must comply with fencing guidelines for private areas, as may be agreed by the Group using the Group Decision Making Process.

Sharing Rules

A core principal of Cohousing is the strengthening of community through sharing meals and contributing time to the day-to-day running of common facilities.

As well as rostered kitchen duties, members will share the burden of administration duties, and routine cleaning and maintenance of the Common House and the grounds. At times the Group may decide to carry out non-routine improvement projects involving the common areas. Costs (both financial and time) will be shared by members according to decisions agreed by the Group.

- **Cohousing Shared Meals** Residents will commit to having shared meals at regular intervals. Helping to prepare common meals is obligatory. Eating common meals is encouraged, but optional. When planning shared meals, the team will take into consideration dietary requirements of Group members. Shared meal frequency, purchasing, team structure etc. will be decided by the Group and may change over time.
- **Working bees** will be organised for gardening, cleaning, and ongoing scheduled maintenance and, for one-off improvements. There may be multiple working bees operating at the same time, focusing on different projects. At least one adult from each household will contribute 40 hours per year of their time towards working bees on the common areas and/or Group administration. Children may contribute work hours on a voluntary basis, or contribute 10-20 hours per year depending on age. A log will be kept of hours contributed. Hours may be bought out at the rate of the current living wage (\$22.10 in 2020) which will be paid into the Operating Cost Fund. A member may apply to The Group for an exception to these requirements based on an individual's circumstances.

Day-to-day Living Rules

Keeping in mind the dangers of being too prescriptive and trying to cover every eventuality, here are basic guidelines to keep everyone safe, and maintain fairness with the resources that may, by their nature, be limited. Other rules may be applied by relevant sub-committees.

- **Kitchen** For the protection of the health and well-being of all, kitchen workers will adhere to NZ Food Safety Guidelines, and all are responsible for Health & Safety concerns.
- **Dining/Social room** The Commonhouse is for the use of all members at any time. The Common Meals committee and the Social committee may, at times, reserve the Commonhouse for specific events.
- **Workshop** Anyone who uses the workshop is responsible for Health & Safety by managing risks that could cause serious injury, illness, or even death.
- **Laundry** Permanent washing lines will be set up for common use. Occupiers may make use of temporary clothes racks to hang laundry outside their unit.
- **Guest Rooms** May be booked and paid for according to the procedures established by the Commonhouse committee.
- **Vehicle Parking** There is limited parking onsite. Some spaces are reserved for EV charging and disabled parking. Remaining spaces are for Owner and visitor short-term parking (< 48 hours). Longer term parking (including for trailers, containers, rubbish skips etc.) must have prior approval from the Group. Bicycle parking will be in the planned bike shed or designated bike areas.
- **Gardens** Members can choose plants for their private plot of land – keeping in mind the ‘quiet enjoyment’ of neighbours and others. The planting of vegetables, fruit trees, shade or ornamental trees, and play equipment or other structures in the common areas is the decision of the Landscape & Gardens Committee.
- **Cleaning Glass** The Body Corporate will periodically organise the cleaning of external windows. If an Owner requires cleaning of external windows more often than the frequency in each year to be determined by the Body Corporate, then the cost of such additional cleaning shall be borne by the owner.
- **General Health & Safety** All residents will actively manage health and safety for themselves and others. All residents who identify new or existing hazards or risks will take all reasonably practicable steps to eliminate or minimise the exposure to significant hazards or risks. Ensure fire exit doors are never blocked or obstructed in any manner. Keep hazardous tools, equipment, chemicals etc. out of the reach of children.

Committees

Committees are the formal decision-making entities that strive to foster wellbeing, diversity and the right use of resources by utilising clear communication, and decision-making and conflict resolution guidelines that promote tolerance, safety, respect, and co-operation.

The Group

The primary, over-arching ‘committee’ is **The Group**. In essence this is the continuation of the UCOL meetings that created our community and worked together to build the homes and common areas that are known as Toiora High Street Cohousing.

Unless authority is passed to a sub-committees, all material decisions that affect members will reside within The Group.

The Group is distinct from the Body Corp. In a sense, The Group acts as a soft buffer just underneath the Body Corp. It allows Toiora Cohousing to have a much more open and flexible participation in both the day-to-day activities, and the longer term development goals.

The Group <i>(Provisionally to be known as Toiora Cohousing Group)</i>	Oversee the community’s policy and decision-making.	Considers subcommittee recommendations. Instructs Body Corp to take action where necessary. Can levy households or individuals or owners for non-Body Corp expenses.
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It is anticipated that sub-committees will have the authority and autonomy to decide and act on the myriad of smaller decisions that will encompass living in our cohousing community.

Sub-committees

Residents of any age, non-resident owners, and neighbours (on the old High Street School property footprint) can attend, and contribute to any sub-committee.

All sub-committees utilise the agreed Group Decision-making Process.

Sub-committees make recommendations, ask for funds, or request a ruling from The Group.

Sub-Committee name	Purview	Typical issues	Members
Shared Meals	All group meals.	Kitchen rosters. Food suppliers. Kitchen equipment.	Keen cooks. Those with special diets. Anyone who eats!
Landscape & Garden	Outdoor common areas	Planting – vegetable and decorative. Pathways. Fences & benches. Bike storage. Compost & worm farms.	Keen gardeners. A rep from the kitchen group re vege garden. Cyclists. Worm wranglers. Historic fence & Arch supporters.
Commonhouse	All use of the Commonhouse.	Social events. Booking visitor accommodation. Cleaning roster.	Anyone. Residents of M1, M2, M3.
Maintenance & Development	Tangible deterioration of property. Threats to physical property. Additions or improvements to common areas	Maintenance issues that arise. Long-term planning. Advises Body Corp. Adding more EV parking? Implementing solar power generation.	Anyone. Anyone with property experience.
Conflict Support	Helping to resolve personal differences.	Any interpersonal issues within the community that need assistance.	Anyone with appropriate skills and knowledge.
Social	Community social events.	Birthday parties. Seasonal. Special & family events.	Anyone. Teenagers. A rep from the Commonhouse committee.
Workshop	Activity within workshop	Equipment purchase or maintenance. Making stuff.	Anyone.
Finance	Anything concerning finance. Works closely with Body Corp.	Oversees the budgets. Answers finance questions. Oversees reimbursements and payments for community expenses. Oversees collection of Body Corp payments.	Anyone. Everyone.

Dispute Resolution and Mediation

Disputes vary in scale and may affect a few or many members of the Group. For this reason, different strategies for dispute resolution will be employed as appropriate. For example, disputes may remain between two Owners, or, if they affect the entire Group, they may appropriately be resolved via the Group Decision Making Process.

If there is a dispute between Owners and/or Occupiers, the parties should first meet face to face to discuss the issue. The parties may choose to use an in-house mediator, chosen from within the Group. If the dispute is still not resolved, the parties are obliged to appoint and consult a professional mediator and go through the recommended mediation process before seeking legal action. Any cost of mediation is to be shared pro-rata between the parties.

SIGNING

The Member hereby acknowledges and confirms their acceptance of the High Street Cohousing Kaupapa and the High Street Cohousing Group Decision Making Process and their willingness to respect and comply with these Group Rules and other that may, from time to time, be added.

Name

Signed Date/...../2021

Witness

Signed Date/...../2021

Schedule 1

Cohousing Group Decision Making Process

Communication Guidelines

- I will use “I” statements and speak for myself, not others
- I will speak succinctly (short and to the point)
- I will take responsibility for owning and naming my own feelings
- I will respect others’ rights to speak without interruption
- I undertake to respect others’ privacy by not discussing outside the Group other people’s personal issues which may arise within the Group process
- I undertake to keep relationships within the Group clear by dealing with any problematic issues directly with the persons concerned
- I recognise that we work best together when we remember to have fun!

Coloured Card Agreement Process

We use a particular consensus-building procedure to reach agreement which has been adopted by many cohousing groups, as follows:

[Each person should have a set of coloured cards – green, blue, orange, yellow, red and black.]

The Process for Discussions

The cards can be helpful in preliminary discussions, particularly if the Group is large. Before being called on to speak on an issue, participants must first put up a coloured card according to the following guidelines:

- **Black** I have an interpersonal difficulty and can’t proceed
- **Red** I have a process observation, i.e. we are off topic or over time.
- **Yellow** I have a question or need clarification
- **Orange** I wish to acknowledge someone or something (often a thank-you)
- **Green** I can provide clarification or information
- **Blue** I have a comment or opinion

The facilitator calls first on anyone holding a black card. The Group then decides what happens next. The red cards are then dealt with. The red “stop the process” card can be raised at any time. It is used to point out a breach in the way we have agreed to proceed.

People raising yellow cards to indicate questions receive the next attention.

After a question has been asked, people holding green cards are called on to provide clarification.

After all questions have been answered, the facilitator calls on people holding the blue cards to speak.

The Process to Reach Agreement is Through Consensus

When deciding an issue, the minute taker and/or chair writes the minute and reads it out to the Group for any further amendments, additions, corrections or discussion. The whole Group is responsible for the wording of the minute. The chair then calls for a show of cards and each person raises one of the cards:

- **Green** I agree with the proposal
- **Blue** I am neutral about the proposal or for it with some slight reservation
- **Yellow** I have a question concerning the proposal which must be answered before I can make a decision
- **Orange** I have some serious reservations about the proposal but am not willing to block consensus
- **Red** I am entirely against the proposal and will block consensus

If not all cards raised are green, those people with reservations should voice their concerns if they have not already done so. The process requires everyone to participate in decision making. Dominant personalities will find it harder to push their ideas through at the expense of the less vocal, and softly spoken members must take responsibility for voicing their concerns.