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# Media Release

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## **New SACOSS ED suggests heatwave an opportunity to build neighbourliness**

Speaking this morning Ross Womersley — the new Executive Director of the South Australian Council of Social Service — said “This heatwave offers all of us the chance to take a little more interest in the people we live next door to. As a community and as individual community members, we forget how we too can be really helpful during trying conditions.”

Mr Womersley went on to recommend that we all take time to check on our neighbours and relatives, and not make the assumption that someone else will.

“Having someone looking out for you at times like this is critical and we shouldn’t wait for the government or some human services agency to do it. There are many people who might be especially vulnerable through a period like this — because they are older, or live with a disability, have a health condition, or simply because they do not have a lot of money,” Womersley said.

“Often people on low incomes won’t have air conditioners or other means to stay cool easily, or if they do they will not use them through extended periods like this, knowing that their electricity and other energy costs are increasing every day.”

“Electricity costs in particular have consistently risen above CPI rises, with the average South Australian consumer seeing a rise of nearly 16% since 2006, and a 4.3% rise since March this year.”

“This is a great opportunity to reach out and check that the people in your immediate neighbourhood are doing okay. Maybe you could help someone who doesn’t drive get to and from the shops, or maybe it’s just about popping in for a cuppa and checking they are remembering to drink plenty of water”.

### END ###