



Making Renting Fair in SA



The State of Renting in South Australia

- 194,000 rental households in South Australia
- July 2023 vacancy rate of 0.04% - the lowest in the country along with Perth
- Median house price \$540 per week, up 3.4%
- Median unit price \$430 per week, up 2.4%
- Lack of renter protections in the Residential Tenancies Act



The State of Renting in South Australia

- Issues for SA renters
 - Availability
 - Affordability
 - Security of tenure
 - Renting with pets
 - Inefficient homes
 - Lack of repairs
 - Lack of effective dispute resolution



SA Renter Case Study - Emily

Single mother living in Mount Barker

- Emily has been struggling to pay rent, energy bills and essentials such as groceries and medication
- Has been forced to make really tough choices including not buying medication and groceries
- Her mental and physical health has deteriorated as she struggles with her finances and cold home
- She said she feels like she has *“failed as a mother”*





**Renters deserve
more than just a**

“roof over their heads”

What are we doing in SA - *the campaign to Make Renting Fair*

The need for a campaign:

- Getting out of our silos
- Sharing resources
- Having shared messaging and goals
- Playing different roles



What have we done so far?

- Pre-elections West Torrens renters forum hosted by SACOSS
- Coordinated submissions to the RTA review along with renters workshops to encourage renters to make submissions
- Letters to and meetings with MPs
- Joint statement on 4 key campaign asks
 - Currently open for endorsement
- Do Gooder campaign for renters and supporters to email their MPs

Our campaign asks *the make Make Renting Fair in SA*

- Abolish no cause evictions (periodic lease and non-renewal of fixed term lease)
- Limiting rent increases (to CPI)
- Introduce minimum energy efficiency standards
- Ensure landlords cannot unreasonably refuse a pet





**But there's more
that can be done...**

What more can be changed in the RTA?

- 1. Reinforcement of Repair Obligations:** Landlords are obligated to maintain properties in a reasonable state of repair, but this often becomes a point of dispute. More explicit guidelines and stronger enforcement could ensure properties are maintained in good condition.
- 2. Improvement of Dispute Resolution:** Enhancing the accessibility and efficiency of the dispute resolution process can aid in resolving issues between landlords and tenants more effectively.
- 3. Allow Renters to Make Minor Modifications:** Amend the Act to allow tenants to make minor modifications, like hanging pictures or painting walls, without landlord approval.
- 4. Simple Bond Transfer System:** Introduce a system where the bond can be transferred directly from one property to another, easing the financial burden of moving.
- 5. Introduce an Independent Rental Body with Regulatory Powers:** Establish an independent body to regulate the rental market, enforce rental laws, and educate both landlords and tenants about their rights and responsibilities.

Limitations of relying on RTA reform

We cannot rely on legislative reform alone, while reform of legislation grants renters more legal power these new-found **powers are toothless without strict enforcement and penalisation.**

Renters also need to know their rights and entitlements.



What can we do now?

Endorse the Joint Statement

- This is a joint statement authored by SACOSS, Uniting Communities, Anti-poverty Network SA, Shelter SA and Better Renting calling for our 4 key asks



What can we do now?

Share the Do Gooder action

- We're encouraging all renters and supporters to email their local MP calling on them to stand up and call for stronger changes to the RTA





So in summary...

Summary

- It's a really **rough time to be a renter** in South Australia
- We need a **collaborative effort by advocates** and organisations to push for greater reform in SA
- The current review of the RTA is **a prime opportunity to get necessary improvements** for renters in SA
- Reform must work alongside **strict regulation and compliance** and **education of renters**
- Endorse the **joint statement** and share the **MP email Do Gooder action**
- Housing must be seen as more than a right, but as **an essential service that we are obliged to provide**