



#ShelterSABlog

Welcome to the first Shelter SA blog post! For those of you who don't know me, I'm Alice, the Executive Director of Shelter SA. We thought it was time to create a way to communicate our current activities, advocacy and happenings with everyone who subscribes to our mailing list. There are more than 1200 of you who currently subscribe, and we know that the readership stretches far and wide. We welcome everyone who wishes to join, it's free, and we won't clog up your inbox with advertisements or material that's not directly relevant to housing. Subscribe by emailing sheltersa@sheltersa.asn.au.

As well as our extensive mailing list and well established networks, you may know that Shelter SA has several social media platforms that we use regularly to share our work, housing news, research, reports and advocacy – we hope that you will also follow us and show your support through sharing our messages.

Recently, Shelter SA visited with Minister Zoe Bettison to provide a briefing on the results of our Regional Engagement Strategy visits. The two main issues discussed were the lack of crisis accommodation in the regions and the situation of children who are falling through service delivery gaps. These two issues are evident across the regions but also apply to metropolitan areas so it is critical that Shelter SA continues to advocate for change. Minister Bettison was encouraging about Shelter SA's initiative to improve how government departments work across portfolios in conjunction with housing and community service providers to ensure that policies that aim to keep our children safe are implemented more effectively. Shelter SA has convened a working group to progress work in this area and soon we will publish a background paper for you to read and share that explains in more detail what the issues are and some suggested solutions for more consistent service delivery. One idea is that we may hold an event for very wide, cross sector participation, so stay tuned and we'll keep you informed.

Another one of our current research projects is looking at rooming houses, commonly referred to as boarding houses. The framework for the research is the Residential Tenancies Act and what it has to say about rooming houses. Most of you will know, that a rooming house is a place where people can rent a single bedroom within a house or a building that they share with others who they are not related to. The bathroom, toilet, kitchen and any living areas are all shared.

The academic literature tells us that due to affordability issues, it is likely that rooming house accommodation is on the increase, as there are so many people who cannot afford to establish a home on a single income, or who experience health and mental health issues that are a barrier to consistently commencing and maintaining a tenancy. With accepted levels of housing affordability set at 30% of a household's income, we will also be examining how affordable rooming houses are for people living on low incomes.

To date we've undertaken a literature review and held an owners and landlords focus group – we're distributing resident surveys through our networks and will soon have on line surveys available. If

you want to find out more or you know someone who's living in a rooming house please contact us. We'll keep you up to date with progress and share the final report with you, it will contain recommendations and help us to advocate for affordable housing for all South Australians.

We've also just circulated an open letter about removing no cause evictions from the residential tenancy legislation to support Mark Parnell, Leader of the Greens in SA, in his efforts in parliament available here www.sheltersa.asn.au/wp-content/uploads/Shelter-SA-RTA-submission-2016.pdf. There are various ways for landlords to evict tenants if they do not comply with the law but it is not fair to evict someone for no reason – then there's no chance for tenants to remedy either. Please add your organisation to the growing list of those who support Mark's efforts by emailing us.

Thanks for reading my first blog – your feedback and questions are welcome via email alice.clark@sheltersa.asn.au and don't forget to join us on social media!

Alice.

