



Media Release

Compassion not Fear!

Shelter SA is the peak body for housing in South Australia. Shelter SA's vision is that all people in our state have access to a safe and affordable place to call home, especially people living on low incomes, from minority groups and other cultures. With the huge reduction in public housing most are left to take their chances in a highly competitive private rental market. Dr. Alice Clark, Executive Director of Shelter SA said today "if you have recently arrived from another country you will almost certainly find it difficult if not impossible to get into private rental because of language barriers, low incomes, discrimination and no rental history – this is made worse by the price of renting that is just out of reach for thousands of families".

Commenting on some of the stories Shelter SA has heard about people from other cultures, Dr. Clark also said, "when you start to ask people where their grandparents and great-grandparents were born – it's pretty easy to see that for most of us the answer is unlikely to be Australia". Except for our Nation's First Peoples, in the big scheme of things we are all relatively recent arrivals or migrants and can trace our origins to countries overseas so it's surprising that many people still feel fearful when they hear another language being spoken or encounter people who don't look as they do. Dr. Clark said "the inappropriate slogans used by some of our politicians fans the fear and doesn't help to combat very negative and misleading stereotypes".

Everyone who is struggling to find and afford decent housing deserves our full compassion and support, especially if they are newly arrived in our "lucky country". Shelter SA hopes that next time you see someone who looks different to you that you'll say hello and smile, replace your fear with kindness and concern and reach out to them as human beings. If you have neighbours from another culture, take your time to get to know them – they are trying to raise their children, protect them and nurture them just like you. If you're renting out a home, give people a chance – we are all trying to survive, pay our way and get on with our lives. Everyone in Australia deserves a fair go! For more information and positive stories go to www.sheltersa.asn.au.

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