

#PositivePetPolicy in South Australia

Shelter SA is calling for a positive pet policy in the private rental market for South Australia and we invite you to back us!

#1 There Should be an Increase in Pet Friendly Rentals

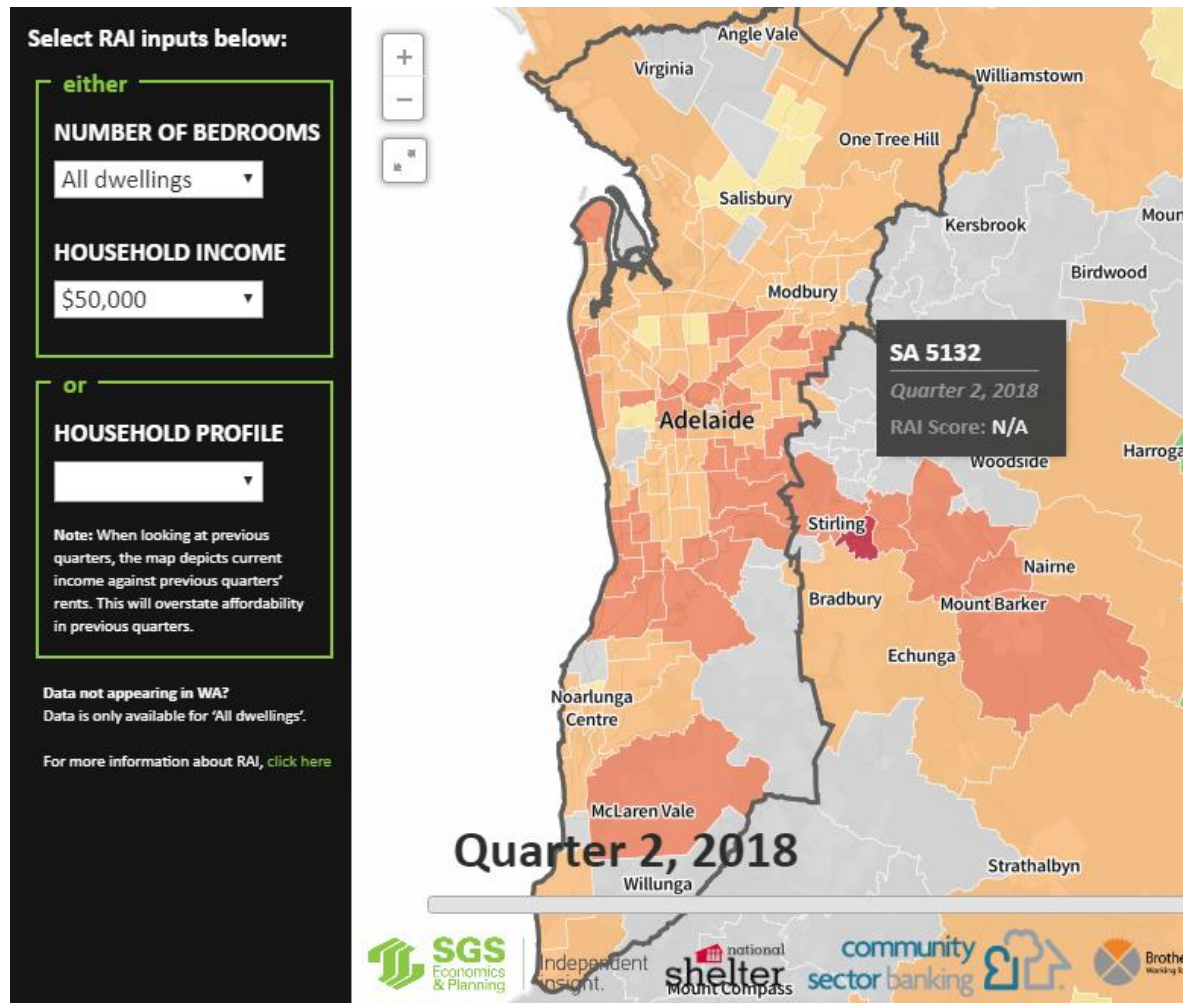
Private renters should be allowed to bring pets into their homes. Pets are a very important part of people's lives. More than two thirds of Australian households own pets and with home ownership on the decline, more families must reside in private rental accommodation. During March 2019, of 97 properties listed for rent on one real estate website for the suburb of Marion and surrounding suburbs, only 16 properties were pet-friendly.



There is **no evidence** that the introduction of pet bonds will increase the number of pet-friendly rentals on offer. Unfortunately, it is very difficult to change the attitudes and behaviours of some landlords and real estate agents on any issue, including allowing pets.

#2 Housing Affordability Crisis

Households living with housing stress, in the bottom two income quintiles, are paying more than 30% of their household income in rent. This leaves them with insufficient funds for other necessities. Given our high unemployment rate and cost of utilities, South Australians living on low incomes experience a 'triple whammy' when it comes to the cost of living and housing affordability. The number of households living with housing stress has doubled since 2007 and affects more than 120,000 households. The cost of entering a property listed at \$305 per week, with four weeks rent as bond and two weeks rent in advance would be \$1830.00, but would be \$2130 if a \$300 pet bond was added.



Then there are private renters who cannot achieve four weeks rent as a bond for a private rental and who are reliant on Housing SA Bond Guarantees and rent in advance to secure a home. The cost of the private rental assistance program continues to increase, as there are more and more South Australians, who due to living on a low income, are eligible for it. However, the Housing Authority will not finance pet bonds if they are introduced.

The National Rental Affordability Index shows unaffordability in the private rental market across the State of South Australia for the lowest two household income quintiles. You can log onto the map yourself and check rental affordability in your suburb against your income: <https://www.sgsep.com.au/maps/thirdspace/australia-rental-affordability-index/>.

#3 Stop Pet Surrenders



The number of people experiencing homelessness is also on the rise, as their housing needs cannot be met, and we see people cycling back through the system as well as people requiring assistance for the first time. Most homeless shelters do not cater for pets either and there are anecdotal stories of people sleeping on the streets as they refuse to relinquish their pets. Pets are being surrendered to the RSPCA every year and some are euthanised because they cannot be rehomed.

'No pets in rentals' causes heartache for South Australian families

Every year hundreds of pets are surrendered to RSPCA South Australia and other animal welfare and rescue organisations by families who need to rent but cannot find rental properties that will accept pets.

If you are a landlord and have a pet, you might not have thought much about the consequences of ticking the 'no pets' box whenever your property comes up for rent.

But consider this: *The Advertiser* recently reported that less than 5 per cent of rental properties in Adelaide and surrounding suburbs allowed pets.

With 62 per cent of Australian families owning a pet as part of the family, many families who have animals and need to rent are being forced to surrender loved pets just to keep a roof over their heads.

This is a poor outcome for animals and families that love pets.

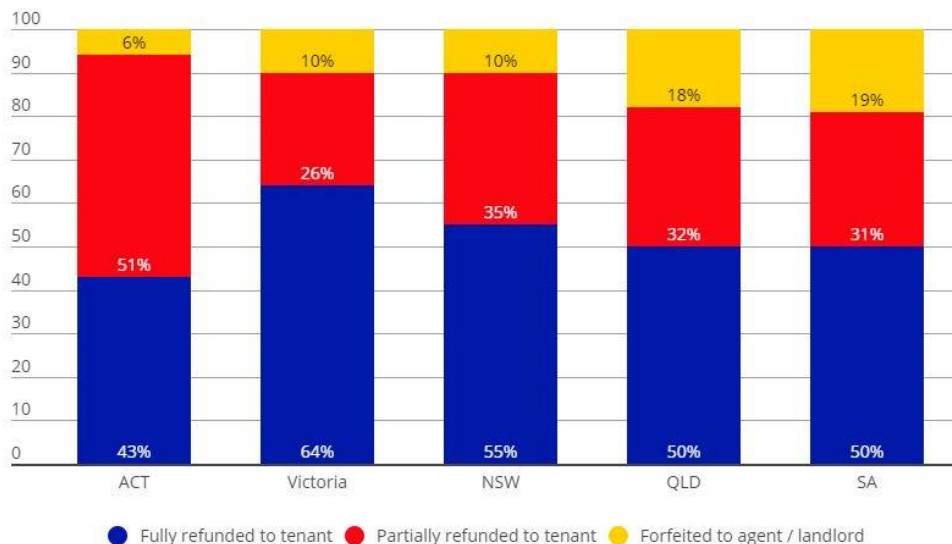
The fact is that loved pets cause minimal damage to rental properties. Landlords may also find that tenants with pets are more likely to stay for longer terms.

Rather than rental agreements defaulting to not allowing pets, RSPCA South Australia encourages private landlords, strata corporations and retirement villages to accept tenants with dogs and cats as the 'default' position.



#4 Say No to Pet Bonds

Some landlords are charging six weeks rent as a bond which is outside of the relevant legislation and 50% of bonds are claimed by landlords/agents in South Australia with another 25% partial claims. Having to pay a new bond if your original bond is not returned, or is in the process of being claimed, is another affordability barrier for people living on low incomes.



An added amount of money to be paid as a pet bond will cause more financial disadvantage to the families who are already struggling with affordability in the private rental market. Four weeks rent is more than adequate insurance for landlords to cover rent-arrears or damages to rental properties. Tenant Unions across Australia are also against pet bonds.



#5 We Need a Positive Pet Policy

A positive pet policy that consistently accepts and allows pets in private rental properties will create the right environment for an increased proportion of pet-friendly rentals. Creating a pet resume to use during your search for a private rental property is one way to convince real estate agents that you are a responsible pet owner and have a well looked after pet.

I'm a certified goodboy!!



ShelterSA
Housing: a basic human right

Does your pet have a pet resume?



Hi, I'm
Benny



Age: 4 years Owner:
Breed: Staffordshire Terrier Phone:
Sex: Male Email:
Neutered: Yes Weight:
Training: Completed 10 private sessions with P.B.T.C.A. in

About Me
I am house-broken and respond to basic commands. I'd be happy to shake your hand with either paw. I love meeting new people, playing on leashes and going for long walks. My favorite hobby is snuggling—both with humans and my Chihuahua, Belle.

Health and Grooming
I am about healthy, but I love getting brushed with my Furminator. I am up-to-date with all vaccinations and go for regular check-ups at Chesham Veterinary Clinic in Los Angeles. I use Frontline Plus every six months to stay protected from fleas and ticks.

About My Owner
Nicole is a dog lover and believes that a pet is only as good as parents. She also volunteers with Angel City Pit Bulls. When she goes out of town, she arranges care with DogTory.

References

Previous Landlord Name	Previous Neighbor Name
Phone Number	Phone Number
Email Address	Email Address

See attached document.

#MakeRentingFair

Within the recently released “Committed to Safety” framework, the South Australian Government policy to address domestic violence, it is indicated that pet bonds will be introduced by Consumer and Business Services. Shelter SA is calling for pet bonds to **remain illegal in South Australia** on the grounds of:

- Less affordability for people living on low incomes;
- The adequacy of existing protections for landlords and tenants that are already contained in our legislation when it comes to damages or wear and tear;
- Reducing the number of relinquished and euthanised pets; and
- Increasing positive pet policy.

Please join us by sharing pictures of your pets on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram using the hashtags #PositivePetPolicy #SAParli #MakeRentingFair and tag @ShelterSA