

Housing Options

Community housing and low cost rental

What is community housing?

Community housing provides long term housing, security and affordable rent for people with low means.

It does not refer to rooming /boarding house. Each person/household rents a self-contained unit. Community housing is not an emergency housing service. There is a single register for all community housing registrants.

Community housing providers are non-government, not-for-profit organisations operating under the *Community Housing Providers (National Law) (South Australia) Act 2013*. They are also subject to the *Residential Tenancies Act 1995*.

To be eligible people must meet:

- the government's eligibility criteria for all Community Housing; this includes residency, income, assets and needs tests
- the specific eligibility criteria of the individual housing provider in which they are interested.

Some community housing organisations cater especially for people with special needs such as disability, mental health issues or who have experienced homelessness.

Many tenants require support services to maintain independent housing. These are provided by government and community service agencies, not necessarily the community housing provider.

Each organisation manages its own tenant selection processes. Some may require tenancy supports to be in place before a referral will be accepted.

A single form ('Registration of interest in housing') can be used for Housing SA and community housing accommodation. The form is available from the www.sa.gov.au website. If you register your interest for both at the same

time, Housing SA will be your primary contact for information on your registration.

It is also possible to register for community housing only. In this case you can nominate your preferred community housing provider, which will become your primary contact. Before doing so it is recommended that you contact the provider to discuss your needs. They may assist you with completing the form.

The website www.sa.gov.au features a list of community housing providers. Alternatively contact **Housing SA** on **131 299**.

Volunteer member-tenant managed community housing (also called housing co-operatives) are run by a group of people with a common interest who work together to maintain and manage housing for their members.

Volunteer members perform landlord roles (e.g. tenancy, rent and maintenance) and business roles (e.g. administration, bookkeeping). Membership requires significant ongoing commitment, including attending meetings and actively participating in the management of the co-operative.

Each co-operative manages its own member and tenant selection processes.

Contact the **Community Housing Council of SA** on 7077 2803 or visit its website if you have any questions about the responsibilities of living in volunteer member tenant-managed properties.

People interested in this housing type must complete the *Registration of interest in housing form*. The form and a list of volunteer member-tenant managed community housing providers are available from the www.sa.gov.au website. There are also links on the Council's website.

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The **Community Housing Council of SA's** website also features further information on community housing - www.chcsa.org.au.

Information about community housing is also available through Housing SA – call the Contact Centre on 131 299 or visit a Housing SA office.

Community housing is only one of a number of affordable housing options. See other options below.

Rental independent living for seniors

Low cost rental accommodation may also be offered by not-for-profit and community organisations specifically for seniors. They usually consist of one- and two-bedroom units and are specifically for older people who do not own their homes.

A low rent amount is charged and an assets test may be required. These contracts are governed by the *Residential Tenancies Act 1995*.

Supported rental accommodation

Some providers offer semi-independent rental accommodation. This often comprises bed-sitter housing with some limited support (e.g. meals, linen) provided as part of the contract.

Housing SA

Housing SA is the South Australian government's public housing provider. It provides public rental housing for low income households and people with special needs including a special housing program for Aboriginal people. There is usually a very long waiting list. A priority system applies. A large number of Housing SA houses have been transferred to community housing providers (See relevant section above).

Housing SA also provides financial assistance to eligible customers in the private rental market. It may include help paying bond and rent in

advance. Application forms are available from local offices and from www.sa.gov.au.

To contact **Housing SA, tel. 131 299** (08 8207 0211 if calling from outside South Australia), email housingcustomers@sa.gov.au or visit one of the offices.

Renting in residential parks

Some residential parks provide the option to rent a dwelling (e.g. caravan or cabin). A residential parking tenancy agreement should be in place. For information on renting a home in these parks see the relevant section of the www.sa.gov.au website and the associated booklet *Living in a residential park - information for residents who rent both a site and a dwelling*, published by South Australian Government's Consumer and Business Services.

Further information can be provided by **Consumer and Business Services, tel. 131 882** and **Catalyst Foundation** (including a list of parks in SA).

Accommodation for people with a disability

Some community housing providers specialise in providing low cost rental accommodation for people with a disability. See section *Community Housing* above.

People who are registered with the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) may receive assistance to live independently, including, among other supports, 'home modifications to the participant's own home or a private rental property and on a case-by-case basis in social housing'.

The NDIS may be able to provide extra assistance to Scheme participants, such as a Local Area Coordinator to make contact and discuss their needs with housing providers, and funded support co-ordination to assist sourcing appropriate housing options.

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The NDIS will only fund **Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA)** when it is a reasonable and necessary support for a participant due to extreme functional impairment or very high support need. SDA payments are made by the NDIS to SDA property owners for the cost of housing a person with SDA funding allocated in their NDIS plan.

For further information on how the NDIS support participants with housing matters visit www.ndis.gov.au/providers/housing-and-living-supports-and-services or call **1800 800 110**.

The Housing Hub

www.thehousinghub.org.au is an online resource containing information on disability housing. It includes a portal where people can find disability-friendly properties across Australia, for rent and for sale. The website advertises vacancies for apartments and houses that are owned by housing providers. It also features a library of useful information about housing options and planning your move.

Nest (<https://gonest.com.au/>) is another online resource for people with disability and providers of housing suitable for people with disability. It lists properties available and can be searched by area. The website also features an A-Z directory of the organisations that list their vacancies on the database.

Support for older people facing homelessness

Frail older people or prematurely aged people 50 years and over (or 45 years and over for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people) on a low income who are at risk of homelessness as a result of living with hoarding behaviour or living in a squalid environment may be eligible for assistance through the Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP).

A referral from **My Aged Care** (tel. **1800 200 422**) is required to receive assistance.

Care finders may provide specialist and intensive assistance to help eligible older people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness to connect with appropriate and sustainable housing and other supports in the community targeted at avoiding homelessness or reducing the impact of homelessness.

To find the local care finders visit www.myagedcare.gov.au/help-care-finder

Other useful contacts and resources

Homeless Connect SA provides 24/7 state-wide telephone service for anyone experiencing homelessness in South Australia. Available anytime as a free call to help you find information and a direct referral into homelessness services.

Tel. 1800 003 308

www.homelessconnectsa.org/

The **South Australia Government's** website contains information on housing including a range of resources on rental accommodation - www.sa.gov.au/topics/housing.

Consumer and Business Services provide advice or further information about tenancy issues. Tel. 131 882;

www.cbs.sa.gov.au/renting-letting-advice

South Australian Civil Administrative Tribunal (SACAT) deals with housing disputes (e.g. breach of agreement, end of agreement disputes) including those between tenants and private landlords or community housing providers. It also deals with cases involving decisions made by Housing SA. **Tel. 1800 723 767, email sacat@sacat.sa.gov.au; www.sacat.sa.gov.au**

RentRight SA (formerly Tenants Information and Advocacy Service - TIAS) is a free, independent service, helping people maintain

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their tenancies in private rental, community housing or public housing (e.g. if facing eviction).

The service is provided by **SYC Ltd**,
tel. 1800 060 462,

www.syc.net.au/services/housing-homelessness-support/retright-sa

Catalyst Foundation (including Seniors Information Service) provides information about housing options available, especially for seniors.

It publishes a directory of rental independent living for seniors in South Australia, available in print and on the website. The information is also listed on a publicly available online database and vacancy register where subscribing housing organisations update their respective vacancies. Access the database at

www.catalystfoundation.com.au/housing/.

In addition, a list has been compiled of providers offering semi-independent (supported) rental housing).

Our staff can also assist with accessing these resources and with information from other sources. Contact us by telephone, email or visit our office. Bookings are required for face-to-face consultations.

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