

ROBERT SIMMS**MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL**

Dr Catherine Earl
Chief Executive Officer
South Australian Council of Social Service

2 February 2026

Via email: sacoss@sacoss.org.auCc: Dr Greg Ogle, Senior Policy Analyst (greg@sacoss.org.au)

Dear Dr Earl,

RE: SACOSS' Policy Priorities and Election Report Card

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the South Australian Council of Social Services' (SACOSS) policy priorities for the 2026 South Australian State Election.

The Greens support your organisation's commitment to addressing poverty, inequality and injustice and being a strong peak body for the community sector. The Greens support your submission and see a strong alignment on your election report card on many issues such as housing, energy and human rights.

Responses to your policy priorities are outlined below:

Fixing Funding and Workforce Development

The Greens recognise the important role that the community sector plays in delivering frontline services to some of the most vulnerable South Australians. The Greens are supportive of a co-designed 10-year workforce and development plan led by the sector. This should be delivered simultaneously with a co-designed longer-term funding model that supports future planning and capacity building needs of the sector.

Public and Community Housing

Over the last 20 years, South Australia has lost tens of thousands of social housing dwellings while the waitlist has stayed stagnant for over five years, forcing more people to sleep in tents, couch surf or sleep rough. The State Government's current commitment to public housing is completely insufficient to meet demand. The Greens have a plan to build 20,000 public homes over the next four years, eliminating the public housing waitlist in the process. This will ensure the building of public homes not only far exceeds the 430 built in this term but also plans for future demand in mind. Our policy involves restoring the SA Housing Trust to its original mission as a public builder to undertake construction of new public and affordable homes and to complete construction of homes when private building companies collapse. This plan ensures the 2025 and 2026 levels of building are exceeded in 2027 and beyond.

Rent caps

Across South Australia, rents have gone up by 20 per cent over the last two years, with average rental prices increasing from \$350 to \$420 a week. Recent changes to the South Australian rental rules prevents landlords from increasing rents within a 12-month period. The Greens support these changes

but will be pushing the Government to introduce a rent cap. The Greens will introduce legislation into the next term of Parliament to cap rent increases in line with CPI and restrict rent increases to once every two years. We are the only party actively campaigning on rental reforms that support renters' rights.

Better definition of "affordable housing"

The Greens support a new definition of affordable housing that is set in reference to the household income, rather than inline with market rental rates.

We will reintroduce legislative amendments to the *Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016* to mandate that all new developments of 20 dwellings or more be required to include: 10 percent affordable to buy dwellings, 10 percent affordable rental accommodation, and 10 percent community or public housing. This amendment is designed to increase the number of affordable dwellings available to South Australians when a new development is approved in our state.

Expand Homelessness Services

Specialist homelessness services play a vital role in supporting individuals and families who are experiencing homelessness or at risk of becoming homeless. It is unacceptable that they have faced a major funding reduction at a time when SA is grappling with the worst housing crisis in generations. The Greens support a restoration in funding to the providers of these services, alongside and increase in social housing and supported accommodation, to restore their capacity and to boost it further.

Additionally, with the news that Shelter SA has ceased operations, I recently renewed my calls for the Government to step up and properly support a publicly funded homelessness peak body. We will continue to advocate for future investment in affordable housing and to increase services across the homelessness sector.

New National Energy Objectives and Energy Efficiency

The Greens support the recommendation to legislate an explicit consumer protection to require energy market institutions and regulations to prioritise meaningful safeguards for consumers.

We are also calling for the establishment of a commission of inquiry to examine the bringing back of the Electricity Trust of South Australia (ETSA) to provide publicly owned electricity. South Australians are paying the highest energy prices in the nation, with the cost savings made by big corporations failing to be passed on to the consumer. We want to bring ETSA back into public hands.

The Greens strongly support the implementation of minimum energy efficiency standards for rentals. We will reintroduce legislation into the next term of Parliament that mandates all rental homes to be fitted with efficient and functioning heating and cooling, have sufficient insulation, fly screens on external windows and the house must be maintained to prevent draughts. Importantly, our plan specifies that landlords cannot increase rent while a tenant is in the property to pay for these fixtures. The legislation will also provide potential tenants with information on the energy efficient standards of the rental property.

Electrification

The Greens support all three of SACOSS' proposals on electrification. Banning new gas connections is crucial to cutting back gas use and emissions and we will reintroduce legislation to Parliament that bans mandatory gas connections for new builds. We also propose introducing a Sustainable Household Fund that will dedicate \$30 million over 10 years in no-interest loans for homeowners and landlords to electrify appliances in their properties. Our plan involves committing government

investment in upgrades to social and community housing to take these properties off gas, as well as government buildings and infrastructure at a cost of \$15 million over 10 years.

Human Rights

The Greens strongly support establishing a Human Rights Act. In 2023 I moved a motion in State Parliament calling on the State Government to legislate a Human Rights Act and I am a member of State Parliament's Social Development Committee, which tabled a report in April 2025 recommending that the government legislate a Human Rights Act. The Greens further believe that a Human Rights Act must not only articulate a set of common values and principles that define and preserve our modern democracy but also require governments to act to address inequality and discrimination and lack of access to fundamental services.

Funding for the People's Health Voice

The Greens support your proposal to continue the People's Health Voice, including the provision of on-going funding to have ongoing community engagement and representation from the People's Health Voice in South Australia.

Kind regards,



The Hon. Robert Simms MLC
Greens SA Member of the Legislative Council

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