

2nd April 2020

Hon Michelle Lensink MLC
Minister for Human Services
Email - DHSMinisterforHumanServices@sa.gov.au

Dear Minister

COTA SA was recently advised by Shelter SA that their funding contract to undertake systemic advocacy as South Australia's peak body for housing will end in September 2020.

We are very puzzled about the decision not to support their ongoing role in advocacy, policy and evidence-based research. A consumer focused and independent advocacy organisation, independent of the interests of the various players in the housing sector, would seem to us to be especially important as we face serious risks of new housing stress and homelessness including for almost 10,000 older people right now.

COTA SA has always worked constructively with Shelter SA. They have been informed, independent and collaborative in framing of the risks (and options to address) homelessness including for older South Australians. We particularly value their advocacy on many fronts including -

- advocating for the Code Blue policy that now guides housing providers during extreme weather
- making representations to the Federal Government for critical funding for specialist homelessness services including as part of the national Shelter alliance
- focusing on housing affordability for people living on low incomes and raising public awareness and understanding of these issues through the media
- conducting community consultations and workshops to inform State Government policy
- producing intelligent, independent and well researched data and commentary to support housing policy development.

I am writing to express COTA SA's deep concerns about the decision to leave South Australia without a specialist and independent housing advocacy peak body.

Yours sincerely



Jane Mussared
Chief Executive