



STATEMENT ON FORMAL RESOLUTION

Published under section 26 of *Ombudsman Act 1972*

Resolved 7 August 2026

Delay in completing maintenance works



Essential Insights

As a provider of public housing, SA Housing Trust has an obligation to ensure that its properties are fit for habitation. This includes ensuring that any necessary maintenance works are completed within a reasonable timeframe.

THE COMPLAINT

The Deputy Ombudsman assessed a complaint from a tenant about SA Housing Trust (**SAHT**). The tenant had been living with a termite infestation in their home since at least May 2025. While there were early efforts to treat the infestation, these were not successful and the termite technician recommended use of a bait box. There was a seven-month delay before the bait box was installed.

The tenant also complained that a different maintenance contractor had cut a hole in her kitchen wall while removing kitchen tiles, resulting in dust spreading through the house. The tenant reported this to SAHT and expressed concern that the wall may contain asbestos due to the age of the home. There was a five-month delay in SAHT arranging for asbestos testing, which confirmed there was asbestos.

The tenant had contacted SAHT on a number of occasions, including by raising official complaints, about the above matters but they had not been resolved.

KEY OUTCOMES FOLLOWING THE DEPUTY OMBUDSMAN'S ASSESSMENT

While the SAHT's actions appeared to amount to error, the Deputy Ombudsman considered that the matter could suitably be resolved via formal resolution.

SAHT agreed to:

- acknowledge that there had been unreasonable delays in testing for asbestos, and in conducting termite treatments
- provide an apology to the tenant for the above errors
- refund the cost of asbestos testing, which the tenant had paid for after becoming frustrated with the delay
- investigate whether there is a risk that the tenant's soft furnishings were contaminated with asbestos (including testing if necessary) and informing the tenant of the outcome of the investigation (including reasons)
- make an assessment as to whether it will be safe for the tenant to remain in her home whilst repair works are undertaken to the termite-damaged areas of the house, noting the presence of asbestos, and informing the tenant of the outcome of the assessment (including reasons)
- in light of the delays, and the tenant's health conditions which are being exacerbated by the termite infestation, reassess whether it is appropriate that the tenant remain as a Category 4 for a transfer.

The Deputy Ombudsman will monitor the actions of the SAHT to ensure that the agreed actions are fully implemented.