OmbudsmanSA

Report

Full investigation - *Ombudsman Act 1972*

Complainant	[redacted]
Agency	SA Housing Trust
Ombudsman reference	2026/00619
Agency reference	26SAHTC/0852
Date complaint received	30 January 2026
Issues	1. Whether the SAHT erred by failing to respond to concerns about the risk of domestic violence at the tenant's property 2. Whether the SAHT erred by failing to appropriately manage a complaint from the tenant and her advocate

CONTENT DISCLAIMER

This report mentions experience of domestic violence. If you need to seek support, please refer to the end page of this report for support resources.

Jurisdiction

On 30 January 2026, my Office received a complaint from [redacted] about the SA Housing Trust (**the SAHT**). I will refer to [redacted] as 'the tenant' throughout the body of my report.

The tenant's complaint is within the jurisdiction of the Ombudsman under the *Ombudsman Act 1972*.

Investigation

My investigation has involved:

- assessing the information provided by the tenant
- obtaining information from the department, including case management records form the tenant's Connect file
- seeking responses from the SAHT

- considering the following:
  - the *South Australian Housing Trust Act 1995* (**the SAHT Act**)
  - the *Ombudsman Act 1972*
  - the SAHT's Transfer Policy, Domestic Abuse Policy, Domestic Abuse Procedures, and Access Practice Guide
- providing the tenant and the SAHT with my provisional report for comment, and considering their responses
- preparing this report.

Standard of proof

The standard of proof I have applied in my investigation and report is on the balance of probabilities. However, in determining whether that standard has been met, in accordance with the High Court's decision in *Briginshaw v Briginshaw* (1938) 60 CLR 336, I have considered the nature of the assertions made and the consequences if they were to be upheld. That decision recognises that greater care is needed in considering the evidence in some cases.[1] It is best summed up in the decision as follows:

> The seriousness of an allegation made, the inherent unlikelihood of an occurrence of a given description, or the gravity of the consequences flowing from a particular finding, are considerations which must affect the answer to the question whether the issue has been proved … .[2]

Procedural fairness

I provided a copy of my provisional report to the SAHT and the tenant, inviting submissions in relation to my provisional views.

I received a response from the Chief Executive of the SAHT, as well as from the tenant and the tenant's support worker, on behalf of the tenant. I have carefully considered all of the responses and addressed those responses as I consider necessary in the body of this report, but note the following:

- the SAHT made submissions in relation to my provisional view that the SAHT erred in failing to take sufficient action to support the tenant in removal of her ex-partner from the property. As a result, I have amended my view about that issue.
- the SAHT nevertheless accepted all of the proposed recommendations in the provisional report
- the tenant's support worker made suggestions for further recommendations, including that the SAHT reimburse the tenant for financial losses attributable to the errors, consider making an ex-gratia payment for the distress caused to her, and provide a remediation plan. I provided SAHT the opportunity to consider those additional recommendations and have given careful consideration to them in coming to my final views as to recommendations.

I wish to acknowledge at the outset that the tenant and her support worker have emphasised to my Office the important impact that my investigation has had in validating the tenant's experiences, and in allowing the tenant to feel that she is being heard and that her circumstances are being taken seriously. I consider that this response highlights the effects of the SAHT's failures that I have identified in this investigation, and the importance of

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[1] This decision was applied more recently in *Neat Holdings Pty Ltd v Karajan Holdings Pty Ltd* (1992) 110 ALR 449 at pp449-450, per Mason CJ, Brennan, Deane and Gaudron JJ.

[2] *Briginshaw v Briginshaw* at pp361-362, per Dixon J.

listening to and believing victim-survivors in the first instance. I am grateful for the tenant's and her support worker's honest and thoughtful responses to my investigation.

Background

1. The tenant in this matter had resided in the relevant SAHT property (**the property**) since 2022, and left the property in March 2025 due to experiencing domestic violence, perpetrated by her ex-partner. Given the lengthy history between the tenant and the SAHT in this matter, a timeline of the key events since December 2024 is provided at **Appendix 1** of this report. I will, however, discuss certain events in more detail throughout this report where relevant.

2. The tenant made a complaint to my Office, which raised concerns that the SAHT had failed to adequately respond to the tenant's risk of domestic violence at her property, and that she experienced a delay in being prioritised as category 1 for a transfer.

3. Under the SAHT's Transfer Policy, the level of urgency of a tenant's situation and need for transfer is assessed and placed into a category. Category 1 is the highest level of priority for transfer, and a tenant will meet the criteria for category 1 where they are at risk in their current property, and are experiencing tenancy issues that make their current property unsuitable in the long term.[3] I note that until February 2026, the tenant was registered as category 4. Tenants are eligible for registration as category 4 where they have lived in their current property for at least 3 years and they're not eligible for either category 1 or category 2.[4]

4. The tenant has complained that the SAHT failed to update her registration to category 1, despite multiple requests from her and her support worker and evidence of her being at risk at the property.

Whether the SAHT erred by failing to respond to concerns about the risk of domestic violence at the tenant's property

5. In determining whether the SAHT failed to respond to concerns about the risk of domestic violence at the tenant's property, I have considered whether the department erred in the following ways:
   - by failing to conduct its own risk assessment
   - by failing to support the tenant in removing her ex-partner from the property
   - by failing to register the tenant as category 1 priority.

<u>Failure to conduct risk assessment</u>

6. I have considered whether the SAHT erred by failing to conduct its own risk assessment in relation to the tenant's risk of experiencing domestic violence at the property. As can be determined from the timeline at **Appendix 1**, the SAHT appears to have relied on verification of the tenant's risk from South Australia Police (**SAPOL**) when concerns were raised by the tenant or her support worker.

7. In particular, I note that on 13 November 2025, the SAHT reiterated its decision for the tenant to remain at category 4 priority, due to SAPOL not verifying that the tenant was

[3] SA Housing Trust, 'Transfer policy' (28 June 2023) <https://www.housing.sa.gov.au/about/policies/transfer-policy>.
[4] Ibid.

at risk in her property, or indeed at the emergency accommodation. This was after the SAHT had already been notified that the tenant's tyres had been slashed, her car vandalised, there had been reports that the tenant was being isolated by her ex-partner, that the tenant's ex-partner and his father overtook the property, and that the property was broken into.

8. The basis for the SAHT's assessment noted above, that SAPOL had not verified that the tenant was at risk, appears to be a response from SAPOL to an information exchange request on 11 November 2025. The SAHT, on 10 November 2025, requested that SAPOL provide information regarding recent police reports made by the tenant against her ex-partner, and also that SAPOL advise of any concerns that it had for the tenant's safety at her current tenancy. SAPOL responded, advising of a police report made by the tenant on 13 August 2025 regarding domestic violence, and noting that the suspect 'is actively avoiding police and is currently wanted. His whereabouts is unknown'.[5] In this regard, I note that SAPOL did not explicitly say whether it considered the tenant to be at risk in her property or not, and in my view, the fact that the suspect was currently wanted by police and his whereabouts were unknown would have indicated a level of risk for the tenant.

9. The tenant's support worker expressed dissatisfaction with the SAHT's assessment to keep the tenant at category 4, writing:[6]

> I believe this assessment fails to reflect the clear risk factors, as well as the broader context of vulnerability and systemic failure that [the tenant] is currently experiencing.
>
> SAPOL's lack of confirmation that [the tenant] is "at risk" does not equate to evidence that she is not at risk. People in domestic violence situations frequently avoid reporting or engaging with police due to fear of retaliation (which [the tenant] has explicitly stated), previous experiences of limited protection or being disbelieved, and [the tenant] has had cognitive and psychosocial impairments that limit help-seeking. The reliance on a police verification model – especially in the context of a woman with significant trauma places an unrealistic burden on [the tenant] to produce "proof" of her own risk, while actively experiencing it.
>
> The recent breach of her property (gate lock cut, barricaded door forced open, and prior perpetrator's belongings removed) is clear, tangible evidence of ongoing trespass and intimidation. If this does not meet the threshold for a tenancy being "unsafe", I respectfully ask what criteria SAHT is using, because from both a housing and a risk management perspective, this is unacceptable.

10. The SAHT responded to the tenant's support worker, suggesting a formal referral to support services for the tenant, and expressing that a transfer did not appear to be the solution, due to the tenant reporting similar concerns of feeling unsafe in her previous properties.

11. In considering whether the SAHT acted in error, I have had regard to the relevant policies and procedures. The SAHT's Domestic Abuse Policy details that the SAHT

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5 Information exchange between SAPOL and Housing SA or a community housing provider, 11 November 2025.

6 Email from the tenant's support worker to the SA Housing Trust, 13 November 2025.

requires verification of domestic abuse, and notes that verification can be verbal or in writing, including information from (my emphasis added):[7]

- a relevant support agency
- a third party, for example relatives, friends, neighbours
- an intervention order
- a Multi Agency Protection Service summary document
- **an assessment by the SA Housing Trust.**

12. The SAHT's Domestic Abuse Procedures note under 'Assessing risk' that the SAHT should complete a domestic violence risk assessment when domestic abuse is identified, assessing the risk in line with the Access Practice Guide. The Access Practice Guide includes the following relevant guidance:[8]

> Remember that the client is the expert in their own life. Even if the risk seems small, if the client says that they are afraid, this should be taken seriously.
> …
>
> Immediate risk to safety includes:
> - Structural hazards in the property
> - Violence and threats from community members
> - Domestic and family violence where the perpetrator knows the client's whereabouts
>
> The SA Housing Authority has a duty of care to provide safe accommodation to its tenants.

13. I am also mindful that the SAHT Act provides that it is the functions of the SAHT to (my emphasis added):[9]

> (a) provide affordable, **secure and appropriate housing that meets the needs of its clients**; and
> (b) ensure that rental housing provided by SAHT is well located, of adequate size and condition, and meets **reasonable standards of health, safety and security**; and
> (c) ensure that housing built by or for SAHT after the commencement of this Act incorporates modern standards of energy efficiency; and
> (d) aim to provide housing that provides reasonable access to community services.

14. In light of the SAHT's policies as set out above, and the SAHT's functions under the SAHT Act, I am of the view that there was nothing to prevent the SAHT from conducting its own risk assessment in relation to the tenant, independent of verification from SAPOL. In fact, I consider that the SAHT had an obligation to address the safety concerns being raised by the tenant and assess the risk itself, noting the duty of care that the SAHT has to its tenants to ensure that tenancies are safe and appropriate. Further, I note that the SAHT's policies expressly provide that verification of risk can also be provided by a relevant support agency, or even by third parties such as friends,

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7 SA Housing Trust, 'Domestic abuse policy' (3 August 2022) <https://www.housing.sa.gov.au/about/policies/domestic-abuse-policy>.
8 SA Housing Trust, 'Access practice guide' 39; 44.
9 *South Australian Housing Trust Act 1995* s 5(3).

neighbours and family members. I therefore query why the SAHT did not appear to accept the existence of risk, where the tenant's support worker and social workers were also giving this information.

15. The SAHT responded to my investigation, explaining that it was seeking to apply its Transfer Policy to assess whether the tenant would meet the eligibility criteria for category 1. Therefore, the SAHT said that it needed to verify whether there was 'imminent risk' at the property, for which it relied on verification from SAPOL and assessments from other services.

16. I note that the SAHT's Transfer Policy provides that a tenant will be eligible for category 1 priority where there is a risk of harm at the property, and they are experiencing tenancy issues that make the property unsuitable in the long term. There is no requirement for there to be a risk of 'imminent harm' as the SAHT has claimed. In fact, I consider that even if the risk of harm is moderate, this limb of the policy would still be satisfied due to the tenant being 'at risk' to some degree. I consider that the SAHT's reliance on verification from SAPOL to be unreasonable in these circumstances, where multiple concerns had been reported.

17. I would also like to note my concern with the SAHT's approach of relying on SAPOL for verification of risk, noting the many barriers that victim-survivors of domestic violence face in reporting their experiences. These barriers were addressed in the recent South Australian Royal Commission into Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence, which noted that fear of retaliation, or of not being believed were significant roadblocks to reporting.[10] An insistence by the SAHT that the tenant report her fears to SAPOL, with the consequence that otherwise she will not be considered at risk, suggests a fundamental misunderstanding of domestic violence and the complexities faced by victim-survivors. In that regard, I note the tenant's submission the SAHT's failure to accept that she was at risk due to the fact she had reported similar concerns in previous tenancies was especially distressing and 'reinforced her belief that she was being judged for repeatedly experiencing domestic violence rather than supported as a victim-survivor'.[11]

18. I am aware that the SAHT ultimately accepted that the tenant was at risk at the property in February 2026, after receiving a Domestic Violence Risk Assessment (**DVRA**) score of 66 (high risk of injury or death) from SAPOL, however this was after the tenant had been assaulted by her ex-partner. I further note that once the tenant was recommended for category 1 priority in February 2026, the updated Housing Needs Assessment stated that risk to the tenant's safety was 'evidenced by the accused and associated overtaking the property'. It appears that the SAHT retrospectively accepted that this was an indicator of risk, although it failed to do so at the time that it was actually occurring in July 2025.

19. I find it unacceptable that the SAHT failed to conduct its own risk assessment in the circumstances where multiple indicators of risk appeared to be present for the tenant, and I consider that this amounts to administrative error.

[10] *Royal Commission into Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence* (Final Report, August 2025).
[11] Email from the tenant's support worker to Ombudsman SA, 21 August 2026.

Failure to support the tenant in removal of her ex-partner from the property

20. I understand that the tenant's ex-partner and his father effectively took over the tenant's property in July 2025. The SAHT advised that the regional manager was 'not supportive' of the SAHT attending the property with SAPOL to remove them, and expressed the view that it was the tenant's responsibility to arrange for SAPOL to remove the ex-partner and his father.

21. In my provisional report I expressed a view that it appeared 'unreasonable for the SAHT to refuse to assist with the removal of the tenant's ex-partner and his father, in the context where the tenant had openly expressed fear for her safety and possible retaliation and where SAHT's functions include providing safe and secure accommodation to clients'.

22. The SAHT, in response, accepted and acknowledged that the tenant was experiencing safety concerns, that the SAHT had a responsibility to support her and engage with relevant services to respond to those concerns and that tenants experiencing domestic and family violence require a coordinated, responsive and victim-centred approach. However, the SAHT submitted that its responsibilities do not extend to the physical removal of unwanted occupants from a property and that SAHT staff are not trained or authorised to participate in enforcement activities; 'Where individuals need to be removed from a property against their will, responsibility for that action rests with SAPOL or the courts exercising the relevant statutory powers'.[12]

23. I accept that it is not the SAHT's responsibility to enforce an unwanted person's removal from the property; indeed I accept that SAHT had no authority in relation to the occupation of the property by the complainant's ex-partner. SAHT stated that it encouraged the tenant and her support worker to engage with SAPOL directly to achieve this and submitted that it did make contact with SAPOL seeking assistance in relation to the matter.

24. Accordingly, I have revised my view and do not consider SAHT erred in this regard.

Failure to register as a category 1 priority

25. For the reasons outlined above in relation to the SAHT's failure to conduct its own risk assessment, I consider that the tenant appeared to be at risk of domestic violence at the property and also at emergency accommodation, which the SAHT failed to assess appropriately and address. As such, I consider that the SAHT should have registered the tenant as a having category 1 priority at a much earlier stage than January 2026, when the tenant was assaulted by her ex-partner.

26. Further, the SAHT received a risk assessment score of 66 from SAPOL on 20 January 2026 and still did not update the tenant's registration to a category 1 priority. I consider this to be unreasonable, noting that a score of 66 indicates that a person is at high risk of serious injury or death.

27. As detailed at **Appendix 1**, the Multi Agency Protection Service (**MAPS**) assessment detailing that the tenant was at risk at her property and required transfer was finalised on 2 February 2026, however she still was not changed to a category 1 priority from category 4 until 4 March 2026.

[12] Letter from Julie-Anne Burgess to the Ombudsman, 12 August 2026.

28. By way of explanation, where a domestic violence incident occurs, SAPOL may refer the matter to the MAPS, which is an inter-agency information-sharing program to support the management of high-risk domestic violence and child protection matters. The program enables agencies to share relevant information and coordinate responses to risk, and operates as part of the Family Safety Framework, which aims to reduce the incidence and impact of domestic abuse

29. I have before me emails between SAHT employees, which include the Operations Manager stating on 24 February 2026, 'I wasn't aware her transfer category was 4 … she would require to be cat 1'[13]. This suggests that at this point the SAHT were of the view the tenant should have been reprioritised as a result of the MAPS assessment. It is not clear to me why this did not occur. In any event the failure to change the priority status in early February 2026 was, in my view, another error on the part of the SAHT.

30. The effect of the tenant remaining registered as a category 4 during that period is that she remained at the bottom of the priority list for a transfer, despite being at a high level of risk. It is unacceptable for this to simply be overlooked. I note the tenant's characterisation of this as having serious consequences for her, including adding to her overall distress. I understand that the registration date has been backdated to October 2025, to align with the date the tenant registered interest in being transferred. However, I consider the failure to promptly update the tenant's registration category for an extended period of time and despite receiving SAPOL's assessment and then MAPS' assessment, amounts to administrative error.

Opinion

In light of the above, my view is that the SAHT has erred by failing to respond to concerns about the risk of domestic violence at the tenant's property in the following ways:

- by failing to conduct its own risk assessment
- by failing to register the tenant as category 1 priority.

Whether the SAHT erred by failing to appropriately manage a complaint from the tenant and the tenant's advocate

31. The tenant's support worker made a formal complaint to the SAHT on 15 August 2025 and received a response from the SAHT on 8 September 2025 which stated that information could not be shared with her as she was not listed as the tenant's proxy. The SAHT has explained that on 18 August 2025 it received ministerial correspondence from the Hon Tom Koutsantonis MP who had been contacted by the tenant, which was prioritised. The tenant was provided with a response from the department on behalf of the Minister on 9 September 2025, which reiterated that it did not have enough information to suggest that the tenant was at risk.

32. For the reasons I have already set out in this report, I consider that the SAHT failed to properly engage with the risk factors that were present at this time. I am therefore of the view that the SAHT erred in failing to address those in response to the Ministerial correspondence.

33. In relation to the support worker's complaint, the SAHT noted that it was limited in the information it could provide to the tenant's support worker in line with privacy

[13] Internal email between SAHT employees, 24 February 2026.

obligations, as she was not registered as a proxy. The SAHT's response to the support worker's complaint did include a link for the tenant to complete a consent to share information form should she wish to do so, however, the SAHT then continued to openly communicate with the support worker for several months after this date.

34. I have considered whether the SAHT acted in error by failing to appropriately respond to the complaint from the tenant's support worker, and provide her with a substantive outcome. I acknowledge that the SAHT did not wish to divulge confidential information about the tenant without proper authorisation to do so, however I query the validity of this reasoning, given that the SAHT was openly communicating with the tenant's support worker about the tenant, her previous tenancies, and her emergency accommodation arrangements before and after this point.

35. I have had regard to the SAHT's Privacy and Information Sharing Policy,[14] which states that the SAHT may share a tenant's personal information when the tenant gives consent to share it. It is not specified whether such consent needs to be in writing. It appears that the SAHT had accepted they had the authority and the required consent to communicate with the tenant's support worker about her tenancy before the support worker's formal complaint, and I am not convinced that the nature of the SAHT's response to the support worker's complaint would have necessitated the disclosure of the tenant's sensitive information, beyond what had already been disclosed to the support worker in previous communications.

36. In my view, the SAHT had clearly been satisfied that it had some form of consent to liaise with the tenant's support worker in previous communications, and so it appears possible that once a formal complaint was raised, the team within the SAHT responsible for managing these complaints may have been unfamiliar with the support worker's status due to a lack of formal documentation confirming as such.

37. On 19 March 2026, a social worker from the SAHT emailed the support worker, asking for her to ask the tenant to sign a form, nominating the support worker as her proxy. The social worker also wrote that 'This would also help should you need to escalate a complaint again, as I understand it was knocked back because you were not listed as a proxy'.[15] Therefore, as of 19 March 2026, the tenant's support worker had still not been registered as a proxy for the tenant, however it appears that the SAHT had accepted her as being the tenant's advocate for the previous 14 months. It is not clear to me why the SAHT did not follow up on their suggestion from September 2025 that the tenant complete a consent to share information form before continuing to communicate with the support worker, and I consider that this may indicate a lack of communication or formal documentation between teams within the SAHT.

38. I consider that the SAHT failed to properly register and document the support worker as a proxy, in the circumstances where the SAHT had apparently accepted that there was appropriate consent in place for the SAHT to communicate with the support worker, which in turn resulted in the support worker not being provided with the outcome of her complaint. The tenant's support worker has advised that this failure by the SAHT impeded her capacity to advocate effectively for the tenant, who was vulnerable and unable to navigate the system independently.

[14] SA Housing Trust, 'Privacy and information sharing policy' (15 December 2025).
[15] Email from the SA Housing Trust to the tenant's support worker, 18 March 2026.

Opinion

In light of the above, my view is that the SAHT erred by failing to properly register and document the tenant's support worker as a proxy for the tenant.

Summary and Recommendations

My final view is that the SAHT has erred by:

- failing to respond to concerns about the risk of domestic violence at the tenant's property in the following ways:
  - by failing to conduct its own risk assessment
  - the delay in registering the tenant as category 1 priority.
- failing to properly register and document the tenant's support worker as a proxy for the tenant.

In considering my recommendations in this matter, I have had regard to the recommendations made as a result of the Royal Commission into Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence (**the Royal Commission**). This includes that South Australia develop and implement a statewide Risk Assessment and Management Framework, as has been done in other jurisdictions.[16]

While the DVRA tool is utilised in South Australia to assess risk, the Royal Commission considered that there is a need to modernise the approach to risk assessment in South Australia, as the DVRA was last revised in 2014. It was observed that the DVRA fails to effectively capture complex and nuanced cases of risk, due to its dependence on static risk factors, and failure to appropriately consider situational concerns.[17] Further, the length of time that has passed since the risk factors occurred is a significant part of the DVRA, with some risk factors only contributing to the overall score if they occurred within the past 14 days.[18]

In light of the concerns raised in this matter regarding a failure to conduct fulsome and proactive risk assessments, I consider that the introduction of a statewide Risk Assessment and Management Framework that is consistent and evidence-based, and can be effectively utilised by agencies, is warranted.

In response to the Royal Commission, the South Australian Government has stated that it intends to introduce SA's Framework for Evaluating Risk (**SAFER**):[19]

> A new evidence-based and future-focused Risk Assessment and Management Framework will be developed to better meet the needs of South Australians, including children and young people who experience domestic, family and sexual violence. SAFER will be used by specialist services, the child and family support system, child protection services and South Australia Police (SAPOL) to identify and manage risk and provide referrals to support services as appropriate.

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16 *Royal Commission into Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence* (Final Report, August 2025)131-134.
17 Ibid 138.
18 Ibid 135.
19 Government of South Australia, *Building safer futures: South Australia's whole-of-government response to the Royal Commission into Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence* (December 2025) 10.

I note that the above statement does not specify that SAFER will be used by the SAHT and community housing providers.

Further, as there were periods of time in which the SAHT did not recognise that the tenant was at risk in her property, and as such did not fund emergency accommodation, the tenant incurred out of pocket costs to fund her own accommodation, travel and pet boarding. I also note the considerable distress that the errors have caused the tenant. I am therefore of the view that the SAHT should consider making an ex-gratia payment to the tenant.

To address the errors identified in my investigation, I make the following recommendations:

1. that the SAHT apologises to the tenant for the errors

2. that the SAHT considers making an ex-gratia payment to the tenant in light of the errors identified

3. that the SAHT provides continued housing assistance and assists the tenant with accessing support services as needed
4. that the SAHT ensures that it has appropriate processes in place to clearly record and review the authority of tenant advocates and support people

5. that the SAHT reviews its policies and procedures to ensure that it is appropriately responsive to tenants who raise that they are at risk of domestic violence including:

    - providing guidance relevant to the SAHT conducting its own risk assessments
    - ensuring that guidance considers evidence about the prevalence, risks and barriers to reporting domestic violence including relevant material from the Royal Commission into Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence report
    - providing that where domestic violence is claimed, SAHT accepts that it has occurred/is occurring unless there are clear and exceptional circumstances indicating that the claim is not founded
    - makes clear that the absence of a determination from SAPOL is not determinative of the matter.

6. that the SAHT conduct further training for staff in relation to the above, and in relation to identifying and assessing risk of domestic violence

7. that the SAHT implements the SAFER Risk Assessment and Management Framework, once it has been introduced by the South Australian Government.

Final comment

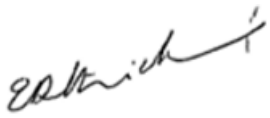
I now report this matter to the principal officer of the SAHT.

In accordance with section 25(4) of the Ombudsman Act the SAHT should report to me by **31 December 2026** on what steps have been taken to give effect to the recommendations above; including:

- details of the actions that have been commenced or completed
- relevant dates of the actions taken to implement the recommendation.

In the event that no action has been taken, reason(s) for the inaction should be provided to me.

I have also sent a copy of my report to the Minister for Housing and Urban Development, as required by section 25(3) of the *Ombudsman Act 1972*.



Emily Strickland
SA OMBUDSMAN

30 September 2026

Appendix 1:

Timeline of key events

Date	Event
2 December 2024	The tenant entered emergency accommodation due to maintenance being done on her property (**the property**). The SAHT referred the tenant to the Exceptional Needs Unit (**ENU**) at the Department for Human Services, which funded a support worker for the tenant.
21 January 2025	A friend of the tenant made a report to South Australia Police (**SAPOL**) that the tenant's ex-partner was staying with the tenant at her emergency accommodation against her wishes. SAPOL attended and arrested the tenant's ex-partner on an existing warrant.
3 February 2025	The SAHT received a phone call from the tenant's support worker who advised that the tenant felt unsafe at her current emergency accommodation due to her tyres being slashed and requested a transfer. The Housing Officer stated that SAPOL would need to verify that the tenant's safety was at risk at the emergency accommodation.
7 February 2025	The manager of the emergency accommodation made a report to SAPOL that a male had vandalised the tenant's car, spray painting the word 'slut'. The tenant spoke to the SAHT and requested to be moved due to safety concerns. The tenant was moved to alternative emergency accommodation.
21 February 2025	The tenant's support worker advised the tenant that she would need to collect the keys to the property and leave the emergency accommodation as of 22 February. The tenant was too distressed to return to the property. It is unclear where the tenant was staying between 22 February and 6 March 2025.
1 March 2025	SAPOL received requests for welfare checks due to third party reports that the tenant was being isolated in the property by her ex-partner.
13 May 2025	The SAHT were advised that the tenant had not been seen at the property or responded to contractors. The SAHT requested that SAPOL conduct a welfare check.
8 July 2025	The tenant's support worker advised the SAHT that the tenant was not willing to return to the property. It appears that at this time, the tenant's ex-partner and his father were residing at the property.

9 July 2025	The tenant moved into emergency accommodation due to safety concerns.
22 July 2025	The SAHT emailed [redacted] Domestic Violence Service to advise that the regional manager was not supportive of the SAHT attending the property with SAPOL, and that it is the tenant's responsibility to call SAPOL have her ex-partner and his father removed.
5 August 2025	The SAHT contacted the tenant to advise that emergency accommodation was not being provided after 6 August, and that the tenant will need to arrange for SAPOL to have her ex-partner removed from the property.
13 August 2025	The tenant made a report to SAPOL detailing the domestic violence perpetrated by her ex-partner from January to March 2025.
15 August 2025	The tenant's support worker made a formal complaint to the SAHT about a failure to prioritise the tenant for a category 1 transfer due to the risk of domestic violence.
18 August 2025	The SAHT received Ministerial correspondence, forwarding a complaint from the tenant and asking the SAHT to respond on the Minister's behalf.
22 August 2025	The tenant enquired as to whether the locks on the property had been changed as SAPOL were wanting to attend.
23 August 2025	The SAHT arranged for the locks to be changed at the tenant's property.
2 September 2025	The tenant advised the SAHT that she was now in [redacted]. The tenant's support worker in [redacted] enquired about a transfer application, and about termination of tenancy so that the tenant did not have to continue paying rent when she is not living at the property.
8 September 2025	The SAHT responded to the 15 August complaint from the tenant's support worker, stating it could not provide any information as the support worker is not listed as a proxy.
3 October 2025	The SAHT received a phone call from Domestic Violence Services in [redacted], advising that the tenant was being funded for two weeks' emergency accommodation in [redacted]

23 October 2025	The SAHT received an email from the tenant's support worker advising that the tenant has returned to [redacted] and found the property broken into, and her ex-partner's belongings taken. The support worker requested that the tenant be urgently transferred, and advised she is not residing at the property.
5 November 2025	The SAHT advised that the tenant was assessed as being a category 4 priority, based on the information from her supports and from SAPOL. It was noted that the tenant had not reported her concerns about her ex-partner to SAPOL. The SAHT was concerned about the tenant's housing history, and that this was her fourth SAHT property after requesting three transfers previously due to domestic violence.
13 November 2025	The SAHT emailed the tenant's support worker to advise that SAPOL has not verified that the tenant is at risk, and the appropriate priority level for the tenant is category 4. The tenant's support worker highlighted deep concern at this classification, highlighted the tenant's risk factors and questioned the SAHT's reliance on verification from SAPOL. The Regional Response Team Manager responded the next day noting that what the tenant was reporting is similar to what she reported in her previous three tenancies, and that SAHT 'Just don't think transfer is the solution as [the tenant] has never felt safe in any of the properties she has had'.
30 December 2025	The tenant's support worker advised that the tenant had not returned to the property, and she had not had contact with the tenant since 9 December 2025.
15 January 2026	The tenant was assaulted by her ex-partner near her SAHT property, which was reported to SAPOL.
19 January 2026	[redacted]omestic Violence Service ([redacted] notified the SAHT that the tenant was assaulted by her ex-partner. The tenant was placed into emergency accommodation.
20 January 2026	[redacted] advised the SAHT that the tenant wished to change to different emergency accommodation due to feeling unsafe. The tenant made a report to SAPOL and they assessed her Domestic Violence Risk Assessment (DVRA) as being a score of 66 (high risk). SAPOL is unable to issue an intervention order against the tenant's ex-partner as they cannot locate him.

	The SAHT received an email from the Multi Agency Protection Service (**MAPS**) advising that the tenant had been selected for 'mapping' with a DVRA of 66. It was noted that the perpetrator of the assault against the tenant was currently wanted by the police. The SAHT refused to move the tenant to different emergency accommodation due to the behaviour of the tenant requesting multiple changes in the past. The SAHT said that the tenant's property was safe to return to as the locks had been changed, and there were been no reports of her ex-partner being there.
22 January 2026	The tenant had a discussion with the SAHT in which she expressed that she did not want to return to her property as it was not safe. The SAHT advised that it did not have information to suggest the property was unsafe and was awaiting further information from SAPOL and the Domestic Violence Crisis Line. The tenant's ex-partner was arrested for assault/strangulation and the intervention order was put in place.
23 January 2026	The tenant's tyres were slashed at the emergency accommodation, and the tenant reported this to SAPOL.
2 February 2026	The MAPS for the tenant was finalised, and the SAHT was advised that the tenant was unable to remain safe at her property. The tenant's social worker requested an extension to the tenant's emergency accommodation, and that she be changed to a different emergency accommodation location noting her DVRA score and the MAPS assessment.
5 February 2026	The tenant's social worker emailed the SAHT noting that the tenant's emergency accommodation was extended in the same location, and followed up on the request to move location noting that the tenant's GP had recommended an urgent transfer from the current emergency accommodation, and [redacted] also recommended an emergency accommodation transfer.
6 February 2026	The tenant was moved to an alternative emergency accommodation.
12 February 2026	SAPOL confirmed with the tenant's social worker that the tenant's property is not safe to return to, and a transfer is necessary. SAPOL also advised that it was not safe for the

	tenant to stay at the emergency accommodation where she had been previously.
24 February 2026	In the process of the tenant's SAHT social worker preparing a Specialised Allocation Escalation form, the SAHT identified that the tenant was currently a category 4, and needed to be changed to category 1.
27 February 2026	The tenant's Housing Needs Assessment was updated to recommend her registration as a category 1. It was noted that the risk to the tenant's safety is 'evidenced by the accused and associated overtaking the property'.
4 March 2026	The SAHT sent a letter to the tenant, confirming that her registration was reviewed and she was now category 1 for a transfer.

If you feel the need to seek support, please see the below resources

Domestic Violence Crisis Line - 1800 800 098

1800RESPECT - 1800 737 732

Lifeline - 13 11 14

Kids Helpline - 1800 55 1800

Beyond Blue - 1300 22 4636

13YARN - 13 92 76

MensLine Australia - 1300 78 99 78

Men's Referral Service - 1300 766 491

Suicide Call Back Service - 1300 659 467