

ANTI-POVERTY NETWORK SOUTH AUSTRALIA



MEDIA RELEASE

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A Jumper Is Not An Energy Policy: Low-Income People Deserve Energy-Efficient Homes

Anti-Poverty Network SA is appalled by suggestions from Federal Liberal Party politicians Senator Andrew Bragg and Tim Wilson MP that they would seek to weaken energy-efficiency standards, and that low-income people should simply accept sub-standard housing.

Australian homes are already some of the worst in the developed world for energy-efficiency. [The CSIRO notes that over 80% of Australian homes have a NatHERS rating of 2 stars or less, meaning they are expensive to heat and cool, and are often uncomfortable year-round.](#) Households living in 1.7-star homes can pay up to 6 times more in energy bills than those in modern, energy-efficient homes.

The recent suggestions would mean more expensive power bills, poorer health outcomes, and increased energy use, with the most significant impacts falling on those on the lowest incomes, and renters, who are already bearing the brunt of a changing climate and soaring energy bills.

Recent changes to ensure new homes must meet a 7-star NatHERS rating are a welcome start to improving the thermal performance of housing, making housing easier to heat and cool. However, we must go further, not backwards, by improving the efficiency of existing housing, implementing minimum energy-efficiency standards in rental properties, and continuing to increase the minimum energy-efficiency requirements for new housing.

Anti-Poverty Network spokesperson Mel Fisher states that *"Minimum standards must include higher levels of energy-efficiency for heating and cooling in all homes. I've just moved into a home where for the first time in my life I have insulation, along with heating and cooling and it's made an enormous difference to my life already. It's easy for Andrew Bragg to say that it should be optional, but he's not living in poverty, where these issues matter most. We need action that makes homes warmer, healthier and cheaper to run - not a race to the bottom in housing standards. For people living in poverty, 'just put on another jumper' is not an energy policy."*

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Quick Facts About Renting And Energy-Efficiency

- [Renters pay 8% more in energy bills on average than homeowners in comparable homes](#), primarily due to inefficient appliances and poor thermal performance
- [Up to 40% of rental households will experience some form of energy hardship](#)
- [Low energy-efficiency is associated with increased risk of thermal-related illness](#) and increased risk or worsening of respiratory illness

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