



Media Release

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For immediate release

RLC lodges Ombudsman complaint about Housing NSW failure to respond to vulnerable tenants

Today, Redfern Legal Centre has lodged a complaint with the NSW Ombudsman regarding Housing NSW's ongoing failure to respond to the needs of their tenants. The complaint highlights six case studies in which tenants repeatedly tried to communicate with Housing NSW with no response.

Our client, Elizabeth, was a young Aboriginal woman, who was illiterate and had a history of depression and anxiety. Elizabeth had an Apprehended Domestic Violence Order (ADVO) against her former partner, who after their relationship ended had threatened her and entered her home without permission. He breached the conditions of the ADVO on an ongoing basis by moving in with another tenant on the floor below. Elizabeth was regularly coming into contact with him in common areas and she was living in fear. RLC repeatedly attempted to contact Housing NSW to discuss Elizabeth's urgent transfer needs to no avail. **Even with the assistance and advocacy of RLC, it took Housing NSW eight months to rehouse Elizabeth.**

Another of our clients, Andrew, had complex physical and mental health issues including suicidal impulses. He had previously attempted to commit suicide using the premises he was housed in. He told Housing NSW about his needs and requested a transfer to another property. When Housing NSW offered him a property for transfer, it had the same characteristics that had facilitated his previous suicide attempt and was therefore inappropriate. Andrew contacted RLC for assistance in May 2012. **RLC has continuously contacted Housing NSW over the last 14 months without satisfactory communication or resolution of Andrew's need for housing transfer.**

RLC calls on Housing NSW to introduce and publish timeframes within which correspondence must be acknowledged and responded to. Ends//