



**RENTERS AND HOUSING UNION**

**November 28 2025**

**FOR RELEASE DECEMBER 5TH 2025**

## **Union Unveils World-First Model to Solve Rental Crisis: Universal Rent Control via Collective Bargaining**

The Renters and Housing Union (RAHU) today released a groundbreaking position paper, *Rent Control via Collective Bargaining*, proposing a radical new system to tackle Australia's devastating rental crisis. The model calls for an immediate two-year rent freeze, followed by a permanent shift to a system where all rents are set through collective bargaining between tenants and landlords.

This is the first policy position that has been completely developed by renters, rather than think tanks or political parties.

The paper spent many months being developed by RAHU member volunteers on the Research and Policy Committee. It draws upon data gathered from RAHU's thousands of members, including from our Renters Rights Support Team fighting on behalf of our members. The paper was finally approved by the RAHU governing committee on Tuesday as the official position paper of the RAHU on how to do rent controls. RAHU thanks and acknowledges the many contributions made to produce the paper by various RAHU members.

*"The Australian rental market is not merely broken; it is actively inflicting harm,"* said RAHU Research and Policy Officer William Bake. *"With rents soaring 40% since 2021 while wages grew only 11%, we are witnessing a social catastrophe. Our plan transfers power from speculative markets to the people who live in homes, ensuring affordability is based on economic reality, not landlord profit."*

The RAHU proposal is built on three core pillars:

1. **An Immediate Two-Year Rent Freeze:** To halt the crisis and allow wages to catch up to rampant rent increases.
2. **Rent Control via Collective Bargaining:** Following the freeze, all rent increases would be determined through negotiations between organised groups of tenants and landlords. This system, inspired by successful Swedish and labour union models, would be underpinned by strict minimum standards, including:
  - At least 80% of tenants in any agreement must pay no more than 30% of their after-tax income in rent.
  - Rent increases cannot exceed the real wage growth of the tenants in the agreement.
  - Tenants retain the irrevocable right to collectively withhold rent as a last resort.
3. **Transparency and Enforcement via an Independent Rent Authority (IRA):** A new public body would be established to manage a national, open database of all landlords and rents, facilitate bargaining, and enforce the new rules.



## **RENTERS AND HOUSING UNION**

**November 28 2025**

The paper draws on successful Australian and international evidence to debunk myths that rent control reduces supply, highlighting multiple examples from both within Australia and across the world.

RAHU also acknowledges that mass building of public housing and rent abolishment is **the** long-term solution to the housing crisis but argues that its proposed rent control model is a crucial, cost-effective, and immediate step to prevent spiralling homelessness and restore dignity to millions of Australian renters.

*"To be realistic: no government is likely to implement our plan because it directly challenges the profits of the landlord class. So, if Australian renters want to see these ideas become reality, the message is simple: you must organise and join the fight with RAHU to make it happen."* William concluded.

**-END-**

### **Quotes attributable to RAHU Member and Research and Policy Officer William Bake:**

*"The Australian rental market is not merely broken; it is actively inflicting harm, with rents soaring 40% since 2021 while wages grew only 11%, we are witnessing a social catastrophe. Our plan transfers power from speculative markets to the people who live in homes, ensuring affordability is based on economic reality, not landlord profit."*

*"The question is no longer if rent control can work, but whether our governments have the political courage to prioritise the well-being of their citizens over the profits of a powerful few. We have the evidence, we have a workable model, and we have a moral imperative to act. We call on all levels of government to implement these essential measures immediately."*

*"Let's be realistic: no government is likely to implement our plan because it directly challenges the profits of the landlord class. So, if Australian renters want to see these ideas become reality, the message is simple: you must organize and join the fight with RAHU to make it happen."*

### **Quotes attributable to RAHU Member Kali Couper:**

*"It's important we have rent control actually controlled by renters because we know no one else is going to do it for us."*

### **Quotes attributable to RAHU Member Alex Gruenewald:**

*"This is the first argument for rent control that was actually formulated completely by those most affected, renters, not political parties chasing votes or think tanks chasing government funds."*



## **RENTERS AND HOUSING UNION**

**November 28 2025**

### **Quotes attributable to RAHU Co-Secretary Sadie Ward:**

*"We commend the Research and Policy Committee and their volunteer members for the release of their new position paper and appreciate this wholly original and comprehensive proposal. We look forward to fighting for it."*

### **Quotes attributable to RAHU Co-Secretary Harry Millward:**

*We know there are plenty of examples of a system more fair for renters, this important research we will give us an important goal post to push for*

### **For further enquiries**

William van den Wall Bake, Research and Policy Officer, RAHU

Email: [policy@rahu.org.au](mailto:policy@rahu.org.au) or [williamb@rahu.org.au](mailto:williamb@rahu.org.au)

RAHU General Enquiries: [contact@rahu.org.au](mailto:contact@rahu.org.au)

**The full position paper, *Universal Rent Control via Collective Bargaining*, is available on the RAHU Website [here](#)**