

# SHARING YOUR STORY FOR SYSTEMS CHANGE

## Advocacy Kit



AnglicareWA



shelterwa



# HOW TO USE THIS TOOLKIT

Western Australia is experiencing its worst rental crisis in decades, with Perth one of the hardest cities in the world to find an affordable rental.

Although recent rental reforms have provided some relief for renters (such as rent increases being limited to once every 12 months, rent bidding being banned and pets being allowed), these reforms have not gone far enough.

There are no adequate minimum standards for rental properties, and renters can still receive substantial rent increases and can be evicted from their homes without being given a reason. (1)

That is why now, more than ever, we need to change the rental system and make renting fair. This means changing the minds of decision-makers to end no-ground evictions, legislate minimum standards for rental homes and cap rent increases.

Sharing personal stories of how the rental crisis has had a harmful impact on people is a powerful way to change minds and systems. Therefore, this toolkit aims to equip and empower renters, including renters at risk of homelessness, to be advocates for change through storytelling.

Data proves but stories move, and by tapping into the power of storytelling renters can transform their experience to move people, inspire them to act and change systems.

1 At the end of a fixed-term lease or at any time during a periodic lease.

## **This toolkit is divided into the following four sections:**



Advocacy Basics



The Power of Storytelling



Sharing Your Story for Systems Change



Influencers

# ADVOCACY BASICS



## What is advocacy?


Advocacy is **the act of supporting, promoting, or arguing in favour of a cause, idea, or policy to bring about change**. It can be done by individuals, groups, or organisations.

Advocacy involves activities aimed at influencing decision makers and public opinion such as:

- lobbying governments
- engaging with politicians
- public speaking
- media campaigns
- community organising
- education/awareness raising

## Types of advocacy

The kind of change you want to make will influence the type of advocacy you do. **The table below describes three main types of advocacy.**




Advocacy Type	Definition	Who Benefits
<b>Self-Advocacy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Advocating on behalf of yourself and your own interests and rights.</li><li>• For example, speaking with your landlord.</li></ul>	You
<b>Individual Advocacy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Advocating on behalf of another person or supporting them to advocate for themselves.</li><li>• For example, <u>tenant advocates</u> such as tenancy advice and education services.</li></ul>	Individuals
<b>Systems Advocacy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Advocating for long-term social change by tackling social, political or economic systems.</li><li>• For example, the <u>Make Renting Fair</u> campaign.</li></ul>	Society



# Your advocacy style

Not only are there different types of advocacy but different advocacy styles. Being aware of your own unique personality traits, skills and strengths can help you work out the advocacy style best suited to you and the change you want to make. An illustration of these advocacy styles can be seen [here](#). **What is your advocacy style?**



## THE COMMANDER

- Stands up, speaks up, shows up
- Risk taker
- Empowers others to resist injustice

### Examples of action:

- Public speaking at events, fronting media, meeting politicians.

## THE CONNECTOR

- Thrives connecting people
- Mobilises to support a good cause
- Outgoing, open-natured and grows their communities

### Examples of action:

- Connecting with other people in campaigns, joint actions/events, meeting with politicians.

## THE GUARDIAN

- Behind the scenes legend
- Provides support
- Great mediator

### Examples of action:

- Providing emotional support to lived experience, advocates or campaigners, support hosting an event, mentoring.

## THE EXPERIMENTOR

- Researches the facts
- Creates questions, issues and stories for a wider picture
- Not afraid to dig deep

### Examples of action:

- Researching data on an issue, creating information sheets, find out politicians interested in the issue

## THE IMAGINATOR

- Creative
- Spreads news, information and ideas in different ways
- Public speaking

### Examples of action:

- Media interviews, developing or sharing content on social media, newsletter creation

## THE BUILDER

- Hands on approach
- Practical solutions
- Grass roots approach

### Examples of action:

- Organising or coordinating an event, media, writing to or meeting with politicians

# THE POWER OF STORYTELLING

Storytelling has been around for centuries and is an integral part of being human. It is a way to speak about events, raise issues or share ideas that create emotional connections, promote understanding, and inspire people to think differently or take action. This makes storytelling a powerful tool for advocacy.

## Crafting your story

The power of storytelling in advocacy comes alive when we can effectively communicate who we are, the challenges we face, what we have in common with others and what we can do collectively to change things now. This is known as a Public Narrative, which contains three components: a Story of Self, a Story of Us, and a Story of Now.

### Story of Self

Your story of who you are, the challenge you faced, the choices you made, the outcome and lessons learned.

Lets people know you share their experience.

Should generate emotions that inspire action.

### Story of Us

Draws on the shared values and experiences of 'us' (the community you are motivating to act)

Highlights both community challenges and hopes.

Should create a sense of unity.

### Story of Now

An urgent challenge you are calling on others to join you in resolving.

Contains actions that can be done together with others to make change.

Should end with a 'hard ask' (something that is urgent and specific).

Taken from [The Commons Social Change Library](#).



When you craft your rental story, what emotions, values, and experiences will you draw on to gain empathy, unify people and motivate them to take action?

# Preparing your story

Now that you know how to craft your rental story, you will need to prepare it. Below is a useful guideline for how to do so.

## Guideline for preparing your rental story

Using the inverted pyramid structure in the diagram:

- Start with the most important information: introduce yourself, explain your situation, and use a strong quote that highlights the urgent need.
- Next, clearly describe your housing situation and any issues you are facing, including key dates and why this information matters.
- Then, explain how these issues have affected your rights as a renter and other parts of your life.
- Provide relevant facts, laws, data, and statistics to support your story and show how common your experience might be.
- Finally, wrap up with a clear 'call to action' that summarises your main points. This could be the asks from the Make Renting Fair campaign such as:
  - End 'no grounds' evictions
  - Stabilise rent, and
  - Create minimum standards for rental houses.
- Edit and proofread your work many times to make sure it is accurate, effective, and relevant.
- Then share your story with the world!

## The Inverted Pyramid

How news stories are organised

**THE LEAD:** The most important info

Who? What? When? Where? Why? How?

**THE BODY:** The crucial info

More detail about what happened

**THE TAIL:** Extra info

interesting items

extra context

background

info

## Useful tips!

EMOTIONS THAT PREVENT ACTION

UNRESPONSIVENESS

INDIFFERENCE

FEAR

ISOLATION

SELF-DOUBT

VS

EMOTIONS THAT ENCOURAGE ACTION

URGENCY

ANGER

HOPE

SOLIDARITY

CONFIDENCE

- Know your audience so your story reaches the right people.
- Make sure your story is emotionally engaging to encourage people to act.
- Double-check your facts to make sure they are correct.
- Have one or two other people read and check your work.

# Protecting your story

Preparing, writing and sharing your story can be an empowering experience, but it is important that you feel safe and protected during the process. Below are some points to think about to help protect yourself and benefit from your story. (2)

- **Before telling your story, think about how you are feeling right now and if it is a good time to share your story.** You may like to wait to share your story at a time that works better for you.
- **Think about why you want to share your story.** What is your motivation? How will your story be used? Who will you share it with?
- **Ask yourself, is this your story to tell?** Avoid speaking on behalf of others unless they have given you permission to do so.
- **Have you been made aware of the opportunities, risks and benefits** of sharing your story?
- **Have you been given the chance to provide free, informed permission to the people using your story** before your story is shared?
- **Do you have decision-making authority** over what you share and how it is used?
- **Do you feel culturally secure/safe when sharing your story?** This means that the people using your story should recognise cultural protocols and provide culturally appropriate support.
- **You should not give personal details that could threaten or embarrass yourself (or your immediate family).** How will sharing your story affect people who are important to you? You have the right to remain anonymous or only use your first name when sharing your story.
- **What support do you have around you?** What do you need to feel safe to share your story? Stories are deeply personal and sharing them may be difficult, especially if they contain traumatic events.

2 Taken from 'Safe storytelling and controlling your narrative: TEST Principles'

If you require further support, please see the services listed below:

- [Lifeline](#): 13 11 14
- [Beyond Blue](#): 1300 224 636
- [headspace \(Youth\)](#): 1800 650 890
- [Circle Green Community Legal Centre](#): 08 6148 3636
- [Financial Wellbeing Collective](#): 1800 932 050
- [National Debt Helpline](#): 1800 007 007
- [WA Connect](#): 1800 979 777



# SHARING YOUR STORY FOR SYSTEMS CHANGE

Systems change is about challenging social, political, or economic systems for the improvement of society. So, **if we want to make renting fair, we need to challenge the rental system.** This is why it is important to share your rental story with people who make decisions about the rental system: politicians.

It is also important to share your story in a way that reaches as many people as possible and influences public opinion so that politicians take notice and listen. This is where media and social media comes into play.

This final section will help you share your story for systems change by identifying the best decision-makers to share it with and how to amplify your story and influence public opinion using media and social media.



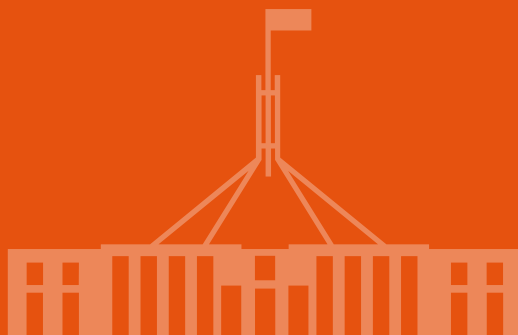
## Decision Makers: Members of Parliament

Parliament is a branch of government comprised of Members of Parliament (MPs) who are politicians elected by the public to represent the views and interests of people in their local area or state/territory. MPs also make and change laws, debate public policies and hold the government accountable for its decisions and spending.

Australia has three levels of government—federal parliament, state/territory parliaments, and local councils—each with its own areas of responsibility (and sometimes shared responsibilities). Therefore, it is important to identify which level and area of government is responsible for the issue or system you would like to change.

For example, if you want to share your rental story to demonstrate why the rental laws need to change, you would contact your State MP since housing is mainly a state government responsibility.

To find out who your State MPs are, please access the Parliament of Western Australia's Current Members site.





# SHARING YOUR STORY FOR SYSTEMS CHANGE

## Writing to a Member of Parliament

Once you have identified the level and area of government, you could write to the relevant MP. The most powerful letters or emails are personalised.

If possible, avoid using chain letters or emails. If you do use a chain letter or email, try to add your experience to make it stand out. Some tips on how to write a letter or email:

<b>Introduce yourself</b>	Outline who you are, that you are a voter in their electorate, a concerned citizen or an expert on an issue that the MP may be interested in.
<b>State your purpose</b>	This paragraph should clearly state the purpose of your letter or email. You could outline the problem here. It is a good idea to keep to one issue.
<b>Explain and illustrate your concerns</b>	Next, outline why the problem is important, who is affected by the problem, your own experience and other evidence or stories. Avoid personal attacks or inflammatory language.
<b>Provide a solution</b>	This section of the letter or email could describe the solution or your idea to change the situation.
<b>Make a call to action</b>	In this section outline what are you asking the MP to do. For example, seek an urgent meeting? Sign a petition? Attend an event? Ask a question in Parliament? Bring the issue to the attention of the relevant Minister?
<b>Ask for a response</b>	At the end of the letter or email, include your contact information and ask that the MP respond to you.

## Calling a Member of Parliament

You also have the option to call the MP's office. It is highly unlikely that you will be able to speak directly to the MP straight away, but you will be able to speak to one of their staff members. Some tips on what to say:

- Introduce yourself
- Keep to one issue
- State the solution in a sentence or two
- Ask for a response about the issue from the MP in writing
- Make sure you provide your contact details

# INFLUENCERS

## Media

It is important to share personal stories of rental hardship in the media as they can bring the difficulties of renting to the attention of people who may not be aware of the problem. Stories can illustrate the depth and breadth of issues facing renters in WA, generate public interest and attract new advocates to support systems change.

If you think your story could be an effective tool for change as a media story, then the first step is to work out which is the best medium to share your story: **print (newspapers and publications), radio, or television**. The table below describes what each medium will ask of you when you share your story. Which medium will you choose?

### What will Media ask of you?

<b>Print</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• An interview, either in-person or over the phone, with a journalist</li><li>• A photograph, taken by a journalist, at your home (you can decide where you are comfortable having the photo taken)</li></ul>
<b>Radio</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• An interview, most likely over the phone, which will be recorded, cut into chunks called "grabs", and used in radio news stories</li><li>• There is also the opportunity to speak to a radio host live on air, either over the phone or in-studio</li></ul>
<b>Television</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• An interview, in-person, at your home</li><li>• Recording vision to use in the story called "cutaways". For example, you walking into your house, making a cup of tea, sitting on the couch, etc.</li></ul>

### Turning your story into a news story

You've chosen a medium to share your story, but what makes it newsworthy? Below are some key elements a media outlet requires to run a story.

- **Hook or angle:** The media will be looking for an angle or 'hook' that will get their readers, listeners, and/or viewers interested. In the case of rental stories, it is often new data, a piece of research, legislative reforms, or a comment from the Government.
- **Timing:** This is an extension of the hook/angle and answers the question "Why are we talking about this now?". Timing is also relevant to you being involved in the coverage, because journalists often have tight deadlines and same-day stories. The more available you are, the more likely they are to run your story.
- **Relevance and proximity:** Does it have a local angle relevant to the community, current issues, or trends?
- **Insightful and informative:** Is there public interest in the information? Will people find it useful to know? That's why they need you: to give a glimpse of the reality of the rental crisis for tenants.

# INFLUENCERS #

## Social Media

If you are comfortable sharing your story on social media, below are some tips for crafting engaging and successful social media content.

- **Identify your target audience:** Understand their demographics, interests, and behaviour.
- **Tailor your message:** Create content that resonates with audience needs and preferences. Show your personality and authenticity.
- **Keep it short and simple:** Social media users often scroll quickly, so get to the point and avoid jargon and complex sentences.
- **Include images or videos:** Visual content is more engaging and likely to be shared. Ensure that your images and videos are clear and professional.
- **Grab attention:** Use catchy and intriguing headlines.
- **Call to action:** Ask your audience to like, share, comment or visit your website. Make it easy for them to understand what you want them to do.
- **Increase visibility:** Use relevant, well-chosen hashtags to reach a broader audience.
- **Timing and consistency:** Analyse when your audience is online and the best times to post.
- **Engage with audience:** Respond to comments and show you value feedback and engagement using a friendly and authentic tone.
- **Track performance:** Use social media analytics tools to monitor how your posts perform.

## Other ways to use media and social media

Another way to share your story with the media is to respond to other stories. You can:

- Call in or text when you hear a story on the radio.
- Follow up with journalists who have written stories about housing issues and offer to share your story as a follow up piece.
- Tag campaigns in social media stories.
- Share stories on your social media.
- Share your story in the comments section of online news sites.

# SHARING YOUR STORY FOR SYSTEMS CHANGE

## Advocacy Kit

**Congratulations!**



**You are now ready to start sharing your story with the world, and we can't wait to see what you achieve.**

Thank you to these organisations for making this advocacy kit possible.



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wa council of  
social service

