

15 March 2026

Commissioner: brett.humphrey@sa.gov.au

Consumer and Business Services

GPO Box 1719

Adelaide SA 5001

Dear Commissioner Humphrey,

Re: Operational Limitations within the CBS Bonds Online System Impacting Timely Bond Release

I am writing to raise several operational concerns regarding the CBS Bonds online system (RBO) (OneCBS) which are currently affecting the timely and efficient release of rental bond funds to tenants and landlords across South Australia.

While the implementation of the online bond management system represents an important step in modernising rental administration, there are a number of practical limitations within the current process that appear to be creating unintended delays and administrative inefficiencies for tenants, landlords, property managers, and CBS support staff.

These limitations are increasingly resulting in avoidable support enquiries and unnecessary escalation of matters to the South Australian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (SACAT), even where no genuine dispute exists between the parties. (eg. see attached current matter)

Executive Summary

The current CBS Bonds Online workflow relies heavily on automated email notifications being successfully delivered to tenants in order for bond release requests to progress. However, in practice these communications are frequently not received due to spam filtering, outdated contact details, or other email delivery issues.

When this occurs, there is currently no mechanism within the system for landlords or property managers to:

- confirm whether the notification email has been delivered
- trigger a resend of the notification
- initiate an alternative communication pathway within the system

As a result, bond release requests can become stalled indefinitely despite both parties being willing to finalise the release.

In many cases the only remaining pathway is escalation through SACAT or repeated contact with CBS support services, creating additional administrative burden across the system.

Observed Operational Impacts

From an operational perspective within the property management sector, the following impacts are being observed:

- Delays in tenants receiving bond funds that may be required urgently to secure new accommodation.
- Delays in landlords receiving funds for agreed claims or outstanding matters.
- Increased enquiry volumes directed to CBS support services regarding stalled bond releases.
- Unnecessary tribunal applications where no substantive dispute exists.
- Additional administrative workload for property managers attempting to manually resolve communication failures.

These outcomes appear inconsistent with the intended efficiencies of a digital bond management system.

Supporting Observations

Consumer and Business Services, South Australia (CBS) reporting shows:

- *Incoming bond-related calls increased from 38,951 to 46,791, an additional 7,840 calls, representing a **20.1% rise year-on-year.***
- *Incoming emails requesting tenancy advice escalated from 27,261 to 52,811 an increase of 25,550 enquiries, equating to a **93.7% surge.***

Examples may include:

- number of bond release requests delayed due to tenants not receiving system emails
- volume of follow-up communication required to resolve stalled bond releases
- instances where SACAT applications were required solely to trigger the bond process
- additional administrative time spent managing these system constraints

Potential System Improvements

Based on operational experience, a number of relatively modest system enhancements could significantly improve outcomes for tenants, landlords and CBS, including:

1. Resend Functionality
Allowing agents or landlords to trigger a resend of bond release notifications to tenants.
2. Email Delivery Status Indicators
Providing system visibility showing whether notifications have been successfully delivered.
3. Alternative Notification Channels
Introducing SMS prompts or dashboard notifications to tenants where email communication fails.
4. System Escalation Pathway
Establishing an internal system pathway to progress bond releases where communication failures occur before tribunal escalation becomes necessary.

These types of enhancements would likely reduce enquiry volumes, improve processing efficiency, and ensure tenants receive bond funds in a more timely and predictable manner.

Conclusion

The CBS Bonds Online system is a valuable platform that has the potential to deliver significant efficiencies across the rental sector. Addressing the operational limitations outlined above would further strengthen the system and better support the needs of tenants, landlords, and administrators alike.

I offer these observations in the spirit of constructive feedback and system improvement, and would welcome the opportunity to provide further operational insights should that assist CBS in evaluating potential enhancements.

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours sincerely,

Brett Wheatland:

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Founder/Property Manager

South Australian Property Management Community (SAPMC)

CC: Minister for Consumer and Business Affairs: MinisterMichaels@sa.gov.au

Leader of the Opposition & Member for Schubert: schubert@parliament.sa.gov.au