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MORE RIGHTS FOR CARAVAN AND MOBILE HOME PARK RESIDENTS

People who live in caravan and mobile home parks will be given extra protection for the first time under legislation, which takes effect tomorrow.

The *Residential Parks Act 2007* will increase the rights of people who rent caravans and cabins and who live there permanently along with those who rent sites on which they've located their own home.

The new laws include provisions, which require new tenancy agreements to be in writing and park owners lodging bonds with the Commissioner for Consumer Affairs within 7 days of receipt. Residents will also be given access to the residential tenancies tribunal when disputes are not able to be resolved through negotiation.

"The legislation encompasses anti-victimisation provisions and also includes unique requirements in cases of serious violent incidents.

It's hoped these new laws will strike an important balance between the interests of residents and those of park owners," Ms Rankine said.

Minister Rankine said that with large numbers of South Australians now living in caravan parks, it's appropriate for their living arrangements to be regulated for the benefit of everyone concerned. Importantly the legislation clarifies the role of park operators, as well as outlining the responsibility of renters.

"Current tenancies legislation does not adequately cover agreements for the occupation of space or dwellings in caravan and mobile parks.

Living arrangements will be now be regulated much in the same way as landlord/tenant arrangements for the renting of houses," Ms Rankine said.

The legislation applies to mobile home villages, mobile home parks, relocatable home parks, residential parks and caravan parks. It will only impact on agreements where a person is occupying a dwelling in a residential park, as their principal place of residence, for 60 days or longer. The legislation does not apply to holiday accommodation agreements.

ABS figures released in 2001, indicated approximately 7 602 people live permanently in residential parks.

"This legislation will provide certainty for both residents and operators by clearly spelling out their rights and responsibilities and will provide easier access to the protection of the law," Ms Rankine said.

For further information about these laws, contact the Tenancies Branch of the Office of Consumer and Business Affairs on (08) 8204 9544 or visit www.ocba.sa.gov.au.