



## **PRESS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – May 8, 2024**

### **ARC Justice to support more renters than ever**

ARC Justice’s dedicated tenancy rights and advocacy service, Housing Justice, will expand after receiving funding through the Victorian Government’s Rental Stress Support Package.

Housing Justice will be able to help more families and individuals across central and northern Victoria stay in their homes thanks to a boost to Tenants Victoria’s Renter Stress Hub program, which ARC Justice is part of.

ARC Justice chief executive officer Damian Stock said Housing Justice provides information and advice, legal help, advocacy and representation for renters.

“The demand for our services is growing faster than ever, reflecting the increasing challenges faced by individuals and families in securing and maintaining stable housing,” he said.

“This funding will help us try to meet this demand because we know so many people in our community need assistance to navigate the complexities of the rental market.

“Co-ordinating with Tenants Victoria will maximise digital tools and remote assistance for information and advice when appropriate, allowing us to focus frontline support for those in greatest need,” Stock said.

Stock said demand is being driven by three key factors. “Historically low vacancy rates have made it difficult for renters to find alternative accommodation, increasing the need for support when facing disputes with landlords,” he said.

“Secondly, recent changes to Victorian tenancy laws have empowered renters with new legal rights, driving up demand for guidance and advocacy.

“And lastly, floods in our region in 2022 and subsequent inundations this year have exacerbated housing strain, heightening the urgency for programs to help renters in securing stable housing,” Stock said.

ARC Justice was one of 12 organisations to share in \$7.8 million from the Victorian Government.

Minister for Consumer Affairs Gabrielle Williams said the community organisations supported through the package “do critical work to support Victorian renters.”

#### **About ARC Justice**

ARC Justice is a rights-based, for-purpose organisation incorporating the Loddon Campaspe Community Legal Centre and Housing Justice based in Bendigo and the Goulburn Valley Community Legal Centre based in Shepparton. ARC provides legal and tenancy support services across 13 local government areas in central and northern Victoria, with a team of 54 staff working to advocate for and uphold the rights of rural and regional Victorians.

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