

Attention: Serious renovators, builders and speculators

# Single mum launches platform to help other single parents make ends meet — by sharing a house

JANE HANSEN, The Sunday Telegraph  
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AS A married business owner who owned her own home for 10 years, Willo Ford had no idea how tough the world was for single mums, especially when it came to renting a home, until she became one.

All of a sudden road blocks were in place that left the Central Coast mum homeless when her marriage broke down.

“I had built up a business and sold it, I had savings and I had owned my home for 10 years, so I had no rental history and no financial documents to show I had an income. I looked like I had no money, along with two small children and a dog,” she said.

Real estate agents wouldn't even look at her.

“You are conspired against, everything is a roadblock, there's a ripple effect of nastiness,” she said.



ShareAbode founder Willo Ford with her son Dustin, 3, and daughter Monique, 14 months and the family dog.

It took four months to find a rental and only because she resorted to putting her mother's name on the lease to get a roof over her head.

"We basically had to lie for me to get a house," the 37-year-old said.

She found herself in a big house with lots of bills, but it was a light bulb moment.

"The only house I could get was huge and semirural and I thought what if you can put two people together to share — you halve the bills — internet, connection fees and so on and it becomes a platonic relationship."

So ShareAbode was born.

"If rent and expenses are half the cost, then savings will be doubled and financial obligations for a single parent would be less stressful. Single parents living together can afford a better house or apartment within a safer neighbourhood because it is shared and therefore a bit more than the single parent budget can be afforded," she said.



Willo Ford founded ShareAbode to help other single parents find homes.



Willo Ford with her son Dustin, 3, and the family dog.

ShareAbode is a national, free service set up for other single parents to connect as home seekers or home sharers. It most resembles an online match making service with personality profiles, references and police checks.

“I’m trying to lobby police for free national police checks for single parents, so instead of paying a fee, they can get the check to say they are fine and that goes on their profile.

“The closest platform it resembles is [matchmaker.com](http://matchmaker.com) where they actually do match people and that’s what we are doing, except it’s totally platonic,” Ms Ford said.

The site also included tips for conflict resolution, parenting plans, boundaries and how to stick to it.

The last household, income and labour dynamics in Australia report (HILDA) found one in four single parent families lived in poverty which often consigns children to a life of poverty trap because their education is affected.

“Poverty is insane in the single parent community and so is homelessness, if you give two women a house, they can make a home and become active members of society and maybe even get off parenting payments,” Ms Ford said

Launched two months ago, there are already 275 single parents signed up.

**\* For more details, go to [shareabode.com.au](http://shareabode.com.au)**

**\* Follow Jane Hansen on Twitter [@janehansen2000](https://twitter.com/janehansen2000)**