

MEDIA RELEASE

21 APRIL 2016

Rent or Eat? The choices for every day Territorians are stark.

“Pay rent or eat – this is the stark choice facing many people who live in the Northern Territory”, said Anglicare NT CEO, Dave Pugh.

“The national Anglicare Australia Rental Affordability Snapshot figures this year show there is a severe and immediate housing crisis for people on low incomes and the numbers in the Northern Territory paint an alarming picture”.

Anglicare Australia, of which Anglicare NT is a member, will launch its annual Rental Affordability Snapshot at Parliament House in Canberra at 10.30am this morning (Thursday, 21 April 2016).

“On 1 April, we surveyed 1354 properties in the Northern Territory and found zero (0) properties that were both affordable and appropriate for people who receive Newstart Allowance, Disability Support Pension or Youth Allowance. This is an ongoing trend which is simply unacceptable in a mature and wealthy democracy,” said Dave Pugh.

“We were only able to find three (3) individual properties suitable for a couple who receive the age pension. We found 53 individual properties suitable for a household living on minimum wage without placing them in housing stress, which was a marginal improvement from last year; however in context Darwin rental prices are still relatively expensive when compared with the majority of other capital cities”.

“People from all walks of life are suffering chronic housing stress across Australia; forgoing daily necessities in order to pay the rent. We know in the Northern Territory this means they are often living in overcrowded houses, cars, parks or shelters without access to essential services such as electricity, water or fresh and healthy food”.

“This report, now in its seventh year, continues to highlight a trend within the Northern Territory of lack of availability of housing stock that is both appropriate and affordable for those in our community who have the most limited resources”.

“Through our work supporting families across the Northern Territory, we continue to hear stories about women trying to escape domestic violence or young people transitioning to independence. In the NT nearly 4000 young people aged between 12 – 24 years are living in overcrowded accommodation or couch surfing. We know they need somewhere safe and secure to live, however the numbers in this report prove right now those places just don’t exist”.

“This housing crisis will continue to disadvantage and impact on the ability of Territorians to meaningfully participate in their community; to find work, complete education and contribute to their neighbourhoods”.

“What we want is a plan for affordable housing supported by all levels of government, which means more social housing and real collaboration between the community sector and government”.

“The Northern Territory is significantly reliant on the Australian Government for the funding of its homelessness and public housing programs. Given the Northern Territory’s dependence on Australian Government support for remote housing, homelessness investment and some public housing, Anglicare NT encourage both the Northern Territory and Australian Governments to make a meaningful and long term commitment towards an agreement. Particular emphasis should be placed on housing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and young people”.

For more information please download a copy of the 2016 Rental Affordability Snapshot:
<http://www.anglicare.asn.au/research-reports/the-rental-affordability-snapshot>

FOR COMMENTS OR INTERVIEWS

Anglicare NT CEO Dave Pugh is available for interview / comment regarding Rental Affordability.

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