

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **URGENT INVESTMENT NEEDED INTO AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

Anglicare NT is calling on the government to urgently invest in more affordable homes and raise the rate of welfare for good. The call is being made as Anglicare NT and Anglicare Australia release the annual Rental Affordability Snapshot.

The Snapshot surveyed 70,000 rental listings on the weekend of 21 March and found a chronic shortage of affordable rentals across Australia and particularly in the Northern Territory.

Of the 1159 properties located in the Northern Territory, the Snapshot found that:

- Only 0.5% were affordable for singles living on the JobSeeker payment (formerly Newstart), which has now doubled for six months in the wake of Covid-19
- Without the higher rate, there were 0 (n=zero) properties affordable for singles on the JobSeeker payment in the NT
- People on the Age Pension or Disability Support Pension missed out on the increase altogether, resulting in 0 (n=zero) affordable properties for singles on these payments
- Regional areas like Katherine and Alice Springs are even more unaffordable than Darwin/Palmerston.

Anglicare NT Chief Executive Officer Dave Pugh said that the income support increase should be open to everyone on government payments – and it should be permanent.

“The increase in the rate of government income support has given many Territorians badly needed relief – but the private rental market is still too expensive for people on the lowest incomes.”

“Our Snapshot has shown that a person out of work in the NT can afford just 0.5% of properties, and that’s with their payments doubled for the next 6 months.”

“Age pensioners and people with a disability have been left out altogether. Singles on these payments can’t reasonably afford any property in the Territory. This is unacceptable, particularly during a health crisis.”

Mr Pugh said ending the affordable housing shortfall would be the most powerful way to tackle the rental crisis and boost the economy.

“People on income support are effectively locked out of the private rental market. At a time when we are asking people to stay at home, we must have affordable homes within reach for those that need them most.

“That’s why we must invest in more affordable housing. Our shortfall is massive. The Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute estimates we need at least 6700 properties right now to meet current demand. We are not building anywhere near this amount even with the investment in remote housing.”

### **FOR COMMENTS OR INTERVIEWS**

To arrange an interview with Dave Pugh, Anglicare NT CEO contact Lila Loveard – 08 8985 0000 or 0409 222 143