

## MEDIA RELEASE

### Anglicare reports shows hidden housing crisis beyond Sydney

Anglicare's Rental Affordability Snapshot reveals the shocking extent of the housing affordability crisis in the Illawarra, the state's peak community housing body said today.

NSW Federation of Housing Associations CEO Wendy Hayhurst, said findings released by Anglicare today show all levels of government to act urgently to address the Illawarra's worsening housing crisis for people struggling on income support and the minimum wage.

Just 1% of rental properties advertised in the Illawarra on April 1 were affordable to rent for people on income support payments – compared to 4% in 2014, with rents in the region rising faster than the state average.

Just 14 of properties advertised were within the reach of a single Aged Pensioner.

"While governments are beginning to take Sydney's chronic housing unaffordability seriously, today's report shows rising rental prices have moved beyond the city," Ms Hayhurst said.

"Local community housing providers are at the coalface of this crisis – with local families hit by industry closures, regional wage rates and an influx of economic refugees from Sydney pushing up rents.

"There's also a chronic undersupply of public housing, with waiting lists of longer than a decade in most areas of the Illawarra and our members inundated with calls from people desperate for a safe and affordable home for themselves and their children."

Ms Hayhurst joined Anglicare's call for national and state plans to address the crisis and urged all governments to look beyond encouraging private development as the only solution.

"Housing affordability is hitting renters and those surviving on low wages or government support, including our Aged Pensioners, hardest," Ms Hayhurst said.

"What's really concerning is that there appears to be no co-ordinated national strategy, something all parties need to address in the Federal election campaign.

"There's no point just building more expensive homes or opening new developments in areas that people have no access to work or transport."

Ms Hayhurst said at a state level the crisis could be addressed through:

- planning reforms that create incentives for investment in affordable housing;
- a 30% affordable housing target for all new developments;
- mandated affordable housing on government owned land; and
- fast tracking the transfer of ageing public housing to the community housing sector, which will allow providers to use the assets as security to borrow money to help replace poor housing and build more new social and affordable homes.

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