

Regional NSW locked out of housing debate – 6,900 new social and affordable homes needed in Central West

Regional housing providers have called on the NSW government to address chronic housing stress in local communities experiencing among the highest levels of housing stress and homelessness in Australia.

The rental market is facing renewed scrutiny after the Anglicare Rental Affordability Snapshot revealed yesterday that just 506 properties listed in West NSW were appropriate for families earning minimum wage, and only 166 for households on income support.

The Central West region will need 6,900 new social and affordable homes by 2036 to stop increasing homelessness and provide relief for local communities struggling with chronic rental stress.

In less than two decades the Central West will need 5,300 new social housing homes for people in the local community on very low incomes and government support such the aged pension or Newstart.

The region will need another 1,600 below market rentals properties to provide relief for local families surviving on minimum wages or low incomes.

Housing Plus CEO David Fisher said, “Currently, 1 in 3 Australians rent their home. In the Central West and Orana regions, growth in the economy through mining developments, large infrastructure projects and the loss of rental properties to the tourism sector, put pressure on an already limited supply of rental properties with rents rising.

“In our region new data coming from the recent [Domain rental report](#) shows that Orange has the highest average rents at \$375 which was up 7.1% compared to the same time last year followed by Bathurst at \$360 a week and Dubbo at \$340 per week.”

CHIA NSW Chair, John McKenna said regional towns and country areas are being ignored in debates around housing and housing affordability – when 1 in 3 new social and affordable homes needed in NSW by 2036 are outside of Sydney.

“It’s clear when you compare population sizes that communities in regional NSW are in just as desperate need – if not more than - for social and affordable housing than they are in Sydney,” Mr McKenna said.

“A combination of lower wages and increasing rents and house price mean that people in regional NSW are doing it tougher than almost anywhere else in Australia, going without many essentials including food just to pay the rent.

“The flow on effect to local economies is huge. Too many politicians are still saying move to country areas because it’s cheaper – but the reality is very different for many people already living in these areas.

“Not only haven’t wages kept up with the private rental market and there’s a chronic shortage of both social and affordable housing close for people who need a home they can afford.

“The government has said regional infrastructure is a priority – housing is absolutely critical infrastructure that must be funded in all areas of NSW, not just in the city.”

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