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Housing *un*-affordability a national issue

There is a critical shortage of affordable rental housing across all major cities and even most regional areas of the nation a new snapshot from Anglicare Australia has shown.

The annual *Anglicare Australia Rental Affordability Snapshot* shines light on just how bad the housing crisis has become with less than 1 per cent of rental housing in cities such as Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Perth and Canberra being affordable for people on a low income.

Last Saturday, Anglicare agencies in each state and territory, searched major newspapers and common websites for rental accommodation which did not take up more than 30% of income for people living on government benefits. Anglicare Australia Executive Director, Kasy Chambers, said it was no surprise that there was almost nothing that people on a low income could afford.

"Right across the country private rental housing suitable for a young person on Newstart or Austudy was virtually non-existent, even in shared accommodation.

"Aged pensioners and people accessing the disability support pension would have met with disappointment if they were looking for a home on Saturday especially as in some states as little as 2%, as low as 0.5% in WA, of the advertised rentals would have been suitable.

"As families and individuals spend more on meeting housing costs less of their limited resources go to meeting other needs such as, utilities, education, health and food. We see more and more people asking for emergency relief as a result.

"A safe and secure house underpins a person's capacity to contribute meaningfully to society and given the results of the *Anglicare Australia Rental Affordability Snapshot*, we have to ask ourselves, how much is housing *un*-affordability costing us as a nation?

"In our capitals housing *un*-affordability extends to all household types with many low income earners being pushed out of the rental market such as in Victoria.

"From the snapshot we can see that housing affordability is not just a metropolitan issue however. In regional areas too, housing is out of reach for people on low incomes. With less than 10% of all advertised rentals in South Australia suitable for families and nothing at all for anyone on an allowance that was suitable in regional NSW, Tasmania or the Northern Territory.

"Australians on low incomes are bearing the cost of unaffordable and inadequate rental housing right across Australia.

"This is a national problem that requires action at a national, state and local level from all sides of government, industry and the community. Ms Chambers said.

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MEDIA CONTACT:

Michelle Waterford | 0421 271 839 | (02) 6230 1775

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