

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **Housing Affordability issues illuminated during Homelessness Week**

National Shelter is shining a light on Australians living in the dark shadows of the nation's housing affordability crisis during National Homelessness week from 1-7 August.

Over the past year most regional areas across the country have seen rental rises by at least 10 per cent, according to new research.

In Queensland, the Sunshine Coast has seen rental increases of more than 25 per cent. In parts of the Northern Territory there have also been massive rental spikes, leaving areas with little capacity to absorb the demand on rental housing.

Similarly, Western Australia has experienced rapidly rising rents and low vacancy rates due to an immigration boom. There has been a visible rise in rough sleeping and homelessness.

"Homelessness is becoming far more about a lack of affordable housing than other causes," National Shelter Executive Officer Adrian Pisarski says.

"Our regions have been experiencing unsustainably rapid rental increases, forcing many households further away from their networks of support and opportunities to work, educate and care for family. This is increasing homelessness and pricing out families in areas we have never seen it before.

"Our regions have very low levels of social housing and rents in the private market mean many families have nowhere to go," Mr Pisarski says.

Regional rental markets also have low vacancy rates and low levels of available housing, as markets fill quickly.

One of the contributing factors is that many young workers and students are no longer leaving the regions for work or university during the pandemic and higher income workers from the cities are also now working from home in the regions.

Additionally, many regional areas face large worker shortages partly because their housing supply isn't suitable to attract unemployed people and they have previously been reliant on backpacking tourists for workforces.

National Shelter is calling on government to consider reevaluating policies to provide support for those who need better access to housing.

"We require a national housing plan to look at what the future balance of regional and city markets, social housing levels and workforces are sustainable."

"The best place for governments to put money into is social housing to respond to needs and stimulate economies.

"Many of our current policy settings work against increasing home ownership and mean house prices and rents continue to rise at a pace wages and incomes can't match," Mr Pisarski says.



For more information on National Shelter and housing affordability recommendations go to [www.shelter.org.au](http://www.shelter.org.au).

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