

## MEDIA RELEASE

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# Anglicare's rental snapshot paints stark picture of housing affordability for pensioners

Anglicare's Rental Affordability Snapshot released today reveals aged pensioners are among those most vulnerable to rental housing stress in Australia, with rental housing affordability for people on the aged pension dropping to a six-year low.

The report shows that a mere 3.2 per cent of private rental properties were affordable for a couple on the aged pension, the lowest percentage in a snapshot since 2013, when the figure was 2 per cent.

Shockingly, less than one percent of properties across the country were suitable and affordable for a single person on the Age Pension.

Ian Yates, Chief Executive of leading older people's advocacy body, COTA Australia, said the snapshot released by Anglicare today paints a stark picture of Australia's escalating housing crisis and highlights the need for urgent action from all parties ahead of the upcoming election.

"The sector has been talking for years on end about Australia's housing crisis and the figures are now getting worse, not better – what is it going to take for governments to step up and tackle this crisis?"

"Private rental prices continue to outstrip increases to government benefit payments, leaving vulnerable Australians, including older Australians in private rentals, struggling to keep a roof over their heads."

"Over the last decade we have seen a growing number of older Australians retire as renters, who have either fallen out of home ownership or who have never owned a home, and it is clear that this will increase over coming years."

"The Snapshot shows that about fifteen per cent of older Australians are renters and they are typically economically disadvantaged – many have no asset base and are relying on either the Age pension or Newstart Allowance to make ends meet."

"Every Australian deserves to have a roof over their head and a secure and affordable place to call their home."

"The upcoming election is an opportunity for all parties to step up and demonstrate decisive action on this national crisis – no more vague and partial promises, we need action and we need it now."

### **In the upcoming election, COTA Australia is calling on all parties to commit to:**

- Increase Commonwealth Rent Assistance by 40%, a call supported by the Grattan Institute and a range of other advisory bodies and reports
- Increase investment in social housing (public and community housing) to support older Australians at risk of homelessness, including older women who are renting and are increasingly at risk of homelessness
- Adopt a whole-of-government approach (including states and territories) to developing an affordable housing strategy, in close consultation with the housing sector
- Increase the Newstart Allowance by \$75 a week, as advocated for by ACOSS' Raise the Rate campaign
- Commission a comprehensive, independent Retirement Incomes Review, including a review of the adequacy of the age pension taking housing costs into account.

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**COTA Australia is the peak policy development, advocacy and representation organisation for older Australians, representing COTAs in every State and Territory and through them over 500,000 older Australians.**