



MEDIA RELEASE

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ANTI-POVERTY WEEK 2021 WILL SHINE A SPOTLIGHT ON THE TERRITORY'S SHORTAGE OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING.

Sunday marked the start of Anti-Poverty Week 2021 and this year the national campaign will focus on the need for more affordable housing.

The shortfall of affordable housing in the Northern Territory is massive. Research released in 2019 by the UNSW City Futures Research Centre identified a shortage of 9,000 social and affordable dwellings. The Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute expects the shortfall to grow to 14,500 over the next 15 years.

For people on low to moderate incomes, housing is considered unaffordable if more than 30% of the household's income is required to pay the rent.

As many Territorians on income support payments struggle to keep a roof over their heads, the private rental market has become even harder to access over the June quarter, with the NT experiencing the largest decrease in rental affordability of all states and territories.

Advocates from around Australia are calling for an increase to Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA), a Federal Government payment for eligible private renters. CRA is tied to inflation, rather than to rents, which means it is being rapidly outpaced by rising rental prices across Australia. A 2020 report by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, found that nearly one third of CRA recipients were still considered to be in rental stress, while one fifth of low-income renters don't receive CRA despite being in rental stress.

Researchers and advocates from across Australia are recommending a 50% increase in the maximum rate of CRA and a review of the payment to ensure that it is getting to those who need it most, a position that NT Shelter, the Territory's peak body for affordable housing and homelessness, supports.

"CRA has only increased 3.59% in the last two years, yet rents have increased by 32% for houses. If you're a Territory family who receive CRA along with additional family benefit payments, you would need to find a rental property for less than \$245 a week in order to remain out of rental stress. This is almost impossible in a city like Darwin where the median rent for a house is currently \$565 a week." said Mike Byrne, Coordinator North Australia at NT Shelter.



Anti-Poverty Week supports the Australian community to have an increased understanding of poverty and take collective action to end it. Learn more, attend an event and find out how you can contribute at: <https://www.antipovertyweek.org.au>.

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