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## Campaign dodging big issues

Anglicare Australia has suggested this election is dodging the most important issues.

“The un-affordability of housing is something that affects almost everyone in Australia” said Kasy Chambers, Executive Director of Anglicare Australia today. “Yet, as ACOSS pointed out through its campaign launch today, housing and homelessness are not the agenda for this election campaign.”

“It is widely agreed that price of rental housing is hurting more and more people. Even families with two jobs can find themselves in housing stress because of the shortage of housing and high rents.”

Today ACOSS estimated the shortfall in affordable housing at 490,000. And, according to National Shelter last week, of the 1.1 million Australian households now in housing stress, 60% are renting.

“Elections should pay attention to who is and isn’t getting a fair go. Right across Australia people on benefits and pensions - including single aged pensioners, refugee families, people who are ill and out of work - simply can’t afford private rental even with Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA). The Henry Review, National Shelter and ACOSS all agree that CRA is inadequate. **Anglicare Australia calls for the CRA to be increased as a matter of urgency.**”

“The rental housing market is tight and landlords chose the tenants they want. For a lot of people – including those with disability, large families, sole parents – renting a home in the private market is out of the question. If we are all to live well together, in sustainable towns and cities, we will need more public housing.”

“Anglicare Australia welcomed the Stimulus Fund investment in social housing, but the program is coming to an end. The national shortage of public housing is still significant. **Anglicare Australia calls on both the Coalition and Labor to commit to growing the stock of public housing.**”

“For some people managing a tenancy is a long way from reality. People need a safe secure home if they are to participate in society, manage their illness, become available for work, look after their kids. We do believe in a society where everybody counts. Whatever their disadvantages. So there needs to be wrap around services linked to housing, connecting people into their communities, providing support for the long term.

“Recently, we have seen a number of new housing and supported homelessness initiatives held up at the local level in some States. **Anglicare Australia calls for a bipartisan approach and national leadership to invest in and build community support for all tenures of housing.**”

“The last government began with vision for social inclusion. That idea has been absent from this campaign. If it is not possible to rely on those principles to ensure access to secure and affordable housing we should consider enshrining the right to housing in our legislation, as they do in the UK. Anglicare Australia stills wants an inclusive society because, in the end , it is better for us all when everybody counts” Ms Chambers said.

***Note re CRA Increase:** The Henry review suggests a variable rate according to actual rent in different locations. National Shelter and ACOSS propose 30% increase in maximum rate (\$113 p/wk for someone alone) as an interim measure.*

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This statement represents the views of Anglicare Australia, as the national peak body of the Anglicare network. It may not necessarily represent the views of the Anglican Church of Australia or the views of an individual member of the Anglicare Australia network.

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