



# RENTAL AFFORDABILITY SNAPSHOT NATIONAL REPORT 2025 \ SIXTEENTH EDITION





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National Report 2025

SIXTEENTH EDITION



Every year, Anglicare Australia surveys rental listings across Australia to see what it is like for people on low incomes to rent a home. We do this by taking a snapshot of the thousands of properties listed for rent on [realestate.com.au](http://realestate.com.au). We test whether each rental listing is affordable and suitable for people on low incomes. The Rental Affordability Snapshot is released every year in April. This is the sixteenth edition. Preferred citation:  
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## Introduction

For sixteen years, Anglicare Australia has measured affordability in Australia's rental market and for sixteen years we have witnessed the struggle faced by Australians on the lowest incomes. This year is no exception, with no signs of relief for Australians battling the housing crisis.

Despite an increase in the number of listings surveyed for this year's Snapshot compared to 2024, Australians on low incomes or relying on income support payments will be hard pressed to find good news. With the national vacancy rate sitting at around 1.3 percent<sup>1</sup> – again an increase on last year – observers may be forgiven for assuming that this increase in listings would provide relief for Australians desperately trying to keep a roof over their heads.

For a single person on JobSeeker, just three properties would be affordable nationwide. Nothing would be affordable for someone receiving Youth Allowance. Single people on the Disability Support Pension or Age Pension could afford 0.1 and 0.3 percent of properties.

The private rental market is simply impossible for Australians on low incomes. This is not by accident.

Many would say that because the housing market has become too expensive, it is broken. However, the truth simply is that the housing market is working exactly as it was designed to. Generous tax handouts for investors have incentivised the buying and selling of homes like stocks, turning a fundamental human right into a speculative commodity trade. This has happened entirely by choice.

Choices made by governments over the last 40 years have entrenched inequality in Australia's private rental market. Government divestment from providing housing has led to dwindling social housing supply as Australia's population has grown. The prioritisation of private subsidies as a solution has done little to relieve the burden on Australians struggling to make ends meet.

It doesn't have to be this way. Just as the dire state of the rental market exists by choice, we can choose a different way. Australia can choose to undo policy settings that crush the poorest and most vulnerable in our community.

Without bold choices, inequality will only entrench further. It is time Australia chooses a future where every Australian can find a place to call home.

## This year's Snapshot

Every year, Anglicare Australia measures whether Australians on low incomes can afford to rent a home on the private market. Using thousands of rental property listings on realestate.com.au on a weekend in March or April, we are able to survey online rental listings across the country. Using this data, we assess each property for affordability and suitability metrics for thirteen different household types on low incomes.

These households are:

- » single people receiving the Disability Support Pension, Youth Allowance, JobSeeker and the Age Pension, or earning minimum wage;
- » single parents receiving the Parenting Payment, earning the minimum wage, or a combination of these income sources;
- » couples without children on the Age Pension; and
- » couples with children on JobSeeker, Parenting Payment, earning the minimum wage, or a combination of these income sources.

### How we measure affordability

For most people on low incomes, the cost of rent needs to be no more than 30 percent of a household budget for it not to cause financial stress. This is an internationally accepted benchmark based on many years of study into the impacts of cost of living and how this impacts people. Anglicare Australia uses the 30 percent benchmark.

To test whether a listing would be *affordable*, we calculate the maximum weekly affordable rent for each of our household types. This is done using government-published information on rates of payment for JobSeeker, Youth Allowance, the Disability Support Pension, the Age Pension, Parenting Payment, minimum wage rates, applicable Family Tax Benefits, additional supplements and allowances, and the maximum rate of Commonwealth Rent Assistance. We then compare those figures against properties deemed suitable.

*Suitable* means a listing contains an appropriate number of bedrooms for the number of people or family type within our households. For example, a one-bedroom apartment would not be appropriate for a family with two children, nor would a room in a sharehouse appropriate for a couple on the Age Pension. We acknowledge that one area where we are likely to overestimate the suitability of a property is for people on the Disability Support Pension. While not every person with a disability would need modified housing, there are many that do. Our Snapshot does not measure accessibility or compliance with universal housing standards.

## What we found

This year, the Snapshot surveyed 51,238 rental listings across the country on the weekend of 15-16 March 2025. Table 1 shows how many property listings were affordable and appropriate for our household types, and compares the changes with the 2024 survey. Table 2 breaks down the results by each state and territory.

The results paint a bleak picture of the private rental market's capacity to house Australians on low incomes. Nationally, the situation has remained dire for most household types compared to 2024. For single people on JobSeeker or Youth Allowance, affordability remains almost non-existent with just three listings across the entire country affordable for someone on JobSeeker, and none for those on Youth Allowance. Even households with comparatively higher incomes, such as minimum wage earners or people on the Age Pensioner, saw minimal improvements. For instance, single minimum wage earners only saw a 0.1 percentage point increase in affordable properties, from 0.6 percent to 0.7 percent. The data confirms that affordability at the bottom end of the market is stagnant, with marginal gains overshadowed by a growing housing crisis.

Breaking the data down reveals stark disparities in affordability. It is clear that even in relatively better-performing regions, access remains limited for households on low incomes. In every state and territory, affordability for these groups was close to zero, reinforcing the systemic exclusion of people on low incomes from the private rental market.

Perhaps most concerning is that the overall increase in rental listings, from 45,115 in 2024 to 51,238 in 2025, did not translate into improved affordability. This calls into question the assumption that increasing supply alone will ease rental stress for low-income households. The data shows that even with more properties on the market, affordability rates remained static or declined for most groups. The persistent lack of affordable options highlights the urgent need for systemic interventions.

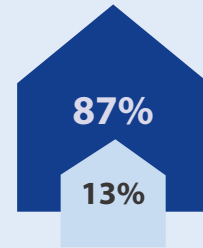
Figure 1. Snapshot of rental affordability for sample households

● Unaffordable ● Affordable



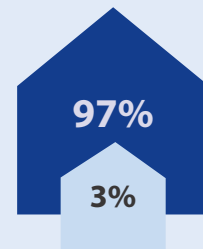
### Family of four on the minimum wage

12.8% of rental listings are affordable for a family of four with two parents on the full-time minimum wage.



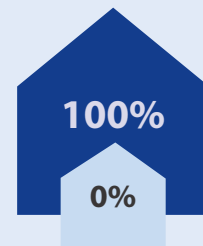
### Single parent on the minimum wage

2.6% of rental listings are affordable for a single parent on the full-time minimum wage.



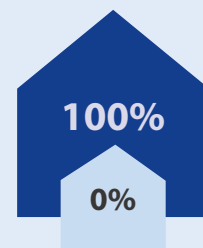
### Single person on the JobSeeker payment

0% of rental listings are affordable for a person looking for work on the JobSeeker payment, a result we've seen year after year.



### Retirees on the Age Pension

0.3% of rental listings are affordable for a retiree on the Age Pension, halving over the last year.



### Single person on the Disability Support Pension

0.1% of rental listings are affordable for a person on the Disability Support Pension.

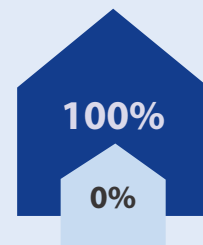


Table 1. Rental affordability by household type, national results  
(includes Commonwealth Rent Assistance, Family Tax Benefits, and all supplements where eligible)

Household Type	Payment Type	March 2025		March 2024		Change
		Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Percentage
01. Couple, two children One aged less than 5, one aged less than 10	Jobseeker Payment (both adults)	157	0.3%	160	0.4%	-0.1%
02. Single, two children One aged less than 5, one aged less than 10	Parenting Payment Single	64	0.1%	49	0.1%	0.0%
03. Couple, no children	Age Pension	334	0.7%	450	1.0%	-0.3%
04. Single, one child aged less than 5	Parenting Payment Single	73	0.1%	59	0.1%	0.0%
05. Single, one child aged over 14	Jobseeker Payment	20	0.0%	21	0.0%	0.0%
06. Single	Age Pension	165	0.3%	89	0.2%	+0.1%
07. Single aged over 21	Disability Support Pension	28	0.1%	31	0.1%	0.0%
08. Single	Jobseeker Payment	3	0.0%	3	0.0%	0.0%
09. Single aged over 18	Youth Allowance	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0.0%
10. Couple, two children One aged less than 5, one aged less than 10	Minimum Wage	6,538	12.8%	6,025	13.4%	-0.6%
11. Single, two children One aged less than 5, one aged less than 10	Minimum Wage and Parenting Payment Single	1,352	2.6%	799	1.8%	+0.8%
12. Single	Minimum Wage	352	0.7%	289	0.6%	+0.1%
13. Couple, two children One aged less than 5, one aged less than 10	Minimum Wage and Parenting Payment Partnered	1,352	2.6%	1,205	2.7%	-0.1%
Total number of properties		51,238		45,115		

Table 2. Rental affordability by household type, State and Territory results  
(includes Commonwealth Rent Assistance, Family Tax Benefits, and all supplements where eligible)

Household Type	Payment Type	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA
01. Couple, two children One aged less than 5, one aged less than 10	Jobseeker Payment (both adults)	0.0%	0.2%	0.0%	0.2%	3.0%	0.9%	0.2%	0.1%
02. Single, two children One aged less than 5, one aged less than 10	Parenting Payment Single	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	1.5%	0.4%	0.1%	0.03%
03. Couple, no children	Age Pension	0.0%	0.6%	0.8%	0.4%	3.6%	2.8%	0.5%	0.2%
04. Single, one child aged less than 5	Parenting Payment Single	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.1%	1.5%	0.4%	0.03%	0.0%
05. Single, one child aged over 14	Jobseeker Payment	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.02%	0.5%	0.1%	0.01%	0.0%
06. Single	Age Pension	0.0%	0.4%	0.0%	0.3%	0.8%	0.9%	0.2%	0.1%
07. Single aged over 21	Disability Support Pension	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.04%	0.2%	0.3%	0.03%	0.0%
08. Single	Jobseeker Payment	0.0%	0.02%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
09. Single aged over 18	Youth Allowance	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
10. Couple, two children One aged less than 5, one aged less than 10	Minimum Wage	1.1%	5.2%	6.5%	9.9%	20.6%	29.3%	23.5%	4.2%
11. Single, two children One aged less than 5, one aged less than 10	Minimum Wage and Parenting Payment Single	0.0%	1.3%	0.3%	1.6%	8.3%	8.2%	4.2%	1.2%
12. Single	Minimum Wage	0.0%	0.9%	1.4%	0.7%	1.6%	2.1%	0.4%	0.4%
13. Couple, two children One aged less than 5, one aged less than 10	Minimum Wage and Parenting Payment Partnered	0.0%	1.3%	0.3%	1.6%	8.3%	8.2%	4.2%	1.2%
Total number of properties		1,152	17,028	370	10,046	2,220	680	16,219	3,523

## What this means

### No relief for households on low incomes

Having a secure, affordable home is the basis for allowing people to maintain stable employment, raise a family, and age comfortably in a community. This year the Snapshot reveals that this security remains unattainable for thousands of Australians on the lowest incomes.

Across the country, a single person out of work and relying on the JobSeeker payment would be able to find just two rooms in a sharehouse, or a single unit in regional New South Wales. Nothing is affordable for a young person on Youth Allowance.

Australia's social security system is supposed to act as a safety net, helping Australians in moments of crisis or supporting them to get back on their feet. If it ever achieved that outcome, it certainly isn't now. Rates of payment are so low that Australians become trapped in an endless cycle of poverty. Housing costs remain the largest fixed cost for low-income households. A survey from the Australian Council of Social Services found that nearly 50 percent of JobSeeker recipients are forced to spend half, or more, of their payment solely on rent.<sup>2</sup> When forced to make choices about what other essentials to cut in order to keep a roof over their head, people are most likely to skip meals, medication or heating just to make the rent each week.<sup>3</sup>

Older Australians have found no reprieve in the private rental market. Singles and couples relying on the Age Pension have no better chance of finding affordable housing, despite being an integral part of ageing well. Anglicare Australia's *Ageing in Place* report surveyed older Australians about their desires for secure housing, and found that three in four older Australians in private rentals want to remain in their home.<sup>4</sup> However this is more difficult for renters, with renting creating insecurity for people as they age. At the same time, Australia's retirement income system is predicated on the idea of home ownership in older age. It is no longer correct to assume that all older people will retire without ongoing housing costs, and those who do will likely find the Age Pension inadequate.

Research from Swinburne University has identified around 145,000 older renters who are neither poor enough to qualify for housing assistance nor wealthy enough to ensure secure housing as they age. 77 percent of these older Australians are reliant on the Age Pension, and 61 percent have no superannuation to fall back on.<sup>5</sup> With a mere 0.7 percent of properties affordable to a couple on the Age Pension, and an even smaller 0.3 percent for a single, older Australians are facing no other reality than rental stress. From the 165 listings affordable for a single person on the Age Pension, 137 were rooms in a sharehouse.

## **More than a supply issue**

For years, the dominant narrative surrounding housing has been that the crisis is driven by limited supply. Governments and the property industry continue to feed the narrative that we have a shortage of homes, and that more supply will solve the crisis through a trickle-down effect that will eventually benefit low-income households. The results of this year's Snapshot do not support this conclusion.

This year, rental listings across the country rose to just over 51,000, up from around 45,000 the same time last year. Despite an increase in rental listings of over 13 percent, affordability has stagnated or declined across almost every household type. If a simple increase in the supply of housing really added more affordable housing, then we would have expected to see an increase in affordability.

While supply is important, it is not the silver bullet for the housing crisis. Australia's private rental system is not designed to provide affordable homes to renters, especially those on low incomes. Adding more supply will have a limited impact if the homes supplied aren't affordable for the people who need them. Without reforming tax settings that favour landlords, or ensuring more public and community homes are built, renters will see no improvement to the market conditions. Supply alone cannot push down prices when the market is designed to keep rents high and maximise investor profit.

## What can be done

### Tax reform for affordable homes

Australia's housing crisis has been building for decades, with policy settings exacerbating and incentivising the degradation of affordability. Australia's spending on housing has slowly divested a direct role for government to play in the provision of housing, instead prioritising private subsidy schemes for renters and investors alike, with neither producing any long-term or notable benefit. Tax concessions like negative gearing and the Capital Gains Tax discount do little to incentivise affordable housing, instead providing more opportunity for wealth generation for investors. The housing system is not designed to provide housing, it is designed to provide profit.

Negative gearing was initially intended as an incentive to landlords to offer below-market rents to tenants, by allowing them to claim the loss as a deduction on their income tax. However, the dual impact of the Capital Gains Tax discount has perversely incentivised already wealthy investors to leverage existing assets, out-bid potential first home buyers, and reduce their tax burden while waiting to sell the property for its capital gains. This is not a system designed to make housing affordable; it is designed to make housing profitable.

The private market has consistently demonstrated that it cannot be relied upon to provide real solutions or self-regulate. There is a vested interest from investors to protect the current tax settings and defend them by arguing that a trickle-down effect makes housing more affordable over time. There is no evidence supporting this claim, while in fact, more evidence suggests that the opposite is true. Between 1996 and 2011, the shortfall of affordable rentals grew for low-income households, according to analysis from the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute.<sup>6</sup>

Landlords and investors often use the threat that they will be forced to sell their property, thus reducing rental stock if changes are made to their lucrative tax benefits. The threat of churn in the market puts off reform to the tax settings, but the reality is that renters in the private market already live in the churn of rentals entering and exiting the market. Already, 50 percent of properties exit the private rental market after only five years.<sup>7</sup> The rental market continues to adapt, as data shows that in Melbourne and Sydney, around one third of new rental tenancies commenced in properties that were new to the rental market, while around one quarter of bond refunds were for properties that left the private rental market.<sup>8</sup>

Anglicare Australia's own research has revealed the lop-sided impacts of the tax concessions. The A Costly Choice report found that 55 percent of negative gearing concessions benefited the top quintile of income earners, while only two percent went to the lowest income earners. Additionally, a staggering 82 percent of benefits from the Capital Gains Tax discount went to the top income quintile.<sup>9</sup> The impact of these tax concessions is ultimately further entrenching the wealth divide.

These generous tax settings are expensive. Analysis from the Parliamentary Budget Office shows that negative gearing deductions and the Capital Gains Tax discount cost the Budget nearly \$11 billion in foregone revenue in 2023-24. They further estimate that over the next decade these costs will double, costing \$21.4 billion to the budget bottom line by 2033-34.<sup>10</sup>

An overhaul of Australia's tax regime is needed. Anglicare Australia proposes, firstly, that the Capital Gains Tax discount is slowly phased out over a period of ten years. This gradual approach to reform gives the housing market time to adjust and would guard against short-term shocks. Secondly, negative gearing deductions would be phased out for new investors in the private market.

By eliminating these elements of Australia's tax regime, the Government can remove the incentives that are making housing unaffordable. In doing so, the Government can generate revenue it is otherwise foregoing, and direct that into measures that would make renting affordable.

## **Raise the rate of income payments**

Secure housing is the basis of building a secure life. Yet for people relying on income support payments to make ends meet, they will never experience housing security. Where the social security system was meant to help people avoid falling into poverty, it instead works to trap them there.

The reality facing out of work Australians is that the JobSeeker payment will never be enough to help them afford the basics. The weekly rate of the payment sits nowhere near the Henderson Poverty Line. In fact, JobSeeker is so stubbornly below the poverty line that the temporary doubling of the payment during the pandemic only barely lifted people out of poverty.<sup>11</sup> The low rates of working age payments ultimately force those relying on the payments to make difficult choices between paying for food, medicine or heating just to ensure they still have a home. These choices are exacerbated by the fact that rental price growth has far outstripped the payment rate. In fact, a person on JobSeeker could spend all their income and still not afford the average asking rent, even with the help of Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA).<sup>12</sup>

Commonwealth Rent Assistance has become the Federal Government's single largest recurring housing expense. Each year, the cost of the program reaches new heights, having climbed to a total cost of \$5.5 billion in 2023-24. Despite this, there is little evidence that CRA is helping Australians cover the costs of renting. Only one in three people on JobSeeker, and one in ten young people out of work, are even eligible for the payment.<sup>13</sup> After receiving the payment, half of all people receiving the payment remain in rental stress.<sup>14</sup>

Over the course of two Budgets between 2022 and 2024, the Federal Government increased the base rate of CRA by a collective 25 percent. While these increases were welcome, these increases made no difference in affordability for a single person on JobSeeker. Increasing the payment is simply not effective. Further, the payment is plagued with targeting accuracy problems. Research from the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute estimates that the payment has a target error rate of 41 percent, with the payment not reaching low-income renters who would benefit the most from support.<sup>15</sup>

Anglicare Australia believes that Commonwealth Rent Assistance needs to be overhauled in order to become effective. By reforming the cut-in rate of the payment, and indexing the payment to average rents by region, CRA can reach more people and be more effective in responding to housing costs.

## **Putting government at the heart of housing supply**

The housing crisis has been one of the biggest talking points in public discourse for several years now. The solution favoured by the property industry and by governments is increasing private supply, on the assumption that affordable homes will trickle down as a result.

The idea that private supply alone will improve affordability is not borne out by the evidence, nor by the results of the Snapshot. Australia currently completes around 180,000 new dwellings each year.<sup>16</sup> Despite new supply outstripping population growth, affordability has declined. Increasing supply is part of the solution, but only if the right supply is built.

Australian governments once took a more active role in providing affordable homes. The Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement was first established so the Federal Government could play a direct role in the provision of affordable housing. In the first year of the Agreement, nearly one in every four homes in Australia was built by the government.<sup>17</sup> The slow and gradual divestment of responsibility by the Federal Government, effectively outsourcing the provision of housing to the private market, has led to the gradual decline of public housing as a percentage of overall stock. In 2021, public and social housing made up only 3.8 percent of total stock in Australia, down from 4.9 percent in 1981.<sup>18</sup> As a result, the shortfall in public and community housing has grown to at least 640,000 homes.<sup>19</sup> It is this shortfall, rather than a need for generic homes, that has driven the crisis.

To simply maintain the current ratio of social housing, we would need to add 15,000 new social homes a year. At current rates of construction, we are only managing to add around 3,000 new homes to the supply.<sup>20</sup> Even the Housing Australia Future Fund's goal to support the construction of

30,000 new social homes in the first five years won't be enough to meet the social housing need. The Government cannot rely on off-budget measures to provide enough investment that meets the scale of the crisis. It must make sustained capital investment in new social housing.

Anglicare Australia believes that the Government must support the construction of 25,000 new public and social homes every year for the next two decades. This will allow Australia to close the shortfall and meet the demand.

## Conclusion

For sixteen years, Anglicare Australia has borne witness to the erosion of affordability in Australia's private rental market. Each year we hope for the best. We endeavour to publish a Snapshot that shows improvement instead of feeding our worst fears. Unfortunately, it's getting harder to see the light at the end of the tunnel.

Australia's housing crisis is not a temporary shock or a blip in the system. Australia's housing crisis is the system. The reality is that the housing market is designed to generate profit and wealth for investors, not to provide homes to those in need.

While the richest continue to amass new wealth, the poorest find themselves even more stretched, forced to make difficult choices between staying warm over winter or putting food on the table just to keep a roof over their heads. This reality is a choice. As long as governments choose not to play a role in providing affordable homes, then nothing will change.

The solutions are clear, and they involve putting real people at the centre of housing. They will require a concerted and dedicated effort to reform unjust tax handouts and build the homes we need. But they are not impossible.

The housing crisis is the result of policy decisions made by governments. These are decisions that can, and must, be reversed so that every Australian can find a home of their own.

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