

Rentals are too costly, report claims

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RENTAL prices are too expensive for regional residents on welfare, a damning new report shows.

Anglicare's Rental Affordability Snapshot reported of 472 available properties, only 72 were affordable for locals living on income support payments – a meagre 15 per cent.

For a single parent with two children, there were no appropriate affordable homes in Tamworth, Armidale, Moree or Inverell.

Tamworth Family Support Services business development manager Leigh Smith said the current housing crisis was "a huge problem".

"It's quite ridiculous. We can't always rely on government and social housing, because quite simply there are waiting lists there as well. If people can't get into there, and can't get into private rentals, they're going to be left with nowhere," he said.

Mr Smith said the average waiting time for social housing was two years in Moree, but almost five years in Tamworth.

"Quite frankly two years is still too long to wait for a house," Mr Smith said.

He said there was an urgent need to increase the supply of affordable rentals by repairing vacant dwellings and building more new homes suitable for single people.

Mr Smith said exorbitant rental costs could render people homeless.

“If someone has been homeless for an extended period, they are more prone to mental health issues and drug and alcohol issues,” he said.

“The sooner you can find stable housing for someone who is homeless, the better.”

The charity’s snapshot included the Northern Inland region for the first time this year, and found of houses available for rent on April 11-12 this year, 262 properties out of 472 were affordable for people living on minimum wage “without placing them in housing stress”.