



Snapshot: Anglicare Central Queensland

Introduction

Central Queensland's diverse communities range from major population centres to isolated outback towns, each with their own unique set of housing affordability challenges. The region's economy revolves around industries such as mining, gas and associated fields, tourism, agriculture and beef production. Health and social services, retail and education are also major employers.

Anglicare Central Queensland (CQ) services a 570,000 square kilometre region extending from the Capricorn Coast right across the state to the Northern Territory border. The agency's services cover foster care and child protection, community services including youth, disability and mental health programs, and a housing portfolio of more than 530 properties. These properties range from short-term crisis accommodation for people who are homeless or otherwise in urgent need of a safe place to stay, to long term family homes leased through the National Rental Affordability Scheme. AnglicareCQ manages housing in Rockhampton and the Capricorn Coast, Gladstone and surrounding communities including Tannum Sands and Calliope, the Central Highlands communities of Emerald and Blackwater, and Barcaldine, Longreach in the state's west.

Findings

On the weekend of 27th March 2021, 422 private rentals were advertised for rent in the Central Queensland communities surveyed: Rockhampton, Gladstone, Longreach, Barcaldine, Capricorn Coast, Central Highlands and Emerald. Private rentals were surveyed from realestate.com.au. While a property could be affordable and appropriate for more than one household type, any individual property can only be rented out by one household type at any time. To this end, we found that:

- 68 individual properties were suitable for at least one household type living on income support payments without placing them in housing stress.
- 298 individual properties were suitable for at least one household type living on minimum wage without placing them in housing stress.



On the Snapshot weekend, these are the number of unique properties affordable and appropriate for:

Households on income support payments (#1-10)	Households on minimum wage (#11-14)
68	298

Table 1: Rental Affordability, Central Queensland, by household type and percentage

#	Household Type	Payment Type	Number Affordable & Appropriate	Percentage Affordable & Appropriate
1	Couple, two children (one aged less than 5, one aged less than 10)	Jobseeker (both adults)	32	8%
2	Single, two children (one aged less than 5, one aged less than 10)	Parenting Payment Single	8	2%
3	Couple, no children	Age Pension	44	10%
4	Single, one child (aged less than 5)	Parenting Payment Single	16	4%
5	Single, one child (aged over 8)	Newstart Allowance	1	0%
6	Single	Age Pension	3	1%
7	Single aged over 21	Disability Support Pension	3	1%
8	Single	Jobseeker	0	0%
9	Single aged over 18	Youth Allowance	0	0%
10	Single in share house	Youth Allowance	0	0%
11	Couple, two children (one aged less than 5, one aged less than 10)	Minimum Wage + FTB A (both adults)	287	68%
12	Single, two children (one aged less than 5, one aged less than 10)	Minimum Wage + FTB A & B	83	20%
13	Single	Minimum Wage	12	3%
14	Couple, two children (one aged less than 5, one aged less than 10)	Minimum Wage + Parenting payment (partnered) + FTB A & B	154	36%
Total No of Properties		422		



Discussion

Over the past 12 months, Central Queensland has seen a significant decline in housing affordability across the region. This can be attributed to the upturn in the local mining sector, increased economy recovery projects in the region and people returning or relocating to Queensland during the COVID pandemic. This has seen rental prices increase across the region and particularly in the Rockhampton, Capricorn Coast, Emerald and Gladstone regions.

This year's Rental Affordability Snapshot showed a significant decline in affordability percentages across the region and particularly for singles on parenting or aged pensions, jobseeker and youth allowance payments. Central Queensland is facing a housing shortage crisis. Rents are increasing at rapid rates and it is forcing more and more individuals and families into homelessness and placing further pressure on an already broken social housing system.

Investment in social and affordable housing is now essential across the region and it's time we put homes before investment.

Policy Implications

With increasing housing unaffordability, Central Queenslanders are struggling to find a suitable, affordable place to call home.

AnglicareCQ supports Anglicare Australia's calls to grow the supply of social housing, creating more affordable housing in the communities where it's needed and ensuring every Australian has enough to pay for safe and secure accommodation.

AnglicareCQ also supports calls for a mix of housing, to meet the needs of the diverse Central Queensland community. Every individual's housing needs vary across their lifetime, and many in our community have extra needs which are not met through conventional housing stocks. We need to examine our communities' needs for accessible, culturally appropriate housing that is sensitive to the needs and lives of the people who live there.

Conclusion

On the weekend of 27th March, 2021, 422 private rentals were advertised for rent through Realestate.com in the Central Queensland communities surveyed: Rockhampton, Gladstone, Longreach, Barcaldine, Capricorn Coast, Central Highlands and Emerald.

Local results show significant rental unaffordability in the region, that can be attributed to the upturn in the local mining sector, increased economy recovery projects in the region and people returning or relocating to Queensland during the COVID pandemic. Central Queensland, like Australia as a whole, needs a reliable and forward-thinking supply of social housing for lower income earners to ensure all our residents have a safe, suitable place to call home.