



27 November 2018 – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New report shows rental affordability easing across Queensland, but older women continue to face extreme hardship

Queensland's peak body for the housing and homelessness sector, Q Shelter, has welcomed improvements to rental affordability across Brisbane, but has expressed alarm about the lack of affordable housing options for low-income earners.

Q Shelter's Executive Director, Fiona Caniglia, said that the latest Rental Affordability Index showed that without more affordable housing options, pensioners and Newstart recipients would continue to struggle in the private rental market.

"While we welcome news of easing affordability in Brisbane, we have considerable concerns about declining rental affordability for very low and low income households across Queensland." Ms Caniglia said.

"Older women in particular are the fastest growing cohort of people experiencing homelessness."

"Older women on Newstart or the aged pension are finding themselves locked out of affordable private rental options across the state." Ms Caniglia added.

The 2011-2016 census for Queensland homelessness for older people increased greater than any other age group with a 28% increase for those over the age of 55. Most worrying is the 65-74 age group where many people have had to stop working and are struggling to survive in the rental market on Newstart or the Age Pension.

The Rental Affordability Index shows that those on the Newstart Allowance and Single Pension Payments facing Severely Unaffordable and Extremely Unaffordable rents across Queensland.

"In Brisbane, a single pensioner is paying almost two-thirds their income in rent"

"In regional Queensland, over half of a single pensioner's income is paid in rent."

"The lack of affordable housing is forcing some pensioners and older women into insecure living, overcrowding and homelessness." Ms Caniglia said.

The Ageing on the Edge – Older Persons Homelessness Prevention Project also highlights the plight of housing affordability for older people.

It outlines that the consequences of this escalation of homelessness and housing stress for older people is abject poverty, social isolation, fear of asking for property maintenance, sexual exploitation for some women, sleeping in cars, couch surfing with family that can lead to elder abuse, hospitalisation caused by a health emergency and also premature entry into residential aged care.





“We’re seeing older women making impossible choices between securing housing with access to transport, shops, and services; as well as juggle the increased healthcare costs associated with ageing.” Ms Caniglia added.

Ms Caniglia said that there needs to be more investment in well-located social and affordable housing to address affordability issues for low to moderate income Queenslanders. Ms Caniglia also encourage the Federal Government to review the rate of Newstart payment given this report’s dire findings for low-income earners.

“In a state like Queensland it is critical to maintain a regionally sensitive approach to the solutions and also one that addresses the needs of specific household types such as older people, single parents and single income families.” Ms Caniglia added.

Q Shelter Media Contact: Scott McGregor – 0430 100 932

You can find an interactive map highlighting these figures here -

<https://www.sgsep.com.au/projects/rental-affordability-index>

You can find the full report here - https://www.sgsep.com.au/assets/main/Projects/SGS-Economics-and-Planning_RAI-Nov-19.pdf

TABLE 1. RAI FOR SINGLE PENSIONER HOUSEHOLD

	RAI score	Rent as a share of income
Greater Sydney	34	88%
Rest of NSW	77	39%
Greater Melbourne	43	69%
Rest of VIC	80	37%
Greater Brisbane	47	64%
Rest of QLD	55	54%
Greater Adelaide	60	50%
Rest of SA	98	31%
Greater Perth*	46	65%
Rest of WA*	48	63%
Greater Hobart	54	56%
Rest of TAS	86	35%
ACT	40	75%

Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2019)

*RAI has been calculated using median rents for all dwellings rather than one bedroom due to data unavailability

Queensland Shelter

Queensland Shelter (Q Shelter) is the state’s peak body for the housing and homelessness sector. Founded over thirty years ago, Queensland Shelter is a member-based organisation funded by the Queensland Government. They work with both the state government and housing and homelessness sector to reform, grow, engage, and build the capacity of the housing and homelessness sector.

ABN 214 955 03 790

PO Box 214, Spring Hill, Qld 4004

Telephone: 07 3831 5900 || Fax: 07 3236 1396 || www.qshelter.asn.au

