AnglicareWA

50 YEARS



# RENTAL AFFORDABILITY SNAPSHOT 2026

# ESSENTIAL WORKERS

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RENTAL AFFORDABILITY SNAPSHOT 2026

ESSENTIAL WORKERS



The Rental Affordability Snapshot is the product of a partnership with Anglicare Australia. Anglicare WA would like to acknowledge the support of Anglicare Australia and their partners for their assistance.



# ABOUT THE SNAPSHOT

Earlier this year, Anglicare WA released its Rental Affordability Snapshot 2026, showing that across the entire state, there is not a single property – not even a room – affordable to someone on Jobseeker or Youth Allowance.

The Snapshot, which is taken each year in March, captures the number of affordable and appropriate rentals available for Western Australians on low incomes. A property was considered affordable if it required less than 30% of a household's income and appropriate if it had an adequate number of bedrooms.

There were 3,314 available private rentals listed across WA when the Snapshot was taken.

**The Rental Affordability Snapshot: Essential Workers Edition 2026** takes this data and assesses it for affordability across 16 essential worker categories:

- Aged Care Worker
- Ambulance Officer
- Childcare Worker
- Cleaner
- Construction Worker
- Delivery Driver
- Dispatcher
- Firefighter
- Freight Driver
- Hospitality Worker
- Meat Packer
- Nurse
- Postal Worker
- Retail Worker
- School Teacher
- Social and Community Services Worker

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# RENTAL AFFORDABILITY SNAPSHOT 2026

## ESSENTIAL WORKERS

**Less than 1% were affordable for 11 out of the 16 essential worker categories, including early childhood educators, hospitality workers, and social and community services workers.**

**Even the highest-earning essential workers – aged care workers, ambulance officers, firefighters and school teachers – could afford less than 2% of all available rentals.**

This is another insight into the rental crisis facing Western Australians, and highlights the risk that persistently high rents and reduced availability pose to the productivity, health and cohesion of our communities.

The problem is particularly prevalent in regional and remote WA, with not a single property or room affordable to any essential worker in the North West, and only a single affordable property in the South West and Great Southern.

Calculations are based on the latest award rates from 1 July 2026 across all 16 occupations, with net weekly earnings calculated using Australian Taxation Office guidance on withholding tax.

Affordability is measured for a single person earning an adult full-time award wage for their relevant occupation. As a result, this may overstate the affordability of rents for some people, as younger people working in hospitality or retail often work casual hours or receive youth rates. Similarly, we do not calculate for industries where workers often work regular overtime or outside of regular hours.





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# WESTERN AUSTRALIA

| Occupation | # Affordable | % Affordable |
|---|---|---|
| Aged Care Worker | 52 | 1.6 % |
| Ambulance Officer | 54 | 1.6 % |
| Early Childhood Educator | 22 | 0.7 % |
| Cleaner | 19 | 0.6 % |
| Construction Worker | 22 | 0.7 % |
| Delivery Driver | 22 | 0.7 % |
| Dispatcher | 19 | 0.6 % |
| Firefighter | 54 | 1.6 % |
| Freight Driver | 19 | 0.6 % |
| Hospitality Worker | 16 | 0.5 % |
| Meat Packer | 16 | 0.5 % |
| Nurse | 32 | 1.0 % |
| Postal Worker | 19 | 0.6 % |
| Retail Worker | 22 | 0.7 % |
| School Teacher | 57 | 1.7 % |
| Social and Community Services Worker | 19 | 0.6 % |

TOTAL NUMBER OF AVAILABLE PROPERTIES **3,314**



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# PERTH METRO

| Occupation | # Affordable | % Affordable |
|---|---|---|
| Aged Care Worker | 44 | 1.6 % |
| Ambulance Officer | 45 | 1.6 % |
| Early Childhood Educator | 19 | 0.7 % |
| Cleaner | 16 | 0.6 % |
| Construction Worker | 19 | 0.7 % |
| Delivery Driver | 19 | 0.7 % |
| Dispatcher | 16 | 0.6 % |
| Firefighter | 45 | 1.6 % |
| Freight Driver | 16 | 0.6 % |
| Hospitality Worker | 13 | 0.5 % |
| Meat Packer | 13 | 0.5 % |
| Nurse | 28 | 1.0 % |
| Postal Worker | 16 | 0.6 % |
| Retail Worker | 19 | 0.7 % |
| School Teacher | 45 | 1.6 % |
| Social and Community Services Worker | 16 | 0.6 % |

TOTAL NUMBER OF AVAILABLE PROPERTIES **2,763**

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# WHEATBELT & GOLDFIELDS



| Occupation | # Affordable | % Affordable |
|---|---|---|
| Aged Care Worker | 6 | 6.6 % |
| Ambulance Officer | 6 | 6.6 % |
| Early Childhood Educator | 3 | 3.3 % |
| Cleaner | 3 | 3.3 % |
| Construction Worker | 3 | 3.3 % |
| Delivery Driver | 3 | 3.3 % |
| Dispatcher | 3 | 3.3 % |
| Firefighter | 6 | 6.6 % |
| Freight Driver | 3 | 3.3 % |
| Hospitality Worker | 3 | 3.3 % |
| Meat Packer | 3 | 3.3 % |
| Nurse | 3 | 3.3 % |
| Postal Worker | 3 | 3.3 % |
| Retail Worker | 3 | 3.3 % |
| School Teacher | 9 | 9.7 % |
| Social and Community Services Worker | 3 | 3.3 % |

TOTAL NUMBER OF AVAILABLE PROPERTIES **93**

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ESSENTIAL WORKERS

# NORTH WEST



*"THE CHALLENGES WERE GREATER THAN EXPECTED AND VERY OVERWHELMING.*

*WITH THE CONSTANT FEAR OF NOT BEING SUCCESSFUL AND THREE DECLINED RENTAL APPLICATIONS LEADING TO MORE CHALLENGES AND THE POSSIBILITY OF HAVING TO GIVE UP ON STAYING IN THE PILBARA."*

Meenaaz, 60, Service Manager Pilbara

| Occupation | # Affordable | % Affordable |
|---|---|---|
| Aged Care Worker | 0 | 0.0 % |
| Ambulance Officer | 0 | 0.0 % |
| Early Childhood Educator | 0 | 0.0 % |
| Cleaner | 0 | 0.0 % |
| Construction Worker | 0 | 0.0 % |
| Delivery Driver | 0 | 0.0 % |
| Dispatcher | 0 | 0.0 % |
| Firefighter | 0 | 0.0 % |
| Freight Driver | 0 | 0.0 % |
| Hospitality Worker | 0 | 0.0 % |
| Meat Packer | 0 | 0.0 % |
| Nurse | 0 | 0.0 % |
| Postal Worker | 0 | 0.0 % |
| Retail Worker | 0 | 0.0 % |
| School Teacher | 0 | 0.0 % |
| Social and Community Services Worker | 0 | 0.0 % |

TOTAL NUMBER OF AVAILABLE PROPERTIES **142**



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# MID WEST & GASCOYNE

| Occupation | # Affordable | % Affordable |
|---|---|---|
| Aged Care Worker | 1 | 2.1 % |
| Ambulance Officer | 2 | 4.3 % |
| Early Childhood Educator | 0 | 0.0 % |
| Cleaner | 0 | 0.0 % |
| Construction Worker | 0 | 0.0 % |
| Delivery Driver | 0 | 0.0 % |
| Dispatcher | 0 | 0.0 % |
| Firefighter | 2 | 4.3 % |
| Freight Driver | 0 | 0.0 % |
| Hospitality Worker | 0 | 0.0 % |
| Meat Packer | 0 | 0.0 % |
| Nurse | 1 | 2.1 % |
| Postal Worker | 0 | 0.0 % |
| Retail Worker | 0 | 0.0 % |
| School Teacher | 2 | 4.3 % |
| Social and Community Services Worker | 0 | 0.0 % |

TOTAL NUMBER OF AVAILABLE PROPERTIES **47**

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# SOUTH WEST & GREAT SOUTHERN



*"INCREASING RENTS OVER THE YEARS HAVE CHANGED HOW I HAD TO LIVE. COUPLED WITH THE INSTABILITY OF THE HOUSING MARKET, I HAD TO MAKE CHANGES TO MY LONG-TERM GOALS AND PLANS FOR HOUSING."*

Kade, 24, Peer Support Worker, Housing First Support Services

| Occupation | # Affordable | % Affordable |
|---|---|---|
| Aged Care Worker | 1 | 0.4 % |
| Ambulance Officer | 1 | 0.4 % |
| Early Childhood Educator | 0 | 0.0 % |
| Cleaner | 0 | 0.0 % |
| Construction Worker | 0 | 0.0 % |
| Delivery Driver | 0 | 0.0 % |
| Dispatcher | 0 | 0.0 % |
| Firefighter | 1 | 0.4 % |
| Freight Driver | 0 | 0.0 % |
| Hospitality Worker | 0 | 0.0 % |
| Meat Packer | 0 | 0.0 % |
| Nurse | 0 | 0.0 % |
| Postal Worker | 0 | 0.0 % |
| Retail Worker | 0 | 0.0 % |
| School Teacher | 1 | 0.4 % |
| Social and Community Services Worker | 0 | 0.0 % |

TOTAL NUMBER OF AVAILABLE PROPERTIES **269**

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# HOUSING SOLUTIONS FOR OUR FUTURE

## Availability

**Commonwealth:**

- Implement meaningful reform to Commonwealth Rent Assistance so that it provides meaningful support to low-income earners in the private rental market, with a new baseline and a mechanism for payments to keep pace with the private rental market.
- Continue the Housing Australia Future Fund to improve supply for key worker accommodation.

**State:**

- Establish a $1 billion WA Housing Future Fund, by setting aside a portion of the state's surplus, in perpetuity, using annual returns to fund new builds.
- Explore innovative options to increase supply for regional areas of WA, such as scaling modular homes appropriate to local needs (such as climate and population).
- Invest in additional regional housing supply for key workers, including non-government workers.

## Affordability

**Commonwealth:**

- Ensure a liveable income above the poverty line for all Australians, including raising the rate of income support to at least $82 per day and improving the minimum wage.
- Reinstate the National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS) to increase the supply of rentals affordable to low and moderate-income tenants.

**State:**

- Continue and expand eligibility for the WA Rent Relief Program until the rental vacancy rate is between 2.5% and 3.5%.
- Establish a mechanism to stabilise or cap rents in line with Make Renting Fair WA.
- Create a WA equivalent to the NRAS to replace the affordable properties lost as a consequence of the closure of the Commonwealth scheme.

**Both:**

- Set a social housing target of 6% of total housing stock.

## Appropriateness

**State:**

- Ensure public, social and private rental housing in WA accommodates climate change, including minimum efficiency standards to mitigate extreme weather-related health risks and reduce energy costs for tenants.
- Sign the National Construction Code 2022 so every new build meets minimum accessibility standards.
- Implement the Ending Child and Youth Homelessness Coalition 2027-2028 Pre-Budget Submission.

**Both:**

- Expand crisis, transitional and supported accommodation options for people living with complex needs, particularly in regional, rural and remote areas with programs like Housing First approaches, Youth Foyers and Aboriginal community-controlled organisations.

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**Everyone deserves access to available, affordable and appropriate homes.**
Both State and Federal Governments are required to address the rental affordability crisis.
A bold vision is needed, but sensible policy solutions are at hand.



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