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Housing stress exacerbates mental illness

Mental Health Australia is concerned that low income Australians are under pressure from housing affordability stress resulting in negative impacts on mental health, following the release of Anglicare Australia's *Rental Affordability Snapshot*.

"Poor housing and housing stress, together with other life stresses, reduces psychological wellbeing and exacerbates mental illness," CEO of Mental Health Australia Frank Quinlan said.

"Affordable housing for low income earners is extremely important - safe, stable and secure accommodation is vital to the mental health and wellbeing of people and families living with mental illness.

"The Anglicare Australia report confirms the findings of the *2012 National Report Card on Mental Health and Suicide Prevention* that housing stress along with financial stress, and the stress of unemployment or living with poor health, can be contributing factors to mental illness.

"We know that for many people who are living with mental illness, owning and keeping their home can be harder to achieve compared to the general community – fewer own a home, or are paying off a mortgage, with more people renting or needing housing support."

Anglicare's Snapshot describes a severe housing crisis for people on low incomes, and calls on governments to put a national plan in place to resolve it as a matter of urgency. This must be part of a 10 year plan for mental health reform.

Anglicare Australia's Rental Affordability Snapshot can be found here - http://www.anglicare.asn.au/site/rental_affordability_snapshot.php

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