

## MEDIA RELEASE

2 August 2022

### RE: HOMELESSNESS WEEK 1 – 7 AUGUST 2022 | NT STILL WAITING *#StillWaitingNT*

Last Friday there were 5,941 applications on the NT public housing waiting list, and only 162 vacant homes.<sup>1</sup>

Homelessness Week aims to raise awareness of the impact of homelessness in Australia via national and local community events, including providing information on the importance of housing as a solution and educating communities on how they can make a difference.

DCLS Principal Solicitor, Judy Harrison said, “It is well known among crisis and other service providers in the NT that many people on the housing waiting list in the NT are homeless. The NT housing waiting lists aren’t achieving housing when it’s needed or within a reasonable time. That people can join a waiting list might sound good, but what is this really - if the wait defeats the purpose?”

*#StillWaitingNT* is the name of the Tenants’ Advice Service (‘TAS’) Homelessness Week campaign to encourage community engagement with what’s needed to reduce and ultimately overcome homelessness in the NT. The campaign highlights:

- ***#StillWaiting* for a plan to end homelessness in the NT**
- ***#-StillWaiting* for proper resources for the NT**
  - Needs-based federal funding to be achieved – while the NT’s homelessness rate is 12 times the national average, the NT only received 1.3% of funds under the National Housing and Homelessness Agreement.<sup>2</sup>
- ***#StillWaiting* for the lived experiences of being homeless to inform NT housing list rules**

Phil Andrews, Community Solicitor with the Darwin Community Legal Service Tenants’ Advice Service said, “The size and length of the waiting lists, and how they operate are a dramatic indication of the scale of the problems. This isn’t only the major centres of Darwin, Alice Springs, Tennant Creek, and Katherine – the issues are NT wide, including remote and very remote communities.”

Al Cabry, DCLS’ Tenants’ Advice Service Advocate said: “We don’t believe that the public housing wait list accurately reflects the extent of the housing and homelessness crisis in the NT. We believe it is much worse than the current figures indicate. We’re calling for greater transparency and accessibility regarding the processing and progression of public housing applications.

## MEDIA RELEASE CONTINUES

<sup>1</sup> Northern Territory Government, [Public Housing Waiting Times, NTG web site](#), 29 July 2022

<sup>2</sup> NT Shelter, Submission No 59 to the Productivity Commission, Review of the *National Housing and Homelessness Agreement* (18 March 2022) 8 (‘PC Review’).

### Want to help?

- **#StillWaitingNT** is raising awareness, you can help spread the news
- Link in with advocacy groups and services in the NT to help

TAS is attending venues throughout Homelessness Week collaborating with other community organisations combatting homelessness in Darwin, offering free legal advice, and assisting people in applying for the public housing waiting list.

DCLS contacts for media comment:

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**MEDIA RELEASE ENDS**

