

# Perth's housing emergency is our State's collective shame

**1** To our great collective shame, WA is on the precipice of escalating from a housing crisis to an all-out housing emergency.

In a State as prosperous as ours, how can it be that so many people are struggling with one of life's most basic necessities — finding a home, and keeping that home.

For the second year in a row, Perth is the most unaffordable place to live in the country.

**2** You would think that statistic alone would be enough for the State Government to urgently extend the WA Rent Relief Program, a program which gives tenants in the private rental market a

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payment of up to \$5000 to help them stay in their homes.

But so far, nothing.

The Opposition is calling on the Government to get their priorities right and support our most vulnerable.

Imagine approaching Christmas and New Year and not being sure if you can afford your rent.

That is the reality for too many West Australians.

**3** For the benefit of our Perth Park Premier Roger Cook, the Treasurer for Italian

soccer matches (expect AC Milan v Como to be announced for February at Optus in the next few days) Rita Saffioti and chief lever-puller, Housing Minister John Carey, here's some thought starters which might provide the inspiration to look after, rather than entertain the masses.

**4** In just five years, Perth has gone from the most affordable rental market in the country to the least affordable, overtaking Sydney. The average Perth renter now spends 32 per cent of their total income on rent.

**5** In four years, the median rent in WA has increased 118 per cent, up from \$339 in 2021 to \$716 today.

Remember, that's just the median price. Many people are paying a great deal more per week on rent.

More than a quarter of WA renters now consider their rent unaffordable.

**6** Nearly two-thirds of single female renters over 55 are living in poverty and half of those are experiencing severe poverty.

**7** There is a shortfall of 7700 homes in Perth's rental stock. There are more than 23,000 applications for public housing.

**8** Of those, 7755 applications are on the priority wait list. That is a staggering 367 per cent increase between 2019 and now.

**9** The median social housing wait time has blown out from 58 weeks to 120 weeks in four years. That's an increase of 106 per cent.

And social housing makes up a paltry 3.8 per cent of all housing stock in WA.

**10** Extending the Rent Relief Program is one way to give certainty to people in need and address their very real and immediate stress. The Cook Labor Government is big on announcements but short on delivery.

In a State as wealthy as WA, we must help people at risk of eviction.

**Basil Zempilas is the Opposition Leader**