

**Opening Remarks**  
**Simon Miller**  
**CEO, Anglicare Sydney**

- Good afternoon, members of the Select Committee. I appear on behalf of Anglicare Sydney, a provider that is deeply embedded in the care and wellbeing of our communities for over 160 years.
- We face a crisis – a failing housing supply market that is generating a rental affordability crisis. This crisis isn't just a crisis for people on job support - it now strikes at the heart of our essential workforce. These are the people who care for our elderly, teach our children, heal our sick, and serve and protect our communities. Their ability to live near or among the communities they serve is being eroded, not by choice but by a housing market that has become inaccessible to them.
- Essential workers, including those in aged care, disability services, and other parts of the care economy, must be explicitly recognised in the definition of an essential worker. Their contribution is not ancillary; it is foundational to the functioning of our communities. Without them, our schools, hospitals, aged care homes, and emergency services simply cannot operate.
- Essential workers are critical to the functioning and flourishing of society, and housing insecurity threatens community diversity and resilience. Communities should be home to these real people, with real jobs, who are able to live and work among those they serve.
- The data is stark: an aged care worker in New South Wales can afford just 1 in 50 rental properties; an early childhood educator, only one in every hundred. Even the highest-paid essential workers, such as school teachers, can afford only 1 in 25 rental properties on the market. These figures reflect not only a housing supply and affordability crisis but a profound threat to our social fabric and community wellbeing. And it's getting worse not better.
- This crisis has immediate implications for sectors like aged care and the broader care economy. Anglicare's own workforce data shows that our care workers, predominantly based in Western and South Western Sydney, are priced out of living closer to aged care facilities for example in the Sutherland Shire, Eastern Suburbs or the Northern Beaches.
- This is not merely an inconvenience for them but also a disincentive since working significant distances from home involves additional financial cost of transport, lost time in commuting (for many who have young families) and inaccessibility of public transport. For providers it exacerbates workforce shortages, diminishes productivity, and ultimately compromises the quality of care we can provide to an increasingly ageing population.
- As a result, Anglicare welcomes this inquiry as a timely opportunity to work together on solutions to these critical issues.