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AFFORDABLE HOUSING SOLUTIONS FOR THE ILLAWARRA SHOALHAVEN

Business Illawarra, in partnership with key regional stakeholders, has today released a major report outlining solutions to the affordable housing crisis affecting key workers in the Illawarra Shoalhaven – and commenced an advocacy campaign to accelerate housing supply in the region.

Launched at two events in Wollongong and Nowra, the report is based on leading research undertaken by Judith Stubbs and Associates that examines the underlying causes of the crisis and identifies actions to grow affordable housing in town centres across the region.

Executive Director of Business Illawarra, Adam Zarth, said his organisation was responding to the concerns of local employers and business owners who were suffering acute workforce shortages and attributed them to a lack of affordable housing regionally.

“We knew that the housing challenge key workers face is particularly acute in our region, where they spend on average 40% of their income on rent, compared against the 30% national average.”

“Today we have articulated the actions that each of us can take to address this issue, which is hampering economic growth and exacerbating difficult trading conditions for key sectors including hospitality, human services, retail and construction.”

“There is a role for each level of government, the property sector, Community Housing Providers, major employers, peak bodies and the wider community in supporting the development of new affordable housing – and being innovative in how we do it,” said Mr Zarth.

The research was supported by the Illawarra Shoalhaven Joint Organisation, Warrigal, MMJ Real Estate, the Housing Trust and the Property Council of Australia (Illawarra).

Illawarra Shoalhaven Joint Organisation CEO Roger Stephan said, “The councils I represent are invested in finding solutions to the regional housing shortage, and in this they must be supported by the state government and the wider community.”

Jennifer Macquarie, Chair, Property Council of Australia (Illawarra) said, “The current planning system is overly complex and in dire need of reform. The state government has recently taken some welcome steps that will have a positive impact in our region, but in this report we are urging them to go further.”

Warrigal CEO Jenni Hutchins said, “My organisation is now providing housing for our workers, so we know well the impact the current housing crisis is having. Our staff support the most vulnerable members of the community and work in shifts, so it is imperative that we can provide safe, local accommodation to meet their needs.”

Housing Trust CEO Michele Adair said, “We need a commitment from each level of government to help deliver more affordable rental housing, faster and more collaboratively with the private and not-for-profit sectors. We need additional investment, planning reform, and where possible, partnerships on their landholdings.”

MMJ Real Estate Business Operations Manager, Natalie Allan, said, “There is a pivotal role to be played in community education and engagement to overcome concerns surrounding infill development. By focusing on selecting appropriate areas with proximity to transportation and essential services, we can ensure well-planned growth that serves the best interests of the

community."

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Report link: [Solutions to the affordable housing crisis in the Illawarra Shoalhaven](#)

Report link: [Illawarra Shoalhaven Affordable Housing Strategic Options Report](#)

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About Business Illawarra

Formerly the Illawarra Business Chamber, *Business Illawarra* is the region's peak business organisation; a not-for-profit advocacy group dedicated to the economic development of the Illawarra.