

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## **Lack of affordable housing killing Northern growth**

The lack of affordable housing in mining towns is killing the prospects of growth in Northern Australia, according to John Shipp, Director of the ANDEV/IPA North Australia Project.

Mr Shipp's warning came in response to reports in the *Australian Financial Review* yesterday that Landcorp, the state government body responsible for land release in Western Australia, only released approximately 40 allotments of crown land in Port Hedland last year.

As of September 2011, the average three bedroom house in South Hedland sold for around \$700,000, and weekly rent on the same dwelling had grown to \$1,700 rent per week.

'Port Hedland is facing a housing affordability crisis and Landcorp simply isn't doing enough to counter it,' Mr Shipp said.

'Karratha and Port Hedland have an estimated housing shortage of 1531 and 1402 dwellings respectively, and I think that's a low-ball figure because it doesn't factor in latent demand.'

'In a town where housing is in such hot demand, and local renters are being forced out of town, far more crown land should be released for development.'

Mr Shipp said that releasing more land would encourage more permanent settlement and less fly-in, fly-out labour.

'FIFO only makes sense because it's cheaper to fly to Karratha than to live there,' Mr Shipp said.

'If you want to encourage permanent settlement and discourage FIFO, start with land release.'

A recent Newspoll conducted exclusively for the Institute of Public Affairs found that 63% of Australians believe increasing the population of North Australia would be a good thing for the area. Only 15% said that a higher population would be bad for North Australia.

The same poll found 71% of West Australians believe increasing the population of North Australia would be a good thing for the region.

'At a time when Australia could be spreading its population out away from densely settled areas, governments are making this harder because of strict land release policies,' Mr Shipp said.

'Without affordable housing you will not attract human capital and without human capital the north will never realise its full potential.'

The North Australia Project is a joint project of Australians for Northern Development and Economic Vision and the Institute of Public Affairs. For more information visit [www.andev-project.org](http://www.andev-project.org).

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