

The rental-housing shortage is now a national disaster

May 22, 2013 | [Globe and Mail](#)

While the effect of home ownership on the economy is watched with X-ray vision, the rental market is pretty much ignored. This despite the fact that a full third of Canadians are renters, many of them students and newcomers whose journey to stability is made difficult by crowded living situations and constant moving.

Those who follow the rental market daily don't hesitate to call the situation disastrous. Vacancy rates are dismal across the country. Only 10 per cent of the shiny new buildings that have gone up during the past decade's housing boom were built expressly to house renters. Many older rental buildings have been demolished in favour of condominiums, while those that still stand have often been left to crumble.

Arguing that housing is a human right doesn't get much traction with the federal government. Neither, it seems, do economic facts, like the usefulness of a mobile labour force not tied down by mortgages and heavy household debt. Also pointless is linking traffic congestion to the inability of workers to find housing they can afford close to their jobs. "The incremental nature of the problem is what stops us from seeing it as a crisis," says Steve Pomeroy, a senior research fellow at the University of Ottawa Centre on Governance.

For more on this story, [click here](#).

Posted on [WinnipegRentNet.ca](#)

