

# 2025 FEDERAL ELECTION PRIORITIES



**All Territorians should have adequate incomes to pay for food, clothing and medicine and have safe and comfortable homes to live in.**

However, many Territorians are struggling to meet their basic needs, forced to choose between a meal, putting on the air conditioning or buying medicine. In communities desperately lacking crucial health, education and employment services, Territorians are living in dangerously hot houses where power frequently cuts out.

Successive federal governments have chosen to maintain these conditions. NTCOSS and the communities we serve are demanding future federal governments make different choices. Choices that mean everyone can afford the basics and have access to quality services, no matter where they live.

This 2025 Federal Election, **Northern Territory Council of Social Service (NTCOSS)** is calling on all candidates and parties to commit to priorities that will create a fairer, safer, and healthier Northern Territory for all.

## 01 CLOSE THE GAP

**Progress towards the National Agreement on Closing the Gap is possible if all governments implement and fund their commitments.**

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people face significantly worse outcomes across several indicators when compared with non-Aboriginal Territorians. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are 23.7 times more likely to be homeless; 2.9 times as likely to have a low income; 2.7 times as likely to not have finished year 12; and 3 times more likely to be unemployed or not in the labour force. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the NT are removed from their families into child protection and the youth justice system at disproportionately high rates.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Territorians should be leaders in decision-making. Genuine partnerships between governments and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, along with investment in the community-controlled sector, drive sustainable results and better outcomes. **We support the Coalition of Peaks and SNAICC in calling for the incoming Federal Government to:**

- **Fully implement their commitments to the National Agreement on Closing the Gap**
- **Invest in evidence-based policies for NT children via properly investing in culturally safe family supports, a universal childcare system, and community-led intervention programs**

## 02 RAISE THE RATE

**Raising the rate of income support will assist to lift Territorians out of poverty.**

Income support should be a safety net for Territorians who are doing it tough, but the current payments are so low they entrench people in poverty. More than 20,000 Territorians rely on these payments and are forced to make heartbreaking decisions every day between paying their rent or buying enough food and medicine.

We can and must do better. Lifting JobSeeker, Youth Allowance, Parenting Payment and related supports will ensure members of our community can live with dignity. **NTCOSS is calling for the incoming Federal Government to:**

- **Raise all income support payments to \$82 a day so everyone can afford the basics**



## REMOTE AREA ALLOWANCE

**A substantial increase to the rate of the Remote Area Allowance will provide much needed relief to the cost of living crisis in remote NT communities.**

In the Territory, almost 40% of people live in remote or very remote areas. We know that the further you get from the main centres and the Stuart Highway, the more expensive things get. NTCOSS' latest cost of living factsheets highlight that a healthy basket of food costs on average 40% or almost \$300 more in remote stores than district centre supermarkets across the NT. Fuel is almost double the cost on the Tiwi Islands than in Darwin. These highlight just some examples of the additional cost of living pressures faced by those living remotely.

The remote area allowance payment was introduced in recognition of this - to support people living in these areas to cover the inflated costs of living remote. However, at only \$9.10 a week, it is failing to achieve that. **NTCOSS is calling for the incoming Federal Government to:**

- **Substantially and immediately increase the Remote Area Allowance**
- **Conduct a review of payment settings, including appropriate indexing and geographic eligibility, to ensure this payment is fit for purpose going forward**



## ENERGY EFFICIENCY

**Energy efficient homes keep Territorians safe, healthy and comfortable.**

Territorians have some of the highest electricity bills in the country due to extreme temperatures, poor-quality housing and the effects of climate change. Many low-income households cannot afford the energy they need, resulting in unmanageable power bills and frequent disconnections.

Some home-owners can afford to make their homes more energy efficient with solar panels and other energy efficient means while people on low incomes are struggling with electricity bills, going cold in winter and sweltering through summer heat. The Government should support people on low incomes, especially renters, to have solar, battery storage and more efficient homes so they can reduce their electricity bills and cope in extreme weather. **NTCOSS is calling for the incoming Federal Government to:**

- **Work with states and territories to improve the energy efficiency of existing and new housing, including providing financial support for social housing and low-income homeowners**

## 05 COMMUNITY SECTOR FUNDING

**A well-funded community sector supports our communities to thrive.**

Territorians rely on community service organisations every day. Community services provide shelter to people facing homelessness, legal support to women escaping domestic, family and sexual violence, food relief for families, counselling to help people surviving trauma, and care to improve our health and wellbeing. During times of crisis and disaster, community services are even more critical.

Right now, services are forced to turn people away because they do not have the funding and resources they need to support everyone looking for help. The increased levels of financial stress in our communities have led to a rapid increase in the number of people turning to local community service organisations for urgent assistance. To ensure Territorians do not miss out, we need to overhaul the approach to funding community services. **NTCOSS is calling for the incoming Federal Government to:**

- **Provide an immediate funding boost to essential crisis-response services, including frontline domestic and family violence services – so they are not forced to turn away Territorians in distress**
- **Increase direct funding to First Nations specialist domestic, family and sexual violence services to support community-led and place based responses that include early intervention and prevention**
- **End the chronic under-funding of community service organisations by developing a better funding and grants management model to ensure their long-term viability and ability to meet need, in line with initiatives in the National Not-for-Profit Blueprint**





## A FAIR TAX SYSTEM

**A fairer tax system would enable further investment in essential services, income support systems and economic development.**

Territorians face persistent poverty. There is a housing and homelessness crisis, and significant gaps in the access to, and delivery of essential services. Furthermore, the severity and frequency of extreme weather events is increasing. To address these challenges, the federal government must raise adequate revenue to address the funding gap.

In comparison to other Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries, Australia ranks in the bottom quartile in terms of taxes collected. Australia is the 9th lowest for all taxes and 7th lowest for income taxes (Australian Institute, 2024). **NTCOSS is calling for the incoming Federal Government to:**

- **Increase public revenue through more effectively levying taxes according to ability to pay, in order to fund investment in essential services, safety nets and supports for those most in need**
- **Increase public revenue and improve housing affordability through curbing negative gearing and reducing the Capital Gains Tax (CGT) discount. The 50% CGT discount should be halved on investments in all assets that yield capital gains. This should be phased in over five years**

