

14 May 2025

NTCOSS Responds to 2025 NT Budget: Positive Steps Acknowledged, Gaps Remain

The Northern Territory Council of Social Service (NTCOSS) acknowledges positive initiatives in the NT Government's 2025 Budget but highlights key gaps that require further investment, particularly in domestic, family and sexual violence (DFSV) services, housing, targeted cost-of-living relief, energy affordability, and community sector sustainability.

NTCOSS recognises the government's need to address community expectations around safety. However, members emphasise the importance of transitioning to a greater investment in targeted prevention. This shift is crucial for reducing crime, rebuilding the economy, and revitalising the Territory lifestyle.

While NTCOSS welcomes the inclusion of a DFSV Training Centre and co-responder initiatives in the Budget, concerns remain about the allocation of funding to frontline specialist DFSV services. A separate media release on this issue has been issued, outlining the need for sustained and targeted investment to support those most affected by violence.

NTCOSS also acknowledges the Budget's commitment to repairs and maintenance of social housing. However, the modest target of increasing urban social housing by just 2% in 2025/26 falls short given the significant demand, with more than 5,500 Territorians currently on social housing waitlists. As the National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS) winds up in 2026, an additional 532 NT properties are set to lose their entitlements, further risking housing security for low-income workers. NTCOSS supports NT Shelter's calls for a comprehensive urban housing supply plan to address this shortfall and ensure affordable options remain available.

While continued Commonwealth funding for energy upgrades is welcome, the lack of new NT Government investment to support the renewable energy transition is a missed opportunity. Supporting energy efficiency in social housing would reduce living costs for disadvantaged Territorians while advancing sustainability.

Despite the Budget's commitment to infrastructure and acute services, NTCOSS remains concerned that community service organisations are under-resourced amid increasing demand and workforce pressures. Representing over 11% of the NT workforce, the community services sector requires a comprehensive workforce strategy to address capability, stability, and sustainability, particularly in remote areas.

NTCOSS remains committed to working collaboratively with the government to ensure that budget priorities reflect community needs and support a more just, resilient, and thriving Northern Territory.

Quotes Next Page:

“We understand that Safety is a priority for all Territorians. However, going forward, we must transition towards increasing the ratio of spending toward targeted prevention, rather than punishment after harm has been caused. This is not only the most effective way to reduce crime but also the best path to rebuilding the economy and renewing the Territory lifestyle we all value.

If we are going to fund safety through borrowings, the greatest return will come from investing in local knowledge and innovation targeted at prevention. It’s the smartest way to build a safer, stronger Territory.

Community services represent more than 11% of the Territory’s workforce, yet many organisations remain stretched, facing rising costs and workforce challenges. It’s vital that future budgets reflect the sector’s needs and include co-designing a Territory-wide workforce strategy to build stability and capability.

The community sector stands ready to work together for a safer, more sustainable future. Achieving this balance requires genuine partnership between government, community services, and the broader NT community.”

- Sally Sievers, CEO Northern Territory Council of Social Service