

26 May 2025

Territorians Struggling to Afford the Basics, New Cost of Living Reports Show

The Northern Territory Council of Social Service (NTCOSS) has today released two new Cost of Living Reports, highlighting the pressures faced by Territorians—particularly young people—when it comes to affording life’s essentials: housing, utilities, and transport.

The flagship report, *Cost of Living in the Northern Territory*, and its companion report, *Cost of Living for Young People in the Northern Territory*, both paint a concerning picture. The findings reinforce what the community sector has long known: cost of living relief is most effective when it is targeted towards those people who are most disadvantaged.

Among the key findings:

- A young person receiving Youth Allowance would need to spend nearly half their income on even the cheapest room in a Darwin share house.
- Alice Springs now records average power disconnection events lasting over 11 hours—up 291 minutes in a single year.
- NT rent affordability continues to worsen, with only 3 properties across the Territory affordable to someone on income support on Anglicare’s 2025 snapshot day.
- Alice Springs is the most expensive regional centre in Australia for transport costs.

The reports provide practical, evidence-based recommendations to both the Northern Territory and Federal Governments. These include:

- Raising income support payments to at least \$82 a day.
- Expanding the NT Concession Scheme to all Health Care Card holders.
- Ensuring affordable housing is prioritised in land release.
- Indexing motor vehicle concessions and improving public transport access, especially in remote areas.
- Addressing the impacts of power self-disconnections and implementing minimum energy efficiency standards for rentals.

[The reports can be downloaded here](#)

Quotes:

"Cost of living pressures are hitting the Territory hard. When young people are paying 78% of their apprentice wage just to rent a one-bedroom unit, it’s clear the system is not working for everyone. These aren’t abstract figures, these are stories of people skipping meals, missing rent, or losing power.

That’s why cost of living relief must be targeted—it’s those most disadvantaged who need the support most, and where it will make the biggest impact. We must work together—across government, the community and social sector and community—to create a Territory where everyone can afford to live with dignity."

- Sally Sievers, CEO Northern Territory Council of Social Service