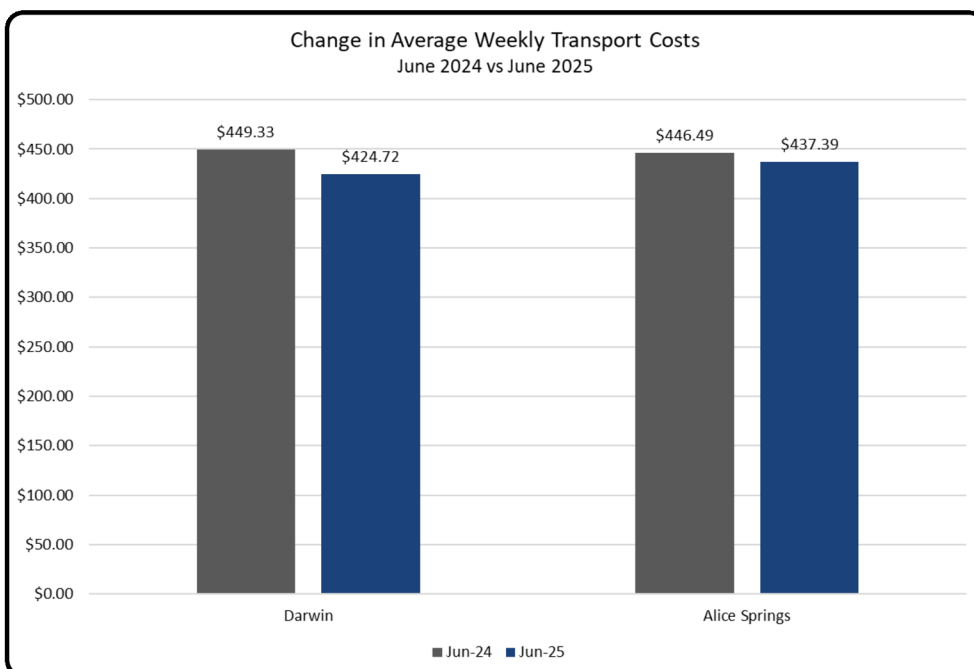


This report focuses on cost of living pressures and price changes in the key household expenditure areas of **transport and utilities**.

The Australian Automobile Association’s Transport Affordability Index shows that as of June 2025, household’s average transport costs are decreasing in the NT.

This decrease is mostly due to a reduction in fuel prices after record highs, and free public transport in Darwin.



As of June 2025, a typical household in Darwin is estimated to spend 16% of their weekly income on transport costs. This has decreased from 17.8% in June 2024.

In Alice Springs, transport costs represent 17.5% of a typical household’s income - down from 18.8% in June 2024.

[1]

Note: These proportions are based on a hypothetical household with two adults working full time and a total weekly income of \$2654.50 in Darwin and \$2499.37 in Alice Springs



Despite prices decreasing, Darwin is the 3rd least affordable capital city and Alice Springs is the 2nd least affordable regional town of those surveyed.

[2]

Consumer Price Index (CPI) - changes over the previous year to June 2025



Fuel

CPI for fuel has decreased by 6% in the NT, compared to a decrease of 10% nationally.



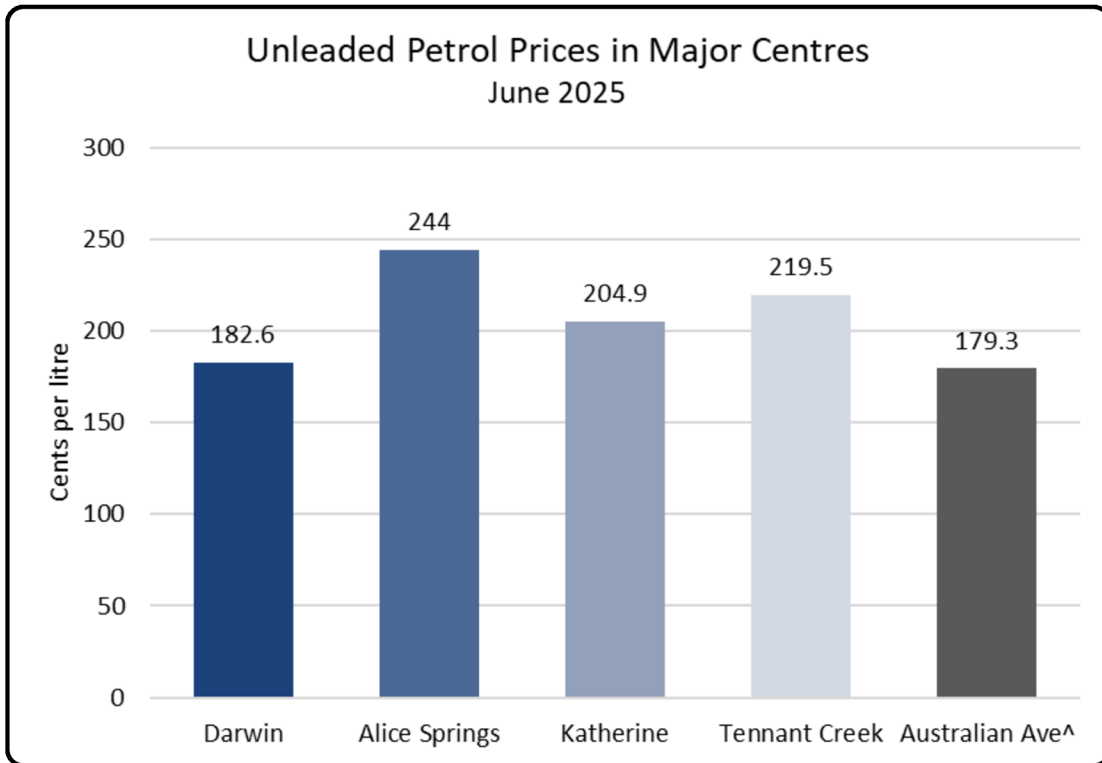
Transport

CPI for all groups Transport decreased by 1.2% in Darwin, compared to a decrease of 2.6% nationally.

While fuel prices are decreasing in the NT, they are not decreasing as fast as they are nationally. It is also off the back of a long-term trend of increases; over the past ten years CPI for fuel has increased by 32.2% in Darwin, and 33% nationally.


[3]

Fuel prices in Darwin are similar to national averages, outside Darwin it's a different story.



The price of unleaded petrol in Darwin is only 3.3 cents per litre (cpl) higher than the Australian average, as of June 2025.

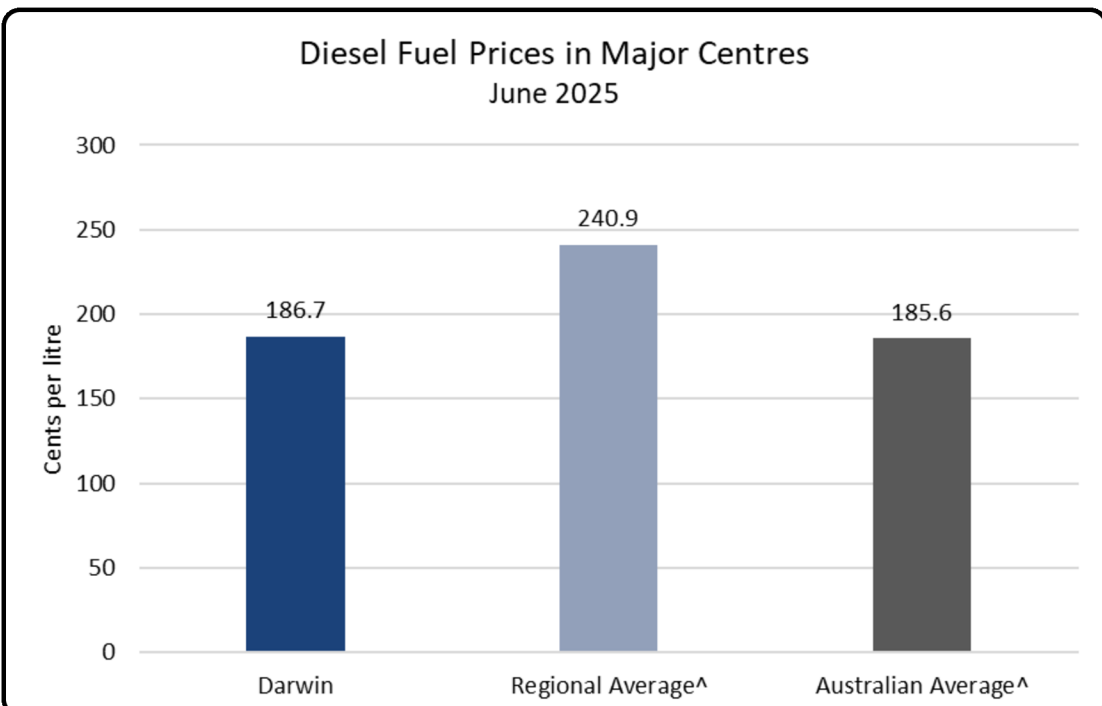
However, the further you get from Darwin the higher the prices are. Alice Springs is the most expensive major centre, where prices are more 61 cpl higher than Darwin. [4]

In Darwin, a tank of unleaded petrol would cost **\$91**.
In Alice Springs, a tank of unleaded petrol would cost **\$122**.

Over a year, using a tank a week, someone in Alice Springs would spend almost \$1500 more on petrol than someone in Darwin.

Note: Figures based on a tank size of 50 litres.



As with unleaded petrol, diesel prices in Darwin are on par with the Australian average.

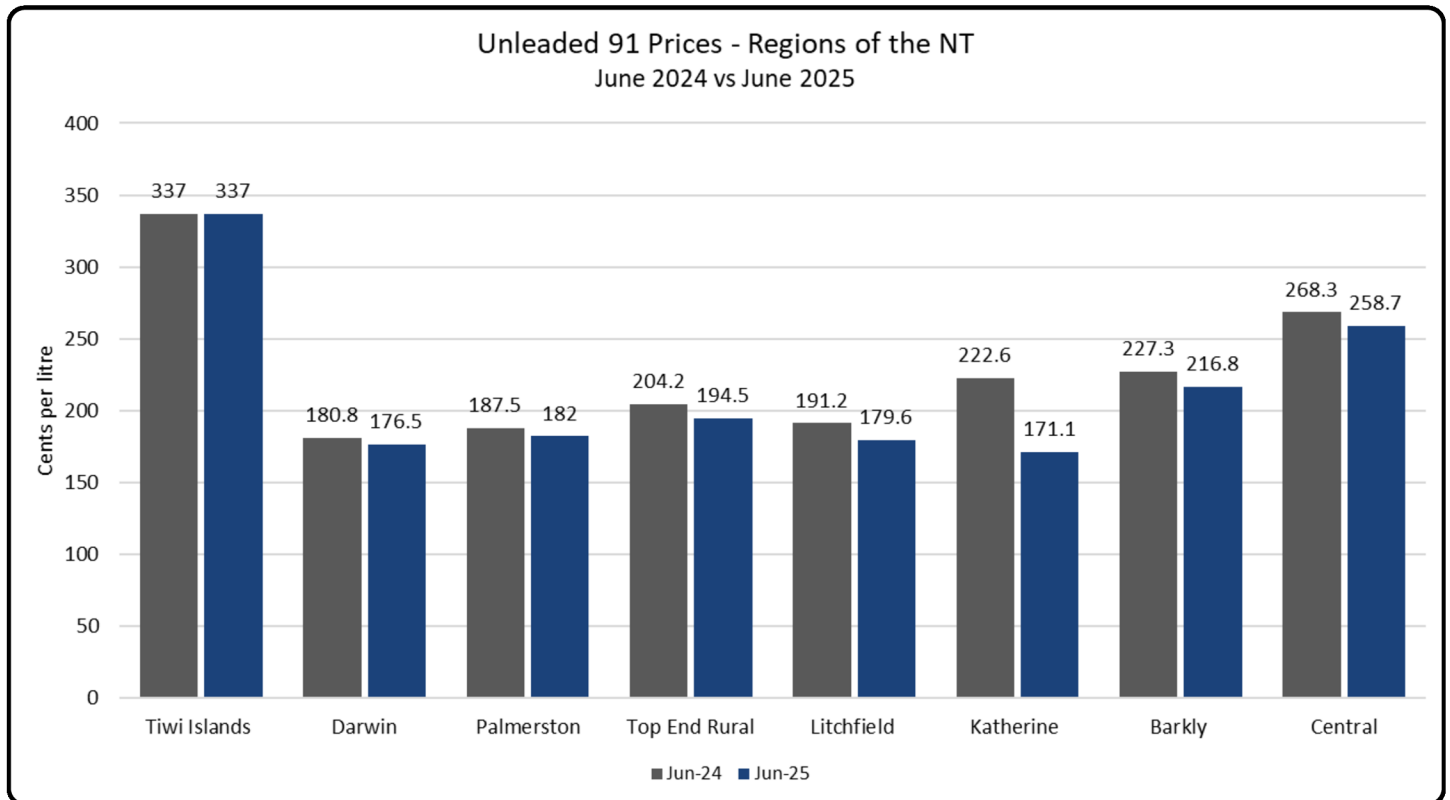
However, the average price for diesel across the NT regions, was 54 cpl higher than Darwin.

That means people living outside of Darwin would spend just over \$40 more per tank (80L) on average.

Note: [^] Weighted Average

[5]

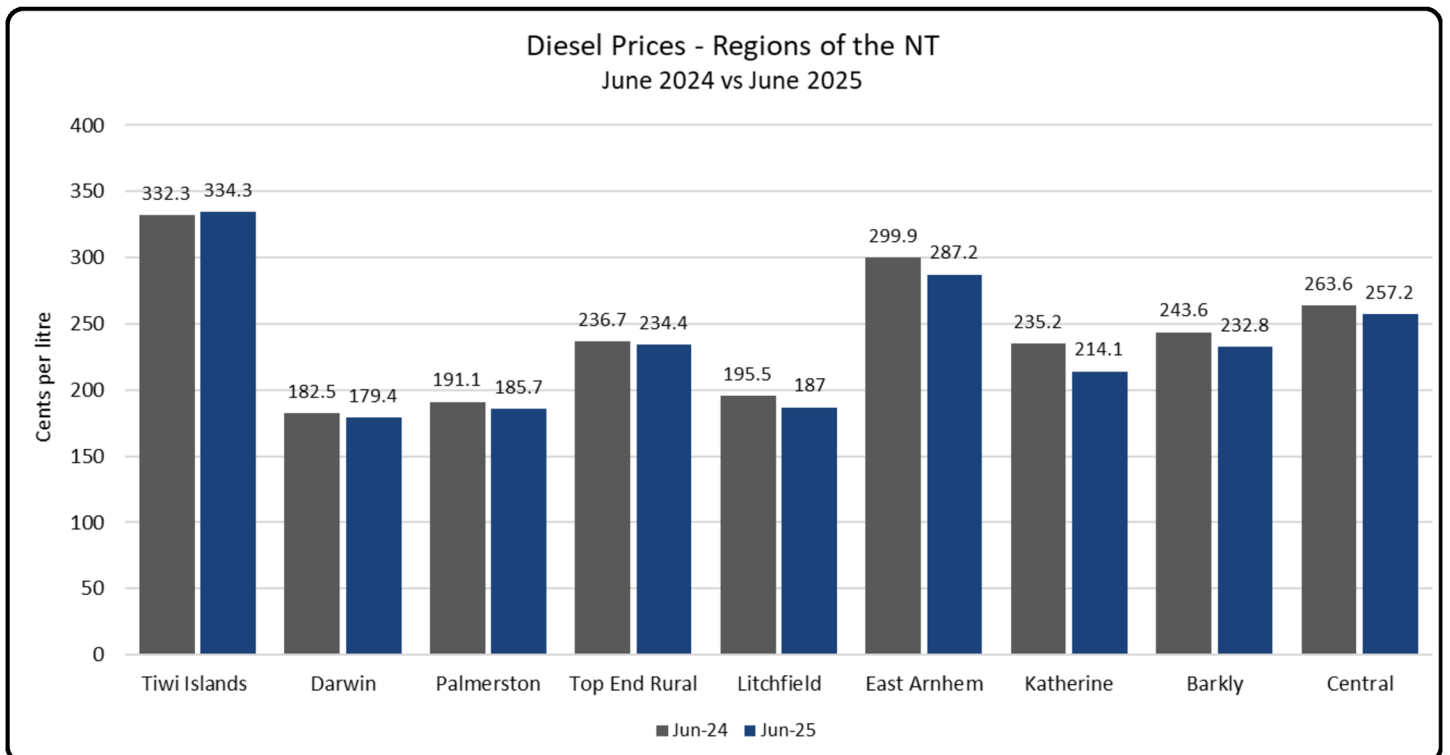
Across the NT, fuel prices are much higher outside of the major centres, and prices in regional areas are not coming down as fast.



[6]

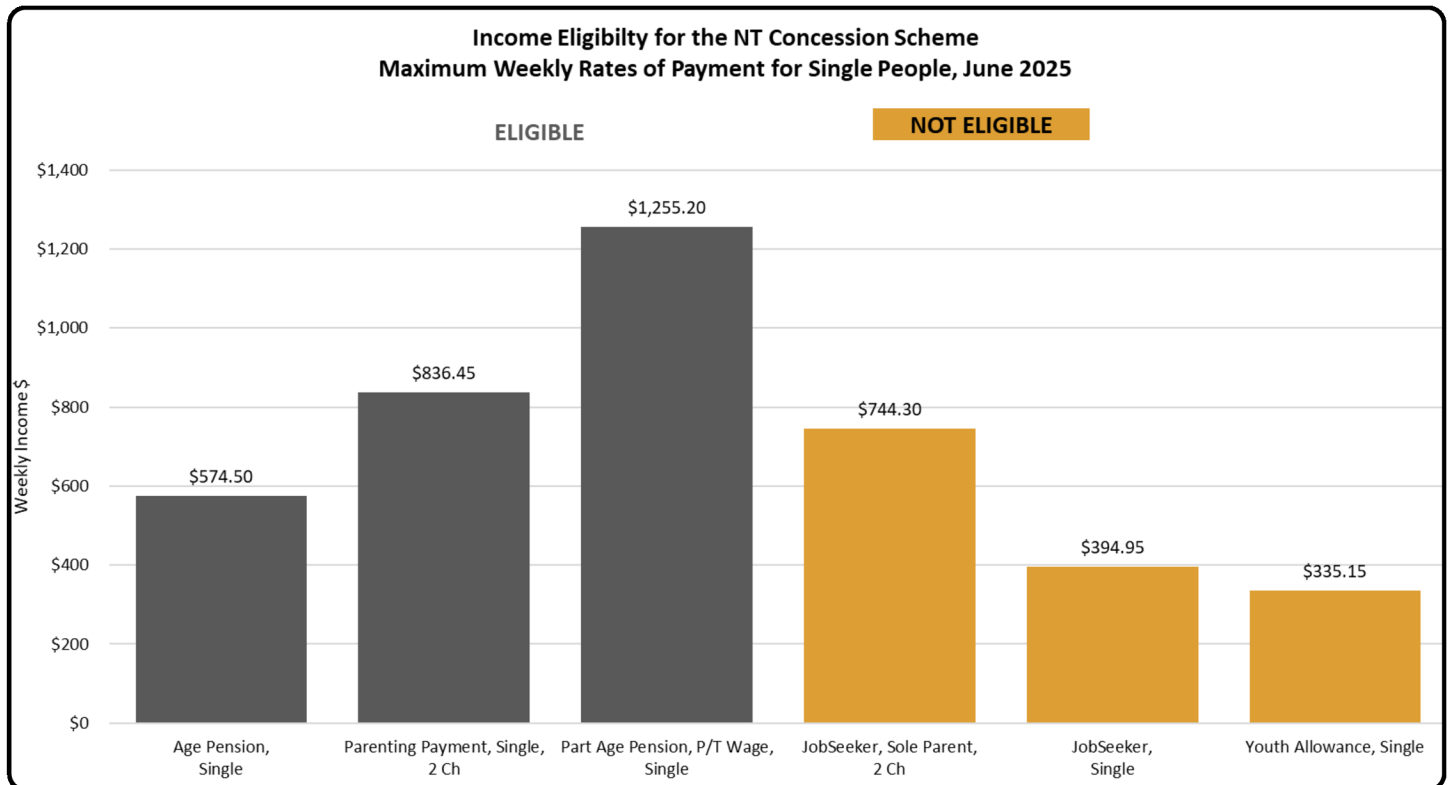


Fuel prices, for both unleaded and diesel, have decreased in all regions of the NT over the past year - except in Tiwi Islands. Tiwi Islands remains by far the most expensive place for fuel in the NT.



[7]

Concessions are an important mechanism to offer targeted support and ensure those on low incomes can meet their basic needs.



Note: Income figures do not include rent assistance.

[8]

Under the NT Concession Scheme’s current eligibility, a single pensioner, on an income of \$574.50 a week, can receive up to \$3200 worth of concessions per year for utilities, council rates, spectacles and vehicle registration, depending on their circumstances.

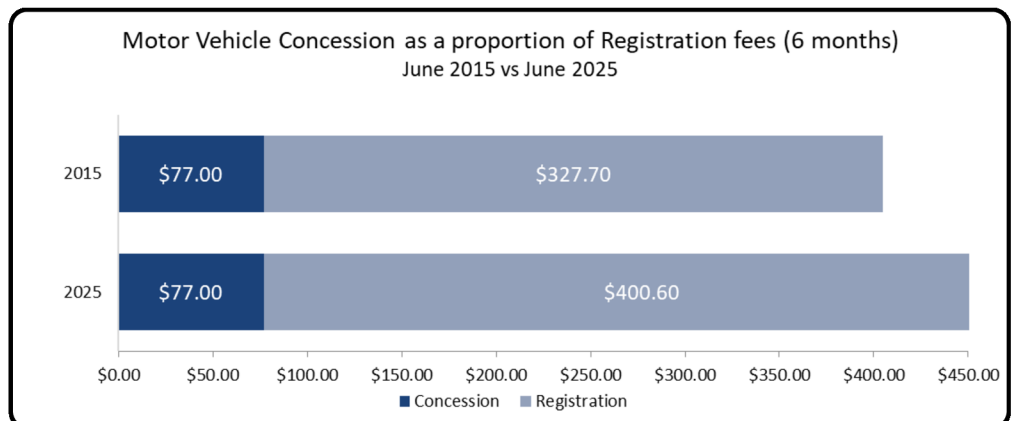
However, someone earning only \$394.95 a week on JobSeeker, would receive no concessions.

Registration is a significant cost of owning a car. For a small car it costs around \$400 for 6 months.



The **Motor Vehicle Concession** is available to people eligible for the NT Concession Scheme to assist in paying for registration costs. It has not increased since 2009 and is a set amount of up to \$154 per year (\$77 for six months).

While registration costs are currently frozen, the value of this concession has diminished significantly. Ten years ago, it represented 23.5% of the registration cost for a small vehicle, as of June 2025 it is only 19.2%.



Note: these figures are based on 6-months registration for a small 4-cylinder vehicle with 1001-1500cc engine size.

[9]

Energy costs are a significant part of household budgets - and a key area of cost of living pressure for low income households.

Consumer Price Index (CPI) changes over the previous year - to June 2025



Electricity

CPI for electricity has decreased by 4.6% in the NT, compared to a decrease of 6.2% nationally.



Gas

CPI for gas and other household fuels has decreased by 1.9%, compared to an increase of 5.7% nationally.



Water & Sewerage

CPI for water & sewerage has risen 4.3% in the NT, more than the 2.7% increase seen nationally.

The decrease in electricity CPI (-4.6%) can be attributed to the Federal Government's \$300 energy bill relief, that was delivered to all households over between July 2024 and July 2025. However, at the same time there has been an increase in electricity tariffs in the NT. The full impact of these tariff increases will be felt once the Commonwealth's energy bill relief ends - currently it has been extended by \$150 to December 2025.

[10]

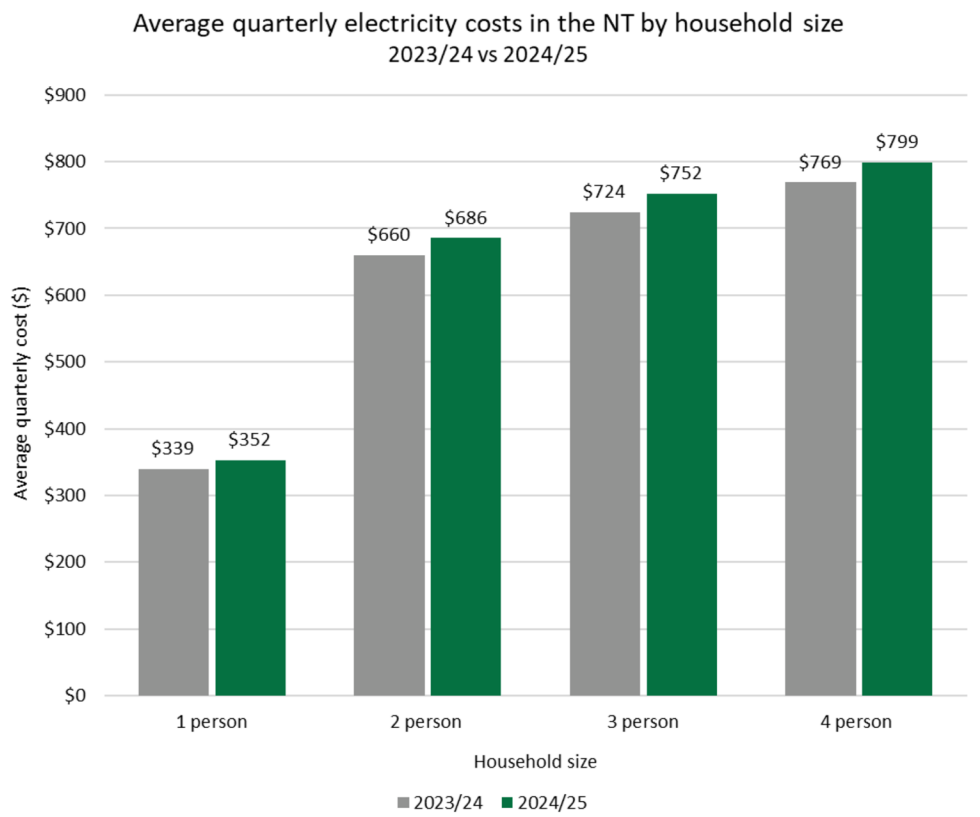


Keeping consumption rates the same, average power bills have

increased by **\$13** (for a 1-person household) to **\$30** (for a 4-person household) per quarter - between 2023/24 and 2024/25.

This is due to electricity tariffs for post-payment households increasing:

	2023/24	2024/25
Per kilowatt hour (kWh)	\$0.28	\$0.29
Fixed daily charge	\$0.55	\$0.58



Note: For comparison between 2023/24 and 2024/25, consumption figures for 2024/25 are used. Consumption is based on the average of all four quarters' consumption rates as published on Jacana's household bills (to cater for climate variations).

[11]

Households across the NT with prepayment meters struggle with very high rates of disconnections - the latest data showed that in 2023-24 there were **79,700** involuntary self-disconnections in major centres in the NT.

The tariffs are higher for those on pre-payment meters - \$0.33 per kWh in 2024/25, up from \$0.32 in 2023/24.

[12]

RECOMMENDATIONS

This report makes recommendations to the Federal and Northern Territory Governments regarding evidence-informed actions to address cost of living pressures, ensure Territorians living on low incomes and income support payments are better supported and everyone can afford the basics.

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| Federal | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Raise all income support payments to at least \$82 a day so everyone can afford to meet their basic needs• Substantially and immediately increase the Remote Area Allowance |
| NT | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Expand the NT Concession Scheme so all holders of a Services Australia Health Care Card can receive access to concessions |

Transport

- Increase the NT Motor Vehicle Concession to a minimum of \$221.70 per 12-month period to address deteriorated value and establish yearly indexation
- Remove the excessive administration fees on short-term motor vehicle registration
- Require private transport companies receiving government grants to provide transport to have concession fare options that give a significant discount
- Conduct a review into regional and remote public transport networks

Utilities

- Install solar energy on all social housing
- Commit to reducing the number and duration of disconnections for prepayment meter (PPM) customers, including through:
 - Adopting mandatory reporting of electricity disconnections across all households
 - Reducing the standard prepayment tariff to ensure tariff parity with post-payment customers
 - Ensuring PPM customers can access an equivalent level of hardship programs as post-payment customers across all retailers
 - Increasing payment options for PPM users to include automated payment options
- Implement minimum energy efficiency standards for rental homes

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