



**NTCOSS**  
Northern Territory  
Council of Social Service

2024-2025



**ANNUAL  
REPORT**

# Northern Territory Council of Social Service Incorporated

## Email Address

admin@ntcoss.org.au

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## Postal

PO Box 1128 Nightcliff NT 0814

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## Phone

(08) 8948 2665

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## Website

ntcoss.org.au

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## ABN

19 556 236 404

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NTCOSS acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the lands on which we live and work. We pay our respects to the Larrakia people of Garramilla (Darwin), the Arrernte people of Mparntwe (Alice Springs), and the Jawoyn, Dagoman and Wardaman peoples of Katherine, upon whose lands NTCOSS workplaces are located.

We extend our respect to Elders past, present and emerging across the Northern Territory and Australia. We honour their enduring connection to land, waters, culture and community, and we recognise that sovereignty has never been ceded.

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# President & CEO's Report


This year has been one of significant transition and uncertainty for the Northern Territory (NT), shaped by both the NT election in August 2024 and the Federal election in May 2025. These milestones brought robust campaigns, new governments, and time for fresh agendas to take shape – creating both challenges and opportunities for the community sector.

With a fully staffed team, NTCOSS seized these moments to advocate strongly for the rights of Territorians experiencing the greatest disadvantage. We focused our election asks on policy reforms and platforms that would ensure every Territorian would have their basic needs met – from housing and food security to energy, transport, and community safety. Our advocacy also highlighted the essential role of community and social service organisations, which deliver diverse programs across the NT, from urban centres to the most remote parts of the Territory.

The recent change in government has provided opportunities for renewed dialogue around the rights of Aboriginal Territorians and those experiencing profound disadvantage. While parts of the current policy agenda have yet to fully address these critical needs, our commitment to championing practical solutions to reduce poverty and inequality has only strengthened.

We continue to foster constructive partnerships with governments and the broader community to ensure that every Territorian can access dignity and opportunity. We encourage sustained investment in Aboriginal self-determination, partnership-based service delivery, and greater inclusion of community voices in policy design, to ensure that change is meaningful and sustained.

## 2025 FEDERAL ELECTION PRIORITIES



**NTCOSS**  
Northern Territory  
Council of Social Service

**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.

[Download the 2025 Federal Election Priorities.](#)



The latest Value of the Sector (VOS) reports have been critical in telling our story — clearly articulating the size, scale, and both the economic and social contribution of the NT community sector. With more than 13,000 people employed, ours is one of the fastest-growing sectors in the Territory, delivering an extensive footprint of services that support the wellbeing and cohesion of communities across the NT.

To sustain this impact, we have continued strong advocacy for sector sustainability — including fair and adequate funding, realistic indexation, and workforce development initiatives that ensure organisations can meet the needs of Territorians now and into the future.

Alongside our policy and advocacy work, we have continued to support the sector through initiatives such as NTCommunity, which makes it easier for Territorians to connect with the services they need. We have also engaged deeply with sector-wide issues such as the SCHADS Award case before the Fair Work Commission, ensuring that the unique diversity and skills of the NT community sector are clearly represented.

Our members consistently tell us they want to work with government, business, and each other to build a thriving NT where everyone's basic needs are met. Our focus this year has been on shining a light on what works — community-led programs, innovative service models, and partnerships that create real change.

This report reflects a year of hard work, persistence, and collaboration across the sector. The challenges are significant, but so too is the determination of our members and partners. As we look ahead, we remain focused on collaboration, data-driven advocacy, and practical solutions that reduce poverty and strengthen the social fabric of the NT. Together we will continue to advocate, innovate, and build for a future where every Territorian thrives with dignity and opportunity.

**Jayne Lloyd, President & Sally Sievers, CEO**



NTCOSS staff and members congratulate NTCOSS CEO Sally Sievers on being made an Officer of the Order of Australia (AO) for distinguished service to the law, to social justice and human rights, and to the community of the Northern Territory.



# About Us

The Northern Territory Council of Social Service (NTCOSS) is the peak body for the Northern Territory's (NT) vibrant and diverse not-for-profit social and community services sector.

The community services sector is one of the NT's largest and fastest-growing employers, contributing more than \$3 billion to the economy and employing over 13,000 people – most of whom are women. It plays a central role in supporting wellbeing, economic participation and community development throughout the NT, delivering essential services in urban, regional and remote communities.

Our team is based across Darwin, Alice Springs and Katherine. For almost 50 years, NTCOSS has worked with our members, government and the broader community to improve outcomes for Territorians.

Our mission is to promote social justice and reduce poverty and disadvantage in the NT. We are guided by the values of equity, inclusion and self-determination.

Our work spans policy, advocacy, sector stewardship and sector support – shaping fair and effective public policy; amplifying the voices of those experiencing disadvantage; strengthening workforce capacity and conditions; and building the capability of community organisations to deliver meaningful, place-based solutions.

We recognise the leadership and cultural authority of Aboriginal communities and organisations. We are committed to working in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to progress equity, self-determination and community control of programs and services. This includes a strong focus on supporting the National Agreement on Closing the Gap and ensuring policy and funding decisions enable Aboriginal-led organisations and solutions.



NTCOSS Team members Meg Wright, Ummay Kalpona, Caitlin Perry, Claire Pirrett, Lea Toogood, Mollie Harding, Jess Manski and Alex Richmond.



# In the Community

The NTCOSS team spends as much time as possible with members, stakeholders and the community – informing our work, fostering connection and collaboration, and celebrating the achievements of the sector.



NTCOSS Team members Claire Pirrett, Tate Soller, Steph Burgess, Meg Wright and Morgan Rickard.

NTCOSS continues our long-term commitment to supporting the NT Human Rights Awards, as a member of the Steering Committee, sponsor and supporter of the event.

Congratulations to the 2024 winners!



Winners and steering committee members at the 2024 NT Human Rights Awards.



Sally with NTHRA Youth Winner, Yalu's Girl Power Group.



NTCOSS CEO Sally Sievers with ACNC Commissioner Sue Woodward AM during her visit to Darwin.



NTCOSS team at IDAHOBIT Day in Mparntwe.



Former SACOSS CEO Ross Womersley, Caitlin Perry (NTCOSS) and ACOSS CEO Cassandra Goldie.

# Sector Stewardship

NTCOSS prioritises sector-wide advocacy, reform and cooperation, aiming for stronger outcomes for the social and community sector and for NT communities.

In July 2024, NTCOSS released the Value of the Sector Snapshot report to inform NT election advocacy, followed by the full report in June 2025. Both reports were commissioned from the Centre for Public Value at the University of Western Australia. Our long-term collaboration with Professor David Gilchrist continues to be vital to this work. These reports demonstrate the sector's critical role in the NT – as a major employer and contributor to the economy – and provides an important evidence base for advocacy to ensure the sector is properly funded.

NTCOSS continued to advocate for the sustainability of the sector. NTCOSS wrote to both the Chief Minister and Treasurer after their election in August 2024 highlighting the value of the social and community sector. The full Value of the Sector report and the Funding a Sustainable NT Human Services Industry Factsheet were also provided after publication in June 2025 with further requests for meetings.

NTCOSS met with senior staff in the Department of Chief Minister and Cabinet to collaborate on the recommencement of the Northern Territory Government /Non-Government Organisation Partnership Group (NNPG). A workshop was held in May 2025 and recommitment established. NNPG's first full meeting was held in July 2025.

Ongoing collaboration with the NT Department of Trade, Business and Asian Relations on overseas worker attraction ensured the sector received

an invitation and funded travel for a delegation to New Zealand Worker Attraction events in July 2025.

NTCOSS developed the 2024 NT Election Asks, calling for action to; strengthen the family violence sector; fix the concession scheme and improve protections for renters; support affordable energy and a clean climate; invest in community safety; provide safe environments for children and families; and ensure the sustainability of the community services sector.

NTCOSS and the specialist Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence (DFSV) sector were pleased to secure election commitments from both major parties of \$180 million in additional funding for frontline DFSV services.

NTCOSS also developed the 2025 Federal Election Priorities, advocating for the next Federal Government to implement commitments to Close the Gap, Raise the Rate of income support and the Remote Area Allowance, improve energy efficiency in NT homes and ensure adequate community sector funding.

We worked closely with members and stakeholders to advocate for retaining strong protections under the Anti-Discrimination Act. NTCOSS collaborated with four member organisations to represent the sector's concerns to the Attorney-General and, in collaboration with Equality Australia and Top End Pride, produced a joint letter with 28 national and local signatories.





# Policy & Advocacy

## SOCIAL SECURITY AND COST OF LIVING

Too many Territorians continue to struggle to meet basic needs due to rising costs, inadequate social security payments and entrenched disadvantage.

NTCOSS produces six-monthly Cost of Living reports tracking price changes across the NT. The reports also include recommendations to the Federal and NT Governments for evidence-informed action to support Territorians on low incomes.

In May 2025, NTCOSS released a youth-focused factsheet for the first time, highlighting cost-of-living impacts on young people and presenting practical recommendations.

We collaborate closely with national and NT partners to advocate for policy solutions that support those on the lowest incomes. NTCOSS participates in the ACOSS Income Support and Employment Policy Network, the ACOSS Poverty Research Network and the Accountable Income Management Network.

NTCOSS coordinates the NT Income Management and Social Security Network, and together produced a joint submission with CLC, NAAJA, AMSANT and NLC to the Select Committee on Cost of Living (October 2024).

## HOUSING AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Many Territorians experience energy hardship – when households struggle to afford or obtain the energy needed to meet basic living standards. This is compounded by extreme weather, poor-quality housing and outdated appliances.

NTCOSS works with community services and stakeholders to identify and address factors contributing to energy hardship. We convene the NT Utilities Network and, together, produced a joint submission to the NT Utilities Commission's Electricity Performance Code Review (June 2025), acknowledging the leadership of the First Nations Clean Energy Network and Original Power.

NTCOSS also participated in consultations for the Homelessness Strategy 2023–2030 and made two submissions informing its development (November 2024 and January 2025).

In 2024, the Council to Homeless Persons partnered with NT Shelter and the NT Government to produce the first NT-focused edition of Parity, the national homelessness publication. NTCOSS served on the steering committee, ensuring a wide range of voices were represented, and contributed an article alongside many sector colleagues.

**Cost of living for young people in the Northern Territory**

Young people are distinctly affected by changes to the cost of living, as they begin entering the workforce and become financially independent. Young people are also often on lower wages and have less capacity to protect themselves from financial pressures.

**Mission Youth Survey 2024**

The Mission Australia Youth Survey is the largest annual survey of young people in Australia. In 2024, the Survey asked 17,480 young people across Australia about the issues that concern them the most.

205 young people in the NT responded

50% of young people in the NT said that Cost of Living was the most important issue in Australia today.

Young people are more concerned about the cost of living than ever before. In 2023, only 30% of those surveyed said that cost of living was the most important issue in Australia today.

We asked young people living in the NT about their experiences and how the cost of living impacts them

“ I've had my power cut off when I couldn't afford to pay it. It was having to make decisions about fixing my car or paying other bills, it was so stressful. I've worried about not being able to pay rent, scraping money together. I've had

Download the Cost of Living for Young People in the NT Report.

## DOMESTIC, FAMILY AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Rates of domestic, family and sexual violence in the NT remain alarming. Through funding for a DFSV Policy Officer, NTCOSS has continued to focus on advocacy, coordination and sector capability-building, including facilitation of the NTCOSS DFSV Meeting – a network of 32 specialist services across the NT.

Together with member organisations, NTCOSS has helped shape Territory responses by ensuring sector voices and lived experience inform policy and service planning.

Key contributions include:

- **Submissions:**
  - Our Ways – Strong Ways – Our Voices: National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Plan to End Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence (with AMSANT, November 2024 and February 2025).
  - Domestic and Family Violence and Victims Legislation Amendment Bill 2025 (with AMSANT).
- **Engagement:**
  - Attendance at National Rallies Against Violence in Alice Springs (26 July) and Darwin (27 July 2024).
  - Support for sector participation in the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence campaign.
  - Until its dissolution in April 2025, NTCOSS co-chaired the NT DFSV Advisory Group.

Following the release of the Inquests into the deaths of Miss Yunupingu, Ngeygo Ragurk, Kumarn Rubuntja and Kumanjayi Haywood [2024] NTL 14 (May 2025), NTCOSS continues to work with members to drive systemic reform.

NTCOSS formalised its role as a partner in the multi-jurisdiction Safety Measures Project, launched in June 2025, which is strengthening understanding of workforce capacity in the NT DFSV sector.

NTCOSS remains an active member of the National Alliance for DFV Peaks and Services, contributing to collective federal advocacy.



Signs & Flowers at the Darwin Rally.

## CLIMATE JUSTICE

Managing the impacts of climate change is particularly challenging for those experiencing disadvantage and poverty.

NTCOSS works with NT and national partners to advocate for policies and programs that help Territorians adapt to a changing climate. We are a member of the NT Climate Justice Alliance, convened by Jesuit Social Services, and support ACOSS's call for fast, fair and inclusive climate action.

In January 2025, NTCOSS made a submission to the Federal Parliament's Inquiry into Energy, Food and Water Security in Northern Australia, and joined a national NGO coalition seeking NEMA funding for climate and disaster preparedness projects.

# Sector Support & Sustainability

## YOUTH VOICE

Youth Voice is an NT-wide advocacy project uplifting young Territorians' voices. Our vision is for young people to be connected and supported by their friends, families and communities – loved, listened to, and strong in identity and culture. Young people's lives are enriched through friendships, creativity, sport and education, and they grow up in safe, healthy environments with opportunities to express themselves and shape their futures.

In September 2024, Youth Voice hosted the NTG Youth Round Table members at the Alice Springs/Mparntwe office, with special guests from the Justice Reform Initiative, NT Legal Aid and NAAJA. Discussion focused on youth justice and supports for young people in Alice Springs.



The NT Youth Roundtable at the NTCOSS Mparntwe office.

In May, Youth Voice hosted an online discussion with Australian Youth Representative to the UN, Satara Uthayakumaran, and young Mparntwe leaders Xuan and Esther. This engagement led to Satara's visit later in the year. Esther completed her work experience with NTCOSS in November 2024 and plans to study policy after school. Both Esther and Xuan are members of the 2025 Youth Round Table.



Youth Voice is regularly approached by government and non-government organisations to facilitate youth consultation. This year, Youth Voice supported Future Yeyes Group to develop consultation guidelines and connect with Satara Uthayakumaran for a session on amplifying young Aboriginal women's voices in Alice Springs.

The 2024 Youth Grant was awarded to the CAAMA Digital team – a group of under-25s who produced digital stories of young people involved in the Dream Big Hip Hop event.

NTCOSS also made submissions to the Legal and Constitutional Affairs References Committee: Australia's Youth Justice and Incarceration System (October 2024) and co-signed a COSS Network submission to the same inquiry, as well as a joint submissions with Aboriginal Peak Organisations NT on proposed amendments to the Care and Protection of Children Act (January & May 2025).



Young People with Youth Voice t-shirts.

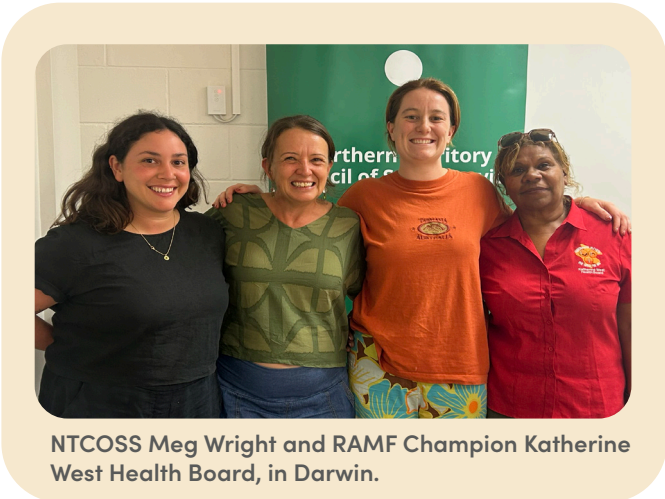
# RAMF CHAMPIONS

The Risk Assessment Management Framework (RAMF) Champion Project, coordinated by NTCOSS, supports the implementation of the RAMF across eight universal services. Coordinator Meg Wright facilitates capacity-building for Champions through 11 Communities of Practice held during the year, alongside one-on-one support.

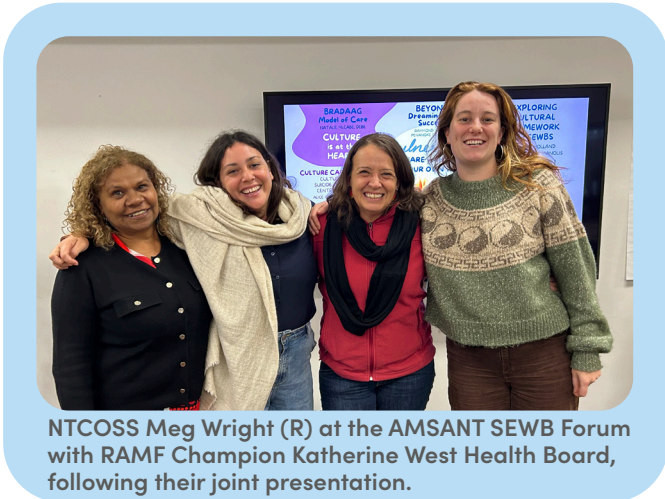
NTCOSS is conducting a process evaluation of this project to identify successes, opportunities and lessons from the capacity-building work delivered to date.



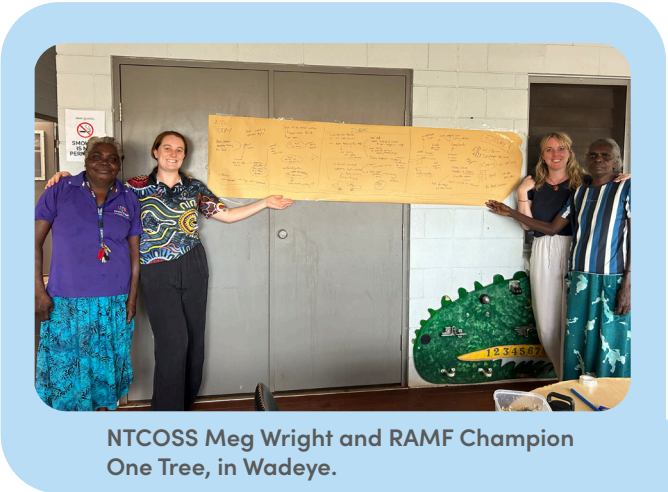
NTCOSS Meg Wright and RAMF Champion Yalu Aboriginal Corporation, in Galiwinku.



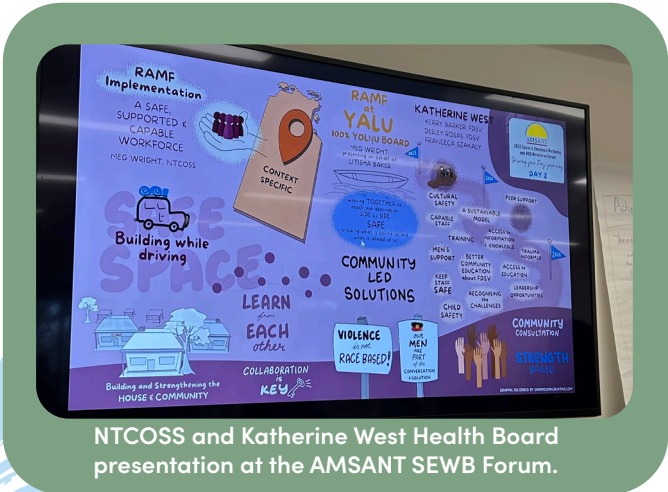
NTCOSS Meg Wright and RAMF Champion Katherine West Health Board, in Darwin.



NTCOSS Meg Wright (R) at the AMSANT SEWB Forum with RAMF Champion Katherine West Health Board, following their joint presentation.



NTCOSS Meg Wright and RAMF Champion One Tree, in Wadeye.



NTCOSS and Katherine West Health Board presentation at the AMSANT SEWB Forum.



# NTcommunity

NTCOSS develops and manages the online services directory NTcommunity.

With support from the Department of Children and Families, NTCOSS provides ongoing development and maintenance of the NTcommunity website and mobile app, enabling users to access service information both online and offline.

In partnership with Refuel Creative, the platform continues to evolve in response to community and sector feedback. Improvements to usability have reduced average session durations, helping users find the information they need quickly and efficiently.

A targeted marketing campaign through social media, community engagement and education activities increased online users from 70,000 in 2023-24 to 94,000 in 2024-25.

NTcommunity is regularly updated as new organisations and services become available. It now provides access to more than 418 community organisations, offering 917 services across 842 locations.

NTCOSS acknowledges the significant contribution of Janine Simms to the inception, development, maintenance and ongoing improvement of NTcommunity. Janine served as Sector Development Coordinator from 2008 to 2022, returning in 2023-24 to continue her valued work on the directory.

## SECTOR DEVELOPMENT

NTCOSS continues to provide coordination and practical support to strengthen the NT's community services sector.

In 2024-25, NTCOSS facilitated networking meetings, Sector CEO Lunches, and three Communities of Practice (Communications & Advocacy, Quality & Compliance, and Social Policy), connecting staff and leaders across the sector to share resources and strategies.

Workforce and organisational capability were a central focus. NTCOSS delivered workshops, resources and direct support on workforce planning, public relations, workplace conflict, government budgets and submissions, communications strategy, sector sustainability and AI for communications.

This included supporting a shared understanding of, and coordinated advocacy around proposed changes to the Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services (SCHADS) Award before the Fair Work Commission; as well as the coordination of a "High Performing Leaders" program, mentoring 15 emerging and established leaders from member organisations across the sector.

Shared resources developed this year included a sector media and communications one pager and a sector indexation formula to strengthen engagement with government funding frameworks.

Through these activities, NTCOSS continues to build the capability and cohesion of the NT community services sector.



# Communications

This year's focus has been streamlining and strengthening communications systems.

Key developments include:

- Simplifying and restructuring the website to reflect current areas of advocacy, policy and practice.
- Establishing a comprehensive website based publications library and migrating existing resources.
- Launching a new, centralised and accessible sector calendar on the website.
- Refreshing the NTCOSS eBulletin, Member Alert & Media Release mailers with a modern, streamlined design.
- Installing and implementing analytics and reporting systems across all four major communications channels: website, traditional media, social media and email campaigns.
- Collecting and establishing baseline communications data that will allow NTCOSS to consistently track trends, set targets, and evaluate the reach and impact of communications into the future.



COTA NT CEO Sue Shearer; NTCOSS CEO Sally Sievers; & Anglicare NT CEO Craig Kelly recording joint media for ABC News.



# Financial Reports

## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

	2025	2024
	\$	\$
<b>ASSETS</b>		
<b>Current Assets</b>		
Cash and cash equivalents	869,166	1,655,061
Trade and other receivables	49,135	48,969
Investments	426,359	410,869
Other Assets	31,981	11,502
Total Current Assets	1,376,641	2,126,401
<b>Non-current Assets</b>		
Property, Plant and Equipment	593,878	436,757
Right-of-use assets	48,012	74,154
Total non-current Assets	641,890	510,911
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>2,018,531</b>	<b>2,637,312</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>		
<b>Current Liabilities</b>		
Trade and Other payables	96,654	105,001
Lease liabilities	27,822	25,692
Employee benefits	135,748	103,881
Other financial liabilities	18,669	16,422
Total Current liabilities	278,893	250,996
<b>Non-current Liabilities</b>		
Lease liabilities	19,535	46,570
Employee benefits	15,881	10,716
Total non-current liabilities	35,416	57,286
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>314,309</b>	<b>308,282</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>	<b>1,704,222</b>	<b>2,329,030</b>
<b>Equity</b>		
Reserves	383,938	270,695
Accumulated fund	1,320,284	2,058,335
<b>Total Equity</b>	<b>1,704,222,</b>	<b>2,329,030</b>

Northern Territory Council of Social Service Incorporated Statement of financial position for year ended 30, June 2025. NTCOSS 2025 Audited Financial Report with accompanying notes is available on our website [www.ntcoss.org.au](http://www.ntcoss.org.au)

## INCOME & EXPENDITURE

	2025	2024
	\$	\$
<b>Revenue</b>		
Revenue from grants	1,597,919	3,111,499
Other revenue	118,073	50,763
Finance income	14,071	17,799
Other income	36,083	15,889
	<u>1,766,146</u>	<u>3,195,950</u>
<b>Expenses</b>		
Employee benefits expense	(1,300,125)	(1,251,800)
IT Support	(91,213)	(151,770)
Depreciation and amortisation expense	(44,905)	(39,949)
Audit and accounting	(25,526)	(44,032)
Program fess	-	(17,487)
Program expenses	(30,906)	(52,436)
Contract Trainers/Consultants	(803,126)	(906,593)
Travel & Accommodation	(58,749)	(127,081)
Subscriptions and memberships	(16,444)	(38,772)
Venue hire	(1,658)	(48,101)
Insurance	(31,409)	(5,893)
Other expenses	(96,309)	(70,728)
Finance costs	(3,827)	(1,575)
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<u>(2,504,197)</u>	<u>(2,756,154)</u>
<b>(Deficit)/surplus for the year</b>	<u>(738,051)</u>	<u>439,796</u>
Other comprehensive income for the year	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
<b>Total Comprehensive (loss)/profit for the year</b>	<u>(738,051)</u>	<u>439,796</u>

*Northern Territory Council of Social Service Incorporated Statement of profit and loss and other comprehensive income for year ended 30, June 2025. NTCOSS 2025 Audited Financial Report with accompanying notes is available on our website [www.ntcoss.org.au](http://www.ntcoss.org.au)*

You will note on review of the 2025 financials that NTCOSS shows a deficit of \$738,051. This is a timing issue and not a financial loss. Accounting standards require the unexpended grants from 2024 of \$961,960 to be held in the balance sheet equity. In 2025 we used the same money for our program activities. This creates a temporary accounting deficit for 2025 because the revenue was recognised in the previous year, but the related expenses are shown in the current year.



# Partners



## THANKS TO OUR 2024-2025 CONTRACTORS

CATHERINE STREET

JONATHAN PILBROW

LEEANNE CATON

MINDFUL PRACTICE





[www.ntcoss.org.au](http://www.ntcoss.org.au)



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