

New report shows Territorians hit harder than majority of country by rising costs of living.

- Proportion of weekly family income needed to cover rent has increased more than anywhere else in the country.
- Over 100,000 instances of NT households being disconnected from power due to inability to pay for prepaid credit.
- NTCOSS & sector leaders urging immediate action from Federal and Territory governments to prevent low-income Territorians being pushed deeper into cycle of disadvantage.

The Northern Territory Council of Social Services (NTCOSS) newly released *Cost of Living in the Northern Territory* report has revealed just how severely Territorians are being impacted by rising costs, with low-income households especially at risk.

The report reveals that more people in the NT are being locked out of necessities - such as housing, utilities, fuel, and transport - than ever before. It also shows that they are experiencing this hardship at higher rates than most other jurisdictions across Australia.

Key findings of the report include:

- The NT has the second highest average rent paid in the country, increasing by \$85 per week since the end of 2024.
- While every other jurisdiction in Australia has seen the proportion of median family income needed to rent an average home decrease, the NT has seen a rise of almost 2%.
- There are currently 0 affordable rental properties in the Territory for a single person on minimum wage or any form of income support.
- There has been a 30% increase in involuntary disconnections of power due to households not being able to afford prepayment credit. The average disconnecting household in Alice Springs on a prepayment meter was cut off from power 75 times in 2024/25.

NTCOSS has joined major sector voices including NT Shelter and Anglicare NT to urge immediate action from government to support those in greatest need.

“We are calling on Territory and Federal Governments to take a proactive approach and prevent the future cost of poverty by ensuring those in need can access supports and relief today” said Claire Pirrett, Interim Chief Executive of NTCOSS.

“This data should be shocking, but unfortunately it comes as no surprise to organisations who are working on the ground with families across the Territory.”

“What we are seeing is the deep entrenchment of disadvantage for many of our population, especially those in regional and remote areas.”

“The data shows that housing costs are far exceeding a manageable threshold, putting any low-income household under housing stress across every single region of the Territory.”

“This means that Territorians are having to go without necessities like food, medical care and transport just to put a roof over their head.”

NT Shelter CEO Annie Taylor said that unless urgent action is taken, the Territory quality of life would be diminished for all.

"The Territory has always been a place where people come to build a life, raise a family and create opportunities. Rapidly escalating rents risk putting that aspiration further out of reach for the people who keep our communities running, our key workers. This then means that businesses, hospitals, schools, infrastructure projects and so on can't attract and keep workers. There are flow-on effects that impact all social and economic infrastructure."

Craig Kelly, CEO of Anglicare NT said that the sector was ready to work alongside decision-makers to ensure policy can be effective and have the most benefit for all Territorians.

"The challenges outlined in this report are significant but not insurmountable. With targeted investment in social housing, fairer income support, and stronger concessions, we can ease cost-of-living pressures and build a more equitable future for all Territorians. What's needed now is commitment and urgency from all levels of government."

Key recommendations from the report include:

- Substantially and immediately increase the Remote Area Allowance
- Amending rental protection legislation to provide NT renters with the same protections as renters everywhere else in the country.
- Embedding more social housing within any new developments.
- Making the NT Concessions Scheme benefits easier to access for eligible Territorians, and extending eligibility to all Services Australia Health Care Card holders.
- Indexing the MVR concession.

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