

FACT SHEET

Cost of Food in the Northern Territory

Cost of Living in the Northern Territory: A Ten-Year Comparison 2016-2026

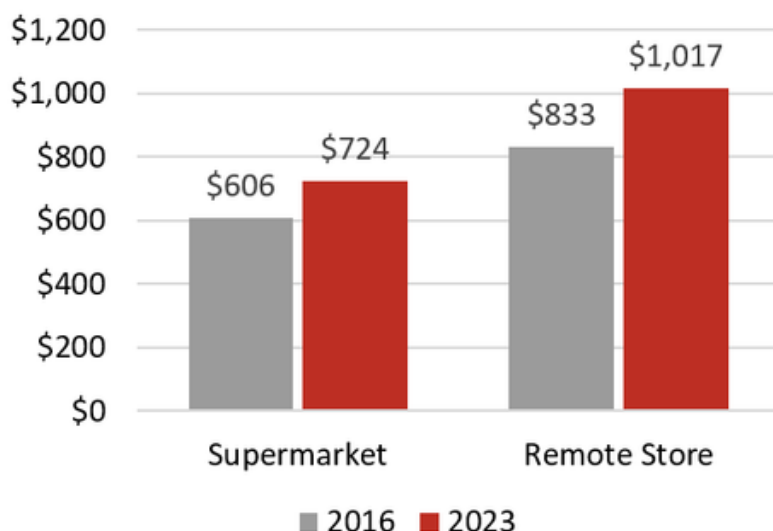
Key points:

- Food prices have continually risen over the last decade, making it more difficult for Territorians to afford healthy food.
- Food is less affordable and accessible in remote areas.

Almost 1 in 2 Territorians experience food insecurity. The cost of food is significantly higher in remote areas than in urban areas.

The Market Basket Survey, run by NT Health, shows that in remote stores, between 2016 and 2023, the average cost of a healthy food basket increased by 22%. In district centre supermarkets it increased by 19%.

Healthy food basket costs - NT
Average: 2016 vs 2023
↑19% ↑22%



Almost 1 in 2 Territorians were food insecure in 2025



In 2023, the average cost of a healthy food basket in the NT was 40% more in remote stores than in district centre supermarkets. (In 2016, the difference was 38%).



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Food CPI: Increase from 2016 to 2026



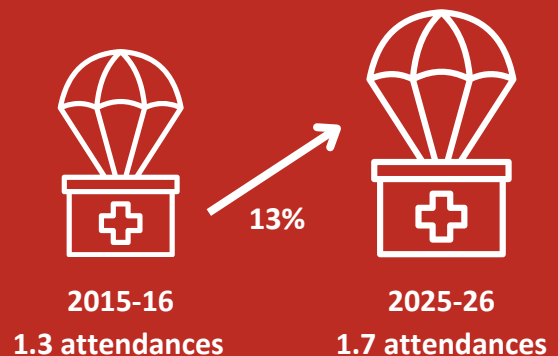
Food prices in Darwin (as measured by the CPI) rose 35% in Darwin over the past decade, slightly less than 37% nationally.

However, the experience in Darwin can be very different to elsewhere in the Territory.

Case study: Anglicare NT Emergency Relief

Anglicare NT provides Emergency Relief to clients in the form of food vouchers. Over the past decade, average attendance per client increased by 13%, meaning clients are needing more support than they were a decade ago.

Average attendance per client



Recommendations

For the Federal Government:

- Extend the 30 essential items subsidy to include more items over time, including: fresh and frozen meat, fruit and vegetables, and nutrient enriched baby and toddler food.

For the NT Government:

- Ensure housing in remote communities is fit for purpose and has adequate facilities to support safe food storage and preparation. This includes ensuring reliable power supply, safe drinking water and culturally responsive housing design.
- Invest in the sustainability of the community services sector to ensure they can provide important support to Territorians experiencing food insecurity, including by:
 - Removing the efficiency dividends from sector funding agreements.
 - Developing appropriate indexation measures to ensure funding reflects real cost of delivering services.