

FACT SHEET

Income levels in the Northern Territory

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

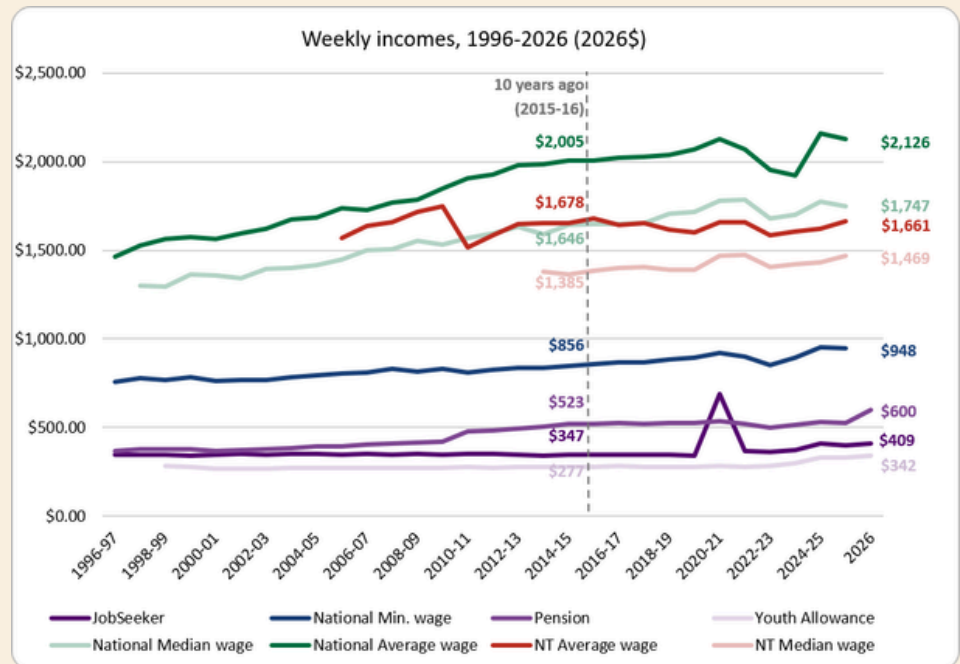
Key points:

- Working age income support payments have risen by 15-24% in real terms (i.e. accounting for inflation) in the past decade.
- Even with these increases, income support payments remain below the poverty line, leaving many people unable to meet their basic needs.

Over the past 10 years, the minimum wage and key single social security payment rates have all increased by 37-55%. However, much of the apparent increases simply reflect higher economy-wide prices. In real terms (i.e. accounting for inflation), the Age Pension, JobSeeker and Youth Allowance have all increased by between 15-24% over the last decade. Minimum wage has increased by 11%.

Despite these increases, all income support payments remain well below the poverty line and the minimum wage.

As of June 2026, the weekly JobSeeker payment (\$409) and Youth Allowance payment (\$342) are both less than half of the weekly minimum wage (\$948).



Recommendations

For the Federal Government:

- Raise the base rates of JobSeeker, Youth Allowance, Parenting Payment and related income support payments to parity with pensions, at least \$618 per week on current rates (as at September 2026).
 - In addition, index payments to wages as well as prices.
- Immediately and substantially increase the Remote Area Allowance to properly account for the higher costs of living in remote areas. The minimum appropriate increase should be \$121.30 per week or \$17.30 per day.