

FACT SHEET

Cost of Utilities in the Northern Territory

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

Key points:

- Energy prices in the NT are lower than in the rest of Australia and are increasing at a slower rate. However, this is somewhat offset by high energy consumption per household in the NT.
- Increasing energy costs are having a bigger impact on people living in remote Aboriginal communities, who face higher costs and frequent disconnections.

CPI changes over the past decade (June 2016 - June 2026)

Electricity



CPI for electricity has increased by 20% in the NT, compared to 49% nationally.

Water & Sewerage



Water & sewerage CPI has risen by 20% in the NT, and 21% nationally.

Regulated utilities tariffs and government subsidies keep power prices in the NT lower than they would be otherwise. Consequently, over the past decade, electricity prices in Darwin and across the NT rose at a much slower rate than elsewhere in Australia.

The cost of electricity in Darwin (as measured by CPI) rose by 20% over the last 10 years, less than overall inflation in Darwin (30%) and far less than electricity price increases in other capital cities (49%). Across the NT, prices for average power bills increased by around 18%.

NT Average electricity cost in 2025/26 (compared to 2015-16)

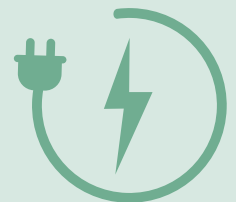


\$356 per quarter (up 18% from 2015-16)
for a one-person household (based on average daily consumption of 11 kWh)

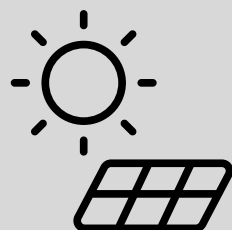


\$713 per quarter (up 18% from 2015-16)
for a three-person household (based on average daily consumption of 28 kWh)

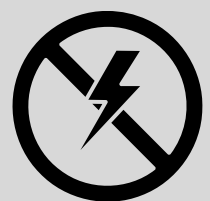
Increasing energy costs are having a bigger impact on low-income households and households in remote communities



Renters (including people living in social housing) can't take advantage of government subsidies on solar power, so don't experience the benefits and cost reductions that solar can pass on.



Most households in remote Aboriginal communities (and some urban public households) use prepayment meters for electricity, which face higher costs and frequent disconnections (see next page).



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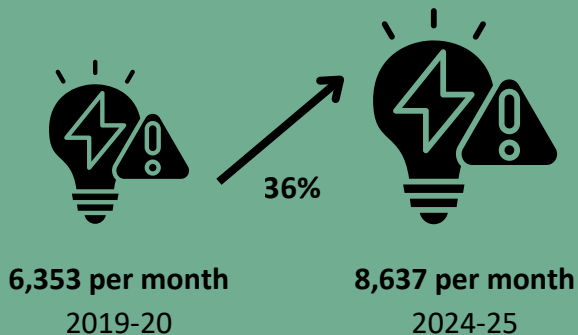
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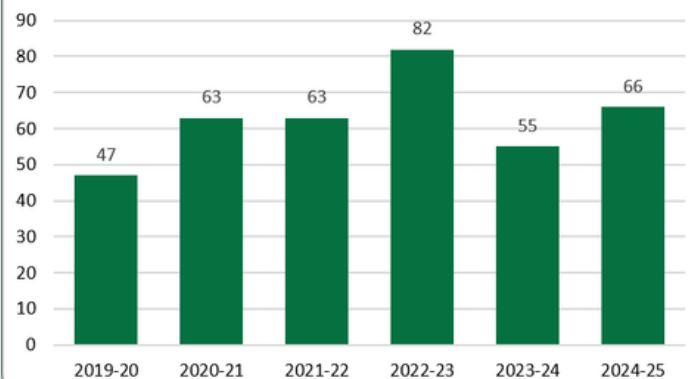
There were **103,648** involuntary self-disconnections in major centres across the NT in 2024-25.

When prepayment meters are not topped up with sufficient funds, power to the household is disconnected. Disconnection generally occurs when a consumer cannot afford power credit.

Average total prepayment meter disconnections per month in major centres



Average number of involuntary self-disconnection events, per self-disconnecting customer, per year



In 2024-25, prepay customers in the NT who reported involuntary self-disconnections were, on average, disconnected every 5.5 days. A typical disconnection leaves households without power for around 4 hours.

Most prepayment households pay more for electricity than postpayment households.

The prepayment rate is higher than postpayment to account for prepayment customers not paying a fixed daily charge. While this equalises rates for lower use households, once a prepayment household is using more than 19.8kwh per day (which is below the average daily energy use for NT households with 2 or more people), they are paying more for electricity than a post payment household would.

Recommendations

For the NT Government:

- Install solar energy on all social housing, ensuring cost savings are passed onto residents.
- Commit to reducing the number and duration of disconnections for prepayment meter customers, including through:
 - Adopting mandatory reporting of electricity disconnections for all networks.
 - Reducing the standard prepayment tariff.
 - Ensuring prepayment customers can access an equivalent level of hardship programs as post-payment customers across all retailers.
 - Increasing payment options for prepayment meter customers, including automated payment options.
- Implement minimum energy efficiency standards for rental homes.