

A SAFE COMMUNITY FOR EVERYONE

Labor & the CLP have made a mess, and then blamed kids for falling through cracks that they created. If we want safe communities we need to focus on what people need RIGHT NOW - a safe place to live, access to nutritious food & a sense of purpose and belonging.

1. Urgently meeting basic needs of young people - Youth Drop in Centres and crisis accommodation

The rate of young people experiencing homelessness in the Northern Territory is almost 12 times the national average.¹ They need a roof over their head and food in their bellies. This is the most effective and immediate measure, to ensure our neighbourhoods are safe places for everyone.

The Greens will:

A) Urgently expand community drop-in centres, so kids have a safe place to go, at any hour of the day or night that is staffed with the resources and services they need. These should be designed by communities and their families so that they address the needs of the people who use them. Drop in centres could help find employment, stable housing and foster healthy community connections.

B) Urgently expanding youth crisis accommodation. There are more than 200 kids experiencing homelessness in Alice Springs each night,¹ yet our only youth crisis accommodation has a capacity of 7 beds & is severely underfunded.² The youth homelessness crisis should be addressed with the same kind of urgency as the government imposed the last curfew.

2. Safe homes for everyone - Addressing homelessness and domestic family and sexual violence

Alongside meeting the immediate needs of young people, we need longer-term solutions so that young people and their families have safe and stable homes, as well as options for young people who have nowhere to go.

The Greens will:

A) Prioritise an urgent & significant increase in our urban public housing stock.

We have the worst rates of overcrowding in Australia with Territorians waiting up to 10 years for public housing.³ Recent Territory and Federal investment in remote housing is important for remote communities, but we also urgently need a massive increase in our urban public housing stock.

B) Immediately commit \$180 million (over 5 years - as a minimum) for domestic, family and sexual violence services.

In the Territory we have the worst rates of domestic, family and sexual violence in the country; 63% of people in prison are there for alleged domestic violence offending.⁴ Domestic, family and sexual violence also drives so many other issues in the Territory - including crimes like property damage.

The sector has said the bare minimum they need right now to deliver services is \$180 million over 5 years. Our government says they can't afford it. But we can't afford not to.

DFSV is costing the NTG \$600 million a year, and stretching police and health resources.⁵ The sector knows what works. We urgently need to fund prevention, early intervention and other measures which will prevent domestic family and sexual violence. We will also commit to a DFSV workforce development strategy to attract & retain staff, and give them the skills to work effectively in the space.

C. Establish Youth Specific accommodation.

For so long kids in Alice Springs have been told that they are the problem and pushed to the margins of our community. We need to be investing in kids and families so they can make the right choices and be part of the solution. People under 25 are almost 50% of the NT's homeless population.¹ Criminalising or moving on young people on the street, instead of meeting their basic needs makes things worse, not better.

We will commit to providing medium term accommodation for young people. Kids in Mparntwe have called for this. There are models that work, but they need to be designed for, and by the community they serve. One example is Youth Foyers - For more detail on youth foyers, see page 29 of NT Shelter's "[They Can't go back home](#)" report.²



3. Breaking the Cycle & building better justice

The evidence is clear that imprisonment as the default response to crime fails to keep our community safe. Despite our prison population increasing 30% in the last decade our community is feeling less safe than ever.⁶

We all want the same thing: a safe and vibrant community for everyone. There are proven, cost effective alternatives to prison which will break the cycle of incarceration and improve community safety.⁷ The funding needs to be long term and supporting Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations.

The Greens will:

Establish a Breaking the Cycle Fund to properly fund and expand evidence-based, independently evaluated programs and services, including:

- Early intervention and prevention programs which have reduced offending amongst at-risk populations by 50%.⁷
- Alternative first responder models that reduce criminal justice involvement, lessen likelihood of arrest by 58% and halve the rate of crime and justice system involvement.⁷
- Bail support programs which significantly reduce reoffending (by 33%) and increase compliance with bail conditions (by 95%).⁷
- Post release programmes: including for people facing homelessness, drug dependency and other complex needs. First Nations led post-release programmes have reduced reoffending to 4% in other parts of the country (compared to 75% in NT).⁷
- Alternative Courts and processes, like First Nations Courts, and restorative justice conferencing.
- On-country programs for Aboriginal young people, such as those run by Kings Narrative and (in WA) the Yiriman Project.

References

1. Australian Bureau of Statistics (2023). 2021 Census of Population and Housing. TableBuilder.
2. NT Shelter (2023). "They can't go back home" Young People and Homelessness in Mparntwe (Alice Springs). https://occ.nt.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0020/1264043/74698_NT_Shelter-TCGBH_Report_Booklets_Digital.pdf
3. Northern Territory Government (2024). Social Housing Wait times. <https://nt.gov.au/property/social-housing/apply-for-housing/apply-for-public-housing/waiting-list>
4. Northern Territory Government (2022). Review of Legislation and the Justice Response to Domestic and Family Violence in the Northern Territory. https://justice.nt.gov.au/_data/assets/word_doc/0003/1130385/review-of-legislation-and-the-justice-response-to-domestic-and-family-violence-august-2022.DOCX
5. Northern Territory Government (2023). Mapping of current investment and activity to prevent and respond to domestic, family and sexual violence in the Northern Territory. https://tfhc.nt.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/1274038/dfsv-mapping-report.pdf
6. Australian Bureau of Statistics (2022). Prisoners in Australia 2022, table 19.
7. Justice Reform Initiative (2023). Alternatives to Incarceration in the Northern Territory. https://assets.nationbuilder.com/justicereforminitiative/pages/337/attachments/original/1684122983/JRI_Alternatives_NT_Full_FINAL-2_copy.pdf?1684122983

