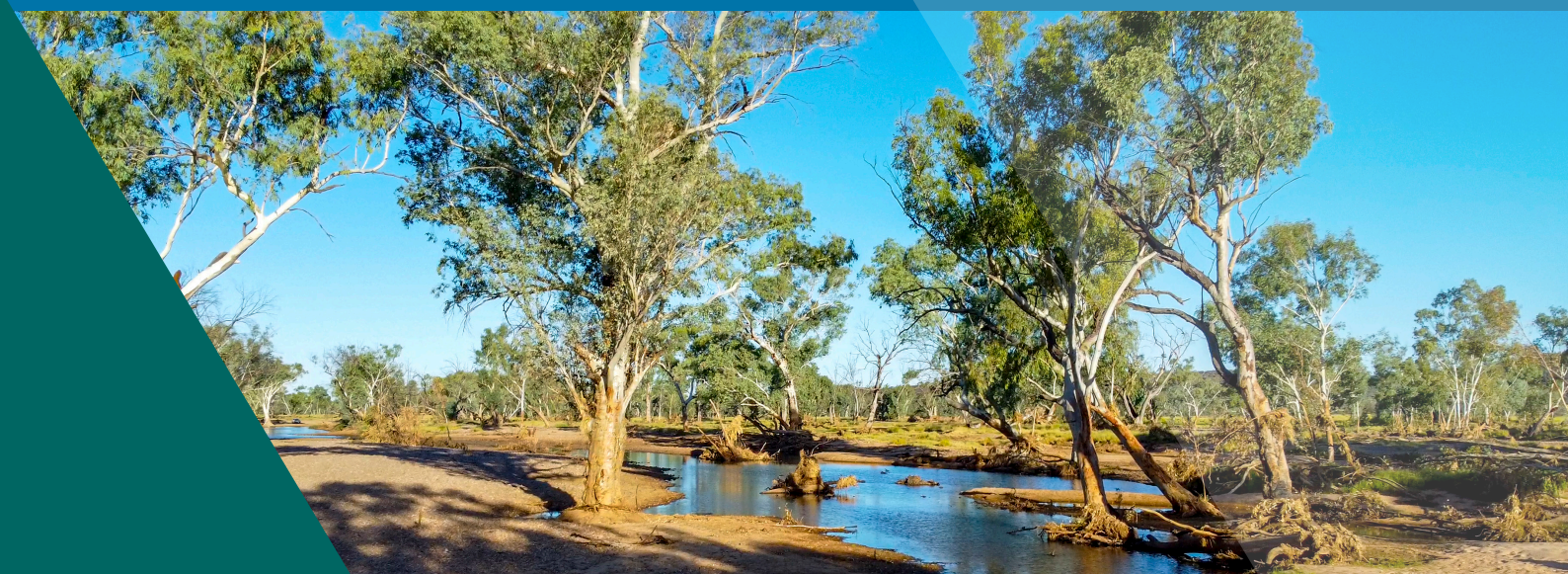


Department of Children and Families Strategic Plan 2025-2029



Department of
CHILDREN
AND FAMILIES



NORTHERN
TERRITORY
GOVERNMENT

Acknowledgement of Country

The Department of Children and Families respectfully acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land and seas of the Northern Territory.

We acknowledge and respect their continuing connection to their lands, waters and communities. We pay our respects to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and peoples, their ancestors, their Elders, past and present, and to the leaders of today and future generations.

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Minister's foreword



I am proud to present the Department of Children and Families Strategic Plan – an evidence-based roadmap for delivering real change. Our Government was elected with a clear mandate to Reduce Crime, Rebuild the Economy and Restore our Lifestyle. This plan outlines the role the department will play in achieving those goals with a newfound focus on innovation, accountability, and results.

The challenges we face – protecting vulnerable children, addressing domestic violence, and reducing homelessness – are deeply interconnected. When children grow up in unsafe environments, when families live in fear, and when stable housing is out of reach, the consequences ripple across generations and fuel cycles of crime. Tackling these issues is not just about social justice; it is fundamental to building safer communities and a stronger economy for every Territorian.

I am pleased that innovation is at the forefront of the department's priorities – whether that be adopting new technologies,

modernising policy frameworks, or strengthening partnerships across sectors – every step will be guided by evidence and grounded in what works.

Creating lasting change requires collaboration – across government, with frontline workers, and with communities. Together, we will build a future where every child is safe, every person has a place to call home, and every survivor of violence receives the support they deserve.

With an emphasis on accountability, the department's strategy focuses on outcomes not outputs ensuring transparency to clients, partners, and the wider community.

Thank you to all who have contributed to this strategy. I look forward to delivering on this plan with integrity, transparency, and a relentless focus on results.

Hon Robyn Cahill OAM

Minister for Children and Families

Minister for Child Protection

Minister for Prevention of Domestic Violence

Message from the Chief Executive



Our strategic plan sets the roadmap for how we will deliver on the Northern Territory Government's priorities to Reduce Crime, Rebuild the Economy and Restore our Lifestyle.

This is a time of transformation for the Territory. We are operating in an environment marked by ambitious national targets, focused investments, and a need to adapt to challenging fiscal and workforce realities. In the face of these challenges, we are committed to fostering accountability, building strong partnerships, and working collaboratively to create lasting change in our community.

This plan is about delivering on Northern Territory and national priorities. It includes a bold commitment to reforming our approach to strategic commissioning and sector strengthening, which means redesigning our programs of work across domestic family and sexual violence, homelessness and children and families to ensure our systems are responsive, integrated, sustainable, and equitable.

Our workforce is critical to the success of this work and data and feedback have reminded us of the importance of regrouping and focusing on the fundamentals. We are dedicated to building the skills, knowledge, and capabilities required to meet the complex needs of the Territory.

We know that we cannot do this work alone and the strength of our partnerships will be central to our success. We must re-commit to working together, listening to our community, and acting with purpose. Our approach is one of collaboration, grounded in the understanding that generational change takes time and requires both short-term actions and long-term vision.

At the heart of this plan is the recognition that our homelessness, DFSV and family support sectors make up a large human services industry, which we must support as such through innovation, investment and transitioning our role to one of system stewardship.

Together, with our partners and community, we will continue to build a system that delivers the safety, wellbeing, and opportunities that every child and family in the Northern Territory deserves.

Karen Broadfoot

A/Chief Executive
Department of Children and Families

Our impact

Our department leads the Northern Territory Government's responses to homelessness, domestic family and sexual violence, and child protection.

We provide or enable prevention, early intervention and tertiary services for children, young people and adults experiencing vulnerability, which are crucial to breaking generational cycles of disadvantage and supporting people to create pathways for lasting change.

At a glance

- Services to strengthen families and build parenting capacity delivered in 39 locations
- 6 Children and Family Centres that empower families with the tools needed to support early childhood development
- Network of 403 paid volunteer Foster and Kinship Carers
- Family Responsibility Agreements to hold parents accountable for behaviour impacting their children
- 4,200+ children protection investigations commenced
- 847 children in Out of Home Care
- 28 Women's Safe Houses operated by our department or our funded partners
- 170+ men participating in domestic family and sexual violence behaviour change programs
- 5,000+ Territorians accessing funded specialist homelessness services.

Note: 2023-24 figures

Our future

Our future focus is clear and will drive positive change for all Territorians through:

Reduce Crime

Our department's responsibilities are crucial to addressing the root causes of crime and building safer families and communities.

Rebuild the Economy

Our industry is one of the largest in the Northern Territory, substantially contributing to public and private employment and economic growth.

Restore our Lifestyle

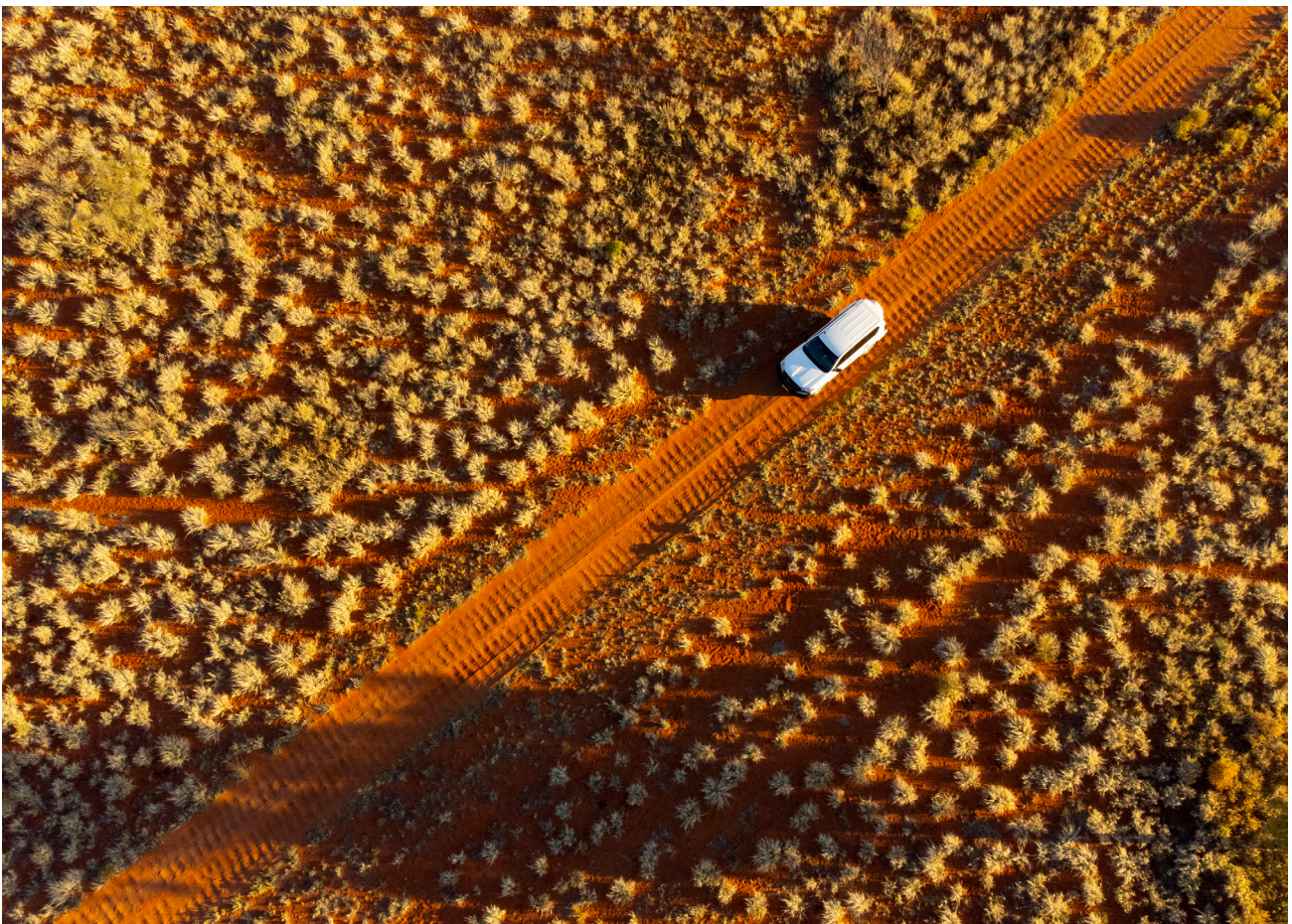
Our commitment to innovation and accountability will enable us to deliver impactful services to the community, aligned to the expectations of Territorians.

Strategic alignment

Our work is further guided by a series of national and Northern Territory commitments aimed at improving the lives of children, families, and vulnerable communities through real, lasting change.

These commitments include:

- National Agreement on Closing the Gap and Northern Territory Implementation Plan
- Department of Children and Families Aboriginal Cultural Security Framework
- Safe and Supported: National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2021-2031
- National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032
- Northern Territory Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Reduction Framework 2018-2028
- National Agreement on Social Housing and Homelessness.
- Northern Territory Homelessness Strategy 2025-2030.



Vision

A safe and thriving Territory where children and adults experiencing vulnerability are supported, families are responsible, and communities are strong.

Mission

Together with our partners, provide culturally safe services that empower individuals experiencing vulnerability to increase safety and wellbeing for themselves, their children, and their community.

Outcomes

- Our service system is culturally safe, integrated, effective, person-centred, and sustainable.
- NT children and young people live in safe environments.
- Territorians experiencing or at risk of homelessness have access to appropriate support, accommodation, and housing.
- Territorians are safe from abuse and violence.
- The essential needs of Territorians impacted by a disaster are met.

Values

Our core values serve as the foundation of our strategic plan, guiding every decision and action as we strive to achieve our mission and vision.

Accountable

We take responsibility for our actions, decisions, and outcomes, ensuring transparency and delivering on our commitments to the community.

Collaborative

We partner with our colleagues, our community and across organisational borders to achieve shared goals, foster trust and deliver better outcomes.

Ethical

We uphold the highest standards of integrity and professionalism, acting with honesty, fairness, and in the best interests of those we serve.

Respectful

We treat all individuals, families, and communities with dignity and fairness, valuing diverse perspectives and cultural security.

Our strategy

To Reduce Crime, Rebuild the Economy and Restore our Lifestyle, we will focus our efforts in three priority areas:

Priority 1. Innovate for change

1.1. Community development and job creation

- Review policies and operating models to strengthen services that are closer to the ground, based on evidence and responsive to innovation.
- Work across government, with industry and community to support employment pathways for locals.
- Establish place-based partnerships that respond to local priorities and support economic growth.

1.2 Strategically commission services

- Align investments with local priorities, national commitments and evidence bases.
- Increase accountability to work across organisational borders for shared outcomes.
- Improve governance of and access to information that enables informed solutions.
- Trial industry and community-led solutions through innovation and pilot programs to inform future investments.

Priority 2. Strengthen the system

2.1 Reform and strengthen our supports

- Strengthen focus on quality standards and continuous improvement of departmental and commissioned service providers through contemporary legislation, policies and processes.
- Increase the accountability of adults who have committed domestic, family, and sexual violence or whose behaviour harms their children.
- Strengthen evaluation of programs and service delivery to better understand what works in the Territory.

2.2 Improve our connection with universal supports

- Work across government to support sustained funding, coordination and shared accountability for addressing the root causes of crime.
- Review and modernise policies and procedures to support integrated service pathways and maximise collective resources.

Priority 3. Modernise our department

3.1 Build a contemporary and capable workforce

- Elevate and embed the Aboriginal Cultural Security Framework to increase the cultural capability of staff and promote opportunities for Aboriginal employment and leadership.
- Improve client outcomes by prioritising practice quality, use of evidence and evaluation and efficient resource management.
- Implement new and innovative ways to attract and retain a qualified and skilled workforce, including opportunities for para-professional workforces and workforce flexibility.

3.2 Build a high-performance organisational culture

- Implement departmental structures and processes that prioritise accountability, collaboration and integration across functions.
- Drive performance through NT evidence-based policy and people-centred program design and delivery.
- Enable a high-performance culture through prioritising coaching and development, information sharing, psychological safety and staff recognition.








Keeping accountable

The Department of Children and Families commits to:

- publicly report against this strategic plan within our annual report
- focus on continuous improvement, including by engaging clients, staff and stakeholders in feedback
- oversee and manage our strategic direction through our Executive Leadership Board
- hold ourselves accountable for the performance of our deliverables.

Success will be measured against our five outcome areas, their associated indicators and metrics, which will reflect the communities that we serve.

Outcomes	What success looks like
 <p>Our service system is culturally safe, integrated, effective, person-centred and sustainable</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased workforce diversity • Increased workforce capability • Increased services delivered by community organisations • Increased use of evidence and data to inform programs and services
 <p>Children and young people live in safe environments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced rate of children receiving and re-engaging in child protection services • Increased accessibility and effectiveness of family and parental support programs
 <p>Territorians experiencing or at risk of homelessness have access to appropriate support accommodation and housing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased early intervention, prevention and support for Territorians at risk of becoming homeless • Increased housing and tenancy sustainability through culturally safe, place-based support • Increased effectiveness of the homelessness service system
 <p>Territorians are safe from abuse and violence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in victim survivors feeling safer and respected • Increase in people who commit DFSV taking responsibility for their violence and changing their behaviour
 <p>The essential needs of Territorians impacted by a disaster are met</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Welfare Group works as a collaborative member of the Emergency Operations Centre to meet the essential needs of disaster affected Territorians

DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Strategic Plan 2025 - 2029

VISION

A safe and thriving Territory where children and adults experiencing vulnerability are supported, families are responsible, and communities are strong.

PURPOSE

Together with our partners, provide culturally safe services that empower individuals experiencing vulnerability to increase safety and wellbeing for themselves, their children, and their community.

VALUES

ACCOUNTABLE

COLLABORATIVE

ETHICAL

RESPECTFUL



PRIORITY: INNOVATE FOR CHANGE

Community development and job creation

- Strengthen local services through model reviews.
- Partner with government, industry and community to create local jobs.
- Build place-based partnerships to drive local priorities and economic growth.

Strategically commission services

- Align funding with local needs, national goals and evidence.
- Improve accountability for shared outcomes across sectors.
- Strengthen governance and data access for informed decision-making.
- Test industry and community-led solutions to guide future investment.

PRIORITY: STRENGTHEN THE SYSTEM

Reform and strengthen our supports

- Improve quality standards and continuous improvement for all service providers.
- Increase accountability for adults who commit DFSV or harm children.
- Strengthen program evaluation to understand what works in the Territory.

Improve our connection with universal supports

- Work across government to ensure sustained funding, coordination and shared accountability in addressing crime.
- Update policies to support integrated services and better use of resources.

PRIORITY: MODERNISE OUR DEPARTMENT

Build a contemporary and capable workforce

- Elevate and embed the Aboriginal Cultural Security Framework.
- Improve client outcomes by strengthening practice quality, use of evidence, evaluation and efficient resources.
- Attract and retain skilled staff through innovation.

Build a high-performance culture

- Prioritise accountability, collaboration and function integration.
- Drive performance through evidence-based policy and people-centred programs.
- Foster a high-performance culture with coaching, development, psychological safety and staff recognition.



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