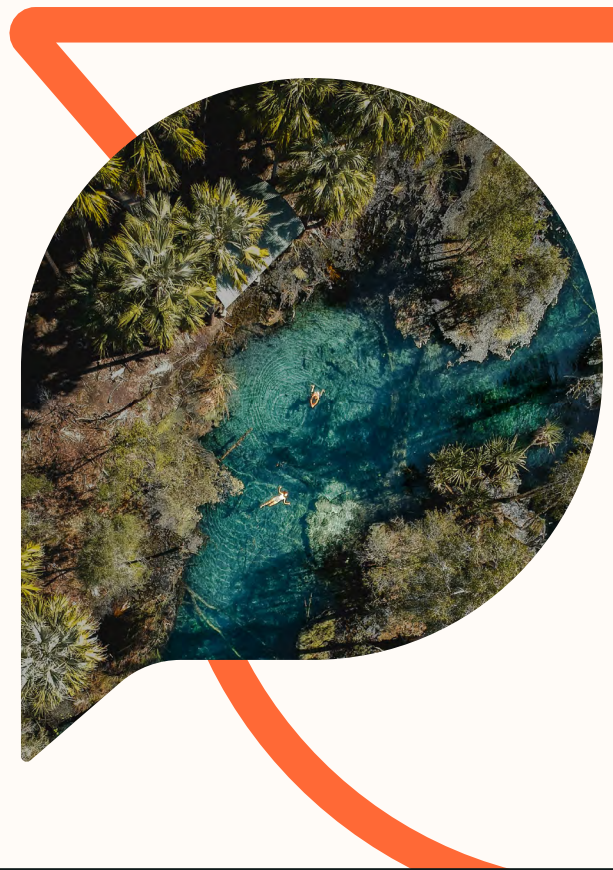




NT Jurisdiction Report



Purpose for our visit

Commissioner Micaela Cronin and Assistant Commissioner Jenna Roberts visited the Northern Territory in November 2025 to listen, learn and strengthen relationships across Darwin, Alice Springs and the Big Rivers region.

The visit coincided with the beginning of the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence, and continued the Commission's commitment to engaging directly with NT communities. Insights gathered will inform the Commission's Yearly Report and ongoing national policy advice.

The Northern Territory continues to experience the highest domestic, family and sexual violence (DFSV) rates nationally, with unique geographic, cultural and systemic factors driving unique pressures on service providers. Stakeholders described the ongoing impacts from government restructures, uncertainty regarding the recommendations from the 2024 coronial inquest and a lack of clarity around long-term funding allocation.

Who we engaged with

- Dawn House, Darwin
- Holly Supple-Gurruwiwi, Lived Experience Advisory Council member
- NT Department of Children and Families
- NT Police
- Katherine Women's Information & Legal Service (KWILS)
- North Australian Aboriginal Family Legal Service (NAAFLS)
- Frontline workers and community members across the Big Rivers region
- Northern Territory Council of Social Service (NTCOSS)

What we heard

Across Darwin, Katherine and the Big Rivers region, conversations emphasised the need for community-led solutions, culturally safe approaches and stronger coordination across services.

Frontline workers described increasing pressure due to complexity and demand. Katherine's theme for the 16 Days of Activism, 'Understanding Big Rivers', highlighted long-standing gaps in visibility and policy attention for the region.

Themes raised included:

- the importance of place-based responses that reflect local leadership and local solutions,
- sector and workforce pressures, including challenges in attracting and retaining staff,
- desire for transparency in funding decisions, service models and outcomes,
- NT Government's response to coronial recommendations and the broader policy environment, and
- strong appetite for improved collaboration across government, Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) and specialist services in DFSV responses.

During our visit, the Northern Territory Government released the *Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Reduction Strategy 2025–2028*, setting out a renewed policy direction and a sustained investment of \$36 million per year in DFSV initiatives across prevention, early intervention, response, healing and system reform. The Strategy outlines a strengthened whole-of-government approach, a greater emphasis on data, evaluation and accountability, and the continuation of community-led and culturally grounded responses. Stakeholders reflected both the significance of the Strategy and the importance of ensuring its implementation is guided by local knowledge and lived experience.

Innovative work underway

- The Dragonfly Seat of Stories memorial initiative in Darwin, creating a dedicated space of remembrance and healing.
- The Big Rivers Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (ACCHO) DFSV consortium approach that integrates primary health care with DFSV responses.
- Community-led healing initiatives and Strong Women's Groups in remote and regional communities.
- KWILS' place-based legal, advocacy and community education work in Katherine and the Big Rivers region.

Aboriginal-led responses

Aboriginal organisations and communities consistently emphasised the need for greater investment in Aboriginal community-controlled DFSV services, culturally grounded healing models, and transitions to community control for women's safe houses. Elders and leaders also highlighted the importance of embedding shared decision-making into Northern Territory and national governance frameworks, including structures linked to the National Plan and Closing the Gap Target 13.

Police and justice system insights

NT Police shared high-level insights from recent data and operational activity, noting trends that continue to shape responses across the Territory. Discussions highlighted the role of the Prevent, Assist, Respond (PART) training program in strengthening frontline capability and consistency, alongside the expanding co-responder model, which brings police and specialist practitioners together to provide early intervention in the period immediately following an incident. These initiatives form part of a broader shift towards more coordinated, trauma-informed and prevention-focused policing approaches across the Northern Territory.

Children and young people

Discussions with senior leadership from the Department of Children and Families and frontline organisations highlighted the need for improved early intervention pathways, youth-specific responses and more coordinated systems to support children and young people experiencing DFSV.

Next steps

- Integrate insights from the NT visit into the Commission's 2025 Yearly Report and advice to governments.
 - Continue engagement with NT Government, Aboriginal leadership, ACCOs and the DFSV sector on implementation of the DFSV Reduction Strategy 2025–2028.
 - Explore opportunities for a northern Australia-focused roundtable or forum to consider shared challenges across remote and very remote communities.
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The Commission sincerely thanks all of the community members, Elders, organisations and government partners who shared their time, knowledge and insights with us.

