



## STATEMENT BY NT SHELTER

Wednesday 19 June 2025

### Reform must preserve support for social housing tenants

NT Shelter acknowledges the Northern Territory Government's announcement regarding the establishment of a new Police Public Safety Officer (PPSO) stream as part of its broader community safety reform agenda. This proposed change will see the transition of Public Housing Safety Officers (PHSOs) into a new uniformed role under the Northern Territory Police Force.

NT Shelter recognises the Government's intent to improve community safety and appreciates the work PHSOs have contributed to social housing residents. Their role has supported tenants to feel secure, maintain their tenancies, and foster cohesive urban communities. It is essential that law and order reform efforts do not unintentionally weaken the support available to social housing tenants who are doing the right thing and benefit from the assistance and safety PHSOs provide.

PHSOs play a vital role that extends beyond enforcement. Not only do they help manage and respond to antisocial behaviour, they also investigate complaints and work with the staff of community housing providers and the Department of Housing, Local Government and Community Development. In many communities, PHSOs are a point of contact for tenants seeking help to stay safe and sustain their tenancy.

Any model that transitions this function to a policing structure must ensure that these essential support roles are not lost or diluted. NT Shelter urges the Government to ensure that social housing residents, many of whom already face significant social and economic disadvantages, are not left behind in this transition. We encourage the Government to consult closely with tenants and community housing providers to ensure the transition is done in a way that strengthens support for social housing residents.

We also note the recent release of the *Northern Territory Homelessness Strategy 2025–2030*, which is underpinned by new investment to expand pre-tenancy and tenancy support services. These supports are an important step toward identifying housing issues earlier, preventing escalation, and helping people stay housed and communities cohesive. With supports in place, tenants can be supported to feel more in control of their housing in ways that build confidence, stability, and long-term housing success. What is essential is that, in the interim, we do not lose the support that PHSOs currently provide to tenants, communities and frontline staff.

Law and order reform must not come at the cost of housing stability.

-ENDS-

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