



16 August 2025

636% Power Bill Increase in One Month: Student Funds Diverted to Pay Electricity Costs

Northern Territory schools are being hit with massive power price increases, with one school reporting a 636% jump in just one month, from June to July 2025.

NTCOGSO warns that schools are being forced to take money meant for students and spend it on electricity bills instead. This comes after the NT Government removed schools from the electricity subsidy on 1 July 2025, leaving schools to pay full commercial rates for power, water and sewerage.

Data from the first 12 schools that have provided their June and July 2025 electricity bills shows the loss of the subsidy equals almost \$1 million per year. This is money stripped directly from student programs and redirected to power bills.

An everyday example

"Think about your own household budget. You have an income, you pay your bills, and you plan ahead. If one bill suddenly triples, something else has to give. Your income does not go up just because the bill did. It is exactly the same for schools. Their income is government funding. When the power bill suddenly jumps, something already planned for students has to be cut. That is the reality," said Ruth Mirams, NTCOGSO President.

Why this matters

Schools set their budgets in Term 4 for the following calendar year. When schools locked in their 2025 budgets back in October 2024, there was no way of knowing that power costs would suddenly skyrocket in July 2025. By now in August, more than half of the money is already spent, and the rest is committed to programs and resources for students. A sudden mid-year increase leaves schools with no choice but to cut from student needs.

On top of this, schools have already been hit with teacher pay rises that took effect in October 2024 and again this October. No extra money was provided to cover these costs, which pushed many school budgets into deficit. Now schools are being forced to absorb massive power bill increases as well.

The Commonwealth government increased funding for the NT from 2025 through to 2029 to improve student outcomes. However, instead of being used for new programs, staffing and resources for students, this money is being redirected to cover pay rises and higher utility costs. Funding intended to lift student learning is being lost to government cost shifting.



THE VOICE FOR NT PUBLIC EDUCATION

“Parents were told the extra Commonwealth funding would mean more teachers, more support and more opportunities for students. Instead, it is disappearing into higher power bills and unfunded pay rises,” said Ruth Mirams.

“Community groups right across the Territory hire school facilities after hours for sport, culture and events. These groups will also be impacted when schools are forced to raise hire fees just to cover power bills,” said Ruth Mirams.

NTCOGSO calls for

- Reinstatement of schools in the NT electricity subsidy
- NT Government funding to fully cover the 1 July 2025 power price increases until schools are reinstated in the subsidy, provided separately from Commonwealth student funding
- The Department of Education to act as the central client for electricity, removing the burden from 152 individual schools that are left vulnerable negotiating separate contracts with suppliers

Contact

Ruth Mirams

President

Northern Territory Council of Government School Organisations

Mobile: 0411 654 303

Email: president@ntcogso.org.au

ABOUT NTCOGSO

The Northern Territory Council of Government School Organisations (NTCOGSO) is the peak parent representative body advocating for the interests of students and government schools across the Northern Territory.