

# ALTERNATIVES NOT QUASI-POLICING

26-06-25

The Alternative First Responders campaign is deeply concerned about the Northern Territory Government's plan to implement law reform that would create a new police stream specifically targeting public places and people's homes. The new Police Public Safety Officers (PPSOs) are a proposed frontline resource, but they further entrench the default police-first response.

This reform risks increasing unnecessary encounters with police, criminalisation of health and disability, and the over-policing of communities — all in the name of 'community safety'. The PPSO roles are set to replace positions, such as Public Housing Safety Officers and Transit Safety Officers – roles that currently sit outside of NT police.

**As stated by David Villegas, NT Regional Secretary of the Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU), which represents transit safety and public housing safety officers:**

"One of the main reasons those roles existed was to minimise contact between Indigenous people and the police force." ([ABC, News Article 2025](#))

**This echoes the concerns of Change the Record, the national self-determined First Nations justice coalition, who rightly stated:**

"Embedding armed officers into everyday environments will only increase the risk of harm for Aboriginal people, people with disabilities, and those experiencing mental health issues or disadvantage." ([ABC, News Article 2025](#))

Increasing police presence in public spaces and in people's homes — particularly in roles of care — does not lead to greater public safety. We have seen the devastating consequences when police respond to people experiencing social, health, or emotional distress that required care. These incidents are not isolated, they are systemic. In the past month alone there have been several deaths in custody across the country.

**Chloe Fragos, Campaign Lead for Alternative First Responders said:**

"More boots on the ground does not mean safety – more boots is more force and does not provide the care and skills needed when people in community need support. Having alternative frontline roles is crucial for reducing the harms that can occur from a police response."

**The Alternative First Responders campaign echoes the concerns of the Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance of the NT (AMSANT), which called the move a:**

"deeply irresponsible escalation that will place more lives at risk," including people experiencing mental health episodes or living with disabilities. (Chief Executive John Paterson as quoted in [ABC, News Article 2025](#))

We call for the Northern Territory Government to retain and invest in alternative first responders that are unarmed and trained in care, de-escalation, and harm reduction.

**Alternative First Responders Team**