



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

Official Committee Hansard

**HOUSE OF
REPRESENTATIVES**

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ABORIGINAL AND TORRES
STRAIT ISLANDER AFFAIRS

**Reference: Community stores in remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
communities**

MONDAY, 27 APRIL 2009

PAPUNYA

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STANDING
COMMITTEE ON ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER AFFAIRS**

Monday, 27 April 2009

Members: Mr Marles (*Chair*), Mr Laming (*Deputy Chair*), Mr Abbott, Ms Campbell, Mr Katter, Ms Rea, Mr Kelvin Thomson, Mr Trevor, Mr Turnour and Mrs Vale

Members in attendance: Mr Marles, Mr Turnour and Mrs Vale

Terms of reference for the inquiry:

To inquire into and report on:

The operation of local community stores in remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, with a particular focus on:

- food supply, quality, cost and competition issues;
- the effectiveness of the Outback Stores model, and other private, public and community store models; and
- the impact of these factors on the health and economic outcomes of communities.

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Committee met at 3.50 pm**ANDERSON, Mr Sid, President, Stores Company, Papunya****BUTCHER, Mr Sammy, Vice-President, Stores Committee, Papunya****JAKAMARRA, Mr Michael Nelson, Papunya Elder****LECHLEITNER, Ms Ada, Town Bore Outstation**

Mr Anderson—I would like to welcome the House of Representatives people to this community. On behalf of the residents of this community, I welcome you.

CHAIR (Mr Marles)—Thank you very much, Sid. I welcome everyone to this public hearing of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs in our inquiry into community stores in remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. I would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land and pay our respects to elders both past, present and future. We would also like to acknowledge the Aboriginal people who now reside in this area. The committee are very thankful to the Papunya community for having us here today and allowing us to conduct our hearings. Thank you, Sid, Sammy and Michael for your welcome. It is also appropriate that we put on record, Michael, that we enjoy your work in the forecourt of Parliament House every day we are there. It is a magnificent piece and it is a real honour to have you in our presence today and to meet you. Thank you very much for coming along today.

These are formal proceedings of the parliament and all evidence from the witnesses needs to be factual and honest. It can be considered a serious matter to attempt to mislead the committee. We invite all those who are making comments to provide comments which assist us in our inquiry with the intention of taking some improvements to the way governments administer remote community stores. This hearing is open to the public and a transcript of what is said here today will be placed on the committee's website. If you would like any further details about the inquiry or the transcript then please ask any of the committee staff here today. At the end of the hearing there will be an open session, which is an opportunity for members of the community to have their say about the community store. We would encourage anyone who would like to participate to get up and say your piece. If you would like to contribute at that part of the proceedings then please inform the committee staff so that we can acknowledge it when the time comes. Before we start, I will invite the committee to introduce themselves.

Mrs VALE—My electorate is in southern Sydney and takes in the Sutherland Shire, which is on the foreshores of Botany Bay, and across to the Liverpool district. It is a privilege to be here today. I am very interested to hear what you will tell us so we can make sure the government provides the very best we can for your community stores. The Indigenous people of the Illawarra region are the Gandangara and Dharawal. Thank you very much.

Mr TURNOUR—I live in Cairns but my electorate encompasses Cape York Peninsula and the Torres Strait. A large number of my constituents are Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders. I would like to thank the traditional owners and elders here today for making us feel so welcome. We are here to see what we can do in terms of improving delivery of services, particularly to

outback stores and stores generally across Australia. Thank you very much for having us in this part of the world.

CHAIR—My electorate of Corio is based on Geelong in Victoria. I note from the store that this is AFL-supporting country. I see Collingwood hats, North Melbourne hats, Lions hats and Carlton hats, but I have not seen any Cats hats—so that is obviously something we need to rectify! I call the witnesses that we have before us. Would you like to make an opening statement about the store? We will then ask you some questions.

Mr Anderson—First of all, the store is owned by the community. It is run by the elected councillors. It is doing all right. In the past we had ups and downs, but it seems to be okay and the community is really proud of this shop.

CHAIR—So the store is run by a not-for-profit incorporated association?

Mr Anderson—Yes; it is a not-for-profit charitable organisation that we formed. The councillors agreed not to give profits to individuals; it is a charitable thing.

CHAIR—Is the operating body registered with the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations?

Mr Anderson—Yes, we have done that. We adopted the constitution that the community wanted in order to run the business as a community thing. It was adopted by the association.

CHAIR—Who are members of the association?

Mr Anderson—There are 14 elected councillors but more than 14 members. We have quite a few from the community, and outstation people have their voice in it, as well, to see how the shop runs.

CHAIR—So there are 14 elected members of the council which operates the store. Who are you elected from? Is it just people within this region? How far away?

Mr Anderson—Like I said, outstation people come in and elect their members to be on the council. It is especially people in the community—the members—who elect the councillors.

CHAIR—How often do you have elections for the council?

Mr Anderson—We had one six months ago. Electing councillors is a yearly thing.

CHAIR—The store has had new management since January of last year—is that right?

Mr Anderson—Yes. The other manager stayed for a year but did not stay longer. We thought maybe change was coming and we really needed a good store manager—which we have now. It was maybe 13 months ago that we got the store manager.

CHAIR—You are happy with the change?

Mr Anderson—Yes. It is really improving the store. We are happy with it.

CHAIR—Could you describe that in a bit more detail? Is the quality of the produce better now?

Mr Anderson—We only got a few fresh fruits and vegies under the previous store manager. We talked about how we could improve to get our kids healthier. We talked to the store manager and said: ‘This is what we want for our community. We want more fresh fruit and vegies in the store.’ You saw that just a while ago.

CHAIR—Is the council quite active in the pricing of products? Do you tell the store manager what you want in terms of pricing?

Mr Anderson—Yes, we all discuss and, if the community people complain about prices, we sit down and consider how we can improve the prices—maybe bring them up or bring them down a little bit for the community people. The service is there so that community people can have healthy food.

CHAIR—Just going back to how the community is run, how often do you as a council meet?

Mr Anderson—Every three months.

CHAIR—In between times is there an ongoing discussion with the store manager? Do you talk to them frequently?

Mr Anderson—I think the store manager talks to everybody like me, the councillors and the community. They ask them, ‘How do you reckon the store is doing?’ They ensure that everybody is happy and if people want more products in the store they talk to the store manager and the store manager talks to us. If we pop into the store, they ask: ‘What do the community want? Can I get it?’

CHAIR—Do you ever get complaints about the store?

Mr Anderson—Not often, but maybe once in three months or six months.

CHAIR—How do you deal with those complaints?

Mr Anderson—We ask whoever has put in a complaint, ‘How can we improve it?’ They talk to me and I would probably talk to our store manager.

CHAIR—Since the new management has come into place, what has happened with prices generally? Have the prices gone up or down?

Mr Anderson—I think the prices are level across the board. The only thing that we look at—for example, the government changed price on tobacco et cetera, and we accept that.

CHAIR—In managing the prices, do you try to keep the prices the same as in Alice Springs or do you have a benchmark for how you manage the prices?

Mr Anderson—It is cheaper in Alice Springs. They are maybe a little cheaper here as well—when we buy items there, we see they are 10c or 20c more.

CHAIR—Do you have a policy about the profitability of the store? Do you try to make, say, a 10 per cent or a five per cent profit every year? How do you determine that?

Mr Anderson—When the store makes a good profit, the first thing we talk about is looking after our shop. From there, if there is any profit we look after our community as well—charitable things that we spoke about earlier.

CHAIR—What is an example of that?

Mr Anderson—For example, if the boys want to get a football bus not only do we get the boys a football bus but we try to look after our softball team. It is for all the people in this community. We can share our transport around.

CHAIR—Do you try to have a certain level of profitability? Do you try to ensure that costs are covered? Do you have a particular policy about that?

Mr Anderson—We look at the policy to ensure it covers everything. As I said, if we want to fix up the store, get more fridges or the cold drinks fridge breaks down, we have a problem.

Mr TURNOUR—How do you describe the quality of the fruit and vegies in your store? Are you happy with it? What are your thoughts in relation to the fruit and vegies?

Mr Butcher—I am not judging anybody. I think the store is there for people to go in and buy whatever they want. It is not judging anybody.

Mr TURNOUR—We go to different stores across the country and we are trying to find out the best ways to manage stores. We had a look at the store down there and it looks quite good. Generally, you are pretty happy with the quality of your fruit and vegies that come through here? Have you had any experience in other parts of the Northern Territory, or other parts of the country, that you could compare with here and, if so, are you able to say why things are good here or could be better here?

Mr Butcher—People go to the shops. Surely we are complaining about the prices in the store. That is what happens everywhere—not only at Papunya, but everywhere, even in cities or anywhere. But at the moment, I think the store is working well for us.

Mr TURNOUR—What would you describe as the main reason it is working well for you?

Mr Butcher—Because of good store managers.

Mr TURNOUR—Good store managers?

Mr Butcher—Yes.

Mr TURNOUR—I suppose this is a bit leading, but are there differences in the relationship with the community—obviously because of the store manager—but is the committee important as well?

Mr Butcher—Well, you come from a city where there are so many white people there, and here we live with black people, yellow people, any sort of people. So it does not make a difference. We, Aboriginal people, go to the shop and we shop for anything. We buy any sort of food or any sort of stuff. We spend a lot of money. To get some complaints from other people—I am not against white people—but, surely, we do a lot of shopping, the black people of Papunya. There are a lot of white people that live here and maybe some are complaining, but they should turn up and say to us, ‘Look, Sammy, we need to change things.’ But they are too afraid to say that. We live here, both black and white, so we got to have communication with everybody.

Mr TURNOUR—So are any issues generally dealt with through the store committee or directly with the store manager?

Mr Butcher—Well, you know, one is hiding behind closed doors. I am not saying whatever they have got to say, because we need to—like I said, communication is one thing that we have got to do—communicate. And we are missing out on that one.

Mr TURNOUR—You are missing out on—sorry?

Mr Butcher—We are missing out on communication with everybody, black and white, about the food prices. So one thing we need to do is get together and say, look, the prices are too up; the prices have got to go down. So we need to talk to each other, instead of one complaining to the other.

Mr TURNOUR—One of the things this inquiry is looking at is taking any of those issues back to Canberra and looking at how we might improve policy in relation to those sorts of issues as well.

Mr Butcher—There are a lot of people complaining about lollies and stuff, but we all grew up eating lollies. You, the white man, brought lollies. So why should we complain? Why should anybody complain?

Mr TURNOUR—The issues around that also relate to the health in the community. You spoke about—

Mr Butcher—I think it is up to the parents to show the parents how to eat good tucker.

Mr TURNOUR—So that is very much the responsibility of parents?

Mr Butcher—Yes, parents. And we, Aboriginal people, should look at those things. But we are not teaching ourselves. We are not educating ourselves. We are living fast. People are dying fast. So when is the good time to stop and say, look, we are eating rubbish tucker?

Mr TURNOUR—Does the store provide any educational materials in relation to that, in terms of trying to support and help? Are there any other programs running in the community that can help with that?

Mr Butcher—I would rather see some education brought into communities telling us how to look after a healthy lifestyle. We need more of that because, like I said, a lot of our people are going on dialysis. So, if the government is inquiring about all sorts of things, these are the things that we should be looking at. Aboriginal people need some help too.

Mr TURNOUR—Just to get that clear, I think what you are saying is that you can get good quality fruit, vegies, meat and whatnot in the store. It is about getting better understanding about maybe how to prepare them and the impacts they have on different qualities of food for children and other people in the family?

Mr Anderson—Yes. We are trying to look after everybody and we get people from the other government staff in the community who say, ‘You people are doing good things’, and we take their advice and tell our people not to get too many lollies. It is up to people to have their choice, but we have still got to understand to look after our health as well. Going back to the store managers, talking to store managers, if we have got good store managers, a good committee and people supporting otherwise, we will go a long way on that stuff.

Mr TURNOUR—Does pretty much all the food for this community come from the store or do people also bring food in from Alice Springs? What percentage of food for the community is actually bought at the store? Do people hunt locally as well?

Mr Jakamarra—We have got transport from town to the store here and we are quite happy about that, and some people with their own car go to town and do some shopping.

Mr TURNOUR—Is most food bought at this local store in the community?

Mr Jakamarra—Yes, most of it. We get our food here at the store, which is really good. I talk to the manager and we have a yarn about the food and drink and everything and the fridge, and we agree it has worked well. We are proud of our store manager and it is working well.

Mr TURNOUR—Where I come from many communities are by the sea or in the Torres Strait and a lot of people get food from the sea. Is there any hunting or anything else that goes on here in terms of supplementary—

Mr Jakamarra—Yes, when they have got cars, people often go out with a gun and shoot some kangaroos and get some bush tucker.

Mr TURNOUR—Is that a major part of the diet or not?

Mr Jakamarra—Yes, a major part. Sometimes it is easy but sometimes it is a bit hard to find bush tucker around here. It is part of our life.

Mr Butcher—If it was not for that food we would not be here. So how do Aboriginal people survive, answer me that.

Mr TURNOUR—I understand. You have got the store there now so would people eat bush food daily, weekly—how many times a week?

Mr Jakamarra—Any time. When they feel they want to go with the car or bus or Toyota, some staff here take them round to do some hunting for berries or goannas or kangaroos. It's when they feel like it. I think that everything I see in the shop I agree with. We have got a lot of vegetables and fruit and drinks and now we have got two big fridges full of vegetables and other food.

Mr TURNOUR—I would like to get a bit clearer about 'when people feel like it'. Where I come from people have to supplement their food intake with hunting and the like because, effectively, they are struggling to meet the family's needs through being able to afford to purchase enough food through the store. With the amount of money that people receive, can they buy enough to feed themselves for a week or a fortnight or do they need to supplement it with hunting and bush tucker? Is that an issue here?

Mr Jakamarra—In this centre we have a problem with the rain. Often we do not see any goannas and bush berries anymore because it dries out quickly. Some people do find them, mostly the women, but mostly we shop at the store.

Mr Butcher—You come from the city and your parents taught you how to put a meal on the table. Your family taught you how to cook tucker from the morning until the evening. Here, my tucker was kangaroo—that is how I grew up. In the sixties my people were brought in and we did not know all these products. It is slow learning for us about what is good to eat and what is bad to eat, you know. So education is the main thing. We have got to try to talk to our people.

CHAIR—Thank you very much. We really appreciate your evidence today.

Mrs VALE—I wanted to pick up on some of the points you made about education with food. You probably are all aware of the reason that the government wants us to actually have a look at community stores, because there is a 17-year gap between the longevity of Indigenous people against the white Australians. Part of the reason is the poor food that is available, as also some of the eating habits of some of the young children. So a little bit further on, when we have an open forum, I would really value hearing from some of the mothers and some of the grandmothers about exactly what they would like to see in the store that they could actually provide for their children. If that is an opportunity, we really would value having that kind of guidance from the women.

Sammy, one of the things I want to ask you is whether there are any other ways that people here in the community get vegetables. Are there any market gardens that grow? Do people grow any of their own food?

Mr Butcher—In the late seventies there was a farm over there, just around the corner. There were a lot of old people working on a big farm there. There was a piggery. People lived on the vegetables. But now I do not know. I grew up differently. I know what I want for my family. I told my family, 'Look, let's cook good tucker. This is the way.' I learned from others too. My sister-in-law is white and she always teaches me how to cook, so I am learning, because people

are getting dialysis, we are living too fast, drinking so much Coke, commercials show Coke on TV and kids go, 'Let's go and get Coke.' That is rubbish. We need to teach our kids.

Mrs VALE—Even in the mainstream white communities of Australia there is a tremendous amount of health issues like diabetes. There is an increase amongst children of obesity and diabetes.

Mr Butcher—Why can't we Aboriginal people educate ourselves how to look after ourselves, get tucker from the land?

Mrs VALE—You mean getting cooking lessons and learning how to use the food that is available.

Mr Butcher—Growing vegetables. That is the way our people lived, looking at bush tucker, and that is how they grew up. In the old days they were fit.

Mrs VALE—I understand. I think Jim asked about this. There are no cooking classes here run by any agency?

Mr Butcher—I would like to see some classes here, people teaching how to cook. That is what we are missing out on.

Mrs VALE—You would like to see that.

Mr Butcher—I reckon people should get off their arses and do. If the government provides everything then the Aboriginal people should get off our (expletive) arses and just do things like that.

Mr Anderson—I just want to interrupt Sammy to say we have learned a code of conduct and have to keep our language down a bit, please.

Mr Butcher—No, because—

Mr Anderson—Do not get carried away, settle down and see if we can answer the questions properly.

Mrs VALE—I was interested that Sammy said there was a farm once down the road that had a piggery. Did they also have chickens and eggs?

Mr Anderson—As Sammy said, down where the football oval is we had a piggery and chickens and one of our grandfathers used to have a farm there, and the pastor a long time ago, they had a big fruit farm here—

Mrs VALE—You had a fruit farm, did you?

Mr Anderson—As young kids we used to come around here, because the local pastor used to operate orange trees and lemons and that, in the 70s, as Sammy was saying.

Mrs VALE—What happened to the farm?

Mr Anderson—It just fell down, or maybe the person trying to do that stuff went back home to South Australia.

Mrs VALE—And so it did not get looked after. So we know that we can actually grow things like that here.

Mr Anderson—We can, yes. We are trying to do that stuff in outstations for our older people, for people who have got their homeland to look after the old people, not just some fruit but maybe going hunting.

Mrs VALE—Like Sammy said, there would be an interest in gardening, in doing a market community garden?

Mr Anderson—Yes, if we get people to help us and they continue to help us and show the young kids how to do it.

Mrs VALE—This would not replace what you need from the store. While having a community garden, it would just supplement some of your fresh food that you might be able to grow here.

Mr Anderson—Yes. Sammy and I used to go out to meetings and we would see outstations with their own vegies, and we came back and said, ‘Why can’t we do it?’ Like Sammy said, most of our kids—

Mrs VALE—It is a matter of having the opportunity and having the lessons.

Mr Anderson—The opportunity to do it, yes. Like Sammy said, our people should be up and going instead of just watching TV at home.

Mrs VALE—Perhaps you are not the people to ask this question; perhaps I should ask the mothers, the grandmothers or the senior women. When young babies are no longer being nursed by their mothers, how are they transferred onto solid food and what kind of food is available? Do they go onto Farex and do they have fruit? I would just like to know that.

Mr Anderson—I will ask Ada to explain it.

Mrs VALE—Thank you, Ada. When babies are no longer being breastfed, what do mothers here give the young children? How long are children usually breastfed?

Ms Lechleitner—Probably when they are one or two they are still breastfed.

Mrs VALE—What choices do the mothers have when it comes to training the child to go onto solid food?

Ms Lechleitner—They have a program at the health centre and the nurses teach them.

Mrs VALE—They teach them to try Farex?

Ms Lechleitner—Farex, Weet-Bix, porridge—

Mrs VALE—Do they introduce any vegetables? Do they have the canned baby food?

Ms Lechleitner—Whatever the mother cooks, they cut it down and make it into paste and then give it to them.

Mrs VALE—So there are many different ways that the children are introduced to food.

Ms Lechleitner—Yes—even chewing kangaroo meat. The mother chews it and feeds the baby.

Mrs VALE—I know it is difficult to speak for the other women here, but is there anything that you would like to see available in the store for you to provide for your family? Maybe the store cannot provide them because of the nature of your requirements, but—

Ms Lechleitner—Everything is there.

Mrs VALE—You are happy with what is there.

Ms Lechleitner—I am happy with it.

Mrs VALE—If there is any way we could recommend to the government to provide lessons in nutrition, in cooking, in opportunities to present food in different ways—like Sammy was saying, learning to have Western food, because nobody has really ever shown you how to prepare it?

Ms Lechleitner—We have this Waltja group that comes and teaches the ladies and young mothers.

Mrs VALE—Would you like to see more programs that are really supportive in that way for mothers?

Ms Lechleitner—Yes, that would be good.

Mr Butcher—I just want to say sorry. I will have to apologise, because I must be angry about my people, because we are the only ones who always speak up. I just want to say I am sorry. They are going to follow me in what we are going through, because we want to learn things.

Mrs VALE—I understand, and I can see that you really do need to learn, and you are asking for that, and that is something we will really take into account.

Mr Butcher—That is why I got frustrated that I am always the strong one. I am looking forward to leading our people towards good things.

Mrs VALE—And there are good things to do. There really are.

Mr Butcher—Yes.

Mrs VALE—Even in Western culture in Australia we really have a concern with, as I said, obesity in children and too much sugar. You are right: Coke is not a food. There are 16 teaspoons of sugar in one can of Coke, and that is not good for people. So it is a matter of learning nutrition, learning how to choose what is good and learning how to prepare it for children. If you think you could use some lessons and some guidance and support—

Mr Butcher—I think this is the time to do that, because there are a doctor and a schoolteacher here.

Mrs VALE—Ada, is there anything else you want us to tell the government about your needs here and how you could best feed your family?

Ms Lechleitner—It will be good to talk individually with people and ask them and then give my talk.

Mrs VALE—Thank you for your contribution. Thank you very much, Jim, and thank you, Sammy.

CHAIR—Thank you, Ada. You talked about there being a difference in the store since you have had the new managers. Before the new managers were here, were you happy with how the store ran?

Mr Anderson—Community people used to complain about the manager and how he behaved towards the communities. Now our store manager is consulting the committee and community as well on how the store should be run. Getting back to Dana's question about health, some men came up last week to learn how to cook, look after their weight and do more exercise. I think a similar thing should happen so young mothers and older people can learn how to cook, as Sammy was saying. All the programs are coming in, but we need people in the community to be interested to learn how to cook, not only families but young people. Some of our young people are overweight and they want to learn how to cook meals properly for themselves.

CHAIR—How did you recruit the new managers?

Mr Anderson—To be honest, the intervention was coming in and our store managers did not like the idea of licensing and so on. They had an argument amongst themselves. Greg showed an interest in coming to work for us. We did not interview him, but our accountant brought him and said, 'This is a good person,' so we said, 'All right, we'll have a look at him.' And now he is doing all right.

CHAIR—Thank you very much for giving us your time today. We really appreciate it.

Mr Jakamarra—There was something I wanted to say about the store. I am asking the committee members: we would like keep the store as it is.

CHAIR—Perhaps it is worth me mentioning what we are trying to do with this inquiry. It is not like the government is about to make any changes to any particular stores, so you do not need to have any concern about that.

Mr Jakamarra—Right.

CHAIR—We are really trying to learn where there are good stores and where there are bad stores and understand what makes a good store a good store. We will be coming up with recommendations about how things can be worked better across Australia. One of the really interesting things we have heard about so far is the whole issue of governance and how stores are governed locally. That has come through in the evidence that you have just given.

Mr Jakamarra—Yes, I was just saying we have good store managers here. Everybody likes them. We are proud of them because they always do a really good job in the store. Thank you.

CHAIR—That is very good. Thank you, Michael. With that, we might call the store managers and have a chat with them. Thank you very much for the time you have given us.

[4.30 pm]

GIUMELLI, Mr Greg, Store Manager, Papunya

GIUMELLI, Mrs Michelle, Store Manager, Papunya

CHAIR—Greg and Michelle, would you like to make an opening statement before we ask you some questions?

Mr Giumelli—Yes. I would like to welcome you all here today. I hope you enjoyed the tour of the store. Certainly, I am very proud to be associated with the Papunya store—going from where we came from to where we are now. That is not without all the help we get from the local people, the committee members and the staff who come in daily and help stack shelves, operate tills, drive vehicles and pump fuel. We are a unit that work as a team and who, we hope, will continue to do so for the betterment of the store and, ultimately, the community.

CHAIR—I will ask you some basic questions. They are much the same questions that we asked you in the store but it is for getting it on the record. Firstly, how many people do you employ?

Mr Giumelli—We employ one full-time storeman. He is full-time at exactly the same pay criteria and structure as with Michelle and me. We have two part-time cleaners, a part-time till operator and a part-time storeman. Each of those part-time people can actively do up to about 15 hours a week. It is good for the store and it is also good for that person because it does not directly affect their payments.

CHAIR—Are any of them paid on the CDEP?

Mr Giumelli—No.

CHAIR—We have talked with our previous witnesses about the governance arrangements. How does it operate from your point of view? Do you have a formal consultative mechanism with the committee or the council?

Mr Giumelli—Yes. We formed the non-profit organisation with 14 members. It was voted on here and they voted for their committee members, chairman, vice chairman and president. We have meetings every three months. On a weekly basis, I have discussions with all of those people. They are the committee members of the store and ultimately, as we step on further, will make more and more associated decisions in regard to the store, the delivery of healthier food, pricing, employment and all areas.

CHAIR—When we were speaking to you in the store, you talked about the turnover of the store when you first took it over. Could you describe it again for the record.

Mr Giumelli—When we first took over the store, it was stated to us that the store was doing around \$35,000 a week. From the point of time when we first took it over, within the first week

we were doing about \$50,000. Ever since that day the store has been hitting \$50,000, \$55,000 to \$60,000 or in some exceptional weeks \$70,000. It is fair to say that the right product—quality fruit and veg—the clean store, a good aura about the store and the participation of local people within the store are all good signs for turnover for the store.

CHAIR—The store is obviously profitable.

Mr Giumelli—Yes.

CHAIR—Do you have a goal for what level of profit you make?

Mr Giumelli—We are at about 35 per cent gross profit.

CHAIR—Does that then get put back into the not-for-profit organisation?

Mr Giumelli—It is held within the store's accounts. If the committee come together at the point in time when we have Centre Accounting Services there then we discuss our financials. If we are in a healthy position, there is a viable source where there is a donation, the store is in a position to donate and the committee makes that decision then it happens.

CHAIR—Okay. How do you determine pricing? Is that done by the pair of you or in consultation with the committee?

Mr Giumelli—Pretty much right from the start, even before we had a committee set up, , Sid Anderson, the chairman, and I would always look at and discuss pricing, along with Sammy Butcher and Michael Nelson—all the people you have met. Pricing has been determined as we have gone along. We have only recently made a decision to have meat at a mark-up of 25 per cent that incurs the freight in that margin. That was decided by the committee.

CHAIR—Do you try to keep the fresh fruit and vegetables and meat at a lower mark-up than other products?

Mr Giumelli—Yes, fruit and vegetables are at about 22 per cent. We do that in order that people can buy more fresh fruit and vegetables as opposed to Mars bars or cans of Coke. We sell Diet Coke more cheaply than Coke and we sell water more cheaply to help sell healthier fluids as opposed to sugary fluids.

CHAIR—Do you keep stats on what percentage of your turnover is through fresh fruit and vegetables?

Mr Giumelli—Yes, we probably have got that here.

CHAIR—While you are looking for that, I might keep going because we have to keep it moving. How do you go about your purchasing? Do you purchase from one supplier in Alice Springs? How does it all work?

Mr Giumelli—We purchase the majority of our groceries through IGA. Having said that, we also purchase through another supplier called Smimac. By keeping two suppliers I can try to

keep both of them a bit honest and try to get the best deal from either one at any point in time. We have one fruit and veg supplier and we get meat from Alice Springs. As for variety, we spread that and buy it from anywhere we can—the best quality for the best price.

CHAIR—That sounds as though you do a lot of the purchasing management yourself in the sense that you are not being managed out of a place in Alice Springs.

Mr Giumelli—No. One of the advantages of our store as opposed to other stores is that if, for example, someone wants a bridle for a horse—and there has been a request for one—I can source it from Alice Springs or from Adelaide, if it is cheaper, purchase it and bring it in for that person. That goes for all the specialty type requirements we have in store.

CHAIR—In terms of the range of products you have—I do not mean one-off things like that but a brand of breakfast cereal or whatever—is there a capacity to stock a particular line of product if there is a demand from the community?

Mr Giumelli—Absolutely. If I can buy a certain product in a bulk range and save a small amount on it, it is bought and then on-sold at a later time. Provided it has consumerability it can last a long time.

Mrs Giumelli—We were asked last year by the nutritionist who comes to the community to have a larger range of lentils and things like that. Because IGA and Smimac do not provide those products, we have gone to Woolworths and Coles and bought them ourselves and put them into the store. Whilst we do not have a huge range of those things, we do have something to offer people if they want to buy a healthier alternative. We have also gone to IGA and asked them to stock wholemeal products for us so that we can have wholemeal flour and wholemeal pastas and things like that. Sometimes we might not be able to get them from the supplier but we source them from the local supermarket.

CHAIR—You mentioned a nutritionist. How did it come about that you were talking to one?

Mrs Giumelli—A nutritionist comes out to the community once every so often, and they come in and see us and look at what we have got. If there is something we do not have and they think it would be beneficial, they speak to us about getting it into the store. We do not buy huge amounts of it because, quite obviously, if it does not sell, it is a loss to the store, but we do try to have a small amount of anything that is suggested.

CHAIR—I also want to ask about the transport situation here. How do you organise transport? How often is product being brought out here?

Mr Giumelli—We get product every fortnight. We purchase through our suppliers. We provide a list to a freight company and they bring it out. It is always delivered very well. ABC Transport are a very good freight company and I have never had any issues with them. The fruit and vegies are always fine; they are not damaged or frozen in the truck.

CHAIR—Is the truck a dedicated truck to this community?

Mr Giumelli—That is correct.

CHAIR—Is it ABC Transport?

Mr Giumelli—Yes. The other sectors of the community also have a relationship with ABC, and it is up to them to place their own orders and acknowledge with ABC what they require to have picked up, and they are charged separately.

CHAIR—So when they deliver here they are not delivering just to you?

Mr Giumelli—That is right, but we probably get 85 per cent of the delivery.

CHAIR—Did you pick ABC Transport?

Mr Giumelli—No, they have been in this area for the last six years.

CHAIR—You mentioned that sometimes you might order a particular delivery, if you are short on fruit and veg, within the fortnight.

Mr Giumelli—Yes. We sell lots of fruit and veg. People ask me if I have a statement on fruit and veg, and my philosophy is to always provide as good a quality of fruit and veg as we can all the time. That means that, if we have a truck on a Tuesday and I happen to be in Alice Springs on the Sunday prior to the Tuesday, we will go to Central Fruit and Vegetable Wholesalers and pick up four, five or six boxes of specific stuff, such as fruit packs, salad packs or veggie packs; they will go on the shelf just to suffice for that day-and-a-half period, and they sell.

CHAIR—You also mentioned when we were talking to you earlier that you have worked in other stores around Australia. Could you briefly go through the stores that you have worked in.

Mr Giumelli—Yes. We ran a bullocky store in Ramingining, which was a takeaway-type bullocky store but also a carver enterprise, for about four months. I went to Kiwirrkurra as a project officer for about eight months. I went to Bidyadanga, which is in Broome, on two occasions. That is a large store, very well equipped. I was there for three years or more, and that was a very well-run and operated store and business. Having said that, I say that it makes less money than Papunya despite having more people in the community.

CHAIR—With your experience, do you think there is a secret to running a good community store in a remote community?

Mr Giumelli—You have to understand people, treat them with common decency and fairness, listen to what they want and really go out of your way to try and get what they want for them. Good customer service goes a long way. Ultimately, you need to try and install the pride and thought of ownership with regard to the store. Once you get that momentum happening, people start to enjoy the store. They like the store, and it is a bit of a buzz to go in there and see what has come in on the truck for that fortnight and what they can purchase, as opposed to having to go to Alice Springs.

CHAIR—You mean a sense of ownership amongst the community—that the community has a sense of ownership in the store.

Mr Giumelli—Yes.

Mr TURNOUR—Greg and Michelle, congratulations on the work that you do at the store. I have been to many stores in my electorate over the period of time I have been with this committee, and I wish we had similar responses from community members to those we have had about you. So congratulations on that. I think the chair has covered most things. You are running an individual community store here and obviously doing a really good job, but there have been problems in the past. Do you have any advice for the committee in the form of general recommendations? Obviously there would be risks, where you can turn over \$50,000 a week, of having somebody who did not necessarily have their heart in the right place—money goes missing and all of those sorts of potential problems I can imagine in a store like this. Do you have any recommendations that the inquiry could take on board about how you can manage those issues and assist the community to manage those issues more effectively?

Mr Giumelli—What I effectively try to do—and I have started speaking about this with the committee members—is that the committee members need to know and understand the level at which their store can run and operate. Effectively they are my and Michelle’s employers—ultimately the community is our employer—so they have a right and responsibility to ensure that their store operates at the level that they know it can run at. If at any point they see it starting to derail—within a three-month period from their bringing in new management after we leave; that is what I am saying—at that point within the three months they need to acknowledge these changes, watch what is going on and take appropriate measures to ensure that it does not go down the slide within a three- to six-month period. Unfortunately, that is how quickly stores can go downhill. The committee members would need to rectify that, pull the new managers up and ensure that certain levels of practice that were happening previously are still kept up.

Mr TURNOUR—Do you have the percentages of things that you throw out, your turnover and things like that documented? Do you provide those as reports to the committee? Do you have an external auditor come in? What sort of key performance indicators, I suppose, are there that are in place or could be put in place in working with a committee like yours to make sure things are not running downhill quickly? Obviously people see that, but seeing something and then having a discussion and being able to prove it in a constructive way are different things.

Mr Giumelli—Now that they have the committee, we are held under our constitution to have a minimum of four meetings a year. I have asked Centre Accounting Services, and they must attend at least two to three of them per year, so there should be a financial report given at each of those meetings. At stocktakes we are audited by Deloitte. They come out and do a full audit of our stocktake, financials on hand. They go right through Centre Accounting Services and their operational capacity with our financials, and they ensure that everything is correct.

Mr TURNOUR—Can you explain who Centre Accounting Services are and how Deloitte fit in as well?

Mr Giumelli—Centre Accounting Services are the body who finance our store. They are accountants. That is who I was employed through. I originally applied for a position at Kintore when I was at Badgingarra. I did not get the position and then I got a phone call asking, ‘Would you like to go to Papunya?’ That is how I got the position. It was through Centre Accounting

Services. As I stated, they do financials. Deloitte come in as an external auditor to ensure that everything is above board and that we are operating effectively.

Mr TURNOUR—Thank you very much and, again, congratulations.

Mrs VALE—Congratulations. I would like to add to Jim's comments—you have done very well. Welcome, Michelle. When we had a tour of the store, you mentioned, Greg, that you had negotiated a very good price for baby formula. I have seen that in other remote stores and it has been nearly \$10 dearer than what you have it for here. Could you explain for the committee how you negotiated that very good price for baby formula. Also, do you sell very much of it?

Mr Giumelli—Certainly. Michelle and I acknowledge that we thought it was relatively expensive as we went through Coles doing some personal shopping and shopping for the store every fortnight. A local person brought it up with us and said, 'Look, it's too expensive,' and we agreed. At that point—correct me if I am wrong, Michelle—Michelle phoned IGA, spoke with the head sales rep there and said it was too expensive. I believe they had a marginal decrease in their sale to us and, in turn, we had a relative decrease in our sale. Michelle, what percentage would the baby food have dropped by?

Mrs Giumelli—I am not sure of the percentage on the baby formula, but I guess more to the point is the fact that we have made a conscious effort not to make a large amount of money from the formula. Whilst we have bought it at a better price, it is still very expensive, quite a lot more expensive than if we buy it from town. We do not have a very high margin on formula. Basically, we have enough just to cover the freight in. We absorb all the costs of freight. We do not actually add the freight cost to any of our products. The store absorbs that cost in its gross profit.

Mrs VALE—I have seen it in other remote community stores and it was over \$30 or \$33. I think you have it for about \$26, haven't you?

Mr Giumelli—It is \$26 and \$23.

Mrs Giumelli—It depends on the product. I have noticed that at the moment Nurture is quite reasonably priced for us to buy, so that has been good for us. With \$26, we do not make a very high margin at all. It is much lower than our normal grocery margin.

Mrs VALE—Is it around the same price as what you can buy in Alice Springs or is it still a little higher than Alice Springs?

Mrs Giumelli—It is still a little higher. I find that the biggest problem—getting on to the store a little bit is not so much the freight; it is the price that we are buying the goods for. We buy from, obviously, IGA, Smimac and Central Fruit and Veg. Quite often we are paying the same price that we would to personally go and buy things from Coles or Woolworths. They obviously have a much higher buying power, being a large corporation, but there is not really any benefit for us to buy—

Mrs VALE—They do not pass it on to you; they actually load the price?

Mrs Giumelli—We are not sure whether they are having to pay more for freight to get it into Alice Springs, but pretty much across the board with certain products, as Michelle said, we could go and buy \$100 worth of gear from Woolworths and go and buy the same \$100 worth of gear from IGA and the prices would be almost within five dollars.

Mrs Giumelli—There have been times when we have run out of stock here and bought from a supermarket because we have been in there, and it has cost us the same amount, if not a little bit less, than it would have to buy it through our supplier, which I find a little bit ludicrous. Obviously, we are competitive out here but we still need to be able to make some money. For us to have lower prices—

Mr Giumelli—Having said that, there is a purchase arrangement whereby if we buy five or 10 cartons we get a slight discount. But sometimes we do not want five or 10 cartons of stuff because you end up getting a build-up and you do not have your money in the bank. That is probably one area where we would like to see them be a bit sharper. It would make our job easier and it would be passed on as well.

Mrs Giumelli—Particularly with fruit and veg. I find quite often that Coles and Woolworths are far cheaper than our buying power is. That is why fruit and vegies are still more expensive out here even though we try to have very low margins.

Mrs VALE—I will ask you about bread. I do not recall noticing any bread inside. You obviously get the bread delivered once a fortnight too. Do you freeze it?

Mrs Giumelli—It is frozen when it comes; it is snap frozen once it is baked. But our bread prices are actually cheaper than at Alice Springs, so we are quite happy about that.

Mrs VALE—You are doing well on the bread, are you? Is there is a good market for bread? Do people buy bread constantly?

Mrs Giumelli—We sell a lot.

Mr Giumelli—We get a healthy, high-fibre white bread that is made by Tip Top. We also sell quite a bit of wholemeal and a little bit of multigrain. We probably go through two to 2½ pallets of bread per fortnight.

Mrs VALE—Lastly, Michelle, you talked about the nutritionist. How often does the nutritionist come to visit?

Mrs Giumelli—I am not really sure. We probably see her once every three months or so, but I know she has a lot to do with the clinic.

Mrs VALE—Does she give lessons in nutrition to anyone? Are there formal courses?

Mrs Giumelli—I think she does cooking with the ladies. We had a mental health gentlemen—I think it was—out last week doing cooking with the gentlemen.

Mrs VALE—Is there any mechanism whereby the women are able to come to you and say, ‘We would like to be able to purchase this from the store?’ What I am trying to ask you is whether there is any formal way that you have community consultations or if it is just the opportunity of people coming in and, when they see you, saying, ‘Hey, we would like you to get some of this or some of that.’

Mr Giumelli—That is the way it happens generally, but the formal way for it to happen, if they really wanted it, would be to go to a committee meeting; it would be noted in our minutes and therefore there would have to be a response by the next time.

Mrs VALE—I note some of the Indigenous ladies are very shy. I was just wondering about the opportunity for them to come to speak to you directly, perhaps about things that they might like to offer their children.

Mr Giumelli—That is what is interesting. Probably one of the biggest advantages that we also have—as opposed, probably, to some other, larger community-run-type stores—is that we get a consistency in managers and therefore people get to know us, and after a period of about four to five months people and ladies will come up and talk; you have a joke and they quite openly let you know if they want certain products.

I will just add, in regard to the statement before about healthy cooking and eating and all those types of factors, that we sell lots of canned food in communities, and unfortunately it is very easy to buy a can of savoury mince as opposed to getting mince and some vegetables and chopping them up and cooking. From what I have seen as a store manager over the years, some help within that area—cooking lessons for the young ladies and that type of thing to assist—would certainly be beneficial.

Mrs Giumelli—I personally think gentlemen would like it as well, though.

Mrs VALE—It is interesting you say that, though, Greg, because even in Western culture in the cities young women who are now career women do not actually know what to do with a pound of mince, so it seems to be something we have to look at right across the general mainstream community.

Mr Giumelli—Yes.

Mrs VALE—Thank you very much for your contribution.

CHAIR—You mentioned Centre Accounting Services. They are not your employer now?

Mrs Giumelli—No.

Mr Giumelli—We, the store and the committee, employ Centre Accounting Services to operate our financials.

CHAIR—So they are engaged on a retainer as the accountants?

Mr Giumelli—Correct. It is about two per cent, I think.

CHAIR—That explains that. You talked about difficulty with the suppliers and the price. Is there any ability to change suppliers?

Mr Giumelli—That is why I was trying to keep two of them on board and work from one to the other. We could start purchasing out of Adelaide, which I believe would be x amount cheaper, but then we also have the freight component from Adelaide to Alice Springs. But there are a few stores within this line through to WA who buy out of Adelaide as opposed to IGA Alice Springs.

CHAIR—The final issue is that when we were in the store you mentioned that you had improved the infrastructure of the store with the freezers and so forth. Could you talk a little bit about that?

Mr Giumelli—Yes. When we arrived, there was not a great deal of product or choice, in my opinion. I always try and work as best I can with all the sales reps and prove to them that we can get sales up. Subsequently, we attained fridges and freezers through Coke; racking, with Smith's chips; and Pauls fridges through Pauls milk. Attaining all those different fridges helps us display product and keep it longer and better. The improvements we have made at the store in the time we have been there are that we have put in a big flyscreen at the front of the door that helps keep the insects out, we have put in air conditioners and we have put floodlights out the front that flood up the store at night-time. They are some of the improvements we have made.

CHAIR—What percentage of the cost of the product is transport?

Mr Giumelli—About four per cent.

CHAIR—And that is from Alice Springs?

Mr Giumelli—Correct.

CHAIR—So any transport in getting product to Alice Springs is not—

Mr Giumelli—It is already built into the purchase price.

CHAIR—Thank you very much for your evidence today. We really appreciate the time you have given us.

Mrs Giumelli—Thank you.

Mr Giumelli—Thank you.

[4.56 pm]

SIFA, Ms Sue, Principal, Papunya School

CHAIR—Welcome. Would you like to make an opening statement? Then we might ask you some questions.

Ms Sifa—I think all of this community are very concerned about the health of their children, not just in the general sense but about things like their teeth and their ability to learn at school. That is affected by our location and people's access to healthy foods.

CHAIR—How many kids do you have at the school?

Ms Sifa—On the roll there are 87.

CHAIR—From what years to what years?

Ms Sifa—From preschool, so they can come at 3½, and the oldest children at the moment are 14. We sent in 12 students to Yirara College this year, so that is why there is no-one over 14; they are in town.

CHAIR—So, when kids complete their schooling here, they tend to go to Yirara?

Ms Sifa—They tend to, yes.

CHAIR—Do you run any kind of canteen?

Ms Sifa—Yes, we run a nutrition program funded by the intervention and parents' payments for their children's food. That is built on the foundation of the one that existed before the intervention, so the school has always provided breakfast, morning tea and lunch. Since the intervention, there has been a larger budget for that, so their quality and quantity of food has improved, but basically those three meals were provided every day and are provided every day.

CHAIR—How are they provided? Who does the cooking?

Ms Sifa—Who does the cooking?

CHAIR—Do you purchase that product from the store? How does that all work?

Ms Sifa—We do as Greg does. We do bush orders once a fortnight, and that would be the bulk of that food. We do that with Independent Grocers, Prime Cuts and Central Fruit and Vegetable Wholesalers. If we run out of something or if we have forgotten something or whatever, we will go to the store and top up what we have purchased from them. I have to say that, unlike Greg, we have ongoing issues with transport and the delivery of items that vanish between Alice and here.

CHAIR—Are you using ABC Transport?

Ms Sifa—We have to use ABC Transport; that is all there is.

CHAIR—So is your product coming in on the same delivery as what supplies the store?

Ms Sifa—Yes. On Tuesday morning it is generally a very busy place at Papunya. Everyone is at the shop offloading.

CHAIR—It sounds like you largely use the same suppliers that the general store does.

Ms Sifa—We do, but there is not a lot of choice in Alice.

CHAIR—There must be some infrastructure like freezers and so on where you are keeping the fresh fruit and vegetables.

Ms Sifa—Yes. We were fortunate. With the intervention, we are one of, I think, only four schools where the food is actually prepared on the school grounds in the school kitchens. The school had a secondary block built four years ago, and that had kitchens for home economics as part of it. That is really the only large-scale kitchen that exists in Papunya. So, whereas in other communities the women's centre or the community centre cooks and then delivers food, all the food for the children is actually cooked at school by a couple of ladies.

CHAIR—Where is that stored?

Ms Sifa—We have freezers and fridges for storing food. In truck week we mostly use fresh food and in non-truck week we go onto frozen food, because it does not last.

CHAIR—Do you end up topping up some of your products from the general store?

Ms Sifa—We do.

Mrs VALE—Sue, you are saying that some of the ladies cook. Do some of the mothers come into the kitchen and cook?

Ms Sifa—No, we have two local ladies who are employed—Emily as the cook and Emma as kitchenhand and emergency cook when Emily is not there. We have ongoing PD for those ladies—both of them are enrolled at Batchelor Institute to improve English reading and writing. As well as that, Susie Mannis, who is the NT Health nutritionist, comes out one to two times a term. She stays for a week and some of that time she spends in the kitchen working with our ladies. She also works with the ladies who work in aged care. She provides training for them and she also provides education in the classes for children. They have developed cookery books which are mostly photographs rather than writing. She trials those recipes and refines them with the ladies and then we use them, and she uses those recipes in other communities.

Mrs VALE—What kinds of meals would the ladies cook?

Ms Sifa—In a week we would have Weet-Bix or toast or porridge for breakfast, rotating through, and Milo. Morning tea is fruit. Lunch today was sausages as a kind of hot dog with salad, but quite often it will be chicken stir-fry or kangaroo stew or curry or that kind of thing through the week.

Mrs VALE—Do you do soups at all?

Ms Sifa—No, the children do not like soup. We have tried soup and children who are used to a more traditional diet do not understand why it is thin. They are much happier having stew.

Mrs VALE—They will have stew and casseroles and stuff like that?

Ms Sifa—Yes. We have mince and all the rest of it as well.

Mr TURNOUR—Are those cooks employed by the education department or they employed through CDEP with top-up? How are they employed?

Ms Sifa—They are employed through the intervention. Susan McVicker is the bureaucratic manager of intervention nutrition programs throughout the centre. She has an accountant in Darwin called Debbie Miller. The ladies' time sheets go to her rather than to the school. In the past it ended up being teachers' and principals' responsibilities and those ladies were paid. One position was a CDEP position and the other one was paid out of the tiny budget that came from the Red Cross and NT Health.

Mrs VALE—How is that particular program being received by the residents here in the community?

Ms Sifa—I think that all families are very pleased with the food that people receive during term time. It is a well-rounded diet. It is a hot meal in the middle of the day. Children look forward to Mondays—they like their lunch—and we measure the success of that by how many scraps are in the bin. Sweet and sour is not an item in Papunya—nobody likes it—so you see the buckets full and you do not do it again.

Mrs VALE—How is your attendance rate at school? Has it picked up because the children are fed?

Ms Sifa—They were fed before the intervention started.

Mrs VALE—It has just improved the quality and the choice—

Ms Sifa—That is right.

Mrs VALE—so you find that it does help to feed the children of school. Did you actually start feeding the children?

Ms Sifa—No, it was running when I got here. There is one member of staff who has been here five years and in her first year children would be gone by lunchtime, because children would go home for lunch and not come back. So having lunch at school is really important.

The other thing I would like to say, in terms of looking at what families buy, is that very few people in Papunya have a fridge. So you cannot buy an economy version of anything—at the shop here or in Alice—because you cannot keep it. So people can only buy a very limited number of things, and they have to consume them that day. The other thing that is problematic is that housing here is so crowded that if you have 15 people living in one house and you take home food for your four, people will share that. You are not going to not feed people. So if people go to shop and buy a tin of flour, it will not last them the week or two weeks that it would last a usual small family, because everybody is in that one house and everyone is going to have to share it. The economies of scale that Greg and Michelle use, and that I use, are not actually available to people, because they do not have facilities to store or they are forced by housing to have six youngfellas in with a family. And youngfellas eat. They eat anything that is not nailed down, and that is true of everywhere.

Mrs VALE—Thanks, Sue. I think that is an important point. Thanks very much for your contribution.

[5.06 pm]

McDONALD, Mr Lance, Private capacity

TASI, Mr Sifa, Private capacity

WILLIAMS, Ms Anne, Aboriginal Interpreter Service

CHAIR—We have just a few minutes before we close, and we do have to close because of the flight restrictions getting back into Alice. We have got four names. If you can keep it brief, that would be great.

Mr McDonald—My name is Lance McDonald. I am a local man. I always go shopping here.

CHAIR—What would you like to say to the committee, Lance?

Mr McDonald—I would like to say that the shop is really good. It has got a lot of good tucker. When we had the former store manager he was selling all the rubbish tucker. These two came along and changed everything. You guys would have come when the old store manager was here, and you would have seen the shop different. We know from our personal experience that there are a lot of changes in this shop, and it is really good. It is not only the tucker but there is a lot of motorcar gear and sporting gear as well, like AFL gear. That is really good.

CHAIR—Thank you, Lance.

Mr Tasi—I am Sifa Tasi. I am coordinating the aged-care program in Papunya. They asked me to say something about the food here. I do the same as Greg and Michelle. The truck comes here once a fortnight, so I order fresh fruit for the week, because unlike the school and the shop, I do not have the facilities to store it for longer than a week. After it is used up I use tinned fruit or go up to the shop and get products for that week. You just have to do with what is there.

My beef is because of my aged-care people. There are five old ladies between 70 and 75 living under a tree at the moment. They have been there for nearly eight weeks. The housing is the main thing I am worried about, so I thought you would probably tell your colleagues in Canberra.

Mr Tasi—I want to say one thing more. My beef is because of my aged care people. They are five old ladies between 70 and 75 living under a tree at the moment. They had been there for nearly eight weeks. The housing is the main thing I am worried about. I thought you could tell your colleagues in Canberra.

CHAIR—We will certainly pass that on. Thank you for that.

Ms Williams—I am not a local person from Papunya but I am from Alice Springs. I am employed by the Aboriginal Interpreter Service. The question I would like to put to the committee is that the government did a review into the Northern Territory emergency response

and one of the very strong recommendations was that interpreters should be used, especially at community meetings. I am wondering why one was not organised today, because this is a very special meeting. People do understand English but the whole community, the people that are here, should have been represented properly by using an interpreter.

CHAIR—Thank you for that. I think we will have to take it on notice. I am not sure what the answer is in terms of why we have not organised an interpreter. But we will get back to you with an answer to that question because we know it is an important issue. What we might also try and do is offer to try and have, if people are interested, the transcript translated so that people are in a position to read it, if that would be of use. We might talk to you afterwards and try and work out a solution to that. But thank you for raising that.

That brings our meeting to a close today. I am sorry that we have had to be quick at the end because we do need to get on this plane. I thank all of you for taking the time in your day to attend this hearing. I thank the secretariat staff and also the Hansard staff. The committee will take into consideration everything which has been discussed in today's public hearing. As I mentioned earlier, the report of the hearing is due to be presented to the House of Representatives by September of this year. That will be public and will be able to be accessed through the committee's website. Thank you again for attending today.

Resolved (on motion by **Mrs Vale**):

That the committee authorise the publication of the evidence given before it at public hearing today, including publication on the parliamentary electronic database of the proof transcript.

Committee adjourned at 5.12 pm