



Remote community stores— More than just a shop

The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs will hold the second public hearing in its inquiry into community stores in remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait communities.

The Committee has received over sixty submissions to the inquiry, many from Australia's diverse remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait communities. An important message being conveyed is that remote community stores provide a vital community service, not only food for health but also revenue for community projects as well as training, employment and information for the community as a whole.

The Committee Chairman Mr Richard Marles MP has stated:

“In remote communities the local store may be the sole provider of fresh foods and goods essential for health; it is often also the hub of economic and social life. The Committee wants to ensure that these stores are viable operations, delivering healthy outcomes for healthy communities”.

At the hearing, Professor John Altman and Ms Kirrily Jordan from the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research (CAEPR) will brief the Committee about the potential of the ‘Hub and Spoke’ supply model to achieve these outcomes, as one of the range of models needed to ensure health and economic security in diverse remote Aboriginal communities.

The Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs will advise on the obstacles to good health in remote communities and report the steps being taken to overcome these. The Department currently funds Outback Stores, a supplier and management corporative which aims to boost availability of affordable healthy foods to remote communities by establishing regional and national store networks.

Public hearing on Thursday 12 March 2009
Venue: Committee Room 1R2 Parliament House

12.15pm Professor John Altman and Ms Kirrily Jordan, CAEPR

1.00-pm The Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs

For media comment, please contact the Committee Chair Mr Richard Marles on (02) 62774330.

For background information, contact the Committee Secretariat on (02) 62774559 or atsia.reps@aph.gov.au