Inquiry into Remote Community Stores in ATSI communities

Lockhart River Submission

The following submission is being presented on behalf of members of the Lockhart River community in Cape York. Members of the Lockhart River Health Action Team (a local health advisory group) and Queensland Health Primary Health Centre staff were consulted for their opinions about the store. A random collection of store receipts were gathered and together with direct comments from community members, make up the content of this submission.

For the community members of Lockhart River that we spoke to, the major concerns in relation to the store were:

1. High price of food (making healthy eating difficult)
2. Poor quality produce
3. Shelf prices missing or incorrect (making budgeting impossible)
4. Out of date items
5. Unclean environment
6. Lack of variety, especially of healthy food items
7. No healthy takeaway options and unhealthy options prominently displayed at front of shop
8. No specials

At the request of the community this submission has been compiled by Royal Flying Doctor Service employees, Wendy Graham, Dietitian and Amelia Hosking, Health Promotion Officer. The content of this submission and views expressed within are entirely that of community members of Lockhart River. The views expressed do not necessarily reflect the opinions of RFDS staff. A separate submission has been prepared and submitted by staff of the Royal Flying Doctor Service.
Comments from Lockhart River Community Members

Food supply
- “Not getting fresh vegetables”
- “Need to farm own vegetables”
- “Quantity of meat is no good, e.g. 2 pieces in one pack” - (not appropriate for large families)
- Lack of bulk items, e.g. no 20kg flour bags
- “variety big issue, same food all year round”
- “barge ok but when trucks stop run out of flour etc.” – (due to wet season)
- “some things haven’t been re-stocked for months”
- “food in the storeroom that doesn’t get brought out”
- “don’t bring in fresh bread anymore or if it does goes straight away”
- “things are defrosted and refrozen, e.g. vegetables are in lump or sticking together”
- “people could make own coconut milk not buy from can”

Quality
- “Vegetables don’t last long”
- “Vegetables left on shelf when wrinkled and not thrown away”
- “People don’t look at used by dates and food is out of date”
- “bought mouldy bread”
- “cartons with cracked eggs left on shelf”
- “quality of meat no good”
- “milk all mixed up in terms of used by dates, putting fresh ones in front and leave old ones behind”
- “water on top of milk”
- “getting food that goes out of date within a couple of days close to their expiry date”
- “fruit sometimes rotten or bad quality, not fresh”
- “oranges are bad”
- “leave old unsold fruit on shelf and put new ones on top”
- “bread mouldy and smells”
- “cook up steak and no blood comes out, no taste, like cardboard”
- “things are defrosted and refrozen, e.g. vegetables are in lump or sticking together”
- “2 minute noodles all out of date, people getting sick”
- “flour bag has a hole in it and they stick it back together”
- “eggs out of date”
- “expired noodles, cottage cheese, sour cream, yoghurt”

Cost
- “vegetables expensive therefore don’t buy much”
- “prices went up again last week”
- “every time there’s a break (holidays e.g. Christmas) prices go up”
- “price of meat has come down a little bit from last time but still expensive”
- “prices always going up”
- “fruit expensive”
- “can spend $300 and doesn’t last one week, in Cairns will last a long time”
- “prices too dear to shop for whole family”
➢ “$20 for a whole chicken”
➢ “$88 for turkey at Christmas”
➢ “leg of ham ranged $50-$70 at Christmas”
➢ “hygiene products too expensive”
➢ Freight makes food too expensive

**Competition**
➢ “should be specials on especially before expiry date”
➢ “never any specials”
➢ Too many barriers to ordering food from Cairns – no credit card, internet

**Availability of healthy options**
➢ “no healthy quick meals”
➢ “sandwiches are really yucky, don’t last long”
➢ “lots of pies and sausage rolls”
➢ “getting brown bread but not as much as used to”
➢ “lots of sweets at the store and on display”
➢ “want healthy choices to be available at the takeaway”
➢ lack of choice of convenience foods

**Other issues**
➢ “Prices on shelves don’t match food”
➢ “sometimes no prices on shelves”
➢ “outside the store is dirty, rubbish everywhere and inside as well”
➢ “don’t see anyone cleaning”
➢ “don’t have any cleaner to mop the floor”
➢ “no profit coming back into the community”
### Comparison of prices in Lockhart River Store and Cairns supermarkets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Cairns $</th>
<th>Lockhart River $</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tomatoes</td>
<td>$2.45/kg</td>
<td>$8.66/kg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pasta shells</td>
<td>59cents/500g</td>
<td>$4.02/500g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(cheapest available)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baked beans</td>
<td>69cents/400g</td>
<td>$1.20/220g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milk</td>
<td>$1.19/1L</td>
<td>$2.22/1L (UHT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weet Bix</td>
<td>$2.00/750g</td>
<td>$6.72/750g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deodorant</td>
<td>$2.89/50g</td>
<td>$10.39/100g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toilet paper</td>
<td>$2.95/6pk</td>
<td>$8.48/8pk (black &amp; gold)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potatoes</td>
<td>$1.97/kg</td>
<td>$5.68/kg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bananas</td>
<td>$1.99/kg</td>
<td>$3.93/kg</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Invoice 1

**Welcome to**

Lockhart River Retail Store
(07) 406607192

**Tax Invoice**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Description</th>
<th>Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 x Wave Cheese Burger 150gm</td>
<td>$4.36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Subtotal**

$4.36

**Total**

$4.36

**Items**

1

**Cash**

$5.00

**Change**

$0.65

**Transaction Includes GST:**

$0.40

**Indicates Taxable Supply**

Thank you for visiting
15/01/09 15:34
Cashier: 00103

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### Invoice 2

**Welcome to**

Lockhart River Retail Store
(07) 406607192

**Tax Invoice**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Description</th>
<th>Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coca Cola 1.25L</td>
<td>$4.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interior Chick/Veg Pie 200gm</td>
<td>$4.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interior Steak Kidney</td>
<td>$4.12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Subtotal**

$13.00

**Total**

$13.00

**Items**

3

**Cash**

$20.00

**Change**

$7.00

**Transaction Includes GST:**

$1.18

**Indicates Taxable Supply**

Thank you for visiting
15/01/09 15:07
Cashier: 00103

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### Invoice 3

**Welcome to**

Lockhart River Retail Store
(07) 406607192

**Tax Invoice**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Description</th>
<th>Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coke Cola 1L</td>
<td>$4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interior Mac Cheese Steak Kidney</td>
<td>$4.40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Subtotal**

$8.40

**Total**

$8.40

**Items**

1

**Cash**

$5.00

**Change**

$3.40

**Transaction Includes GST:**

$0.31

**Indicates Taxable Supply**

Thank you for visiting
15/01/09 14:36
Cashier: 00103
Hygiene & personal products expensive

Vicks Vaporub $12.06

Deodorant $10.39
The store in Lockhart River has a significant influence on the health and wellbeing of the entire community. The high cost of food and groceries and the lack of specials are key issues for community members in regards to the store. Poor quality produce, missing or incorrect shelf prices and the stocking of expired items are also major concerns. In addition it is recognised that the lack of healthy takeaway options and limited variety of foods impact on people's ability to make healthy choices.

Community Members of Lockhart River