



Inquiry into remote Indigenous community stores

Everybody's Business

The Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs last night released its report ***Everybody's Business: Remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Community Stores***.

Chairman the Hon. Bob Debus advised: 'The Committee has found that remote Indigenous communities are operating a range of store models to meet their food security needs with varying degrees of success. Group store models like the Arnhem Land Progress Aboriginal Corporation and Outback Stores offer security from boom and bust cycles, but not every small community can sustain a viable store despite the need for one.'

The Committee's report makes 33 recommendations to ensure remote communities can obtain a secure and affordable food supply using the store or food delivery model that best suits their circumstances, including:

- requiring every remote Indigenous community store to develop a specific healthy store policy,
- establishing a national remote Indigenous food supply chain coordination office,
- establishing a remote community store infrastructure fund,
- supporting community garden, traditional foods and farming projects,
- commissioning a regional cost of living study for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders living in remote communities,
- requiring the registration of stores under the *Corporations and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Act 2006*,
- revising the operational objectives of Outback Stores as a commercially viable store network and ensuring government food security objectives, and
- working with individual communities to develop or maintain stores or supply delivery models that meet the unique needs and situations of those communities.

Mr Debus thanked former Chairman the Hon. Richard Marles for his contribution to the inquiry. The Committee also acknowledges the support of all Indigenous communities and other stakeholders who participated, especially those traditional owners and elders, clans and families in the remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait communities visited.

A media conference is scheduled for 12.15pm on Tuesday 17 November 2009 in Committee Room 1R2, Parliament House.

See the live webcast: <http://webcast.aph.gov.au/livebroadcasting/>

For **media comment**, please contact the Committee Chair, Chair Bob Debus MP on (02) 62774490.

Copies of the report are available at www.aph.gov.au/atsia or by contacting the Committee Secretariat on (02) 6277 4559 or at atsia.reps@aph.gov.au