

**Centrefarm**  
Aboriginal Horticulture Limited

**To: Committee Secretary**  
**House of representatives Standing Committee on**  
**Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs**  
**PO Box 6021**  
**Parliament House**  
**CANBERRA ACT 2600**

RECEIVED  
16 FEB 2009  
BY: ATSIA 

**Re: Inquiry into community stores in remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities**

Dear Committee Secretary,

The following comments from Centrefarm Aboriginal Horticulture Ltd relate to the economic outcomes of local community stores in remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

**Centrefarm Aboriginal Horticulture Ltd**

Centrefarm Aboriginal Horticulture Ltd was originally established by the Central Land Council to develop horticulture on Aboriginal Freehold Land in central Australia. This role has been revised so that the company's charter is now to:

Be a creator of a regional economy on Aboriginal owned land.

Create the capacity for people within the Aboriginal community to participate in the created economy.

**Centrefarm's Activities**

Our aim is to have:

- Agri-business invest in areas that have commercial potential; as well as

- Work with communities to enable them to have the capacity to grow their own fruit and vegetables.

Our analysis has found that, generally speaking, few community gardens/farms have survived because of the lack management and technical support. In the past these initiatives have always been on the periphery of main stream programs such as health, CDEP and general community council work. There is no single program that supports community farms.

It was to try and overcome this fragmentation and have a unified approach that Centrefarm invited stakeholders from a range of government departments as well as service bodies, including Outback Stores, to attend a workshop to determine a way forward.

The conclusion from the workshop was that community gardens had health and economic benefits to remote communities and recommended that funding be sought to do a business plan that could be used to seek funding to establish farms on about 12 communities.

The community farms initiative is to be known as *Growing-to-Grow* or *G2G*

A conclusion reached at the workshop was that there is potential for communities with water supplies to produce and sell product through their own stores with surplus requirements being distributed to a wider market – mainly other community stores probably in other areas.

### **The role of Outback Stores**

Centrefarm invited Outback Stores to have an important role in the G2G initiative:

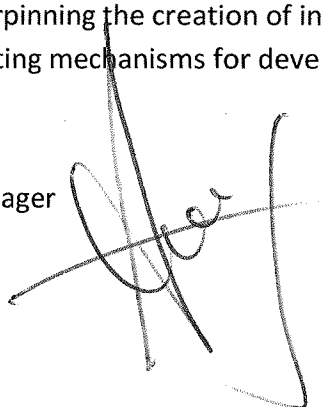
- As a local outlet from locally grown product; and as
- A key player in a network to distribute and market product throughout the region. No other organization has the logistical capacity and market reach to enable the development of such networks.

A single overarching organization, such as Outback Stores, would be in a position to fulfill this role whereas individual stores would not have this capacity. Outback Stores in turn were very supportive and we have developed a working alliance to progress this initiative.

We strongly support the need for Outback Stores and believe the organization has a significant role a role in creating both underpinning the creation of independent economies in remote areas and providing practical supporting mechanisms for developing health and well-being initiatives.

Yours sincerely,

Allan Cooney General Manager

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Allan Cooney', is written over the typed name. The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping 'A' and a long, horizontal stroke extending to the right.