

**Response to the House of Representatives Standing Committee
On Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs**

Food Security in Indigenous Communities

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BY: ATSLA

CRANA was asked by Outback stores to make comment on the above inquiry particularly in light of the inclusion of 'OutBack Stores' in the mix.

CRANA is and has always been very concerned about the availability, choice, cost and freshness of food in Communities and is very keen to help ensure that the best possible model or mix of models is employed in these regions.

The request for comment was discussed last week at the face to face meeting of our Board of Management and after careful deliberation and discussion with those who were more aware of the genesis of the Outback Store model we felt that we needed much more information in order that our comments were valid.

CRANA has probably the best reach into remote communities of any organisation and there would certainly be merit in us conducting a review of community stores and then making evidence based comment. As it stands there does not seem to have been much work done in the area and the accreditation process seems to have been variable.

There needs to be a stores audit with real data in real time.

One project officer would be sufficient to pull together a questionnaire based on the priority list as outlined below. He/she would then need to analyse the data look at the models and make some real recommendations. We have access to staff in most of the clinics in the NT giving us people with immediate on the ground information. This would afford us real information and enable us to make sensible comment about what if any, model works.

There is no doubt that food security is one of the social and clinical determinants for health and one that needs to be 'right' if the 'Closing the Gap Strategy' is to be effective.

It has been suggested that the food security issue will be addressed within the next four years. This is a very short time frame and there is a lot of work that needs to be done before we are confident that Indigenous communities are well served and their food security needs met. In many areas change needs to happen and such change needs to be immediate.

CRANA has determined a list of priorities that need to be addressed as a matter of urgency and ask that the standing committee look at these priorities during its investigations.

Communities need to be able to:

access food that is Not out of Date for bottled, canned and long life goods

access fresh food of good quality

have clarity around price (there have been examples of 2 prices or more on the one item)

some places do not display prices at all
access variety and suitable amounts of food at prices that are not overly inflated
(including baby food)
there should be healthy options to minimise the 'take away mentality'
shop in a store that is clean and inviting with adequate maintenance and storage
facilities free of pests and dust
access stores at reasonable times
have access to competition if that is available without compromise and threat of total
closure
see their stores managed properly with those in charge having some real skills
see the store as an employment generator through store committees with
responsibility for appropriate training and for work supervision
be confident that their store is properly audited and above board with profits shared
in an equitable manner
have access to adequate hardware such as toothbrushes, mops, brooms, hoses, plugs
and locks
undertake health promotion activities within the store without managers becoming
disgruntled

As mentioned earlier in this response, CRANA is well placed to undertake a short
project around the issue of the store model/s and could do so over a six month period
at a reasonable cost. The exact amount has not as yet been determined but would not
be in excess of \$100,000.

The Committee needs to determine a number of matters within this focus and
CRANA is quite keen that those determinations are assisted with fact.

Kindest regards,

Carole Taylor
CEO CRANA plus
Remote Health Counts