

Supermarket Pricing Inquiry

Submission No: 28
Submitted by: Health and Wellbeing Queensland
Publication:
Attachments:
Submitter Comments:

Submission to the Queensland Parliamentary Inquiry into Supermarket Pricing

Poor dietary intake, often as a result of food insecurity, is among the factors that significantly influence health outcomes. Ensuring reliable access to affordable, fresh and nutritious food and the ability to safely store, prepare and consume it, is essential to a healthy diet.

In Queensland, numerous factors impact food security for families and communities, particularly in remote areas. Geographic isolation exacerbates many of these challenges, including long supply chains, harsh climatic conditions and reduced economic development opportunities, all of which make equitable access to healthy food, particularly difficult.

Supermarkets are of particular importance to food security in remote Queensland and are a tangible opportunity to improve the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Most remote Queensland communities are serviced by one supermarket, with offerings that are usually more expensive, lower quality and of less variety than other parts of the state. This variability is driving diet-related inequity in Queensland remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

This submission focuses on the section 2(b) of the Terms Of Reference, ‘the variability in supermarket offerings and pricing across the state, particularly in regional Queensland and in remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities’.

Health and Wellbeing Queensland (HWQld) has been leading efforts to improve food security in remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in Far North Queensland and the Lower Gulf as evidenced through our submission to the Federal Inquiry in 2020 - ‘*Food prices and Food Security in Remote Indigenous Communities*’ (Attachment 1). Since then, HWQld has been leading efforts through a combination of local and whole-of-system actions. In partnership, we are building a multi-strategic response to improve food security by addressing its barriers and amplifying community strengths. We are engaging with communities, and across sectors, to identify and implement solutions that will have meaningful, lasting impact.

Gather + Grow 2023 - 2032

Co-ordinated by HWQld, [Gather + Grow 2023 – 2032](#) is the Queensland Government’s long-term strategy to improve and sustain food security in remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities through a combination of local and whole-of-system actions.

The Strategy outlines the changes required to promote remote food security in Queensland across the following key priority areas:

- optimising **supply chain** performance, resilience and **logistics** to ensure quality, affordable, healthy food is consistently available year-round;
- improving the accessibility and availability of healthy food by creating supportive settings for sustainable **local food production**;
- empowering **communities** to choose and prepare healthy food by building awareness, capability and environments for good nutrition (including in the supermarket setting); and
- supporting **healthy homes** that enable the use of healthy food with reliable and functional facilities and equipment (for example, working fridges and cooktops).

This Strategy will be delivered across three action plans, cultivating whole-of-system change. The first of the action plans, [Gather + Grow Action Plan 2023-2026](#) will deliver 23 actions across the four priority areas through collaboration across 17 local, state, and federal government agencies.

Local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships

HWQld recognises and prioritises the important role of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voice, lived-experience, Traditional and local knowledge and partnership in developing and delivering projects in remote communities. As such, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partnerships have been fundamental in the design and delivery of Gather + Grow 2023-2032.

HWQld have established partnerships with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled sector across the Torres Strait, Cape York, and Lower Gulf regions. The primary objective of these partnerships is to develop Local Food Security Action Plans in collaboration with community members by identifying priorities and preferred implementation initiatives towards enhancing place-based food security.

Through these partnerships, HWQld has engaged with nine communities to date, to develop local food security action plans, including Aurukun, Kowanyama, Lockhart, Mapoon, Napranum, Pormpuraaw, Mornington Island, Doomadgee, and Normanton. Through this engagement, and other consultation undertaken by HWQld and partners, many remote communities have identified the need to increase availability and reduce the costs of healthy food in their local supermarkets. Particularly, fruit and vegetables. This is despite many remote store operators voluntarily subsidising healthier products (e.g., water, fruit and vegetables) for health and affordability benefits to their customers. Further engagement and development of these plans is continuing across the regions. HWQld is leveraging data collected through a variety of sources within and outside of the Gather + Grow program to develop local food environment maps (currently Bamaga and Mornington Island have been completed), which provide a geographic overview of food provision (including retail stores and sources of local production and traditional foods), availability and accessibility within these communities.

Remote Supermarkets

Through partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, local supermarkets have been identified as a key setting for food security, health, wellbeing, and community connection. Unlike in regional and urban centres, remote communities are usually serviced by one local supermarket which accounts for the majority of the community's diet (with the exception of Traditional hunting and gathering of food). Therefore, remote stores have significant potential to influence the health of remote communities through their offerings.

The Gather + Grow Action Plan and Strategy include targeted actions to enhance the capacity of remote supermarkets to cultivate healthy retail environments through strategic pricing, placement, and promotion of food and beverage products. This will be carried out in partnership with Community Enterprise Queensland (CEQ), alongside other participating stores throughout far north Queensland and the Lower Gulf.

Healthy Retail Offerings

Over the past three years, HWQld have been actively working to support food security and health promotion in remote supermarkets through the Healthy Stores project. The primary aim of this initiative

is to collaborate with Community Enterprise Queensland (CEQ) store managers and staff to improve the offerings within their supermarkets to promote and support the purchase of nutritious food and beverages. This is supported by a rigorous research project in partnership with Monash University, The University of Queensland, and Menzies School of Health Research. The project builds on previous research with remote stores, involving an ongoing trial of the Store Scout App as a tool to assess the healthiness of remote retail food store offerings in Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The Store Scout App utilises the 4Ps of marketing framework (Price, Promotion, Product, and Placement) to assess and provide health-promoting best-practise actions that have the potential to improve healthy food offerings in store^{1,2}. Similar interventions in other states have demonstrated no adverse impact on gross profits but have improved the healthiness of consumer purchasing behaviour³. Upon the completion of the Healthy Stores project (approx. December 2024), changes in purchasing behaviours will be ascertained using CEQ store sales information. HWQld would be pleased to discuss the Healthy Stores Project further with the Committee and can explore the potential to share preliminary results in confidence.

Remote Workforce

To support remote workforces to undertake actions that improve the healthiness of supermarket offerings, a free 8-session [Remote Stores Project ECHO®](#) series was developed with Monash University to support health professionals as part of the Healthy Stores project. The series brought together experts and participants on a free web-based platform to share evidence-based knowledge, discuss cases or scenarios and develop new professional skills. An evaluation found that participant's confidence in knowledge and skills to work effectively with the remote stores, increased from zero per cent 'very confident' and 13 per cent fairly confident pre-course to 11 per cent 'very confident' post-course and 33 per cent fairly confident⁴. Nutritional resources and training can support supermarkets in ensuring healthier food environments for their customers, as well as cost-effective. The Project ECHO series was also delivered as part of a robust research project, and HWQld would welcome the opportunity to further discuss this work, and explore the potential to share preliminary findings in confidence.

Supply Chains to Remote Queensland

Through consulting with communities and across sectors to develop the Gather + Grow Action Plan and Strategy, HWQld have identified the need to support remote supermarkets with more efficient and resilient supply chains if they are to improve the quality and affordability of their offerings. Currently, long and complex supply chains to remote supermarkets hinder food security in the remote setting. Therefore, the Action Plan and Strategy include targeted actions to improve supply chains to remote supermarkets, which will improve the opportunity for remote retailers to improve the quality, price and variety of their offerings. This will be actioned through coordinated partnership across multiple Queensland Government departments, communities, industry, academic and other sectors.

To date, a variety of works have been undertaken across Queensland and Local Government sectors to better understand remote supply chains and their impact on food security/the cost of food. For example, in 2022, HWQld commissioned the [Remote Queensland Healthy Food Supply Chain Study](#) to map the supply chain of healthy food items to two of Queensland's most remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

The key findings from the report highlight that remote supply chains in Queensland:

- **Cover large distances** with some food traveling the entire length of Australia (almost 4000kms) to reach remote communities.
- **Take a long time to navigate** with some foods taking up to 8 days to travel from the producer to the store.
- **Multiple touchpoints** with up to 20 across organisations, including mode changes between road and sea freight.
- **Are prone to disruptions** due to weather events and infrastructure issues with costly workarounds which can result in shortage of food supply.
- **Are carbon intensive** with a single pallet of food generating over 277kg of CO₂ emissions during its journey to reach remote communities.
- **Are more expensive** resulting in healthy foods on average, 12 per cent more expensive in Bamaga and 34 per cent more on Mornington Island, compared to Brisbane.

To address these challenges, amongst others, HWQld is establishing a remote Queensland Logistics and Supply Chain Technical Working Group. This working group is being established in response to calls from key Queensland Government departments that have indicated the need for a coordinated, cross-government approach to improve remote food supply. The Technical Working Group will be responsible to progress the four Logistics and Supply Chain Actions within the Gather + Grow Action Plan by working in partnership with communities to develop and deliver solutions. The Technical Working Group's Terms of Reference are still in draft, but anticipated members include representatives from HWQld and the Departments of Transport and Main Roads, Agriculture and Fisheries, Treaty, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Communities and the Arts and Queensland Health, amongst others. HWQld will be responsible to co-ordinate the Technical Working Group and welcomes the opportunity to discuss the group's potential to support supermarkets and remote food security with the Committee. HWQld can share draft Terms of Reference on request.

The cost of food in remote Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities

Over past years (and beyond) remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in Queensland have voiced concern about the high cost-of-living in their communities. Particularly in the Torres Strait and Northern Peninsula Area (see below):

- [Torres Shire Council - Community Cabinet](#)
- [Torres Strait and Northern Peninsula Area Cost of Living Summit](#)

The high cost of food at local supermarkets has been consistently raised by communities in multiple forums, including through Gather + Grow partnerships related to food security. This is supported by evidence that indicates communities in remote Far North and Central Queensland regions are 20 per cent more likely to experience food insecurity, with a healthy food basket costing 50 per cent more than it does in Brisbane (which is approximately 35 per cent of the median household income). The cost of food varies over time periods based on a range of factors. Despite this variability, the cost of a healthy basket of foods in very remote areas is reliably 25-31 per cent more expensive compared to all other areas in Queensland rendering healthy diets unaffordable in low-income households and those in very remote areas.

A whole-of-system and community-based approach is required to tangibly improve the cost-of-food, health and nutrition in remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities⁵. A single program/initiative cannot improve the cost-of-living in isolation and is to be supported by a suite of systemic solutions to improve health and food security. Gather + Grow 2023-2032 is the Queensland Government's effort to enable this whole-of-system approach and close the gap in diet-related inequity in remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. It will leverage and support existing initiatives, while critically analysing the need for new and/or alternative approaches based on community-voice and evidence.

Affordability Monitoring in Queensland Supermarkets

In Queensland, the cost of diets is not regularly monitored. Previously, the Healthy Food Access Basket (HFAB) was collected six times in Queensland (2000-2014). While the HFAB was useful for comparing the price of a healthy food basket across Queensland, it had limited comparability across Australian jurisdictions and different household structures. It also did not consider household income, and therefore did not indicate diet *affordability*.

In 2014, Queensland researchers developed standardised food price and affordability data collection tools based on an international standard (International Network for Food and Obesity Research, Monitoring and Action Support). This tool was tested in Brisbane,⁶ and published as the Healthy Diets Australian Standardised Affordability and Pricing (ASAP) protocol in 2018⁷. The Healthy Diets ASAP tool, developed by The University of Queensland, aims to assess, compare and monitor the price, price differential and affordability of healthy (recommended) and current (unhealthy) diets in Australia. Of particular relevance, the tool has been adapted and specifically developed for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households. The Healthy Diets ASAP protocol constitutes a standardised approach to assess diet price and affordability to inform the development of nutrition policy actions to reduce rates of diet-related chronic disease in Australia.

The Healthy Diets ASAP tool has subsequently been deployed across Australia and in multiple Queensland locations (including the Torres Strait Islands⁸) to collect data on diet affordability. However, until recently, the tool has not been used by the Queensland Government to systemically collect and analyses diet affordability across Queensland to inform decision-making. As part of Gather + Grow, in late 2023, HWQld collected food affordability and pricing information (including availability of certain items) from across a sample of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, in the Far North and Lower Gulf regions, in comparison with regional centres (Brisbane and Cairns). HWQld is currently undertaking analysis of this data and intends to repeat data collection in 2024. HWQld would welcome further discussions with the Committee on this data and the need for ongoing state-wide monitoring.

Recommendations

- In the context of considering the variability in supermarket offerings and pricing across the state, particularly in regional Queensland and in remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, also consider the impacts that this can have on health. In particular, there is a need to consider the impacts on remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities where single supermarkets have significant potential to influence health behaviours and support the Queensland Government's commitment to Closing the Gap.

- Support the expansion of projects similar to Gather + Grow Healthy Stores within remote, regional and urban contexts to ensure;
 - offerings across Queensland supermarkets are consistent with a healthy diet and support prevention of disease;
 - healthy diets are accessible and affordable to all Queenslanders, no matter where they live.
- Consider the need to invest in a systems approach that considers the unique barriers remote stores experience in providing healthy, affordable offerings to Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. For example, supply chain and logistics solutions as outlined in the Remote Food Supply Chain Mapping Study.
- Consider the need to establish regular monitoring of diet affordability across urban, regional and remote Queensland, including across different store groups/chains. This data can be used to inform decision-making. Data collection tools used should be appropriate for diverse Queensland settings (including remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities) and consider income not just the cost of healthy diets. An example of this is the Healthy Diets ASAP tool.
- Consider the need to establish a group or body to review data and advocate for solutions that address inequities in diet affordability across Queensland, through coordinated action at all levels (including through coordinated policy action).

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Attachments

1. Health and Wellbeing Queensland Submission to Federal Inquiry – Food Prices and Food Security in Remote Indigenous Communities, 2020.



Federal Inquiry

**Food prices and food security in
remote First Nations Communities**

**Health and Wellbeing Queensland
Submission**

Health and Wellbeing Queensland welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the Federal Parliamentary Inquiry into food pricing and food security in remote Indigenous communities.

This submission outlines:

- The context in Queensland for food security;
- The *Queensland framework to achieve food security in remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities* (Attachment 1);
- Discussion on the core dimensions of food security outlined in the framework, that is availability, access and utilisation. Case examples are included of innovative and practical food security solutions being implemented in Queensland in remote Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities;
- Community perspectives that have been provided by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mayors, Chief Executive Officers and Council staff; and
- Remote food security work planned by Health and Wellbeing Queensland.

Throughout the submission, the term First Nations will be used to describe Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities. 'First Nations' recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the sovereign people of this land and that there are various language groups as separate and unique sovereign nations (1).

Health and Wellbeing Queensland undertook extensive consultation with a range of stakeholders including First Nations Local Councils, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Health Sector, government, non-government organisations, key First Nations agencies, store groups and the university sector (Attachment 2) in the preparation of this submission. Issues, key themes and priority responses identified throughout the consultation are presented below:

Issues:

- Chronic food insecurity is a major issue in remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, and this issue has been compounded during COVID-19;
- Communities and people who experience extended poverty, lack of assets or financial resources are not able to prioritise healthy eating;
- Inadequate housing (particularly a lack of storage and preparation facilities) and lack of access to reliable and safe utilities (electricity and water) also negatively impacts on food security;
- There is a lack of skilled, connected and supported workforce to support food security actions;
- Cost of freight and the long supply chain (up to 3000km within Queensland) contribute to the high cost of foods in remote communities; and
- Seasonal factors influence access for communities e.g. supply of fresh food to some communities in the wet season is challenging, affecting availability and consumption of healthy foods.

Key themes:

- First Nations culture must be created and embedded into everything, with community members at the table from the beginning and during strategy and solution development;

- Significant progress will only be made if barriers to accessing, buying, preparing and consuming healthy foods are eliminated;
- New initiatives must link to existing community priorities to ensure their relevancy (initiatives must be contextualised to the region);
- Investment in the local workforce will assist in building the communities' economic and social assets.
- Different approaches are needed in communities; a 'one-size' fits all approach will not work;
- Improvements in healthy eating will not be achieved unless food security is achieved; and
- Nutrition education and cooking programs across settings (e.g. school, community) were identified as beneficial for improving knowledge, cooking, shopping and budgeting skills.

Priority responses:

- Committed leadership with comprehensive strategy to support sustained action infiltrating all sectors and governments to address the structural and systemic problems that have impacted food security for remote First Nations communities (develop a long term, systems approach);
- Develop a National Action Plan based on the widely recognised dimensions of food security (availability, access and utilisation) to achieve resilient and stable food supply in remote First Nations communities (refer Attachment 1 - *The Queensland framework to achieve food security in remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities*, which provides an example of the multi-actions required to achieve food security).
- Expand and build on existing innovative and practical food security solutions, programs and resources.
- Empower First Nations people to participate equitably in food security actions;
- Build an adequately resourced, trained and connected workforce in remote communities that support identified food security actions; and
- Establish an effective monitoring and evaluation system to measure progress and outcomes, including health outcomes.

1 Context in Queensland

In Queensland, there are sixteen discrete First Nations Local Government Areas including Aurukun, Doomadgee, Cherbourg, Hope Vale, Kowanyama, Lockhart River, Mapoon, Mornington Island, Napranum, Northern Peninsula Area, Palm Island, Pormpuraaw, Torres Straits, Woorabinda, Wujal Wujal and Yarrabah (Attachment 3). There are also communities such as Mossman and Coen, that sit in other local government areas, but are included when considering the strategies and initiatives relevant to First Nations Queenslanders.

The Queensland Government is committed to increasing the capability of government to deliver innovative, efficient, effective and integrated services for First Nations Queenslanders by First National Queenslanders who live in remote and discrete communities. The Government Champion program provides an opportunity for Chief Executives of Queensland Government agencies to work together with identified communities, towards improving life outcomes for First Nations people, in a shared responsibility partnership. Additionally, Queensland Ministers can act as individual champions for discrete First Nations communities. Under the Ministerial Government Champion's program, Ministers work closely with the mayors and community leaders from their respective partner community to engage more effectively with Cabinet on the opportunities and challenges facing First Nations communities (2).

Achieving food security in remote First Nations communities has been a long-time goal and ongoing challenge for the Queensland Government for many years. It is well accepted that achieving food security would have far reaching and long-term health and economic benefits for these communities. Improving the affordability, quality and accessibility of healthy foods is likely to increase the consumption of these foods and reduce the diet related burden of disease for First Nations people in remote Queensland and help address the inequity experienced by disadvantage (3).

Improving food security was part of the response required to Close the Gap for Indigenous disadvantage. A National Strategy for improving the affordability and availability of healthy food for First Nations people living in remote Australia was agreed by COAG in December 2009 (4). In Queensland a government working group was established and strategies to address food were explored, such as the cost of food in the Torres Strait. Whilst there has been lots of work undertaken to understand the issue and strong intent by many stakeholders to achieve food security, very little progress has been made. Improving the food security of First Nations Queenslanders in remote communities requires sustained action across all sectors and governments to address the structural and systemic problems that exist across all levels of the system, including meso, micro and macro layers.

In October 2018, the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services identified the need to address healthy food supply in remote First Nations communities in Queensland as a Minister's Priority. In early 2019, this was also identified as a high priority under the Keep Queenslanders Healthy Roadmap of *Advancing Queensland's Priorities: Our Future State* (5) *Our Future State* outlines the Queensland Government's objectives for the community and provided the mechanism to facilitate stronger cross-government conversations about food security.

Evidence of the Queensland Government's commitment to the health of First Nations was the appointment of Queensland's first ever Chief Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Officer, Ms Haylene Grogan in October 2019. This also resulted in the creation of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Division which will drive efforts to improve health equity and outcomes for First Nations Queenslanders.

The Queensland Government's commitment to addressing food supply in Remote Indigenous Communities provided an opportunity for Department of Health staff from Prevention Division and from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Branch to engage with and visit Cape York, and work with key Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander agencies including the community-controlled health sector, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Councils and the university sector. The lead for this Queensland Government priority transitioned from the Department of Health to Health and Wellbeing Queensland (HWQld) in January 2020. This has elevated the priority and allowed for community-led and sustained system actions across sectors:

- Community – e.g. Community Controlled Health Organisations; Primary Healthcare Networks.
- Local Government – e.g. First Nations Local Government Councils; Torres Cape Indigenous Council Alliance.
- State Government – e.g. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Division led by the Chief Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Officer; Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships; Department of Agriculture and Fisheries; Department of State Development, Tourism and Innovation; Department of Housing and Public Works; Department of Employment, Small Business and Training; Department of Education; Department of Transport and Main Roads.
- Federal Government – e.g. Torres Strait Regional Authority.
- Universities – e.g. Queensland Alliance for Agriculture and Food Innovation; University of Queensland; Griffith University; Monash University; James Cook University.

1.1 Health and Wellbeing Queensland

The Queensland Government established HWQld in July 2019 as a dedicated statutory health promotion agency to improve the health and wellbeing of the Queensland population and reduce health inequity. The agency has been

given a mandate to lead on obesity prevention for Queensland and contribute to achieving the ambitious target to increase healthy weight by 10% by 2026 (*Advancing Queensland's Priorities: Our Future State*). The agency is leading the government's response to improving healthy eating and physical activity of First Nations communities and peoples. Through a combination of prevention, partnerships and a population-approach; HWQld can disrupt the cycle that leads to obesity, poor diets and insufficient physical activity.

HWQld's approach is to build on the collaboration and sharing opportunities that make it easier for people to be more active and have access to healthier food and drink options, regardless of where they live. HWQld is partnering and collaborating across government, the private sector and communities to make a meaningful and lasting impact on the health and wellbeing of Queenslanders as one of its top priorities.

HWQld is now recognised as the lead agency for progressing a high priority of the Keep Queenslanders Healthy Roadmap Action 21 – 'Ensure the supply of healthy food in remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.'

1.2 Health Inequity

Health inequities relate to differences in health status or the distribution of health resources between different population groups. This usually arises from circumstances and/or social conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age often referred to as the social determinants of health (6). The social determinants of health represent a body of evidence identified as influencing the health outcomes of individuals and populations. The social determinants of health that influence the First Nations population have been thoroughly investigated and reported (7).

In Queensland, it is well known that the First Nations Australians suffer a far greater burden of disease compared to the total Australian population, due to the inequities faced by the population. HWQld's objective is to improve the health and wellbeing of the Queensland population including by reducing health inequity (8). With a focus on the three pillars of population, prevention and partnership HWQld will develop new ways of working to address the underlying social determinants of health for people living with disadvantage, regional and remote communities and First Nations people.

The World Health Organisation has outlined ten social determinants which significantly influence the health outcomes and behaviours of both individuals and populations. Extensive research has been undertaken to compile this list of determinants which are non-discriminatory and can influence the living circumstances and quality of life of any population in the world (9). Food security is identified as one of the 10 social determinants of health, which also include social gradient, work, unemployment, stress, social support, social exclusion, early life, transport and addiction.

Food insecurity is a chronic and persistent issue in remote First Nations communities. In 2012, 31% of First Nations people living in remote communities ran out of food and couldn't afford to buy more in the previous 12 months, compared with 22% in non-remote areas. Less than one in twenty (3.7%) non-Indigenous people report a similar level of food insecurity (10).

2 Framework to achieve food security in remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities

A framework to achieve food security in remote First Nations communities in Queensland has been developed and endorsed by the Our Future State, Keeping Queenslanders Healthy Deputy Director-General Cluster Group. The framework demonstrates the interplay and complexity of the factors contributing to food insecurity (Attachment

1). The framework uses the widely recognised dimensions of food security to describe the strategies required to achieve resilient and stable food supply in the remote First Nations context in Queensland. The three dimensions include availability, access and utilisation, each which can be influenced at the system, community, family and individual level.

The framework was developed in consultation with government agencies, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Health Sector, non-government organisations and academics across Queensland. Stakeholders supported the principles of the framework and provided valuable input to clarify the terms and language used. For example, the importance of including a male perspective around traditional hunting and gathering practices.

3 The core dimensions of the Queensland food security framework

Food insecurity is a chronic and persistent issue, of significant complexity, in remote First Nations communities. The following section will use the Queensland food security framework, developed for remote First Nations communities, in an attempt to describe the core dimension food security and the multiple levels in which they can be addressed. In addition, case examples will also be presented to describe the types of work that is occurring. This is not an exhaustive list but does intend to describe the multiple approaches that are required.

3.1 Availability

The system level comprises the suite of legislation and policies that determine the ownership, resourcing and maintenance of the transport network, as well as the policies and regulations, that influence the food supplied in settings such as schools and aged care.

The freight supply chain to remote communities is long and complex, comprising a matrix of private, government and corporate ownership of infrastructure and equipment. This complexity leads to excessive loss and wastage of perishable foods and it is challenging to coordinate freight agreement across many stakeholders. Food supply is also disrupted to some communities, reliant on road transport, during wet seasons.

Advice from food supply chain experts in Australia highlights the following:

- The cold food chain is poorly integrated in some areas (particularly rural and remote areas);
- Attention to stabilising food at its source will increase the shelf life of the products, particularly for fresh fruit and vegetables;
- Long distances and poor logistics negatively impact on the supply of high-quality food to remote Queensland; and
- Lack of skills in safe food handling and suitable technology further compound the poor quality of produce delivered to remote communities.

At the community level, food availability is determined by local food retail outlets, primarily by what is available in the store. Takeaway outlets are also a common source of food. Store policies and practices directly influence the diets of most community members through the amount, variety and quality of healthy foods available and pricing policies. Hunting and gathering practices, local food production such as gardens, breakfast programs, food boxes and meal delivery programs also determine food availability within the community.

Case example 1 – Healthy Indigenous Communities

The Healthy Indigenous Communities project (Cape York and Lower Gulf) and the Healthy Islander Communities project (Torres Strait) aimed to engage with Local Government Councils and communities to develop and implement community-led strategies to improve healthy food availability, accessibility and acceptability. Community-led action focused on creating supportive environments for healthy living by identifying barriers and opportunities.

These projects were funded by the Queensland Government to explore healthy food environments in some of the remote First Nations communities. Findings from this work strongly indicated the need to work with remote food stores on food security issues.

Cape York

The [Healthy Indigenous Communities project](#) delivered by Apunipima Cape York Health Council took some important steps to work with communities to improve local food environments. Key outputs include:

- Creation of a remote food outlet policy guide to engage Cape York Council's leadership to improve local food environments. For example, to help with leasing agreements with businesses such as takeaways so nutrition is always on the agenda.
- Completion of a kindergarten menu review for Wujal Wujal and the creation of a menu support tool kit to support early childhood centres across Cape York to comply with National Quality Frameworks
- Completion of a menu review for Wujal Wujal Community Care Centre and development of a menu support toolkit for community staff
- Working with the local ALPA store in Aurukun
- Supported Wujal Wujal General Store to implement healthy drinks fridge containing water and diet drink options only
- Supported Wujal Wujal and Lockhart River stores to provide healthy takeaway and snack options
- Supported Lockhart River School to deliver healthy breakfast program and lunch meals with feedback, recipes, practical cooking demonstrations and nutritional advice
- Established regular health education sessions for mothers attending the Kuunchi Kakana Centre in Lockhart River
- Engagement with men's and women's groups in Wujal Wujal to deliver nutrition education sessions.

Lower Gulf

Gidgee Healing was tasked with working with local communities to understand local food environments including local store engagement and to identify their readiness to change their food environments. Some Lower Gulf communities went into lockdown much earlier than the enforced lockdown of which presented many challenges to the project team. The project team has endeavoured to main relationships with key stakeholders which has been difficult in the current environment. Whilst the team were able to commence engagement with the local communities and began analysis of the food environment, this was initially stalled due to an unusually long wet season followed by COVID-19. Some highlights include:

- Approximately 4 communities in the Lower Gulf were consulted regarding this work
- Wet season and COVID impacted food security in communities in addition to what is normally experienced
- Initial engagement identified freight as a major factor that influenced both price and quality due to the long supply chain.

- Gidgee had secured a partnership with a local butcher and Council to promote healthy eating before lockdown. The partnership will seek to promote Gidgee-developed healthy eating recipes and conduct cooking classes at the butcher's which would also promote the variety of lean meat products available for purchase.

Torres

Torres Strait Island Regional Council was funded to deliver the Healthy Communities project in the outer islands of the Torres Strait region. The Regional Council was tasked with working with up to three local communities to understand local food environments and to identify their readiness to change their food environments. In addition, it was identified that there was an opportunity to provide healthy eating and physical activity upskilling to their 15 Healthy Lifestyle Officers (HLOs) who resided on each of the 15 outer islands.

Due to enforced lockdown as a result of COVID-19, the project team have had to reconsider their approaches to community engagement and upskilling opportunities, including:

- Establishing health action groups in at least 3 local island communities
- Exploration of new topics to upskill HLOs via online media.

In Queensland, the Remote Indigenous Land and Infrastructure Program Office (RILIPO), within the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships (DATSIP), works collaboratively with discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to develop Master Plans. The Master Plan represents the community's aspirations for the future, providing a strategy to promote a thriving economy and healthy community for future generations. The Master Plan, once endorsed by Council becomes a policy document which guides future residential, industrial, commercial, tourism, community facilities, and recreation and open space development within communities, in a way that aligns with land use planning objectives, community needs and aspirations.

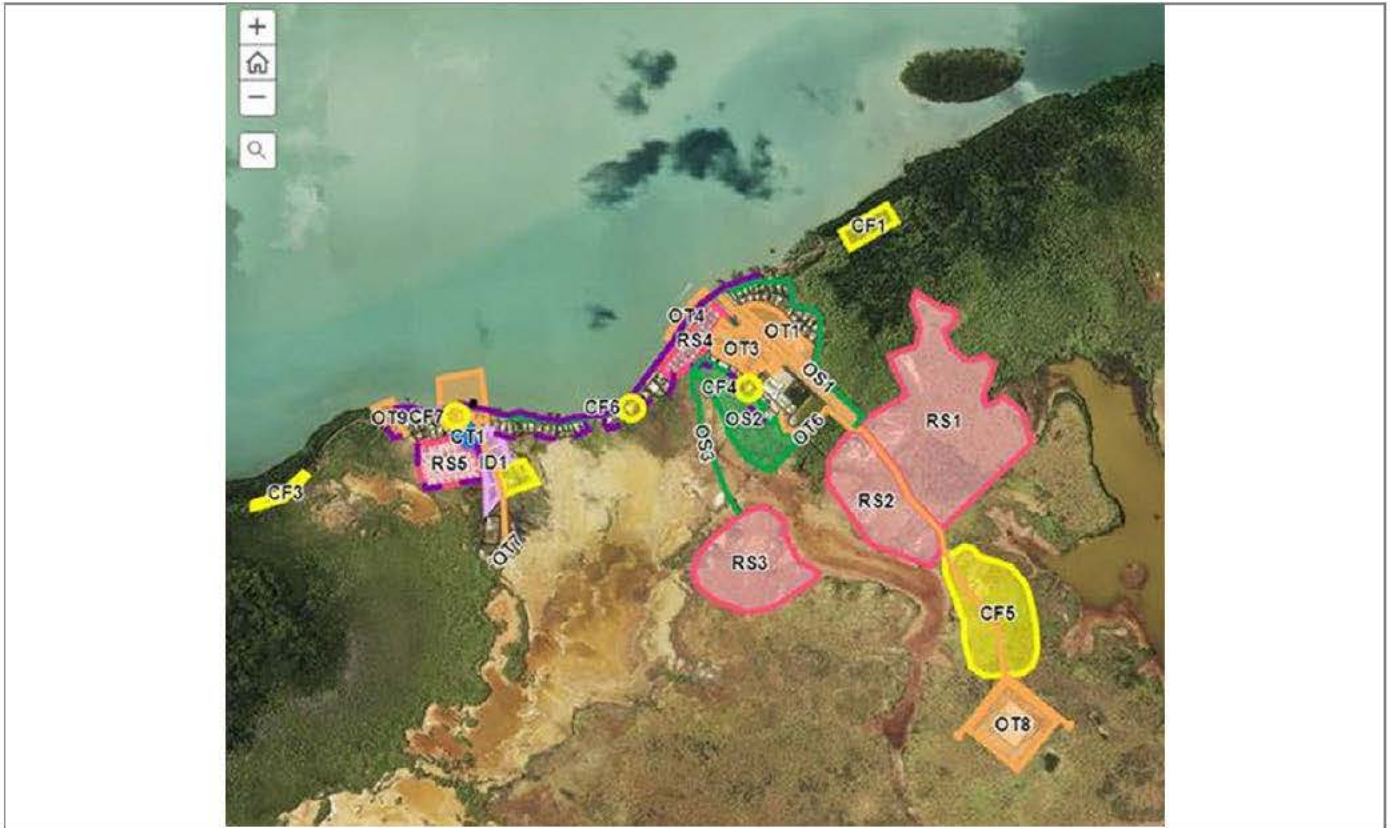
The Master Plan can be used by Trustees, Local, State and Commonwealth government agencies, service providers and the broader community to inform planning decisions in relation to future development and to inform Grant Applications. An engineering assessment of identified Master Plan Projects is also undertaken, providing indicative infrastructure development costings to assist in the delivery of critical infrastructure that supports proposed developments and strengthens the community.

The Master Plan is a living document describing the social, economic and infrastructure desires of each community. The document encompasses the aspirations and hopes that will be reviewed on a regular basis allowing for the update and addition of moving priorities. The image hereunder is a typical example of what a Master Plan includes.

Case example 2 – Saibai Island Master Plan Consultation Draft

This example is for the Saibai Island Master Plan Consultation Draft which is currently under development. CF5 in yellow was identified by the community for the development of gardens for food production to supplement food availability, fresh produce and thus ensure food security.

Further investigations will be required to determine soil quality, water availability, development of a Precinct Plan to set out infrastructure needs such as storage sheds, undercover areas for workers etc as well as a business plan for the operations, cultivation and potential supply of produce to neighbouring markets.



Case example 3 – Local food production by TCICA

An initiative that is being led by the Torres Cape Indigenous Council Alliance (TCICA) will help identify opportunities to develop new food production and associated industries in the region for jobs and economic growth once the threat of COVID-19 passes. This work will help build the region’s resilience to future economic shocks through the development of new agri-based industries that generate employment opportunities for local people.

There is currently very little horticultural activity taking place across the Cape York (north of Lakeland) and Torres Strait region, despite a range of studies indicating the potential of a range of food crops. This is due to complex land tenure arrangements, Native Title restrictions, legislation restricting land clearing, variable soil quality, limited access to markets, freight costs, water security issues and difficulties attracting and retaining suitably qualified staff.

Nonetheless, there are opportunities to explore food production in communities that can overcome land tenure, water security, market access, staffing and other issues. There are also opportunities for innovative forms of food production like closed-loop hydroponics and aquaculture, cyclone-proof greenhouses and vertical gardens. These forms of production are becoming increasingly popular and can help address food security issues for communities, leading to increased regional resilience, as well as new employment and training opportunities in innovative industries.

An example of a similar initiative being funded by the Queensland Government is a study of the commercial vanilla bean production viability in one remote First Nations community, a crop that is perfectly suited to the environment. Vanilla bean can be worth more than \$500 per kilo, with Daintree vanilla beans reportedly fetching up to \$1,000 a kilo.

Case example 4 – Greening Kowanyama

A successful initiative in the remote community of Kowanyama demonstrated the effective local food production in a project delivered by Greenfleet in 2018. This project saw Telstra employees and Kowanyama Aboriginal Shire Council join forces to plant over 1,000 native and fruit trees. [This revegetation project](#) was aimed to deliver a wide range of benefits, including environmental, health and well-being outcomes for the local community. Greenfleet and Telstra worked closely with Kowanyama Aboriginal Shire Council to understand the community's needs and, following consultation, planted a mix of native and fruit-bearing trees. This included bush lemons, mangos and mulberries.

At the family and individual level, food availability is determined by shopping patterns that can be multiple times a day in some communities and not equally spread across each pay cycle. Cultural practices, such as the hierarchy of food distribution within large families and obligations to share food, influences food shopping patterns and a reliance on takeaway foods.

Case example 5 – Indigenous Healthy Food project

The Indigenous Healthy Food project is in development with a consortia of state departments, corporates, not-for-profit groups, and Indigenous communities, led by the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries with the Far North Queensland Food Incubator, Health and Wellbeing Queensland, Cape York Land Council and the Department of State Development, Tourism and Innovation (DSDTI).

The proposed project aims to source, manufacture and supply a range of nutrient rich, healthy, great tasting food products that are economically packaged, designed for longer shelf-life and require minimal preparation for the consumer. The proposed project will allow remote Cape York and Gulf First Nations communities to access nutritious food products at affordable prices ensuring immediate food security.

3.2 Access

Having adequate financial resources and being able to physically access available food is the second dimension of food security.

At the system level, food security is influenced by broad factors that impact on the cost of food, economic development, education policies, and policies that impact household incomes, expenses and access to country for hunting. Many Aboriginal elders still retain knowledge and can live as hunter-gatherers but may be restricted by laws and/or require permits.

At the community level, access is influenced by costs at the retail outlet, local employment opportunities, high attendance at school to increase readiness for work, vocational training and mobility to access food. The combination of lower buying power of remote stores, energy and maintenance costs and the cost to transport fresh food long distances contributes to prices that are significantly higher than in non-remote communities. For example, the cost of a basket of healthy foods to feed a family of six for two weeks is 26.5% more expensive in very remote areas compared to major cities (\$812 and \$642 respectively, 2014) (11).

At the family and individual level, access to food is determined by the household resources available and the financial literacy to make decisions. Food affordability is hampered by higher unemployment rates of Aboriginal

and Torres Strait Islander people living in remote communities; low household incomes and government pensions or allowances as the main source of income for many. Access to food is also influenced by individual mobility and the availability of transport to source food from both inside and outside of the community, including traditional foods.

Case example 6 – Enterprise for social impact

Long term economic empowerment can be built through employment and entrepreneurial activity. In Queensland there is growing encouragement of local enterprise and improving health outcomes are critical to enhancing the quality of life in remote Queensland communities. Significant opportunity exists to improve the wellbeing and resilience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander remote communities by supporting economic development through new enterprise. The success of Indigenous business is a core driver of Indigenous employment.

The Australian Native Botanicals industry represents an unprecedented opportunity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to develop thriving enterprises, aligned with their aspirations to work on and care for country. Many Aboriginal communities are developing enterprises in this emerging industry, with the explicit intention of creating social impact through meaningful employment and products that improve community health and well-being.

Australian native botanicals are nutrient-dense, climate-resilient and biologically unique. There are about 6,000 recorded types of native foods in Australia including fruits (e.g. Kakadu plum/ Gubinge), nuts (e.g. Bunya nut) and herbs, spices and teas (e.g. saltbush, gulbarn, wattleseed). These ingredients present a significant opportunity for the creation and enhancement of premium products across multiple industries including food and beverage, health and wellbeing, and cosmetics. They can also leverage growing consumer interest in the provenance and the traditional heritage of ingredients.

Case example 7 – Local Food Futures – Cook Shire

The *Local Food Futures* in the Cook Shire is an initiative which is an active community development and capacity building process for strengthening regional resilience in dealing with economic, social and environmental change. The proposed program of work is built on a strong local community and tourism sector desire for greater local food security and provenance. In partnership with Cook Shire, the initiative is being led by a consortium team from the University of Southern Queensland, James Cook University, CSIRO and The Ecoefficiency Group (TEG).

3.3 Utilisation

Utilisation refers to the factors that influence food choice, preparation, cooking and storage.

At the system level, this includes housing availability, a school curriculum that addresses food and nutrition and campaigns and food promotion that influence behaviours, preferences, attitudes and beliefs.

Poor living conditions contribute to the cyclical nature of undernutrition and poor health. First Nations people living in remote areas are 2.7 times more likely to live in overcrowded dwellings, 2.5 times more likely to live in social housing, 1.9 times more likely to live in a house that does not meet acceptable standards and half as likely to own

their own home. Only a small proportion of homes are likely to have all the equipment needed to store, prepare and cook food such as working refrigeration, stove or sink (12).

Improving environmental health conditions is particularly important in remote Indigenous communities where poorer environmental health management is contributing to higher levels of communicable diseases and hospitalisation rates than for the broader Indigenous community across Queensland. The Queensland Health Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Environmental Health Plan 2019 – 2022 outlines the environmental health planning for Queensland’s First Nations remote and discrete communities. The includes supporting the environmental health program for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander local governments since 2006. The program provides funded employment opportunities for workers from within the community to implement and monitor environmental health services. These Environmental Health Workers (EHWs) and Animal Management Workers (AMWs) oversee and monitor a range of local government programs to detect possible public health risks and assist in their management.

Case example 8 – Safe and healthy drinking water in Indigenous local government areas

The Queensland Government is working with First Nations local governments to improve the safety and reliability of their drinking water through the ‘Safe and healthy drinking water in Indigenous local government areas’ project. The project aims to improve the operation and management of drinking water supplies in First Nations communities to ensure public health is protected. The project adopts a new approach to building the capacity of First Nations water operators and facilitates upgrades to infrastructure and technology. Queensland Health allocated \$9.9 million over four years from 2019-20 to expand the programs to all drinking water supplies operated by First Nations local governments.

Utilisation at the community level is influenced by retail store food promotion and shelf placement, community-wide education and awareness programs, dissemination of traditional knowledge and access to community cooking and storage facilities. Food preferences were influenced by colonisation through reduced access and availability of traditional foods and an increased reliance on, and preference for, introduced foods such as flour, sugar, tea, tobacco and meat.

Case example 9 – Family Fresh Food Garden

The Family Fresh Food Garden project is an example of a project aimed to improve the availability, accessibility and utilisation of fresh fruit and vegetables. The project targets families and seniors in community to grow small vegetable gardens in their own yards. The project was delivered to 300 social housing households living in remote communities including Cooktown, Laura, Coen, Wujal Wujal and Hope Vale. Each household received a raised garden bed, soil and mulch, seedlings and basic gardening equipment. The project aimed to encourage community connectedness, promoting social and emotional wellbeing, ensure sustainable fresh food availability, promote healthy eating and provide recycling opportunities with the use of pallets and plastic drink bottles. Project partners included Department of Housing and Public Works, Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Cook Shire Council, My Pathway, Cape York Employment, Gungarde Aboriginal Community Centre, Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Shire Council and Hope Vale Aboriginal Shire Council.

At the family and individual level, utilisation refers to homes that are sufficiently equipped with preparation, cooking and storage facilities including clean water and electricity, and individuals who have adequate knowledge and skills to choose, cook and store healthy foods. The Queensland Government has released the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing Action Plan 2019-2023. This plan strives to provide First Nations Queenslanders with access to safe, appropriate and sustainable housing that provides the foundation to close the gap, and improve health, safety, wellbeing, education and economic outcomes.

While Queensland has achieved significant improvements in housing standards, and reduced overcrowding, more work is needed to address housing issues of affordability, diversity, disability and the resolution of land tenure issues. The action plan details how communities, the housing sector and government will work together to put local communities at the centre of decision-making. Access to homes with running, fresh water, reliable electricity supply, kitchen hardware, such as fridges and food preparation surfaces, and waste management facilities are key to improving the health of First Nations people in remote communities.

Food literacy programs that have targeted First Nations people living in remote areas have reported success when they respond to local needs, values and experiences.

Case example 10 – Deadly Choices

[Deadly Choices](#) is an Indigenous-led, strengths-based whole-of-community health promotion initiative established in 2010 by the Institute for Urban Indigenous Health (IUIH) in South East Queensland. Deadly Choices' aim is to empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to make healthy choices in order to prevent the onset of chronic disease through social networking sites, education programs and community events. The program is now delivered state-wide in Queensland including to some remote communities. The program is delivered in a variety of modes including a strong social marketing campaign, healthy living programs, DC FIT, Community events, camps and Senior Indigenous Games. Deadly Choices also has a strong social media presence which assists with the promotion and reach of their healthy lifestyle messaging including healthy eating.

Good Quick Tukka is a program offered by Deadly Choices as part of their suite of programs. Good Quick Tukka aims to teach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples cooking skills, helping them explore budget friendly and healthy range of foods including fruits and vegetables, and cooking techniques. Good Quick Tukka cooking demonstrations are streamed live through the Deadly Choices Facebook page weekly.

Case 11 – Jamie's Ministry of Food

The Queensland Government provides funding to The Good Foundation (TGF) to deliver the [Jamie's Ministry of Food](#) hands-on cooking and food literacy program in Queensland and the organisation works to ensure the delivery is accessible to priority groups, including First Nations people. As part of this delivery in 2018-2019 TGF travelled to the Atherton region in March 2019 to commence an outreach service. The outreach service delivered a culturally-tailored version of the cooking and healthy eating program. This work was to specifically address food literacy, utilisation of healthy food and food security issues facing disadvantaged, semi remote, remote communities and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. In consultation with officers from the Tablelands Regional Council (TRC) two communities were selected for development of this pilot program, Ravenshoe and Mount Garnet.

A four-week on-site scoping period allowed for the development of a model of the JMOF program that specifically addressed the priorities and concerns of residents in these regions and which incorporated sustainability elements. The need for this was further enhanced by the comments made by medical staff from Mamu Health

Service, responsible for delivering health clinics to the region – “it is great that this project is here, but at the same time we have seen before organisations come to deliver various programs, and once they come to an end things for the locals don’t change”. To address this concern and ensure this was a program the residents would benefit for a long time to come, TGF worked on developing a sustainable outreach model which included a ‘Train the Trainer’ element and identified and worked to remove barriers to sustainability. Recipes were built around ingredients accessible, both financially and geographically, to residents and suitable for many common health concerns. While TGF staff delivered these classes to almost 100 residents, five community members were identified and recruited to participate in the Train the Trainer program and provided with resources to support ongoing delivery.

The program culminated in the graduation of five registered Jamie’s Ministry of Food Community Trainers in the TRC region. Each week these trainers continue to change lives in their own communities by delivering classes to fellow residents. TGF support office continues to support and monitor the delivery of this program on an ongoing basis. During COVID-19 TGF has adapted their delivery to an online model which has been delivered as a community ‘virtual location’ in the Atherton Tablelands, as well as in six other locations in Queensland. The JMOF community trainers, with their training and skills were able to assist TGF with the delivery of the online model to their community, gaining further skills.

4 Community perspectives

Ensuring the community voice is represented and heard is critical for HWQld. As part of this submission, HWQld consulted directly with nine Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Shire Councils, and 30 Council staff (Attachment 2). Below is collated feedback from the consultation undertaken which asked Mayors, CEOs, Councillors and Council staff to identify the challenges and opportunities their communities faced in striving to be food secure. It is important to identify that whilst this a collective description, each Council and community is different. Community-led and relevant strategies to address the issues related to food security must be fully understood and considered, as a ‘one-size fits all’ approach will not work.

Key challenges included:

- High cost of freight was commonly reported. This resulted in the higher cost of foods and other products e.g. white goods, as a result of high freight costs.
- Travel to other communities to purchase cheaper food/white goods is often offset by additional fuel costs, so limited savings are made.
- Poor quality of food. Suggested reasons included the long supply chain and food products that are sent from Brisbane instead of from closer centres like Cairns or the Tablelands. This results in high amounts of foods waste.
- Cheaper brands are sometimes the only ones available in stores (e.g. black and gold) but are marked up for a variety of products including food and white goods.
- Some products have a short shelf life or have expired once they have reached community.
- Quantity of food delivered is sometimes inadequate and is in high demand when it arrives in community. This usually results in a ‘first-in-first-served’ situation.
- Small stores result in limited ability to store food in refrigerators and freezers. The small size of one community store made social distancing and storage difficult. It placed great stress on the store staff, and it resulted in resignations.

- Deliveries vary between communities; some communities receive weekly supplies whilst others may receive deliveries once a month. Delays to this service severely impact a community's food supply.
- Electricity insecurity is a major problem for communities. Long outages can result in food spoilage and waste when food cannot be cooled and stored. Depending on the community and the issue, power outages can last for several days.
- Power cards are the only way to get electricity in some communities. If credit runs out over a weekend or at night, recharging cards with sufficient credit can be difficult in some communities.
- There is a combination of council/privately owned stores and stores run by the major store groups e.g. IBIS. The challenges around this include:
 - Council do not have the same buying power as major store groups. Store size and ability to store large quantities was limited in one community during lockdown due to COVID-19 and the increased demand on the local store by community. This resulted in less variety of stock available due to storage shortages.
 - Stores groups' prices are usually fixed and cannot be changed like the Council/private stores are able to.
- White goods have been generally difficult to purchase during COVID-19.
- The wet season poses the biggest obstacle to road freight in some communities. Delivery by air is often required, which contributes to higher costs.

Key opportunities included:

- Community have done the hard work to identify their own solutions, they just require investment to support these initiatives such as:
 - An economic development plan to address food security, social connection and employment and as part of a strategy to attract tourists and to harness local spending rather than travelling to the nearest regional centre.
 - Increase opportunities for the younger generation to return to community and begin their own business.
 - Planning for the establishment of a community freight depot that has the potential to reduce costs, provide employment and reduce the number of large vehicles entering the town.
- Ability to source food from alternative suppliers. Some communities have organised bulk purchases that can be shared. Another community organised the purchase of food boxes that could be purchased and delivered in community (Attachment 4).
- Local rangers are assisting with the development of community gardens on some islands, but most gardens are for personal use.
- Activities such as fishing not only provide a food source for communities but also strengthen social and cultural ties by bringing families together and/or connecting youth with Elders.
- Existing groups such as men's, women's or Elders groups provide an opportunity to introduce education about cooking and traditional foods and address other community issues.
- There is a combination of council/privately owned stores and stores run by the major store groups e.g. IBIS. The advantages of this include:
 - Council were able to drop the price of products during COVID-19 as they were aware this would be a challenge for community members during this time.

- Store groups have stronger buying power. One store had been recently refurbished which meant new fridges were installed to store and promote fresh fruit and vegetables.
- Some communities have access to larger town supermarkets and in one case only 25% of the community shop in their local remote store.
- Whilst some communities felt that community gardens are not successful, there was an opportunity to plant fruit trees (like an orchard).
- Travel to other communities to purchase cheaper food/white goods can result in social benefits if community members can visit family members who are in larger towns. However, the economic impact remains the same.
- Takeaway stores sell some healthy options but can be expensive.
- Council have taken proactive steps and worked with stores in community to ensure school children are not served between designated times to discourage children from missing school. This approach is working.
- COVID-19 has provided opportunities for new supply lines to be developed in some communities whilst there have been no changes in others.
- Local food production in community in the form of aquaponics to grow vegetables.
- Explore the reestablishment of local abattoir and market gardens in community.
- A Federal Government Initiative is available where \$1 million is offered to remote communities for agricultural development but this has not progressed yet.
- There was an intention for remote store groups to set up a community watchdog to monitor prices, but this has not been progressed.

5 HWQld remote food security work

Commitment and coordinated systems action between government, community and other key stakeholders is critical to address the complexity of food insecurity at the system, community and individual family level. HWQld aims to stimulate intersectoral action by tackling the determinants that influence the food security dimensions of remote First Nations communities in Queensland. This includes working with communities, stores groups, government, non-government organisations, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Health sector, universities and businesses to improve food security.

5.1 Supporting Health and Wellbeing in the Torres Strait

In consultation with the Torres Strait Regional Authority, HWQld visited Thursday Island in February 2020 to meet and explore opportunities to support community led health and wellbeing initiatives. Torres Strait Regional Council, Torres Shire Council, Torres and Cape Hospital and Health Service, the Institute of Urban Indigenous Health, Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, and Department of Housing and Public Works (Sport and Recreation) were also part of the discussion in February. HWQld was asked to work with the local Thursday Island community and the outer islands to connect, consolidate and maximise current resources through collaboration.

The newly elected Torres Strait Regional Council invited Dr Robyn Littlewood, Chief Executive of HWQld to meet via teleconference in May 2020 to discuss how HWQld could support efforts to prevent the high burden of chronic disease in the region. The Council identified several immediate needs including holding a regional forum on health and wellbeing, increasing awareness of healthy eating, working with local food stores, and building the capability and capacity of local Healthy Lifestyle Officers located on each of the 15 outer islands.

5.2 Remote Food Stores project

HWQld is in the early stages of planning a Remote Food Stores project in partnership with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Health sector and remote stores groups to build the capacity and capability of the remote food retail sector. Inherent in this work is strong engagement with community to address community-specific food security issues and develop, through co-design, sustainable solutions to the complex and long history of food insecurity in remote communities in Far North Queensland. In the past, community expectations and remote stores (including the workforce, product availability and environments) have not always aligned to create healthy eating outcomes. Whilst local food stores are usually the primary source of food in remote communities, the work will also look to explore other opportunities to support food access and availability in community. This includes working closely with partners such as Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, Department of State Development, Tourism and Innovation, James Cook University, Torres and Cape Indigenous Council Alliance and Kindred Spirits (an Enterprise for Social impact).

Key outcomes of success would be:

- Community-led action response to identified needs;
- Improved access and demand for healthy food;
- Reduced access and demand for discretionary food and beverages;
- Improved promotion, education and training opportunities for communities and local workforces;
- Business development that explores local food production and social enterprise opportunities;
- Decreased purchase of sugary drinks, confectionary and sweet biscuits; and
- Increased purchase of vegetables and fruit.

5.3 Far North Queensland Hub

HWQld is planning to establish a Far North Queensland Hub as a place to connect those who are committed to improving the health and wellbeing of their communities. HWQld plans to strengthen the prevention workforce capacity and capability and create a new evidence base that is informed by co-designed community initiatives.

The Hub will provide a HWQld presence in the region and allow collaboration between key stakeholders to coordinate implementation of food security actions and support communities to lead their own health and wellbeing efforts. The Hub will provide support for Hospital and Health Services, the remote food stores network, other government agencies, non-government sector, community-controlled health organisations and universities who are contributing to improving food security throughout this region.

It is proposed to commence the establishment of the Far North Queensland Hub with a presence in Cairns to drive HWQld initiatives supporting food security, and a presence on Thursday Island to provide nutrition support and training to local Healthy Lifestyle Officers.

6 Attachments

1. A Framework to achieve food security in Remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities in Queensland.
2. Consultation list.
3. Map of Queensland Remote Communities.
4. Hopevale Food Box example.

7 References

1. **Common Ground.** *Common Ground.* [commonground.org.au](http://www.commonground.org.au). [Online] 6 July 2020. <http://www.commonground.org.au/learn/aborigianl-or-indigenous>.
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Attachment 1: A Framework to achieve food security in Remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities in Queensland.

What is chronic food insecurity?

- People who are consistently unable to meet their daily food requirements over sustained periods.
- People who experience extended poverty, lack of assets or financial resources.

What are we doing to address this?

- Stimulate intersectoral action by tackling the determinants that influence the dimensions food security of remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in Queensland.

Food insecurity is based on where you live

31%

of Indigenous people living in remote areas are food insecure

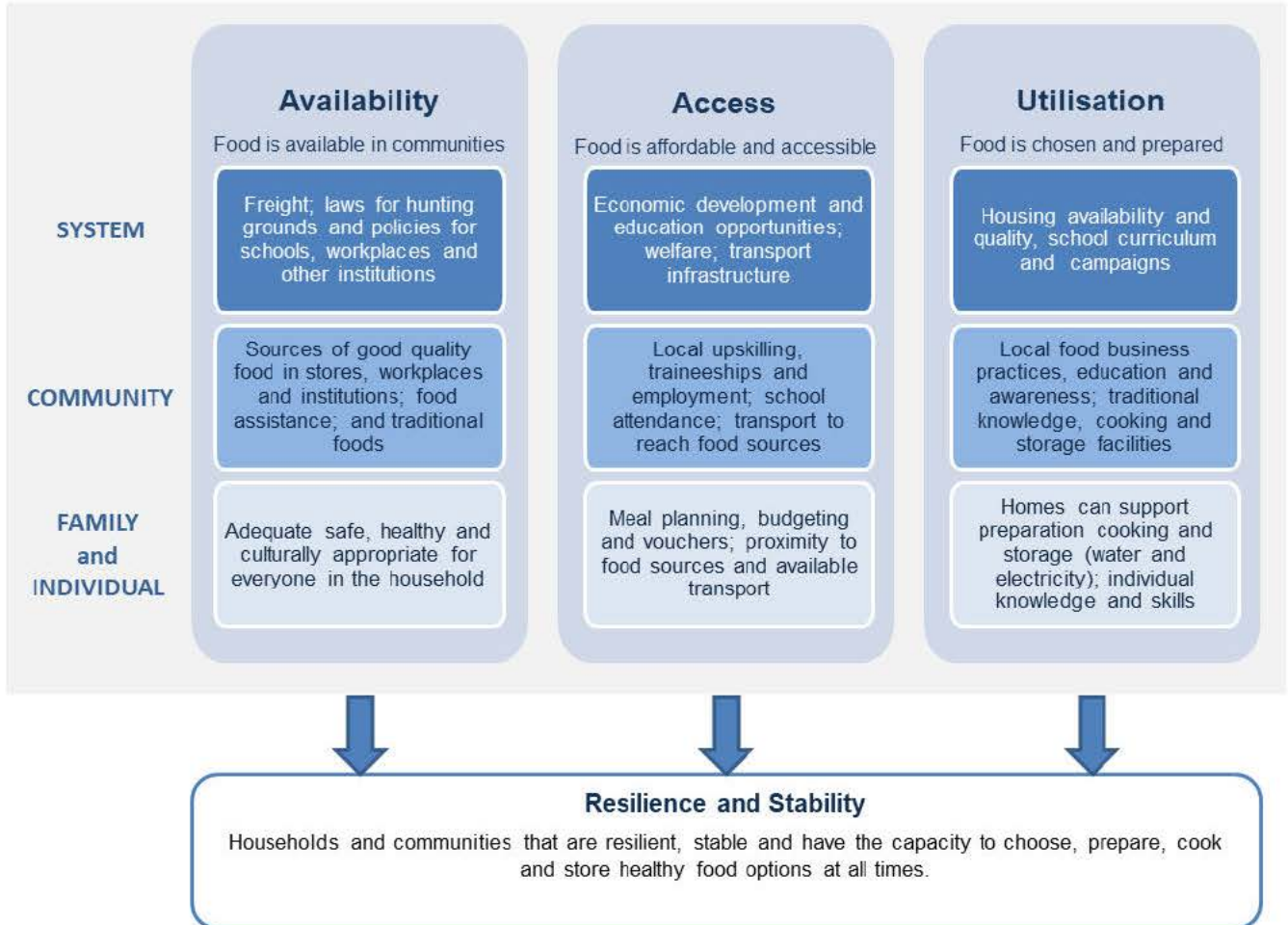
VS

20%

of Indigenous people living in non-remote areas are food insecure

How will this happen?

Community-owned solutions address the dimensions of food security (availability, access, utilisation and stability) at the system, community and individual and family levels.



Attachment 2: Consultation list

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Shire Councils

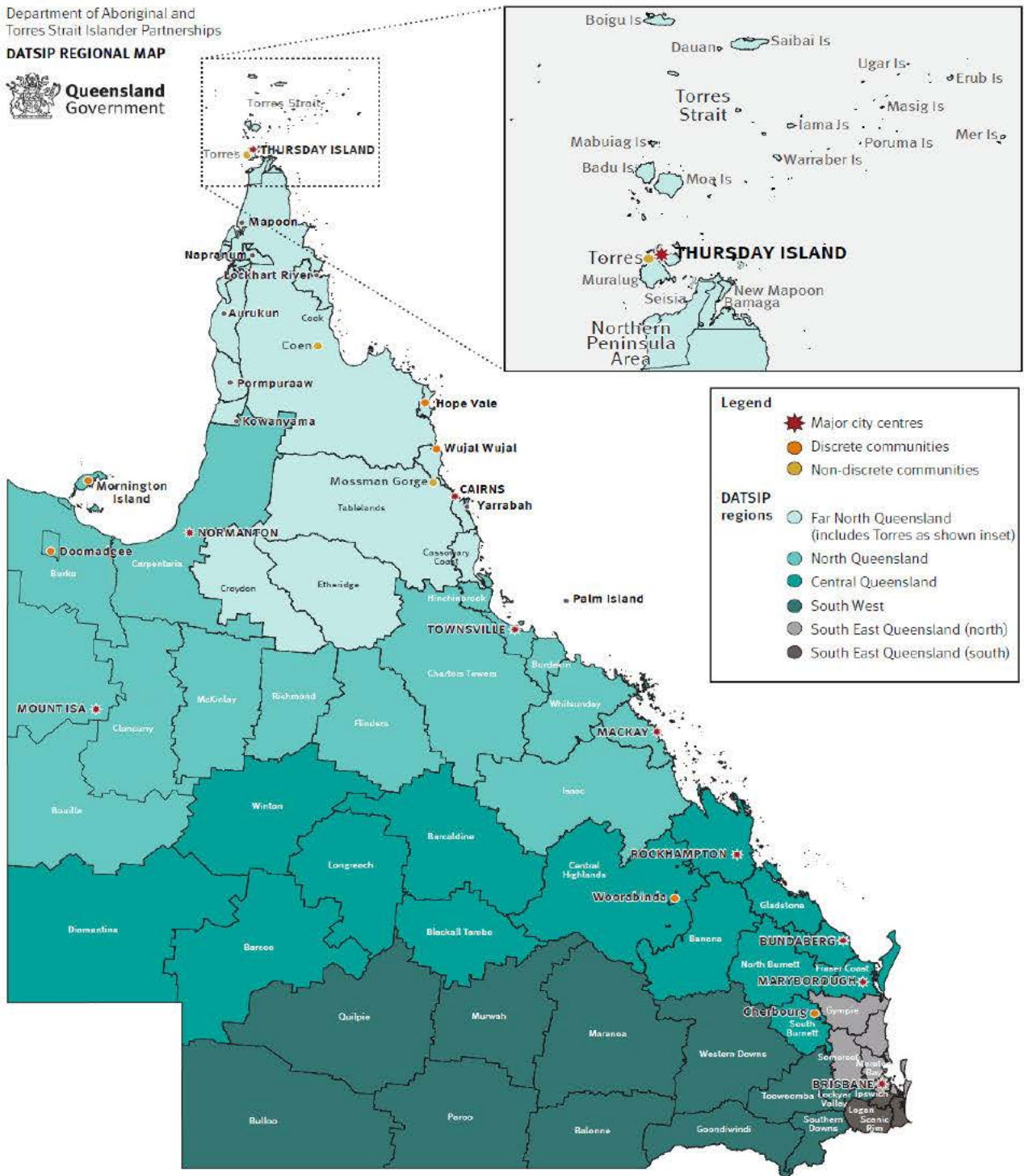
1. Aurukun Council	Mayor Kerri Tamwoy Bernie McCarthy, CEO
2. Wujal Wujal Council	Mayor Bradley Creek Steve Wilton, CEO
3. Yarrabah Council	Mayor Ross Andrews Leon Yeatman, CEO
4. Doomadgee Council	Mayor Jason Ned Garry Jefferies, CEO
5. Mapoon Council	Mayor Aileen Aido Nassem Chetty, CEO
6. NPA Council	Mayor Patricia Yusia Renee Williams, Interim CEO
7. Napranum Council	Steve Frost, Manager
8. Hope Vale Council	Michelle Vick, Director of Social Services
9. Torres Strait Island Regional Council	Mayor Pillemon Mosby TSIRC Councillors

Key Stakeholder engagement

10. Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council
11. Apunipima Cape York Health Council
12. Gidgee Healing
13. Institute of Urban Indigenous Health
14. Torres Health
15. Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Service
16. Central Queensland Hospital and Health Service
17. Darling Downs Hospital and Health Service
18. North West Hospital and Health Service
19. Torres and Cape Hospital and Health Service

20. Townsville Hospital and Health Service
21. Deadly Ears
22. Department of Education
23. Department of National Parks, Sport and Racing
24. Premiers and Cabinet and Treasury
25. Department of Housing and Public Works
26. Department of Children, Young People and Women
27. Department of Agriculture and Fisheries
28. Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships
29. Department of Local Government, Racing and Multicultural Affairs
30. Department of Transport and Main Roads
31. Department of State Development, Manufacturing, Infrastructure and Planning
32. Department of Innovation Tourism Development and Commonwealth Games
33. Department of Employment, Small Business and Training
34. Community Enterprise Queensland
35. ALPA – Island and Cape
36. University of Queensland
37. James Cook University
38. Cape York Partnerships
39. North Queensland Primary Health Network
40. National Indigenous Australians Agency
41. Torres Strait Regional Authority
42. Kindred Spirits
43. Torres Cape Indigenous Council Alliance

Attachment 3: Map of Queensland Remote First Nations communities





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