



New inquiry - Remote community stores in Aboriginal and Torres Strait communities

The operation of local community stores in remote Indigenous communities is the focus of a new inquiry by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs.

The Chair of the Committee, Richard Marles MP said “The quality and cost of supplies in remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait communities is of critical importance to the health and economic outcomes of these communities.”

He added “The Committee will consider the food security and cost of living pressures of these remote Indigenous communities which may go some way to close the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians on life expectancy, educational achievement and employment opportunities. “

The Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs has asked the Committee to inquire into and report on the operation of local community stores in remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait communities, with a particular focus on:

- food supply, quality, cost and competition issues;
- the effectiveness of the Outback Stores model and other private, public and community store models; and
- the impact of these factors on the health and economic outcomes of communities.

The Committee invites submissions by **Friday, 20 February 2009**. Further details on the inquiry, including the terms of reference and advice on making submissions can be obtained on the Committee’s website at www.aph.gov.au/atsia or by contacting the committee secretariat on (02) 6277 4559 or emailing atsia.reps@aph.gov.au.

For media comment, please contact the Committee Chair Mr Richard Marles on (02) 2774330.

For background information, contact the committee secretariat on (02) 62774559 or atsia.reps@aph.gov.au