

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

The Committee has tabled the report in the House of Representatives. Most of the recommendations in the report were to the Australian Government to take action.

Such action is the responsibility of the Executive Government rather than the Parliament.

The Government will respond to the Committee report by way of a written statement to the House of Representatives. In recent years it has been government policy to respond to a report within three months of its presentation to the Parliament although it may be longer before a response is provided.

The Government may accept, or partially accept, the Committee's recommendations, and announce its intention to take certain action. Some recommendations may be rejected and the Government may announce that it wishes to give further consideration to others. The Government may implement recommendations made by the Committee through changes in legislation or government administration or policy without publishing a formal response.

The government response will be published on the Committee's web site.



FURTHER INFORMATION

For more information regarding the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs and the inquiry into community stores in Aboriginal and Torres Strait communities please contact:

Committee Secretary
House of Representatives Standing
Committee on Aboriginal and
Torres Strait Islander Affairs
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600
AUSTRALIA
Phone: 02 6277 4559
Fax: 02 6277 4427
email: atsia.reps@aph.gov.au

A full copy of the report is available on the web at
<http://www.aph.gov.au/atsia>



Images of fruit and vegetables courtesy of Jupiterimages Unlimited



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STANDING COMMITTEE
ON ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER AFFAIRS

EVERYBODY'S BUSINESS

*Remote Aboriginal and
Torres Strait Community Stores*



This pamphlet provides an overview of the process and the findings from the inquiry into community stores in remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

November 2009

THE INQUIRY INTO REMOTE COMMUNITY STORES

The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs consists of 10 Members of Parliament.

On Thursday 4 December 2008 the Hon Jenny Macklin MP, Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs requested the Committee inquire into and report on the operation of 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.



RECEIVING EVIDENCE

Through the evidence gathered during the inquiry, the Committee was able to be better informed of views on the operation of community stores in remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait communities.

The Committee received 112 submissions from a wide range of sources including Commonwealth, state and territory government departments, store owners, store managers, freight providers, health experts and providers, individuals living in remote Indigenous communities, academics, and Indigenous representative organisations.

The Committee conducted 28 public hearings in Canberra, Darwin, Alice Springs, Broome and in remote areas of the Northern Territory, Queensland and South Australia. A transcript of evidence was taken at every public hearing and was published on the web.

The Committee visited 17 remote communities, all of which had a distinctive culture, history and identity. In all remote communities the Committee invited community members to make short statements about the inquiry.

The Committee appreciated the generous hospitality and evidence provided to the Committee by traditional owners and elders, clans and families in all the remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait communities visited during the inquiry.

A list of submissions, public hearings and transcripts of evidence can be accessed at:

<http://www.aph.gov.au/atsia>



FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The remote community store has the potential to play a pivotal role in improving the social, economic and health outcomes of remote Indigenous communities.

The Committee made 33 recommendations overall in key areas such as health and nutrition, food access and supply, cost of living, regulating governance, licensing of stores, and the future role of Outback Stores.

Recommendations include:

- ▶ developing a healthy store policy for every remote Indigenous community store,
- ▶ 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,
- ▶ the registration of stores under the *Corporations and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Act 2006*,
- ▶ revising the purpose of the Outback Stores model to recognise the two distinct roles— as a commercially viable store operator and ensuring food deliveries (where the store is not viable or the regular supply of healthy food is not secured), and
- ▶ working with individual communities to develop and support a diversity of good store operations or delivery models that recognise the unique needs and situations of those communities.