



Keeping stores and communities strong

In Canberra for the Budget week, the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs will hold public hearings to learn more about store governance and food security in remote communities.

In most Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander remote communities the local store is owned by a community corporation. The Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations (ORIC) supports and regulates the incorporation of many of these organisations.

At the public meeting, Anthony Beven, Registrar of Indigenous Corporations will outline his Office's powers to intervene and rebuild corporations which are experiencing problems. The Registrar will also expand on ORIC's work in the Northern Territory where the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs is licensing stores in prescribed communities.

The Committee will then hear from environmental health expert Kerry Arabena. Kerry has many years experience in national health policy and implementation in rural and remote Australia and is a Fellow of the Sir Gustav Nossal Leadership in Health Reform. She argues that fundamental assumptions about food supply, packaging and sourcing must be reassessed if nutrition and economic outcomes for Indigenous Australians in remote communities are to be improved.

The Committee's recent trip to the Central Desert and the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands of South Australia provides the context for this discussion. Committee Chairman Mr Richard Marles MP stated:

"In the Central Desert community of Papunya, and in Amata and Kaltjiti in the APY Lands, the Committee saw that a strong store committee combined with responsible store managers can make all the difference to a remote store. At the same time, where dairy, fruit and vegetables are supplied once a week, few people can prepare or keep this food fresh in their homes. The Committee wants to find ways to enable families in remote communities to eat, prepare and store more fresh food".

Public hearing: Thursday 14 May 2009 Venue: Committee Room 1R2

- 12. 15pm Mr Anthony Beven, Registrar
Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations (ORIC)**
- 1. 00pm Ms Kerry Arabena, Visiting Research Fellow
Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
Studies (AIATSIS)**
- 1.45 pm Adjourn**

For media comment, please contact the Committee Chair Mr Richard Marles on (03) 5221 3033 **For background information**, contact the Committee Secretariat on (02) 62774559 or atsia.reps@aph.gov.au