



Paying the highest prices – remote indigenous community stores

The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs will hear from Mr Joseph Elu for the second time during its inquiry into remote indigenous community stores.

In particular, Mr Elu will address the following issues:

- Freight costs and a discussion on subsidies;
- Cost of living in remote communities; and
- Delivery models for community stores.

Mr Elu is keen to reiterate with the Committee the debilitating costs of freight for remote indigenous communities, particularly for the Cape York Peninsula and the Torres Strait Islands. Freight costs incurred result in higher running costs for local operators and higher store prices for goods and services in remote communities such as his.

“We people north of Cairns are fighting to try to get freight equalisation on the basis of equity since Tasmania was given it”, Mr Elu commented.

Mr Elu is Mayor of the Northern Peninsula Area Regional Council, Cape York. He has had extensive involvement in indigenous affairs throughout Cape York. Mr Elu has chaired numerous organisations that aim to improve the health and nutrition of Indigenous Australians. He currently co-chairs the Indigenous Community Volunteers Foundation. Due to his service to Indigenous Communities Mr Elu has been appointed as an Officer of the Order of Australia in the General Division.

Commenting on the situation the Committee Acting Chair Mr Andrew Laming said:

“Food security is a huge challenge for small remote Indigenous communities. The cost of fuel, freight and refrigeration during the transportation of food is very expensive. Some of the fresh produce that arrives in remote communities has been travelling for 5 days minimum and requires refrigerated road and barge transportation. This all adds up significantly to the end costs of food.”

Public hearing: Wednesday 24 June 2009 Venue: Committee Room 1R2

9.00am Mr Joseph Elu – Mayor, Northern Peninsula Area Regional Council

10.00am Adjourn

For media comment, please contact the Acting Chair Mr Andrew Laming MP on (02) 6277 4258 **For background information**, contact the Committee Secretariat on (02) 62774559 or atsia.reps@aph.gov.au