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## It's time for action: improving food security in remote communities

Dietitians Australia applauds the recommendation to develop a strategy on food security and nutrition for remote First Nations communities. This strategy is one of 16 recommendations in the [final report](#) from the Senate Inquiry into food pricing and food security in remote Indigenous communities, which was tabled earlier this week.

“The development of a national food and nutrition security strategy was a key priority within Dietitians Australia’s written submission to the Inquiry, and it’s great to see this highlighted as one of the recommendations in the final report,” said Robert Hunt CEO of Dietitians Australia.

“This is the third time in recent years that food insecurity in remote communities has been raised. Now is the time to act with urgency, so we can begin to resolve this issue.”

A strategy driven by the Government, working in partnership with the States, Territories and First Australians living in remote communities, is vital to start creating long lasting and practical solutions to food access and affordability issues.

“There is not just one solution to reducing food insecurity. It is important to look at the many factors which impact food access, including freight, weather impacts and remote store viability. Addressing these factors will help reduce the cost and improve the quality and variety of food available for purchase in these communities,” said Hunt.

Other recommendations which align with Dietitians Australia’s submission include the need for better transparency and accountability regarding the availability, quality, and pricing of foods sold in remote stores.

“While the report indicated the high price of food in remote communities reflected the genuine cost of stocking and operating a remote store, this highlights just how dire the issue of food insecurity is.”

“The impacts of COVID-19 on food supply, brought some valuable learnings this year, including how effective collaborative working groups can be, in helping to improve food supply to remote communities,” said Hunt.

Dietitians Australia continues to advocate for community stores to be regarded as an essential service.

“Like healthcare and education, food is a basic human right and community stores must be given the appropriate status to reflect this. We must work with these communities to prioritise and support local stores, many of which are the only place to purchase food in these areas,” said Hunt.

Dietitians Australia also welcomes the Inquiry’s recommendations for community grants to foster local food production and improvements to safe food storage.

“These grants will encourage development and delivery of community owned and led programs, which in turn will help to increase the supply of healthy and culturally acceptable food choices.”

“This, along with improving food storage options are positive recommendations, which will help to empower and better equip First Nations communities to put their health first,” said Hunt.

**ENDS**

**For media enquiries and interviews, contact Pattie King, Dietitians Australia 0409 661 920.**

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**Note to Editors:** Dietitians Australia (DA) is the leading voice of nutrition in Australia, representing dietitians nationally and advocating for healthier communities. Accredited Practising Dietitian (APD) is the only national credential recognised by the Australian Government as the quality standard for nutrition and dietetics services in Australia. For more information, including DA’s media releases and position on topical nutrition issues, visit [www.dietitiansaustralia.org.au](http://www.dietitiansaustralia.org.au).