 

**To the Standing Committee on Indigenous Affairs**

**Inquiry into food pricing and food security in remote indigenous communities**

**Submission by the Titjikala Community supported by My Voice and the Australian Federation of Disability Organisations (AFDO)**

30th June 2020

Dear Committee Members

From October 2019 to the current date, My Voice in partnership with the Australian Federation of Disability Organisations has been providing disability support services and systemic disability advocacy to people with disability on the remote indigenous community of Titjikala, 150km outside of Alice Springs. We have embedded staff in the community.

During this period, we became highly concerned by the quality, quantity and cost of the food available at the Outback Store located in Titjikala. Food quality is of particular concern to our agencies given the impact it has on disability and chronic health conditions. Staff from both our agencies have bought additional food at Coles in Alice Springs to take out on regular visits to Titjikala, being aware of the costs of the food there and the food sacrifices families were regularly making.

At the commencement of the pandemic, this issue became a serious health threat to the community as community members were prevented by COVID 19 restrictions from travelling to supermarkets in Alice Springs. We received calls for help from the community with community members scared that they were experiencing starvation. Photos we received from the community clearly showed rows of empty shelves. The food that was available was of poor quality and high cost. The community were unable to seek help from Outback Stores nor any government agency to assist them in this emergency.

At one point during the pandemic, My Voice negotiated with the local police and the army checkpoint to enable a food delivery from Coles Alice Springs to get through to the local community. We then organised for essential services passes for our staff based at Titjikala so that food could be obtained.

This is a community that is resilient and provides significant leadership, however are often powerless as there is no accessible mechanism by which they can raise their concerns. As Outback Stores is an affiliated government organisation, we hope that

appropriate standards and safeguards will be put in place to ensure that the people of Titjikala receive the same access to quality food at regular prices that everyone else in Australia enjoys and have their complaints acted on.

My Voice and AFDO have supported the Titjikala Community to make this Video Submission and in doing so acknowledge the significant leadership of the community in wanting to provide this Video Submission in Language to the Committee.

Please find attached the video made by the community, providing their own representation to the Committee.

We hope that the Committee hears what the Titjikala Community have to say on this important issue.

Yours Sincerely

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