

[REDACTED]

From:

Diana Carolina Badillo Vega [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] 5 August 2024 1:43 PM

To:

Remote Food Security Strategy Consultations

Subject:

Submission on Remote Food Security - Coen

Dear Remote Food Security Consultation Team,

I am writing to provide my feedback on remote food security based on my experiences as a female counsellor for Coen (Cook Shire, Queensland), where I have been working as a FIFO worker for almost a year. Prior to this, I worked in the Torres Strait Islands for 3 months, and even there, I did not witness such a massive constraint in accessing food.

What does food security mean to you? Food security means consistent and reliable access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life. It is the foundation of well-being and a basic human right that should be accessible to all, regardless of geographic location.

How could food security be improved in your community? Improving food security in Coen requires several measures:

1. Ensuring reliable transportation and supply chains, especially during the wet season, to guarantee access to essential food items.
2. Establishing additional food outlets or supporting the current shop to maintain regular supply and competitive pricing.
3. Implementing transparent pricing in the local shop to enable better budgeting for community members.
4. Developing community gardens or local food production initiatives to reduce dependency on external supply chains.

The resilience and resourcefulness of the Coen community are significant strengths. Community members often support one another during tough times, sharing resources and information. Additionally, there is a strong sense of solidarity and a willingness to work together to address common challenges.

After experiencing my first wet season in Coen, I observed the severe hardships faced by the community from December 2023 to May 2024. Road closures during this period resulted in very limited access to produce and basic food necessities. The only family-owned shop in Coen was unable to supply food for the community consistently. Additionally, the shop does not display prices for any food items, making it very difficult for community members to budget and ensure they can provide food for their families.

This situation is deeply concerning, as it undermines the fundamental needs of the community. It is particularly troubling to see that while the local pub managed to restock alcohol, the shop did not prioritize bringing in food due to cost concerns. Furthermore, the shop's unreliable opening and closing hours exacerbate the issue, as it is the sole source of food for the 300 residents of Coen. This situation represents a severe violation of basic human rights.

Thank you for considering my submission. I hope it contributes to meaningful improvements in food security for remote communities like Coen.

Sincerely,
Carolina Badillo Vega