# 2019 NT Market Basket Survey

| | |
|---|---|
| **Document title** | 2019 NT Market Basket Survey |
| **Contact details** | Director, Health Improvement<br>Northern Territory Department of Health<br>PO Box 40596 Casuarina NT 0811 |
| **Approved by and date** | Chief Executive, Department of Health, 23 June 2020 |
| **Document review** | Biannually |
| **TRM number** | EDOC2019/416260 |

| Version | Date | Author | Changes made |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 12 June 2020 | Health Improvement | First version on new template of 2019 draft |
| 2 | 23 June 2020 | Health Improvement | Version for publication |

| Acronyms | Full form |
|---|---|
| ALPA | Arnhem Land Progress Association |
| CDB | Current Diet Basket |
| HFB | Healthy Food Basket |
| MBS | Market Basket Survey |
| NT | Northern Territory |


# Acknowledgements

The authors are grateful to the many people, who have assisted in the production of this report, including:

- store managers and store management groups
- managers of supermarkets and local corner stores
- surveyors, both government and non-government
- community members.




An electronic version is available at: www.health.nt.gov.au.

*Please check for any corrections to this document. This was produced early to meet deadlines for the Commonwealth Inquiry into food prices and food security in remote communities and is potentially subject to further change.*

**General enquiries about this publication should be directed to:**


Director, Health Improvement
Northern Territory Department of Health
PO Box 40596 Casuarina NT 0811

# Contents

# 1. Executive summary

## 1.1 Survey results – 2019

- The 2019 Market Basket Survey (MBS) is the nineteenth survey of remote stores in the Northern Territory (NT).
- Fifty-eight remote stores were surveyed between June and August 2019; a supermarket and corner store in the major town/city in each of the district centres were also surveyed for comparison.
- A Healthy Food Basket (HFB) and Current Diet Basket (CDB) were priced in each of the stores. The HFB is based on foods recommended in the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating, the CDB is based on the most recent survey of dietary patterns of Aboriginal* people in Australia. Both baskets contain sufficient food to feed a hypothetical family of six for a fortnight. 2019 is the third year the CDB has been included.
- The average cost of the CDB was higher than the HFB in all districts and all store types.
- The CDB was 7% higher in remote stores ($913 compared to $848), 6% higher in corner stores ($847 compared to $800) and 17% higher in district centre supermarkets ($650 compared to $542) compared to the HFB.
- On average, the HFB in remote stores was 56% more expensive than in the district centre supermarkets and 6% higher than the average of the district centre corner stores.
- On average, the CDB in remote stores was 40% more expensive than in the district centre supermarkets and 8% higher than the average of the district centre corner stores.
- Compared to 2017, when the last survey was conducted, the average cost of the HFB decreased by 1% in remote stores and increased by 1% in district centre supermarkets.
- 61% of people employed in remote community stores were Aboriginal.
- 87% of fresh fruit and vegetables were rated to be of ‘good’ quality.
- 96% of items in the HFB were available, or usually available, in the remote stores surveyed.

## 1.2 Trend Data 2000 – 2019

- In remote stores, there has been a rising trend in the average number of varieties of fresh fruit and vegetables from 2000 to 2019. The average number of varieties of fresh vegetables available was highest in 2017 when there was an average of 18 varieties available.
- On average, the cost of the HFB has risen annually by 3.1% in remote stores and 2.1% in district centre supermarkets. The average consumer price index over this period was 2.7%.
- Compared to district centre supermarkets the HFB was the most expensive in 2017 (60%), this gap has decreased in 2019 (56%).

# 2. Background and history

In 1995 the then Northern Territory (NT) Department of Health and Community Services released the NT Food and Nutrition Policy. One of the strategies identified in this policy was to develop a tool to monitor food cost, availability, variety and quality in remote community stores as the community store is a major contributor to the food supply in remote communities. The tool developed was the Market Basket Survey (MBS), the first survey of a sample of remote stores was conducted in 1998 and the first Territory wide survey was done in 2000.

## 2.1 Food baskets used in the MBS

### Market Basket Surveys 2000 – 2015

Surveys conducted during this period priced a basket of foods which would meet the average energy and recommended nutrient needs of a hypothetical family of six for a fortnight. The family represents a cross-section of people who have different nutrient requirements because of their age and sex. The family consists of:

- a grandmother aged 60 years
- a man aged 35 years
- a woman aged 33 years
- a male aged 14 years
- a girl aged eight years
- a boy aged four years.

The NUTTAB 2010[1] database and Nutrient Reference Values for Australia and New Zealand[2] were used to determine the quantities of each food in the basket required to provide 95% of the family's energy requirements and 100% of selected nutrient** requirements for a fortnight. Details are available in previously published surveys[3].

### Market Basket Surveys 2016 - 2019

In 2016, the cost of a wider range of foods was collected to enable the comparison of two baskets, a HFB and a CDB. The HFB is based on recommendations for the number of serves of food from each of the food groups detailed in the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating[4]. The CDB is based on information from the Australian Bureau of Statistics[5] on the average diet Aboriginal people in Australia consumed in 2012-13. It contains both healthy and unhealthy foods. Both baskets contain sufficient food to feed the family of six described above for a fortnight. Details of the foods contained in the HFB and CDB are contained in Appendix A.

## 2.2 Additional survey information

In addition to collecting information on cost, the MBS also collects information on store management, employment of Aboriginal people and existence of a store nutrition policy.

A major supermarket and corner store in each of the district centres are surveyed so urban and remote store prices can be compared. The corner store is a small suburban supermarket which provides a benchmark store with similar buying power to the remote stores.

---

**Nutrients selected were those used in modelling for the development of the current Australian Guide to Healthy Eating.[6]

# 3. Results for 2019 survey

58 remote stores were surveyed between June and August 2019; results are shown below.

## 3.1 Remote store characteristics

Table 1: Ownership/management characteristics by district, remote stores, 2019

| **Ownership*** | **Alice Springs** | **Darwin** | **East Arnhem** | **Katherine** | **Total remote stores** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Owned and managed by community or Aboriginal corporation | 4 | 7 | 0 | 1 | **12** |
| Privately owned | 8 | 4 | 0 | 6 | **18** |
| Owned and/ or managed by store group (e.g. ALPA | 9 | 5 | 4 | 10 | **28** |
| Other/Not recorded | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | **0** |
| **Management characteristics** | | | | | |
| Store committee | 14 | 11 | 4 | 12 | **41** |
| Nutrition policy | 11 | 9 | 4 | 9 | **33** |
| **Number of stores** | **21** | **16** | **4** | **17** | **58** |

- 21% (12) of stores were owned and managed by the community or a local Aboriginal corporation.
- 48% (28) of stores were either owned or managed by a store group [e.g. Arnhem Land Progress Association (ALPA) and Outback Stores].
- 31% (18) of stores were privately owned.
- 71% (41) of stores had a store committee.
- 57% (33) of stores stated they had a nutrition policy.

Licensing involves the Australian Government setting standards stores need to meet to help make sure they have fresh and healthy food available and are sustainable operations.

Table 2: Store licensing by district, remote stores, 2019

| | **Alice Springs** | **Darwin** | **East Arnhem** | **Katherine** | **Total remote stores** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Licensed | 19 | 13 | 4 | 14 | **50** |
| Not licensed | 2 | 3 | 0 | 3 | **8** |
| **Number of stores** | **21** | **16** | **4** | **17** | **58** |

- 86% (50) of stores were licensed by the Australian Government, Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet.

Table 3: Employment characteristics by store ownership and management, remote stores, 2019

| | Owned and managed by community or Aboriginal corporation | Privately owned/ Leased from Community | Managed and/ or owned by store group (e.g. Outback Stores, ALPA) | Other/not recorded | All remote stores |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Number of stores with Aboriginal employees | 10 | 6 | 25 | 0 | **43** |
| Number of Aboriginal employees | 82 | 29 | 242 | 0 | **353** |
| Total employees | 148 | 101 | 328 | 0 | **577** |
| Percent Aboriginal employees | 55% | 29% | 74% | 0 | **61%** |
| **Number of stores** | **12** | **18** | **28** | **0** | **57** |

- 61% of employees in the remote stores surveyed were Aboriginal.
- The proportion of Aboriginal employees was highest in stores owned and/or managed (74%) by a store group (e.g. ALPA and Outback Stores).

## 3.2 Variety and quality of fresh fruit and vegetables

In this survey, variety is defined as a type of fruit or vegetable (e.g. apple or capsicum). If different options are found (e.g. red and green capsicum) they are usually counted as one variety.

Table 4: Number of varieties of fresh fruit and vegetables by district, remote stores, 2019

| | Alice Springs | Darwin | East Arnhem | Katherine | All remote stores |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Average number of fresh fruit varieties | 8 | 13 | 17 | 11 | **11** |
| Range | 0 - 18 | 3 – 20 | 13 – 20 | 4 - 19 | **0 - 20** |
| Average number of fresh vegetable varieties | 13 | 21 | 21 | 16 | **16** |
| Range | 0 - 25 | 8 - 32 | 20 – 22 | 2 - 28 | **0 - 32** |
| **Number of stores** | **20** | **16** | **4** | **17** | **57** |

On average there were 11 varieties of fresh fruit and 16 varieties of fresh vegetables in remote stores.

Table 5: Quality** of fresh fruit by district and remote stores, 2019

| | Alice Springs | Darwin | East Arnhem | Katherine | All remote Stores |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Good | 84% | 85% | 91% | 91% | **87%** |
| Fair | 16% | 13% | 7% | 8% | **12%** |
| Poor | 1% | 1% | - | 1% | **1%** |
| Rotten | - | - | 1% | - | **>1%** |
| Not rated | - | - | - | - | - |

Table 6: Quality** of fresh vegetables by district, remote stores, 2019

| | Alice Springs | Darwin | East Arnhem | Katherine | All remote stores |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Good | 90% | 82% | 75% | 95% | **87%** |
| Fair | 9% | 16% | 18% | 5% | **11%** |
| Poor | 1% | 2% | 4% | 0.4% | **1%** |
| Rotten | - | >1% | 4% | - | **1%** |
| Not rated | - | - | - | - | - |

** Rating quality of fresh food is difficult and dependent on the opinion of those undertaking the survey. Descriptive tables were included in the survey sheets to help reduce the variance amongst those undertaking the survey.

- Overall, 87% of fresh fruit and 87% of fresh vegetables were rated to be of 'good' quality on the day of survey.
- Katherine remote stores had the highest proportion of 'good' fresh fruit and 'good' fresh vegetables on the day of survey (95%).

## 3.3 Food basket costs

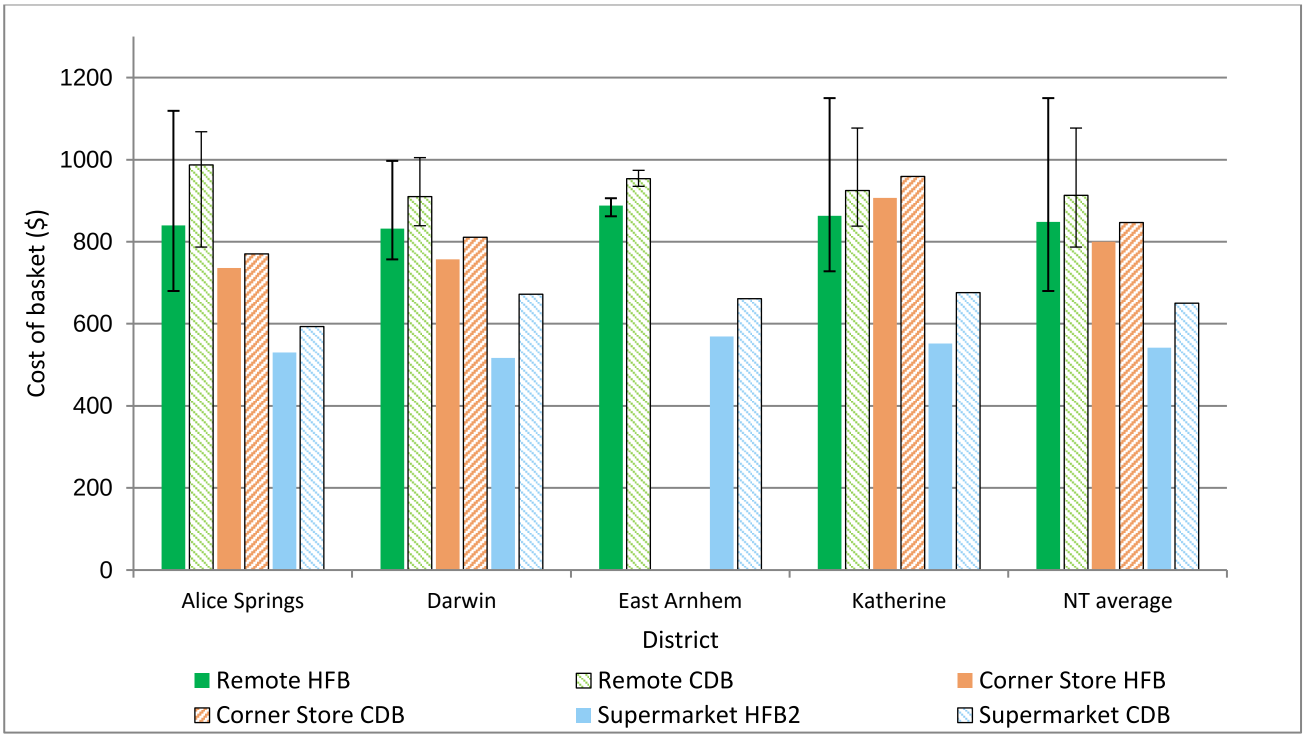
In order to compare the cost of the food basket between stores, it is sometimes necessary to establish a price for items not in stock on the day of the survey, or not carried by the store. If the item is not in stock, its usual price is used. If the item is not carried by the store, the average price of the item in other remote stores in the same district is used instead.

Table 7: Usual availability of HFB (CDB) items by district, remote stores, 2019

| | Alice Springs | Darwin | East Arnhem | Katherine | All remote stores |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Average availability of prices of items in food basket | 93% (92%) | 98% (97%) | 98% (97%) | 96% (96%) | **96% (95%)** |
| Range | 53 - 100% (58 -100%) | 90 - 100% (92 – 100%) | 97-100% (94 – 100%) | 87-100% (83 -100%) | **53 - 100% (58– 100%)** |
| Number of stores with 100% of items | 10 (4) | 11 (7) | 2 (1) | 9 (7) | **32 (19)** |
| **Number of stores** | **21** | **16** | **4** | **17** | **58** |

- On average 96% of items in the HFB and 95% of items in the CDB were available or usually available in remote stores.
- 55% (32) of the 58 remote stores had, or usually had, all the items in the HFB available in their store.

### Figure 1: Cost of the food baskets by district and type of store, 2019




N.B. Bars on columns represent the range of different basket costs for districts and store types.

### Table 8: Cost[#] of food baskets by district and type of store, 2019

| | Alice Springs | Darwin | East Arnhem | Katherine | Average |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Supermarket** | | | | | |
| Healthy food basket | $530 | $517 | $552 | $569 | **$542** |
| Current diet basket | $593 | $672 | $676 | $661 | **$650** |
| **Corner store** | | | | | |
| Healthy food basket | $736 | $757 | - | $907 | **$800** |
| Current diet basket | $770 | $811 | - | $959 | **$847** |
| **Remote stores** | | | | | |
| Healthy food basket | $840 | $832 | $888 | $863 | **$848** |
| (range) | ($680-$1,119) | ($757-$997) | ($862-$906) | ($728-$1,150) | **($680-$1,150)** |
| Current diet basket | $897 | $910 | $954 | $925 | **$913** |
| (range) | ($787-$1,068) | ($880-$1,005) | ($935-$974) | ($850-$1,077) | **($787-$1077)** |

[#] Due to rounding of numbers the sum of food groups does not equal the total basket cost in some instances in Table 8.

**Supermarket**

- The HFB was the most expensive in Katherine ($569) and cheapest in Darwin ($517).
- The CDB was the most expensive in East Arnhem ($676) and cheapest in Alice Springs ($593).

**Remote stores**

- The East Arnhem district had the most expensive HFB ($888) and CDB ($954).
- Darwin was the cheapest district for the HFB ($832) and Alice Springs district had the cheapest CDB ($897).

- The HFB in remote stores was 6% more expensive than the district centre corner stores ($848 compared to $800) and 56% more than the district centre supermarkets ($848 compared to $542).
- The CDB in remote stores was 8% more expensive than in the district centre corner stores ($913 compared to $847) and 40% more than the district centre supermarkets ($913 compared to $650).

**HFB vs CDB**

- The CDB was more expensive than the HFB in all districts and store types.
- The CDB was 7% more expensive in remote stores ($913 compared to $848), 6% more in corner stores ($847 compared to $800) and 17% more expensive in district centre supermarkets ($650 compared to $542) compared to the HFB.

Table 9: Percentage difference in the cost of the food groups in the basket between remote stores and respective district centre supermarket, by district, 2019

| | Alice Springs | Darwin | East Arnhem | Katherine | Average (remote stores and district centre supermarkets) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Bread & cereals** | | | | | |
| Healthy food basket | 45% | 40% | 96% | 28% | **47%** |
| Current diet basket | 40% | 33% | 79% | 19% | **38%** |
| **Fruit** | | | | | |
| Healthy food basket | 91% | 78% | 62% | 71% | **75%** |
| Current diet basket | 97% | 82% | 69% | 72% | **79%** |
| **Vegetables** | | | | | |
| Healthy food basket | 33% | 47% | 1% | 43% | **33%** |
| Current diet basket | 39% | 55% | 5% | 57% | **42%** |
| **Meat & alternative** | | | | | |
| Healthy food basket | 69% | 75% | 50% | 68% | **58%** |
| Current diet basket | 70% | 46% | 78% | 66% | **63%** |
| **Dairy** | | | | | |
| Healthy food basket | 70% | 68% | 127% | 71% | **58%** |
| Current diet basket | 77% | 77% | 134% | 77% | **63%** |
| **Takeaway** | | | | | |
| Healthy food basket | -38% | -37% | -13% | -20% | **-25%** |
| Current diet basket | 21% | 0% | 4% | 1% | **3%** |
| **Other foods** | | | | | |
| Healthy food basket | 28% | 33% | 167% | 60% | **54%** |
| Current diet basket | 70% | 68% | 49% | 70% | **64%** |
| **Total basket** | | | | | |
| **Healthy food basket** | **58%** | **61%** | **56%** | **65%** | 56% |
| **Current diet basket** | **51%** | **35%** | **44%** | **37%** | 40% |

- On average, the cost of the HFB was 56% higher in remote stores than in district centre supermarkets.
- On average, the cost of the CDB was 40% higher in remote stores than in district centre supermarkets.
- Katherine district remote stores had the greatest difference compared to the district supermarket (65% more expensive) and East Arnhem district remote stores had the lowest difference in HFB price (56% more expensive than the East Arnhem supermarket).

## 3.4 Cost variations, 2019 compared to 2017

### Variation in the cost of the food groups in the HFB and CDB by district, remote stores, corner stores and supermarkets

(See Appendix C: Tables 10, 11 and 17 for underlying data)

District centre average supermarket costs for the different portions of the HFB and CDB showed much more variation than in remote stores.

Between 2017 and 2019 in remote stores the:

- average NT cost of both the HFB and CDB decreased by 1%
- largest decrease in total cost of the HFB (-4%) and the CDB (-3%) was in Alice Springs region
- greatest increase in the total cost of the HFB (9%) and CDB (1%) was in East Arnhem region
- ‘dairy portion’ of the HFB was the only portion to increase (1%)
- ‘takeaway’ portion of the HFB had the largest decrease (-9%)
- CDB average remote stores’ costs by food type showed little or no variation with the largest being a 3% decrease in the meat component of the CDB.

Between 2017 and 2019 in district centre supermarkets the:

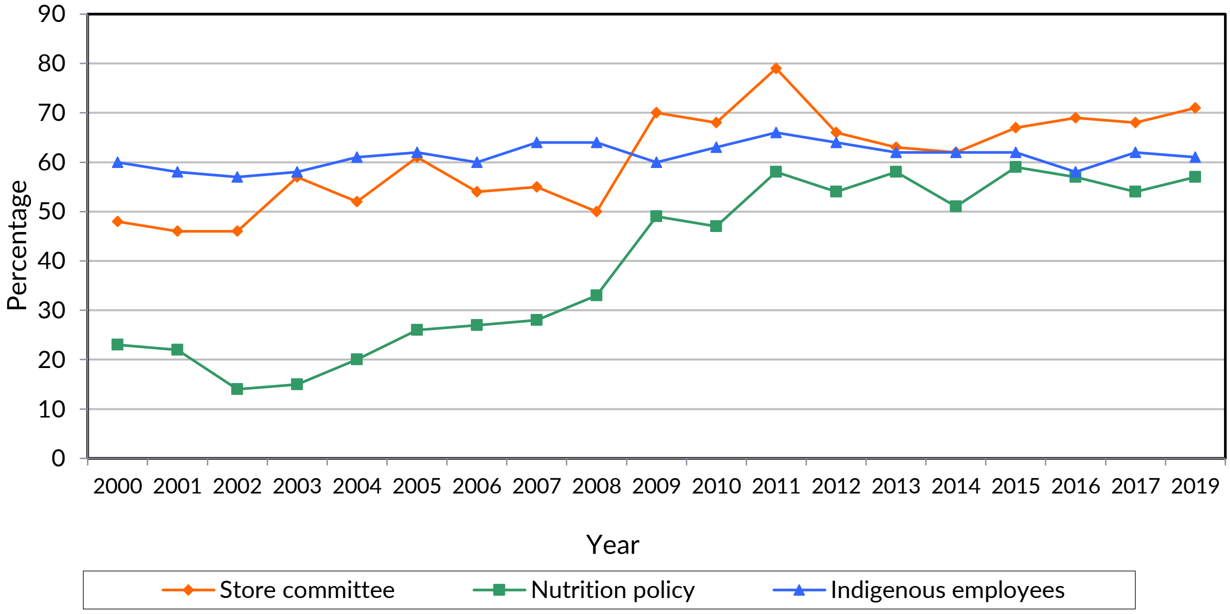
- average NT cost of the HFB increased (1%) and the CDB decreased (-1%)
- ‘meat’ portion of the HFB had the greatest average cost increase (14%)
- ‘takeaway’ portion of the HFB had the greatest average cost decrease (-26%)
- ‘bread and cereal’ portion of the CDB had the greatest cost increase (14%)
- ‘vegetable’ portion of the CDB decreased the most (-10%).

Between 2017 and 2019, the NT average cost of both the HFB and CDB rose significantly in corner stores (by 14% and 16% respectively).

# 4. Survey trends, 2000 to 2019

## 4.1 Store characteristics

Figure 2: Store governance and employment characteristics in remote stores from 2000-2019

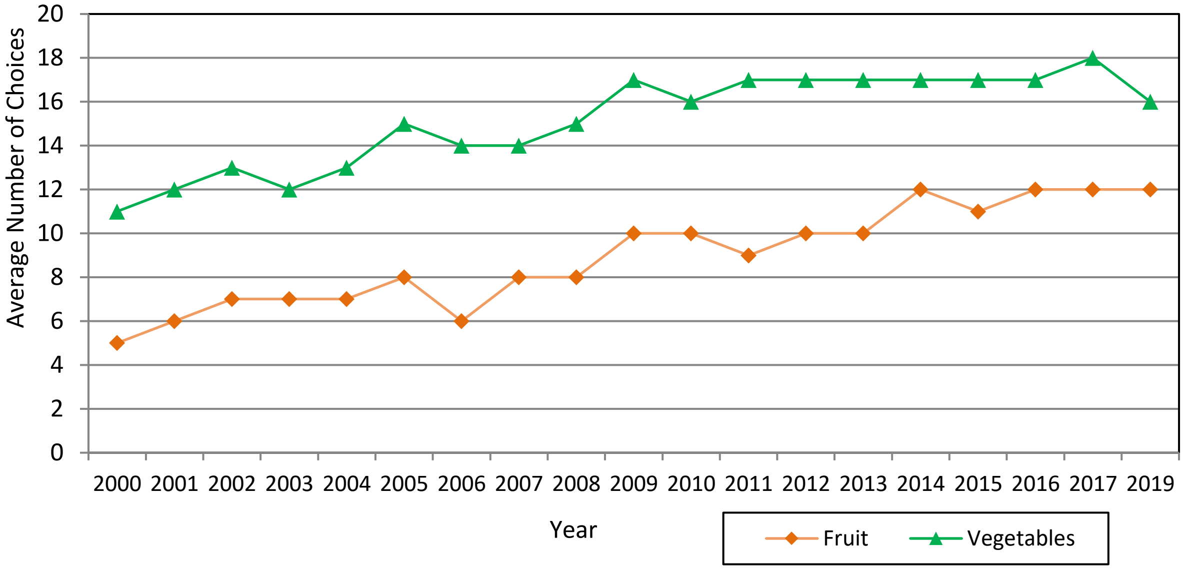



(See Appendix C: Table 12 for the underlying data)

- The percentage of stores with a store committee was highest in 2011 (79%).
- There was a marked increase in the percentage of stores with a nutrition policy in the 2009 survey, this was sustained in subsequent surveys.
- The percentage of Aboriginal employees has been mostly stable from 2000 to 2019.

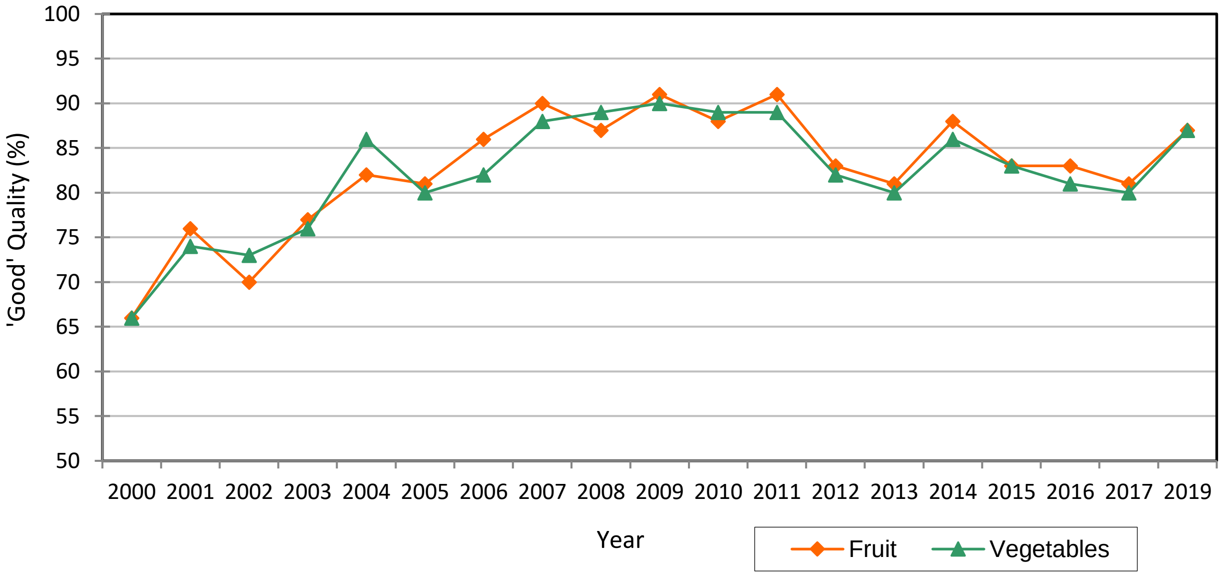
## 4.2 Food variety and quality

Figure 3: Average number of varieties of fresh fruit and vegetables, remote stores, 2000 – 2019



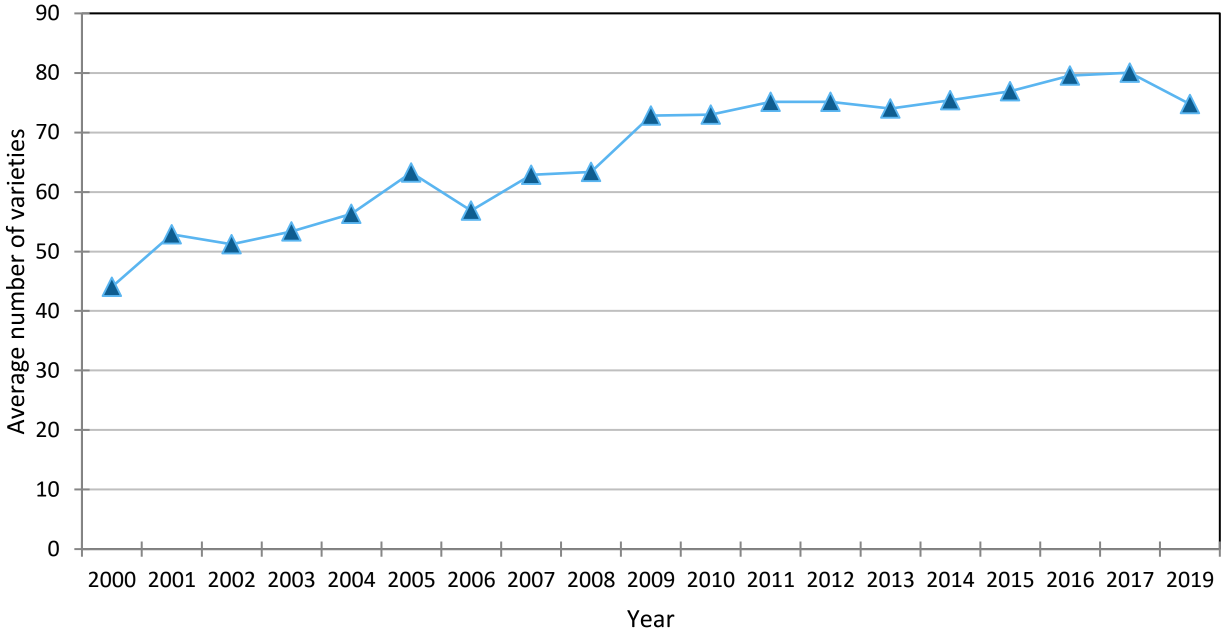

- Since 2000 there has been an increasing trend in the average number of varieties of fresh vegetables available in remote stores.
- Since 2014 the average number of varieties of fresh fruit available has been at its highest with an average of 12 varieties available.
- The average number of varieties of fresh vegetables available was highest in 2017 when there was an average of 18 varieties available.

Figure 4: Percentage of fresh fruit and vegetables rated as 'good', remote stores, 2000–2019




- Fruit and vegetable quality has varied over the years 2000 to 2017 and is now rising again.

Figure 5: Average number of varieties of selected healthy food and drink available, remote stores, 2000-2019



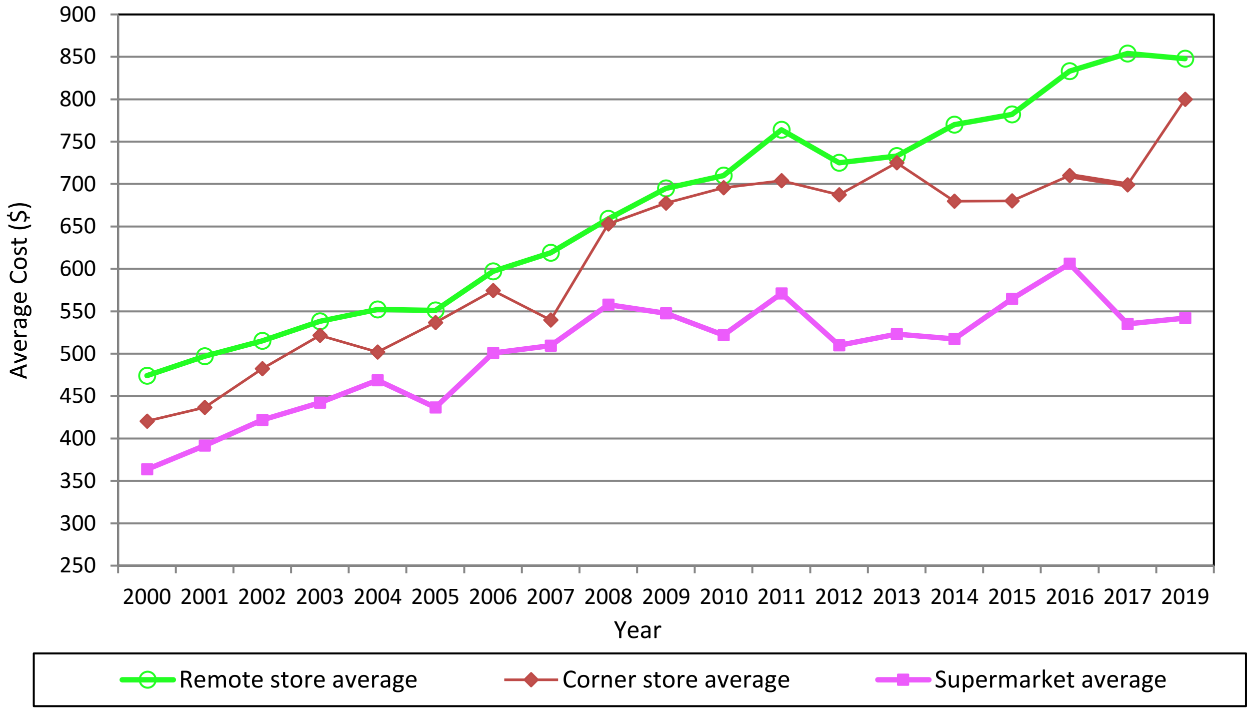

(See Appendix C: Table 13 for the underlying data)

- The average number of varieties of all food and drinks available in remote stores has shown an increasing trend from 2000 to 2017, with a decline in 2019.
- The average number of varieties of all food and drinks was highest in 2017, with stores offering on average 80 lines of the selected foods.
- Selected healthy foods include items from the categories of: bread and breakfast cereals; canned, dried and fresh fruit and vegetables; diet cordials and soft drinks; dried biscuits; fish/ seafood; lean meat and meat and vegetable meals. Products are included if they meet specified nutrition criteria.

## 4.3 Price comparisons

As discussed previously, a number of new food items were added to the survey in 2016 to enable the calculation of the CDB. As these products were not included in prior surveys, comparison of the CDB is not possible. Data shown below is therefore for the HFB only.

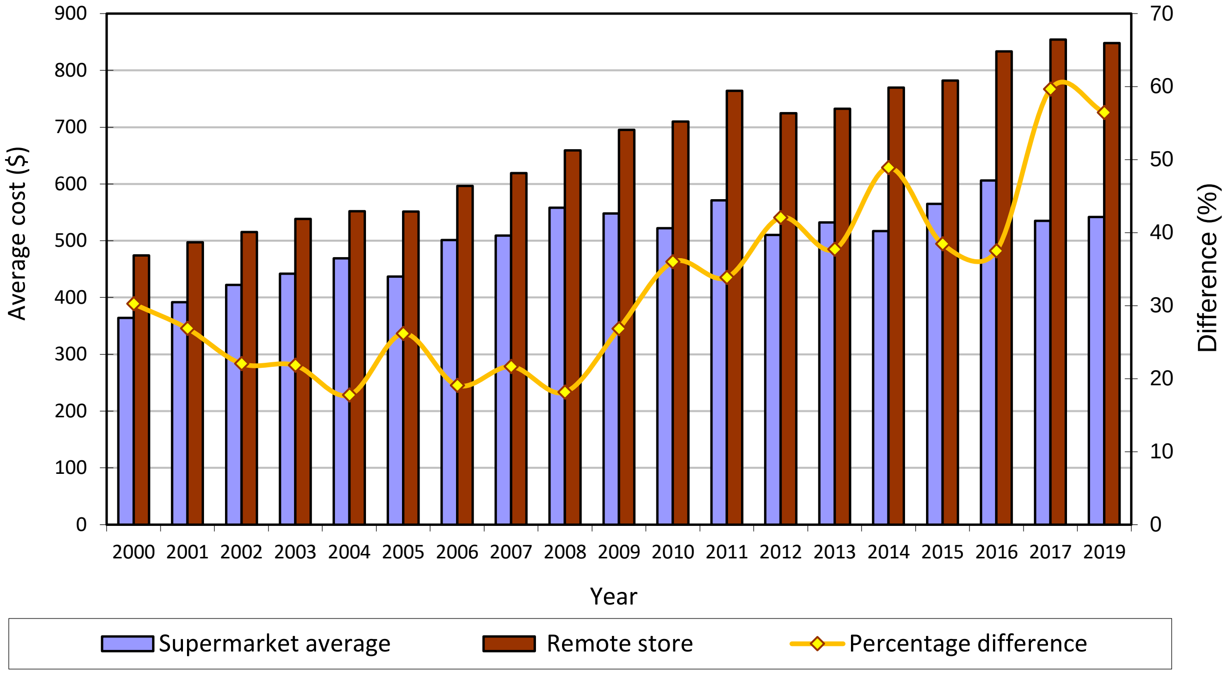
Figure 6: Average cost of the HFB, store type, 2000–2019




(See Appendix C: Table 14 for the underlying data.)

- The general trends in average HFB costs shown in Figure 6 for remote stores and urban centre corner stores are upwards as can be expected due to inflation over time.
- The average cost of the HFB for urban centre supermarkets trended upwards from 2000 to 2008; however, from 2008 to 2019, the cost has stabilised within a range from $510 (2012) to $606 (2016).

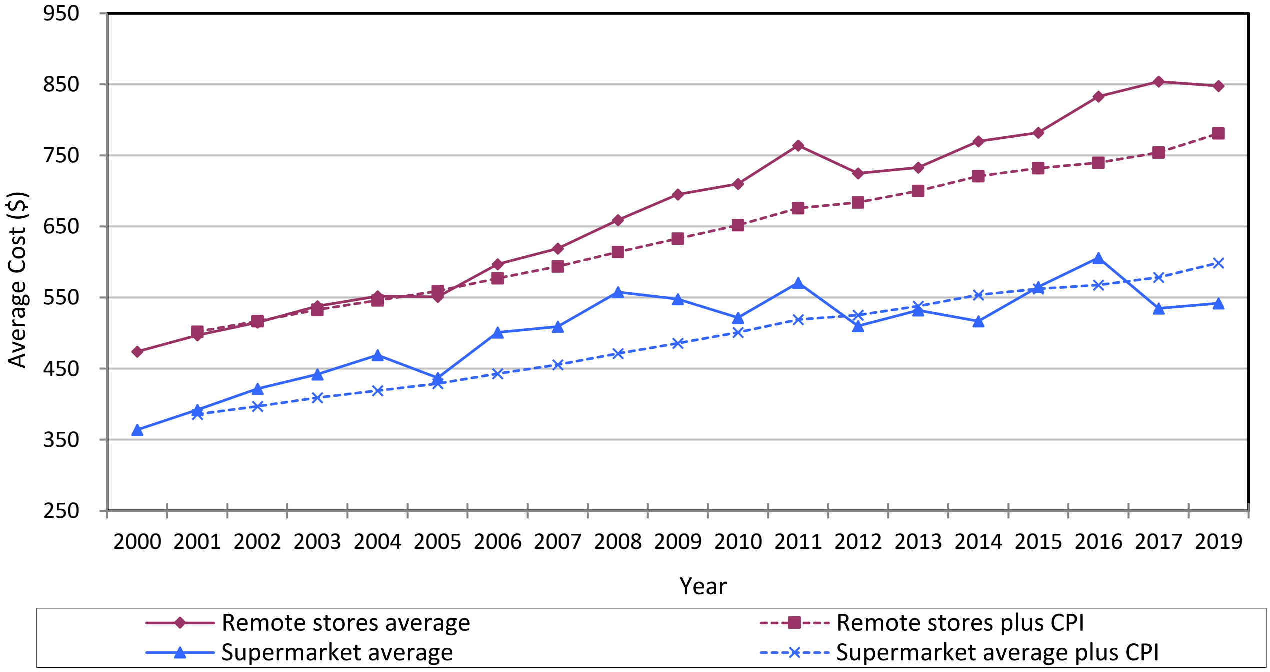
## Figure 7: Cost of the HFB, remote stores compared with NT supermarkets, 2000 – 2019




(See Appendix C: Table 15 for the underlying data)

- The cost difference between remote stores and the district centre supermarkets was least in 2004 and 2008, when the HFB cost 18% more in remote stores.
- The cost difference between remote stores and the district centre supermarkets was the highest in 2017 when the HFB cost 60% more in remote stores.

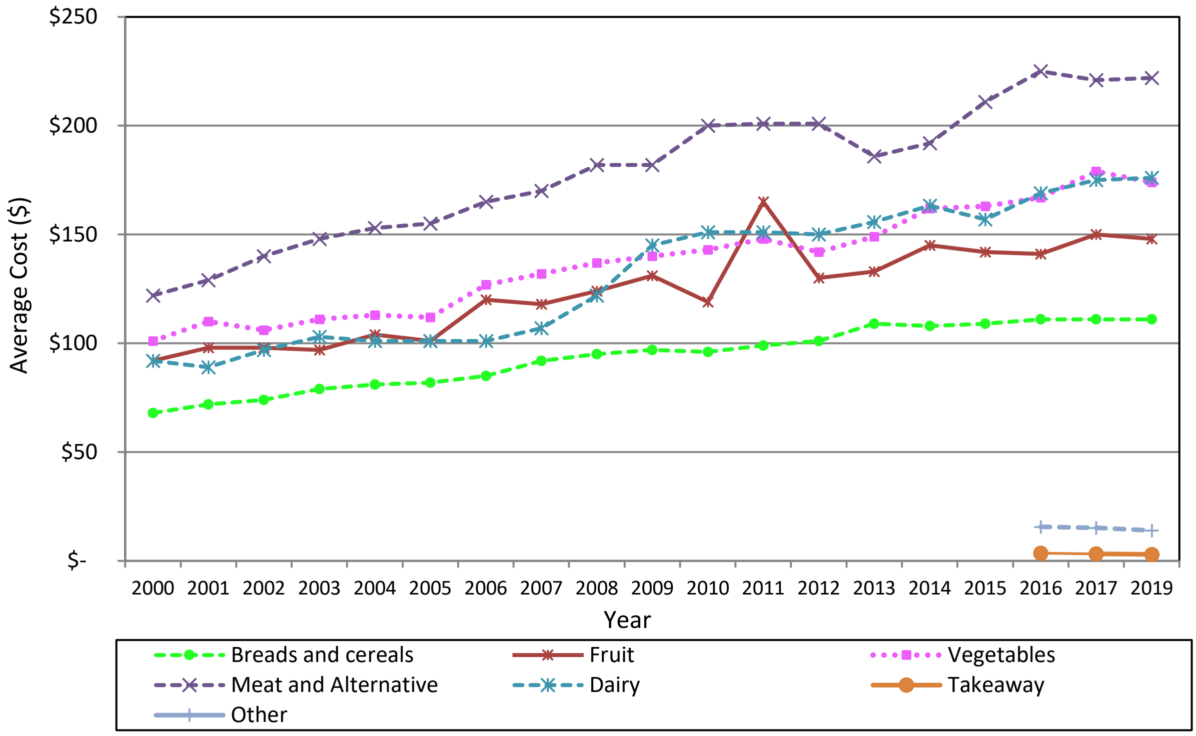
**Figure 8: Cost of the HFB compared with projected cost of the HFB with annual Consumer Price Index (CPI) increase, remote stores and district centre supermarkets, 2000 - 2019**




(See Appendix C: Table 15 for the underlying data)

- In remote stores the actual cost of the HFB has been higher than the projected cost of the HFB using annual CPI[8] rates, from 2006 to 2019.
- In the district centre supermarkets the actual cost tended to be above projected cost between 2005 and 2011 and in 2016.

Figure 9: Cost of food groups in the HFB in remote stores, 2000 – 2019




* A price for the 'takeaway' and 'other foods' portions of the basket were not available prior to 2016.

(See Appendix C: Table 16 for the underlying data)

- A large increase is evident in the cost of the 'fruit' portion of the basket from 2010 to 2011, returning to trend in 2012. This was mostly due to a spike in the price of bananas as a result of a cyclone destroying banana plantations in Queensland.

# 5. Discussion

The 2019 MBS is the nineteenth survey of remote community stores in the Northern Territory. The 2019 survey was the third survey to enable the comparison of the cost of a basket of foods which represents the current dietary patterns of Aboriginal people with an ideal, or 'healthy', basket of foods.

## 5.1 External influences on the survey

Since the MBS was first conducted in 2000, the Australian Government has introduced two initiatives which have the potential to impact on results of this survey.

*Outback Stores* - In 2007 the Australian Government established Outback Stores, a company set up to manage stores on behalf of remote communities to ensure their commercial viability and a reliable supply of healthy, affordable food.

*Licensing of remote stores* - In late 2007 the Australian Government commenced licensing of remote stores to improve both the management of stores and the quality of food they provide. In 2012 the licensing of stores was incorporated into legislation through the *Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory Act 2012*. This is required for food security reasons in remote areas where little or no competition exists. Under the Act (s37(3)) "Food security means a reasonable ongoing level of access to a range of food, drink and grocery items that is reasonably priced, safe and of sufficient quantity and quality to meet nutritional and related household needs."

As a result, stores in NT remote Aboriginal communities in this survey are required to be licensed. Stores in more accessible areas (e.g. in small towns on major highways) are not required to be licensed. As part of licensing conditions stores are expected to have a reasonable range of groceries and consumer items, including healthy food and drinks. In this survey 86% of remote stores were licensed.

## 5.2 Store characteristics

The local store is an important source of employment for people living in remote communities. Stores managed and/or owned by a store groups (e.g. ALPA and Outback Stores) have a policy of employing local Aboriginal people to work in their stores. In each year the MBS has been conducted, the proportion of Aboriginal employees has been consistently higher in stores managed and/or owned by a stores group than in other stores. In the 2019 survey, 79% of employees in stores managed and/or owned by a stores group were Aboriginal. No information on the type of employment (e.g. full time, part time or casual) was collected as part of the survey.

Stores with a nutrition policy and a store committee increased from 2000 to 2011. The proportion of stores with a nutrition policy has remained stable since 2011; however, there has been a slight decline in stores with a store committee since 2011 (Figure 3). It is likely both have been maintained at higher levels from pre 2011 due to the introduction of stores licensing and/or an increase in the number of stores managed by Outback Stores.

## 5.3 Fruit and vegetable variety

There is strong evidence to suggest an adequate intake of vegetables has a protective effect against cardiovascular disease and research has strengthened the evidence of the beneficial effects of various non-starchy vegetables in reducing risk of some site-specific cancers.[9] Aboriginal people in the NT have a low intake of vegetables, with only 1.6% reporting an adequate intake in the 2018-19 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey.[10]

There is also strong evidence, including fruit in the diet is protective against cardiovascular disease and there is a protective effect against a number of chronic diseases when vegetables and fruit have been studied together.[9] The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey (2018-19) reported 40.4% of NT Aboriginal persons had adequate daily fruit consumption.[10]

For these reasons there is a focus on fruit and vegetable quality and variety in this survey. While there are no recommendations about the number of varieties of vegetables which should be available in remote stores, a diet including daily consumption of a wide variety of vegetables is recommended.[9] MBS results indicate there has been an increase in the average number of varieties of fresh fruit and vegetables available in remote stores since 2000 (Figure 3).

## 5.4 Basket costs

**Healthy diet costs compared to current diet costs**

The CDB basket was more expensive than the HFB in all store types and all districts in this survey suggesting a healthy diet is less expensive than the current diet consumed by Aboriginal people. While the CDB contains both healthy and unhealthy foods, the most expensive portion of the CDB was the ‘takeaway’ portion which contains only discretionary (unhealthy) foods. These findings are similar to those of Lee et al[11] who found ‘healthy diets can be more affordable than current (unhealthy) diets in Australia’. Lee et al used a similar methodology, but costed a more comprehensive range of foods and included alcohol in the current (unhealthy) diet.

**Food basket costs in remote stores compared to costs in district centres**

In 2019, the average cost of the HFB and CDB in remote stores were 56% and 40% higher than the average of district centre supermarket baskets. This is the second highest difference in cost of the HFB between remote stores and the district centre supermarkets in any of the years surveyed. However the district centre supermarket in Tennant Creek (Barkly Region) was not able to be surveyed in 2019. This supermarket is historically more expensive than other supermarkets. The absence of this supermarket is likely to account for part of the increase in price difference in 2019.

The ‘takeaway’ portion of both the HFB and CDB was the only portion to be less in remote stores than the district centre supermarket average, with the exception of the HFB in East Arnhem Land. The HFB contains only one takeaway item, bottled water, which is sold at a discounted price in many remote stores to encourage consumption of water rather than sugar sweetened beverages. This discount accounts for the lower cost of the ‘takeaway’ portion of the HFB in remote stores.

Compared to 2017, only a small change was evident in the average cost of the HFB and CDB in remote stores and district centre supermarkets in 2019. The average cost of the HFB decreased by 1% in remote stores and increased by 1% in district centre supermarkets; the average cost of the CDB decreased by 1% in both remote stores and district centre supermarkets. In contrast, the average cost of both the HFB and CDB rose significantly between 2017 and 2019 in district corner stores (14% and 16% respectively). The large difference in cost in district centre corner stores is due to the small number of corner stores surveyed and different corner stores were surveyed between 2017 and 2019. In 2017 corner store information was not available for the Katherine district, in 2019 corner store information was not available for East Arnhem.

## 5.5 Limitations of the survey

When interpreting the results of this survey, a number of issues must be considered. These include the following:

- A letter was sent to each store manager prior to the survey period informing them their store would be surveyed in the coming months. Prior notice may have influenced store prices and availability of foods during the survey period.

- The MBS measures the variety, quality and availability of some healthy food items; it makes no attempt to measure the quantities available or purchased.
- The food basket contains a relatively small number of items (41). The prices of these items are then multiplied by varying amounts to provide the total cost in each of the food baskets. Therefore significant changes in the price of one or two items may have an unduly inflated effect on the total cost of the basket. An example of this occurred in 2006 and 2011 when banana crops in Queensland were destroyed by tropical cyclones, resulting in an increase in the price of bananas. As a result, the cost of the 'fruit' portion of the basket in NT supermarkets increased by 45% in 1996 and 68% in 2011, compared to the preceding years.
- The 2019 survey was conducted over a three month period. During this time frame there is the potential for variation in the prices of fresh fruit and vegetables. To reduce the impact of this variation surveyors are encouraged to conduct the district centre supermarket surveys in the middle of the survey period as these stores are used as a benchmark.
- When conducting the survey, surveyors are asked to record the price of a particular brand and pack size for many items. For occasions when the standard brand and pack size is not available, surveyors are provided a set of instructions on which alternative product to price (i.e. a different brand or pack size). Therefore on some occasions a larger or smaller pack size (of a different brand) may be priced in a remote store compared to the district centre stores. This may have a notable impact on the price of the basket in some individual store reports; however this impact will be lessened with the aggregated data provided in this report.
- As described previously, surveyors are asked to record the price of a particular brand and pack size for many items. This is not necessarily the cheapest option for some items and actual food costs could be lower in all store types than is reported in this survey.
- Items in the food baskets are chosen from those commonly found in remote stores. This limits the occasions when the price for a substitute product is recorded and minimises inaccuracies in price comparisons between stores. It does however, limit the number of items which can be included in the survey, particularly as some stores are in small communities and stock a smaller range of foods than larger stores and supermarkets.
- One store's management group reviewed their data for the 2019 survey and found a number of discrepancies in the recorded data compared to what was available through their computer systems. These discrepancies suggest the MBS data could have overestimated the cost of the HFB in their stores by approximately 5% and the CDB by 3%. Reasons for the discrepancies could include: incorrect recording of price or weight of item by the surveyor; incorrect price on display; and/or incorrect choice of product by the surveyor. Methods to reduce these errors will be investigated for future surveys.
- While efforts are made to include the same stores in the survey each year this is not always possible. For example in 2015 only one store in the Barkly Region was able to be surveyed (as opposed to an average of six). Data from this store was therefore amalgamated with data from the Alice Springs district.

# 6. Summary

58 remote stores were surveyed in the NT between June and August 2019. These surveys collected information on the cost of two baskets of foods, a 'healthy' basket and a basket which reflects current eating patterns ('current' diet). Both baskets contained sufficient food to feed a family of six for a fortnight. Information was also collected on the quality, variety and availability of a selection of healthy foods and store management characteristics.

The 2019 survey found the CDB was, on average, 7% more expensive in remote stores than the HFB and the HFB was, on average, 56% higher in remote stores than in district centre supermarkets. Between 2017 and 2019 the cost of the HFB decreased by 1% in remote stores and increased by 1% in district centre supermarkets.

From 2000 to 2019, the cost of the HFB has risen by an average 3.1% annually in remote stores and 2.1% in district centre supermarkets. The average consumer price index increase over this period was 2.7%.

# Appendix A: List of foods in the HFB and CDB

| | | Healthy Food Basket | | | Current diet - basket | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Serve size | Volume in basket | | Number serves | Volume in basket | | Number serves |
| **Breads and Cereal** | | | | | | | |
| Bread, white high fibre, iron enriched | 40g | 8400g | 12 x 700g loaves | 210 | 8400g | 12 X 700g loaves | 210 |
| Flour, white, plain | 50g | 4000g | 4 x 1kg bags | 80 | 4000g | 4 x 1kg bags | 80 |
| Weetbix | 30g | 1500g | 4 X 375g packets | 50 | 1125g | 3 x 375g boxes | 38 |
| Oats, rolled | 30g | 1000g | 2 x 500g packets | 33 | 0g | - | 0 |
| Rice, white | 35g | 2000g | 2 X 1kg packet | 57 | 0g | - | 0 |
| 2 minute noodles | 26g | 0g | - | 0 | 560g | 8 x 70g packets | 22 |
| Spaghetti in tomato & cheese sauce, canned | 200g | 840g | 2 x 420g tins | 4 | 840g | 2 x 420g tins | 4 |
| | | | Total serves | 435 | | Total serves | 353 |
| | | | Recommended number serves | 434 | | Serves from ATSI Health survey | 353 |
| **Fruits** | | | | | | | |
| Apple, red | 150g | 4500g | 30 apples | 30 | 3150g | 21 apples | 21 |
| Orange, navel/valencia | 150g | 5075g | 35 oranges | 34 | 3045g | 21 oranges | 20 |
| Banana | 150g | 4340g | 35 bananas | 29 | 3100g | 25 bananas | 21 |
| Peach, canned in light syrup | 150g | 3280g | 8 x 410g cans | 22 | 3280g | 8 x 410g cans | 22 |
| Orange juice, 100% no added sugar | 125ml | 5000ml | 5 x 1 litre bottles | 40 | 4000ml | 4 x 1 litre bottles | 32 |
| | | | Total serves | 155 | | Total serves | 116 |
| | | | Recommended number serves | 154 | | Serves from ATSI Health survey | 116 |
| **Vegetables** | | | | | | | |
| Tomato | 75g | 2000g | 2kg | 27 | 1000g | 1 kg | 13 |
| Potato, washed | 75g | 8000g | 8kg | 107 | 2500g | 2.5kg | 33 |
| Pumpkin | 75g | 3000g | 3kg | 40 | 500g | 0.5kg | 7 |
| Cabbage | 75g | 3000g | 1 cabbage | 40 | 750g | 0.25 cabbage | 10 |
| Carrots | 75g | 4000g | 4kg | 53 | 500g | 0.5kg | 7 |
| Onions, brown | 75g | 3000g | 3kg | 40 | 500g | 0.5kg | 7 |
| Peas and carrots, canned | 75g | 2520g | 6 x 420g cans | 34 | 1680g | 4 x 420g cans | 22 |
| Mixed vegetables, frozen | 75g | 3000g | 6 x 500g packets | 40 | 1500g | 3 x 500g packets | 20 |
| Tomatoes, canned | 75g | 2075g | 5 x 415g cans | 28 | 1245g | 3 x 415g cans | 17 |
| Baked beans, canned in tomato sauce* | 150g | 3080g | 14 x 220g cans | 21 | 0g | - | 0 |
| | | | Total serves | 428 | | Total serves | 136 |
| | | | Recommended number serves | 427 | | Serves from ATSI Health survey | 136 |
| **Meat and alternatives** | | | | | | | |
| Baked beans, canned in tomato sauce* | 75g | 3080g | 14 x 220g cans | 41 | 0g | - | 0 |
| Beef, corned, canned | 65g | 0g | - | 0 | 3060g | 9 x 340g cans | 47 |
| Meat and vegetable meal, canned | 375g | 4000g | 10 X 400g cans | 11 | 4000g | 10 X 400g cans | 11 |
| Beef mince (medium fat) | 90g | 6000g | 6kg | 67 | 2000g | 2kg | 22 |
| Sausages | 90g | 0g | - | 0 | 2000g | 2kg | 22 |
| Chicken drumsticks | 90g | 6000g | 6kg | 67 | 2500g | 2.5kg | 28 |
| Eggs | 132g | 1400g | 2 dozen | 6 | 1400g | 2 dozen | 11 |
| | | | Total serves | 191 | | Total serves | 141 |
| | | | Recommended number serves | 182 | | Serves from ATSI Health survey | 123 |
| **Dairy** | | | | | | | |
| Milk, powdered, full cream | 34g | 3600g | 9 X 400g packets | 106 | 1600g | 4 x 400g packets | 47 |
| Milk, UHT, full cream | 250ml | 25000ml | 25 x 1 litre cartons | 100 | 12000ml | 12 x 1 litre cartons | 48 |
| Iced coffee, full cream | 250ml | 0ml | - | 0 | 2400ml | 4 x 600ml cartons | 10 |
| Cheese cheddar | 40g | 750g | 3 x 250g packets | 19 | 0g | - | 0 |
| | | | Total serves | 225 | | Total serves | 105 |
| | | | Recommended number serves | 224 | | Serves from ATSI Health survey | 104 |
| **Other** | | | | | | | |
| Margarine | | 0g | - | | 500g | 1 x 500g tub | |
| Sugar | | 0g | - | | 5000g | 5 x 1kg packet | |
| Oil, monounsaturated | | 2000ml | 2 x 1 litre bottle | | 1000ml | 1 x 1 litre bottle | |
| Scotch Finger biscuit | | 0g | - | | 1500g | 6 x 250g packets | |
| Cordial base | | 0g | - | | 3000g | 3 x 1 litre bottles | |
| **Takeaway items** | | | | | | | |
| Pie | | 0g | - | | 2280g | 12 x 190g pies | |
| Chips | | 0g | - | | 2400g | 16 x 150g buckets | |
| Coke | | 0g | - | | 15000g | 40 x 375ml cans | |
| Water | | 1200ml | 2 x 600ml bottles | | 0ml | - | |
| Energy provided | | **645,980KJ** | | | **639,111KJ** | | |

*Baked beans have been counted in both 'vegetable' and 'meat and alternatives' groups

# Appendix B: 2019 Market Basket Survey by district and food group

| | Alice Springs | | Darwin | | East Arnhem | | Katherine | | NT Average | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | HFB | CDB | HFB | CDB | HFB | CDB | HFB | CDB | **HFB** | **CDB** |
| **Bread & cereals** | | | | | | | | | | |
| Supermarket | $76 | $73 | $81 | $79 | $60 | $60 | $84 | $84 | **$75** | **$74** |
| Corner store | $107 | $100 | $82 | $69 | | | $114 | $111 | **$101** | **$93** |
| Remote stores | $110 | $102 | $114 | $104 | $118 | $108 | $107 | $100 | **$111** | **$103** |
| **Fruit** | | | | | | | | - | | |
| Supermarket | $77 | $58 | $82 | $62 | $90 | $68 | $87 | $67 | **$84** | **$64** |
| Corner store | $114 | $88 | $132 | $105 | | | $159 | $121 | **$135** | **$105** |
| Remote stores | $147 | $114 | $147 | $113 | $146 | $114 | $149 | $115 | **$148** | **$114** |
| **Vegetables** | | | | | | | | | | |
| Supermarket | $133 | $42 | $111 | $35 | $150 | $45 | $129 | $38 | **$131** | **$44** |
| Corner store | $153 | $50 | $175 | $56 | | | $182 | $57 | **$170** | **$54** |
| Remote stores | $178 | $58 | $164 | $54 | $151 | $47 | $184 | $59 | **$174** | **$56** |
| **Meat & alternative** | | | | | | | | | | |
| Supermarket | $126 | $129 | $124 | $148 | $176 | $130 | $136 | $135 | **$140** | **$136** |
| Corner store | $207 | $184 | $200 | $192 | | | $249 | $240 | **$219** | **$205** |
| Remote stores | $213 | $219 | $216 | $217 | $263 | $231 | $228 | $223 | **$222** | **$220** |
| **Dairy** | | | | | | | | | | |
| Supermarket | $102 | $51 | $104 | $52 | $84 | $44 | $104 | $53 | **$98** | **$50** |
| Corner store | $142 | $75 | $153 | $76 | | | $187 | $97 | **$161** | **$83** |
| Remote stores | $174 | $91 | $175 | $92 | $190 | $104 | $177 | $94 | **$176** | **$93** |
| **Takeaway** | | | | | | | | | | |
| Supermarket | $4 | $192 | $5 | $247 | $2 | $259 | $4 | $251 | **$4** | **$237** |
| Corner store | $5 | $214 | $3 | $247 | | | $6 | $259 | **$5** | **$240** |
| Remote stores | $3 | $232 | $3 | $246 | $2 | $269 | $3 | $253 | **$3** | **$245** |
| **Other foods** | | | | | | | | | | |
| Supermarket | $12 | $48 | $12 | $49 | $7 | $55 | $8 | $47 | **$9** | **$50** |
| Corner store | $9 | $59 | $11 | $67 | | | $10 | $74 | **$10** | **$67** |
| Remote stores | $15 | $82 | $18 | $83 | $19 | $82 | $13 | $81 | **$14** | **$82** |
| **Total basket** | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Supermarket** | **$530** | **$593** | **$517** | **$672** | **$569** | **$661** | **$552** | **$676** | **$542** | **$650** |
| **Corner store** | **$736** | **$770** | **$757** | **$811** | | | **$907** | **$959** | **$800** | **$847** |
| **Remote stores** | **$840** | **$897** | **$832** | **$910** | **$888** | **$954** | **$863** | **$925** | **$848** | **$913** |

# Appendix C: Detailed data - Tables 10 to 17

### Table 10: Variation in the cost of the food groups in the HFB and CDB by district, remote stores, 2017 to 2019

| | Alice Springs | | Darwin | | East Arnhem | | Katherine | | Remote store average | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | HFB | CDB | HFB | CDB | HFB | CDB | HFB | CDB | HFB | CDB |
| Bread & cereals | -1% | 0% | 2% | 0% | 5% | -3% | -3% | -7% | **<1%** | **0%** |
| Fruit | -6% | -6% | 6% | 6% | 10% | 15% | -4% | 1% | **-1%** | **-2%** |
| Vegetables | -5% | -4% | -9% | -5% | -3% | 5% | 8% | 26% | **-3%** | **-1%** |
| Meat & alternative | -6% | -3% | 2% | -3% | 15% | -6% | 6% | -3% | **<1%** | **-3%** |
| Dairy | 2% | 0% | -3% | -3% | 12% | 4% | -2% | -10% | **1%** | **<1%** |
| Takeaway foods | -20% | -3% | -21% | 3% | -7% | -2% | 19% | -6% | **-9%** | **1%** |
| Other | 5% | 1% | -22% | -4% | 29% | 6% | -4% | -1% | **-5%** | **<-1%** |
| **Total basket** | **-4%** | **-3%** | **-1%** | **0%** | **9%** | **1%** | **1%** | **-3%** | **-1%** | **<-1%** |

### Table 11: Variation in the cost of the food groups in the HFB and CDB by district, supermarkets, 2017 to 2019

| | Alice Springs | | Darwin | | East Arnhem | | Supermarket average | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | HFB | CDB | HFB | CDB | HFB | CDB | HFB | CDB |
| Bread & cereals | 3% | 2% | 20% | 17% | -6% | 9% | **10%** | **14%** |
| Fruit | -16% | -17% | 8% | 6% | -3% | -3% | **-3%** | **-4%** |
| Vegetables | -12% | -17% | -21% | -20% | 19% | 17% | **-6%** | **-10%** |
| Meat & alternative | 17% | -1% | 16% | 22% | 14% | -15% | **14%** | **0%** |
| Dairy | 0% | 0% | 1% | 1% | -20% | -21% | **-5%** | **-5%** |
| Takeaway foods | -14% | -20% | 0% | 3% | -62% | -2% | **-25%** | **-4%** |
| Other | 26% | 26% | -11% | -2% | 1% | 5% | **<-1%** | **7%** |
| **Total basket** | **-2%** | **-9%** | **1%** | **6%** | **3%** | **-4%** | **1%** | **-1%** |

### Table 12: Store governance and employment characteristics in remote stores from 2000-2019

| Year | % with store committee | % with nutrition policy | % Aboriginal employees | Number stores surveyed |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2000 | 48% | 23% | 60% | 56 |
| 2001 | 46% | 22% | 58% | 53 |
| 2002 | 46% | 14% | 57% | 70 |
| 2003 | 57% | 15% | 58% | 61 |
| 2004 | 52% | 20% | 61% | 60 |
| 2005 | 61% | 26% | 62% | 66 |
| 2006 | 54% | 27% | 60% | 74 |
| 2007 | 55% | 28% | 64% | 67 |
| 2008 | 50% | 33% | 64% | 66 |
| 2009 | 70% | 49% | 60% | 65 |
| 2010 | 68% | 47% | 63% | 76 |
| 2011 | 79% | 58% | 66% | 73 |
| 2012 | 66% | 54% | 64% | 82 |
| 2013 | 63% | 58% | 62% | 72 |
| 2014 | 62% | 51% | 62% | 79 |
| 2015 | 67% | 59% | 62% | 81 |
| 2016 | 69% | 57% | 58% | 67 |
| 2017 | 68% | 54% | 62% | 71 |
| 2019 | 71% | 57% | 61% | 58 |

## Table 13: Average number of varieties of selected food and drinks available, remote stores, 2000-2019

| Year | Bread | Cereals | Dry Biscuits | Fresh Fruit | Dried Fruit | Canned Fruit | Fresh Vegetables | Frozen Vegetables | Dried Vegetables | Canned Vegetables | Fish/ Seafood | Lean Meat | Meat & Vegetable Meals | Diet Cordials | Diet Soft Drinks | **TOTAL*** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2000 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 6 | 3 | 1 | 7 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 1 | 2 | **44** |
| 2001 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 7 | 5 | 2 | 8 | 5 | 3 | 5 | 1 | 2 | **53** |
| 2002 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 7 | 4 | 2 | 8 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 1 | 2 | **51** |
| 2003 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 7 | 5 | 2 | 8 | 4 | 3 | 6 | 1 | 2 | **53** |
| 2004 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 5 | 2 | 5 | 8 | 5 | 2 | 8 | 5 | 3 | 7 | 1 | 2 | **56** |
| 2005 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 6 | 3 | 5 | 9 | 6 | 2 | 9 | 5 | 4 | 6 | 1 | 2 | **63** |
| 2006 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 8 | 5 | 2 | 8 | 4 | 3 | 6 | 1 | 2 | **57** |
| 2007 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 6 | 3 | 5 | 9 | 6 | 2 | 9 | 5 | 4 | 6 | 1 | 2 | **63** |
| 2008 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 6 | 3 | 5 | 9 | 5 | 2 | 9 | 5 | 4 | 6 | 1 | 2 | **63** |
| 2009 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 8 | 4 | 5 | 12 | 6 | 2 | 8 | 5 | 5 | 7 | 1 | 3 | **73** |
| 2010 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 7 | 4 | 5 | 11 | 6 | 2 | 9 | 5 | 5 | 7 | 1 | 3 | **73** |
| 2011 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 7 | 4 | 5 | 11 | 6 | 2 | 10 | 5 | 5 | 7 | 1 | 3 | **75** |
| 2012 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 8 | 4 | 5 | 11 | 6 | 2 | 10 | 5 | 5 | 8 | 2 | 3 | **75** |
| 2013 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 8 | 3 | 5 | 12 | 6 | 1 | 10 | 5 | 5 | 7 | 2 | 3 | **74** |
| 2014 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 9 | 3 | 4 | 12 | 6 | 1 | 10 | 5 | 5 | 7 | 1 | 4 | **75** |
| 2015 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 8 | 3 | 5 | 11 | 6 | 1 | 10 | 5 | 6 | 8 | 1 | 4 | **77** |
| 2016 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 9 | 3 | 4 | 12 | 7 | 1 | 10 | 6 | 6 | 8 | 2 | 4 | **80** |
| 2017 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 9 | 3 | 5 | 13 | 7 | 1 | 10 | 5 | 5 | 9 | 2 | 3 | **80** |
| 2019 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 9 | 3 | 5 | 11 | 7 | 1 | 10 | 5 | 5 | 7 | 2 | 3 | **75** |

* Values are rounded to the nearest whole number hence totals may differ from the sum of food and drink varieties.

## Table 14: Average cost of the HFB, CBD, store type, 2000–2019

| Year | Supermarket average HFB | Corner store average HFB | Remote store average* HFB | HFB Percentage difference Supermarket/remote | Supermarket average CDB | Corner store average HFB | Remote store average CDB | CDB Percentage difference Supermarket/remote |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2000 | $364 | $420 | $474 | 30% | | | | |
| 2001 | $392 | $436 | $497 | 27% | | | | |
| 2002 | $422 | $482 | $515 | 22% | | | | |
| 2003 | $442 | $521 | $538 | 22% | | | | |
| 2004 | $469 | $502 | $552 | 18% | | | | |
| 2005 | $437 | $537 | $551 | 26% | | | | |
| 2006 | $501 | $575 | $597 | 19% | | | | |
| 2007 | $509 | $540 | $619 | 22% | | | | |
| 2008 | $558 | $653 | $659 | 18% | | | | |
| 2009 | $548 | $677 | $695 | 27% | | | | |
| 2010 | $522 | $695 | $710 | 36% | | | | |
| 2011 | $571 | $704 | $764 | 34% | | | | |
| 2012 | $510 | $687 | $725 | 42% | | | | |
| 2013 | $532 | $725 | $733 | 38% | | | | |
| 2014 | $517 | $680 | $770 | 49% | | | | |
| 2015 | $565 | $680 | $782 | 38% | | | | |
| 2016 | $606* | $710 | $833 | 38%* | $694 | $754 | $898 | 29% |
| 2017 | $535* | $699 | $854 | 60%* | $658 | $730 | $920 | 39% |
| 2019 | $542 | $800 | $848 | 56%* | $650 | $847 | $913 | 40% |
| Average annual increase# | | 3.0% | | | | | | |

* Barkly supermarket not surveyed. Historically Barkly supermarket has been more expensive than other supermarkets. Barkly supermarket not surveyed in 2016, both Barkly supermarket and Katherine supermarket were not surveyed in 2017, historically these supermarkets have been more expensive than other supermarkets.
# average increase = [(final value/initial value) $^{1/\text{number years}}$] -1.

## Table 15: Cost of the HFB compared with projected cost of the HFB with annual CPI increases, remote stores and district centre supermarkets, 2000 – 2019

| Year | Remote stores average | Remote stores plus CPI percent increase | Supermarket average | Supermarket average plus CPI percent increase | Consumer Price Index |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2000 | $474 | - | $364 | - | |
| 2001 | $497 | $502 | $392 | $386 | 6.0% |
| 2002 | $515 | $517 | $422 | $397 | 2.9% |
| 2003 | $538 | $533 | $442 | $409 | 3.1% |
| 2004 | $552 | $546 | $469 | $419 | 2.4% |
| 2005 | $551 | $559 | $437 | $429 | 2.4% |
| 2006 | $597 | $577 | $501 | $443 | 3.2% |
| 2007 | $619 | $594 | $509 | $456 | 2.9% |
| 2008 | $659 | $614 | $558 | $471 | 3.4% |
| 2009 | $695 | $633 | $548 | $486 | 3.1% |
| 2010 | $710 | $652 | $522 | $501 | 3.1% |
| 2011 | $764 | $676 | $571 | $519 | 3.6% |
| 2012 | $725 | $684 | $510 | $525 | 1.2% |
| 2013 | $733 | $700 | $532 | $538 | 2.4% |
| 2014 | $770 | $721 | $517 | $554 | 3.0% |
| 2015 | $782 | $732 | $565 | $562 | 1.5% |
| 2016 | $833 | $740 | $606* | $568 | 1.0% |
| 2017 | $854 | $754 | $535# | $579 | 1.9% |
| 2019 | $848 | $781 | $542 | $599 | 1.9 (2018), 1.6%(2019) |
| Average annual increase* | 3.1% | 2.7% | 2.1% | 2.7% | |

*average increase = [(final value/initial value) $^{1/\text{number years}}$] -1.

## Table 16: Cost of food groups in the HFB in remote stores, 2000-2019

| Year | Bread & cereals | Fruit | Vegetables | Meat & alternative | Dairy | Takeaway* | Other* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2000 | $68 | $92 | $101 | $122 | $92 | | |
| 2001 | $72 | $98 | $110 | $129 | $89 | | |
| 2002 | $74 | $98 | $106 | $140 | $97 | | |
| 2003 | $79 | $97 | $111 | $148 | $103 | | |
| 2004 | $81 | $104 | $113 | $153 | $101 | | |
| 2005 | $82 | $101 | $112 | $155 | $101 | | |
| 2006 | $85 | $120 | $127 | $165 | $101 | | |
| 2007 | $92 | $118 | $132 | $170 | $107 | | |
| 2008 | $95 | $124 | $137 | $182 | $122 | | |
| 2009 | $97 | $131 | $140 | $182 | $145 | | |
| 2010 | $96 | $119 | $143 | $200 | $151 | | |
| 2011 | $99 | $165 | $148 | $201 | $151 | | |
| 2012 | $101 | $130 | $142 | $201 | $150 | | |
| 2013 | $109 | $133 | $149 | $186 | $156 | | |
| 2014 | $108 | $145 | $162 | $192 | $163 | | |
| 2015 | $109 | $142 | $163 | $211 | $157 | | |
| 2016 | $111 | $141 | $167 | $225 | $169 | $4 | $3 |
| 2017 | $111 | $150 | $179 | $221 | $175 | $3 | $15 |
| 2019 | $111 | $148 | $174 | $222 | $176 | $3 | $14 |

* A price for the 'takeaway' and 'other foods' portions of the basket were not available prior to 2016.

## Table 17: 2019 Market Basket Survey by district and community

### Central Australia

| | Store Ownership* | Nutrition policy | Store committee | Number Aboriginal staff | Number non Aboriginal staff | Healthy Food Basket | Current Diet Basket | Availability HFB | Fruit (fresh) variety | Fruit (fresh) quality | Vegetable (fresh) variety | Vegetable (fresh) quality | Population |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | P | No | Unknown | 0 | 2 | $1,119 | $1,068 | 93% | 8 | 8 good | 11 | 11 good | 100-399 |
| | C | Yes | Yes | 0 | 8 | $963 | $960 | 97% | 4 | 1 good, 3 fair | 11 | 7 good, 4 fair | 400-799 |
| | P | Yes | No | 0 | 2 | $924 | $834 | 77% | 3 | 3 good | 6 | 6 good | 100-399 |
| | P | No | No | 0 | 3 | $911 | $936 | 57% | 3 | 3 good | 7 | 7 good | 100-399 |
| | C | No | Yes | 3 | 6 | $904 | $963 | 100% | 10 | 9 good, 1 fair | 18 | 16 good, 2 fair | 100-399 |
| | C | No | Yes | 2 | 1 | $894 | $984 | 88% | 9 | 6 good, 3 fair | 7 | 6 good, 1 fair | 100-399 |
| | P | No | Yes | 5 | 2 | $891 | $942 | 91% | 3 | 1 good, 2 fair | 7 | 7 good | 100-399 |
| | P | No | Yes | 5 | 6 | $890 | $935 | 97% | 9 | 5 good, 3 fair, 1 poor | 10 | 10 good | 100-399 |
| | P | Unknown | No | 0 | 1 | $845 | $934 | 53% | 0 | N/A | 0 | N/A | 100-399 |
| | MSG | Yes | Yes | 1 | 9 | $827 | $993 | 100% | 9 | 8 good, 1 fair | 25 | 20 good, 2 fair | 400-799 |
| | C | No | Yes | 3 | 4 | $814 | $925 | 100% | 10 | 8 good, 2 fair | 19 | 15 good, 3 fair, 1 poor | 100-399 |
| | MSG | Yes | Yes | 3 | 2 | $811 | $868 | 100% | 13 | 13 good | 19 | 17 good, 2 fair | 100-399 |
| | MSG | Yes | Yes | 6 | 6 | $809 | $876 | 100% | 13 | 12 good, 1 fair | 18 | 15 good, 2 fair | 400-799 |
| | P | No | Unknown | 3 | 1 | $794 | $798 | 93% | 6 | 5 good, 1 fair | 9 | 8 good, 1 fair | 100-399 |
| | P | Unknown | Unknown | 0 | 0 | $776 | $809 | 100% | | | | | 800-1599 |
| | MSG | Yes | Yes | 0 | 1 | $773 | $866 | 100% | 12 | 11 good, 1 fair | 14 | 13 good, 1 fair | 100-399 |
| | MSG | Yes | Yes | 7 | 1 | $768 | $874 | 90% | 8 | 7 good, 1 fair | 12 | 12 good | 100-399 |
| | MSG | Yes | Yes | 3 | 1 | $757 | $840 | 100% | 9 | 7 good, 2 fair | 13 | 13 good | 100-399 |
| | MSG | Yes | Unknown | 6 | 0 | $743 | $806 | 100% | 10 | 8 good, 2 fair | 15 | 15 good | 100-399 |
| | MSG | Yes | Yes | 14 | 2 | $737 | $849 | 100% | 18 | 15 good, 3 fair | 18 | 15 good, 3 fair | 400-799 |
| | MSG | Yes | Yes | 2 | 1 | $680 | $787 | 97% | 7 | 7 good | 13 | 11 good, 1 fair, 1 poor | 100-399 |
| Remote Stores Average | | | | 4 | 4 | $840 | $8973 | 87% | 8 | | 13 | | |
| Supermarket | | | | | | $530 | $593 | | | | | | |
| Corner Store | | | | | | $736 | $770 | | | | | | |

*C = owned and managed by community or Aboriginal corporation, P = private, MSG = owned or managed by store group, L = leased from community, O = other

## Top End

| | Store Ownership * | Nutrition policy | Store committee | Number Aboriginal staff | Number non Aboriginal staff | Healthy Food Basket | Current Diet Basket | Availability | Fruit (fresh) variety | Fruit (fresh) quality | Vegetable (fresh) variety | Vegetable (fresh) quality | Population |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | P | Yes | Yes | 1 | 5 | $1,150 | $1,077 | 90% | 9 | 9 good | 7 | 7 good | 400-799 |
| | C | Unknown | Unknown | 0 | 5 | $1,109 | $1,077 | 100% | 4 | 4 good | 5 | 5 good | 100-399 |
| | P | No | Unknown | 0 | 1 | $1,034 | $1,045 | 97% | 4 | 3 good, 1 fair | 11 | 8 good, 2 fair, 1 poor | <100 |
| | P | No | No | 0 | 3 | $997 | $1,005 | 93% | 8 | 8 good | 8 | 8 good | 100-399 |
| | P | No | Yes | 0 | 5 | $973 | $987 | 93% | 11 | 9 good, 2 fair | 11 | 11 good | 400-799 |
| | P | No | No | 0 | 12 | $951 | $1,016 | 87% | 5 | 5 good | 2 | 2 good | 100-399 |
| | P | No | No | 0 | 4 | $918 | $927 | 93% | 10 | 10 good | 18 | 18 good | 400-799 |
| | MSG | Yes | Yes | 12 | 3 | $906 | $974 | 97% | 13 | 13 good | 21 | 15 good, 3 fair, 1 poor, 2 mouldy/ rotten | 400-799 |
| | C | Yes | Yes | 5 | 13 | $905 | $954 | 100% | 17 | 17 good | 31 | 27 good, 4 fair | >=1600 |
| | P | Unknown | Unknown | 0 | 0 | $904 | $934 | 93% | 9 | 9 good | 20 | 20 good | 800-1599 |
| | MSG | Yes | Yes | 30 | 4 | $898 | $954 | 100% | 20 | 18 good, 2 fair | 22 | 20 good, 2 fair | 800-1599 |
| | MSG | Yes | Yes | 26 | 4 | $888 | $952 | 100% | 18 | 15 good, 3 fair | 22 | 16 good, 5 fair, 1 poor | 800-1599 |
| | MSG | No | Yes | 3 | 2 | $881 | $937 | 87% | 11 | 11 good | 17 | 17 good | 100-399 |
| | C | Yes | No | 3 | 3 | $865 | $916 | 90% | 3 | 3 good | 10 | 7 good, 3 fair | 100-399 |
| | MSG | Yes | Yes | 12 | 2 | $863 | $918 | 100% | 17 | 12 good, 3 fair, 2 poor | 24 | 12 good, 8 fair, 3 poor, 1 mouldy/ rotten | 100-399 |
| | MSG | Yes | Yes | Unknown | Unknown | $862 | $935 | 97% | 17 | 16 good, 1 rotten/ mouldy | 20 | 12 good, 6 fair, 1 poor, 1 mouldy/ rotten | 800-1599 |
| | P | No | No | 12 | 3 | $846 | $917 | 97% | 14 | 11 good, 3 fair | 20 | 10 good, 9 fair, 1 poor | 800-1599 |
| | MSG | Yes | Yes | 14 | 3 | $833 | $924 | 100% | 13 | 11 good, 2 fair | 22 | 18 good, 4 fair | 100-399 |
| | C | Unknown | Yes | 8 | 6 | $821 | $913 | 100% | 14 | 10 good, 4 fair | 29 | 19 good, 8 fair, 2 poor | >=1600 |
| | C | Yes | Yes | 10 | 3 | $812 | $918 | 93% | 12 | 9 good, 3 fair | 16 | 16 good | 400-799 |
| | C | Yes | Yes | 30 | 10 | $799 | $869 | 100% | 17 | 15 good, 1 fair, 1 poor | 20 | 16 good, 4 fair | 800-1599 |
| | MSG | Yes | Yes | 5 | 1 | $797 | $890 | 100% | 13 | 10 good, 2 fair, 1 poor | 23 | 22 good, 1 fair | 100-399 |
| | C | No | Yes | 13 | 5 | $794 | $906 | 100% | 16 | 12 good, 4 fair | 25 | 22 good, 3 fair | >=1600 |
| | MSG | Yes | Yes | 11 | 1 | $788 | $887 | 100% | 13 | 13 good | 17 | 16 good, 1 fair | 400-799 |
| | C | No | Yes | 5 | 2 | $784 | $901 | 100% | 11 | 9 good, 2 fair | 20 | 16 good, 4 fair | 100-399 |
| | MSG | Yes | Yes | 11 | 3 | $780 | $902 | 100% | 9 | 8 good, 1 fair | 20 | 19 good, 1 fair | 100-399 |
| | MSG | Yes | Yes | 10 | 2 | $780 | $873 | 100% | 13 | 12 good, 1 fair | 21 | 19 good, 2 fair | 400-799 |
| | MSG | Yes | Yes | 4 | 1 | $778 | $873 | 100% | 14 | 14 good | 14 | 14 good | 100-399 |

| | Store Ownership * | Nutrition policy | Store committee | Number Aboriginal staff | Number non Aboriginal staff | Healthy Food Basket | Current Diet Basket | Availability | Fruit (fresh) variety | Fruit (fresh) quality | Vegetable (fresh) variety | Vegetable (fresh) quality | Population |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | MSG | Yes | Yes | 7 | 3 | $774 | $866 | 100% | 13 | 10 good, 3 fair | 18 | 18 good | 100-399 |
| | P | No | No | 3 | 15 | $769 | $839 | 100% | 20 | 18 good, 2 fair | 31 | 27 good, 4 fair | 800-1599 |
| | MSG | No | Yes | 0 | 3 | $769 | $856 | 97% | 9 | 7 good, 2 fair | 15 | 12 good, 3 fair | 100-399 |
| | MSG | Yes | Yes | 13 | 7 | $761 | $873 | 100% | 19 | 19 good | 28 | 28 good | 800-1599 |
| | MSG | Yes | Yes | 8 | 5 | $757 | $880 | 100% | 18 | 18 good | 18 | 18 good | 800-1599 |
| | P | No | No | 0 | 7 | $756 | $838 | 97% | 13 | 13 good | 23 | 23 good | 100-399 |
| | MSG | Yes | Yes | 7 | 1 | $755 | $853 | 100% | 15 | 15 good | 20 | 20 good | 100-399 |
| | MSG | Yes | Yes | 17 | 10 | $751 | $866 | 100% | 15 | 10 good, 4 fair, 1 poor | 16 | 12 good, 3 fair, 1 poor | 800-1599 |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Remote Stores Average | | | | 8 | 8 | $852 | $922 | 97% | 13 | | 19 | | |
| Supermarket | | | | | | $546 | $670 | | | | | | |
| Corner Store | | | | | | $832 | $885 | | | | | | |

*C = owned and/or managed by community or Aboriginal corporation, P = private, MSG = owned or managed by store group, L = leased from community, O = other

# References


(1) Food Standards Austalia and New Zealand. *NUTTAB database*. 2014 [cited 5 Nov 2014]; http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/science/monitoringnutrients/nutrientables/nuttab/Pages/default.aspx . Last accessed: 24 Jan 2019.

(2) National Health and Medical Research Council. *Nutrient Reference Values for Australia and New Zealand including Recommended Dietary Intakes*. Canberra: Australian Government; 2006.

(3) Department of Health. *Northern Territory Market Basket Survey 2015*. 2015. Available at: https://digitallibrary.health.nt.gov.au/prodjspui/bitstream/10137/656/8/Northern%20Territory%20Market%20Basket%20Survey%20report%202015%20FULL.final.pdf. Last accessed: 12 June 2020.

(4) Australian Government, National Health and Medical Research Council. *Dietary Guidelines for Australian Adults - A Guide to Healthy Eating*. 2013.

(5) Australian Bureau of Statistics. *Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey: Consumption of Food Groups from the Australian Dietary Guidelines*, *2012-13*. Commonwealth of Australia; 2016. Report No.: 4727.0.55.008.

(6) National Health and Medical Research Council. *Eat for health Educator Guide*. Canberra: National Health and Medical Research Council; 2013.

(7) Dietitians Association of Australia. *A food modelling system to inform the revision of the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating*. 2011. National Health and Medical Research Council, Commonwealth of Australia.

(8) Australian Bureau of Statistics. *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey (2018-19)*. [6401.0]. 2019. Canberra.

(9) National Health and Medical Research Council (2013). *Australian Dietary Guidelines*. Canberra: National Health and Medical Research Council.

(10) Australian Bureau of Statistics. *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey*, *2018-19*. [4715.0]. 2019. Canberra

(11) Lee AJ, Kane S, Ramsey R, Good E, Dick M. *Testing the price and affordability of healthy and current (unhealthy) diets and the potential impacts of policy change in Australia*. BMC Public Health 2016;16(1):315.

(12) Carlson A, Frazão E. *Are healthy foods really more expensive? It depends on how you measure the price*. EIB-96, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research, May 2012.