

## **Making a difference—the Outback Stores and Canteen Creek story**

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Like many remote Indigenous stores, the Canteen Creek store has had a history of ups and downs, of changing store managers, vested interests, empty shelves one month and semi-full the next. The community of Canteen Creek (Owairtilla) has worked long and hard for a sustainable solution and its decision to have Outback Stores manage the store has brought this to fruition. A core range of healthy foods, including fresh fruit and vegetables, is now provided and community members are delighted with the consistently high quality and variety of foods and drinks on offer. Food security is making a difference in significant ways, including demographically, and is the first step in developing healthy eating patterns leading to positive changes in nutrition-related health. However, ensuring food security has basic ongoing requirements and the store has faced a number of challenges including in the areas of storage and refrigeration. Achieving sustainability requires a strong partnership and this is evident in the community's drive and commitment coupled with Outback Stores policies, which foster capacity building and economic empowerment. Community participation in decision making in relation to the store and full-time employment of Indigenous staff are key elements in ensuring food security in the long term. Outback Stores also recognises the importance of a multifaceted approach to promoting the supply of nutritious food. To this end it has developed a number of generic in-store strategies and continues to develop working relationships with both community-based and external service providers. Canteen Creek was the first community to sign a management agreement with Outback Stores and the partnership is one based on a solid foundation of cross-cultural learning and respect. It continues to impact positively on the health and wellbeing of the community as a whole.