



# POSITION STATEMENT

## Food Security in East Arnhem Land

### KEY MESSAGE

**Food security is a fundamental human right. Miwatj Health Aboriginal Corporation calls for a comprehensive, collaborative approach to address the social determinants of food security and resulting nutrition practices in East Arnhem Land.**

### PRIORITY ACTIONS

**The Board of Miwatj Health recognise the following actions as priority areas for a cross-sectoral commitment to address food insecurity in our region:**

**Community-led decision making:** By devolving decision-making processes within communities, services and service provision is more likely to address the priorities and needs of communities as articulated by communities. This empowers Aboriginal residents to have greater accountability and control over their lives.

**Local food production:** Engage with appropriate groups such as primary industry, small business development and all levels of government to explore community-led, large-scale local food production initiatives (as opposed to small scale community market gardens) that have a solid economic foundation and strong business model.

**Increase access to traditional bush foods:** Increase funding and flexible arrangements for programs that can support access to bush foods (such as those offered by local ranger groups).

**Improve housing:** Increase investment into remote housing, social infrastructure and a regional Aboriginal community-controlled housing model using an economic development approach.

**Improve food price monitoring:** Establish a national and transparent approach to monitoring of food price, availability and affordability; ensuring that results are publicly available.

**Increase nutrition workforce:** Increase government investment in a nutrition prevention workforce to implement healthy remote store practices, business and policy along with healthy lifestyle programs and initiatives. Genuine and sustained funding of a coordinated nutrition workforce that includes community-based healthy lifestyle workers is required to support nutrition initiatives and generate effective change.

**Increase support to remote stores:** Consider remote community stores to be an 'essential service', that requires cross-jurisdictional support from government, health and social agencies at all levels. Increase government funding to remote community-owned stores to enable them to promote a healthy food supply. Strengthen the Community Stores Licensing Scheme through the adoption of a non-legislative collaborative model that is delivered through Land Councils, Traditional Owners and Township Leasing.

**Invest in job-creating strategies:** Take a strengths-based approach to remote employment programs that focus on being community-driven, creating jobs, strengthening culture, being flexible, promoting incentives versus punishments, provide ongoing support and prioritising long-term economic, social and skills development, e.g. the APO NT-proposed Remote Development and Employment Scheme as an alternative to the current Community Development Program.

**Take a fiscal approach:** Decrease the economic barriers to food security to improve food affordability and address the high cost of living. This may be in the form of direct-to-consumer healthy food subsidies or increased remote area allowance for recipients of social security payments.