



30 March 2012

Media release

Beswick celebrates gaining back store ownership

The remote community of Beswick in the Northern Territory is bursting with pride and ready to celebrate after gaining back the ownership of their local store.

Today's community event at Beswick, 118km south east of Katherine, marks the beginning of a new period for the store which went into voluntary administration three years ago. Outback Stores took over management of the Beswick store in 2008 and worked in partnership with the community to improve financial management, train and mentor managers and staff and introduce new retail practices.

The store has now been handed back to the Beswick Store Committee on behalf of the Wuduluk Progress Aboriginal Corporation with Outback Stores continuing to help manage the store and a community event is being held in Beswick today to celebrate at 12 noon.

Outback Stores has also helped the store committee to teach people about the 'money story' to help them understand the store's books so they can learn to run their own stores.

Outback Stores CEO Steve Moore said it has been a fantastic outcome for the community.

"Within three years the store has been turned around – debts have been paid, new retail systems introduced, facilities upgraded and a steady supply of healthy food is provided to the community," he said.

"Outback Stores will continue to work with the store committee to manage the store, hire local staff and invest profits back into the community."

Beswick Store Committee chairperson Peter Lindsay has lived in Beswick for more than 18 years. He has seen the changes in the store since it went into administration.

"The shelves are now chock-a-block with fresh food and there is a variety of products to choose from," Mr Lindsay said.

"We have come to a happy time. If it wasn't for the community, the whole community itself, we wouldn't be where we are now," he said.

The store committee works with Outback Stores to make decisions about the store to meet the community's needs.

“We have about ten people from the community on the store committee who go and explain to their tribe what is happening with the store,” Mr Lindsay said. “There has been great community support.”

Mr Lindsay says he has learned a lot. “I’ve come along this journey and I’m over the moon,” he said.

Event details

Where: Beswick community store

When: Friday, 30 March 11.30 am – 1pm

As part of the celebrations there will be a presentation from the local school, BBQ and activities with the community.

About Outback Stores

Outback Stores is a company that provides retail services to remote stores on behalf of Indigenous communities. It is an Australian Government owned company with an independent board of directors.

Outback Stores was set up to improve food security in remote Indigenous communities by applying good management and retail practices to community stores.

The company was set up by a group of retailers from large supermarket businesses, such as Coles Myer and Woolworths, with the support of Indigenous Business Australia.

Outback Stores emerged from a need to help improve the health of Indigenous people in remote Australia by addressing rising nutrition-related health problems, unreliable food supplies, management issues, stores closing and build-up of debt.

In June 2007, the Australian Government introduced its Northern Territory Emergency Response Bill to Parliament. As part of the intervention, funding became available to support stores that were facing closure because they were unprofitable due to small population or remote location.

This was when Outback Stores was given \$29.1 million funding for stores in the Northern Territory to ensure these unviable stores remained open to provide healthy and affordable food for the communities.

In 2009, Outback Stores was given funding for unviable remote stores outside the Northern Territory to guarantee food security and local jobs.

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Creating healthier communities

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