

MEDIA RELEASE

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Good news from Urapunga on National Nutrition Week

Remote residents of Urapunga have reduced consumption of sugary drinks in their store by 43 percent in the past year, due to a range of sugar-reduction measures implemented by store directors.

“We knew the community was drinking too much sugar, so we came up with a plan to start changing that. As directors of the store, we felt like we could make a positive change,” said Antonella Pascoe, board member of Urapunga Aboriginal Corporation.

The store has restricted the size of soft drinks sold, and implemented “Sugar-Free Wednesdays”, a day in which no full-sugar soft drinks are available for purchase.

In the first six months, the proportion of sugary drinks sold has fallen by 4.7% which equates to 1,921 litres, or twelve bathtubs less of full-sugar soft drink consumed in the community.

“We know that the community is now drinking less sugar. One of the best things is the way it has made the community think about what they are drinking, even on days when they can buy sugary drinks,” said Antonella Pascoe.

Urapunga joins a growing list of communities trying to reduce sugar consumption through strong, community-led decision making, such as Engawala, Santa Teresa and Ali Curung.

“We love to see community leaders taking action to improve health outcomes and are always keen to assist in implementing the measures they choose”, said Anna Murison, Health and Nutrition Manager for Outback Stores.

Since 2012, the proportion of full-sugar drinks has reduced by 34 percent across stores serviced by Outback Stores. In the same period, the proportion of water sold has increased by 131 percent and that of sugar-free drinks has increased by 89 percent.

These healthy outcomes are driven by local store directors wanting to tackle diet-related health problems, in line with Outback Stores’ Healthy Food Policy.

Urapunga Aboriginal Corporation first approached Outback Stores in 2019, when the store was facing significant challenges due to mismanagement and debt. [Today the store is in a much better financial standing, with new fittings and upgrades and a better range of healthy food.](#)

“The shop looks much better. There’s lots more food on the shelves, the products are worth buying and the prices are cheaper too,” said James Woods, director of Urapunga Aboriginal Corporation.

National Nutrition Week runs from 16-22 October. The theme this year is ‘Create a world of flavours’. To view 100 new vegetable recipes and videos, as well as downloadable resources visit www.tryfor5.org.au.

Photo: Cleven Woods (left) with store director, Antonella Pascoe (right) at Urapunga Store

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[Outback Stores](#) provides retail store management and support services on a transparent fee for service basis to Indigenous owned community stores. We work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in a holistic way to improve health, nutrition, employment, training and economic outcomes in remote communities.