

## Andrew Oliver, NT Department of Education

Dear Sir/Madam

**Re: Letter of support for Food Ladder's submission to the Federal Enquiry into food security in remote Indigenous communities**

I am pleased to support Food Ladder submission to the Enquiry.

Over the last 12 years I have been involved in delivering Vocational Education and Training (VET) to school students in remote Indigenous communities across the Northern Territory. One of the focus areas has been agriculture, conservation and land management and horticulture. 'Grow your own' has been a key point, both from a work force development perspective as well as sustainable food production.

Indigenous communities need to be able to grow fresh, nutrient rich fruit and vegetables that is sustainable and will bring wide benefits, not only to the student population, but to the wide community.

I had the opportunity a few years ago to see the Food Ladder set-up in Katherine and was very impressed with the ability to produce multiple crops quickly and at a reasonable cost. This led to the Education Department commissioning a Food Ladder at the Juno Centre in Tennant Creek. This infrastructure has been an excellent teaching resource for a wide range of students. Students have ranged from those that are disengaged with school and just want to grow something, VET students undertaking units of competency through to students working on a STEM aligned curriculum.

The students have not only grown the food, they are then involved in the picking and processing stages, including the cooking of nutritious, healthy meals.

Growing healthy food in remote communities must be sustainable and strong partnerships will be required that are both proven and practical. This will include showing young people that there is a career pathway and employment opportunities in this area.

Having a Food Ladder in remote communities is an effective, cost efficient solution that will provide the food security required.

Yours Sincerely

**Andrew Oliver**  
**Director, Industry Training Programs**  
Department of Education  
Northern Territory Government

Street address: Level 5, Mitchell Centre, 55-59 Mitchell St, Darwin

Postal address: GPO Box 4821, Darwin, NT 0801, Australia

**tel:** (08) 8944 9352

**m:** 0408 849 270

**e:** [andrew.oliver@nt.gov.au](mailto:andrew.oliver@nt.gov.au)

**w:** [www.education.nt.gov.au](http://www.education.nt.gov.au)