

## Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency



25<sup>th</sup> June 2020

To Whom It May Concern,

The Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA) is pleased to provide this letter of support for Food Ladder's submission to the Inquiry into food pricing and food security in remote Indigenous communities.

VACCA is the lead Aboriginal child and family welfare organization operating across Victoria, with 40 years of experience and expertise as an Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation which supports and advocates for the needs of vulnerable Aboriginal community members including children, young people and their families. We are the largest organisation of its kind in Australia and one of Victoria's leading Aboriginal employers, delivering over 50 programs across Victoria.

Since 2019, VACCA has been working in partnership with Food Ladder to provide a food security, nutrition and education program in Werribee South, Victoria.

Operating inside a quarter acre hydroponic greenhouse, the produce provides much needed food security to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their families. Fresh fruit and vegetables are delivered to in-need members of the community, with over 30 households and 125 community members receiving produce boxes on a weekly basis. Produce is also sold to local restaurants and cafes to help fund the project.

As part of the program, weekly classes are offered to Aboriginal people where they can receive a certificate in horticulture and gain job-ready skills in the agriculture industry. All participants are provided with appropriate clothing and equipment to undertake the program and volunteer drivers are available to take participants to and from class, ensuring the initiative is helping those who need it most.

We believe that our work with the Aboriginal community across Victoria puts us in an authoritative position to verify and corroborate Food Ladder's recommendations to the Chief Inquirer. While food subsidies are a step in the right direction, we agree that:

"Reducing the cost of food does not necessarily mean that:

- 1) The food available in remote communities will be of improved nutritional value.
- 2) Healthy eating practices will be adopted and maintained by people living in remote Indigenous communities."

Food Ladder, Submission 2020

Food Ladder addresses both food supply (availability, accessibility and affordability of foods) and demand for healthy foods through a community-led approach, founded on close partnerships with local stakeholders. Importantly, the Aboriginal communities are involved in all stages of the

Connected by culture

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program. It is truly community-led, addressing food security, education, employment and community self-determination, wellbeing and pride.

We fully support Food Ladder in its submission to the Federal Government.

Yours sincerely,



Prof. Muriel Bamblett AO  
**Chief Executive Officer**