

**Submission to the Inquiry into the most effective ways for WA to address food insecurity for children and young people affect by poverty.**

As a long serving Public School Principal, I spent 15 years in regional and remote schools in the Kimberley before returning to the South West in 2020. My experience in the Kimberley Remote schools saw me complete 10 years at Kalumburu Remote Community School, three years at Derby District High School and 2 years at One Arm Point Remote Community School.

During my tenure at the remote schools mentioned, the school staff provided a breakfast and lunch program for students using food accessed from Foodbank. Whilst we were grateful for this service, because of the remoteness of these communities, the food available from Foodbank was limited to canned and non-perishable items, thus limiting what could be offered to students. Neither of the schools had a canteen facility and so this service was provided by staff from makeshift facilities.

Due to the high cost of food from the retail outlets in these communities, particularly Kalumburu and given that most families were Centrelink clients, food security was a major issue for our students. Students regularly presented at school tired and hungry having not had a nutritious evening meal the night before, and no breakfast in the morning. My mantra to staff was that tired and hungry students could not learn and so by providing food through our breakfast and lunch programs, and providing food in classrooms, we hoped to address this issue and allow students to achieve great learning outcomes.

I would suggest that a possible way to provide greater food security to students in remote communities would for all remote schools to be provided with basic canteen facilities. Additional funding would be required to employ canteen staff. This would not only allow provision of more nutritious foods on a regular basis but provide additional employment opportunities for Aboriginal community members and a training opportunity for high school students. Centrepay deductions from parents could then be encouraged to support these meals. I believe school attendance would also increase as students would attend to access this service.

I hope that my opinion is of some value to the Committee.

Kind regards

████████████████████

████████

████████████████████

29<sup>th</sup> April 2022