Information Booklet

National Code of Practice for Remote Store Operations

National Indigenous Australians Agency

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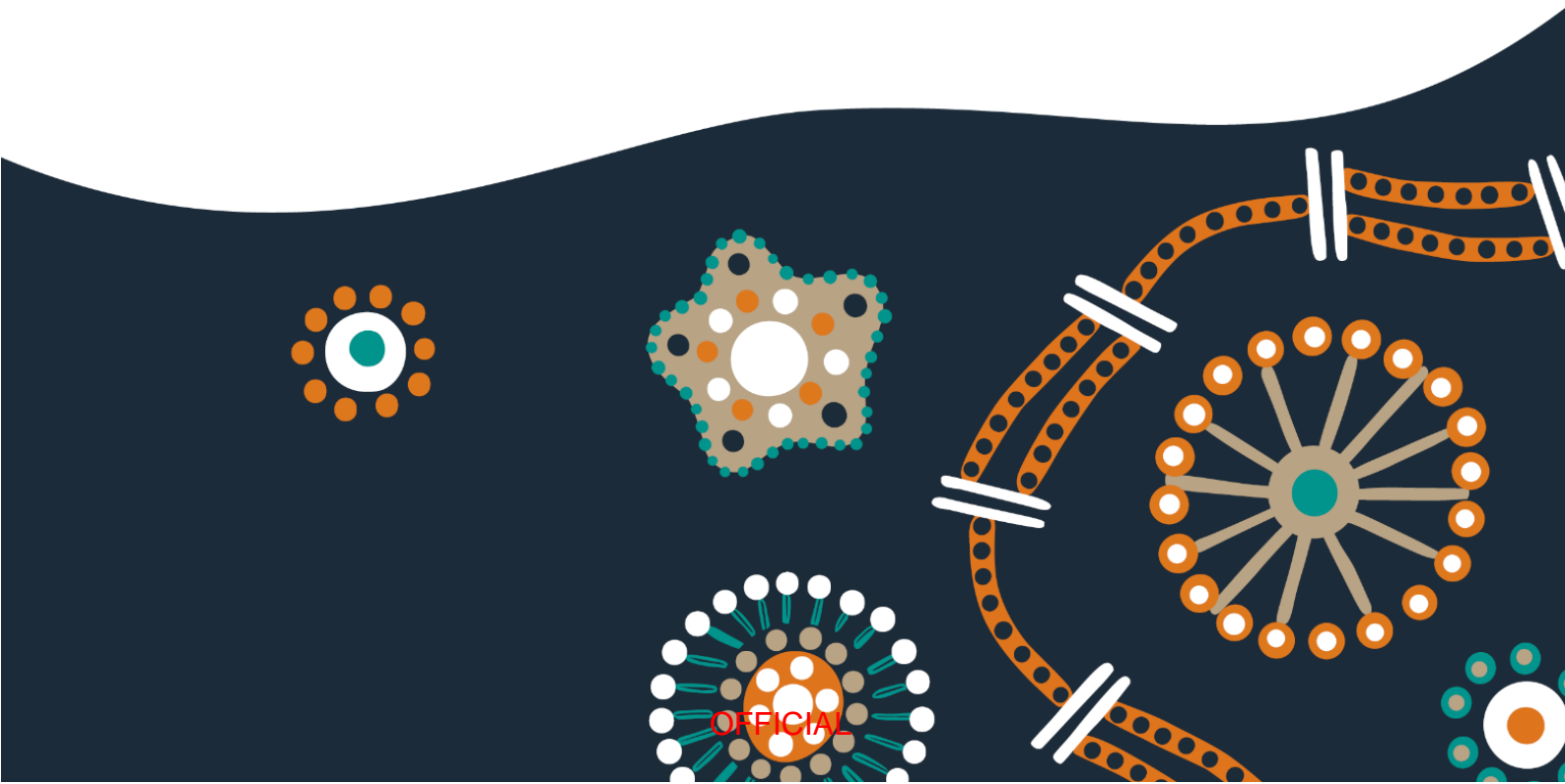
Summary

The National Code of Practice for Remote Store Operations (the Code) is a voluntary non-prescribed code that provides minimum standards for stores in remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. It addresses three key areas of Health, Operations and Governance.

The National Code is designed to provide a basis for stores by setting out 11 key standards that all stores must meet in order to be registered as part of the Code. Stores are encouraged to pursue health, governance and operational processes beyond these standards.

The Code recognises the full diversity of remote stores, including the strengths many stores have in ensuring their community has access to a service that meets community aspirations and is affordable, healthy and accessible.

By including a range of recommended "should" standards the Code outlines what are the next steps stores can be taking to build on the minimum standards required for participation in the Code.

The Code has been designed with the purpose of benefiting both stores in delivering a sustainable service and remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and families, increasing their food security.

Some benefits for stores include:

- Increased reputation and trust from customers: by demonstrating a commitment to a set of nationally recognised minimum health, governance and operational standards.

- A foundation to engage with community about their aspirations of the store and the standards you as a store are trying to deliver for them.

- Access to a range of support, expert advice and materials designed to build capacity of stores in the areas of health, operations and governance.

- Access to government schemes that support stores to provide lower cost food and groceries to their community. Including the low-cost essential's subsidy scheme, for the purchase of 30 items at a cheaper rate.

Some benefits for community include:

- Health outcomes: all standards of the Code are evidence based and have been demonstrated in the past to reduce consumption of unhealthy food.

- Increased food security: the standards of the Code are designed to increase the resilience of remote stores and ensure continual community access to food and grocery items.

- Confidence and pride in their store: including avenues to have input into the store, such as the ways outlined in governance standard 1 below.

The Information Booklet

This Booklet expands on the standards outlined in the Code providing more information on the meaning of each and examples of how they can be implemented. The Booklet also provides a 'why', outlining the outcomes the standards are trying to meet and support mechanisms for stores that might assist them in implementing the standards.

NIAA as administrator

NIAA is responsible for the administration of the Code. This includes oversight of the application, assessment, monitoring and complaints processes. It also includes ensuring stores are supported and encouraged to meet the standards of the Code.

Stores are welcome to contact the NIAA food security team at any time if they have questions about the Code, processes of being registered for the Code or support they may be able to access.

Please contact the Food Security Team via: remotefoodsecurity@niaa.gov.au

Governance Standards
Governance Standard 1: Local community input

> Stores <u>must</u> be able to demonstrate how local community is able to input into the store functions.

Why this standard

Remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities have consistently expressed the important role that remote stores play in improving food security and wellbeing of the community. Evidence from differing approaches and communities around remote areas of Australia show the importance of community input to improving the effectiveness of store in delivering these outcomes.

Proactively seeking community input can reduce tension or disputes down the track and create better understanding moving forward.

Practical Implications of the standard

Remote stores operate under a range of ownership and operating models and remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are diverse in their existing contexts and decision-making structures.

Therefore, input may include a range of pathways for community to provide this input.

The main criteria for this standard include:

- **Inclusion:** all community members should have access to either provide input or someone that represents them provide feedback.
- **Consideration of input:** the store should duly consider the input they receive from community members and consider whether any changes should be made to better their service.
- **Demonstratable:** input or the process of input should be recorded by the store allowing them to demonstrate both back to the community and the Code Administrator how that feedback process works.

Potential opportunities to meet the standard

The following provides several examples of approaches to seeking and including community input into store functions.

Community controlled stores

Community controlled stores are likely to meet the standard for providing input into the Store. Community ownership and/or control through a community representative board provides a quality avenue for community to determine how the store can meet the needs of community.

It is encouraged that when signing up, stores use the Code as a foundation for further conversation with community about seeking input into the store. These conversations should also include discussion of the health and operation standards of the Code and the effects the Code will have on store operations.

Targeted community engagement with decision making structures

A strong avenue for seeking community is within existing representative structures or forums within the community.

These forums may provide an effective way to participate in rather than duplicate gatherings of community and seek input from them on the running of the store, without create duplication or consultation fatigue from community.

Open feedback opportunity

An open feedback opportunity provides customers and members of the community to provide their input into the store are any point.

This would include an open process accessible to all community members, it should be documented and would include attempting to resolve the issue with the person providing the feedback.

Open customer feedback is a good way to help you identify what works and does not work for your Store.

Some examples of an open feedback opportunity may include:

- a standard feedback form available at the front of the store

- feedback hours during the week that allow community to talk directly with the store manager

- or period open forums where anyone in the community is invited to discuss their feedback and experiences of the store together.

Support

To support store governance ORIC designed training will be available to stores (not just those registered with ORIC). For more information please see www.niaa.gov.au/food-security.

Operational Standards
Operational Standard 1: compliance with other regimes

> Stores <u>must</u> be compliant with relevant legislation, policies and procedures at a state/territory and Federal level.

Why this standard

The Code is designed to set minimum standards, that do not currently exist legislation, policy and procedures. However, existing legislation, policy and procedures are still key to ensure a sustainable and fair business service to communities. This standard recognises existing legislation, policy and procedures and requires stores comply with them in order to benefit from signing up to the Code.

Practical Implications of the standard

Stores have a wide range of requirements to meet as part of the existing schemes and requirements. The following are just some of the regimes that stores must consider as part of their management of a remote Store.

NT Licencing Scheme

Remote stores in the Northern Territory (NT) are governed under the *Food Act 2004* (NT) as part of the NT Remote Stores Program. NT stores that are declared by the NT Chief Health Officer for inclusion in the program must follow the standards set by the NT Minister.

The Standards of the National Code are aligned with NT standards where possible to ensure stores do not have different standards to follow. Reporting on the National Code will aim to reduce burden on those following the NT scheme and reduce the need for double reporting on the same standards.

For more information on the NT Scheme please visit: Food security | NT Health

Australian Consumer Law

All remote stores must follow the Australian Consumer Law (ACL) and the *Competition and Consumer Act 2010*. The Act and parts of the ACL are Administered by the ACCC and cover areas such as:

- Being fair and honest
- Prices, receipts and guarantees
- Product safety
- Financial dealings.

Included in the ACL is State and Territory regulations administered by the States and Territories. Stores should ensure they are aware of these regulations and comply with them.

For more information including the ACCC's best practice guide please visit: FairStore: a best practice guide for stores serving remote and Indigenous communities | ACCC.

Health and Safety Requirements

As with other food businesses, remote stores must comply with the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Cth*) and Food Safety Standards that are set in their jurisdiction.

For information on work health safety please visit Safe Work Australia and for food safety visit the food safety standards.

Governance requirements

Stores are set up in a diverse range of forms and are therefore required to follow the governance standards that apply to them. They might include:

- Registration with Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations (ORIC) as part of the *Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006.*

- Registration with Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC).

- Registration with Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC).

Support

The information above provides links to information on each of the common pieces of legislation, regulations and rules that may apply to a Store.

Operational Standard 2: price displays

Stores <u>must</u> have clearly displayed and accurate prices

Why this standard

Clear and accurate price displays give consumers the ability to make informed decisions about the purchases they make and how within a store and the purchase will contribute to the overall cost of the food and groceries.

Practical Implications of the standard

Clear displays

Clear displays include displays next to items that allow the customer to understand the cost of the item. The displays to be clear should be:

- prominent – to stand out so that it is easily seen

- proximate – to be positioned close to the selling price for the grocery item

- legible – not be difficult to read

- unambiguous – the information accurate and its meaning clear.

Accurate prices

Accurate prices should mean that all prices displayed next to items represent the total price the consumer will have to pay for that item. Price displays should not:

- Promote a price as being a sale or special price, when it is actually the normal price. E.g. Where an item is offered at a sale or special price for an extended period.

- Identify different components of the prices separately. E.g. fees, taxes or other costs should be included in the overall price displayed with the item.

- Show old prices that no longer apply to the product such as a sale that has ended.

Examples of clear and accurate pricing

The following examples below have an example of price displays.

Potential opportunities to meet the standard

Unit pricing

The Unit Pricing Code sets standards displaying the price of a grocery item as a standard unit of measurement alongside its selling price. It allows your consumers to quickly compare the value of products of varying size and brands.

It is mandatory for stores over 1000 square metres of floor space, but we encourage stores that do not meet that side to follow the Unit Pricing Code as best practice.

Please find further information on Unit Pricing here.

Support

ACCC support

The ACCC has a range of information on price displays that support their role in administrating consumer law and the two prescribed codes of the Food and Grocery Code of Conduct and the Unit Pricing Code.

The ACCC's Advertising and selling guide provide a more detailed summary of town grocery retailers should be advertising, displaying and selling items.

Monash Support

As part of Monash support of stores, Monash will provide guidance on the Health Standard 1 on the restriction of promotion of unhealthy food and drink. Plus, will provide information on ways to actively promote healthy food.

Clear and accurate prices have an overlap with these standards and the support on these standards should give a clearer picture of the types of displays that could be used.

Access to the Monash Healthy Stores Portal here: www.healthystores.net.

Operational Standard 3: opening hours

Stores <u>must</u> clearly display opening and closing hours and notify community of anticipated store closures in advance

Why this standard

Clear opening hours allows community members to plan their grocery shopping, reducing the risk of people and families not having access to food due to the store being unexpectedly closed.

Practical Implications of the standard

Opening hours should be consistent and known well in advance where possible.

Stores should clearly display this signage in an area high traffic and accessible area. This includes having the opening hours available to read when the store is not open.

Potential opportunities to meet the standard

Informing community in advance should include multiple avenues of communication including in store signage in advance of the closure, physical information around areas of the community, informing community services of store closures, and posts or updates to online or social media-based stores pages.

The larger or more effect the change in opening hours is going to have to access to the store, the more avenues and effort should be applied to communicating the change.

Support

If you have any question on how this standard applies, please contact the NIAA at remotefoodsecurity@niaa.gov.au .

Operational Standard 4: Book up practices

> Stores <u>must</u> not participate in practices where in-store informal credit arrangements are being made with customers (informally known as book up practices)

Why this standard

While relationships with book up practices varies, the risks and disadvantages that come from book up can be significant for communities and therefore is restricted under the Code. These common problems can include:

- Increased debt for the consumer, increasing debt cycles and financial stress.
- Increased debt for stores, increasing the risk of store viability.
- Risk of theft, fraud and unfair (or unconscionable) conduct.
- Higher fees for the customer.
- Lack of choice if the consumer's ATM card is left with a store, or loss of other security items.
- Risk of confusion if records of transactions are not kept carefully.

Practical Implications of the standard

What is book up

Book up providers allow customers to obtain goods or services immediately and pay for them later.

Providers will often require customers to leave their debit card at the store. In some cases, the provider will also ask a customer to provide their personal identification number (PIN). This allows a provider to use the debit card and PIN to make deductions against the outstanding amount when funds become available in the customer's bank account.

Restriction on book up

The Code clearly prohibits book up due to the risks outlined above. Stores will not be compliant with the Code if they allow customers to obtain goods via a debt agreement between the store and the customer.

Potential opportunities to meet the standard

Potential areas of focus	Activities
Closing accounts and ending the practice	Customers will need to be informed ahead of time about the end of book up practices and given reasonable time to pay any outstanding debts. Any closing should consider how to ensure a low financial burden on the customer.
Referral	Where customers in your store are struggling with their ability to budget or deal with money you can refer them to support through the ASIC's Indigenous Outreach Program or financial counselling.

Support

Advice on book up practices can be sought from ASIC at Book up - Moneysmart.gov.au.

Operational Standard 5: Display of the Code

Stores <u>must</u> clearly display their registration to the Code, including details of how customers can make complaints about non-compliance. This signage will be provided by the Administrator.

Why this standard

Display of the Code allows customers to see the standards you have signed up to as part of the Code, build trust in your store and provide an avenue of accountability where shoppers can provide feedback.

Practical Implications of the standard

As part of signing up to the Code you may be sent:

- a printed copy of the Code poster and
- a certificate of registration.

The complaints form will allow community members to contact NIAA as the Administrator of the Code if they believe the code is not being complied with.

To access a printable version of the Code please visit the NIAA Website www.niaa.gov.au/food-security

Stores should clearly display this signage in an area high traffic and accessible area so all community members can see and read the Code.

Potential opportunities to meet the standard

Along with the display of the Code we encourage Store managers to have conversations with their boards and communities about what the Code means for them, how they are already meeting the standards of the Code or steps being taken to work towards meeting the standards of the Code.

Training staff members to answer questions on the Code might be required for customers that make inquires of what it means for them.

Support

If you would like any more information about signage and access to that signage, please visit the NIAA Code page here www.niaa.gov.au/food-security.

Health Standards
Health standard 1: promotion of unhealthy food

> Stores must not promote or discount unhealthy food and drinks, unless the discount is reasonably necessary to reduce waste from expiring food or drink.

Why this standard?

Unhealthy food and drinks are becoming more widespread across Australia — and food companies often promote them more than healthier options. Health Standard 1 is based on the Healthy Stores 2020 study, led by the vision of an Aboriginal-led organisation and co-designed by researchers, retailers, and community store boards. The study showed that removing promotions of unhealthy food and drinks in the store and promoting healthy food and drinks only led to healthier purchasing without affecting business outcomes. In 10 remote stores over 12 weeks, there was a 2.8% drop in total free sugars sold – equivalent to 1.8 tonnes less sugar purchased. Customers still bought what they needed and could still buy unhealthy food but were less influenced to do so. This standard permits discounts only when needed to reduce food waste.

Practical Implications of the standard

What foods and drinks are unhealthy? Unhealthy foods and drinks are defined in the Code as discretionary items as per the Australian Dietary Guidelines.

Unhealthy Food are usually high in:	Unhealthy Food include:
• Sugar • Fat • Salt Unhealthy foods are often <u>low</u> in nutrients needed to support health and are typically highly processed.	• Lollies and chocolate • Packaged snacks and chips • Cakes and sweet biscuits • Pies, sausage rolls, hot chips and other deep-fried food • Sugary drinks (soft drink, fruit drink and cordial)

How can I tell if a product is unhealthy?

☑ Use the Good Tucker App

A free, easy-to-use tool—just **scan a barcode** to get a rating:

- 👍 Thumbs up = healthy
- 👉 Sideways thumb = okay
- 👎 Thumbs down = unhealthy

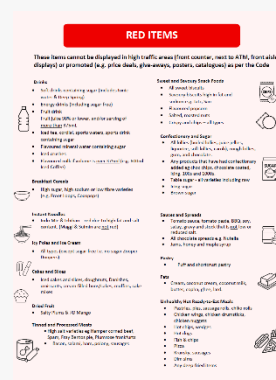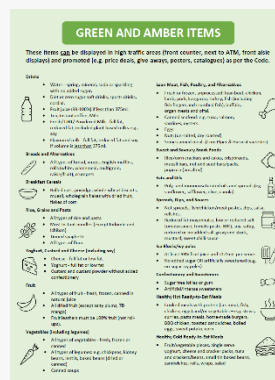Only products rated **thumbs up or sideways** should be promoted. Download it on the **App Store** or **Google Play.**

☑ Use the Food Reference Guide available on the Monash Healthy Stores web portal

A printed guide for people who don't use smartphones.

- **Green and amber items** = can be promoted
- **Red items** = must not be promoted

What is considered a promotion?

Promotions are any activities that advertise or draw attention to products. This includes **marketing** or **price-based** promotions.

Marketing material (may not be related to price):	Pricing promotions:
• Posters and signage • Shelf stripping and branded fridges • Recipe cards and demonstrations • Giveaways, prizes and competitions	• Sales and discounts • Bundle deals (e.g. Buy 1 Get 1 Free) • Promotions of regular price (e.g. everyday low price)

See examples below of what not to do under the Code:

Discounting expiring stock (reducing waste)

Stores can reduce prices to avoid waste on items nearing expiry—**but must follow these guidelines**:

- ☑ Use a plain sign (A4 max) with product name and new price—no bright colours or phrases like "special" or "save now".

- ☑ Keep the product in its usual location—don't move it to the front counter or end-of-aisle.

- ☑ Apply the discount close to expiry—ideally within 7 days of expiry.

- ✖ Do not advertise with deals, bundles, or extra signage.

- ✖ Avoid discounting too early or reversing discounts—it should only be done when reasonably necessary.

See the example provided for how to advertise discounted expiring stock correctly ->

Potential implementation challenges and how to work around them:

We understand there may be challenges that make it difficult to fully meet this standard right away. Below are some common concerns raised by remote stores, along with practical ideas and workarounds that can support implementation.

Common Concerns	Ideas to Support Implementation
Staff practice and training	• Provide training to store managers and merchandise teams on standard with clear examples of compliance and non-compliance • Communicate the standard to suppliers/wholesalers • Get support from the Monash Healthy Stores team who can review current promotions and provide recommendations for change to align with standard
Maintaining sales	• Shift promotions to healthy food and drinks and non-food items

Support Available

Monash University Healthy Stores Support

- Visit the **Monash Healthy Stores Portal** for tools, guides and examples to help you meet this standard. www.healthystores.net

- Want personalised help? Contact Monash at:
    ✉ healthy.stores@monash.edu
    📞 0447 655 457

Health Standard 2: Access to unhealthy food

> Stores must not provide easy access to unhealthy food and drinks at the counter and high traffic areas, except for ready to eat meals.

Why this standard?

Health Standard 2 is also based on the Healthy Stores 2020 study, which found that product placement has a big impact on what people buy. Unhealthy food and drinks placed at the counter or in busy areas can lead to more impulse buys. By keeping healthy food and drinks only in high traffic spots, stores can support healthier choices—without affecting sales. Ready-to-eat meals can be placed at the counter.

Practical Implications of the standard

How can I tell if a product unhealthy?

To check if a product is unhealthy:

- ✅ Use the Good Tucker App
- ✅ Refer to the Food Reference Guide

What does 'easy access' look like?

Easy **access** is when products are **highly visible and within arm's reach**—especially in busy areas of the store where customers are more likely to make impulse purchases.

What are high traffic areas?

These are areas that increase the chance of customers picking up items without planning to:

- At or near the counter (where customers line up)
- At the front end-of-aisle
- At the store entrance
- Near ATMs or public computers

☑ **Exception:** Ready-to-eat meals like hot food from bain-maries or pie warmers are allowed in high-traffic areas, as these fixtures are often fixed in place, and located in staffed areas to serve customers.

See examples below of what not to do under the Code:
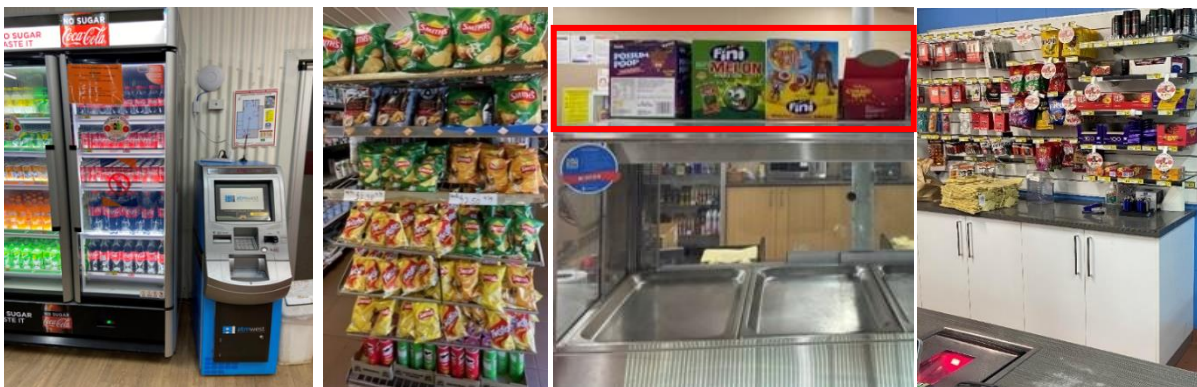
These examples include full-sugar soft drinks next to the ATM, crisps displayed on a front end-of-aisle, lollies on the counter and lollies and chocolate in a highly visible location behind the counter. To meet the Standard these unhealthy food and drinks items need to be relocated to a less visible, lower traffic areas like within the aisle.

Potential implementation challenges and how to work around them:

We understand there may be challenges that make it difficult to fully meet this standard right away. Below are some common concerns raised by remote stores, along with practical ideas to support implementation.

Common Concerns	Ideas to Support Implementation
Reducing shrinkage	• Relocate unhealthy products to shelves with **clear sightlines** or near **staffed service areas**, but in locations that are **less prominent** to customers than their current position. This could be behind the counter but in a less visible location behind the counter. • Consider **reducing the range** of high-theft items (e.g. single-serve bubble gum).
Maintaining sales	• Replace unhealthy items with healthier alternatives or non-food items
Infrastructure	• Where it's not feasible to relocate certain items due to severe space or power limitations (e.g. ice cream freezers), make a note of this for **NIAA.**

Support

Monash University Healthy Stores Support

- Visit the **Monash Healthy Stores Portal** for tools, guides and examples to help you meet this standard. www.healthystores.net

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Health Standard 3: Fresh fruit and vegetables

> Stores must ensure all fresh fruit and vegetable items are continuously available, well-presented and clearly displayed, and carry the minimum variety of these options expressed in the Code for their store size.

Why this standard?

Having a reliable supply of fresh fruit and vegetables in stores is key to supporting good health in remote communities. While many stores already stock fresh produce, offering a range of options makes it easier for customers to buy and eat more of it. The SHOP@RIC and Healthy Stores 2020 study showed that making fresh produce more visible and accessible, alongside other strategies like price discounts or changing shelf location to be more prominent, can encourage healthier purchasing. This standard builds on that evidence. It ensures that fresh fruit and vegetables are always part of the offer, giving customers more opportunities to make healthy choices.

Practical Implications of the standard

What is the minimum number of fresh fruit and vegetable varieties required based on store size?

Basic and small stores:

5 varieties of fresh fruit

5 varieties of fresh vegetables

❌ Does not include frozen or tinned

☑ Examples of 5 varieties of fresh fruit:

• Red apple • Banana • Orange • Lemon • Pear

☑ Examples of 5 varieties of fresh vegetables:

• Potatoes • Brown onions • Orange sweet potatoes • Pumpkin • Green cabbage

Medium and large stores:

8 varieties of fresh fruit

10 varieties of fresh vegetables

❌ Does not include frozen or tinned

☑ Examples of 8 varieties of fresh fruit:

• Red apple • Banana • Orange • Green apple • Lime • Mandarin • Green grapes • Watermelon

☑ Examples of 10 varieties of fresh vegetables:

• Potatoes • Brown onions • Orange sweet potatoes • Pumpkin • Green cabbage • Broccoli • Lettuce • Tomatoes • Avocado • Cucumber

How do you determine your store size?

Store size is **self-determined** by each store, using the below:

Store size weekly turnover [1]	Store size productive floor area	Population [2]
less than $35,000 per week (**basic**)	Basics (<250m2)	<200
$35,000 to $80,000 per week (**small**)	Small (250 - 500m2)	200 - 500
$80,000 to $150,000 per week (**medium**)	Medium (>500 m2)	500-1000
Greater than $150,000 per week (**large**)	Large (>750m2)	1000+

What does high- and low-quality look like?

To meet the standard, fresh fruit and vegetables must be of **high quality.** Fruit and vegetables must be **safe, fresh, and appealing** throughout the delivery cycle — so customers feel confident buying them.

Poor quality produce can turn people off, lead to waste, and **won't meet the Code**, even if the right number of varieties are stocked.

High quality	Low quality
• Fresh in appearance — not wilted, shrivelled, mouldy or bruised	• Wilted leafy greens or sprouting root vegetables
• Clean and free from visible dirt or pests	• Bruised or overripe fruit that feels mushy or discoloured
• Intact skin or outer layers (e.g. no cuts, cracks or broken husks)	• Mould, rot, or visible damage
• Firm texture — not squishy or overly soft	• Dirty or dusty surfaces, including on display trays
• No strong unpleasant odour	• Packaging that's ripped, leaking or open
• Packaged items (if used) should be sealed and undamaged	• Produce left in unclean, dark, or cluttered display areas
• Displayed in clean, tidy, and well-lit areas	

What does "continuously available" mean?

It means fresh fruit and vegetables should be on the shelves **throughout the delivery cycle** — not only for a few days after the truck, plane, or barge arrives.

What does a "well-stocked range" look like?

There should be a **good mix of colours and varieties** of loose fruit and vegetables, with **at least 75% of the display space filled**.

Potential implementation challenges and how to work around them:

We understand there may be challenges that make it difficult to fully meet this standard right away. Below are some common concerns raised by remote stores, along with practical ideas to support implementation.

Common concerns	Ideas to Support Implementation
Supply chain	• Let your wholesaler and transport company know about the standard so they can prioritise quality and keep things at the right temperature.
Staff skills	• Provide training on stock rotation, checking quality, and safe food handling. • Get support from the Monash Healthy Stores team for visual guides and checklists to help.
Reducing spoilage and waste	• Start with smaller orders and build to sales • Managing supply issues and providing staff training will also reduce waste.
Storage and refrigeration capacity	• Use ambient (non-refrigerated) displays for hardy items like pumpkins or potatoes to free up fridge space.

Support

Monash University Healthy Stores Support

- Visit the **Monash Healthy Stores Portal** for tools, guides and examples to help you meet this standard. www.healthystores.net

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Health Standard 4: ready to eat meals

> Stores must have a minimum of 50 per cent of displayed ready to eat meals be healthy foods.

Why this standard

Everyone should have the chance to choose a healthy option — especially when it comes to ready-to-eat meals (also called takeaway or prepared foods). Many people rely on these meals because they're quick, convenient, and don't require cooking. That's why this standard is so important. It supports food security by making sure at least half of the meals available are healthy. When healthy meals are easy to find and ready to go, it helps people eat well and can also support better health outcomes and stronger sales of healthy options.

Practical Implications of the standard

What are ready-to-eat meals?

Ready-to-eat meals are perishable foods that are **prepared and ready to eat straight away**, with **no need to cook or reheat** after purchase.

What are healthy and unhealthy ready-to-eat meals?

Healthy ready-to-eat meals	Unhealthy ready-to-eat meals
Hot items:	Hot items:
• Meat and vegetable meals (e.g. stews, curries and pastas)	• Pastries
• Home-made burgers	• Pies
• BBQ chicken	• Sausage rolls
• Chicken satays	• Chicken wings, drumsticks, nuggets, strips
• Quiches, frittatas	• Hot chips
• Toasted sandwiches	• Wedges
• Boiled eggs	• Hot dogs
• Sweet potato	• Fish & chips
• Corn	• Pizza
	• Dim sims
	• Chiko rolls
	• Kransky
Cold items:	• *Any deep-fried items*
• Sandwiches	
• Rolls	Cold items:
• Wraps	• Muffins
• Salads	• Cakes
• Fruit piece and fruit salad	• Cookies
• Single-serve yoghurt	
• Cheese and cracker packs	
• Tuna and crackers or beans	
• Small tin of baked beans	

What does at least 50% of displayed ready-to-eat meals mean?

It means that half or more of the meals on display at any time must be healthy options. This includes all equipment used to display meals, like:

- 🔥 Pie-warmers
- ♨️ Bain-maries
- ❄️ Cold displays or fridges

The pictures below include examples of ready to eat meal displays that <u>would not meet</u> the Code standard:

These examples show only unhealthy foods in the pie-warmer and bain-marie. To meet the Code, hot and cold healthy options would need to be available, with the same space given to them as the unhealthy items.

The photos below show setups that <u>would meet the standard</u>.

Potential implementation challenges and how to work around them:

We understand there may be challenges that make it difficult to fully meet this standard right away. Below are some common concerns raised by remote stores, along with practical ideas to support implementation.

Common concerns	Ideas to Support Implementation
Capacity to prepare meals	• Prioritise team members for meal preparation • Source pre-made healthy ready-to-eat (RTE) options where available • Get support from the Monash Healthy Stores team to provide simple meal ideas or recipes
Limited supply of pre-made healthy ready-to-eat products	• Work with suppliers to identify healthy RTE options
Infrastructure limitations	• Speak to NIAA where these challenges exist

Support

Monash University Healthy Stores Support

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Health Standard 5: refrigerated drinks

> Stores must have at least 50 per cent of refrigerated drinks dedicated to no sugar products (must include bottled water).

Why this standard?

Sugary drinks are one of the biggest sources of added sugar in people's diets — and too much sugar is linked to health issues like type 2 diabetes, tooth decay, and overweight. This standard helps make it easier for customers to choose healthier drinks, by giving more space in fridges to no sugar options like water, plain milk and zero sugar alternatives. This specific strategy was part of a group of changes tested in Healthy Stores 2020 which showed a reduction in sugar purchased from drinks when stores made changes like this. It's a practical way for stores to make a visible commitment to community health, without needing to remove products entirely.

Practical Implications of the standard

What are "no sugar" drinks?

No sugar drinks include:

- 💧 Water (still, sparkling, mineral, soda)
- 🥤 Diet or no sugar soft drinks
- 🥛 Fresh plain milk
- 🧃 Small 250ml flavoured milks and 100% juice

To check if a drink counts as no sugar, you can:

- ☑ Use the Good Tucker App
- ☑ Refer to the Food Reference Guide

What does the 50% fridge space rule mean?

At least 50% of allocated fridge space for drinks must be dedicated to **no sugar products**. This helps make healthy options easier to find and choose. To get an idea of what this could look like in practice, refer to the sample planogram below.

Potential implementation challenges and how to work around them:

We understand there may be challenges that make it difficult to fully meet this standard right away. Below are some common concerns raised by remote stores, along with practical ideas to support implementation.

Common Concerns	Ideas to Support Implementation
Stock turnover	• Add fridge checks to daily staff tasks to avoid delays in refilling • Order no-sugar drinks in line with sales to minimise waste • Work with store staff, boards, customers, or wholesalers to identify better-selling no-sugar options
Staff skills	• Create a fridge planogram showing a 50:50 layout • Get support from the Monash Healthy Stores team to review current fridge layout and make suggested changes

Support

Monash University Healthy Stores Support

- Visit the **Monash Healthy Stores Portal** for tools, guides and examples to help you meet this standard. www.healthystores.net

- Want personalised help? Contact Monash at:
  ✉ healthy.stores@monash.edu
  📞 0447 655 457

Health standard 6: price discounts on healthy food

> Stores <u>should</u> consider price discounts on healthy food and drinks, either promotional or ongoing.

Why this standard

Making healthy options more affordable supports changes in what people buy. The SHOP@RIC trial tested a 20% discount with price promotions on fruit, vegetables, water, and diet soft drinks in remote stores. This led to a 21% increase in fruit sales, a 9% increase in vegetable sales (which continued to grow after six months), and an 18% increase in water sales. This shows that even small price reductions on healthy foods and drinks can lead to real changes in purchasing patterns, helping customers access more healthy food without spending more.

Practical Implications of the standard

This is a **"should" standard** — meaning it is **best practice**, but not a requirement for all stores to implement under the Code.

Stores are encouraged to consider it as a way to make healthy options more affordable for customers. But it's also recognised that not all stores may be in a financial position to offer price discounts — and that's okay. The goal is to support stores to do what's realistic and helpful in their local context.

How can I tell if a product healthy?

To check if a healthy to apply a discount:
- ✅ Use the Good Tucker App
- ✅ Refer to the Food Reference Guide

What's the difference between promotional and ongoing discounts?

Both options can help make healthy options more affordable — but they work in different ways:

Promotional discounts are short-term offers to draw attention to healthy products • "Special: Apples $4/kg this week only!" • "2-for-1 on diet soft drinks – limited time!"	**Ongoing discounts** are permanent lower prices that make healthy options more affordable every day. • Everyday low prices: $1 waters • A store self-funded freight subsidy to provide ongoing discount – e.g. have a freight subsidy on fresh fruit and vegetables which reduces the price of those products by approx. 20%

Potential implementation challenges and how to work around them:

We understand there may be challenges that make it difficult to fully meet this standard right away. Below are some common concerns raised by remote stores, along with practical ideas to support implementation.

Potential areas of focus	Ideas to Support Implementation
Financial viability	• Explore opportunities to **cross-subsidise healthy food discounts** by using the higher profit margins from less healthy foods and drinks to offset the cost of discounting healthier options, so the overall store profitability is maintained.
Customer responsiveness	• **Pilot the discount** and **monitor customer uptake and feedback** to understand its impact and refine the approach. • **Brief team members** on the purpose of the discount so they can **communicate its benefits to customers** and support broader community understanding.

Support

Monash University Healthy Stores Support

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Health standard 7: large-sized sugar sweetened beverages

> Stores <u>should</u> consider not refrigerating sugar-sweetened drinks (non-perishable) greater than 600 millilitres

Why this standard

Standard 7 encourages stores to consider not refrigerating sugar-sweetened (non-perishable) drinks over 600 millilitres. This is based on strong evidence from the Healthy Stores 2020 study, which showed that removing these large sugary drinks from refrigeration led to a 13.4% reduction in the sugar contribution from sugary drinks to store sales, with no negative impact on overall business performance. In contrast, stores that were unable to implement this change—often due to local competition—saw less than half the impact, with only a 5.7% reduction. Importantly, customers still had the option to purchase these drinks; they were simply no longer promoted through refrigeration, making healthier options more prominent without removing choice.

Practical Implications of the standard

This is a **"should" standard** — meaning it is **best practice**, but not a requirement for all stores to implement under the Code.

The standard is particularly effective in communities with a single store, where implementation is less likely to impact sales. However, in locations with multiple stores or takeaways, if not all retailers agree to implement the change, it can create an uneven playing field and potentially lead to lost sales for the store that does. This standard recognises that context matters, and encourages stores to adopt the strategy where feasible.

What are "sugar-sweetened non-perishable" drinks?

Non-perishable products are items that can be safely stored at room temperature and do not require refrigeration to prevent spoilage.

Sugar-sweetened drinks have sugar added during processing. This includes soft drinks, fruit drinks, flavoured waters, sports and energy drinks, and

some iced teas. Even if they contain fruit juice, if sugar has been added, they are considered sugar-sweetened.

What this could look like

This image show 1.25L sugar-sweetened soft drinks in the fridge which would not meet the standard

This image shows 1.25L sugar-sweetened soft drinks relocated to an ambient shelf in the store.

The maximum volume of the sugar-sweetened drink in the fridge is now 600ml.

Zero sugar 1.25 soft drink remains in the fridge.

Potential implementation challenges and how to work around them:

We understand there may be challenges that make it difficult to fully meet this standard right away. Below are some common concerns raised by remote stores, along with practical ideas to support implementation.

Common concerns	Ideas to Support Implementation
Customer Demand	• Ensure this strategy is discussed with Store Board members. Healthy Stores 2020 found minimal customer pushback when large sugar-sweetened drinks were removed from refrigeration, as the products were still available on shelves at room temperature. The strategy had strong support from Store Directors. • Use signage to clearly explain the reasons for the shift to customers. The Monash Healthy Stores team are able to provide examples.
Sales Impact	• Healthy Stores 2020 saw no negative impacts on gross profit. • Plan for sales swing to sugar free and smaller volume drinks and modify orders before implementing the strategy so you do not run out. The Monash Healthy Stores team is able to support you with this from the Healthy Stores 2020 experience. • Promote water or sugar-free drinks to maintain sales.
Competition with nearby standalone takeaways or stores	• In communities with more than one retailer, a coordinated, community-wide approach is recommended to ensure all stores implement the strategy together and maintain a level playing field.
Staff capacity and training	• Provide staff training and clear implementation guidance (e.g. planograms).

Support

Monash University Healthy Stores Support

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Health Support

Monash University is supporting stores to meet the Health Standards of the National Healthy Stores Code through expert nutrition advice and practical guidance. This support helps stores to:

- Understand what the Health Standards mean in practice, with examples of how they've been successfully implemented

- Learn about the evidence behind the standards and the positive changes they can bring for community health

- Monitor progress and understand how changes in the store are influencing customer purchasing patterns

Healthy Stores Portal

Monash's support is delivered through the **Healthy Stores Portal**, which will include:

- **Access to support from the Monash team**, including phone-based guidance and help connecting with local health services that will be trained by Monash to provide in-person support with implementing the Health Standards

- **Access to training materials**, videos, and visual guides to help stores implement the Code's Health Standards

- **Access to health benchmarking**

The **Healthy Stores Portal** will be available soon, with access details to be shared on this website.

What is Health Benchmarking?

Health benchmarking is a key part of the support available to stores implementing the Code. It involves a twice-yearly in-store assessment that provides practical feedback on how the store environment supports healthy food and drink purchases. Stores receive a report with suggested improvements and key indicators — such as sugar sold, fruit and vegetable sales, and the balance of healthy to unhealthy items — along with a comparison to other stores. This process is designed to be simple, supportive, and highly useful for store teams.

Community Nutrition Support

Stores participating in the Code can also choose to access **community nutrition promotion support** from **Uncle Jimmy Thumbs Up!**. Thumbs Up! works closely with communities to create in-store nutrition materials and deliver engaging education activities, such as music workshops and health-themed events for kids and families.