Australian Government
National Indigenous Australians Agency

Post Implementation Review of the Low-Cost Essentials Subsidy Scheme Recommendations Overview

Recommendation	NIAA Response	Additional Detail
1. Refine product settings through structured review Review the subsidised product range to balance affordability, health outcomes and community needs, including: • The potential to include 'cold' products and assessment of options to incorporate cold chain capability • Undertaking staged or trial-based product changes, assessing supply chain and cost impacts • Embedding stakeholder and community input into product selection.	Accept	• The NIAA will review the current product range with consideration to affordability, health outcomes and community needs. • The subsidy is limited 30 items, and any new items would replace existing. • The NIAA will consider implementation of a periodic review process to include stakeholder and community input.
2. Clarify Scheme objectives and decision framework Clarify and communicate the inter-relationship between the affordability, food security and health outcomes objectives to guide decision-making, performance measurement and stakeholder expectations, including: • Strengthening communication of objective trade-offs. • Aligning performance measures to these objectives. • Establishing structured stakeholder input (including advisory mechanisms) to inform ongoing Scheme refinement.	Accept	• The NIAA will review documentation relating to communications and performance, to clarify Scheme objectives for decision-makers, stakeholders and delivery partners. • The NIAA will consider implementation of a periodic review process to include stakeholder and community input, on top of its existing mechanisms such as the Subsidy Scheme Advisory Group.

3. Strengthen equitable participation and implementation Increase participation by independent stores through simplifying processes, including: • Implementing targeted onboarding and engagement support. • Explaining the factors around conditional participation pathways. • Coordinating with State and Territory programs to explain program interactions.	Accept	• The 2026-27 Budget committed $27.4 million to remove the 152-store cap and provide additional support for independent stores to access the Scheme and Code. • The NIAA will consider opportunities to streamline processes and alignment with jurisdictional programs to support equitable participation through the Annual Review of the National Code of Practice for Remote Store Operations.
4. Strengthen performance, risk and financial oversight Implement an integrated performance, risk and financial management framework, by: • Establishing a Scheme-wide monitoring system with timely, detailed data. • Embedding risk management into governance processes. • Strengthening reporting granularity and timeliness (including assessing the impact of the Scheme at store level). • Integrating financial, operational and compliance data to support proactive decision-making and value-for-money assessment.	Accept	• The NIAA has engaged an independent financial advisor to strengthen performance, risk and financial oversight. • The NIAA has commenced implementing a framework that covers Delivery Assurance and Performance Monitoring to support stores to meet standards, inform compliance and identify risk.
5. Consolidate funding and policy responses Ensure recent funding and policy measures are effectively implemented, monitored and evaluated, by: • Embedding forward budgeting and scenario planning.	Accept	• The NIAA will work to ensure the measures announced as part of the 2025-26 and 2026-27 Budgets are implemented, monitored and evaluated. • The NIAA has engaged an independent financial advisor to

• Strengthening analysis of cost drivers. • Implementing monitoring of new funding measures (including independent store support and cold chain investment). • Ensuring governance groups have access to timely, decision-ready financial data.		strengthen performance, risk and financial oversight. • The NIAA has commenced implementing a framework that covers Delivery Assurance and Performance Monitoring to support stores to meet standards, inform compliance and identify risk.
6. Strengthen oversight of delivery arrangements and market impacts Enhance oversight of the delivery model, by: • Establishing clearer performance expectations and measure service levels. • Improving reporting detail and timeliness. • Strengthening independent assurance (including financial review). • Monitoring market and competition impacts. • Maintaining active engagement with industry stakeholders.	Accept	• The NIAA will consider implementation of a periodic review process to include stakeholder and community input. • The NIAA has engaged an independent financial advisor to strengthen performance, risk and financial oversight. • The NIAA will continue to monitor market and competition impacts through regular and genuine engagement with industry stakeholders through mechanisms including the Remote Food Security Working Group, and the Office of Supply Chain • Resilience coordinated Supply Chain Roundtable.
7. Embed continuous improvement and independent assurance Establish structured mechanisms for continuous improvement, by: • Implementing feedback loops for unintended consequences. • Embedding periodic independent reviews of performance and governance. • Investing in data collection (including baseline data and metrics) to support	Accept	• The NIAA has commenced implementing a framework that covers Delivery Assurance and Performance Monitoring to support stores to meet standards, inform compliance and identify risk. • The NIAA will consider implementation of a periodic review process to include stakeholder and community input. • A digital platform is being progressed that will support the

on-going monitoring and evaluation. • Ensuring findings are systematically incorporated into policy and operational updates.		collection and secure housing of data.
8. Strengthen supply chain resilience Undertake an assessment of supply chain risks and mitigation options, including: • Identifying and prioritising key risks, assessing options (such as buffer stock, regional storage and freight diversification). • Building on the decision to invest in the cold products supply chain. • Strengthening contingency planning for disruption across both Scheme-specific and broader remote supply chain risks.	Accept	• The 2026-27 Budget committed $32.7 million over three years to expand the Store Efficiency and Resilience Grants, which will support up to 75 additional stores on top of support already provided to 25 stores to improve resilience, including to increase capacity to hold additional stock in community. • The NIAA will review delivery arrangements to strengthen consideration of supply chain risks and mitigation options.