

## Cost of Living in the Northern Territory

Sharp rise in Food Costs in corner stores in major centres since 2007

2017 report shows Healthy Food Basket<sup>1</sup> costs \$164 or 31% more in corner stores than NT supermarkets!

### Corner Stores Average Price



### NT Supermarkets Average Price

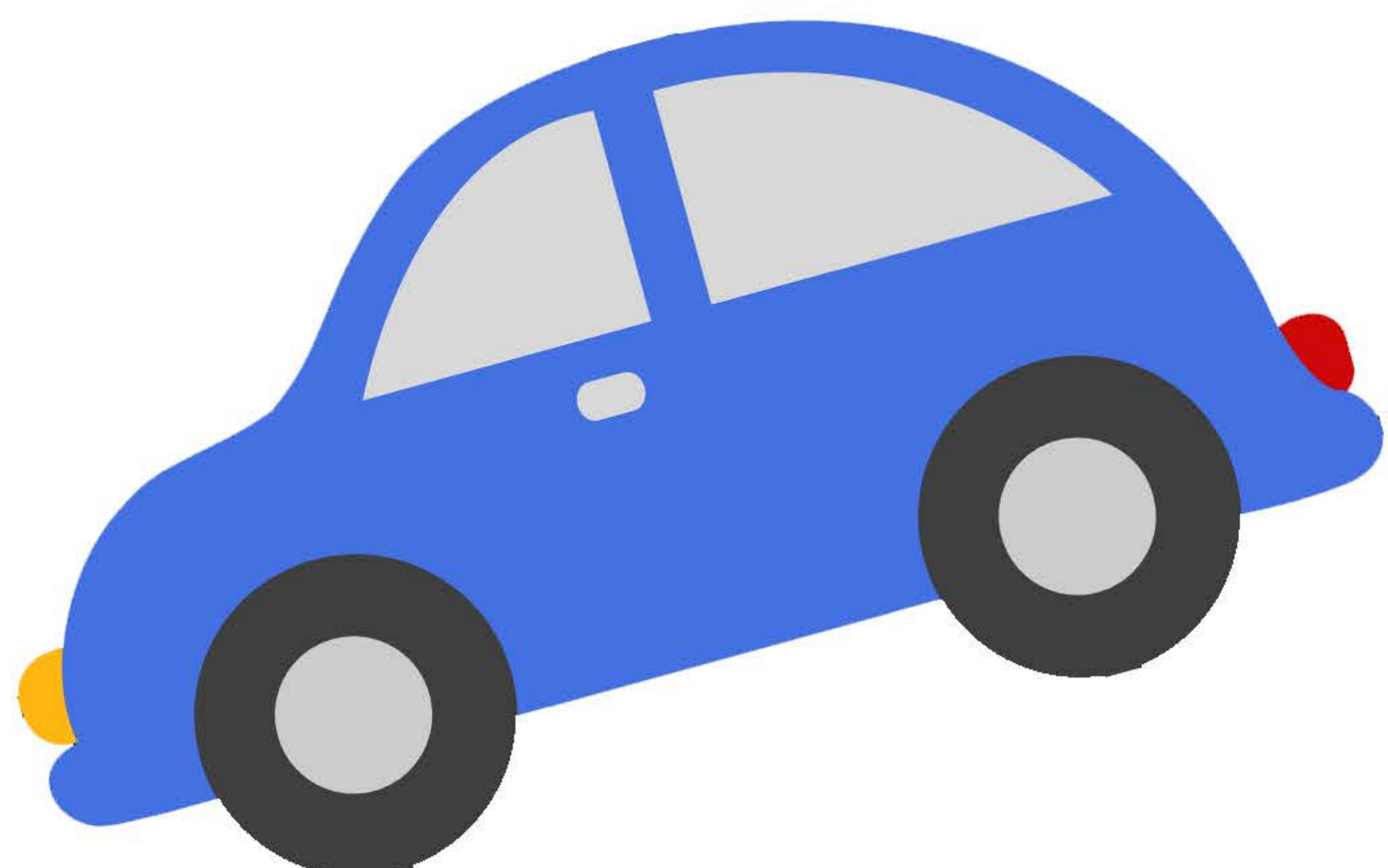


Source: Derived NT Government Market Basket Survey Full Report 2017, p.16 (released in 2019).

Many low-income households lack access to affordable transport and have limited choice but to shop at corner stores where prices are high<sup>2</sup>.

### NTCOSS is calling for:

- Addressing of gaps in regional centre public transport.
- Improving affordability of access to private vehicles by extending the Motor Vehicle Concessions (under the NT Concession Scheme) to all Centrelink Health Care Card Holders.
- Support for Food Bank Hub<sup>2</sup> establishment in other parts of the NT.



<sup>1</sup>The Healthy Food Basket is based on foods recommended in the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating.

<sup>2</sup> A Food Bank involves the collection of surplus, salvaged and donated foods from producers, manufacturers and retailers, to make available to charities and community groups.

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### Store Management and Ownership structure can influence price and quality

In stores that are owned by a store group (OSG), or managed by a store group (MSG) - e.g. Arnhem Land Progress Association (ALPA) and Outback Stores - a healthy food basket is generally cheaper (except for in the Darwin region) than the community run or privately run stores - and there is likely to be a greater variety and a better quality of fresh fruit and vegetables.

#### Variation in price of weekly cost of Healthy Food Basket, in remote stores, across regions 2017

	Katherine	Alice Springs	East Arnhem	Darwin
<b>Highest</b>	<b>\$1206</b>	<b>\$1174</b>	<b>\$862</b>	<b>\$935</b>
<b>Lowest</b>	<b>\$743</b>	<b>\$699</b>	<b>\$751</b>	<b>\$756</b>
<b>Avg. All Remote</b>	<b>\$851</b>	<b>\$870</b>	<b>\$816</b>	<b>\$843</b>
<b>Avg. MSG/OSG</b>	<b>\$777</b>	<b>\$762</b>	<b>\$818</b>	<b>\$855</b>

In 8 of the 45 stores surveyed across the Alice Springs and Katherine regions a healthy food basket cost \$1000 or more. These are predominately privately owned stores. These costs are at least **87% higher** than in an NT supermarket - and as much as **125% higher**.

*Source: Derived NT Government Market Basket Survey Full Report 2017, p.6,10 (released in 2019).*

### NTCOSS is calling for:

- Urgent action to reduce the spiralling price of healthy food in remote stores building on the Stronger Futures investment in infrastructure and licensing. Extending freight subsidies should be considered.
- Provision of capped subsidies for NT Concession Scheme Recipients to use remote private transport services to regional centres to periodically shop for bulk food items and groceries.
- An increase in the base rates of allowance payments, e.g. Newstart, by a minimum of \$75 per week and indexation of these payments to wage and price movements.