



**NAMBOUR  
COMMUNITY  
CENTRE**

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2/4/24

To whom it may concern,

Nambour Community Centre, located on the Sunshine Coast, provides a range of supports to community members, including providing food and frozen meals through food donations from organisations such as Oz Harvest. As a Centre we are currently interested in this inquiry, particularly the impact the competitive market has on consumer shopping experiences. We believe it is important to share the experience of our community members and our current major concerns with the grocery industry.

We have observed a dramatic increase in need for emergency relief and food. This is a need we are at times unable to meet due to lack of resources. From the 3<sup>rd</sup> of January to the 15<sup>th</sup> of March this year we have had 610 recorded instances where emergency relief was accessed (frozen and fresh food and formal emergency relief). Food which is a basic human right is not being met for many of our community members. Supermarkets such as Coles, Woolworths and Aldi, who have significant market power and made record high profits in a cost-of-living crisis, have a social responsibility to provide support for community members without food security. The Centre has reached out to local supermarkets for direct donations to be able to meet the rights of vulnerable community members but have been turned down.

While the major supermarkets should be held accountable in this time and food donations should be increased, we are also still concerned about the unsustainability of relying on the market to reduce food costs. As workers at the Centre, we have ongoing concerns about the dominance of neoliberal ideologies within our society. The competitive nature of the market may ensure that prices are lowered or that suppliers of the grocery stores make bigger profits, but this still neglects the most vulnerable community members within our population. Food is a human right and relying on competition to ensure consumers can afford food is ineffective and unsustainable.

If the position held is that the market is the regulator of food prices, then the market should also be responsible for the human right of food security. If the market cannot do this, then a regulated national food security program should. In the future, national food security policy should be prioritised over the market, promoting the sustainability of production, buying and selling of food.

If you have any questions or require further information please do not hesitate to contact us here at Nambour Community Centre 54414724.

Kind regards

  
**Peter Hogg**  
Community Development Officer

  
**Caroline May**  
Thriving Families Coordinator