

# Food Security in Croydon Shire

MARKET RESEARCH REPORT

GULF SAVANNAH NRM



Australian Government  
Department of Agriculture,  
Water and the Environment



Future  
Drought  
Fund



FRRR  
Foundation for Rural  
Regional Renewal



This project is supported by FRRR, through funding from the Australian Government's Future Drought Fund.

# Report purpose

Once a flourishing gold mining centre, the township of Croydon is now a small, remote community of approximately 258 people. As with many remote communities, residents suffer from high costs associated with buying fresh food. They either have to pay a premium for fruit and vegetables, or travel large distances to access household groceries from neighbouring areas, therefore adding the price of fuel to their grocery bill.

In response to this, Gulf Savannah NRM has been investigating strategies to food affordability, availability and security for the residents of Croydon. After initial community engagement, they have been supported by the Foundation for Regional and Rural Renewal (FRRR) to develop strategies to secure better, cheaper and more nutritious food.

A survey was completed by 23 residences in Croydon to find what their buying preferences are, and some of the struggles they have accessing basic food items. This accounts for over 10% of the total population.

The following report gives the findings from this project survey.



## How much?

Grocery shopping in Croydon often involves prices for standard food items such as milk, fruit, vegetables and quality meats that are over double the regular purchasing price of their eastern equivalent.

For example; 3 litres of milk in Croydon costs \$7.30, compared to a price of \$4.90 in Atherton (460km away). Because of these significant differences, many of Croydon's residents travel regularly to Atherton for basic food items.

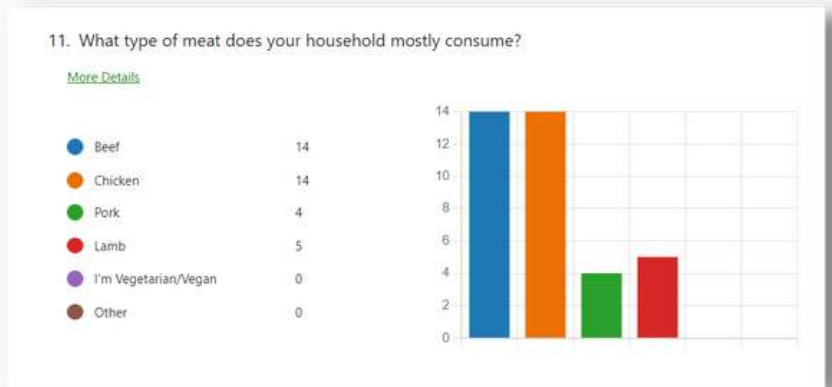


# What is in demand?

Croydon is very much a beef-orientated town; many families in the area grew up with beef being their main source of protein.

Second to beef, chicken is the most in-demand source of protein for residents.

Modern supply chains has forced local cattle stations to supply elsewhere, causing the community to pay prices on meats that have travelled unnecessary kilometres. A popular cut of meat - rump steak - costs about \$24 per kilo locally. In the larger centres, it is easy to find the same product for below \$18 per kg.



## QUESTION FROM SURVEY

***What produce is currently not affordable or accessible that you would like to be more available locally?***

The responses to the question above gives rise to the importance of food security in this region. The most common answer is "fresh fruit and veg", closely followed by "fresh sea food". Tomatoes, a popular and healthy food that is found in many household meals costs up to \$17.50 per kilo in Croydon, which is a 75% increase on most chain grocery stores. Survey results provide an understanding that the people of Croydon need fresh produce to be more easily available and affordable.

## SURVEY RESPONSES:

"Seafood. Meat."

"Seafood would be a Christmas treat only."

"Fresh fruit/vegetables, variety of meats, variety of breads and almond milks or oat milks."

"Fresh sea food, it only comes in deep freeze."

"Fresh seafood would be nice. A choice of leafy greens. A choice of ice creams."

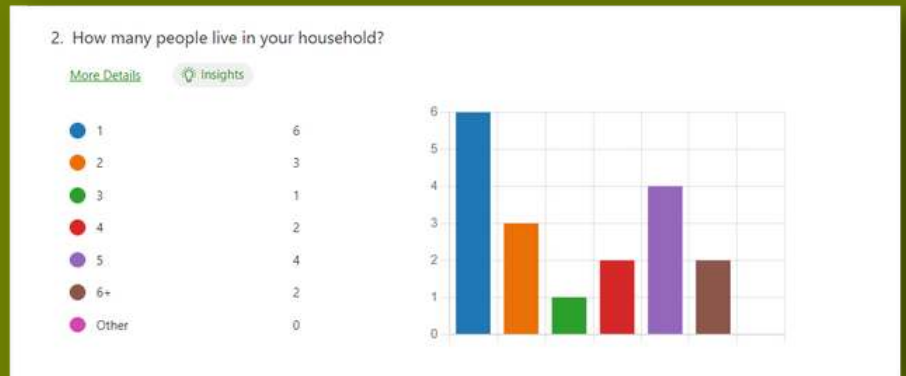
"Fresh vegetables and salad stuff."

"Fresh fruit and veg."

# Why is it so expensive?

Since Croydon general store - one of the oldest stores in Australia - sadly burnt down only a few years ago, there are now only remains two possible places to buy food from for another 150km.

However, these local businesses do not have much choice when it comes to pricing; it is very costly to get the produce delivered because of the distance they are from suppliers and limited freighting options.

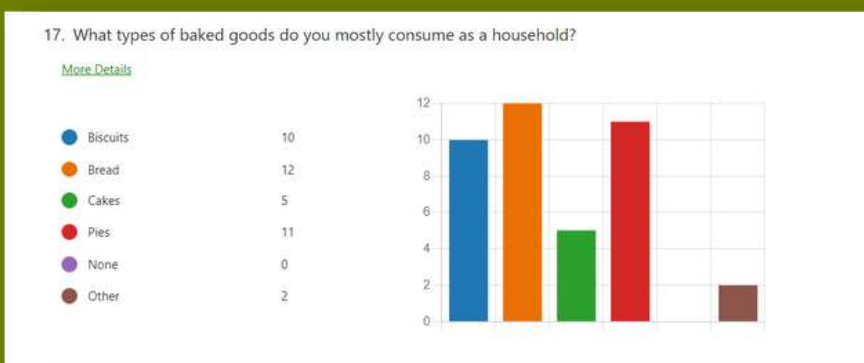


# How do they manage?

Most of the families who can, will travel to Atherton (460km distance) to buy bulk groceries monthly or fortnightly to get the goods they want at a fair price. However, many families simply make do with limited and costly grocery items that they can access locally.

# What can be done?

Many passionate community members responded with ideas they have in mind, for example: a new shop to bring competition to the area, that focuses on supplying food items to local people. Several responses refer to Food Works as an example. Alternatives to this are weekly deliveries from neighbouring businesses in the Carpentaria, Etheridge and Tablelands areas.



The neighbouring towns of Normanton (155km West) and Georgetown (148km East) have local butchers, that are supplied from cattle stations surrounding the area.

*"An organised community shop and transport so it all comes as one pallet rather than individual orders on freight."*

*"Bring prices down. More stores = competition"*

*"Resident discounts"*

*"Encourage someone to start a bakery here. Encourage micro farming and have a regular market where people could sell produce, eggs, baked goods."*

QUESTION FROM SURVEY

**How does your household reduce the cost of groceries?**

"Buy in bulk, make large meals and freeze"

"Travel east"

"Buying in bulk in Atherton."

"Travel or get delivered from coast"

"Ordering online shopping and travelling to the city"

"Don't buy food in Croydon"

"Buy out of town"

"Online ordering"

"Go without"

QUESTION FROM SURVEY

**Do you buy any locally produced goods? If yes, where from?**

"I bought some eggs someone was selling on Buy Swap Sell... Would be happy to buy local beef if I knew where to get it."

"Georgetown Butcher"

"Yes, Gallagher meats"

"Most locals have no clue where to find local produce, or say that there is none."



There are projects within the community that are continuing to tackle this problem. Hydroponics are looking promising, two currently being developed by the Tagalaka PBC Aquaponics and Bynoe CDP Aquaponics.

Previous investigations for Croydon food security strategy were carried out by Community Bred and Farmer Meets Foodie in 2021. Where Erica Hughes and Lyndal Berry dive into the four pillars of ensuring food security: access, availability, utilisation and stability.

Furthermore, this project continues within the community and supports this report and its findings.

This report can be found online here:  
[www.gulfsavannahnrm.org/news/#reports](http://www.gulfsavannahnrm.org/news/#reports)

## We can support you

The existing food industries in the Gulf and Tablelands can play their part in supporting Croydon. Croydon has a concentrated population and high demand located on the main freight route of the Gulf, which provides an opportunity for motivated businesses to fill this market niche.

If you or your business is interested in supporting the Croydon community, please don't hesitate to contact us. We are available to support you, to in turn support Croydon residents.

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