

Northern Territory Resupply Manual



Document title	Northern Territory Resupply Manual
Contact details	Department of Trade, Business and Asian Relations
Approved by	General Manager, Business and Regions
Date approved	2 July 2026
Document review	Biennial or as required
TRM number	NA

Version	Date	Author	Changes made
1.0	29 May 2026	Dr Chati Tasantab	First version

Acronyms	Full form
DTBAR	Department of Trade, Business and Asian Relations
EMU	Emergency Management Unit (DTBAR)
NIAA	National Indigenous Australians Agency
NT	Northern Territory

Definitions

Term	Definition
Unexpected Prolonged Isolation	Continuous weather-related road closures or access restrictions that exceed what is normally experienced for that location
Extraordinary Circumstances	Loss of stock or supply disruptions caused by severe weather impacts or other unexpected, uncontrollable events.
High Risk Stores	Stores in remote communities that regularly experience prolonged isolation. High-risk stores have limited freight options when both road and air access are compromised.

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1 Context

Remote stores in the Northern Territory (NT) play a critical role in supporting the health and wellbeing of their communities, often serving as the only source of food and essential goods. However, these stores face major challenges, particularly during the wet season when transport routes become inaccessible or restricted.

Most remote NT communities depend on a single road or sea access point. Key supply routes such as Port Keats Road, Buntine Highway, and Central Arnhem Road are frequently disrupted by wet season flooding and closures, which can completely isolate communities and prevent delivery of essential goods.

In response to these challenges, the NT Government developed the Essential Goods Security and Resupply Framework to establish processes to support the essential goods security of remote communities facing wet season challenges, especially outside of declared emergency situations.

1.1 Purpose of the NT Resupply Manual

The NT Resupply Manual provides guidance to eligible remote community stores on the operation of Northern Territory Government-supported resupply arrangements.

The resupply framework is designed to deliver a fair and equitable system of support for remote communities experiencing exceptional access constraints. It also reinforces the ongoing responsibility of store operators to maintain sustainable business practices and undertake appropriate wet season preparedness.

Government-supported resupply aims to ensure that isolated communities retain access to essential goods and are not disproportionately impacted by wet season access constraints.

2 Scope

This manual applies to:

- NT Government agencies with roles in freight, infrastructure, health, emergency management, transport, housing, and community services.
- Remote stores that have been formally declared (licensed) as community stores by the Chief Health Officer.
- Resupply of food and other essential items, based on the approved essential goods list.
- Non-declared emergency situations only, where there is prolonged isolation due to unforeseen, uncontrollable or extraordinary circumstances. Declared emergency situations are provided for under the Emergency Management Act 2013.

The manual outlines:

- The NT Government's commitment to supporting the resupply of essential goods to remote stores in isolated communities.
- The conditions and triggers for activating government support, including freight assistance.
- Information requirements and reporting expectations to enable timely and informed decision-making.

3 NT Government Responsibility

NT Government has a shared responsibility with remote stores to ensure the timely and efficient resupply of essential goods to remote communities during periods of isolation arising from emergencies, seasonal weather events, or infrastructure disruption.

The Department of Trade, Business and Asian Relations (DTBAR) manages the resupply framework, which includes:

- Managing approved funding mechanisms, including freight subsidy arrangements, in line with NT Government decisions.
- Ensuring funding is applied in a fair, transparent and accountable manner, including the use of tiered or targeted support where applicable.
- Maintaining robust financial controls, along with effective reporting and acquittal processes.
- Providing advice to NT Government on funding pressures, forecast demand and any need for additional financial commitment.

DTBAR will maintain clear and accessible procedures to manage the approval and delivery of essential goods resupply support. This includes:

- Establishing activation triggers and approval pathways for resupply support.
- Processing and approving resupply requests in a timely manner to minimise disruption to community access to essential goods.
- Ensuring procedures are sufficiently flexible to respond to rapidly changing conditions, including weather and transport availability.

4 At-Risk Remote Stores

For the purposes of NT Government supported resupply, stores located in communities facing prolonged isolation or other extraordinary circumstances are termed at-risk remote stores.

- Prolonged isolation is defined as continuous weather-related road closures or restrictions over and above what is normal for a location.
- Extraordinary circumstances include loss of stock due to weather-related impacts or unexpected and uncontrollable events.

5 Triggers for Government Engagement

To ensure the NT Government is well positioned to support remote stores during periods of essential goods security risk, it is recommended that stores maintain ongoing engagement with both DTBAR, and the Remote Stores Team (NT Health).

DTBAR requests stores to provide regular updates on the status of essential goods, including stock levels, delivery frequencies, and any emerging supply chain constraints through the [Critical Goods Survey](#).

Stores are advised to promptly notify the department of any freight failures or supply chain disruptions that may pose a risk to the continuity of essential goods supply to the community.

6 Essential Goods List

DTBAR has developed an Essential Goods List to guide remote stores on items approved for government-supported resupply (see Appendix A). The department will maintain and periodically review this list to support resupply decisions and determine funding eligibility, ensuring it remains current and aligned with operational needs. The department will ensure the list:

- Reflects community needs.
- Is consistent with other relevant lists (such as NT Health's Remote Store Program Schedule A and NIAA Low-Cost Essentials list) where applicable
- Is used consistently when assessing resupply requests and subsidy eligibility.
- Is based on emerging risks, supply chain constraints or lessons learned from operations.

The approved Essential Goods List will provide clarity to stores seeking resupply grants. Examples of goods considered essential to maintaining human and domestic animal life and/or health include:

- Basic food items– preferably either dried or tinned or otherwise packaged to last 'on the shelf' without special storage requirements by the isolated communities.
- Basic cleaners, disinfectants, and personal hygiene products.
- Baby foods, formula and nappies.
- Dried, or wet pet foods.

The following are not considered 'essential' goods:

- Alcoholic drinks.
- Soft drinks.
- Any tobacco products.
- Any merchandise to allow retailers to trade in anything other than those items considered essential to maintain human/animal health.

It is required that stores seeking resupply grants consider the following:

- Goods you are requesting resupply support for must strictly follow the approved essential goods list.
- Goods not included on the approved essential goods list will not be supported.

7 Essential Goods and Services Resupply Support Grant (Freight Subsidy)

The Essential Goods and Services Resupply Support Grant (Freight Subsidy) supports remote stores requiring assistance to maintain access to essential goods during disruptive events.

The grant is a co-contribution towards the cost of freighting essentials goods to remote communities during periods of prolonged isolation or extraordinary circumstances. Eligible remote stores may apply for the freight subsidy to offset transport costs. This may cover barge, air, or road freight options. Remote stores must note that the subsidy is not available for freighting of goods not listed on the Essential Goods List.

The grant is only available during the wet season and is open to remote stores that can demonstrate evidence of prolonged isolation or other qualifying extraordinary circumstances, as defined in this manual.

7.1 Alternative Road Freight Subsidy Scheme

Where standard freight vehicles are unable to access a remote community due to height or weight restrictions, alternative road transport options may be required, such as the use of higher-clearance or light weight vehicles. This may also apply when freight vehicles are required to take longer detours or alternative routes to avoid closed or impassable road sections. These alternative arrangements can result in significantly higher freight costs. In such circumstances, stores may apply for a subsidy to offset the additional costs associated with using alternative road transport options.

7.2 Alternative Freight Transport Scheme

The subsidy is available to support the resupply of essential goods using alternative transport options—such as barge or air freight—where road transport is not feasible. For barge-dependent communities, this may apply where the regular barge service is unavailable and alternative barge arrangements or air freight are required to maintain continuity of supply. Subsidy support may be provided to offset the additional costs incurred through these alternative transport arrangements.

7.3 Staging and Transfer Points

Remote stores may utilise staging or transfer points to support the freight of essential goods. These are designated transshipment locations used to transfer goods from one mode of transport to another. This may become necessary when sections of roads into a remote community are closed, impassable, or subject to weight restrictions. In such circumstances, the remote store may identify an appropriate transshipment point and arrange the required alternative transport services. Goods may then be transported to the designated point and transferred to an alternative mode of transport for the final leg of delivery.

Examples include:

- **Road closure due to flooding:** Store transports goods by road to the nearest town (e.g Katherine), where the road to the community is cut. Goods are then transferred onto an aircraft for air delivery.
- **Weight restrictions on a damaged road:** A store's freight contractor delivers goods to a bypass staging area before a restricted section of road. A lighter vehicle suitable for the weight limit is used to complete the journey.
- **Barge-to-road transfer:** Where coastal access is available, goods may be sent by barge to a regional landing point (e.g., Wadeye or Maningrida) and then moved by truck for the final leg into the community.
- **Air-to-road transfer due to remote airstrip constraints:** If an airstrip near a community can only take small aircraft, a store may charter a larger aircraft to a nearby major airport (e.g., Alice Springs or Nhulunbuy), then transfer goods to a contractor for road delivery.

7.4 Rate of Subsidy

The rate of subsidy is calculated based on the following criteria.

Subsidy amount	Extended Isolation Trigger ¹
50% of invoice amount	0 - 4 weeks
75% of invoice amount	5 - 6 weeks
100% of invoice amount	7 weeks and above

In most circumstances, the NT Government will provide partial assistance toward freight costs, with the freight subsidy functioning as a co-contribution. Consideration of full freight cost coverage will be limited to situations involving extended periods of isolation that significantly constrain resupply options.

7.5 Exclusions

The freight subsidy only applies to essential goods (life sustaining commodities) for communities with declared community stores. It does not:

- supply travellers isolated enroute.
- supply communities without declared community outlets.
- supply essential goods for commercial or business needs.
- supply non-essential stocks (in particular luxury items).
- address commercial interests or business solvency issues; and
- apply to situations where communities are isolated due to unrest.

8 Eligibility Criteria

Eligibility for the freight subsidy is determined by the following criteria:

- **Isolation Status:** The remote community in which the store operates must be experiencing a prolonged period of isolation that impacts regular freight. Stores experiencing extraordinary circumstances may also be eligible for resupply. This does not include communities covered by an emergency declaration, as resupply during emergencies is addressed under the *Emergency Management Act 2013*.
- **Evidence of Food Security Risks:** There must be clear evidence that the prolonged isolation or extraordinary circumstance is resulting in, or is likely to result in, significant food security risks for the community. This may include shortages of essential food items, or increased food prices. When an extraordinary circumstance forms the basis for request for resupply assistance, there must be evidence that the event is not covered by the store's insurance policy.
- **Community Store Declaration:** The store must be formally licensed (declared) a community store by the Chief Health Officer under the *Food Act 2004* as part of the Remote Stores Program.
- **Need for resupply support:** Available options for resupply must be expensive or logistically challenging compared to the store's usual supply arrangements.

¹ The extended isolation trigger is based on the assumption that a store's wet season stockpile is planned according to the community's typical isolation period. Therefore, subsidy funding can be activated once this period is exceeded.

- **Prior Engagement with DTBAR:** Stores must have engaged with the Critical Goods survey and provided DTBAR with situational awareness on their wet season operations.
- **Wet Season Preparedness:** Stores must have evidence of preparedness for predictable periods of weather-related isolation

9 Freight Subsidy Application Process

The freight subsidy is managed by DTBAR. Stores may express interest in the subsidy by emailing EmergencyManagement.DTBAR@nt.gov.au. Only remote stores that meet the eligibility criteria will be invited to apply.

To apply for the subsidy, stores are required to establish an organisation profile on GrantsNT and obtain a Vendor ID. While setting up an organisation profile on GrantsNT is relatively straightforward and requires stores to create their profile directly through the [GrantsNT website](#), the Vendor ID establishment process through Accounts Payable (Department of Corporate and Digital Development) can be lengthy. Early commencement of the Vendor ID process is therefore required to avoid delays in the subsidy application process. Remote stores can contact accountspayable@nt.gov.au to commence the Vendor ID creation process.

9.1 Resupply Process

- The remote store places orders for essential goods with its usual suppliers.
- The remote store obtains a freight quote or invoice from an eligible transport or logistics provider.
- The remote store submits an expression of interest to DTBAR for a freight subsidy, including the required supporting documentation.
- DTBAR assesses the expression of interest and, where eligibility criteria are met, invites the store to apply for freight subsidy.
- The store works with their supplier and transport operator to freight the goods to the remote community.
- The remote store pays the transport operator the full freight cost.
- The remote store provides evidence of delivery of the goods and invoices DTBAR to enable reimbursement of the approved subsidy amount.

9.2 Invitations to Apply

The freight subsidy operates on an invite-only basis. Eligibility is determined by DTBAR through an assessment process that identifies stores considered high risk or requiring additional support to ensure the continuity of essential goods supply. Only stores that have been formally assessed and invited by DTBAR are able to apply for this grant.

9.3 Application and Evidence Requirements

A remote store applying for the freight subsidy must complete the application through the GrantsNT website. The applicant must provide the following evidence to accompany the application.

- Company details (name and ABN)
- Contact details
- Freight quote or invoice
- Evidence of prolonged Isolation
- Priority or urgency

- Freight route (Road or barge or air)
- Name of logistics provider
- Type of goods or commodity (must be on essential goods list)

9.4 Assessment and Approval

The Emergency Management Unit (EMU) of DTBAR will assess freight subsidy applications on a first-come, first-served basis, subject to the availability of funds.

Once the EMU is satisfied that the application is complete and that the applicant (remote store) meets the eligibility criteria, the outcome of the assessment will be submitted to the General Manager, Business and Regions for consideration.

- Final approval of the grant of a freight subsidy rests with the General Manager, Business and Regions.
- Following approval, the EMU will notify the applicant in writing of the approval and calculated subsidy reimbursement amount.
- DTBAR reserves the right to refuse any application, in whole or in part, where the goods proposed for resupply are not considered essential under the Essential Goods Resupply Policy.
- A decision on a fully completed application will generally be made within two weeks of submission.
- Once approved, the grant agreement will be sent to the applicant for signing by authorised representatives who can legally bind the recipient.

9.5 After Resupply – Reporting and Record keeping

Record keeping is an important aspect of the Essential Goods Resupply Policy framework and supports our ability to make evidence based adjustments to the Policy. Thus, following the completion of a resupply activity, appropriate reporting and record keeping arrangements apply to ensure accountability, transparency and continuous improvement.

9.5.1 Reporting Requirements

- Remote stores must provide acquittal documentation within 30 business days of the completion of the resupply activity, unless otherwise approved.
- Acquittal documentation must include:
 - Freight invoices and proof of payment
 - Evidence of delivery to the community (e.g. freight manifest, delivery dockets or freight confirmations)
 - A summary of essential goods received (including pictures)

9.5.2 Departmental Oversight and Records

The EMU will:

- Verify acquittal documentation against approved subsidy amounts
- Maintain records of freight subsidies provided, including transport mode, costs and delivery timeframes
- Identify any variances or non-compliance with approved Essential Goods List

Records will be retained in accordance with NT Government record keeping and information management requirements.

9.5.3 Post-Resupply Review and Monitoring

- Post-resupply data may be used to:
 - Monitor the effectiveness of the resupply arrangements
 - Inform future planning, funding allocations and resupply decision-making
 - Identify systemic freight or access issues impacting remote communities
- Where issues are identified, DTBAR may engage with relevant agencies, or store operators to improve future resupply outcomes

9.5.4 Audit and Compliance

- Freight subsidy payments may be subject to internal audit or review
- Failure to provide required acquittal documentation may result in:
 - Recovery of funds
 - Ineligibility for future subsidy support
 - Additional conditions being applied to subsequent applications.

10 Resupply Terms and Conditions

The following terms and conditions apply to NT government supported resupply:

- The resupply support/assistance available is pre-determined by NT Government and communicated to stores.
- Resupply operations must utilize the most practical or efficient freight options.
- Where appropriate, the normal resupply arrangements for the remote store must continue, with supplies delivered via bulk orders from usual suppliers.
- Stores are responsible for placing orders with their suppliers.
- Stores are responsible for arranging resupply freight.
- Stores are responsible for paying their freight providers and then apply to NT Government for reimbursement.
- NT Government contribution to resupply cost will be paid directly to stores, with stores required to provide proof of essential goods delivery.
- NT Government resupply does not seek to supersede or replace commercial arrangements.

11 Review of the Manual

This manual will be reviewed at least every 2 years or following any significant organisational, legislative, or regulatory changes.

12 Related Documents

- Northern Territory Essential Goods Resupply Policy
- Northern Territory Essential Goods Security Policy
- Northern Territory Remote Stores Guidelines for Essential Goods Security

- Northern Territory Remote Stores Issues and Response Guide 2025
- Northern Territory Remote Stores Freight Assistance Guide
- Northern Territory Remote Stores Store Manager Wet Season Readiness Guide
- Critical Goods Survey Instruction Manual

13 Interpretation, feedback and further information

For further information or any feedback on the manual, contact Business and Regions by phone on 08 8999 7891 or by email BusinessRegions.Exec@nt.gov.au

Appendix A: Approved List of Essential Goods

Essential Goods	
Fruit (wet shelf stable packaged in juice or spring water)	Nuts (unroasted without added salt)
Fruit (Dried)	Healthy Snacks
Fruit (Fresh)	Rolled oats
Vegetables (fresh)	Artificial Sweetener
Vegetables (frozen)	Salt (Iodised)
Vegetable meals (shelf stable packaged or tinned)	Oil (Monounsaturated or Polyunsaturated)
Vegetables (shelf stable packaged or tinned)	Margarine (non-dairy blend)
Seafood (fresh or frozen)	Water (all bottle varieties)
Seafood (shelf stable packaged or tinned)	Baby food - red meat and vegetables suitable from 6 months
Lean Meat (fresh or frozen)	Baby food - red meat and vegetables suitable from 8 months
Meat or seafood meals (frozen)	Baby food - formula suitable from birth to 6 months
Meat or seafood meals (Shelf stable packaged or tinned)	Baby food - formula suitable from 6 to 12 months
Legumes (Shelf stable packaged or tinned)	Baby food - infant cereal (iron enriched)
Eggs	Baby bottles, Feeding cups
Milk (UHT or fresh)	Nappies
Powdered milk	Baby Wipes
Cheese	Continence aids
Yoghurt	Bandages (adhesive strips)
Rolled Oats	Toothbrush
Quick Instant Oats	Toothpaste with fluoride
Breakfast cereals (wheat biscuit)	Body soap
Healthy cereal (other)	Pain relief medication
Bread	Shampoo
Pasta	Conditioner
Rice	Hairbrushes or combs
Flour	Feminine hygiene products (pads and tampons)
Blankets	Antiseptic (cream, liquid, ointment, spray)
Sheets	Cookware (frypan or saucepan)
Pillows	Serving ware - bowls, plates, cups, cutlery (Ceramic or metal or melamine)
Towels	Foil
Tissues	Cling wrap
Toilet paper	Garbage bags
Broom	Gloves
Disinfectant spray	Can opener
Mop	Clothes washing (powder or liquid)
Pest control (fly spray etc)	Sponges or cloths
Mosquito repellent	Dish washing (liquid or tablets)
Dry dog food	Dry cat Food
Wet dog food	Wet cat food

Appendix B: Freight Assistance Grant Process

