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Alice grocery prices still the cheapest

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Woolworths in Alice Springs is the cheapest place to buy groceries in the Territory, while Bi-Lo at Casuarina is the cheapest in Darwin, according to NT Treasury’s Grocery Price Survey for June 2003.

The survey shows that, in the six months to June 2003, an average basket of groceries cost the least in Alice Springs ($155 – down $1.08), while Yulara again recorded the most expensive basket ($194.72), despite its price falling $8.05 from December 2002.

An average basket of groceries in Darwin cost $162, up by $1.58 over the six months to June.

Meanwhile, a grocery basket cost $162.64 in Katherine (up $2.60) and $187.52 in Nhulunbuy (down $1.91).

Treasurer Syd Stirling said the 1% rise in prices in the Darwin area could be largely attributed to a 6.1% increase in the Meat and Seafood category and a slight rise in the Fruit and Vegetable category (0.2%).

"Both categories are extremely volatile, due to a range of seasonal and other factors that can effect supply," he said.

"The results of the survey confirm that people living in towns further away from major supply centres faced higher prices, due to higher freight costs, smaller market size and lack of competition."

Mr Stirling said the survey showed that, where shoppers had a choice, it was worth shopping around for the cheapest prices.

"In Darwin for example, a basket of goods at the cheapest store, Bi-Lo Casuarina, cost $158.22, while the same basket of goods cost $166.80 at the most expensive store, Palmerston Coles – a difference of $8.58.

"In Alice Springs, a basket of groceries at Woolworths cost $152.66, while at Coles cost $157.37."

Mr Stirling said price fluctuations in the Grocery Price Survey paralleled Darwin’s Consumer Price Index for the June Quarter, which rose slightly by 0.3%.

"The increase was largely due to increases in the Alcohol and Tobacco category, with slight increases in the Food, Clothing and Footwear, and Health categories. Partially offsetting these increases were falls in Recreation and Transportation categories.

"Despite the slight increase in quarterly CPI, Darwin and Perth recorded the lowest rates of annual inflation of 2.1%, well below the national rate of 2.7%.”

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