1. In 2006, the cost of a basket of healthy food in the Torres Strait was 33.5 percent higher than in major cities and 23.2 percent higher than Townsville and Cairns. This is similar to other communities more than 2000 kilometres from Brisbane, including Indigenous communities in Cape York and the Gulf.
2. High food prices are of particular concern in the context of the Torres Strait’s poor health outcomes, with rates of dietary and lifestyle-related conditions such as coronary heart disease, diabetes and obesity significantly higher in the Torres Strait than in the general Queensland population. For example, the diabetes prevalence rate in the Torres Strait is double the Queensland rate, and the diabetes mortality rate for the Torres Strait and Northern Peninsula Area is very high.
3. The higher cost of healthy food in the Torres Strait is impacted by: the cost of establishing and operating stores in a very remote location, supply chain inefficiencies, loss and wastage, and limited transport infrastructure to support more efficient supply arrangements.
4. Cabinet endorsed a series of actions to be undertaken in the next three years to reduce the cost of healthy food and improve health outcomes in the Torres Strait, including:
* implementing strategies to improve nutrition and physical activity, with a particular focus on early life interventions and reducing levels of obesity;
* working with key suppliers to the region to assess the viability of a collaborative supply chain approach and identify potential cost savings to reduce healthy food prices.