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Bedourie Oasis Cuts Groceries Over Soaring Costs

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The Simpson Desert Oasis in Bedourie has ceased offering fresh produce and some frozen goods, as owner Robbie Dare cites unsustainable electricity, freight, and fuel costs.

The Simpson Desert Oasis, a vital roadhouse in Bedourie, Queensland, has scaled back its grocery operations, halting the sale of fresh fruit, vegetables, and select frozen goods due to escalating operational costs. Owner Robbie Dare announced the closure of the grocery section on July 20, 2025, as reported by Queensland Country Life, attributing the decision to soaring electricity, freight, and fuel expenses that have rendered the business

unsustainable. The roadhouse, bar, restaurant, and accommodation services will continue to operate, preserving some essential services for the remote town of 150 residents.

Dare explained to Queensland Country Life that the high cost of transporting goods from Brisbane, a 1200-kilometer journey taking four days, severely impacts profitability. Perishable items like strawberries, costing \$7-\$8 per punnet, often spoil shortly after arrival due to short shelf lives, leading to significant waste. “We might just have apples and oranges, things you know will last,” Dare told the outlet, highlighting the shift to more durable stock. Additionally, competition from online retailers in Townsville, offering ‘click and collect’ services, has eroded the local customer base, spreading overhead costs across fewer sales. Rising electricity bills further exacerbate the financial strain.

Diamantina Shire Mayor Francis Murray expressed concern over the closure’s impact, noting to Queensland Country Life that the loss of the grocery section is a significant blow to the community. “You could see it coming—a lot of people shop online from Townsville,” Murray said, acknowledging the economic pressures on small businesses in remote areas. The nearest alternative for groceries and fuel is now 200 kilometers away in Birdsville or Boulia, posing challenges for residents and travelers.

The Simpson Desert Oasis, rebuilt after a 2020 fire caused by a cold room motor, has long been a cornerstone of Bedourie, offering motel rooms, a caravan park, and a licensed restaurant, per its official website. However, Dare’s decision reflects broader economic challenges facing rural businesses, including high operational costs and competition from distant retailers. As Bedourie adapts, the community faces the reality of limited local access to fresh goods, underscoring the need for sustainable solutions to support remote economies.