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Industry News: Making Capital Work

Bushlight's Capital Works program will funnel \$10 million of solar infrastructure to remote Indigenous communities in the next 18 months. This is a massive financial injection into Australia's RE industry, and Bushlight's Capital Works Program Manager Paul Rodden, believes that Bushlight, with its partner contractors, is building a solid reputation for delivering high quality installations.

"Since inception, Bushlight has built industry capacity to deliver good outcomes in remote areas" says Paul, who is enjoying the challenges of a career change to Photovoltaic engineering. "Clever operators have responded to the challenge of the high standards set by Bushlight's systems, and by training up have grown their business".

Bushlight's Capital Works team are proud of the organisation's aim to exceed industry standards in the design and delivery of solar systems. Capital Works Project Manager Ben MacDougall was keen to get more hands-on when he left the Australian Greenhouse Office and believes that in solar, the individual matters, "you are not just a cog in a wheel, there is personal satisfaction in getting solar up and running".



Ken Turner in action at Yirrkala, Top End, May 2005. L2 Training course, see page 3.

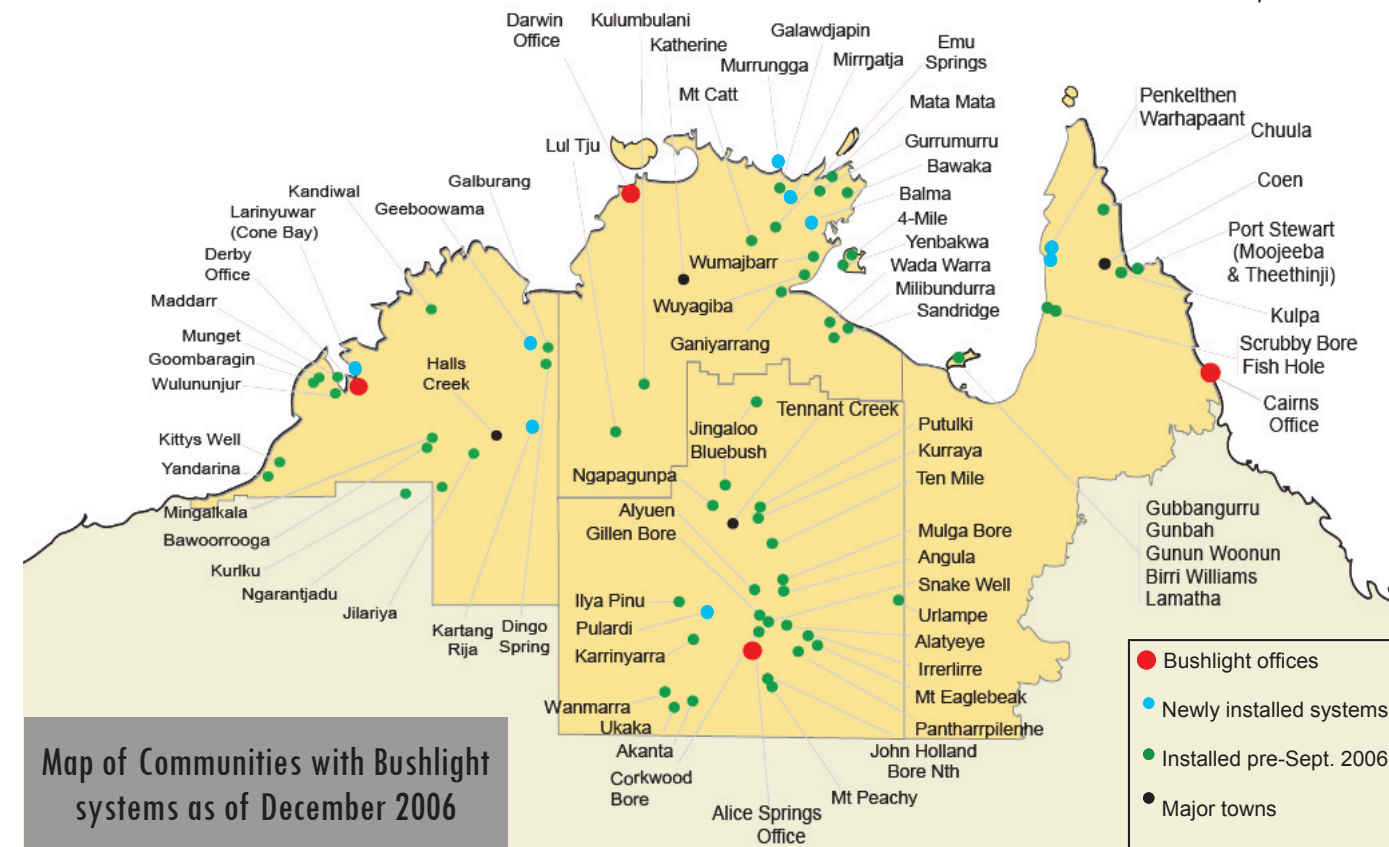


Kitty's Well, see page 2

The Capital Works team enjoys the tangible results of being there for the moment of starting up (commissioning) a community's Bushlight system. "Once testing is complete, fans, lights and fridges are all up and running and people are pretty happy" says Ben.

The Capital Works team maintains a database of active contractors who meet the requirements of Bushlight tenders. Over the next 18 months over 40 communities will be coming up for contract.

Register your interest in receiving tender updates with Paul Rodden at: CWM@bushlight.org.au



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Want to know more?
 Access a linked version of this map for community energy plans, fact sheets, photographs and more details at "What we do" on <http://www.bushlight.org.au>

BUSHLIGHT WINS 2006 NATIONAL ENGINEERING EXCELLENCE AWARD



In November, Bushlight was honoured with one of the engineering profession's highest accolades, an Engineers Australia National Engineering Excellence Award. The award recognises projects which set significant benchmarks in Australian engineering, contribute to the national economy, and impact on the quality of life of relevant communities.

Bushlight outshone 41 other engineering projects from around Australia to win.

Jim Bray, Chair of the CAT Board said, "This award is a valued recognition of the efforts of the Centre for Appropriate Technology—an Indigenous organisation which for over twenty years has sought to support Indigenous people with knowledge and access to science and technology. It is recognition by mainstream engineering industry practitioners that cutting edge innovation can emerge from people-centred approaches."



Noel Hayes (CAT board's Deputy Chair), Tig Armstrong and Grant Behrendorff (Bushlight) and Jenny Kroker (CAT) at Parliament house, Canberra with the award.

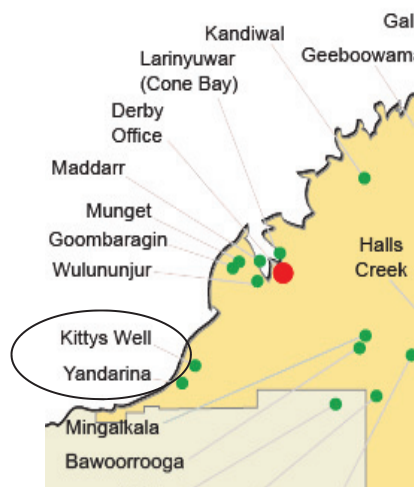
Living on country in the Karajarri region, Kimberley Bushlight helps the community of Yandarina look after their country

In September 2004, the Karajarri people were recognised as the traditional owners of their country and granted native title. Karajarri (also called Kullari) country spreads across the Great Sandy Desert and along 200km of the Indian Ocean coastline south of Broome.

Managing the Land

Residents of a number of Indigenous communities in the Kullari region have signed up as local rangers under the Karajarri Land Management Project. Set up as a collaboration between the Department of Environment and Heritage, the Kimberley Land Council and Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) last year, the ranger program creates the opportunity for the traditional owners of the Kullari region to be recognised as land managers.

The local rangers play an integral role in the management of their natural and cultural heritage, educating tourists and locals about the fragile coastal environment, closing roads to limit access when needed and installing fences to protect coastal wetlands and fragile dunes from cattle and cars.



Yandarina

Yandarina community is 220km south of Broome. In the past, the community had no reliable power and the residents spent most of their time living in the nearby settlement of Bidyadanga. All this changed in December 2006, when a **Bushlight household system** was installed, providing them with 24 hour a day power for lights, refrigeration, clothes washing, space cooling and entertainment. The Bushlight system has enabled residents to live on their country full time and look after it properly. This has meant they can get involved in the local ranger program.

Currently, four members of the community are working as rangers under the program, with both their knowledge of and proximity to the land letting them manage the natural and cultural heritage of their country as it deserves.

Residents of Yandarina are now thinking about setting up a campground for tourists, with lights and power from their Bushlight system. Plenty of bird-watching tourists pass through the area and Donald Grey Senior thinks it could be a great way of telling people about their land, showing them around it and telling them its stories.

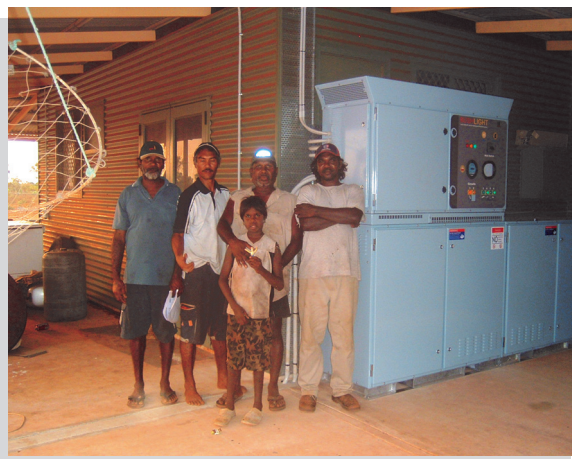


Yandarina residents, Regina Grey (far left) and Donald Grey Snr (centre) with family in front of their Bushlight system

Kitty's Well: more power to them

Traditional owners Johnny and Lenny Hopiga have been encouraging young people to come and spend time on country as part of the Yiriman Youth Project aimed at helping Indigenous youth at risk. Bushlight's power supply to the community increases the appeal of the project by making the visits more comfortable for the visitors.

It is also a popular spot for council meetings and other cultural activities, earning the envy of residents from other communities without the quiet, reliable and affordable power provided by a Bushlight system.



Kitty's Well residents with their Bushlight RE system

Mt Eaglebeak resident a crack trouble-shooter

On the ground training has many benefits for community members who are living with Bushlight systems. Students learn the skills to troubleshoot any problems that might come up and perform standard maintenance to keep their power supply working, which is important when contractors may be many miles away.



Training visit, Mornington Island, Queensland, 2005.

Mt Eaglebeak, North Camp resident and traditional owner Louie Sharber wasn't booked in to attend the maintenance training being run by Bushlight at Hart's Range, NT, in June last year, but came along anyway. Three months later, the community found itself without power, just after the local contractor had come to check the system over. Because of the training, Louie was able to identify the problem and return power to the community then and there, avoiding the need for another call to the contractor, and a lengthy wait for him to come. He also saved Arltarlpilta Community Government Council the cost of the visit.

From early 2005, Ken Turner, Bushlight's RE trainer, delivered 23 training courses, primarily for technical staff of Indigenous outstation resource agencies. By increasing the capacity of these agencies to service communities' solar power systems, this training has improved the reliability of energy supply in communities and rebuilt outstation residents' confidence in the reliability of solar power. Ken has recently left Bushlight to complete higher studies.

"Training community members was an amazingly positive and worthwhile experience" says Ken. "I felt warmly accepted and welcomed by communities and believe that what Bushlight has set out to do by enabling and training for self-sufficiency is the right way to go". Ken praised the previous team's groundwork in developing a clever and innovative training program which provides the missing link between service providers and end users. "Working for Bushlight gave me the chance to be part of a skills exchange with community members, and I always felt that I learnt just as much as I taught."



Ken (kneeling) and attendees, Fitzroy Crossing, February 2006. L2 Training course.

Building technical service capacity in remote Australia: Bushlight's training courses

One of Bushlight's key objectives is to build an integrated technical service network for remote communities with solar power systems. To achieve this aim, Bushlight has developed a three tiered training structure delivering different training programs to different audiences.

Level one and two are already underway, with Level three getting started soon.

Level one (L1) training is provided to community residents and covers system operation, managing energy use and basic maintenance and troubleshooting.

Level two (L2) training is for resource agency or essential service organisation staff. It covers all aspects of system maintenance for which they are responsible under the tripartite Community Service Agreement (CSA); a signed agreement between the community, its Resource Agency and Bushlight.

Level three (L3) training is aimed at the third level of system support: qualified service contractors. They are generally the ones who installed the system and are responsible for providing warranty and post-warranty maintenance services. These contractors are the professionals whom the resource agency can call on if they can't fix a problem themselves. L3 training will begin later in the year.



Learning about the main system control enclosure, Gurungu (Elliot), Northern Territory, October 2006.