

Program update

Bushlight is pleased to announce that arrangements have been finalised with the Australian Government's Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs for the funding of our 2011-12 work program. This funding will allow us to continue to:

- Install new, and upgrade a number of existing renewable energy systems;
- Provide maintenance and support services to over 220 communities with renewable energy systems across central and northern Australia;
- Roll out our energy efficiency program to support households to reduce their energy consumption; and
- Deliver a range of training programs to ensure renewable energy system users and the organisations that support them are equipped to operate and maintain their power systems effectively.

Reliable energy services supporting livelihoods



Residents participating in community energy planning with Bushlight staff



The 4WD tractor getting components across the Mann River in time for installation

Before we just had the old generator and it was always humbug for us, broken all the time. Now things are so good - we always have power and we can concentrate on getting our work done instead of worrying for power. This is what Serina Namarnyilk said about having a Bushlight system installed in her community of Kabulwarnamyo.

Kabulwarnamyo is a remote homeland and ranger base on the Arnhem Land Plateau, with a permanent population of about 50 people. The community is the home of the traditional custodians of the Warddeken Indigenous Protected Area which covers a massive area of stunning stone and gorge country. The area is dotted with hundreds of significant Indigenous heritage sites. For many years the traditional owners have collaborated with various organisations and scientists and it is through these relationships that the community has developed the world's first greenhouse gas abatement scheme based on fire management practices.

work into the future the community required a reliable and environmentally friendly source of energy. In 2009 Bushlight welcomed the opportunity to work with Kabulwarnamyo to support the community's long-term plans.

Various aspects of this unique community presented challenges for Bushlight in designing a renewable energy system that would meet the needs of residents.

One of the difficulties presented in the design of the energy system was access to the community itself. The Mann River is prone to floods and the access route is a 50km heavy sand track. After significant financial

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and human resources were contributed by the community to prepare the road, Bushlight's electrical contractor used 4WD tractor equipment to get the system to site.

In addition, the system design required standalone caravan poles to provide power to people living in raised tent structures with no existing power services. While domestic power requirements were quite small the community also required power for energy intensive operations such as the office which acts as the headquarters for all Warddeken operations and the workshop, which maintains everything from Land Cruisers to helicopters. Bushlight worked alongside the families and rangers in this self-reliant and hard working community to address these challenges and in June 2010 a hybrid solar system was commissioned.

Speaking of the fire management program, elder Peter Biless Nambalambarl said *"when we three old men and the whitefellas here who helped to start this have all gone, it will sustain our young people into the future as they inherit this land and make a living from it"*.

According to Carol Pamkal, Bushlight has helped in achieving this dream, *"We're lucky we've got this Bushlight system because it means we never run out of power if we use it the right way. We've had power all through the wet season"*.



Nina Brown of Bushlight with residents of Kabulwarnamyo during commissioning training

Bushlight farewells Tig Armstrong

We are saying farewell to our Group Manager Tig Armstrong who will finish up with the program in August. Tig has been with Bushlight since the program began in 2002 and has held the position of Group Manager for three years. Over the past nine years Tig has made an enormous contribution to the remote Indigenous communities in which Bushlight works, first in his capacity as Regional Manager

in Central Australia carrying out Community Energy Planning with residents and more recently providing the strategic vision and direction for Bushlight. It is with much admiration and gratitude that we wish Tig and his family a fond farewell and all the very best in the future. The Centre for Appropriate Technology is currently seeking to recruit a new Group Manager for Bushlight.



Tig carrying out community energy planning in 2004 with residents of Mulga Bore during his time as Central Australia Regional Manger

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