



## Garrak-Jarru Regional Council signs MOU

Bushlight is pleased to formally welcome Garrak-Jarru Regional Council and the Katherine ATSI Regional Office to the Project. On Friday, 11 July Garrak-Jarru Chairperson Michael



Berto, together with Bushlight Chairperson Jim Bray, officially signed the Bushlight Memorandum of Understanding. The event was celebrated with other Katherine ATSI staff.

Outstation visits are well under way in the Region and the Regional Energy Plan is currently being developed.

*Jim Bray, Bushlight Chairman, Glenda Guthrie, ATSI Katherine Regional Manager, Michael Berto, Garrak-Jarru Regional Council Chairperson*

## Community Energy Planning in the Kimberley

Regional Manager, John Schmidt has been working on energy planning with four communities. Energy planning is the process undertaken to identify and choose the best energy services option to enable the community to achieve what it wants to do and how it wants to live. The communities are Wulununjur, Djibbinj and Kitty Well in the Broome Region, and Ngarantjadu in the Derby region. Following planning, it is expected the first systems will be installed by November.

In the Kununurra region, the Munthumar Community identified a fairly high energy requirement associated with a small enterprise that they wanted to see grow. Advice has been provided on energy service options, which at this stage do not include a Bushlight RE system. The first phase of energy planning has now also been completed with Dingo Spring.

Big energy users identified in the energy planning so far are old and inefficient fridges with broken seals and ceiling fans allowed to run non-stop for 24 hours.



*Bushlight Regional Manager NWWA, John Schmidt, examines an old DC freezer with community leader, Brian Dann at Ngarantjadu*

## Regional Energy Plans

The Regional Energy Plan (REP) is a comprehensive strategic plan developed by Bushlight for and in conjunction with ATSI Regional Councils and regional ATSI offices. It is the primary document guiding the activities of the regional Bushlight teams. The REP flows from the Memorandums of Understanding, which have now been established with ten regional councils in most regions.

### **Memorandums of Understanding**

Kimberley:	Kullarri, Malarabah, Wunan
Central Australia:	Alice Springs, Central Remote, Nulla Wimila Kutju, Yapakurlangu
Top End:	Garrak-Jarru, Miwatj
North Queensland:	Gulf and West Queensland

## Regional Energy Plans cont.

REPs are being developed for each ATSiC region that Bushlight is working in. On a broad level, the REP describes the existing energy infrastructure in the region, and outlines the strategies and priorities for addressing the demands for energy within the region. The REPs are developed on the back of extensive outstation visits and discussions with other regional stakeholders (e.g. Community Councils, Resource Agencies and ATSiC Councillors and ATSiS staff).

Following strong support expressed by a number of Regional Councils for the development of the Regional Energy Plans, priority activities include establishing contact and building relationships with community organisations (e.g. community councils), resource agencies and ATSiC Councils and Field Officers. This enables Regional Managers to effectively describe the Bushlight project to stakeholders within their regions, and to respond to community interest in the project.

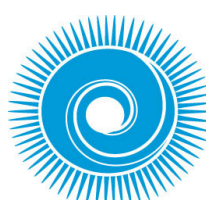
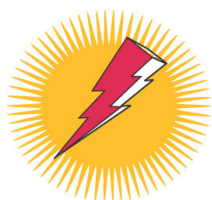
Field visits to communities and eligible outstations, allows us to build up an in-depth understanding of the existing power infrastructure in outstations and the condition of that infrastructure. The visits also assist Bushlight staff to refine the type of information gathered and the questions asked in relation to the present and desired livelihood outcomes. As a result, the Regional Managers are able to make some preliminary assumptions about what is required in order for the residents to have access to a 'reliable and sustainable' power supply in terms of energy service alternatives, system maintenance and repair requirements, and community based education and training.

Regional Energy Plans, once finalised and approved by ATSiC Regional Councils, form the basis of regional Bushlight programs. In simple terms, Regional Councils set the energy service priorities within their regions, ATSiS determines funding available to be applied against these priorities, and Bushlight implements community energy planning in accordance with these plans. A number of Community Energy Plans are currently being developed with communities in consultation with Resource Agencies. In cases where the energy services profile chosen by the community includes the installation of a Bushlight RAPs system, regional capital works programs will flow from community planning. The availability and specific channels for capital works funding vary significantly from region to region.

## Energy Budgeting at Mt Peachy

Bushlight is working on a solar system design for one of the houses at Mt Peachy, a small community 100km south of Alice Springs. We expect to install this system in November. Before the system is designed and installed there are some important planning steps to take with the community.

In August, Central Australian Bushlight staff held a workshop with Mt Peachy residents to work on an energy budget. An energy budget helps the community and Bushlight understand what the energy needs of the community are. To do the budget we used cards with words and pictures that helped us to talk about the different things we use energy for, the different types of energy and the different amounts of energy we need.



*Bushlight symbols for electricity, gas, firewood; and the symbol used to measure units of energy.*

Doing an energy budget also helps to raise awareness in the community about energy. It is part of the way that Bushlight supports communities to use energy in a way that suits their lifestyle and aspirations.

## What is an energy budget?

We use a budget to help us manage resources. The resource can be money, water, energy or even time! A budget tells us about the total amount of a resource we have, and the way that we plan to use it. A daily energy budget is the amount of energy we have available to us from our energy service every day and how we plan to use it.

Solar systems and generators make electricity. It is important to think about other types of energy too, such as gas, firewood and thermal solar. At Mt Peachy they use firewood for cooking and heating. There is plenty of firewood around so it makes sense to keep on using these rather than switching to electric heaters or cooking appliances. The Green House also has gas, and again, keeping on with the gas is better than using electric appliances for cooking. Gas, firewood, thermal solar and electricity are all part of the energy picture, and they all need to be considered in the energy budget.



*More than one type of energy is needed for cooking at Mt Peachy.*



*The final energy budget for the Green House at Mt Peachy. The blue energy icons at the bottom right of the photo show the daily system capacity required to run the fridge, lights, fans, washing machine, TV and video, computer and a Playstation. We also allowed enough for a freezer, which the household want to buy soon.*

## What happens after we do the energy budget?

Bushlight Technical Services use the daily energy budget to design a system with the right number of panels, batteries and other components to supply the electricity that a household needs. Bushlight systems are designed to help people manage their energy budgets, by including circuit and switch timers, and appropriately rated circuit breakers. Bushlight also provide information and training to communities that help them to operate their systems and manage their energy.

## Training forum attracts interest from far and wide

In August, stakeholders came from Sydney, Broome, Darwin, Perth, Alice Springs and Central Australian bush locations to a training forum conducted by Bushlight. Attendees included resource centre staff, TAFE instructors in the electrotechnology field, RAPS system installers and representatives from the National and Territory education and training bodies.

The aim of the forum was to assess the demand for and get input into the development of a nationally accredited Certificate II course in the maintenance of remote area power supply (RAPS) systems. The target audience for the course is the employees of homeland resource centres or community councils and those participating in a Community Development Employment Program (CDEP) with these organisations.

Prior to the forum and with input from Bushlight, Ian Neeson, a consultant with the Utilities and Light Manufacturing Industry Training Board, had prepared a draft of the Certificate II course. The forum addressed specific issues associated with the content, development and delivery of the Certificate II course and saw the microscope applied to the draft course.

The draft course is now under further development to incorporate the outcomes from the forum. It is expected that the course may be sufficiently developed for a pilot course to be available at the beginning of 2004 with the fully developed and approved course available by mid-2004.

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**ATSIC Media Release 11/8/2003**

**New Energy Opportunities for Gulf Communities**

Dozens of small Indigenous communities in the Gulf region will be assisted with planning for access to affordable, reliable and consistent energy after tomorrow's signing of an agreement between ATSIC and the Bushlight renewable energy project.

Chairperson of the Gulf and Western Queensland Regional Council, Steve Hirvonen, said the Memorandum of Understanding will enable Indigenous communities to develop community energy plans and access renewable energy systems specially designed for remote Indigenous communities.

"This MOU is the latest development in ATSIC's efforts to facilitate the return of dispossessed Aboriginal people to their homelands," said Mr Hirvonen. "A lack of access to reliable power sources has historically been a serious impediment to the aspirations of our people to return to their traditional country.

"All the evidence points to the fact that people live healthier and more fulfilled lives when back on country and so this agreement has indirectly very positive health potential.

The Bushlight project, funded by the Australian Greenhouse Office and ATSIC, operates as a joint venture between the Alice Springs-based Centre for Appropriate Technology (CAT) and the Australian Cooperative Research Centre for Renewable Energy.

"Bushlight is already working with seven ATSIC regional councils in Western Australia and the Northern Territory but we are the first region to sign off in Queensland and, of course, I'm very proud of that achievement.

"The project is about more than sustainable energy services, Bushlight will also provide for employment and training outcomes, and ensure greater opportunity to develop Indigenous business," said Mr Hirvonen.

"ATSIC's own energies are aimed at creating healthier environments for our people, strengthening culture by allowing people to return home and creating opportunities for enterprise development and employment.

"The Bushlight project scores on all these criteria and that's why the regional council and I are so keen to get on board.

"Bushlight's work on sustainable energy will become an important part of ATSIC's regional plan for the Gulf area and that will be a huge bonus for local Indigenous peoples", said Mr Hirvonen.

Mt Isa August 11 2003

Steve Hirvonen 0408 600 248  
Alastair Harris 0409 658 177

Signing of MOU by Chair of Gulf and West Queensland Regional Council (Chairman Steve Hirvonen), Tuesday, 12 August



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