

## Remote Indigenous Energy Program

Bushlight is one of five service providers shortlisted to contribute to the Federal Government's Remote Indigenous Energy Program (RIEP). The Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) is administering the \$40M program which will see up to 50 small remote communities benefit from the installation of new renewable energy (RE) systems. Bushlight has completed the first stage of Community Energy Planning with residents of Gawa on Elcho Island, Northern Territory, and is well on the way to completing a functional design brief for the community. This brief will lead to one of the five service providers building the RE system.



*Community Energy Planning with Gawa residents*

In addition to new installations, the RIEP covers repairs and maintenance on existing systems. In order to provide continuity of service for communities currently on the Bushlight Repair and Maintenance Program FaHCSIA has extended the contract to Bushlight to continue to deliver this service during the July – December 2013 period. The focus of this work will be on the northern regions in order to ensure service to systems ahead of the wet season.

## Chile Creek Going Strong



*Roma Puertollano and the Bushlight solar array*



*Roma with the Bushlight Energy Meter installed in one of the ablution blocks for campers*

In November 2007, the Western Australian homeland of Chile Creek was the proud recipient of the 100th Bushlight system to be installed. We took a look back at how things are going in this homeland that sits on the beautiful Dampier Peninsular.

Data shows that over the five and a half years of reliable operation the Bushlight system has provided 96% of the community's energy needs. To date this has saved Roma Puertollano and her family an estimated 100,000 litres of diesel fuel and \$210,000 (based on access to 24 hour power @ 50L/per day at the \$2.10 a litre it costs in nearby Lombadina).

The Bushlight system arrived at just the right time for Chile Creek, as they were in the midst of growing their tourism business and the whisper

quiet RE system was the perfect complement to the community's efforts to create a unique and relaxing environment for cultural tourism.

"It's silent!!" says Roma, "you don't hear the genny, and you don't have to worry that someone's looking after the genny, putting fuel and oil in it".

Roma feels the Bushlight system has been a steady partner in ensuring the homeland and business can successfully grow and develop. "We've got power, so we can have tourists, it's as simple as that". Building upon their existing enterprise which provided camping and kitchen facilities for visiting tourists, in 2010 five new safari tents were opened at the community and a further four bush bungalows were

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opened in 2011. The standalone Bushlight solar system has kept pace with the growing demands of this flourishing community and business.

Roma says "Keep up the good work Bushlight! The sun is free and every community should be making the most of it! Not everyone has the big dollars for diesel, and the solar system means you don't need it – your power rises up in the sky every morning!"

For more information about Chile Creek you can visit the community's website at [www.chilecreek.com](http://www.chilecreek.com)

## Bushlight Energy Efficiency Program Update

**B**ushlight's Energy Efficiency Program is going from strength to strength. Below is a brief update on our work on a project for the South Australia Government as well as some upcoming projects in the Northern Territory (NT).

In addition to our energy efficiency training and engagement work, Bushlight completed a small research project looking into the use of prepayment meters and energy efficiency outcomes in Indigenous communities. Visit the [Bushlight website](#) to download a copy of the report.

### Demand management in SA

In October 2012 Bushlight was contracted to deliver the Demand Management Community Education Project in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands in South Australia. After months of field work in 13 different communities, we are now in the write-up phase of the project. Prior to this project there had been little research

or data collection about power consumption in the APY Lands. This work will provide stakeholders with a better understanding of energy use practices in Anangu homes and an increased awareness among Anangu about electrical safety and the value of energy.

### Addressing energy poverty

Power prices have been the topic of much conversation in the NT recently. People living on low incomes are hit the hardest by ever increasing prices for electricity. Bushlight will soon commence work on two projects in this important area. The first project is as a consortium partner on the Low Income Energy Efficiency Program funded by the Federal Government. The Manymak Power Use! Project will help participating Yolngu households reduce the proportion of their incomes spent on power. Manymak means 'good' in Yolngu Matha the group of languages spoken by Yolngu people in the five participating communities

in north east Arnhem Land. The second project is part of broader work to be carried out by the Centre for Appropriate Technology in the Utopia homelands in Central Australia.

Bushlight's role in both projects will involve mentoring local Aboriginal energy educators to carry out household engagement and training on energy efficiency and strategies for residents to reduce their power expenses. Bushlight will also provide a unique user friendly in-home energy use display as a tool to assist householders keep track of energy use.



Marita Baker with some of the Bushlight education materials, APY Project

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