

Newsletter No. 12

September 2006

## Bushlight wins 2006 NT Engineering Excellence Award

Bushlight is very proud to have had its achievements recognised by being awarded the 2006 Northern Territory Engineering Excellence Award for Engineering for Regional Communities.

This award follows our 2005 award from the Business Council for Sustainable Energy, received in association with Robert Gulberti of Gully's Electrical Services, for Excellence in Design and Installation of a stand-alone Solar Photovoltaic System.



The Honourable Paul Henderson MLA, Grant Behrendorff, Bushlight, and Bronwyn Russell, Engineers Australia Northern Division

### Free Renewable Energy information resources at [www.bushlight.org.au](http://www.bushlight.org.au)

A range of excellent renewable energy resources developed by Bushlight are now available to everyone.

Open the Resources page to find around 50 easy to follow documents on:

- Energy options for remote locations
- Things to consider when planning energy services
- Energy planning tools and resources
- RE system maintenance checklists

... and a whole lot more.

The awards demonstrate that Bushlight is at the forefront of technical excellence in the provision of energy services to regional Indigenous communities.

## End-of-Term Review

In mid 2005 the Bushlight Steering Committee commissioned an independent end-of-term review of the project.

The Review was conducted by IT Power, an internationally recognised consulting organisation. IT Power evaluated project outcomes to date and found that Bushlight has performed very well and has achieved strong levels of satisfaction among communities.

The Review was based on reviews of process and documentation, and on field research, including community visits and other key stakeholder consultations.

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## Bushlight extended to 2008

The Bushlight Steering Committee has decided to continue funding the project for a further two years.

After considering recommendations from the end-of-term Review and receiving proposals from the Centre for Appropriate Technology, the Committee has extended Bushlight's funding and broadened our scope to include ongoing coordination of repair and maintenance of Bushlight RE systems.

Funding arrangements for 2006-08 include:

- Operational funding of \$2m per year (in line with previous budgets)
- Up to \$1m per year to increase Bushlight's focus on repairs and maintenance of all Bushlight systems and potentially in the future, eligible non-Bushlight systems ( the majority of this funding will be used to pay contractors)
- \$5m per year in capital works funding, including approximately \$2.5m from the Australian Greenhouse Office of Renewable Remote Power Generation Programme (RRPGP) funding.

The key elements of Bushlight's operations now include:

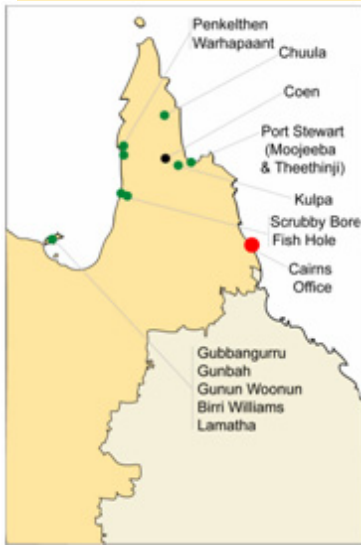
- Integrated regional energy planning
- Participative community energy planning
- Project management of renewable energy systems procurement, installation and commissioning, and repairs and maintenance. R & M is being coordinated initially for all Bushlight RE systems but, in the future, eligible non-Bushlight systems will be included in the program.

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# Light and Life in the Bush - From the Regions

## North Queensland Bushlight Communities



## North Queensland

### 12 Months on...Gunun Woonun reflects on Bushlight

Cheryl Prestipino and Sue Graham from Bushlight talked to residents at Gunun Woonun, about their Bushlight RE system as part of the 12 month community energy planning (CEP) review.

Everyone was very happy with their Bushlight system in this small community on the southern coast of Mornington Island. The families had not needed to run the generator since the installation of the Bushlight system. Having solar energy is saving them money on generator fuel, which they can now use for transport, particularly in visiting the health clinic.

The Bushlight system has also allowed Gunun Woonun families to run new appliances, such as a washing machine. Young people are particularly happy to have more opportunity for enjoying modern entertainment such as TV, DVDs and music.



Gunun Woonun Community

The families acknowledge that reliable 24 hour power has assisted them to live on their homelands, where their lifestyle is quiet and traditional. The grandchildren of the family have freedom of space and learn fishing and hunting skills, which are important to the families self sufficiency.

The young people of Gunun Woonun told Bushlight that they have a good understanding of the RE system. This has been demonstrated by the trouble free use the family has experienced with the system and their power needs.

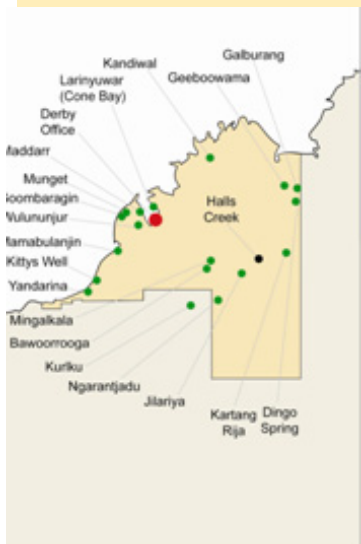


Solar arrays at Gunun Woonun

Visit our website: [www.bushlight.org.au](http://www.bushlight.org.au), follow t

## Kimberley

### Kimberley Bushlight Communities



### Bushlight Systems supporting Indigenous enterprise

In Cone Bay (or Larinyuwar) community, located on the rugged coastline North-west of Derby, Bushlight has been working closely with other service providers, such as the Centre For Appropriate Technology to generate stronger livelihoods for Indigenous people living in remote areas..

It is envisaged that the Bushlight system due for installation in October 2006, will result in an 80% fuel reduction, and this saving will be used to fuel the community boat, with direct benefits for local livelihoods.

Increased fuel for the community boat will:

- Provide regular sea transport from the community to Derby, which means the community has access to services during the wet season, especially in emergencies.
- Allow the community to continue developing their Barramundi farm enterprise.

- Enable the community to continue to collect trochus shells for sale, or to use the shell for making jewellery with their Arts and Craft project.

These livelihood outcomes have the potential to provide employment outcomes for greater economic and social development in the area.



Ernie Hunter, John Schmidt, Jon Healy, Donny Woolagoodja



Cone Bay (or Larinyuwar) community

## Top End

### Mabunji resource agency buys Bushlight systems

Mabunji Aboriginal Resource Association Inc., from Borroloola was so impressed with the quality and performance of Bushlight RE systems, that they decided to purchase and install five Bushlight systems themselves.



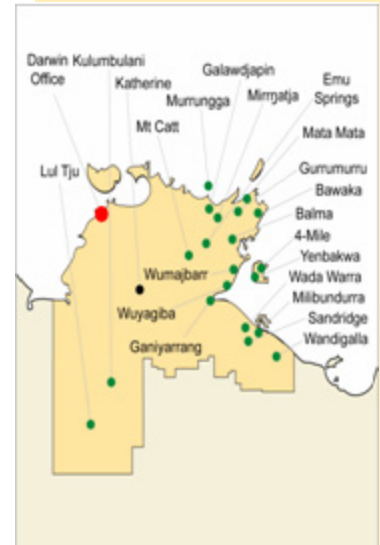
*Bushlight training session with Goolminy residents*

Pedro Schwindt, from Mabunji said “one of the greatest advantages of the Bushlight systems is actually the whole process of community consultation...user training and providing user manuals that are easy to understand...these are precisely the type of resources that Mabunji has found hard to provide”.

To fully support Mabunji, Bushlight has provided the usual RE systems operators manual and adapted other resources to provide education and training to community members after the systems are installed.

At present three of the five Bushlight systems have been installed in the Borroloola area and are working well.

### Top End Bushlight Communities



*Mabunji staff installing system at Goolminy*

he links to “*What’s New*” and “*Work in Communities*”

## Central Australia

### Reliable and affordable power: improving livelihoods at Mulga Bore

A Bushlight RE system was commissioned in Mulga Bore in November 2005, following months of consultation between Bushlight, the community, and various other stakeholders.

Mulga Bore is located about 170 km north-east of Alice Springs and has a permanent population of over 45 people. The community had previously never had an organised power supply, relying on small petrol generators that did not meet their needs.

The Bushlight system now supplies 100% of the community’s basic electrical energy requirements from solar energy. The system incorporates a diesel generator that supplies the school’s large electrical loads and acts as a back-up to the community solar power supply.

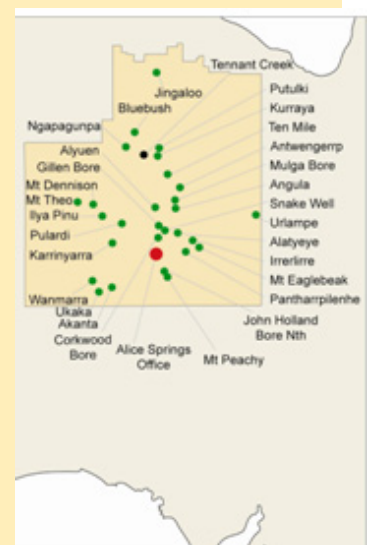
Mulga Bore residents have reported numerous benefits as a result of having a reliable and affordable power supply.

- The school is now able to focus on education without worrying about their power supply.
- The ability to use fridges and freezers to store foods allows access to fresh food and people need fewer trips to town for supplies.
- Life is more comfortable as ceiling fans keep everyone cool during the long hot summers.
- There is more entertainment choices for the whole community, such as TV and DVDs and stereos.
- The women’s centre is now equipped with a fridge and gas cooking facilities so that meals can be provided for the old people.



*Discussing the Bushlight RE system at Mulga Bore*

### Central Australian Bushlight Communities



## Contacts:

BUSHLIGHT ADMINISTRATION  
PO Box 8044  
ALICE SPRINGS NT 0871  
Phone: (08) 8951 4344  
Fax: (08) 8941 4333  
enquiries@bushlight.org.au

Central Australia  
32-38 Priest St  
PO Box 8044  
ALICE SPRINGS NT 0871  
Phone (08) 8951 4342  
Fax (08) 8951 4333  
rmcentral@bushlight.org.au

Top End  
Suite 1/20 Knuckey St  
GPO Box 2875  
DARWIN NT 0801  
Phone (08) 8981 7599  
Fax (08) 8981 7233  
rmtopend@bushlight.org.au

Kimberley WA  
3/68 Clarendon Street  
PO Box 1304  
DERBY WA 6728  
Phone (08) 9191 2585  
Fax (08) 9191 2598  
rmderby@bushlight.org.au

North Queensland  
7/330 Sheridan Street  
PO Box 6182  
CAIRNS QLD 4870  
Phone (07) 4031 0505  
Fax (07) 4031 0431  
rmcairns@bushlight.org.au

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New content - visit the  
**Resources** pages

## Bushlight End-of-Term Review

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Bushlight was originally funded jointly by the Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaCSIA) and the Australian Greenhouse Office (AGO) as a four year project scheduled from 2002 to 30 June 2006. FaCSIA commissioned an end-of-term report<sup>1</sup> prior to Bushlight's scheduled cessation.

The Review recommended Bushlight be extended a further number of years and proposed a broadening of its scope. The Review made several significant conclusions, including:

- Recipient Communities are universally satisfied with the performance of their energy systems and with their relationship with Bushlight
- An excellent Community Energy Planning process has been designed, supported by a wealth of simply presented, understandable information resources
- Communities have access to an integrated network comprising community support agencies, qualified service providers and Bushlight technical support
- System operators and other support staff have received extensive training on systems operations and basic maintenance of RE systems
- The consultant's view of the system design procedures, as well as cross-checking of Bushlight designs against an independent design assessment, found Bushlight to conform well with relevant standards and that technical documentation and design criteria are of good or excellent quality.

<sup>1</sup> Report to Department for Family and Community Services (FACS), 45207784 *Bushlight Evaluation Final Report*, 30 November 2005, IT Power (Australia). Available from <http://www.bushlight.org.au> - open *What's New* then open *Newsletters and Reports*.

## Bushlight Regional Energy Planning Process 2006-08

Now that Bushlight has been extended for another two years to 2008, Bushlight regional teams have conducted a second round of regional energy planning.

The Regional Energy Plans produced by this process document the existing energy generation infrastructure at eligible outstations or homelands in central and northern Australia and prioritise communities that will benefit most from participation in the Bushlight project.

The initial round of planning was carried out over the first 12 months of the Bushlight project back in 2002. Back then, Bushlight regional teams visited over 400 outstations and homelands to assess their eligibility for inclusion in the Bushlight program. In partnership with the now disbanded ATSIC Regional Councils and ATSIC staff, Bushlight subsequently developed 13 Regional Energy Plans which have guided Bushlight's community work over the last three years.

This current round of energy planning has again involved visiting a large number of homelands, including many that Bushlight staff have not visited for up to three years,

to assess each against Bushlight's and the Department of Family and Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaCSIA) eligibility criteria.

Bushlight regional teams have worked closely with other stakeholders to make the plans as integrated as possible with the plans of these other service providers.

We've worked closely with regional staff from FaCSIA and the Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination, State and Territory government agencies, and other program managers, and community councils and resource agencies to develop the new Regional Energy Plans.



*Energy Planning in the Kimberley Region*