

Technology, evaluation & research

CREATING A BEST PRACTICE PROCESS: RISK MANAGEMENT OF SMALL WATER SUPPLIES

CONTEXT:

Since 1994, the Centre for Appropriate Technology (CAT) has followed a risk management approach to water supplies in remote Indigenous communities. This approach was adapted especially for those communities whose water supplies fall outside the remit of government agencies or utility companies. CAT's work builds an evidence base for policy and practice and an enabling environment for shared responsibility between local water managers and service providers.

CAT has a collaborative partnership approach to improving water supplies in remote areas by creating strong partnerships with Water Quality Research Australia and its members and has worked with the National Health and Medical Research Council and the National Water Commission on water projects.

PURPOSE:

To provide the operators of small supplies with best practice information and management tools necessary to keep a small water supply safe and working, and know what to do when something goes wrong.

SCOPE:

CAT works with community members to identify hazards and risks to their water supply systems and develop plans to manage those risks at the local level. This



Bleach treatment of rainwater tanks.

may require fencing off the bore to prevent damage by feral animals such as camels and developing routine maintenance activities to check for water supply system issues such as leaking or corroded pipes. Building knowledge and skills at the local level mitigates risks to water supplies, whether through responding to system failures – pipes, pumps and taps – or water quality issues – contamination from animals or bacteria. Risk management approaches reduce the costs of keeping water supply systems functioning and safe, and reduce dependency on others to fix locally rectifiable problems.

CAT has shaped substantial work to develop appropriate processes and linkages between water service providers to improve small water supply management. Most recently, CAT created the *Community Water Planner Field Guide*; a kit designed specifically for water management planning in Australian Indigenous communities for



Understanding the water supply system.

