

ourplace

NUMBER 37

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Julia Gillard opens the DPC

Social Enterprise

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embracing technology**

**Roebourne Prison: provides
a second chance**

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Opinions expressed in Our Place are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the CAT Board or staff.

WARNING:

This magazine contains images of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. Caution should be exercised while reading this magazine, as some of these images may be of deceased persons.

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Julia Gillard opens Desert Peoples Centre



by Hujjat Nadarajah

One Footprint leads, Many to Follow Ingke Impatye Angente-le, Ingkerreke-le Apentetyeke

On May 28th, the now Prime Minister of Australia, Julia Gillard, the Northern Territory Minister for Central Australia, Karl Hampton, and the Federal Member for Lingiari, Warren Snowdon opened new facilities at the Desert Peoples Centre designed to improve vocational education and training for students in Central Australia.

The Desert Peoples Centre is a joint venture between Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education (BIITE) and the Centre for Appropriate Technology (CAT). It is a commitment to work together to develop better, innovative links between education and training and other services to achieve more positive and sustainable outcomes for Indigenous Australians, particularly residents of desert Australia.

The official opening program involved a traditional ceremony of Central Australian Aboriginal language groups who healed and prepared the campus for its future role in serving the educational and livelihood needs of Aboriginal people. Staff and several hundred guests participated in this process. Desert People from across Arrernte, Anmatyerre, Pitjantatjara, Walpiri, Luritja and Pintupi language groups shared their culture in a spirit of unity, through song, dance and story.

Ms Gillard said the construction of the Desert Peoples Centre will provide students with access to industry-standard equipment and facilities, enhancing their studies at the centre.

This campus is also a place where it will be the people who work, learn, talk and listen here that will be foundational to the future success of the Desert Peoples Centre and the livelihoods of Aboriginal people.

**For more information, email: info@dpc.edu.au or
ph: 08 8959 6100.**

Bushlight babies are born

by Tig Armstrong

Many people living in and working with remote communities understand the challenges of maintaining a reliable and affordable power supply. These challenges are even more difficult for people living in very small communities like family outstations, or for people who spend part of their time 'in town' but also want to spend time 'out bush', perhaps on their homeland.

For some people, being out bush provides a chance to do some hunting and stock up on fresh food for their family. Many others head out bush for cultural reasons, or simply to be on their country in peace and quiet. And for a growing number of people, small remote communities are an opportunity to create a livelihood, perhaps by providing accommodation and activities for tourists.

In all these cases, having access to a reliable and affordable power supply can make a big difference. It means food can be kept fresh, and lights can be used. Perhaps a small computer could be used to take bookings and print receipts? Or it may be critical to maintaining contact with the world beyond.

The problem many people face however is a limited range of power generation options. Generators are noisy, have high maintenance needs and are expensive to run. And although solar systems are often cheaper to run, they are usually much more expensive to purchase.

Bushlight has recently developed a new solar system designed specifically for many of the situations described above. Bushlight is well known for its robust design of RE systems. The 'baby Bushlight system' is small enough to be transported on a ute or in a troopie, and can be installed by almost anyone with some basic technical skills and tools. Importantly, the new system has been designed to the same high standards as larger Bushlight systems and shares some similar features, making them reliable and easy to operate.

The system comes in two sizes. The smaller version will cost about \$14,000 and is suitable for powering lighting and an Engel-type fridge, or perhaps even a small washing machine. The larger system costs about \$20,000, and will also run a larger chest freezer and energy efficient fridge.

To find out more about these new solar systems, contact Ben MacDougall at Bushlight on ph: 08 8959 6142 and see the advertisement on the back cover of this magazine.

www.bushlight.org.au

Community Planning with the Lama Lama People

BY GAVIN BASSANI, ALISON LIDDY AND CHERYL PRESTIPINO



Gavin Bassani (Centre)



Over a fifteen-year period, my people, the Lama Lama, have been weaving planning into the fabric of their decision-making at the community level. My name is Gavin Bassani and I serve as Chairman of the Lama Lama Land Trust. I would like to reflect on this process and shares how our plans tell a really good story for our project partners. Its about what we are already involved in, what we'd like the future to look like. It reflects who we are and what things are important to us.

Who are we?

My people are the Lama Lama people. We are the traditional owners for lands extending for several hundred kilometres around Princess Charlotte Bay, Cape York Peninsula in Far North Queensland.

Today, Lama Lama people have been granted freehold title over almost all their traditional lands under the Aboriginal Land Act (2009 Community Plan, LLLT). It has taken several years to achieve this. In 1982 we were granted permission to occupy a small parcel of land at Port Stewart and in 1990 an official handover occurred. More recently, in 2010, Cliff Islands south east of Port Stewart were returned to be jointly managed

as an Island National Park. The impact of this land handover presents us with opportunities for economic development, the establishment of Natural Resource and Cultural Management Programs over land & sea country and putting into place Joint-Management arrangements with the Queensland Government for three National Parks.

How we'd like our future to be?

Our Vision is to be standing on country together as one Lama Lama Community. We are strong families, we are proud of who we are. We remain confident in one another.

We see the future for the Lama

Lama People will be one of progress, continued planning and development. We now have control of all of our entire clan estate and we have to work together to develop opportunities that arise. This means all Lama Lama people have to be involved, get back to country and be proud of ourselves and our elders who have fought hard for this to be realised.

Where are we going?

In 1996-1997, a detailed community plan for Yintjingga (Port Stewart) was prepared by the Lama Lama community with the support of the Centre for Appropriate Technology (CAT). This project was an extensive planning exercise, done at a time when infrastructure and services were very limited. The plan outlined what was needed to establish a permanent community. Several years after, I can see how a lot has been achieved since our first community plan. It provided a strong foundation for much of our work, activities, infrastructure and achievements on country since 1997. We are proud of our

achievements and grateful for the hard work of all our people.

Today, the Lama Lama Land Trust represents the Lama Lama people and coordinates activities on country. Of course, independently coordinating and managing our traditional estate poses some challenges. In 2009 the Trust decided to carry out a second community planning exercise to reassess our plans for the future. Again, we asked CAT to help us facilitate planning workshops and meetings and prepare a Community Plan report.

The 2009 Lama Lama Country: Port Stewart (Yintjingga) Community Plan project aimed to assist our people to reflect on our achievements and talk about our plans for the next five years. It focused on what we would like to see happen on country and what things we have to do to make them happen.

A lot was discussed during workshops and people shared many ideas for economic development, protecting the environment, dealing with social issues, keeping culture strong, and how to help Lama Lama people be happy, strong and healthy.

One of the main things talked about was an overall vision for our people, and the values to guide us in decision-making and planning.

Acknowledgement:

CAT would like to thank the Lama Lama Land Trust for inviting us to work with them again on this 2009 Port Stewart Planning Project and many of the projects listed above. We would like to thank them for welcoming us to their country and we'd like to recognise their hard work and enthusiasm. □

ALISON LIDDY, TEAM LEADER, LAMA LAMA RANGER PROGRAM



I am a Team Leader with the Lama Lama Rangers. I applied for the Team Leader position because this work is close to my heart. As a TO for this country, I've been able to learn the mainstream side of things, education-wise, and now with an opportunity to work on country, it's my time to give back to country and community.

The Lama Lama Running Creek Nature Refuge, Working on Country Program is in its first year. The team consists of nine rangers who are supported by Balkanu Aboriginal Development Corporation to co-ordinate the program. The Rangers are of different ages, which is a highlight for me — having both older and younger people work together on country, sharing knowledge and experience. I can see how older people have experience and knowledge and the younger people want to learn. It's a good mix.

I enjoy planning different projects for the ranger team, and talking with people about ranger positions when recruiting for other team members — there is a lot of interest. I'd like our ranger team to prove to others we can do this job and be more confident in ourselves, knowing we have paid work for the next four years and are helping to establish a ranger program for Lama Lama future.

We hope to expand this work across all of our traditional estate. Through planning over the years, and involvement with CAT, the dreams and aspirations talked about by the old people are being achieved and now that they are gone, we are still strong in realizing this vision.

Social Enterprise: emerging opportunities in remote Australia

BY SUSAN DOW

Introduction

Social enterprise, which combines social purpose and business methods, has the ability to address issues such as social inclusion and environmental sustainability in a way that is not possible for government, non-government organisations or private business.

This article looks at social enterprise and how it can contribute to improving employment outcomes for Indigenous people.

What is social enterprise

A social enterprise is a business that trades to fulfil a social mission. Social enterprises have explicit social aims and socially inclusive values but also a commercial orientation so that profits can be created and used for community benefit.

Social enterprises are businesses with a double or triple bottom line. They must deliver:

- **FINANCIAL OUTCOMES** — they must make a profit;
- **SOCIAL OUTCOMES** — they are motivated by social purposes rather than financial gain, and often also;
- **ENVIRONMENTAL OUTCOMES** — many social enterprises also seek to reduce or recycle waste or promote renewable energy or energy efficiency.

Social enterprise has been called the fourth sector or for-benefit sector to distinguish it from (1) the public sector or government, (2) the private sector and (3) the charity, non-government and not-for-profit sectors (Sabeti, 2009). The idea of a new sector emerged in the 1980s



in the United Kingdom to describe enterprises which were established to achieve a specific social purpose through engaging in business activities. There are now social enterprises operating around the world and research supported by Social Traders has identified over three thousand in Australia. While the majority of social enterprises in Australia are concentrated in and around Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane, Indigenous enterprises in remote Australia which have specific social aims and do not distribute their profit to individuals also fit the definition of social enterprise.

Why social enterprise

There are three principal motivations for developing a social enterprise (Social Traders, 2010):

- **Income generation** — Many non-profit organisations see social enterprise as a way to reduce their dependence on charitable donations and grants through commercial activity.

- **Service delivery** — Social enterprise has the capacity to create or retain services needed in communities.
- **Employment** — Many people see employment or engagement of marginalised groups as the principle motivation for social enterprise. One type of social enterprise that has employment outcomes as its social purpose is an Intermediate Labour Market Model discussed below.

Intermediate Labour Market social enterprises

The Intermediate Labour Market (ILM) model of social enterprise has been shown elsewhere in Australia to support disadvantaged unemployed people to move off welfare and into employment. An ILM enterprise employs long-term unemployed people for a fixed period of time in a real business with real wages and expectations of productivity and then supports them to move into mainstream employment.

The objective of an ILM enterprise is to provide short to medium term employment in a 'real' work environment as well as providing the additional personal and skills development support to help employees transition into mainstream employment (Marshall & Macfarlane, 2000).

Enterprises established with a public or private contract for the delivery of services (office cleaning, public housing maintenance etc.) have been the least risky to set up and the most suitable to provide entry into the workforce for unskilled and inexperienced people. (Daniels, 2009)

Intermediate Labour Market model Social enterprises provide a crucial additional step in the transition from long-term unemployment to mainstream employment. They provide a supportive working environment but within a business that must deliver a product or service on time, efficiently and of acceptable quality to ensure that the costs of running the business, including salaries of employees, can be met from income from payments by customers.

Social enterprise in remote contexts

Social enterprise within Indigenous communities is not new. Many Aboriginal Corporations have set up enterprises explicitly to achieve social rather than financial goals — income for charitable purposes, service delivery or employment — but do not necessarily identify themselves as social enterprises. However, the sustainability of a social enterprise to achieve its social goals depends on continued financial viability. In remote locations with small and dispersed local markets, where the local economy is dominated by government service provision and skilled personnel are difficult to obtain and retain, financial viability is not easy to achieve.

Opportunities and challenges

Policy reform affecting remote communities has changed the rules for success for many Indigenous

Growing the Social Enterprise Sector in Desert Australia

An Initiative of the Desert Peoples Centre, Alice Springs

The Desert Peoples Centre (DPC) is partnering with the Commonwealth Bank of Australia (CBA) to explore ways of growing the social enterprise sector in Desert Australia to provide a pathway for Aboriginal people into mainstream employment.

The Desert Peoples Centre is currently undertaking business planning to support the development of a Social Enterprise Hub. The Hub would broker a range of business and human resource support services for prospective social enterprises to ensure that they can achieve both their social and financial objectives.

The DPC is also looking at avenues for social enterprise to access start-up and capital grants or loans.

Over the next few years the DPC together with other partners will be working to increase its understanding of the contribution that social enterprise can make to reducing Indigenous employment disadvantage through setting up and supporting social enterprise in the centre and by documenting local experience and lessons learnt.

corporations. For example, in the Northern Territory the Intervention, local government reform, CDEP reform, a move from community controlled housing to public housing and the NT Growth Towns policy, all since June 2007 have reduced the role of local community organisations and called into question the viability of businesses based on CDEP employment. However, this new policy environment provides both opportunities and challenges for the development and growth of social enterprises. There are opportunities for social enterprises to secure procurement contracts from government (local or State/Territory) to ensure the financial viability necessary to pursue employment related social goals.

Conclusions

The social enterprise movement in Australia, while small, is growing, as is interest in its potential for achieving social outcomes (from government, business and welfare providers). Successful social enterprises are increasingly being evaluated and the

lessons learnt documented. Social enterprise in remote Australia which draws on successful experiences of social enterprises elsewhere in Australia as well as an understanding of the specific context of remote Australia can deliver social benefits to Indigenous people, particularly employment outcomes, through a business that is financially viable.

Additional information on social enterprise can be found at www.socialtraders.com.au □

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Marshall, M and Macfarlane, R (2000) Findings: The Intermediate Labour Market;
Mestan, K and Scutella, R (2007) Investing in people: Intermediate Labour Markets as pathways to employment. Melbourne: Sabeti, H (2009); The Emerging Fourth Sector, Executive Summary. Fourth Sector Network Concept Working Group,

USEFUL RESOURCES:

Social Traders: www.socialtraders.com.au
Joseph Rowntree Foundation: www.jrf.org.uk
Brotherhood of St Laurence: www.bsl.org.au
The Aspen Institute: www.aspeninstitute.org



Saltwater People Embracing Technology

by Joshua Kitchens

A wave of technology is sweeping Australia's northern coastline.

I-Tracker, an initiative of the North Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance's (NAILSMA) Saltwater People Network, is supporting Indigenous land and sea managers to use the information they collect to improve land and sea management on local, regional, national and even international scales.

I-Tracker matches state-of-the-art 'field-tough' hand-held computers complete with built-in GPS, camera and voice recorder, the internationally acclaimed software 'CyberTracker' and a sea country survey tailored to the data collection needs of Indigenous sea rangers.

The Djelk Rangers from Maningrida NT pioneered the use of CyberTracker for saltwater country management

by Indigenous rangers in north Australia and assisted NAILSMA and collaborating partners to develop the sea country survey.

Using touch-screen hand-held computers when completing patrols on sea country, rangers answer a series of questions in the survey for each event they might want to record.

The survey can utilise local language words or icons to record

“ I-Tracker has given us the capacity to present to the Marine Safety Branch a really professional summary of where things are at. They can see that we have the capacity and tools to take on a contract of this nature. ”

biophysical information such as marine animal population information; information on threats to the marine environment, such as marine debris like ghost nets; as well as information for agencies like the Australian Quarantine Inspection Service (AQIS), who have a fee-for-service arrangement with some ranger groups to collect bio-security information.

After a patrol is completed, the hand-held computer is synced with the office computer to transfer across all the data collected in the field. There's no need for paper data sheets or manual data entry.

The rangers can then generate powerful maps, charts and spreadsheets that can be used for sea country management or reporting to Traditional Owners, funders and other stakeholders.

But I-Tracker is proving to be much more than an environmental management tool; it is helping to unlock opportunities for Indigenous land and sea managers. NAILSMA CEO Joe Morrison explains.

'The reports generated by I-Tracker articulate and show governments and others — including in the private sector — that the work Indigenous land and sea managers do is of national and international importance'.

The li-Anthawirriyarra Sea Rangers based at Borroloola on the south-west Gulf of Carpentaria coast have experienced first-hand the potential for I-Tracker to unlock opportunities.

'We're using I-Tracker for every facet of what we do. From heritage work — which includes documenting and recording rock art sites — to log coffin sites and Macassan camp sites,' explains Stephen Johnson, li-Anthawirriyarra Sea Ranger Coordinator.

The li-Anthawirriyarra Sea Rangers are currently using reports from I-Tracker to prepare a proposal for the Marine Safety Branch (NT) for the management of navigation aids on the waterways they patrol.

'I-Tracker has given us the capacity to present to the Marine Safety Branch a really professional summary of where things are at. They can see that we have the capacity and tools to take on a contract of this nature,' said Mr Johnson.

I-Tracker is a user-friendly, culturally appropriate and scientifically approved tool that complements Indigenous rangers' knowledge of sea country — supporting livelihoods for Indigenous people living on country, and supporting the management of internationally significant ecosystems for all Australians.

The I-tracker project is supported by NAILSMA, through funding from the Australian Government's Caring for our Country program. □



Making Bonya's water wireless

by Helen Salvestrin, Stephen Purvis and Robyn Grey-Gardner



Bonya Community is able to track its water use with wireless and satellite technology to better manage its water supply.

The groundwater supply of Bonya community, Northern Territory is a fragile one. It is unknown how much water is available or how long it will last due to the type of rocks and soil in the area. The flow of water from the bore is low and rainfalls that refill the groundwater source are few and far between. Various technical and government agency reports on Bonya water supply suggest that a major flood of Bonya Creek every ten years or so is needed to refill the groundwater source.

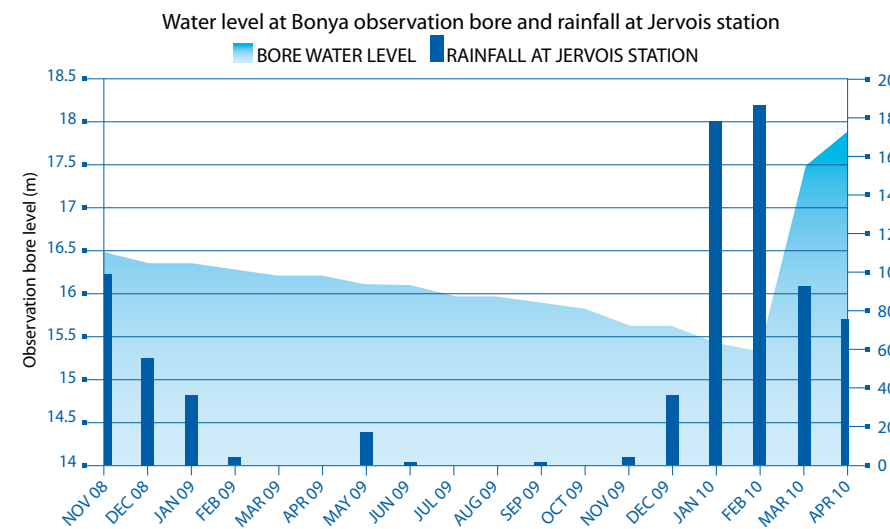
The water supply system has had

a history of bore failure caused by air blockages or when the water table dropped to 11 metres. Interestingly, as the water table drops it empties more quickly; the lower the water level the faster it depletes. Over the years all these issues have created a situation where the supply has often failed to provide enough water for the residents of Bonya.

As of November 2008, residents of Bonya are now able to see how much water they use and how this use affects their water supply using monitoring equipment supplied by Melbourne's South East Water company.

Thanks to South East Water and CAT's Integrated Technical Services group, wireless communication units have been installed on the flowmeters on Bonya's two water supply bores and a data logger has been set-up to measure the level of water at the monitoring bore. Real time data is sent from these points to a central receiver which is connected over a satellite link to South East Water. The information can be viewed either at the bore near Bonya, or over the internet. An alarm can also be set up to let people know when the water level hits a particular level. This is a tool to help people understand the characteristics of the

“ Remote monitoring allows constant readings producing a very clear picture of what is happening over time. ”



bore over time (including recharge events and seasonal water use) so they can better manage the supply.

In conjunction with data collected by the Essential Services Officer (ESO) on water use at individual properties, the data from the dataloggers and meters shows how much water is being used by the community in general, the biggest individual users and how the water use affects the groundwater table.

Since the loggers were installed in November 2008, Bonya community has used over 830,000 litres of water

which is on average 50,000 litres a month. This suggests that each person at Bonya uses about 27 litres each day. This is equal to about three bucketfuls of water. The water use was highest during the summer months (in January 2010, about 73,000 litres) and lower during the winter months (in August, at 28,500 litres).

Prior to November 2009, the water level in the monitoring bore was slowly, but consistently, falling. However, due to the rainfall through February and into March 2010 the water level increased from 15.7

metres to 17.7 metres. This data shows that the water level depends on rainfall. If good rains do not come in future and the water level in the bore drops, then residents of Bonya may need to carefully manage the water supply. Good rains are unpredictable so careful management will be an ongoing requirement.

Over the long term, the monitoring data collected from the wireless technology and the individual household water meter information can be used to inform the community about the water availability and also provide information to avoid water supply failure. Residents will be able to understand the limitations of their water supply and adjust their water use relative to how much water is available or supplement their supply so that existing supplies last longer.

John Syme of CAT further elaborates, 'My understanding is that over the years there has been anecdotal evidence, supported by manual water level measurements, that the bore water level is recharged following significant rain events (to around 18.5 metres) and that the water level drops fairly quickly (to around 16 — 17 metres) and then stabilizing with more gradual decrease in level. The remote monitoring allows constant readings to produce a very clear picture of what is happening over time.'

Wireless and satellite connected data logging technology is increasingly being used in other applications in remote communities, such as for the monitoring of energy use through Bushlight solar systems. The application of this type of technology can provide valuable evidence so that communities themselves can make informed decisions about how and why they use their water for future sustainability. □

Vagaries of Recharge:

- Recharge is sporadic.
- We don't know when recharge will next occur.
- We have to carefully observe and manage ground water.
- Management is needed to ensure a lasting supply.

Roebourne Prison: provides a second chance

BY HUJJAT NADARAJAH



When you travel 1572km north of Perth, you will reach Roebourne Prison. Here you will find 161 female and male inmates. 95% of the inmates are Aboriginal from across communities and towns in the Pilbara and Kimberley region. What is unique about this prison is that staff and prisoners are applying consultative principles within these walls, taking action and learning how to engage in a process of community-building that is rapidly reducing re-offender rates in this region. This type of outcome is setting a new standard for rehabilitation in correctional services. The International Corrections and Prisons Association recently nominated Roebourne Prison for its world's best practice list. So how does this tiny prison, in the middle of nowhere, build up such an outstanding reputation?

Laying the foundation: meet Brian Wilson

Brian Wilson is the superintendent at Roebourne Prison. Moving from Adelaide 29 years ago, he applied for a job at Roebourne as a prison officer. He has been working there ever since. He says, 'I get a certain amount of satisfaction and pride, when I see someone who can turn their life around, that is because, myself and others, have made a contribution that's made a difference'. Besides ensuring the safety and custody of the prisoners, Brian works on maintaining and creating new relationship with Indigenous organisations to further new initiatives for the prison. When he became superintendent, Brian says, 'I made a conscious decision to change the focus on the prison, to become a base for skill-training and treatment programs. In making the decision. I go out and canvass people and explain how we want to do something with the prisoners that is of value, so that they don't come back to jail.'

Prisoners re-offending and coming back to jail is a common challenge found in many prisons across the country. Brian states that, 'what we're trying to promote is there's a better life than come to jail. For some, jail can be a better prospect than what they had outside. Being in jail, you can dry out, straighten out, think more clearly and find more direction for what you want to do. In here, it's not the old days of slam the gates and lock 'em up. Everyone gets out and sits down and talks with them and listens'.

Using consultation to make decisions

A guiding principle that drives project initiatives at the prison is engaging prisoners through consultation at all levels. Brian has learned that, 'the way to engage the population of Roebourne prison is to talk with them. Staff are good at this — talking and listening, finding the problems and solving them'. As a result, he says 'It's rare for the prison to have tension. If

you sit down and communicate with people, whether they like the decision or not, they've at least had some input into the decision. They get the chance to say what they want to do, and how they want to do it. It's up to us, to see if we can work it out'. An example of this was how the staff asked prisoners what traditional foods they'd like to eat. They tallied up results and supplied the most popular traditional foods for everyone to eat.

Community building efforts

At Roebourne Prison there are a number of projects that relate to community building. Brian explains how this process begins by 'canvassing communities to see what they need, then we invest according to their needs. We won't do programs that people don't need; otherwise it'll be a fruitless exercise. This has happened over time. Years ago, the attitude was this is what the Department supplies so that's what we should give them ... now we think outside the square, and come up with innovations that make a difference'.

One of them involves trialling a partnership between Ashburton Aboriginal Corporation and the Roebourne Prison to grow crops required for bio-diesel. There are a few

specific plants that are being grown, harvested and through processing, turned into bio-diesel. The project with Roebourne involves identifying training programs and cropping sites. Ngarliyarndu Bindirri Aboriginal Corporation (NBAC) is currently in discussion with Roebourne Prison on possible sites around the town vicinity where they could establish these cropping beds.

As the prisoners are involved more in projects around the town of Roebourne, the prison becomes a more integral player in community-building. Brian observes how this involvement is really important because 'now that it's recognized that the prison is a part of the community, we have to work with the community, so that the prisoners [when released] don't go back to jail'.

Fresh fruit and veggies grown by inmates

Another project in the works is a test garden (fruit and vegetable garden bed) with an attached shelter and storage area. The idea is to set-up a garden bed on a hectare area with reticulation system for watering the plants. Roebourne TAFE has brought in a horticultural lecturer (sponsored by NBAC) to work with prisoners to





“It’s a real self-esteem boost when the prisoners can see they’ve produced something, they’re quite proud of it.”



grow things, work the reticulation and see what works and what doesn’t through trialling different types of crops. Brian observes how, ‘we test the water first with prisoners, to see if they’re interested. The big incentive is this type of work takes place outside the prison, so the allure is they can get out for the day. Also it’s a real self-esteem boost when the prisoners can see they’ve produced something, they’re quite proud of it.’ If the test-garden bed is successful, it can keep producing crops to supply to the prison kitchens. This reduces prison running costs and creates healthier nutrition habits too. A further outcome is to try and replicate this same food garden bed with other communities in the Pilbara to help them become more self sustaining.

Creating employment opportunities: the Decker site

One project that is producing considerable results is a work facilities program known as the Decker site. This was an abandoned shipping communication facility that was donated to the Roebourne CDEP program. The original premises were

completely run down, so the prisoners themselves refurbished the entire site. The focus of the site is hands-on training; those who show aptitude for higher-level types of training are progressed on to computer and heavy machinery training.

At the Decker site, there are now two fully-equipped classrooms. TAFE lecturers visit and teach on-site and train prisoners through projects such as building smoking huts, fabricated buildings and welding jobs. A series of table-tops for vanity units was built for some mining sites. As payment, the mining company donated a brand new tracker and trained prisoners how to use it.

Three prisoners were involved in a welding project in Karratha, where they got training and experience in cutting scrap metal. The manager was so impressed with their metal work skills that he’s offered to employ them as soon as they are released. Developing skills and real work experience in assisting prisoners at Roebourne to build a future beyond gaol. Recently, the Decker site has been nominated as one of two sites in Australia by the Office of the Attorney-General as one of two sites

to be evaluated for ‘Best-practice in Indigenous intervention’.

Evaluating Program Outcomes:

As a result of the skills-training sites at the prison, Brian says ‘60-70 prisoners have gone through this training and one third have not come back to gaol. This training gives them the skills to be productive once they’re released; it stops the cycle of recidivism — people come to jail, are released, re-offend and come back again. We’re trying to break this cycle.’

What is happening at Roebourne Prison may provide an insight into the future of rehabilitation programs in correctional services across Australia. Brian confirms how the NT and QLD prison systems have contacted them about Roebourne’s programs and want to replicate what they are doing, particularly with the mining industry. He says, ‘we’re doing as much as we physically can at the moment. What’s needed is more resourcing from governments and investments in Aboriginal people themselves. More follow-through care on release will help people stay out of gaol.’ □



Lindberg Fly (left), Eric Fly (2nd left), Mark Fly (centre), Russell Kickett (2nd right), Philip Fly (far right) complete DPC’s first Cert II RAPS program, run by CAT.

Ltira graduates power on

Co-authored by Nick Raymond and Hujjat Nadarajah

March 29th 2010: Five hard-working guys completed the Certificate II Remote Area Power, Supply and Maintenance Program (RAPS) delivered by the Centre for Appropriate Technology (CAT) in Alice Springs. The learners started this new course in May 2009, and completed it in December 2009. Overall, the key objectives were to provide skills and knowledge on how stand-alone solar power systems work as well as gain a basic understanding on how to maintain them.

The group of learners received training at the CAT workshop at the Desert Knowledge Precinct (Alice Springs) as well as the Tjuwanpa Resource Centre. An interesting fact about this group was they are all related; a father, two sons and two cousins completed the course.

Perhaps family-group structures, when channelled correctly, can actually help promote group learning and development within a community?

Eric Fry, from Ltira outstation near Ntaria (Hermannsberg), was one of the graduates who enrolled in the RAPS course. He did so because ‘he was interested in this kind of stuff, and wanted to learn how solar works.’ Upon graduation, Eric’s reflection on the challenges during the course was how ‘wiring was tough. You have to put it in the right way, and so was the adding up part.’ Nick Raymond, from CAT, confirms how ‘one of the challenges for the course participants was the high level of maths and numeracy required in this course, including learning algebraic concepts. However, the group demonstrated

great tenacity and got through it.’

For Eric, the future application of this course is that ‘now I can make a little solar power unit, and use it on my homeland.’ For Nick, one of the achievements of this course was the knowledge flow-on effect, ‘now these guys have greater knowledge on how to maintain these units and this knowledge will filter out to the broader community.’ At the graduation ceremony, Nick let the cat out of the bag with news that two of the five learners have already been offered employment as a direct result of this highly applicable training program. Securing employment right after course completion is a solid testament to the success of the RAPS program, and its ability to create more sustainable livelihoods in our communities. □



A way out of the sex trade for Cambodian kids

BY AILSA BREHENY



Through a simple social enterprise program initiated by Carpets for Communities, families are learning to make good choices. With income they earn from making carpets, their kids are no longer forced to beg and work trafficked streets of Poi Pet, Cambodia.

Between the borders of Thailand and Cambodia is a stretch of no mans land near the village of Poi Pet, which is essentially a casino strip, full of casinos, night clubs and strip joints. Children are sent there by their parents to beg or work and are in serious danger of being trafficked in the slave and sex trade.

David Bacon, a Flinders University development studies graduate and founder of Carpets for Communities, started visiting Poi Pet from 2004.

He recalls 'It's not uncommon for children to forego school to help support their families, either through work at home or on the border. Hundreds of children are at the border each day, pulling carts loaded with goods or people, smuggling clothes past customs officials, scaling fish in the Thai market, holding umbrellas, or begging from tourists. Engaging in such work makes these children vulnerable to human trafficking and sexual exploitation.'

David made a number of trips to Poi Pot and comments how 'on each trip I met and started to make friends with a small group of children who were begging from tourists. They triggered something inside me that

“ By sending them back to school, the child potentially has access to greater opportunities, essentially breaking the cycle of poverty for their family and their village. ”

has been waiting to go off for a long time and after I learned more about their situation I decided I wanted to do more to help them than buy them a meal once a month.'

Through a series of consultations with the kids' mothers, Carpets for Communities emerged.

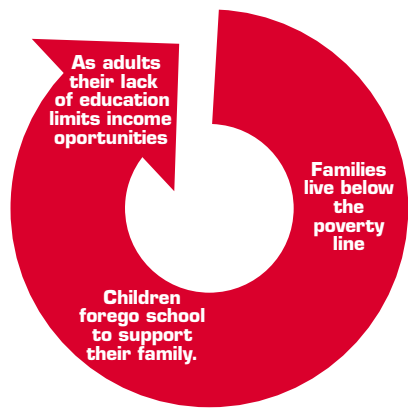
David says, 'I spent several trips trying to find out more about them and their situation, going to visit their families and having a meeting with the village women to see what could be done to help their situation'. He asked the mothers what it would take to get their children off the streets? The mothers told David that what they needed were skills and a source of income that would ensure a sustainable future for their family. He recalls, 'my main idea was to try and help the children I had befriended to have proper educations and eventually access some of the opportunities I

have had. So I simply put two and two together and decided to try and help the parents and families earn money so that the children no longer needed to beg.' By sending them back to school, the child has access to greater opportunities, essentially breaking the cycle of poverty for their family and their village.

Founded in 2004, Carpets for Communities (CFC) a non-profit organisation that aims to empower communities, particularly women and mothers, to help themselves and contribute to a sustainable future for their children. CFC is funded from a variety of sources including the Australian Government's AYAD program, International Youth Foundation, World Youth International and the Australian National Commission for UNESCO. A large aspect of funding is directly from the public, through grass-roots fundraising

NIIG is launched!

by Hujjat Nadarajah



such as selling rugs at market-stalls, movie-nights, bake-offs and direct donations through its website: www.carpetsforcommunities.org

The main aim of CFC is to provide income generation activities. Rather than provide direct seed-funding to mothers, participants are paid based on actual products produced. The mothers who sign up for the CFC program receive training and materials directly from CFC. They are trained in how to make hand hooked carpets using t-shirt cut offs and recycled hessian rice sacks. They make the carpets at home, using the materials that CFC provide, and when they are finished CFC buys the carpets directly from them, providing them with funds to send their children to school and pay for basic necessities. The carpets are packed up and shipped to Australia where CFC volunteers sell them at weekend markets in every capital city. All profits go back to the process of buying carpets and shipping costs. Another sales distribution channel is through a number of fair-trade and home ware boutiques across Australia. Here too, CFC volunteer staff contact retailers directly to: offer the product range; take orders; process these with the production-side in Cambodia; and then arrange for delivery of goods to the stores.

As the organisation is operating at the grass-roots level, marketing budgets are quite limited, so CFC has adapted a variety of low-cost marketing initiatives to drive sales. Through networking, they have appeared on the ABC, other documentary programs and been on the radio. They also advertise through other aid organisations like World Youth International. Another target audience is advertising through universities, including an AISEAC overseas internship position available with CFC in Cambodia.

As a result of these efforts, CFC has grown considerably in the last few years. It now has a board of directors and has more than 20 volunteers from all over Australia and overseas. CFC welcomes more volunteers and is currently on the hunt for volunteer product-developers and fund-raisers for their latest initiatives. Interested parties can apply via: www.carpetsforcommunities.org □

“What happens when the toilet won't flush and there's no water at the household tap? The solar bore is pumping, but water is only just trickling into the storage tank. A household water pipe splits, sending a fountain of water into the air. You have to isolate the main because you can't find the isolation valve. The valve box is hard to find. You think it's near the generator shed under a mass of grass and vegetation, though there aren't any markers to identify the water main's alignment. Eventually you find the remains of the valve box, broken by the bobcat during a rubbish clean-up. And now the phone connection has dropped out again ... ” (NIIG 2010)

A living document shaped by user experience

For those who need to deal with these kinds of infrastructural problems, the National Indigenous Infrastructure Guide (NIIG) can help. The Guide was launched in CAT on 22 February 2010 by the Hon. Jenny Macklin MP, the Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA). It had been developed over two years by the Centre for Appropriate Technology (CAT), with FaHCSIA providing the funding, editing and publication services. The National Indigenous Infrastructure Guide is available free in hard copy and can also be downloaded. The NIIG team wants your comments and suggestions for improvements, and encourages you to lodge your feedback on the website. Details for both are provided at www.icat.org.au/niig

The Guide is a living document, shaped by the experience of its users. Consultants, service providers, government and community staff with a wide cross-section of skills and experience have all been consulted in developing and testing the Guide. A guide should not remain static or else it loses its validity. To address this, CAT is planning to update the guide annually, to reflect input from users and changes in regulations, legislation, standards and the policy context.

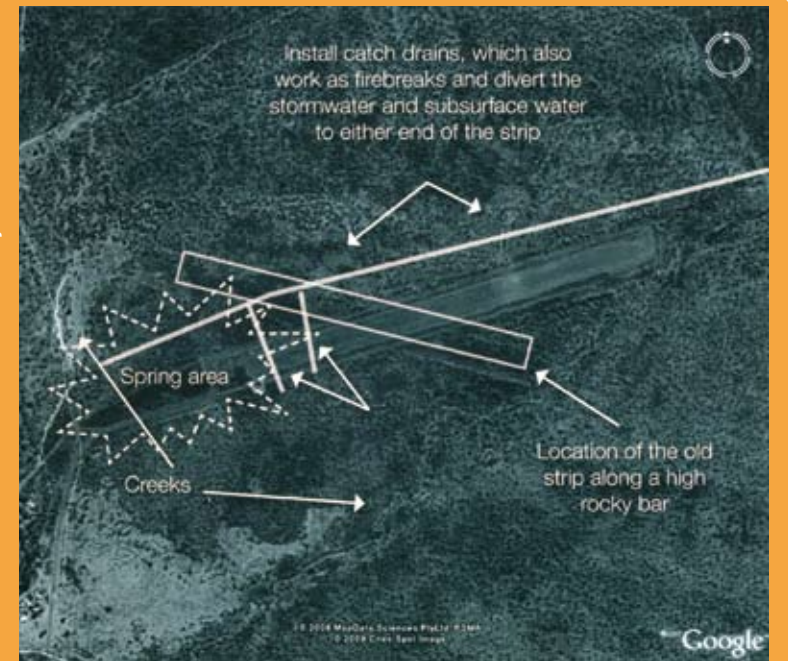


The Hon Jenny Macklin, Minister for the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs launched the National Indigenous Infrastructure Guide (NIIG) on February 22 at the Desert Peoples Centre, Alice Springs.

NIIG CASE STUDY — USING COMMUNITY CONSULTATION TO ADDRESS AIRSTRIP SEEPAGE ISSUES

The community's airstrip presented a further problem: during the wet season, only 60% of the airstrip was serviceable, limiting the types of aircraft that could use the airstrip. The airstrip had a high point in the centre that sloped to either end; this should have been good for drainage but springs appearing on the high side of the strip during the wet season caused water to flow across the airstrip (see diagram). Aircraft had eroded the gravel on the airstrip and the black soil underneath had been exposed to water, rendering the airstrip unusable. The aircraft parking area was also in the middle of a spring, and could not be used at all for four months of the year.

The engineer sat down and talked with the elders of the community. He found that the old airstrip had followed a rocky ridge perpendicular to the current airstrip. The old airstrip had been used by the Royal Flying Doctor service all year round without any threat of closure.



NIIG can be downloaded for free at: www.icat.org.au/niig

A tool for working with infrastructure in Indigenous communities

This tool is designed to provide useful material for people working with infrastructure in Indigenous communities including community managers, essential services officers, government officers, planners, service providers and contractors. It has particular application for the design, construction and maintenance of infrastructure for many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities that are isolated from mainstream utility networks such as the electricity grid.

In addition to general guidance on how to involve community members effectively with infrastructure issues, NIIG includes chapters on project management, asset management, water supply, wastewater, stormwater, waste management, (electrical) energy, telecommunications and transport. It is a companion to the National Indigenous Housing Guide, and has a similar 'look and feel'. As its name suggests, the Housing Guide concentrates on the house itself, while NIIG is concerned with issues 'beyond the front gate'.

A variety of solutions to choose from

NIIG attempts to limit the confusing jargon often found in technical manuals. It addresses issues methodically and in plain language and offers the user a variety of solutions to choose from. Rather than act as a comprehensive 'how to manual', NIIG provides the user with an awareness of the issues that need to be considered when working with various aspects of infrastructure.

Stronger emphasis on community involvement

NIIG emphasizes community involvement, especially in the maintenance and management of infrastructure. It's really important that community members have ownership and knowledge of their local infrastructure projects and work with providers that learn how to tap into the local knowledge already available in the community. If you are engaged in community infrastructure projects, reading up on community involvement in the National Indigenous Infrastructure Guide will help you understand how the community residents may already know the best position for the water tank or have an understanding of rainfall patterns in the area. This type of learning is something both provider and community can benefit from and is something NIIG encourages.

Download your copy now: future editions of NIIG will be shaped by your experience and support!

www.icat.org.au/NIIG





Introducing the 'BABY BUSHLIGHT' System

Designed for use in remote homelands, fishing shacks, pastoral workers quarters, and other seasonally occupied dwellings the new 'Baby Bushlight' solar power system can provide lights and refrigeration without needing to run a generator.

An easy to read interface shows how much power is available and the condition of the batteries.

SMALL

The smaller sized unit provides enough power to run a light and pedestal fan at night as well as a "chest fridge"* 24 hours a day.

*Bushlight is currently selling a conversion kit that turns a chest freezer into a very low energy fridge.

LARGE

The larger unit can power each of these appliances in addition to a small chest freezer. On sunny days either unit can also provide enough power for one load of washing.

INSTALLATION:

The system can be installed by the buyer without needing an electrician. The install kit includes everything required for installation other than a few common tools. It can also be taken down in less than 2 hours – if it needs to be relocated.

COSTS:

1. Small system (1.5kWh):
\$17,200 incl. GST
(minus approx. \$3000 rebate)
2. Large system (3kWh):
\$25,200 incl. GST
(minus approx. \$5000 rebate)

DELIVERY:

Approximately 2 weeks

HOW TO ORDER:

For further information contact:

Ben MacDougall ph: **08 8959 6142**
ben.macdougall@bushlight.org.au
www.bushlight.org.au

BUSHLIGHT