

## BUSHLIGHT CELEBRATES 100TH COMMUNITY MILESTONE

In July 2008 Bushlight reached the milestone of having carried out Community Energy Planning and installed renewable energy (RE) systems in 100 communities across northern and central Australia. To celebrate this achievement and to showcase our work to stakeholders a series of events were held in three of the communities in which we've worked. These events provided stakeholders with an opportunity to hear more about Bushlight and to experience first-hand an outstation community and its Bushlight system. Bushlight invited guests to three separate events; in the Top End of the Northern Territory, on Cape York in Queensland, and the Kimberley region of Western Australia. Residents of



Visitors were treated to a dance as part of the Welcome to Country performed at Kapalga

each community played a big part in the events, helping with setting up and catering, performing Welcome to Country, and engaging with visitors throughout the day.

In addition to the community residents and local traditional owners who attended each event, other guests included residents of nearby communities, staff from local service providers and resource agencies, representatives from a range of local, state and federal government agencies, state utilities and a range of other interested individuals and organisations.

Bushlight used the opportunity to describe to visitors the various capabilities which exist within the project and how they fit together to create good outcomes for communities. Staff talked about the nature of the community engagement process and how it sets Bushlight apart from many other capital works programs. Visitors heard about the Community Energy Planning process which involves a

series of meetings between Bushlight and residents to exchange information and ensure that the RE system is designed to meet the needs of communities. Community residents spoke about their lives and livelihoods on country, about what life was like in their communities prior to the installation of a Bushlight system and what changes reliable 24 hour power have brought to the community. A range of Bushlight resources were on display to give visitors a better sense of various aspects of the project. In addition, Bushlight's Group Manager Tig Armstrong talked about recent technical developments including the release of the Powercard Energy Management Unit which is used in larger communities requiring hybrid (diesel & RE) systems.

The first event was held in late October 2008 at **Kapalga Outstation**, in Kakadu National Park in the Top End of the Northern Territory. The day's proceedings opened with a Welcome to Country by community leader Sampson Henry. This was followed by a dance performed by the young men of the community. After discussions about Bushlight's work in Kapalga a tour of the Bushlight system was conducted. Feedback from attendees on the day indicated that people enjoyed the opportunity to gain a greater understanding of the technical aspects of the Bushlight systems, as well as seeing the collaboration between community residents and Bushlight staff as a reflection of the strong relationships that have been built through the Community Energy Planning process.

In early November 2008, Doris Harold and Alan Creek hosted the second event at **Kulpa Homelands**, on Cape York Peninsula. Kulpa is a vibrant outstation with residents running a growing cattle enterprise. A Bushlight



Kulpa community leader Alan Creek

system was commissioned at Kulpa in 2005 replacing a failing, under-powered hybrid (RE and diesel) system that was costing residents around \$6000 a year in fuel. Residents spoke about the Bushlight system and some of the changes they have seen in their community since the introduction of a reliable 24 hour RE supply. For example, being able to keep food fresh; the peace and quiet without the noise of the generator; and being able to stay at Kulpa through the wet season and support young people to stay on country and learn station skills.

**Chile Creek** played host to the third event in mid November 2008. This homeland is 200kms north of Broome on the Dampier Peninsula and has an active tourism enterprise hosting visitors from all over the world who are keen to see this special part of Australia. A broad range of stakeholders made it to Chile Creek to hear about Bushlight, including members from other communities on the peninsula.

Bushlight would like to give thanks to all those who attended the three events and a special thanks to the residents of each of the communities for making it all possible.



Attendees at the Chile Creek event

### BUSHLIGHT HOSTS INTERNATIONAL ENERGY COUNCIL VISIT

In late November 2008, Bushlight and CAT Projects hosted a visit of 15 guests from the Photovoltaic (PV) Power Systems Program, which forms part of the International Energy Agency (IEA). The purpose of the visit was for the visitors to learn more about PV hybrids and mini grid power systems. The guests included researchers, engineers and consulting experts in their fields from Australia, Canada, Japan, Korea, Germany, Italy, France and Austria. As part of the IEA visit to Australia, Bushlight took the guests on a technical tour of some relevant sites in Central Australia. The tour visited the



International Energy Council delegates enjoying Wartarrka National Park

225kWp Power & Water operated grid-connected solar power system at Kings Canyon resort (480kms south-west of Alice Springs). The system designer/project manager, Wolfgang Meike, conducted the tour and provided insights into its design and operation. The group also visited Ulpanyali, a remote Indigenous outstation community near Kings Canyon resort that recently had a Bushlight system installed. The tour of the Bushlight system allowed guests to gain first-hand experience of some of the unique design and installation challenges of working in remote contexts. IEA guests were interested to hear details about the community engagement process and innovative user interfaces that are included in Bushlight systems. Though the group experienced some unusually inclement weather they also found time for some bushwalking and sight-seeing.

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