

IMPROVING POWER SUPPLY IN REMOTE COMMUNITIES

The Aboriginal and Remote Communities Power Supply Project (ARCPSP) is designed to improve the quality, safety, reliability and affordability of power supplies in remote Aboriginal communities. Recognising the impact essential services have on living standards and development opportunities in remote areas, Horizon Power is working to improve power services in remote communities to a comparable standard as that provided in other regional towns.

The Project was developed by Horizon Power and the Office of Energy and the first phase, completed in December 2007, was funded by the Australian and State Governments. The second phase of the Project is now underway and is currently funded by the State Government.

Phase One

Six Aboriginal communities received new power stations and network upgrades under the first phase of the Project. The Kimberley communities involved were Beagle Bay, Warmun, Ardyaloon, Bidadanga and Djarindjin/Lombadina.

The Project scope also involved upgrading the distribution networks and installed new streetlights and pre-payment electricity meters on community housing. An experienced team from Horizon Power complemented the Project with the delivery of tailored education sessions for community members that focused on energy efficiency, safety and how to use pre-payment meters.

Phase two

The second phase of the Project is now underway and work will begin in the east Kimberley community of Kalumburu in June 2010.

A network upgrade will take place in late 2010 and pre-payment meters will also be installed so that full retail services can commence by December. A new power station, powered by solar and diesel, will be built in 2011.

State and Australian Governments are considering the best model for power and water service delivery in remote Aboriginal communities.

Power from the sun

Horizon Power is committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by incorporating renewable technology wherever possible. In a State as geographically and climatically diverse as Western Australia, there are a range of viable renewable energy sources.

The Kalumburu power station will produce 100 kilowatts of solar energy from fixed photovoltaic panels and will provide up to 25 per cent of day time energy use. Diesel generators will ensure the security of the power supply.

About the Project

The Project includes:

- Close liaison with the communities, their leadership groups and relevant stakeholders including third party land holders;
- Site selection, Heritage surveys and approvals;
- The construction of new power stations;
- An audit and upgrade of the distribution network to utility standards;
- Installation of new streetlights;
- Installation of pre-payment electricity meters on community housing;
- Inspection and upgrade of house wiring to meet regulated standards on behalf of the Department of Housing;
- Access to the full range of Horizon Power retail services;
- Electricity supply to individual customers at the uniform tariff;
- Access to Government rebates and discounts for seniors and welfare recipients;
- Education on electrical safety, what to do in the event of a power interruption, budgeting and how to use the pre-payment meter system; and
- Community-based Essential Services Officers employed by Horizon Power.

Once community members become Horizon Power customers, they are eligible to receive electricity at government-gazetted tariffs and, if eligible, can apply for electricity concessions through Centrelink. Residential customers will also be able to benefit from the installation of individual, pre-payment metering that will allow each household to budget and pay for the electricity they directly consume.

Proposed project timeline*

July 2009 onwards

Tender process and appointment of contractor for networks and internal wiring upgrade

July–September 2010

Network upgrades and meter installation in Kalumburu

November–December 2010

Retail services implemented in Kalumburu

July–September 2011

Construction of new power station in Kalumburu commences

October–December 2011

Kalumburu power station completed

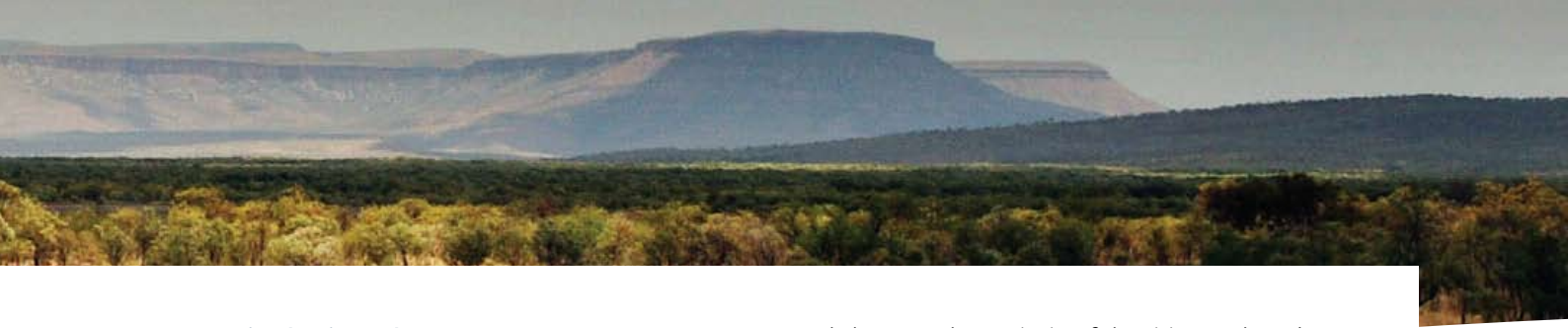
**Subject to change as project progresses*

Project facts at a glance

The project will provide:

- An improvement in power quality, reliability and safety and security through the development new power stations and distribution network upgrades;
- Reduced greenhouse gas emissions with the incorporation of renewable technology into the power station design and energy efficiency innovation for residents;
- Residents and businesses become eligible to receive electricity at government-gazetted tariffs and rebates;
- The installation of individual pre-payment meters which provide householders with direct control over their power use; and
- A large area of land in Kalumburu will be released for redevelopment as a result of the power station being moved; and
- Local employment opportunities.





Creating lasting value

With funding from the Office of Energy, Horizon Power has also been able to deliver additional benefits to residents of Aboriginal communities in Western Australia.

Home Energy Efficiency Engagement

The Home Energy Efficiency Engagement and Refit program has been carried out in 14 Aboriginal communities in regional Western Australia with funding from the Office of Energy's Hardship Energy Program (HEP).

Assessments of each residence, including appliances and structural design, have been carried out in Kalumburu with the aim of reducing the amount of energy used – to benefit the environment and the resident by helping them lower their power consumption.

Home Energy Efficiency Innovation Refits

Horizon Power will return to Kalumburu in 2010/2011, in partnership with the Department of Housing and Office of Energy, to undertake a housing refit program which will involve such innovation as installing insulation, upgrading undersized hot water systems to properly cater for the number of residents in a home; hot water pipe lagging and the installation of shade sails. Refits in each home will vary.

The funding is provided by the Office of Energy and the Project will be jointly-managed by Horizon Power and the WA Department of Housing.

Community engagement

Horizon Power delivers energy solutions to regional and remote Western Australia but is also focused on regional development and adding value to the communities we serve.

When work is carried out in any community, Horizon Power works closely with community leaders, and the community as a whole, to ensure the upgraded electricity systems meet the needs of the community and that Horizon Power's activities are in accordance with the communities' expectations.

While the works are taking place, the Education Officer will visit each community to explain the new electricity system, how it works, the use of pre-payment meters, how to budget for electricity and the benefits of being energy efficient with appliance use and purchase choices. Information is also collected from each household to determine eligibility for electricity concessions.

Building local skills

The isolation and size of some remote communities serviced by Horizon Power presents challenges in regard to maintenance and responding to supply issues.

To help ensure the continuity of electricity supply, and to avoid delays in waiting for a technician to drive long distances, Horizon Power has developed an innovative training program that equips local people with the skills to operate and maintain the local power station and network facilities.

Where the requirement is identified, local people in some remote communities are employed by Horizon Power as Essential Services Officers. They receive specifically designed certified training at Horizon Power's training facility in Broome. Essential Services Officers also have the opportunity to expand their training to become fully qualified linesmen.

Developed to support the ARCPSP Project, the training program commenced in July 2008.

An Essential Services Officer will be recruited for Kalumburu.

Sensitive to culture and the environment

Horizon Power ensures that access permissions and cultural sensitivities are appropriately managed. We ensure that we comply with Aboriginal Heritage and Native Title processes and all relevant environmental and water protection regulations.



Keeping communities informed

Horizon Power will keep the local community and other stakeholders informed about this Project via community briefings and Project newsletters.

If you would like to register for email updates on the Project, please send an email to: XXXXXX

Questions and answers

Why is the Project taking place?

The Western Australian Government understands that inadequate essential services, such as power and water, is a key contributor to poor health and wellbeing in remote and Aboriginal communities. The Project will replace ageing and poorly located power stations with modern, efficient and more environmentally-friendly power stations. The distribution networks and house wiring will be upgraded to improve the reliability and safety of power supplies, and where possible be undergrounded.

Ultimately Horizon Power will work with the communities to ensure a safe, reliable, high quality, cost-effective and sustainable energy solution meets their long-term needs.

Where will the power stations be located?

A new power station will be built at Kalumburu adjacent to the airstrip. The site was chosen because it is adjacent to the main access road, away from the community, and is above the 100 year flood level.

Further information

If you would like further information about the Aboriginal and Remote Communities Power Supply Project please contact:

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About Horizon Power

Horizon Power is an electricity generator, network operator and retailer that is sharply focussed and dedicated to servicing the needs of customers in regional Western Australia; from remote and isolated communities to some of the biggest resource companies in Australia. Horizon Power services an area of 2.3 million square kilometres and continually works towards being a valued member of Western Australian communities. We believe in the importance of community and building social and environmental value in each community we work in. For more information on Horizon Power, visit www.horizonpower.com.au

“While sound planning, engineering and construction were significant components of the success of this program (ARCPSP), the major factor of its success was the open and trusting engagement with Traditional Owners and community leaders. This created a positive environment in which relationships could be forged, mistakes could be forgiven and success could be shared.”

Brendan Hammond
Chairman

“Please pass on my thanks to the Horizon Power staff for all their assistance throughout the electricity changeover. Everyone has been friendly and has helped make the transition as painless as possible. Sacred Heart School appreciate the extra support and assistance all your staff has shown.”

John Rose
*Principal Sacred Heart School
Beagle Bay*