

# The Town Reserves Regularisation Project

KIMBERLEY REGION

NEWSLETTER 1 | APRIL 2005

*This newsletter is to inform you of the Town Reserves Regularisation Project in the Kimberley region. A project to regularise the power supply arrangements in Indigenous Town Reserve communities.*

## Background

The Department of Housing and Works has requested Western Power to assume responsibility for the distribution and retail of electricity in some Indigenous Town Reserve communities initially in the Kimberley region. These communities are located near to regional towns and already receive supply from Western Power's existing power station in the towns.

The Department of Housing and Works will be managing and funding the project. Essentially the project aims to deliver services to these communities on a similar basis to mainstream regional towns.

Upgrading the power supply arrangements is only one component

of the overall regularisation project. Other services in the communities such as water and roads will also be regularised over time.

## The Communities

The following fourteen communities in the Kimberley have been prioritised by the Department of Housing and Works for inclusion in the first round of the regularisation project:

- Mallingbar & Nillir Irbanjin (Broome)
- Karmulinunga, Burununga, Djimund Nugda and Budula (Derby)
- Kurnangki & Mindi Rardi (Fitzroy Crossing)

- Nicholson Camp & Red Hill (Lundja) (Halls Creek)
- Mirima & Nulleywah (Kununurra)
- Guda Guda & Warrayu (Wyndham)

The project will progress to other Town Reserve communities over the next two-three years.

## Current Situation

Western Power currently supplies power to most of the communities through a single metering point for each community (ie. a bulk meter). Electricity is retailed at the uniform tariff and the community receives one electricity bill. Payment of the account is usually through a "chuck-in" process which makes paying the bill a whole of community responsibility.

The existing distribution network (poles and wires) in the communities are currently community or Aboriginal Lands Trust owned. The community is responsible for any operation, repair and maintenance of this infrastructure.

## Project Benefits

As an outcome of the regularisation project:

- The distribution network will be upgraded to Western Power standards. Western Power will



Part of the community owned distribution network in Guda Guda.



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then take ownership of the network and be responsible for ongoing operation, repair and maintenance. This will alleviate the community of this responsibility. As these communities are small in size, the ongoing cost of this work will be absorbed into Western Power's normal maintenance program.

- Community members will see improved safety, reliability and quality of electricity supply through upgraded infrastructure.
- Increased safety and security with improved streetlighting.
- All premises will be installed with individual meters, therefore every household will be on a "user pays" system.
- All premises will be checked for electrical soundness and improvements made if needed by the Department of Housing and Works.
- The uniform tariff will continue to apply.
- When the new meters are installed, eligible residents will qualify for the supply charge, seniors' air conditioning and dependent child rebates and the life support equipment energy subsidy. Due to the current bulk metering arrangements, it has not previously been possible to deliver these rebates.

### Customer Details and Metering

Western Power is considering options for household metering. One option under consideration is pre-payment meters. Under this

option a power card is purchased from a retail outlet, similar to a pre-paid phone card, and inserted into the power meter. These types of meters are already being used in a small number of communities in WA, and in some other States.

The benefit of this metering arrangement is that power is paid for before it is used which assists householders in budgeting for their electricity use. The pre-payment meters also enables immediate payment of some rebates which is not possible with other meters. Further information on the metering arrangements will be included in the next newsletter.

As the introduction of individual metering is a major social change within the communities, Western Power is preparing some education material. Representatives from Western Power will visit the communities mid year to meet with community members and explain how the metering system works, assist in estimating household electricity costs, and assist residents in establishing their account details with Western Power, including eligibility for rebates.

### Project Timing

April 2005	Stakeholder and community visit
April - May 2005	Distribution network audits
June - July 2005	Community education
August - November 2005	Distribution network upgrade
October 2005	Internal wiring inspections & upgrades
November 2005	Installation of meters
November 2005	Follow-up visit and project evaluation

### Contacts

Should you wish to discuss any aspect of this project or provide any comments, please contact Western Power's Project Manager, Graeme Eley.

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### Next Steps

Western Power will be visiting key stakeholders and the communities during April 2005. Following this visit, an audit will be undertaken of the existing distribution network in each of the communities. The audit will identify gaps between the infrastructure in place and Western Power's standards.

Before the meters can be installed, the Department of Housing and Works will be arranging an inspection of all the wiring in households and premises to ensure that it is safe and complies with the regulations.