

POWER AND WATER CORPORATION
NORTHERN TERRITORY

Galiwin'ku water conservation local people empowerment case study

Training indigenous people to undertake water servicing work

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WATER SERVICES
ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

By employing, mentoring, training and equipping four Indigenous local community Water Conservation Ambassadors, Power and Water overcame distance and staff shortages to educate the remote island community of Galiwin'ku in positive water use behaviours. As a result, average water demand has reduced from 1200 litres per equivalent person per day to 750 litres. The project established a best practice model for local indigenous engagement leading to sustainable management of water, and secured Federal funding for an extended version, promising well for further work reaching almost 80,000 customers in 72 wide spread communities over an area of more than 1.3 million square kilometres.



ENLISTING THE COMMUNITY TO HELP SOLVE COMMUNITY PROBLEM

Remote Indigenous communities in Northern Territory experience critical water shortage. Limited human resources, combined with the prohibitive cost and environmental impact of travel, makes it difficult to reach the 72 wide spread communities on water and energy conservation issues, as well as to identify water leaks in mains and government housing.

Localising and enriching approaches to community driven water resource management at the remote Island community of Galiwinku saw Power and Water employing local Indigenous people. These officers worked to preserve the limited water resource by aiming to reduce daily community demand for water to a targeted amount. In partnership with the local Community Development Employment Program (CDEP) providers, Community Enterprise Australia (CEA), Power and Water

identified four local indigenous peoples to take on Water Conservation Ambassador roles within their community. Power and Water employed, trained and mentored four indigenous locals as Water Conservation Ambassadors to educate fellow community members about their water resource, the importance of positive water use behaviours, and how to save water in their homes and workplaces to reach water conservation targets. The officers were supported with branded uniforms, talking book technology in the local language, a DVD series, posters, stickers and radio advertising. Working four days a week, the officers also identified water leaks, enabling PWC and the Department of Housing to increase efficiency, reducing water loss.

Power and Water have one contracted officer on site at Galiwin'ku managing operational tasks, and a team of two responsible for the engagement of Indigenous communities on water and energy conservation across the Territory. Our reach is limited with Travel being costly both economically and environmentally. Employment of local people has boarded our reach by increasing the number of people of the ground and increased our effectiveness in engaging communities by local people working with local people. Through this approach PWC have broken down distance, cultural and resourcing barriers. We now have four officers working within the community four days a week, achieving great results.

POWERFUL PARTNERSHIP PAYS DIVIDENDS

For all the reasons mentioned, it was important to identify a local organisation that could assist in the delivery of the project. PWC partnered with the local Community Development Employment Program providers, Community Enterprise Australia to identify the local community Ambassadors. The CEA staff has worked tirelessly to ensure that culturally appropriate and ongoing mentoring of the officers is core to the delivery of this project. Their dedication has been a great asset to Power and Water and this initiative.

CULTURAL SENSITIVITY A MUST

The officers have been engaged themselves with culturally appropriate training and mentoring, they have been given the tools to first excel as students

and then as enriched educators. They are working effectively within their own cultural boundaries to engage with their fellow community members and create a community that is educated, aware and involved in the sustainable management of the precious water resource. Ongoing and culturally appropriate mentorship has increased Power and Water's reach into the community by allowing us to take advantage of local opportunities and institutionalise the project within the community.

GALIWIN'KU WATER STORY

The Galiwinku water conservation; empowering people to live sustainably project has achieved many successes. Some of these are; a community working collaboratively in order to work toward decreasing the demand on water in a sustainable manner. It is creating a community that have come to appreciate the 'Galiwinku water story' while having the opportunity to share their own stories around water and their community. They are now a community that largely understands where their water comes from and why it is important to save water. They are continuing to grow their respect for water as a limited resource and appreciate that it takes a whole of community effort to achieve its sustainable management.

DAILY DEMAND DROPPING

Importantly the average daily demand for water per person has reduced from 1200 Liters per equivalent person per day to 750 Litres per equivalent person per day. This is an outstanding achievement. A further reduction by another 200 Litres per equivalent person per day will see the community achieve the overall target of 550 Litres per equivalent person per day.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE COMMUNITY

Another notable result is the employment of four local indigenous people, they are employed and empowered to take an active role in the continued management of their communities' water resource. Through innovative education and training they feel comfortable and confident to encourage change among family and friends toward positive water use behaviours. They indeed have become water conservation ambassadors. This project has given these officers, a chance to develop and show their strength both professionally and personally. These officers have grown both, into the role, and

because of the role and they wear the badge of water conservation ambassador with honour and pride. An achievement of the project that far outweighs all others.



HELPING GOVERNMENT ACHIEVE TERRITORY GOALS

This project addresses Territory 2030 by increasing community engagement in identifying values, setting targets for environmental protection, and participating in delivery of environmental management, an action in Target 1.4. It has led to great efficiencies for Power and Water on the Island community of Galiwinku which is populated by largely Indigenous Territorians, one of the many diverse groups of the territory.

Includes a community engagement/stakeholder consultation process

When the need for further demand management work was identified PWC began engaging with community stakeholders. The Housing and the Local reference groups, run out of the East Arnhem Shire Council and the Australian Government Business managers office respectively were consulted. Feedback and advice was taken over many visits, with final project endorsement granted by both groups.

The training phase of the project was designed based on previous community engagement and consultation work carried out by PWC. It was fundamental that training delivery created an environment where both the staff being trained and the local CDEP providers were engaged and felt comfortable to direct the training and the delivery of the role based on the needs of the officers and what they understood would work within the community. PWC left room in the program for changes, and continually gauged effectiveness of delivery in order to improve the project.

Mentoring continues both on site daily by CEA and regular visits from PWC. PWC are also easily and reliably available on the phone. Mentors seek the officers feedback with regards to their needs both for themselves and the community. We are in attendance at meetings or provide written updates to both the reference groups on a monthly basis and stay abreast of their feedback and recommendations.

Demonstrates excellent leadership practices and innovative solutions for the public sector

Excellent leadership is shown in the field of indigenous engagement, training and development, and sustainable management of water. The program is considered best practice, it is the first of its kind and all approaches are driven by the community. Employment opportunities on remote Indigenous communities are low, this project offers vital employment that is both crucial to the sustainability of the community and empowering for the individual officers. The techniques used for both training/employment/development and sustainable water management are well researched, collaborative, adaptable and most importantly focused on achieving results for the officers, the community and PWC. PWC have applied leadership in collating the thoughts of community members and government stakeholders to actively address critical water shortage. The officers are also supported by a set of specially designed educational materials. These resources include; branded uniforms, talking book technology in local language, a poster, sticker and DVD series and radio advertising.

PWC built the project around existing community structures and in doing so they enhanced local capacity in a socially and environmentally positive manner. While PWC were aware of the limitations faced by local agencies due to their remoteness, PWC actively worked with the agencies and their limitations to enhance both the project and the impacts of the local agency.

Incorporates an evaluation process for effective results and continuous improvement

PWC maintain regular contact with all key stakeholders, visiting regularly, adapting to necessary changes. Feedback emails maintain

effective communication and continued improvement of PWCs approaches and officer performance and impact. A working and learning environment has been created that is culturally appropriate and collaboratively driven.

The project commenced in May 2012 and will continue through until at least the end of the dry season. This means the officers are employed for eight months before upcoming upgrades to PWC's water supply infrastructure.

At the close of this project PWC will have cultivated a community that is educated and aware of local water supply issues and how they as individuals can better manage their demand on water. The officers will be trained and equipped to take on other community educator roles within their community or neighbouring communities.

At the end of the project we will undertake a comprehensive review of all processes and approaches for continued improvement. PWC have designed an evaluation and monitoring process that is tailored to community engagement and behaviour change projects, it looks before and after at the change in behaviours, attitudes and perceptions of around water through project delivery.

JUST THE BEGINNING

Federal funding has been secured to apply an extended version of the collaborative and community-driven Galiwin'ku project, in Gunbalanya. PWC look forward to opportunities for expansion of this approach to other water stressed communities.

POWER AND WATER CORPORATION

Power and Water Corporation (PWC) is the sole provider of electricity, water supply and sewerage services to almost 80,000 customers across the Northern Territory- an area of more than 1.3 million square kilometres.