

MEDIA RELEASE

Date: 21 May 2013

Beswick Shines through a Time of Darkness

Solar Street lights – an innovation for a stronger community future

Beswick's newly set up solar street lights shone like beacons during the recent flood despite being inundated and mains power being switched off. Shire Services Manager at Beswick Mal Fox said the lights illuminate what was a very dark and potentially dangerous part of the road linking the old and new subdivisions and shone on through the floods when all else had been switched off for safety. He added that the bright warm light lit the edge of the flooded area at night and became a community gathering point during the flood.

The nineteen light poles fitted with low voltage LED lights are powered by independent solar panels and do not use mains power. The lights which give out a strong natural colour are brighter than standard street lights, have no operational costs and require minimal maintenance. Costing around \$11,000 per unit to install they are expected to pay for themselves in only a few years.

It is planned to roll out more solar lights in the Beswick community and other Roper Gulf Shire Towns and communities in the coming year. Improved street lighting is a high priority in many Roper Gulf Shire communities. Better street lighting leads to improved vehicle and pedestrian safety, and has an important role in reducing anti social street behaviour and contributes to communities feeling safer at night.

Beswick like many of the Shires Towns is a "walking town" and good quality low cost street lighting encourages safe community social interaction and pedestrian movement around the town.

The Beswick solar street lighting project arose from a priority identified by the Beswick Local Board and was included as a township priority in 2012 -2013 and funding gained through the NT Government Department of Lands and Planning. It is hoped that further funding will be made available to increase the number of solar units within the Roper Gulf Shire.

Beswick/Wugalarr also was highly commended at the recent Keep Australia Beautiful National "Tidy Towns Awards" for Energy Innovation

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