

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### ***The Community Energy Efficiency Program nears completion in Roper Gulf Offices***

A half million-dollar Community Energy Efficiency Program is nearing completion in the Roper Gulf region having upgraded and massively improved the energy efficiency of Roper Gulf Regional Council business offices that serve the nine towns of the region. Comparative figure of electricity usage shows a nearly 50% reduction in power usage in Councils Service offices since the program began last year.

*“We can already see significant changes in the environment of these offices, they are better places to work in and have reduced energy usage and therefore power costs”,* said Roper Gulf Regional Council Mayor Tony Jack.

*“Simple actions like retrofitting energy efficient air conditioning, replacing door and window seals, improving insulation and painting roofs with reflective paint has balanced the internal temperature which means we do not need to use as much energy to maintain a good working temperature”* Mayor Jack explained.

*“This in turn gives us a real saving in our power bills, money we can redirect to other community projects”.*

The consistently high temperature experienced in the top end makes air-conditioning a necessary part of life. Improving building energy efficiency has reduced the loss of cool air and the amount of radiant heat that penetrates the buildings. We do not need to continuously run air conditioning to maintain a comfortable temperature.

Many of the old air-conditioners were ineffective relics of a time when there was not the current awareness of energy costs.

Energy efficient air conditioning units have been fitted in all buildings. Passive energy saving methods like fitting door closers and sealing windows to reduce drafts means that insulation is more effective. Sealing air leaks in roofs and painting to reflect radiant heat also greatly improves the insulation.

Low wattage fluoresce lights have also been fitted in all buildings with an estimated saving of about \$300 at each service centre. Fitting new pumps at the Borroloola and Ngukurr swimming pools have also significantly reduced the power costs.

Sharon Hillen, Council’s Director of Council Services and Infrastructure is enthusiastic about the program outcomes.

*“The savings are real and measurable and in line with Council’s Green Plan for 2013-2016 which aimed for 10% reduction in power and water over the three years. We will easily exceed this.*

*The real secret weapon in our energy saving has been the fitting of timer switches which means that lights and air conditioning are not left on unnecessarily. We are also encouraging staff to take responsibility for their energy efficiency which they now monitor”*

The project will also share information with local communities on how to improve home energy efficiency, reduce power and water bills. This will be done with the Power and Water Corporation over the next few months.

Roper Gulf Regional Council Service Offices are now bright and comfortable places to visit and work in and are helping make Council's dollar to go further in a time of rising energy costs.

This activity received funding from the Australian Government.

*The views expressed herein are not necessarily the views of the Commonwealth of Australia and the Commonwealth does not accept responsibility for any information or advice contained herein.*

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