# DESERT KNOWLEDGE
## AUSTRALIA

# 2013/14 Annual Report

## Overview

This report is written as at 30 June 2014 for the period of the 2013/14 Financial Year.

During the course of the year, a strategic review of Desert Knowledge Australia (DKA) was conducted for the Northern Territory Government by Dr Don Zoellner of the Northern Institute at Charles Darwin University.  This was the first such review of the statutory corporation since DKA was formally established 10 years ago.

The report recognised that DKA had helped to generate considerable economic activity from the investment provided and, amongst a range of activities, had been instrumental in the development of the Alice Solar City program. Overall, the report found that DKA delivered a rate of return of $19.90 for every $1 of operational funding invested by the NT Government.  It also emphasised the need for closer engagement with key stakeholders and, following the review, it was decided that the timing was right to put a new focus on the organisation.

*"I think it was time for the NT Government to take a much greater interest in Desert Knowledge and we welcomed the review"*

The Hon Fred Chaney AO

Recognising the opportunity for change, a shift in the membership of the DKA Board is expected to occur early 2014/15 and with long-servicing CEO, John Huigen, moving on.  We recognise the outstanding dedication and strong contribution by each of those people.

*"We are sincerely thankful for the efforts of the Chair, board and management who have provided the foundation for the future"*

David Tollner MLA, former Minister responsible for DKA

Looking ahead, Desert Knowledge Australia is keen to see the organisation develop stronger relationships across government as well as with the broader community, our supporters and various other stakeholders. As a statutory corporation, there is a need to align DKA's agenda more towards economic development particularly in relation to the development of Northern Australia. We acknowledge the ongoing commitment and support of the NT Government and its expressed desire for DKA to play an important role not only in Central Australia but across all of remote Australia to help drive beneficial social and economic change.

## Summary of Projects and Activities in 2013/14

• Intercultural Leadership

In 2013, we completed our second Alice Springs Desert Leadership program.  Thirteen participants ranging in ages from 26 to 45 completed the inter-cultural program.  The true benefits of this program will come as these people develop their careers and assert themselves as leaders within the community.  Once again, we thank the outstanding support of our key program partners, Arup and TIO, along with the mentors, our staff and associates involved in the coordination and delivery of the program.

- Outback Business Networks

With over 40,000 small businesses operating in outer regional and remote Australia, Outback businesses play a vital role as a result of the employment they provide, the economic activity they create, the products and services they provide and so on. DKA's Outback Business Networks (OBN) continued efforts to link businesses locally and across borders to help create opportunities for members. The program wound up at the end of the financial year as we faced a number of challenges in servicing such a widespread network across a broad range of industry and business groups. We thank our key partners, BHP Billiton, the Australian Government, Telstra, Qantas and Southern Cross Television, for their very strong support and significant contribution to Outback regions through OBN over the years.

During the year, long-term Director of DKA's Outback Business Networks program, Mike Crowe, moved across to Batchelor Institute as their new Alice Springs Campus Manager. Mike enthusiastically led the OBN program since its inception and in many regards was the face of DKA across key areas of regional and Outback Australia. Mike was also instrumental in the very early stages and development of DKA and we acknowledge Mike for his outstanding contribution.



*OBN Member: F Cubed Solar Water Processors*

- remoteFOCUS and Collective Impact

Throughout the year DKA continued to develop, apply and refine its understandings around the unique remote Australian context. Our remoteFOCUS program identifies the need for place-centred solutions to improve the input and involvement of people at the local level into decisions that impact communities and regions ensuring the best possible outcomes. Our work this year with the Ngaanyatjarra Council and communities, together with the Commonwealth and Western Australian Governments, has applied this knowledge to address long standing challenges for those communities. We acknowledge the support of the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet and the Sidney Myer Fund in providing major funding for this important work to benefit outer-regional and remote Australia.

Using a Collective Impact approach to create strong alignment, we have been able to use data and measurement to create a pathway forward for the Lands; an approach which is informed by community and which will integrate the efforts of agencies and service providers towards a common vision. The combined efforts of the people and the layers of governance are showing early signs of success in the areas of education, early childhood development and housing in particular, which offers great promise.

- Desert Knowledge Precinct and the DKA Solar Centre

The Desert Knowledge Precinct, managed by DKA, is also the base for Batchelor Institute's Central Australian Campus, the Centre for Appropriate Technology, CSIRO's Alice Springs laboratory and Ninti One Limited, which amongst its various activities manages the Cooperative Research Centre for Remote Economic Participation. In terms of infrastructure development on the Precinct, Batchelor Institute further expanded its footprint here with the completion of their new Conservation and Land Management training facility in 2013/14.



*Desert Peoples Centre Chair, Harold Furber, and Hon John Elferink MLA*
*at the opening of the Conservation and Land Management Training Facility.*

The DKA Solar Centre has continued to develop as a solar technology demonstration facility of national and international significance. Managed by CAT Projects, the winners of Engineers Australia's prestigious Sir William Hudson Award in 2011, the facility now includes 45 distinct solar installations (from the initial 16 installations) and has more planned.

The DKA Solar Centre's role in generating quality long term data and presenting this has become increasingly valuable to industry and consumers in Australia and worldwide.



*DKA Solar Centre*

- Broadband for the Bush Alliance

In 2013/14, DKA continued to provide key support for the coordination of this alliance. In April 2014, the Alliance held the Broadband for the Bush Forum III: Building a Better Digital Future that attracted over 50 participants and formulated a number of key recommendations to advance the digital capacity and capability of remote Australians. For more information, visit www.broadbandforthebush.com.au.

Members of the Broadband for the Bush Alliance include Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance NT, Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association, Ninti One, RDA Northern Territory, the Centre for Appropriate Technology, Remote Area Planning and Development Board, Swinburne Institute for Social Research, Centre for Remote Health, Frontier Services, Mid-West Development Commission, Central Land Council, Central Desert Shire, Indigenous Remote Communications Association and Desert Knowledge Australia.



*Broadband for the Bush Forum III*

## Board of DKA

We wish to acknowledge the efforts and contribution by the members of the Board of Desert Knowledge Australia during 2013/14.

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| *Chair* | The Hon Fred Chaney AO |
| *Deputy Chair* | Harold Furber |
| | Kathy Finlayson |
| | Alwyn McKenzie |
| | Dr Steve Morton |
| | Dr Bruce Walker AM |

# Supporting Partners

## Desert Knowledge Australia



## Desert Knowledge Australia Outback Business Networks



## Alice Springs Desert Leadership



## remoteFOCUS



## Desert Knowledge Precinct



## Desert Knowledge Australia Solar Centre