

Water Issues Facing a Remote Indigenous Community in Australia

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ABSTRACT

With an area of 7.7 million square kilometers, Australia is the sixth largest nation in the world. On the other side of the spectrum, it is the country with few people, the population totalling just over 21 million (ABS, 2007). These characteristics added with the abundance of mineral resources and highly productive agricultural sector have put Australia among the richest nations in the world. For example, in 2004, Australia's GDP per capita of US\$ 31,454 was one of the highest in the world. The 2006 OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) report states, "[Australia's] Living standards have steadily improved since the beginning of the 1990s and now surpass all G7 countries except the United States."

In the midst of these impressive statistics, there still are a number of groups residing in Australia whose living standards are comparable to those in the third world countries. Majority of indigenous communities, residing in remote parts of the States and the Territories, fall in this category of disadvantaged communities. These remote communities are plagued with lack of basic infrastructure. Additionally, lack of public education is a major factor in the battle to upgrade living standards of people living in these remote communities. This paper looks into one such remote community, *Gunbalanya*, and the challenges this community faces in meeting its drinking water requirements. Located approximately 250 km east of Darwin, it is one of the 72 remote indigenous communities in the Northern Territory in Australia. The outcome of this study is expected to assist responsible authorities to develop financially viable plans that can be implemented to meet the drinking water requirements of *Gunbalanya*.