



MEDIA RELEASE FROM OUTBACK STORES



Employees at the Ngukurr General Store putting together furniture for sale in the local community. (Photo: Andrew Johanson – Outback Stores)

COMMUNITY TRAINING PROGRAM LAUNCHED IN NGUKURR

Residents of a remote Northern Territory community are learning skills many people take for granted through an innovative training program set up in the Ngukurr General Store which is managed by Outback Stores.

Ngukurr General Store is continuing to build on its success by establishing training programs to teach employees skills in furniture assembly, gardening, maintenance and retail to help build confidence and much-needed skills in the local community.

Following a \$3.75 million community-driven redevelopment of the store last year, Store Managers Phil Wade and Bronwyn Atkinson are running programs to teach staff and local community members the skills they need to help improve conditions for the whole community.

Phil said the initiative was about engaging community members in local employment and encouraging them to have a go.

“Many of the community members that approached us about working in the store did not have the skills to be able to repair things or put them together,” he said.

“In many cases this was because people were fearful of making a mistake or being seen to have failed, so it made sense to provide some training that would instill confidence to complete tasks and develop employment in the community.

“It is important that people are able to visualise the end product of what they are doing and through these step-by-step programs, we have seen people carrying out tasks and doing them very well which has given them a great deal of personal satisfaction”.

Bronwyn said the community ‘buy-in’ to the store had significantly increased since establishing the training programs.

“We want community members to give it a go, to learn from their mistakes and succeed because this empowers the community and encourages people to take ownership of their local store,” she said.

“The greatest challenge and enjoyment that we get out of this program is that everyone learns at different rates and in different ways meaning that we can provide skills and cross-skill people in areas which most people would take for granted”.

Outback Stores CEO Steve Moore said that the success of the program was testament to the commitment of store management and staff to improve conditions in communities.

“The Ngukurr General Store is a great story of the hard work store staff have been putting in to the community over the past few years,” Steve said.

“Community engagement is the key to the success of any store and with like-minded staff managing all of our stores in the Northern Territory, Western Australia and South Australia, we are very excited about what the future holds”.

About Outback Stores

Outback Stores is a company that manages remote stores on behalf of remote Indigenous communities. It was set up in 2006 in response to a growing need for functional and viable shops that were able to meet the health and nutritional requirements of Indigenous populations. It has been successful because it builds strong relationships with the communities it works with, resulting in stores that people can take pride in and feel part of. Outback Stores is a government initiative with an independent board. www.outbackstores.com.au