





2021—
2022
Annual Review

DEDICATED TO SUPPORTING THOSE IN OUR RURAL AND REMOTE COMMUNITIES





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Acknowledgement of Country

RESQ⁺ acknowledges the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the lands on which we provide our services. We recognise the ongoing cultural and spiritual connection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to the land, waters and community. We pay our respects to the people, the cultures and the Elders past, present and emerging.

RESQ⁺ services a vast area of Queensland and we would like to acknowledge the guidance and assistance of the Indigenous people of each site that we work on and visit.

Central West Queensland	South West Queensland
Balintji	Badjiri
Birria	Bidjara
Dharawala	Budjiti
Guwa	Gunggari
Iningai	Kamilaroi
Koa	Kunja
Kuungkari	Kooma
Maiawali	Kullilli
Malintji	Mardigan
Mithaka	
Pitta Pitta	
Wangkangurru	
Yarluyandi	

Cultural advice

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people(s) are advised that this document may contain images or names of deceased people.



Yumba, Mitchell

Our region

RESQ+ is the employment service provider for Central West and South West Queensland. These two areas form one of Australia's largest and most diverse geographic regions where RESQ+ delivers community-based employment services.

Our program area covers almost half the state, with residents from various cultural backgrounds, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

RESQ+ employees work hard and travel long distances to cover this vast region, meeting its varied employment and training needs.

800,000 km²

area

20,000

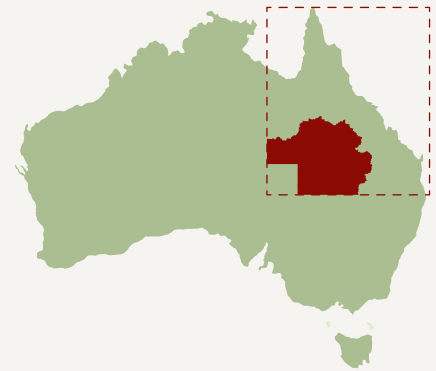
residents

32

communities

40+

employees



Distance and travel time by car

Brisbane to Charleville	744 km	8 hrs
Longreach to Cunnamulla	714 km	7–8 hrs
Charleville to Mitchell	180 km	2 hrs
Longreach to Birdsville	695 km	8–9 hrs



About RESQ+

RESQ+ is responsible for providing employment and community development programs to job seekers and employers in rural and remote communities in Central West and South West Queensland. The Australian Government influences the strategic direction of RESQ+ through its own objectives via the service contract between RESQ+ and the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA).

Our vision

To lead the way in delivering culturally appropriate, innovative and effective employment services while remaining an engaged and active partner in building and maintaining healthy, thriving and culturally diverse regional communities.

Our purpose

- Improve job seekers' employment prospects through training and development, employment programs and strong employer relationships.
- Create enduring community links and partnerships that support and deliver high-impact community projects.
- Generate profits for investment into our communities, either directly or through our shareholders' community assistance programs.

Our values



Excellence



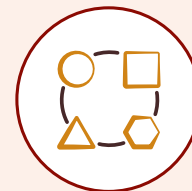
Innovation



Collaboration



Integrity



Diversity

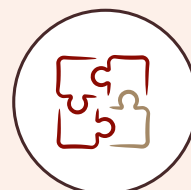
Our priorities



Our Clients



Our Teams



Our Services



Our Communities



Our Resources

Message from the Board Chair



The last few years have been a once-in-a-lifetime experience for many of us, having gone through a global pandemic and a slow and steady re-entry into our new normal. The experts have said that this pandemic will continue to resurface, which means we need to continue to be adaptable to change.

It is easy to forget that even though we are remote in the Central and South West of Queensland, we are still part of a global environment. While the world, nation and state grappled with the pandemic and all its effects, here in our region, life went on, always cognisant of events unfolding around us.

The Central West and South West regions are areas typified by agriculture, tourism, some mining and resources, small business and the public sector. In these industries, we weathered the worst of the pandemic, probably better than other areas of the state and nation.

Our service region, however, is also one that has witnessed some decline from a population perspective.

Recent census data and local observation suggest we have bottomed out, and the coming decade will see a reversal of this trend.

That is my optimistic opinion anyway.

With the backdrop of the global environment reflecting on our nation, the issues confronting our region are no different to those facing the nation. We continue to experience housing shortages, despite the population decline. Access to skilled and unskilled labour has stifled the hospitality and agricultural industry, particularly the sheep industry.

On the upside, we have welcomed much-needed rain over large parts of the region, with some areas revoking their drought declaration. With an expected La Nina period due to arrive, fingers crossed for this rain to continue, and the region will once again reach its full agricultural potential. Continuing that good news, more than anything else, we live in a part of the world typified by optimism, resilience and innovation, a culture and values set personified by the RESQ+ team.

RESQ+ has continued its excellent service delivery during this period. We have continued to build our partnership with Red Ridge Interior, the region's premier arts and cultural entity, and here, I would call out the Wangkangurru wangka-purru Language Dictionary.

The first dictionary of Wangkangurru wanga-purra language was launched in April this year, honouring the work of Elders and language keepers Anpanuwa 'Joyce' Crombie, Aulpunda 'Jean' Barr Crombie and Jim Crombie. This dictionary was an initiative of the Mobile Language Team and Two Sisters Talking (Joyce and Jean), supported by Red Ridge Interior Queensland Ltd, RESQ+ and the Queensland Government through the Indigenous Language Grants.

With the backdrop of the global environment reflecting on our nation, the issues confronting our region are no different to those facing the nation. We continue to experience housing shortages, despite the population decline. Access to skilled and unskilled labour has stifled the hospitality and agricultural industry, particularly the sheep industry.

We have continued to support a wide range of community events and groups and improve our support, resources and tools for job seekers who remain at the core of the service. The following pages outline some of the demonstrated activities of RESQ+.

With the current contracts due to cease on 30 June 2023, and as a new federal government moulds a new policy approach, I hope the work of RESQ+ will be considered an example of service delivery that delivers outcomes—a win-win for government, community and clients.

In closing, I'd like to thank Chris and his team spread across the Central and South West regions. They are the ones on the ground, in the communities, delivering with passion and enthusiasm.

David Arnold

Board Chair and Director of RESQ+ and Chief Executive Officer, Remote Area Planning and Development Board (RAPAD)

Message from the Chief Executive Officer



It's a truism that change is constant. We put 2020 behind us and moved into 2021 thinking we'd have a relatively stable and settled post-COVID-19 period. Not a bit of it! The new variants of the virus and the ever-changing health and policy responses certainly kept us on our toes.

In the middle of all this came the Federal Budget 2021–22. For us as a Community Development Program provider, the way we delivered the program changed significantly on 21 May 2021. One of the key but not widely publicised post-budget announcements was removing the compulsory obligation for our clients, the job seekers, to attend their training and development activities. This decision required us to make significant operational changes.

Understandably, many job seekers opted to stay away, impacting many of our community development projects and other activities. For example, we saw a reduction in the number of people available to assist community organisations and sporting clubs with setting up events and pulling down and cleaning up afterwards. We had to change our thinking.

Rural and remote communities constantly face disruption, which requires people to be resilient, adaptive and innovative. Our RESQ⁺ crew is no different, with everyone stepping up to address this additional challenge.

In the following pages, you can see and read about some of the great things our staff, our clients and our very supportive employers managed to achieve in support of our communities and employers, despite the challenges faced.

In last year's review, I mentioned the prospect of labour shortages and skills deficits resulting from lower numbers of backpackers and fewer skilled migrants. That situation continues to affect local businesses to a large degree. On the positive side, we see record lows in unemployment and a corresponding spike in the numbers of job seekers we have helped find work and stay in their job. We are now in the happy situation that anyone who wants to work is working, and I feel that while there are still some pressures, our communities are all better off as a result.

We are extremely proud to say that this financial year, RESQ⁺ has found employment for over 185 job seekers and supported many organisations from all 32 rural communities. This achievement builds on our record achievement from 2020–21, and it remains real evidence of what a community can achieve if we all pull together.

Heading into 2022–23, the changes keep rolling in. This year's Federal election and the installation of the new Labor government delivered significant change.

Rural and remote communities constantly face disruption, which requires people to be resilient, adaptive and innovative. Our RESQ⁺ crew is no different, with everyone stepping up to address this additional challenge.

One of Labor's election promises was to abolish the Community Development Program and replace it with a new remote employment program with real jobs, proper wages and decent conditions developed in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This change will come into effect in July 2023. For RESQ⁺, we face yet another period of challenges and uncertainty as we are yet to discover how the new program works.

We believe it will give RESQ⁺ and the communities we serve more control to determine local projects and increase economic opportunities, jobs and the flexibility to deliver those outcomes. Personally, I'm excited and energised by the prospect of being able to sit with key members of our Indigenous communities, government agencies, Councils and businesses and co-design flexible, innovative and meaningful approaches to transition job seekers into real jobs.

So, stay tuned and read about what happened in the RESQ⁺ Annual Review 2022–23.

Chris Hamilton

Chief Executive Officer, RESQ⁺

Community engagement

Strong partnerships for strong communities

RESQ+ works with local governments, not-for-profit organisations, Indigenous associations and community groups to deliver events, programs and services that help build thriving communities.

Through strategic investments and partnerships, we aim to strengthen communities, drive impact with people and bring about short and long-term change.

Community impact snapshot

32

local communities

11

councils

110+

employer and organisation partners

60+

events and activities (organised, participated and contributed)

Speaking and sharing language



The first dictionary of Wangkangurru wanga-purra language was launched in April this year, honouring the work of Elders and language keepers Anpanuwa 'Joyce' Crombie, Aulpunda 'Jean' Barr Crombie and Jim Crombie.

This dictionary was an initiative of the Mobile Language Team and Two Sisters Talking (Joyce and Jean), supported by Red Ridge Interior Queensland Ltd, RESQ⁺ and the Queensland Government (Indigenous Language Grants).

Linguist Eleanor McCall, who is part of the Mobile Language Team based at the University of Adelaide, compiled the dictionary, working closely with the Elders.

The dictionary captures more than 1500 Wangkangurru words, grouped by places and people. Many definitions show how people and places are connected.

During the project, an extensive library of historical resources was digitised. Oral recordings were also made to preserve language and its use, showing cultural context.

The launch was held on Wangkangurru/ Yarluyandi Country at the Wirrari Information Centre in Birdsville.

Red Ridge Interior Queensland Manager Louise Campbell said it was a significant event.

"Many family members returned home for a cultural celebration, honouring the efforts made by Elders to preserve culture through the dictionary," she said.

"The launch was an opportunity to continue this documentation. A videographer attended to capture footage of the family coming together."

RESQ⁺ Chief Executive Officer Chris Hamilton attended the event, reflecting the organisation's ongoing commitment to connecting with the local community.

"This project shows what's possible when we all work together. And this is just the beginning. There are already plans underway for a second volume, recording more of this rich language."

The dictionary was made available to families and participants to continue learning and understanding to preserve the Wangkangurru language. The dictionary is available online at www.mobilelanguageteam.com.au.



Celebrating self-care and wellbeing



The Self Care, We Care Festival brought awareness, belonging and connection to the people of Charleville.

In support of Mental Health Week 2021, the event encouraged visitors to take time for their own mental health by engaging in activities that would boost their wellbeing.

This free-entry festival had self-care information sessions, activities involving arts and crafts, market stalls, games and raffles. Local musicians provided entertainment, performing throughout the event, which helped create a calming, relaxing atmosphere. The most popular service of the day was the neck and shoulder massages, provided by local Bidjara man Ron Murphy.

Over 300 people enjoyed a free hangi meal, cooked to perfection by Tui Leleisiao from the Cunnamulla Aboriginal Corporation of Health (CACH).

RESQ+ Regional Community Development Manager Sue Bylett said it was amazing how many people came.

“Given it was the first time holding such an event, we were very pleased to see the community come out and enjoy themselves, engaging with others and learning what help is out there,” said Sue.

Jennifer Peacock, the Community Program Officer from the HOPE Program, hosted a health promotion stall with a chill-out zone and health information.

“Access to in-person and online mental health services is limited, so it’s important to let people know what support is available,” said Jennifer.

The event was a collaboration between multiple organisations, including RESQ+, CACH, Lifeline, Charleville Neighbourhood Centre and Murweh Shire Council.

“If we don’t have collaboration, we’re not solving the issues,” said Donna Enders from the Far West Indigenous Family Violence Service, part of CACH.

The Self Care, We Care Festival was a huge hit among locals and tourists.

“By the end of the night, people were already asking if we’d be doing it again next year!” said Sue.

“Plans are already in the works to make the event bigger and better for 2022, adding another flavour of multiple cultures.”





Letting in the light at **Mitchell Yumba**



RESQ+ job seekers turned a dark storage shed into a bright, light-filled space for meetings, workshops and community events.

The word Yumba means home. The Yumba at Mitchell is a precious place for the Gunggari people, with connections to family and Elders.

While visiting the Mitchell Yumba, RESQ+ Community Development Manager, Sue Bylett learned of long-term plans to revamp the existing storage shed into an activity space for arts and crafts, as well as a meeting place.

After consulting with Saraeva Mitchell and Sue Saunders from the Gunggari Native Title Aboriginal Corporation (GNTAC), Sue took on the challenge of helping make those plans a reality.

It wasn't long before RESQ+ Supervisor Beven McCullagh and his team of three job seekers were on-site with tools in hand.

The job involved installing insulation and air conditioning for those warm summers, lining the wall and adding new glass sliding doors, windows and lighting to make the shed habitable and comfortable. The local terrain and river location meant the team used mostly metal materials to help in the event of a flood and combat potential white ants.

Finishing touches included beautiful timber window frames and a coat of paint to turn the grey concrete floor a warm terracotta.

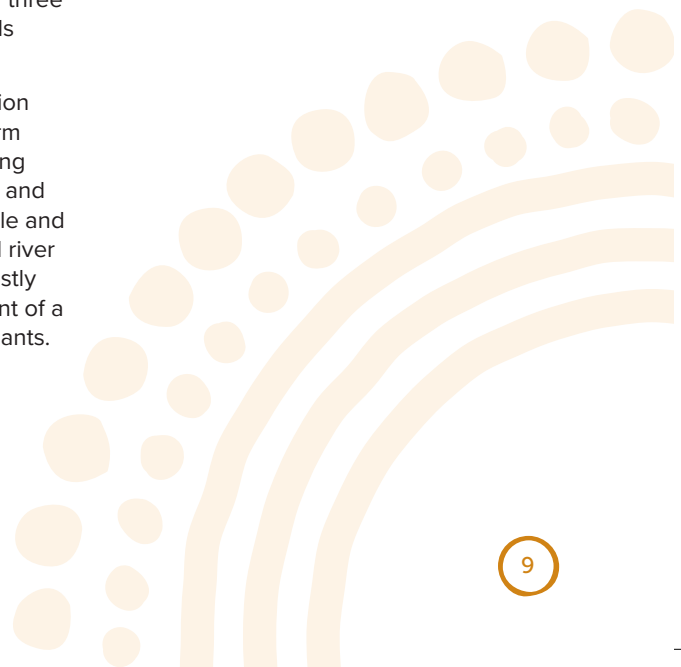
The job seekers also repaired a broken window in the Yumba's museum to ensure precious artefacts and paintings stay protected.

RESQ+ Supervisor Beven McCullagh said his team built valuable planning skills while working on the project.

"They had to think beyond what they were doing at that moment and plan for future work to happen," Beven said.

GNTAC thanked RESQ+ for their care, full consultation and attention to detail during the renovation.

"The space is very precious to them, and they're very happy with the outcome," said Sue Bylett.





Showcasing careers to inspire outback youth

Employers large and small came together to talk to high school students, RESQ+ job seekers and the wider community about job opportunities in South West Queensland.

RESQ+ Community Development Manager Sue Bylett explained that young people in small towns often aren't aware of the career choices available.

"Expos like this allow them to see what careers are available. It also allows local businesses to promote themselves as an employer of choice," she said.

The request for a career expo came from local schools and Jennifer Peacock from the HOPE Project.

"The HOPE Project focuses on improving outcomes for youth, so a career expo is a real boon for us," said Jennifer.

The success of the initial Charleville expo in August 2021 paved the way for a much larger event in March 2022, with many more exhibitors and guest speakers. Three of the four schools in attendance travelled 200 km to be there.

At the March expo, students completed a worksheet, encouraging them to ask the exhibitors questions. The worksheet also provided RESQ+ with valuable feedback about which employers to engage for the next event.

Jess King, Cunnamulla Team Leader for RESQ+, shared that her daughter came home from the expo with greater focus and vision.

"She said 'Mum, I know what I want to do now and what I need to do to get to my career path.'"

Plans are already underway for the next South West Career Expo and expanding the event for the Central West.



Career Expo 2022 snapshot





Deadly recruits show strength through **song**

The week-long Deadly Recruits camp aims to help high school students develop resilience, confidence and courage.

The camp is held at a Tinnenburra sheep station 120 km south of Cunnamulla. Over the past nine years, camp facilitator Uncle Col Watego has challenged students' physical and mental endurance as they learn military manoeuvres and bush survival skills.

But this year's students were given an additional challenge—to write an original song.

Indigenous singer-songwriter Sue Ray, winner of multiple Queensland Music Awards, guided the students through the collaborative songwriting process. Rhan Hooper, a former Brisbane Lions player, accompanied on didgeridoo.

Deadly Recruits was founded by two locals from Cunnamulla—Amanda and Julie Fox. The camp is supported by several key partners, including HOPE, the Australian Defense Force, the University of Southern Queensland, Cunnamulla Aboriginal Corporation of Health (CACH) and RESQ⁺.

HOPE Program Manager Miriam Airey said that RESQ⁺ is one of their most supportive project partners.

RESQ⁺ Community Development Manager Sue Bylett attended the camp to help in any way she could, from preparing food and participating in activities to braving the cold to doing night patrol.

"The musicians did an amazing job with the students. The kids really came together to write the song," said Sue.

Cunnamulla Dreaming

Ooh, ah, Cunnamulla dreaming
Out in the mulga country,
the red dirt stains my skin
Held up by my elders, where
my history begins
Found a strength inside me
I'd buried deep within
With Uncle Col beside me
I knew that I could win
The harder I fought it,
the harder I fell
But every time I got back up,
I found my strength again
He showed me my potential,
he taught me where I'm from
Now I've found my inner
peace, I'll be unstoppable
I'll get up, stand up, show up,
for the person I know I can be
I don't know how I'll get there,
but I know it starts with me



Red Ridge the Label a real success for community



Red Ridge the Label continues to go from strength to strength, adding more artists and fashion collections to its brand.

Red Ridge the Label shines a spotlight on Aboriginal artists from central western Queensland, turning their artwork into high-quality, contemporary fashion.

Established in 2020 with the support of RESQ⁺, this commercial venture has recently added two more collections.

The new fashion line was launched at the Reconciliation Gala Ball, a black-tie event held in Barcaldine in June 2022. The range is available instore at 113 Shamrock St, Blackall QLD or online at redridgethelabel.com.au.

This year, RESQ⁺ helped Red Ridge Interior Queensland identify and recruit two potential employees and provided them with training to succeed in their new roles. RESQ⁺ also helped bring on two new employees to Red Ridge the Label, recruiting and training the job seekers through their program. The new project support officers work across production, distribution, marketing and retailing, as well as make fashion accessories.

Red Ridge Interior Queensland Manager Louise Campbell said that RESQ⁺ recognises the importance of working in partnership with community organisations.

“They know that Red Ridge Interior Queensland is a growing enterprise, creating jobs for the future,” she said.

“RESQ⁺ believes in local projects and continues to provide support over time. They are passionate about the region—they understand the area and how to work in it.”

Red Ridge the Label is an initiative of Red Ridge Interior Queensland Ltd, a nonprofit organisation that supports community and culture through the arts.

RESQ⁺ Chief Executive Officer Chris Hamilton said he continues to be amazed at the creativity and innovation that Louise and Red Ridge provide.

“We’re delighted that we can provide both financial and personnel support to these fantastic projects. Who knows where these initiatives will lead in the future?” said Chris.

The Andrawilla collection by Anpanuwa ‘Joyce’ Crombie and Aulpunda ‘Jean’ Barr-Crombie brings to life their love of Country. The Barkee collection introduces Channel Country artists Ronell Patuwai, Janeece and Beryl Thompson and Deanna Plumb to the label. Their art features waterways, sandhills and stories of connection.

redridgethelabel.com.au



Healing Country **inspires** creative expression

The Charleville NAIDOC Week art competition is an annual event organised by RESQ+.

Each year, as NAIDOC Week approaches, RESQ+ Community Development Manager Sue Bylett talks to the Bidjara people about how RESQ+ can support their celebrations.

“They loved the art competition from the previous year, so that’s what we did,” Sue said.

RESQ+ reached out to schools, daycares, participants/job seekers and the local community,

promoting the upcoming competition through the local radio station. With a wide range of age groups and categories, artists entered paintings inspired by their interpretation of the 2021 NAIDOC theme ‘Heal Country’.

RESQ+ supplied the prizes, which included gift cards for the primary, secondary and adult categories. Each winner in the kindy and daycare categories received a gift pack bursting with art and craft supplies.

Artists shine across the region

This year, local artists had abundant opportunities to display their art and demonstrate their creative talent.

Mulga Lands Art Gallery display

A section of the Mulga Lands Art Gallery was dedicated to displaying the artwork of RESQ+ job seekers from March to August 2022. Several unique pieces have been purchased by gallery visitors, with all funds going back to the artist.

Quilpie Gallery art show

RESQ+ job seekers from Cunnamulla entered their work in Quilpie Gallery’s 2021 art show. As a result, one artist was offered a paid opportunity to paint designs on street bollards in Charleville in preparation for 2022 NAIDOC Week.

Charleville Tourism Program

The new Charleville Tourism Program aims to connect RESQ+ job seekers with tourists visiting the area. RESQ+ liaises with the Charleville Information Centre to host small-scale sessions that bring artists and tourists together.

Four local artists were featured in the first event in May, attracting a group of 35 visitors. The day was a huge success, creating an environment where artists felt comfortable talking about their art and culture and bringing in hundreds of dollars in art sales.

Job seeker support

Providing job seekers with pathways to employment

We're committed to helping job seekers with training, personal development and specialised support to overcome barriers and open up pathways to employment.

Job seeker snapshot



Overcoming anxiety, one step at a time

Three years ago, Emma McLaren was struggling to find suitable employment. She was also reluctant to look as she had never held a job before and mental health issues made it tough on her.



But this all changed when Emma met RESQ+ Employment Consultant Julie Mourilyan in 2018.

Over regular appointments, Julie helped Emma work through her employment barriers and encouraged her self-confidence. And when a cleaning position came up at the Great Artesian Spa in Mitchell, Julie encouraged Emma to submit her resume.

It was the breakthrough Emma needed. Despite her extreme nerves, she won the position and, later, a full-time cleaning contract at Mitchell State School.

At the end of this contract, Emma gained a cleaning position at Mitchell Hospital. It was here, working alongside the medical and nursing staff, that Emma was inspired to start an Assistant in Nursing (AIN) traineeship.

Emma said training to become an AIN gives her purpose and the ability to better look after her family. And she couldn't have done it without Julie's support.

"Before I met Julie, I was struggling with depression and anxiety. But I feel so positive these days," said Emma.

"Julie has been there since day one. She helped me improve my resume and cover letter, prepare for interviews, and even pick the right clothes to wear.

"She never let me give up or back down. Every time I had a bad day, I'd go see Julie and her encouragement and support would bring things back into focus and lift my spirits."

Self-confidence kicks off career success

Jobseeker Cameron McAndrew discovered that nurturing personal growth was the first step in finding a new career.



When COVID-19 hit in 2020, Cameron saw the work he loved in the security industry vanish. He found himself questioning the value of his skills and withdrawing from life.

But things turned around when Cameron began participating in the Longreach Community Development Program activities.

"That was the day I met RESQ+ Supervisor Tim Sorenson. Tim completely rebuilt my confidence over the next four months," said Cameron.

"Tim didn't buy into my sad sack stories. He told me to just turn up and take pride in being there on time."

Every day, Tim encouraged Cameron to get involved and try new tasks. Slowly, Cameron found his self-confidence returning. This confidence inspired Cameron to seize an opportunity shared on social media.

"Energy Skills Queensland was covering the training cost for a Certificate II in Engineering Pathways course in Brisbane."

Cameron was keen but needed to live in Brisbane for the duration of the course.

"I drove back to Longreach and spoke to Atlantis and Julie, my employment consultants at RESQ+. They made everything happen in just four days so that I could get back to Brisbane the next week."

RESQ+ secured funding for accommodation, fuel, workwear and educational materials. Cameron arrived back in Brisbane just in time for the course to begin. Eight weeks later, he had earned his certificate.

Still, it took persistence to secure an apprenticeship. After applying unsuccessfully for dozens of positions, Cameron took the initiative to travel to Townsville and introduce himself at Mick Murray Welding.

He was offered an apprenticeship on the spot. Cameron is now completing a dual trade apprenticeship in sheet metal fabrication and boiler making. He believes that the support he received from RESQ+ made it all possible.

"They were my guardian angels. Every time I asked for help, they were there."

Heartfelt talk leads to dream job

Blackall resident Louise Goodman was long-term unemployed when Cecele Pitt started as a RESQ+ employment consultant over four years ago.



Despite participating in Blackall Community Development Program activities and working in customer service and nanny roles, Louise felt unfulfilled and unsure about her career strengths and goals.

During one of her regular appointments with Cecele, Louise admitted she wasn't achieving anything, and life was generally getting her down.

It was a raw conversation that became the turning point in Louise's life, allowing her to make real changes for the better.

With the support of Cecele, Louise began working on changing her fixed mindset to a growth mindset and turning conversations from complaints to opportunities. She enrolled in Certificate III in Community Services, completing the course in under a year and becoming a mentor to her fellow students.

To help with her studies, RESQ+ supplied Louise with a laptop, internet dongle and printer. Cecele also helped Louise set up her computer and internet and learn valuable IT and study tips.

In January 2022, Louise started as a home care worker for Churches of Christ Care. RESQ+ supported this employment with additional funding through the Indigenous Employment Program. They also helped Louise with uniforms and NAIDOC shirts to help celebrate NAIDOC Week and purchased two new tyres for her car to help her get to work.

Things continue to look up for Louise. She is now studying another Certificate III in Individual Support Services for Aged Care.

"I've gone from being long-term unemployed to working in my dream job!" Louise said.

Finding a new career and fresh start

Former job seeker Sam Rutherford found a way to turn unemployment into a positive career change.

When the local newspaper moved to a digital platform several years ago, Sam, unfortunately, found himself made redundant. Sam registered as a job seeker with RESQ+ and began participating in the employment program and community activities, building new skills and exploring labour market industries by helping RESQ+ support various community organisations and business events.

But real opportunity came in early 2021 when Sam attended an eight-week training course with Energy Skills Queensland. RESQ+ paid for the accommodation and travel to Brisbane, ensuring Sam could complete his Certificate II in Engineering Pathways and create a new career pathway.

On returning to Longreach, Sam found local employment while continuing to apply for apprenticeships as a fitter and turner.

Sam said it was difficult finding a business willing to take on a mature-age apprentice.

"I fired off applications for over 200 jobs and only got two interviews. I didn't even hear back about most of them," he said.

Sam was finally successful, securing an apprenticeship with Sydney-based company Strategic Engineering.

RESQ+ covered the costs of relocating to Sydney and continue their monthly check-ins with Sam as part of his post-placement support.

"I cannot speak highly enough of RESQ+. They bend over backwards to help get you into work you can enjoy and take pride in," said Sam.

Two months into his role, Sam has a firm plan to get his qualification and become a top-quality machinist and toolmaker.

"I'm focused on learning and becoming a skilled tradesman," he said.

"It's a big change after spending years in newspaper rooms, but I wanted to do something completely different, and now I am. And I'm keen to see where this will take me."

Building new skills and a sense of purpose

Upskilling job seekers to improve their employment prospects is a vital service provided by RESQ⁺.

RESQ⁺ Operations Manager Jade Lawson oversees this work, from hospitality training to construction white card certification and everything in between.

“Training courses and face-to-face activities help job seekers gain employment,” said Jade.

“But they’re also extremely valuable for mental health, providing people with community, a creative outlet and a sense of purpose.”

RESQ⁺ offers a range of face-to-face activities for job seekers to build confidence, experience and skills. These activities are delivered at multiple training centres across both Central West and South West Queensland regions.

Upskilling includes

- Gardening and lawn maintenance
- Woodwork
- Metalwork
- Leatherwork
- Health workshops
- Resin art workshops
- Cultural weaving workshops
- Textile classes
- Clay jewellery classes
- Indigenous artwork (painting, didgeridoo making and cultural wood carving)

Training and activities snapshot

150+

people participating in supervised activities

120+

training and activities offered across nine activities and art hubs



Welcoming **culture** into workplaces



Tailored Assistance Employment Grants (TAEG) provide targeted assistance for Indigenous people in Indigenous communities.

Securing a grant through the TAEG program has provided RESQ+ with a unique opportunity over the last year.

The TAEG aims to increase Indigenous employment and retention by funding tailored activities that respond flexibly to local employment conditions. RESQ+ Operations Manager Jade Lawson explained that we need better support for employers to understand cultural differences and respond to cultural needs.

“This has been our first funding opportunity to really deep-dive into this sort of thing,” said Jade.

To support the program, RESQ+ offered cultural safety training to employers. This training helps employers understand how Indigenous culture can impact a person’s employment.

“It helps employers understand how to work with an employee to ensure they can do their job without violating their culture’s customs,” said Jade.

“This helps increase their feeling of safety in the workplace, which helps increase employee retention.”

The TAEG has also allowed RESQ+ to engage the services of an Indigenous counsellor.

“Indigenous job seekers get one-on-one support from someone who understands where they’re coming from. It’s been very successful and well received,” said Jade.

“It’s a more holistic and inclusive approach which has been really beneficial.”

Recognising our partners

RESQ+ seeks to ensure our services have clear strategic rationale and are financially sustainable. In addition to the organisations showcased within this review, RESQ+ shareholders allocate their share of any profits made towards their own community initiatives and projects. We would like to thank our partners for their support.

Remote Area Planning and Development Board (RAPAD)

The Central Western Queensland Remote Area Planning and Development Board (RAPAD) is a regional development organisation and regional organisation of councils that aims to support, facilitate, promote, deliver and encourage sustainable growth and development of our Central Western Queensland region.

RAPAD applies earnings received from its stake in RESQ+ through all of its operations. Some key initiatives include:

- supporting the growth and uptake of digital technology
- promoting the livability of the region
- development of new businesses and ventures.

For more information, please visit rapad.com.au

Career Employment Australia

Career Employment Australia (CEA) is a not-for-profit, registered training organisation that provides superior support and training services to support the needs of job seekers and the local community.

CEA helps alleviate the poverty and misfortune suffered by long-term unemployed and disadvantaged people through programs, projects and training that develop employment-related skills.

For more information, please visit cealtd.org.au

SkillCentred

SkillCentred supports Indigenous communities, disadvantaged young people and people who are long-term unemployed across Queensland. Established in 1980, SkillCentred is nationally recognised for its capability to deliver infrastructure-building, social enterprise and community development projects.

SkillCentred is committed to quality outcomes and continuity of service. Working across the Wide Bay-Burnett, Sunshine Coast and Moreton Bay regions, SkillCentred is helping build communities with practical skills and support.

For more information, please visit skillcentered.com

Central West Aboriginal Corporation

Central West Aboriginal Corporation (CWAC) is a nonprofit organisation based in Barcaldine. Since 1976, CWAC has supported activities that contribute to the wellbeing of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Central West community.

Funds generated through RESQ+ are helping CWAC improve eight rental properties. The work includes new stumps, kitchens, air conditioners and general maintenance. CWAC is also in the process of developing tourist facilities on a 23-acre block of land.

All of these projects will help CWAC sustainably fund its future operations.

For more information, please visit cwac.org.au

The MaraWay

The MaraWay is a fully self-funded Indigenous Corporation with a 100% Indigenous board. Operating in Cairns, The MaraWay tackles tough issues to help the local community.

Investing in RESQ+ provides a revenue stream that helps keep The MaraWay self-funded and free to focus on community needs. This model has enabled growth, innovation and real change in the community.

The MaraWay delivers services and support at the Community Hub. This assistance ranges from helping people access Centrelink services and write resumes to providing spaces for community members to gather and feel welcome.

For more information, please visit themaraway.org.au

Meet our Board

Our Board of Directors volunteer their skills, experience and time to help our leadership team and staff strengthen regional and rural Queensland communities.



David Arnold

*Chief Executive Officer (CEO)
Remote Area Planning and
Development Board (RAPAD)*

David has been the CEO of RAPAD and the Rural Financial Counselling Service North Queensland since 2003, as well as a of RESQ⁺.

David is the Deputy Chairman of the Central West Hospital and Health Service (CWHHS), chair of its executive committee and member of the audit & risk committee, since its inception in 2012, and member of its finance committee since 2016. Since 2011 he has held two periods as a committee member for Regional Development Australia.

As a volunteer, David has been President for seven years, Vice President and remains a member of the Longreach Home and Community Care entity, which delivers care to the frail, aged elderly and disabled.



Rob Chandler

Business Consultant

Rob Chandler works with Sunshot Industries in Barcaldine, a company charged with seeking economic development opportunities in greater Western Queensland and Australia. They have recently lodged a Development Application with Council to build the Barcaldine Renewable Energy Zone, a \$700 million project that could create 500 permanent jobs in the region.

Before this appointment, Rob was a Councillor with the Barcaldine Shire Council from 2000 to 2008 and was Mayor for four years. After the local government amalgamation, Rob was elected Mayor of the Barcaldine Regional Council and served for a further 12 years.

He remains a Director of the Rural Financial Counselling Service and RESQ⁺ and represents the Central West Aboriginal Corporation on the RESQ⁺ Board. In this latter position, Rob sees a bright future for Indigenous people locally and in the outback Queensland areas.



Alicia Gibson

*Chief Executive Officer (CEO),
Skill Centred Queensland*

Alicia is the Board Director of RESQ⁺ founding partner, Employment Services Queensland (ESQ), and CEO of Skill Centred Queensland, a not-for-profit community-based organisation operating across Queensland. She brings years of experience in organisations supporting long-term unemployed, disadvantaged youth and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

She holds various qualifications, including a Bachelor of Social Welfare (Youth Work) and an Associate Diploma in Welfare Studies. Alicia has a passion for making positive changes in her local community. She serves on several boards and committees across a broad spectrum of activities.



Andrea Jackson

Chief Executive Officer (CEO), The MaraWay

Andrea Jackson joined The MaraWay as CEO in July 2017, harnessing her leadership skills and business acumen to set the organisation's strategic priorities.

Andrea constantly challenges the status quo to explore better ways of achieving results. Visionary, energetic and determined, Andrea wants to radically change the standard funding model and deliver community services that make lasting positive changes in our community.

Andrea is an Australian Institute of Company Directors' graduate and has enjoyed a diverse career in small business and senior management in the corporate sector and as a business advisor. For the past 20 years, Andrea has been a Director on a range of education and community services boards in Cairns.



Maria Pedersen

Chairperson, The MaraWay

Maria Pedersen has come a long way from her challenging experiences as a schoolgirl. She is now a Director of RESQ⁺ and the Chair of The MaraWay in Cairns. Maria is passionate about her culture, family and community. She believes if you want something in life, you have to work for it.

A former Community Development Employment Projects participant, Maria used the program as a stepping stone to a better education, job and life. Her firsthand understanding of the barriers encountered by Indigenous youth helps her reimagine ways to tackle tough social problems in diverse communities.

Maria has fostered over 65 children and is determined to use her leadership roles to help people embrace life-changing opportunities.



Tony Rayner

Mayor of Longreach Regional Council

Tony Rayner was elected Longreach Mayor in 2020 after serving four years as Councillor. Whilst a Councillor, he also served as Chief Executive Officer of RESQ⁺, building the company into a highly successful organisation.

Before this, Tony spent 30 years in senior executive roles for the Queensland Government. He has extensive experience working closely with State and Federal Cabinet Ministers and Director-Generals.

Tony is a member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors, a Justice of the Peace and a graduate of the Experiential Leadership Development Program. He has served as a director on various boards and committees.

Tony also has experience in disaster relief operations, having coordinated large-scale flood relief and recovery programs in regional Queensland.



Thank you to our partners

RESQ+ is proud to partner with many different organisations, councils, community groups and individuals. From the wide-open skies to the long dusty roads, we thank you for your support and commitment to help us make changes in our rural and remote communities.

Unless otherwise credited, photography throughout this review has been supplied internally by members of the RESQ+ team and their community partners.

The content of this report was collaboratively developed by Storyflight and the RESQ+ team.

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