

2017-

2018

ANNUAL REVIEW

Changing lives, strengthening
communities

Growing employment opportunities
in rural and regional Queensland

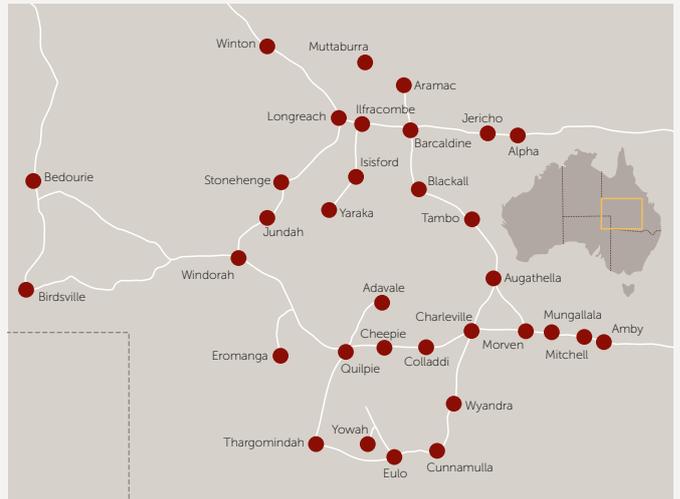
Our region

RAPAD Employment Services Queensland (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 in which community-based employment services are delivered.

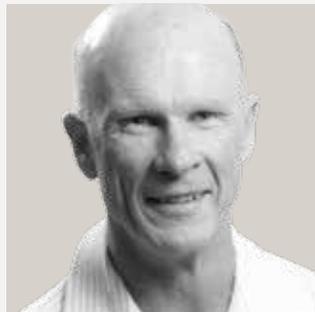
Our program area covers almost 800,000 km², with approximately 20,000 residents from a variety of cultural backgrounds, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Our work is supported by the eleven surrounding regional councils of Barcaldine Regional Council, Barcoo Shire Council, Blackall Regional Council, Bulloo Shire Council, Diamantina Shire Council, Longreach Regional Council, Maranoa Regional Council, Murweh Shire Council, Paroo Shire Council, Quilpie Shire Council and Winton Shire Council.

Over 40 RESQ employees work hard to cover this vast region and its varied employment and training needs. Together, they provide vital support services to 32 communities and over 700 job seekers.



Board profiles



David Arnold

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

With 15 years as CEO of RAPAD, David Arnold brings a wealth of experience in regional development, stakeholder engagement and project management. A well-known Longreach resident, he expands his service to the Central West and South West Queensland regions through his involvement on the RESQ Board, since its commencement in 2013.



Andrea Jackson

**Chief Executive Officer,
The MaraWay (Queensland)**

Andrea Jackson joined The MaraWay as CEO in July 2017. The MaraWay is an Indigenous-owned social enterprise based in Cairns and a founding partner of RESQ. Andrea is an Australian Institute of Company Directors' graduate and has enjoyed a diverse career in small business and at senior management level in the corporate sector. For the past 20 years, Andrea has been a Director on a range of boards within the education and community services sectors in Cairns.



Alicia Gibson

**Chief Executive Officer,
Skill Centred Queensland**

As Chairman of RESQ founding partner, Employment Services Queensland (ESQ), and CEO of Skill Centred Queensland, a not-for-profit community-based organisation operating across Queensland, Alicia 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 is currently completing her Masters in Business. She sits on a variety of boards within her local community.

Message from the Chairman

On behalf of my fellow Board members and the RESQ team, it is with great pleasure that I present RESQ's Annual Review for the 2017–18 financial year.

RESQ was established in 2013 to deliver the Community Development Programme (CDP), helping communities in rural and remote Queensland address the challenges of finding employment.

As we pursue greater opportunities for our job seekers, we also deliver growth for our other stakeholders: our communities, governments, employees and partners. Our activities aim to bring long-term benefits to the places where we live.

Our regional communities are diverse and face many social, economic and environmental challenges. While our focus is on unemployment, we're proud to champion projects and programs that also benefit local communities, economies and natural values.

RESQ remains committed to generating positive change for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in our communities. Respect for the diverse backgrounds and cultures of Australian people is key to RESQ's core values, as exemplified by the collaborative partnerships we have forged.

Looking ahead to the next year, we're proud to be partnering with The MaraWay and Central West Aboriginal Corporation (CWAC) in a joint venture to deliver the CDP and Vocational Training and Employment Centres (VTEC).

I would like to acknowledge everyone who has contributed to the success of our work this year. We are deeply grateful to each partner who supports RESQ in our mission towards building strong, sustainable communities.

Rob Chandler

*Mayor of Barcaldine,
Chairman of RAPAD and RESQ*



Looking ahead to the next year, we're proud to be partnering with The MaraWay and Central West Aboriginal Corporation in a joint venture to deliver the CDP and VTEC.

2017–
2018



Message from the Chief Executive Officer

As a Longreach local, I know firsthand what a significant impact employment brings to remote areas. Strong partnerships and job opportunities are at the core of every thriving community.

Over the past twelve months, RESQ has continued to go from strength to strength, working with regional communities to build and retain skills that support a resilient local economy.

It's our privilege and responsibility as a regional Queensland employment provider to ensure the interests of local people are at the heart of everything we do.

As we grow and change, we work even harder to provide greater support and higher quality services to our current and future job seekers and partners. What we achieve on a daily basis at RESQ is not as individuals, but as a team sharing common values.

At the beginning of April 2017, we strengthened our commitment to building employment and community development with the expansion of services to South West Queensland. The successful roll-out of programs and activities brings us together under one common goal, of building robust employment and community development outcomes.

Our work through the Community Development Programme (CDP) continues to support the career aspirations of our job seekers, with over 130 people successfully placed in jobs in this financial year alone.

Ongoing community programs and activities like the Cunnamulla Community Garden continue to develop the vocational skills of our job seekers, helping them build a better future for themselves and their local community.

By collaborating with rural and remote communities and their organisations, we've fostered local opportunities, crucial to bringing about real change in supporting employment opportunities.

Over the last six months, our strategic and energetic pursuit of tenders has paid off, with the roll-out of new Commonwealth-funded training and employment initiatives. We welcomed participation in Vocational Training and Employment Centres (VTEC), another way we can support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander job seekers to connect with long-term employment and bridge the disadvantage employment gap.

Most importantly, RESQ continues to be highly regarded throughout the sector for our commitment to creating personalised employment pathways. As we've grown, our way of working has remained constant, and always will. We continue to focus on building genuine relationships with our job seekers, encouraging their individual strengths and interests.

Reflecting on the past year, I'm proud of the number of job seekers and communities we've supported and the positive outcomes that we can all celebrate.

I would like to commend our dedicated team and community partners for the work they do. Across this large region, they continue to improve service delivery and support people in building the skills needed to get a job.

As we move towards the future, we're confident our local presence will continue to bring greater community benefits and ownership.

Tony Rayner

Chief Executive Officer, RESQ



RESQ continues to be highly regarded throughout the sector for our commitment to creating personalised employment pathways. As we've grown, our way of working has remained constant, and always will.

Paving the way to employment

RESQ's team of employment specialists know there's more to gaining a job than a resume and interview.

They provide a pathway to employment, which involves building the skills, knowledge and confidence needed to enter or re-enter the workforce.

RESQ helps job seekers navigate this path, which can be particularly challenging for those with significant barriers to employment.

RESQ Employment Consultant Kaylah Smith said that the first step is to identify and work on the pre-vocational challenges facing a person.

"We help address some of the most significant barriers, including social and emotional wellbeing, access to training services, cultural diversity and vocational and non-vocational barriers."

South West Regional Manager Emma Liston explained that there are a number of service partners that support RESQ's training program.

"Their expertise and trusted community network helps to connect job seekers with the best training and support services."

RESQ has connected over 100 job seekers with specialised training and support, encouraging them to transform their lives and become role models for their families and community.

Through an employment pathway plan, RESQ provides intensive, pre-employment support to improve the work-readiness of job seekers.

Job seekers can access formal training to gain qualifications, foundational skills training or work experience as part of their activity requirement.

Training areas include:

- Language, literacy and numeracy
- Licensing
- TAFE qualifications relevant to employment
- Chainsaw and tree felling
- Chemical handling accreditation
- Side-by-side ATV training
- Tractor operations
- First-aid certification
- General construction white card certification
- Responsible service of alcohol
- Responsible service of gambling
- Welding.

Images left to right: Discussing snake bite treatment during first-aid training. Tree felling is discussed during chainsaw training.



Job success from skills training

When job seeker Rick Kearns sought out the services of RESQ, he had been unemployed since April 2017. Rick had some rural work experience but found it difficult to secure work in the sector.

As part of RESQ's pathway to employment, Rick completed part of a Certificate II in Rural Operations. This training covered preparing, transporting, handling, storing and applying chemicals, and operating a side-by-side vehicle.

With his new skills and confidence, Rick has gained casual employment with Queensland Murray Darling Corporation (QMDC), spraying Weeds of National Significance in Maranoa Shire and as a casual supervisor for RESQ.

Rick receiving his chainsaw and buggy certificate.



Building better communities

Employment opportunities are integral to building strong, resilient regional communities. RESQ helps engage job seekers in employment through the Community Development Programme (CDP).

Now in its sixth year, CDP is a federally funded initiative delivered through the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet.

Through the program, RESQ is spearheading a powerful and positive change to create a future where every person has the opportunities needed to gain employment.

RESQ Business Manager Debbie Erswell said the program helps job seekers build skills, address any barriers and make a meaningful contribution to their communities.

"Our vision is to empower individuals to build the skills and independence they need to open up future opportunities.

"Job seekers are challenged to achieve their full potential, in their work and community, creating a culture of growth and success.

"Our program is proudly led and managed by a team of dedicated Employment Consultants, who work closely with job seekers to ensure activities meet their needs and aspirations, as well as provide economic and social benefits for the community," Debbie explained.

Our vision is to empower individuals to build the skills and independence they need to open up future opportunities.

Working with real people for real impact



Connecting with
JOB SEEKERS

130+

people placed in jobs*

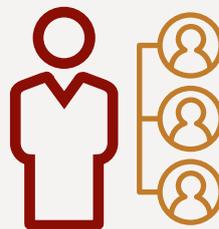
*since 1 July 2017



Connecting with
COMMUNITIES

32+

local communities



Connecting with
EMPLOYERS

90+

employer partnerships



Connecting with
SERVICE PARTNERS

50+

service partners



Job seekers build garden beds to beautify the main street frontage in Quilpie.



Handcrafted leatherwork from Blackall Lost Art job seekers.

Advocating a positive future for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

RESQ takes great pride in working with rural and remote area employers and community partners to create flexible activities and jobs.

"We recognise the incredible work and support of our current CDP partners. Through collaboration and projects, we share a commitment to creating social change in our communities." Debbie added.

Through collaboration and projects, we share a commitment to creating social change in our communities.

Uniting communities with long-term solutions

Community is at the heart of everything RESQ does. Together with its partners, RESQ identifies genuine opportunities and challenges that matter to local people. With this understanding, RESQ delivers real solutions, creating jobs and investment back into the community.

In the 2017–18 financial year, RESQ offered a diverse range of activities under CDP to upskill job seekers and support the work of local community groups.



The Wild Dog Exclusion Fencing Program



The Weeds of National Significance Eradication Program



The Lost Art Program

Working to build employment opportunities

RESQ has recently commenced as a Vocational Training and Employment Centre (VTEC) provider to connect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander job seekers, including early school leavers, with training tailored to specific employment opportunities.

The VTEC services both employers and job seekers across South West and Central West Queensland.

Under the VTEC initiative, RESQ provides career development and training services to prepare job seekers for ongoing employment. RESQ also partners with local services who provide mentoring, engagement and support to VTEC job seekers.

VTEC Consultant Julie Leithhead said the program helps to shape a positive future for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander job seekers and help bridge the employment gap.

"We're proud to be helping Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people access training, support and employment.

"From Winton through to Cunnamulla, employment can provide a pathway to build community capacity and help people achieve the future they choose."

VTEC Consultant Ross Mitchell said that dedicated consultants work with every job seeker, identifying the hurdles they face and accompanying them at every step of their employment journey.



Ross Mitchell is the VTEC Employment Consultant for South West Queensland.

Bringing services to remote areas

Access to Centrelink, Medicare and Child Support services is now easier for people living in rural and remote areas.

RESQ has been appointed to provide agent services for the Department of Human Services (DHS) in Blackall, helping locals access face-to-face support and self-service facilities.

RESQ Central West Regional Manager Jade Smith said they join a network of more than 340 highly trained agents across Australia.

"As agents, we help people in regional communities do business with the department and reach the myGov services they need, no matter where they live.

"We know how important it is for people in the area to have greater access to facilities and services," Jade emphasised.

When Blackall's previous agency faced possible closure, it left community members wondering if they would lose service access.

Local community members are relieved that these valued services have continued.

"Our centres are staffed by experienced customer service agents, who can provide assistance with a range of myGov matters.

"People visit our service agents to lodge claims for payments and get assistance checking the progress of their claims.

"Both our centres have computers, internet and dedicated fax and phone lines for claimants wishing to use self-service facilities. Our agents are always willing to help people find the information they need," Jade assured.

The Blackall office is RESQ's second DHS agency. The first agency is in Cunnamulla and provides access to a similar range of myGov services.

Image below: Blackall's new DHS agency.



1000 hectares reclaimed from weeds in Murweh Shire

The beginning of the year saw RESQ make a valuable contribution to the natural environments of Murweh Shire. Partnering with South West Natural Resource Management (SWNRM), the RESQ team sprayed 1000 hectares of land south-west of Charleville to help eradicate invasive cacti species and mother-of-millions.

RESQ Lead Supervisor John Bursle said the weed control effort would undoubtedly improve the health of the land.

"Just as importantly, we've helped protect downstream areas of the catchment by stopping these weeds from spreading and taking hold," John said.

Craig Alison from SWNRM said that they received funding for the project under the National Landcare Program, to help control Weeds of National Significance.

"Partnering with RESQ and their job seekers was a great outcome for this project. The on-ground results have been promising, with a reduction in weed pressure on Matters of National Environmental Significance in our region.

"We'll be looking to further our relationship with RESQ in the future for all types of environmental projects in South West Queensland. We want to engage with community members actively seeking employment opportunities," Craig emphasised.

RESQ South West Regional Manager Emma Liston said that the weed control project is one of the biggest projects RESQ has worked on.

"Our whole team is really proud to have made such a visible impact on our local environment.

"It took us nearly five months, but we're able to look at the land we've covered and see the results of our effort," she enthused.

While working on the project, team members* were trained and accredited to prepare and apply chemicals, and to control weeds. These practical skills will become a meaningful addition to the job seekers' resume.

**Job seekers used the skills gained through RESQ training to obtain employment on this particular project.*

Image below: RESQ job seekers examining a map of the target area for weed control.



Love of art rekindled at Charleville studio

Art and craft is being nurtured in RESQ's Charleville studio, in a program that has progressed from sharing skills and stories into a newly fledged business.

Job seekers create cultural items from raw materials, cutting and shaping didgeridoos, clap sticks and burls before painting them with Aboriginal, as well as general art pieces and wood craft.

RESQ supervisor Terry Leleca said that the program has encouraged job seekers to reconnect with their art, supported by others in the program.

"Over time, they can see their skills grow. That said, everything made here is celebrated and valued.

"There's now a shop attached to our studio, where locally crafted items and artwork are displayed and sold so artists receive an income for their work.

"We're also setting up stalls at local markets and shows," Terry advised.

The shop also showcases smaller woodwork and metalwork pieces produced by job seekers, such as cutting boards and painting stands. Job seekers even helped develop the infrastructure of the gallery itself.

Larger works from metalworkers and woodworkers have made their way into community spaces and services. Chairs, picnic tables and cupboards have been built to enhance workspaces and donated to the local kindergarten.

These contributions have been deeply appreciated by the community, but perhaps the most celebrated piece of craftsmanship was Santa's sleigh, which featured in Santa photographs across many Charleville homes last Christmas.

More highlights from Charleville

Our job seekers are proud of the many ways they've made a difference in Charleville.

- Maintaining grounds and facilities at the golf course.
- Establishing and maintaining community gardens.
- Renovating and creating a museum at the scout den.
- Building chain-link fences around historic sites.
- Painting the outdoor area at the gun club.
- Installing sprinkler systems at the gun club and small bore rifle range.
- Maintaining trees in the community.
- Refurbishing a trailer for the Rotary Club.

Working with the Cunnamulla community

A newly established community garden at the Cunnamulla work base has begun to thrive under the care of RESQ job seekers.

Community members provided guidance in selecting trees and seedlings, ensuring a focus on herbs, vegetables, fruit trees and flowering plants.

The garden is one of many activities run in partnership with the local community, many of whom are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

RESQ Lead Supervisor Richard Vider explained that this project has been made possible by the support of Cunnamulla Aboriginal Corporation for Health (CACH).

"Once the garden was established, local schools and childcare centres were encouraged to participate.

"The gumbi gumbi tree, bush lemons, cumquat, passionfruit, lemongrass and capsicum are just some of the things we're growing at the moment," Richard shared with excitement.

Job seekers have also worked alongside the Kooma Traditional Owners Association at the Murra Murra and Bendee Downs properties east of Cunnamulla.

On the properties, they were able to help with fencing and maintenance, as well as gain skills in the shearing shed.

RESQ is grateful for the opportunity to work with local employers and partners to develop meaningful projects and training for job seekers.

Image below: Job seekers will enjoy the fruits of their labour in Cunnamulla's community gardens.



Quality woodwork finds a home in Cunnamulla

There was plenty of fuel for wood stoves in Cunnamulla this year, thanks to the foresight of RESQ job seekers. In the early months of the year, wood was cut and prepared for sale in trailer loads.

It's just one of the ways that job seekers have gained skills and experience working with timber.

The local depot now houses a Lucas Mill, a portable timber sawmill that makes woodwork faster and more precise. It takes pride of place near the bench saws and double-sided planer.

Together, this array of equipment allows job seekers to experiment with a range of techniques in the 'woodshed'.

Lead Supervisor Richard Vider said that job seekers have the opportunity to learn from a qualified builder and carpenter.

"They're making everything from paper towel holders to picnic benches. There's coasters, plaques, bar tops and even wishing wells," RESQ Activity Supervisor Daryl Coustley added.

Many of the timber products are available for sale in RESQ's head office, with the profits returning to the craftspeople.

The job seekers also put their developing skills to good use in the community, helping local elders by repairing homes and furniture. On one occasion, a new front door was installed and the old door repurposed to become the dining table, helping preserve the history of the family home.

More highlights from Cunnamulla

Our job seekers are proud to have made a positive impact and gained employable skills.

- Laying turf for Paroo Shire Council.
- Painting and maintenance at football and show grounds, and the golf course.
- Landscaping gardens at Cunnamulla Aboriginal Corporation for Health (CACH).
- Painting and carpeting the RESQ office.
- Maintaining lawns and gardens for local residents.
- Sewing and embroidery of handmade craft.
- Weed spraying at Wyandra for Paroo Shire Council.
- Maintaining the riverwalk in Cunnamulla.

Hotel restoration brings culture to Blackall

Hard work and passion has transformed the once-derelict Bushmans Hotel into Blackall's new cultural hub.

RESQ is proud to have partnered with Red Ridge (Interior Queensland) Ltd to help restore this historically significant building into Blackall's first art gallery.

This is one of many successful joint ventures for RESQ and Red Ridge, a regional organisation working to strengthen communities through participation in the arts.

The Bushmans Hotel was built in 1891 using handmade bricks burned on the banks of the Barcoo River. Since being decommissioned, the hotel has remained abandoned and neglected.

Red Ridge, with the support of five RESQ job seekers, set out to repurpose the old building and bring life back into its foundations.

The RESQ team took ownership of the project, dedicating hours to stripping and painting the walls, and installing the gallery tracking.

The team worked alongside Activity Supervisor Gerard Bell, and a local builder, who shared valuable knowledge and hands-on skills training throughout the project.

Red Ridge Manager Louise Campbell confided that this project would never have happened without the help of RESQ's CDP job seekers.

"Thanks to their involvement, the community has a renewed interest in the building.

"We've received additional private investment for the project, which has allowed us to extend renovations to the front of the building," Louise added excitedly.

In celebration of Blackall's 150 years, the Bushmans Gallery will be housing an upcoming photographic exhibition, showcasing stories of the local community.

"This exhibition will also pay tribute to the RESQ job seekers* involved in the hotel's restoration, seen through caricatures on the front of the building.

"These men helped turn the building from nothing into something. This was one of those projects nobody wanted to touch, and they've made people stop and take notice," praised Louise.

"They should be extremely proud of what they've accomplished for this community."

**At the end of the project, one of the job seekers was approached for a full-time job in Blackall based on the work they had done for the hotel.*

Arts and crafts bring energy to the Longreach community

Once an old ambulance building, the Longreach Arts and Crafts Centre is now home to a vibrant local arts community.

RESQ job seekers are helping the Longreach community preserve this heritage-listed building through activities.

Job seekers have helped renovate both the upstairs and downstairs flooring in the centre. They've also worked alongside gallery employees, talking to visitors, setting up workshops and supporting administrative tasks.

Activity Supervisor Pamela Read said job seekers gained experience in customer service, as well as learning a variety of new skills, including sewing, pottery and textile dyeing.

"We're happy to be building community interest in art, while job seekers gain employable skills and mentoring.

"The space has become an essential community hub. It's a place for people of all ages and backgrounds to interact and achieve positive social and economic outcomes," Pamela remarked.

"We invite all job seekers to create artwork for public sale, with the profits returning back to the centre."

Yard work in Winton

Life is a little easier for elderly residents in Winton, with RESQ job seekers providing ongoing help to maintain yards.

RESQ Supervisor Lawrence Monize boasted that his team of up to six job seekers regularly help with pruning, gardening, lawn mowing and edge trimming.

"People are really appreciative of the help. In fact, Winton's buzzing with praise for the work done by RESQ job seekers," he observed.

The local Home and Community Care office coordinates requests from the community, ensuring that RESQ job seekers are on-hand to help where they're needed.

More highlights from the region

Longreach

Maintaining the Garden of Youth.

Muttaborra

Constructing fences for a wildlife carer.

Winton

Constructing fences and gates at the motorsport club.

Repairing flood damage at the golf course.

Cleaning and maintaining stables and facilities at the showground.

Images below: Proud participants reflect on work accomplished for the new Bushmans Gallery.



More highlights from the region

Augathella

Maintaining garden beds in the main street.

Repairing and painting horse jumps for the pony club.

Gardening at the bowls club.

Painting the verandah of the local police station.

Quilpie

Erecting timber screens and maintaining lawns and gardens at the bowls club.

Painting buildings and establishing gardens at the race club.

Maintaining lawns and cleaning at local churches.

Establishing a greenhouse for fruit and vegetable growing.

Mitchell

Maintaining the Maranoa River Walk with Baringa Action Group.

Welding and weed spraying at the combined sports complex for Maranoa Regional Council.

Landscaping and garden maintenance for the Mitchell Spa Complex picnic areas.

Fencing and refurbishing horse jumps for the Maranoa Pony Club.

Constructing irrigate test plots for parthenium pathogen transfer for the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Spraying and controlling weeds on the Riverwalk Yumba Heritage Trail.

Grounds maintenance and upkeep of the Mitchell Rodeo Grounds.

Honouring community with work in Augathella

A handmade bench has been proudly crafted by RESQ job seekers as a tribute to Augathella local, Mrs Anne Frazer.

The bench is now in place at Augathella State School, in recognition of Mrs Frazer's outstanding contribution to the school. She worked as the school's cleaner for 23 years before retiring earlier this year.

A much-admired member of the community, Mrs Frazer is known for her love of the town and generous community spirit.

RESQ Supervisor Terry Sealy said that the bench was constructed entirely from cypress slabs. A plaque has been added to the recognise Mrs Frazer by name.

"We were all excited and very proud to be part of the construction of the outdoor chair," Terry expressed.

"We spent 20 hours building this memorial chair, making sure it was perfect."

Job seekers in the woodworking program also replaced wood in public benches throughout the town and crafted trophies to be awarded in local sporting events.

Quilpie kindergarten project brings smiles

Preschoolers now have more opportunity to get their hands dirty after RESQ job seekers helped revitalise painting easels and sandboxes.

Repaired and brightly painted, the equipment is attracting fresh interest from children eager to create sketches and sandcastles.

Job seekers also brought smiles to local faces when they delivered handcrafted Christmas trees to local businesses.

The timber trees were built from wooden pallets and painted green, before being erected outside shopfronts to share the festive spirit.

The positive impact of the team was recognised on Australia Day when they were nominated for an award for their contribution to the community.

Tourists enjoy Mitchell's attractions at their best

Pride in Mitchell's tourist sights has surged as RESQ works closely with community groups to showcase local attractions and culturally significant sites.

The Mitchell Yumba is the site of an old Aboriginal camp. A museum and interpretive trail at the Yumba helps tell the story of the region's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

RESQ Supervisor Kel Woodall commented that he regularly takes a team of up to ten job seekers to help maintain the Yumba grounds.

"We mow, clear fallen trees, spray weeds, and help maintain the walking trail.

"There was real excitement when NITV came to the Yumba in May to film an interview with Aboriginal elder, Aunty Lynette. The RESQ team were invited to a barbecue and some people were even interviewed for the documentary," Kel exclaimed.

RESQ has also helped maintain other tourist attractions, including the Mitchell Spa and Maranoa Art Gallery.

"At the Spa, we help Baringa Action Group maintain the grounds so that tourists can enjoy a coffee out on the deck or visit the hot or cold spa," added Kel.

"We've also installed displays at the art gallery and helped refurbish the neighbouring cottages so they can be used for studios and art workshops."

Images top to bottom: Job seekers repaired and painted the rodeo gates at Mitchell's combined sports complex. Concrete is poured at Mitchell Spa.



Click go the shears at **Cunnamulla student camp**



RESQ is investing heavily to help more young people gain work experience and training through their Youth Engagement Strategy.

RESQ works with employers, schools and community organisations to help attract and engage young people, develop their skills, and successfully transition them into sustainable employment.

This year, RESQ lent support to The Blue Light Shearing Program, aimed at guiding young people towards positive futures.

The project invites Year 10, 11 and 12 students in Cunnamulla and the surrounding districts to learn shearing and wool handling skills as part of a school-based Certificate II in Rural Operations.

In June, students from St George High School, Charleville State High School and Cunnamulla State High School joined program founders, Carolyn Ramsey of Cunnamulla State High School and Cunnamulla Aboriginal Police Liaison Officer and shearing instructor Laurie Bateman, for work experience at 'Dundoo Station', a rural property near Yowah. They were also accompanied by Constable Dean Standfield from Cunnamulla Police.

The five-day training camp saw students involved in all board duties, as well as sheep shearing and learning animal handling skills from Laurie and Employment Consultant and Wool Industry Trainer, Cozette Branfield.

The stock and woolshed were generously loaned by property owner, Scott Haig.

By day five, students could identify and date different types of wool and independently crutch and shear a sheep. The dorper sheep were safely sheared and the wool pressed and specified, much to the delight of the trainers and property owner.

RESQ's Cozette Branfield revealed that the students displayed a level of maturity beyond their years, adapting without complaint to the heat, dust and smells of the shearing lifestyle.

"Mastering different skills helps teenagers build confidence and problem-solve. These are the same skills you need to find and keep employment.

"At the end of each day, a shearing singlet was awarded to the student who had demonstrated qualities of leadership, respect and encouragement. And to be honest, we could have handed them out to everyone.

"RESQ is proud to support The Blue Light Shearing Program and be part of changing the direction of young people's lives," Cozette concluded.



At the end of each day, a shearing singlet was awarded to the student who had demonstrated qualities of leadership, respect and encouragement. And to be honest, we could have handed them out to everyone.

A welcome return for a much-loved employee



Crispina Farrant
The Buffs, Kids Club Coordinator

Crispina Farrant not only found permanent employment through RESQ but was welcomed back to her former Mount Isa workplace.

The former Kids Club Coordinator for The Buffs Club in Mount Isa had been unemployed for seven years, having left her job to care for her terminally ill husband.

When RESQ Central West Regional Manager

Jade Smith first met Crispina, she was was living alone in Longreach following the death of her husband.

Jade worked with Crispina, helping her relocate back to Mount Isa and organise the uniforms and training required for the job.

Throughout her job search, Crispina demonstrated determination and dedication, attending every job seeker appointment.

With the support of RESQ, Crispina is back working at The Buffs Club and has a new-found sense of personal connection.

Crispina confided that returning to work was a nostalgic feeling.

"Revisiting The Buffs Club felt like I was in my second home. I'm back in the job that I love most, working with kids and being with people. I've rekindled friendships again.

"As I'm an outgoing sort of person, I love to interact with people. I decided to relocate back to Mount Isa and as the saying goes, the rest is history," beamed Crispina.

Revisiting The Buffs Club felt like I was in my second home. I'm back in the job that I love most, working with kids and being with people. I've rekindled friendships again.

Embracing challenges with a smile



Kaylah Smith
Employment Coordinator

RESQ employee Kaylah Smith isn't one to shy away from a challenge. In fact, it's one of the reasons she enjoys coming to work every day.

"No day is the same when you work for RESQ. There's always something crazy and wonderful happening. I'm challenged every day, in all areas," Kaylah enthused.

Kaylah has been working for RESQ as an

Outreach Employment Consultant for nearly two years. As a Longreach local, she'd always been interested in working for the organisation

"When you live in a small town, everyone talks. I'd heard about the positive work RESQ was doing and I wanted to be part of the team and help contribute to the outcomes."

In her role, Kaylah supports job seekers in Aramac, Barcaldine, Isisford, Winton and Muttaburra into the workforce and helps them stay employed.

"I'm out on the road 2-3 days every week meeting with job seekers to talk about their job search, employment and activities attendance.

"I've been able to build a great rapport with the job seekers in my area. I'm pretty down-to-earth. If they've got a problem, they know they can call or email me anytime and I'll do what I can to help them," she explained.

While solving problems is part of the job, Kaylah experienced a particularly challenging day in the office this year.

"It was Friday afternoon and three phone calls came in from different employers looking for job seekers to start work the following Monday," she recalled.

"I was able to liaise, market and place three of our registered job seekers into work, and organise their personal protective equipment, before 5 pm that same day. It was hectic but a really proud moment for me," she smiled.

With her wealth of experience and knowledge in the Community Development Programme (CDP), Kaylah now trains new team members in Employment Consultant roles for RESQ across Central West Region.

"I just love the team I'm part of, there is never a dull moment! Some days are hard, but it's part of what makes it so rewarding."

Wandering but not lost

RESQ Acting Regional Manager Kerryn Betts, or Gypsy as she's better known, recently drove the long stretch between Longreach and Cunnamulla to put down some roots in the community.

For someone nicknamed 'Gypsy', it's not surprising to learn that she's mostly lived a nomadic life.

"I've always moved around, travelling from town to town managing hotels and motels," she grinned.

"I need to be challenged otherwise I get bored. As soon as I get things sorted, I need to move onto something new to fix."

Gypsy started as a receptionist with RESQ in the Longreach office before moving into an Outreach Employment Consultant role. She said it was RESQ's reputation that initially drew her to the organisation.

"I knew some people in RESQ and admired what they did. I love helping people and RESQ gives you the opportunity to help people in a way that really matters," she explained.

Gypsy is now Acting Regional Manager in Cunnamulla, a new role she is extremely excited about.

"The Cunnamulla community has been amazing. They've welcomed me with open arms," she beamed.

"It's a role where I can sink my teeth into community development and engagement.

Gypsy works closely with council, Lifeline, Cunnamulla Aboriginal Corporation for Health (CACH), Centrelink and many other organisations to link job seekers with the right services.

"Working in this role has been a real eye-opener. Being a small community, there are limited job opportunities. And as a result, we see a lot of people with emotional and social wellbeing challenges.

"I'm passionate about making sure our community has access to education and support services, so they know how best to look after themselves and their families," she emphasised.

But it's the connections that Gypsy has made with the local community that has impacted on her most, both professionally and personally.

"I'm so chuffed to have the opportunity to make these connections. It's something I didn't expect, to be honest.

"Those moments when young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who barely looked at me when we first met, finally look me in the eye and share their dreams. That's what gives me goosebumps," Gypsy concluded.



Kerryn Betts "Gypsy"
RESQ Acting Regional Manager

I'm passionate about making sure our community has access to education and support services, so they know how best to look after themselves and their families.





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RESQ is proud to partner with rural and regional 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 making a positive change.

Photography throughout this review has been generously supplied by Red Ridge Interior Qld, Fiona Lake, Cunnamulla State School and the RESQ team.