



# RESQ

RAPAD EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

QUEENSLAND



## 2016 ANNUAL REVIEW



# Our Region

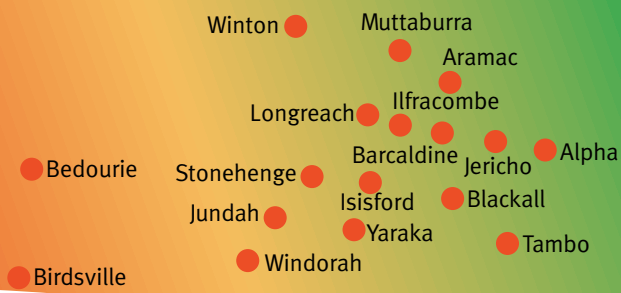


Rapad Employment Services Queensland (RESQ) is one of 60 national Community Development Program (CDP) providers, covering one of the most vast and diverse of the geographic regions with an area of almost 400,000km<sup>2</sup> and just under 12,000 residents from a variety of backgrounds.

Six Regional Councils support the organisation including Longreach Regional Council, Winton Shire Council, Barcaldine Regional Council, Blackall Regional Council, Barcoo Shire Council and Diamantina Shire Council.

Just fifteen staff (nine permanent and six casual) are employed to cover this huge region and its diverse employment and training needs. They worked hard to service their communities, offering programs in 17 communities, and worked with 330 job seekers in the year.

Photography throughout this review generously supplied by Lydia Burton, Ash Moore and Blythe Moore ABC Rural, Lucy Murray ABC News and Outback Pics Longreach [www.outbackpics.com.au](http://www.outbackpics.com.au)



## Board Profiles



David Arnold

**David Arnold**  
**General Manager, Remote Area Planning and Development Board (RAPAD)**

With over 10 years as General Manager at 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 through his involvement on the RESQ Board.



Chris Marin

# Chairman's Message



**Mr Rob Chandler**

**Mayor of Barcaldine, Chairman of RAPAD and RESQ.**

RAPAD Employment Services Queensland, better known as RESQ, was developed through a joint partnership between The Remote Area Planning and Development Board (RAPAD) and Employment Services Queensland (ESQ). Our RESQ partnership has been delivering a successful program to service the Australian Government's Community Development Program (CDP).

2016 saw RESQ's joint venture partners and funding models settle into more stable routine. RESQ has continued to meet the needs of our 17 communities through the strong supportive attention of our Federal government partners and the growing confidence and credibility of RESQ with our private sector partners.

It's still all about improved school attendance, real jobs and safer communities for both indigenous and non-indigenous people of the Central West.

The Board is proud to lead our highly skilled staff, with General Manager Tony Rayner providing the strategic link between our direction and the implementation of RESQ programs and activities. As testament to our sound management and good outcomes, we are being proactively approached to participate in other programs that aim to grow employment in our communities. I am very proud to see our programs attract larger partners and often multi-partner support, providing leverage for our community partnerships through a variety of resources.

The Sheep and Wool Pavillion at Longreach Showgrounds, Wild Dog Exclusion Fence and Weeds of National Significance Projects demonstrate how these programs can provide strong outcomes for individuals, communities, landholders and the environment, across the entire Central West.

Reading about successful job seekers in this Annual Review brings our achievements to a personal level proving again that a job creates a productive and content life.

In 2016 we will continue to advocate for consistent long term solutions for training and employment across the Central West and persistently try and educate decision makers on our challenges and needs.

**Chris Martin**  
**Chief Executive Officer, Indigenous Job Connections (IJC)**

Chris Martin has worked in Indigenous service provision across the Northern Territory and regional Queensland for the past 30 years. He is passionate about Indigenous empowerment and for the past eight years has led IJC (an all-indigenous led organisation) toward financial and operational independence. IJC's involvement in establishing RESQ was another of those steps for his stakeholders.



**Chris Hamilton**

**Chris Hamilton,**  
**Board Director**

An active member of Legacy and ex-serviceman with past operational deployments, Chris Hamilton has extensive skills in governance and strategy, team management, youth engagement, training and employment. He has also, for many years, led a major and successful Job Services Australia (JSA) contract provider.

# General Manager's Message



With three years of community service outcomes under our belt, RAPAD Employment Services Queensland (RESQ) has successfully implemented the Federal Government's Community Development Program (CDP) throughout 2015-16 with a peak engagement of 330 job seekers.

As part of the CDP contract our team have met with and developed individual job and career plans for all 330 registered job seekers in our 17 communities across the Central West. Employment consultants discussed the career aspirations of each job seeker and mapped out a work plan to assist them gain practical and applied skills to build their confidence, knowledge and preparation for work.

Experienced supervisors have then worked closely with each job seeker to provide mentoring, training and individual support, allowing each participant to grow at their own pace.

Widespread winter rains across many areas has brought renewed optimism and confidence in the economy, with many primary producers looking to restock and rebuild our vital agricultural industry.

Our efforts to skill people ready to work has paid off with job seekers on fencing, general maintenance and civil operation projects in particular, being sought after for jobs. Casual employment in tourism, hospitality and retail sectors has also lifted and RESQ is proud to have placed 30% of our talent pool into casual and permanent employment across the Central West.

The commitment of our team to bring projects to fruition and the enthusiasm of participants to improve their lives, when an opportunity is presented, is impressive.

The RESQ team have developed and activated a diverse range of Community Projects throughout the Central West, and where possible support local community groups who struggle to afford repairs and maintenance.

Large multi-partner projects like the Weeds of National Significance Project and the Wild Dog Exclusion Fencing Project have been recognised as priority infrastructure programs for the region by both State and Federal governments. Other small but impactful activities like upgrading the Ilfracombe Race Course amenities and renovating the Windorah Catholic Church provide much needed community infrastructure. All delivering outcomes for participants and their communities.

You can read about how these projects are supporting communities in this Annual Review.

Stable funding, and RESQ's leadership team's regular communication with the Federal Government as the funding provider, has provided a solid platform to invest in strategic long term projects that assist both job seekers and regional communities achieve productive outcomes for the region's future.

**Mr Tony Rayner,**  
**General Manager, RAPAD Employment Services Queensland (RESQ)**

## Again and Again...



RESQ's Weeds of National Significance eradication program has become the backbone of the organisation's projects.

Program co-ordinator Clayton Dolgner explained that not many projects get to keep going for three years.

"Normally, funding, priorities, or people change", he said. "But this project isn't just something to keep unemployed people busy."

"The Weed Project is a nationally significant program needing our men working with Council and Government funds to tackle the ongoing infestation of valuable grazing land."

To broaden the reach of the program, RESQ has invested in six side-by-side 4WD ATV 'buggies' that have given the program the ability to provide a professional and functional field team eradicating weeds across western Queensland. Doing work that graziers and Councils don't have the resources to undertake.

"The partnership between RESQ, our regional Councils, Desert Channels NRM Group, Biosecurity Queensland and rural landholders over three years, has tackled large areas including the Longreach Common, Thomson River Catchment and this year Muttaborra Common", Clayton expanded.

"The first time we tackle an area", he said, "we might be spraying ground not weeded for 20 years and it will take 2700L of spray to cover the infestation."

"This year we have managed to get back to some areas to tackle regrowth and the same area only used 370L of weed

spray. We really are making a dint in an ongoing landcare problem."

"Prickly Acacia, Rubbervine, Cactus, Parkinsonia, Mother of Millions, all are the last things to survive in a drought and the first things to start growing when the rains come - one of the reasons they become weeds."

Clayton's enthusiasm was evident as he continued, "Job seekers gain training, experience and employment from their involvement. It's a huge demanding job, but one that teaches life-time skills to rural workers, not just how to spray weeds safely, but the bigger picture around the impact their work has on the viability of the land."

"Our weeding this year has seen us spraying the upper catchment of the Lake Eyre Basin. This strategic control program has provided a buffer corridor, preventing weed seed migrating downstream and infesting valuable grazing lands. Even more important with the drought breaking rains we've welcomed in the area."



## Wild Dog Fencing Provides Long Term Job Skills

With the wild dog exclusion fence completed along the boundary of the Longreach Pastoral College and Longreach Common, RESQ has taken its successful Wild Dog Exclusion Fencing training program out to bigger pastures.

Providing the labour for Longreach Rodeo Association to fence their special lease in 2016, a co-operative effort was undertaken with neighbour "Old Dahra" Station. The Station provided materials for the project and 5km of common boundary was used to train a group of job seekers in fencing skills. Private fencing contractors across the Central West have said thanks for the new local skill base, employing the successful participants on their fencing crews.

Both State and Federal governments have indicated this program is a high priority to meet their bio-security objectives, reducing feral animal pressure on the environment and allowing pastures to become balanced through better management of grazing needs.

Work in previous years building cluster exclusion fences in key areas is paying off. Recent rains have started improving pastures and the fencing allows landholders to control feral dogs and pigs managing grazing pressure to improve productivity and profitability. The program has

also provided better native animal outcomes with small animals, like the hopping mouse, successfully breeding again in these protected areas and kangaroo numbers being easier to manage.

Trainees have come away with employable skills including knot tying, wire straining, levelling site posts, driving posts, working safely with barbed wire and tying prefab; in addition to regaining good work habits and communication skills.



# Job Seekers Renovate



## Wool Pavilion For Queensland Sheep Show

The Longreach Showgrounds Sheep and Wool Pavilion has been refurbished by a group of RESQ job seekers who are proud of the work they have done and the community contribution they have made.

RESQ program supervisor Robert Cutting gave some perspective.

“There must be 1,000 gates they have painted by hand, so it was a big job”, he said.

From November to May, Rob and his team of local job seekers trained and worked together to renovate the Sheep and Wool Pavilion in preparation for the Longreach Show.

This year the Show hosted the Queensland Sheep Show, so all eyes were going to be on the results of this training program.

“The pavilion was built in the 1950’s and hadn’t had a refurbishment since then” Rob explained. “It was dark and dirty and full of old gear and needed a complete overhaul.”

“We cleaned out all the old manure and hay, bits of steel, gates, forgotten broken equipment - you name it. Then the team got into the real work of making everything ‘new’ again”, he smiled.

“The job seekers took real pride in this project, they knew their friends and family would see their work and what they were doing was going to make a difference to their community.”

“Meaningful work makes a huge difference to someone’s outlook”, he continued.

“They took out all the old dirt and put crusher dust and hay in the pens. They cleaned down and painted the walls and sanded and painted all those gates”, he said.

“Some of the guys got some training welding and doing some basic carpentry to help with repairs.”

For job seeker Cameron Hoskin, this project has been his biggest achievement.

“I was in charge of doing the quick shears area,” he said. “I am really proud about it. It is the biggest achievement that I have done in my life so far. It is just something I can be proud of because I have helped my community out.”

The community were just as impressed, with exhibitors at the Longreach Show commenting it was the best they’d seen the pavilion.

RESQs General Manager Tony Rayner said the refurbishment of the wool pavilion was symbolic of the area trying to rebuild its sheep and wool industry.

“Agriculture remains the major economic driver in western Queensland in conjunction with tourism,” he said. “With the good rain this year there is a renewed focus on restocking the sheep numbers.”

Tony said he was proud of the work the job seekers had done.

“They have learnt some great skills that have helped them get work. In fact, quite a few of the job seekers that have been here over the last few months have left to gain work and they have been successfully placed in work, which is great.”

“Since the show, the pavilion has been used during wet weather as a work shed for training job seekers in metal work, wood work, fabrication and basic engineering”, he continued.

“Having a large area of flat concrete with good ventilation has given us an ideal work area, and it’s in a complex the job seekers have helped to transform.”

“A good demonstration of what goes around, comes around!”



Cameron Hoskin shows off the quick shears area



Drew Eric painting signs for the pavilion



The pavilion after refurbishment



Award winning sheep enjoy new facilities during the Longreach Show

# Pied Piper Of The Central West

Lawrence Monize, an employment program supervisor with RESQ since 2014, drives between houses early on a Thursday morning collecting job seeker Work For The Dole participants.

They're off to the Longreach Showgrounds to paint temporary fencing, getting the arena ready for this weekend's gymkhana.

As he picks up each participant Lawrence checks on their welfare. How's Things? 'Whatchabinupta'? Then a honk outside someone's place who's slept in 'Come on hurry it up'... Everyone's on site, paint brush in hand by 7.30am.

"Righto, let's see if we can get this side of the arena done by the time I get back with more paint. Does anyone need a new brush while I'm at it? You all got sunblock on? Insect repellent?"

"Let's take advantage of the cool morning and put in the effort early", Lawrence encourages before taking off to get paint and another participant.

"Over the years I've helped all sorts, do all sorts", he laughed. "But seriously, I get in and get dirty with them, earn their respect and then we get things done."

"We build fences, spray weeds, mow and slash, paint, weld, clean, you name it - it doesn't really matter what - everything teaches skills, and everything teaches work habits."



Lawrence Monize surrounded by job seekers painting fences at the Longreach Showgrounds.

"I try and get the job seekers in front of employers on projects, teach them how to do the job and just as importantly - ask for the job."

"Employers want people who know how to show up, know how to get in and work."

"I'm so proud when I hear one of my participants has got a proper job", Lawrence said, his head high and eyes bright. "I had eight blokes in Winton registered and I've only got two left now - the other six have jobs as fencing contractors, one's a barman."

He continued, his passion fired up "It just shows the Community Development Program is working for our community. Three years in and we've had such good outcomes. It's working. Giving people something to do gets the impetus going, and creates employable job seekers."

"If I can make a statement to the funders in Government - don't take the program away!"

# Determined Job Seeker

Enthusiastic job seeker Cameron Hoskin, from Longreach, has been actively working toward a full time position since signing on with RESQ three years ago.

"RESQ have done lots for me over the last three years, I've got some great training opportunities, some part time work and lots of moral support", Cameron said.

"It's been a tough few years with little work on offer, even if you want it", he explained.

"Labouring work was the first to go as the drought got worse and RESQ got me up and out, learning some new skills to make me look more attractive to potential employers."

"I've learned all sorts of good skills to keep me working around Longreach - rural operations, weed spraying, painting, basic carpentry skills, mowing and slashing. I've done my Responsible Service of Alcohol and Responsible Service of Gambling tickets too."

"I recently completed a Certificate III in Civil Construction operating front end loaders, bob cats, rollers and excavators. The theory was pretty serious stuff. And to practise I was involved in digging a new landfill dump."



"I'm really interested in Civil Operations. I've got my hopes set on a job with a road crew", he continued.

"RESQ have been so good to me. They've pulled me into line when I needed it, and made me take myself seriously. But we still have fun while we work."

## Little Town

### Hosts Big Hearts

Ilfracombe is just a small spot on a long highway, but it proudly hosted the Burrumbuttock Hay Runners in April, when semi-trailers from NSW and Victoria brought 258 trucks pulling 406 trailers, carrying nearly 14,000 bales of hay, to provide relief to drought-stricken graziers.

And true to form RESQ's job seekers were in the thick of it, helping to prepare the Ilfracombe Race Course and Martin Forrest Centre Oval for the influx.

Toilets were cleaned and painted and turf laid as part of the bigger effort.



RESQ Supervisor Lawrence Monize shows off the refurbished toilet block at Ilfracombe Racecourse



### Stonehenge School Gets Green Facelift

Tiny Stonehenge School 150km south of Longreach was badly in need of some lawn, with the drought leaving the playground a dusty expanse.

Stonehenge P&C approached RESQ for some assistance and a group of job seekers from Longreach came to the rescue.

The team from RESQ drove to Stonehenge and over several days prepared the base and installed a large area of synthetic turf.

The eight students and their teacher were full of praise for the team, as it gave them a dust free and cool place to relax and play outside of the classroom.

It has also made grounds maintenance easier and improved water efficiency.

It is through small projects such as this that job seekers can learn new skills while helping the community.

## Staff Profile - Jade Smith

RESQ Employment Outcomes Officer Jade Smith is one of the original crew. She was at the desk on day one when no-one knew how things would turn out and it was a gamble to take a job with this new job services provider.

"I'm so proud to have been on the team since the beginning. We've made a huge impact on our community. It took 18 months to get people to listen and see what we had to offer", she said.

"We had to get some runs on the board, build rapport with job seekers, and deliver outcomes on projects", she continued.

"Now we are hitting our straps. The last six months we can barely cope with demand. It's fantastic!"

"People know where to come to get community projects activated, find a job... find a job seeker...", she enthused.

"I firmly believe we are in demand because we deliver."

"Just recently a recruitment company from Townsville rang needing short term, short notice labour hire to 'bump in and bump out' the Troy Cassar-Daley concert here in Longreach. We were able to refer four job seekers and the company was very happy with the work."

"Since then we've had other outside companies come to us. We're getting a name, a reputation, which is great."

"And being a one-stop shop in the region makes it easy for employers, job seekers, newcomers, community organisations - just come to us and if we can't help you ourselves, we can point you in the right direction."

"I think that's what I love most about this job - seeing

people blossom, gain confidence, open up and find their self-confidence, become independent - not just for themselves, but from the system", Jade explained.

"Turning up at a project, learning some skills, getting a job, keeping a job - it all makes a difference", she said.

"Employers need support too, and that's just as important. Helping them with entitlements, making sure the person they've taken on has everything they need to do a good job for them."

"In the end I have to look that employer in the eye at the supermarket or on the footy sidelines, I want to be confident I've done the best I can to make the employee/ employer match work."

Jade wrapped up with an enthusiastic smile "I'm looking forward to the next year, we've got some exciting projects in the pipeline and with the rain comes more work and better times for everyone."



# Old Hospital

## Given New Life

The Dr Arratta Memorial Muttaborra Hospital Museum received a makeover this year from a group of job seekers from Longreach, Aramac and Muttaborra led by skilled carpenter and supervisor Gerard Bell.

Museum Co-ordinator Butter McClymont said the popular tourism attraction looks a million dollars after its refurbishment.

“What a transformation! Our warmest thanks for all the help. The museum is on the Up!”

The museum was established to recognise the work of early doctor surgeon Dr Arratta and his matron wife, Mabel Watkins, who single-handedly looked after the region for



35 years from 1925, for many years without electricity or refrigeration. With limited funding in recent years parts of the building became unsafe for visitors.

Barcaldine Regional Council provided materials and RESQ brought in the labour to undertake a variety of repairs including building a new verandah.

Job seekers learned valuable basic carpentry skills and construction techniques and once the works were completed job seekers were given the opportunity to gain further experience as tour guides showing visitors around the museum.

Two very varied sets of skills from one project.



A beautiful new verandah gives the museum a new lease on life



# Girls Can Do Anything

Local Longreach school leaver Amelia Coxon landed her dream job as a Butcher's Apprentice this year after traveling as far as Charters Towers and Townsville looking for a start.

Amelia heard on the grapevine Cornett's IGA in Longreach was looking for an apprentice. “It was great to have a job come up so close to home”, she said.

Cornett's IGA Butcher manager Wayne Little said he was very pleased to have a new apprentice, and to have secured someone of Amelia's aptitude was even better.

“Having a woman on the team has added an extra dimension to how we work”, he said. “She often thinks of things we men might not think of.”

Amelia had some work experience in a butchery on the family station, and had worked in the kitchen of a local restaurant, so she knew the work was what she wanted.

“I did my three month probation and now I'm a fully indentured apprentice”, she said.

“I love going to work every day. It's so skilful to use every bit of a beast and have no waste”, Amelia smiled.



Amelia Coxon and IGA Longreach Butcher Manager Wayne Little at work

“Some of the heavy lifting and knife sharpening has been hard to start, but my upper body strength improves every day and I'm finding it easier the more I practise”, she added.

“Wayne has been a good teacher and he doesn't let me get away with anything, especially safety.”

Amelia's face lit up as she told of her dream to open a paddock to plate boutique restaurant on the family's 'Kateroy' Station, bringing together her skills as a Jillaroo, waitress and butcher.

# Actions Speak

## Louder Than Words

Indigenous reconciliation is about community working together; and Vikki Punch is the woman tasked with linking her school community to the broader Longreach community successfully.

Our Lady's Catholic Primary School in Longreach wanted to make their Reconciliation Action Plan more than a report on a shelf so they advertised for an Indigenous Education Liaison Officer.

A parent at the school for seven years, Vikki Punch saw the opportunity and approached RESQ, her job services provider, for some help with her application.

Employment Consultant Nikki Gay helped Vikki with her application, which she was able to prepare using the computers and resources at the RESQ office.

A few weeks later Vikki was in her dream job.

Vikki explained that her role includes implementing the school's Reconciliation Action Plan with the support of a committee made up of staff and parents.

"Really it's all very practical and not intimidating at all", Vikki said. "We are all learning all the time."

"I organised the whole school to get involved in NAIDOC Week this year, there was a street parade and the whole school marched. I was so proud."

"We have 20 indigenous students in the school of 106-120 kids - it goes up and down a bit depending on parents moving around for work and such", she explained.



Vikki Punch with Our Lady's Catholic Primary School Principal Nicole de Vries enjoying time with two of the school's children - Jeffo King and Katie de Vries

"While I work with individual kids in class with reading, English and such, it's just as important for me to be able to see the whole picture - work with families - what's going on at home as well as school."

Vikki's caring nature came out as she continued, "I might help one family understand about uniforms, another it might be attendance, but there is always something bigger in the background and these little things are my clue to helping out."

"I just keep the communication open and provide support. It gives the kids and their families confidence and lets them know school is on their side."

## Glory Days

Honey floor boards shine with early morning sunshine and gum leaves whisper in the breeze outside. It is not hard to see God in this peaceful place.

The historic Windorah Catholic Church glows with the results of work done by the RESQ job seekers and their supervisor over the past twelve months.

Churches such as this one play a vital role bringing together isolated communities for weddings, christenings and funerals.

The 100 year old building was in desperate need of renovation inside and out to make it both structurally sound and comfortable to worship in.

Job seekers were surprised and pleased to discover a most beautiful timber floor under years of dust and old floor coverings. Their efforts to sand and polish the boards paid off and the floor is now a highlight of the little church.

Gardens were also replanted and future job seekers will be involved in the ongoing development of the gardens as a peaceful space for reflection.



# Partnership

## Achieves Goals

Longreach Regional Council and RESQ work together on many community projects, with the Council providing materials and RESQ job seekers providing trainee labour.

Longreach Regional Council CEO Ian Bodill said it is a productive partnership.

“Council is constantly under pressure to provide more community services and this way we can achieve a double positive”, Mr Bodill said.

“Our partnership with RESQ allows us to offer opportunities to job seekers under skilled supervision to implement community priorities.”

“There have been some fantastic projects over the years.” General Manager of RESQ Tony Rayner agreed.

“One of our most successful projects this year was the refurbishment of the Sheep and Wool Pavillion at the Longreach Showgrounds”, Mr Rayner said.

“The total project cost around \$60,000, but without our job seekers labour the project just couldn't have been completed in time for the show”, he said.

“And with the hosting of the Queensland Sheep Show at the time, our job seekers skills were on show too with potential employers seeing the skill of their labour and the worth of their efforts.”

Mr Bodill explained one project had been ongoing for several years.

“It seems a small thing, but the ongoing refurbishment and maintenance of Ilfracombe's Machinery Mile is a huge contribution to our tourist infrastructure.”



“Help from some young job seekers sanding and painting the displayed machinery has been valuable”, he explained.

With rain finally arriving in the region this year, Council has been put under increasing pressure for green area maintenance. Their crews pushed to the limit to keep gardens and road verges mown and maintained.

“RESQ's crews have been invaluable giving our maintenance team a hand with the increased work load”, Mr Bodill said.

“The Hudson Fysh Walkway along the highway between the airport and town would have disappeared in long grass and weeds without their support”, he explained.

“It has been great to give them real work and if the weather continues, there is sure to be ongoing work in the maintenance area of Council's operations.”



## Longreach Botanical Trail Renewed By Rain

Three years of driving between Longreach airport and town and the dusty sparse bushes by the side of the road looked pretty scrawny. But then it rained.

Magic happened.

The dust washed off the leaves, plants said thank you with new growth and glorious flowers. Some small and dainty, other brash and bold.

Suddenly that ratty bit of bush was transformed along the Hudson Fysh Walkway and could reclaim its part in the Queensland Botanical Trail. Who would have known?...

And the grass and weeds grew in competition.

RESQ's team of job seekers looking to improve their skills took on the challenge. Mowing, whipping, weeding and pruning the two kilometres of walkway between airport and town.

Supervisor Lawrence Monize is very happy with the team.

“I've got a great crew looking after this stretch”, he said.



(L-R) Job seekers Paul Costello and John Perkins check in with supervisor Lawrence Monize

“They're job ready. Good workers, these blokes. Show up. Got their heads screwed on. Work hard all day. 7am - 4pm. A proper day's work.”

“They'll be snapped up now there's work around with the rain coming through.”

Maybe the men are blossoming with the plants.

