



RESQ

RAPAD EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

QUEENSLAND



2015 ANNUAL REVIEW



Our Region

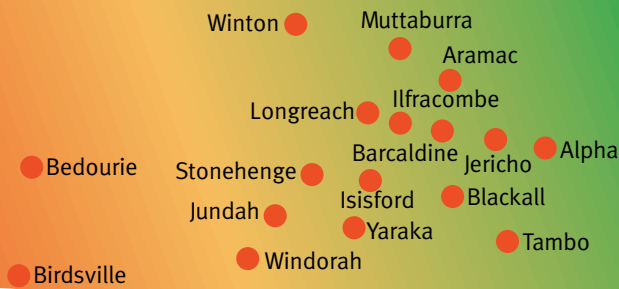


Rapad Employment Services Queensland (RESQ) provides one of 60 national Remote Jobs and Communities Program (RJCP) contracts, covering one of the most vast and diverse of the geographic regions with an area of almost 400,000km² and just under 12,000 residents from a variety of backgrounds.

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 twelve staff (six 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 15 communities, and worked with 305 job seekers in the year.

Photography throughout this review generously supplied by Outback Pics Longreach 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 Service Queensland (ESQ). Our RESQ partnership has been delivering a successful program to service the Australian Government's Remote Jobs and Communities Program (RJCP), and more recently, its Community Development Program (CDP).

2015 saw its joint venture partners and funding models change but, RESQ has continued to meet the needs of our 15 communities while buffering job seekers and employers from the discomfort of these changes. This has been made a smoother transition through the strong supportive attention of our Federal government 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 have been continually invited 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 multipartner support, providing leverage for our community partnerships through a variety of resources.

The Thomson River Weed Project and Ngai Mulli Gooka at Barcaldine 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.

It is fitting in 2015, the centenary of the battle at Gallipoli, that RESQ has been entrusted with seven seedlings originating from seed of the original Lone Pine tree on the Gallipoli Peninsula in Turkey. We will support the establishment of Gallipoli Anniversary Gardens in seven schools in Birdsville, Windorah and Longreach. Each giving promise to a good and optimistic future, just as the young men who fought at Gallipoli believed in a better future.

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 seven years has led IJC (an all-indigenous led organisation) toward financial and operational independence. IJC's involvement in establishing RESQ is another of those steps for his stakeholders.



Chris Hamilton,

Chief Executive Officer, Employment Services Queensland (ESQ)

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 brings these skills with the further experience of leading a major and successful Job Services Australia (JSA) contract provider, ESQ, for the past five years.

General Manager's Message



RAPAD Employment Services Queensland (RESQ) was formed just two years ago and has already weathered significant change in funding and program models.

The support of our communities, business people, federal funding department and Councils has been encouraging through this period. This has been rewarded with a peak engagement with 305 job seekers.

With the ongoing effects of drought and economic stress it is more important than ever to have skilled people ready to work, for when the rain comes. Local employees are much cheaper to employ than fly-in-fly-out workers and provide economic flow-on to our communities. It is our goal to be able to keep these locals in town, productively engaged until the rains come.

We have successfully placed job seekers in the Retail, Hospitality, Civil Construction, Aged Care, Child Care and Agricultural sectors. These placements resulted from developing appropriate career pathways and providing skilling and training aligned to individual job seeker requirements as well as providing ongoing mentoring and post placement support for job seekers.

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.

Our partnership with RAPAD Skilling has strengthened throughout the year as we have consolidated our programs to meet new government benchmarks. The RESQ team have developed and activated a diverse range of Community Projects throughout the Central West. Large multi-partner projects like the Thomson River Weed Project and the Wild Dog Fence, and other small but impactful activities like cleaning Longreach CWA Rest Rooms and the Ilfracombe Machinery Mile. 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 is providing 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)

Rapad Employment Services Queensland Staff



Plant Nursery

prepares for the rain

Drought does not last forever, and when the rains come RESQ wants to be able to assist communities rebuild as quickly as possible.

With this in mind General Manager Tony Rayner has started a plant nursery out the back of the offices in Longreach.

“You don’t need a lot to rebuild confidence, and in my experience re-establishing community gardens is a great way to help once the water is available”, he said.

“As soon as the drought breaks our nursery will be able to supply small communities - schools, churches, parks - with seedlings and advanced stock to re-establish their green spaces. This is particularly important to those communities where redeveloping a garden would not be financially viable.”

He explained, “Our job seekers can learn about growing plants, safe fertiliser use, repotting and irrigation, while establishing stock for these gardens”.

One of the regular participants, Tony Leighton, comes in most days to check on the plant stock, watering, repotting and moving them around to ensure even growth.

“I’ve worked in a nursery before” Tony explained “so I understand more than some, what the plants need.”

“It’s really important to strengthen the roots not just grow green tops. They burn off quickly in the heat, even with shade,” he said.

“I try and keep the seedlings misted, and then repot as



their roots establish.”

“You still have to keep an eye on the more established plants, they can get root bound and need to be regularly re-potted and fertilised. And getting the light to them to keep them hardy is also a challenge - I don’t want to put in all the work to have them die as soon as they’re planted out”.



Helping hand at the CWA Longreach Rest Rooms

It’s not often you see men cleaning up after the women. But that’s the case with dedicated community workers Arthur Daley and Edward Bowden.

These two bushmen aren’t able to work in their beloved bush anymore due to ill health and a lack of light work. But they haven’t let that stop them.

Both men registered for work with RESQ and have become regular fixtures at the CWA Rest Rooms behind the Visitors Centre in Longreach.

“We clean the rest rooms each day, make sure everything is tidy and the refreshments are stocked”, Arthur and Edward explained.

“It’s an old-fashioned service that only survives in small communities, because volunteer groups like the CWA Longreach keep it going”.

“But with all the women working now, they were struggling find anyone to keep the rest rooms clean”.

“We needed some light duties and through RESQ we got the job”.

CWA Longreach President Fiona Owens is very pleased to have the men on board.



“It is wonderful to have this partnership with RESQ. Arthur and Edward do a great job and have really taken ownership of the Rest Rooms. They would never allow the bins to go unemptied, the shower to become dirty, or the tea and coffee to run low”, she said.

“Many visitors reminisce about past trips in the days of poor roads and long uncomfortable travel that were organised around the availability of rest rooms such as ours.”

“We are very pleased to be able to keep the service alive through our RESQ partnership.”

Supervisor Profile

Clayton Dolgner

Clayton Dolgner has a simple philosophy “If you understand the man, you’ll get a good day’s work out of him”.

As a Project Supervisor for RESQ over the last two years, he’s put this belief to work on many occasions and found productive workers behind the disconnected job seeker.

“I’m a bit of an amateur psychologist”, Clayton explained. “I do a lot of listening.”

“So many people talk first and listen later. I’m a bit of a quiet horse, I listen and learn about what makes people tick... And then I can help them find things to do, and ways of doing things, that keep them happy.”

“When we’re happy we’re always going to do a better job, I think”, he said.

Clayton continued to explain his approach, “With jobs few and far between during the current drought, you have to be resourceful - make the most of what’s out there”.

“I’ve been working in the bush all my life, my family were station managers, and I’ve lived through lots of high and low cycles - from drought to poor stock prices, to floods and insect plagues.”

“It doesn’t matter what life throws at me, I always approach it as potential fun - hook in and have a go.”

“I’m happy to wake up each morning and happy to have what I’ve worked for.”



“It might sound a bit silly”, he said, “but the best day is every day”.

“I love working with people and getting the most out of them. It’s the people that make this job special”, he went on.

Clayton teaches a variety of skills to the job seekers, including weeding, welding, fencing - but his number one priority on skills transfer is Common Sense.

“Common Sense is a skill you can learn, and if I can pass on that ability to think sensibly and critically, to be flexible, find solutions and keep positive, then that’s a great achievement toward getting these men a job”, he finished.



Camp Mother

A born mother, Bridget Gaff joined RESQ not long after arriving in Longreach after a life on farms and stations across NSW, Queensland and the Northern Territory.

Having managed huge cattle properties like Lawn Hill Station and Roxborough Downs Station, she and husband Steve came to town when he joined Elders Longreach.

But after ‘mothering’ the teams of stockmen, trainees and associated staff on these big stations, Bridget felt the hole left when she had only her own four grown children to dote on.

“When I was offered the opportunity to work with the RESQ team helping job seekers and others in need around the region, I jumped at the chance”, she said.

“I’ve only been in the job twelve months but it’s given me a chance to immerse myself in life in the Central West, meet people, and help people find their way with jobs, and in some cases life direction.”

“Listening to people’s needs and finding the options available for them, is really enjoyable”, she continued.

“I find it incredibly rewarding when one of my clients finds something they enjoy, that motivates them to get up and get into their life. We only get one life and I want everyone



I work with to make the most of theirs.”

“The mother in me comes out every time I meet a new job seeker”, she laughed. “I just can’t leave them go. I genuinely want the best for them and if a bit of TLC and home truth in balanced measure, can get them on the path, that’s great.”

“There’s a few that know I’ll do anything for them and they try and take advantage, but a real mother is not just the soft bits, she’s the rock too, and I hold them accountable. In the end they appreciate it.”

Bridget sounds like she understands the extent of her job, and just like a mob of kids, her job seekers seem to understand where they can push and where they just need to do as they are told!

Third Time Lucky

Job seeker Kelsey Saffy signed up with Centrelink and ran through her options with RESQ.

She tried a couple of different courses suggested by RESQ but they just didn't do anything to spark her interest.

"Then I signed up for a life skills program with RESQ and that really helped me get ready for work", Kelsey said.

"RESQ was great getting me on some Work For The Dole programs where at least I had to get up and go to work - I didn't want to lose my motivation", she said.

"And then Nikki, my case worker, rang. She had a job going out at The Hall of Fame. I rang them straight away on that Friday, and I started on Monday."

"I started as a split shift casual cleaner and already I'm getting 40 hours a week. I love it!"

Kelsey explained that her supervisor was great, explaining everything and showing her where everything was, what to use and who to ask for questions.

"I got the hang of the job real fast. I really enjoy the day", she said.

"I do my job, do it well. I don't have to talk to the visitors. Once I'm done I can go home."

"There's a lot of variety. When we're busy in the season I work with others, but once it quietens off I can be the only one on the shift, and I just work along on my own."



"It's very peaceful."

"I'm so pleased I decided to work with RESQ as my job support. I would never have had the confidence to get my job without them."



Ilfracombe Machinery Mile Facelift

Ilfracombe Machinery Mile is a huge collection of machinery of all sorts, some extremely rare, which stretches from one end of town to the other.

It might be 135 years since the oldest of these machines were first built, but they couldn't be more loved by locals, and the visitors that stop and admire the display.

Longreach Regional Council Ilfracombe Office Manager, Les Irwin has a soft spot for "The Mile" and was touched when RESQ suggested a job seeker skill project might be to 'spruce up' the Machinery Mile.

Les explained "The Mile" is a very popular attraction, but the Historical Society members are getting older and any bit of help is great.

"The young ones who got involved have washed, sanded back and repainted all the vehicles. They've done a great job", he said.

"It really catches the visitor's eye, and makes them pull up for a look."

"You see people climbing all over the different exhibits, whether it be tractors or steam engines."



"Granddads tell stories to their little ones about the old days and how these machines made a difference to their lives."

"The Treasurer of the Historical Society was very impressed with the work of the RESQ team, let's hope the skills they learned on the project helps them get the ultimate goal - a permanent job."

"We'd be keen to partner on another project with RESQ, they are a great group to work with on community projects", Les said.

Our Spirit Place



Out at the Eight Mile west of Barcaldine is a safe place. Nestled on the Alice River, Ngai Mulli Gooka (Our Spirit Place) was known for years as Clydsdale Farm. It's a quiet place under the trees, offering time for thinking, reconnecting with Country, and learning.

Under the stewardship of Phyllis Heumiller, the Central West Aboriginal Corporation, RESQ, Barcaldine Regional Council and state and federal funding bodies are working toward a place for kids and young people to come and explore, touch and feel their country.

Phyllis' passion for the place is tangible. She's been taking the message of Country to the kids in schools spread around Barcaldine, Longreach, Birdsville and Bedourie for years. And now she is seeing her dream of bringing the kids to Country coming alive. Those same kids can come out to visit and camp, technology free (it helps there's no phone signal out here), alcohol and drug free. She's even seeing the second generation of her first school visits coming out to find their roots under the stars of Ngai Mulli Gooka.

"With the help of RESQ's work for the dole participants we're breathing life into the place" Phyllis said. "These two boys, Kirt and James", she said, patting the shoulders of the two young men sitting beside her during their smoko break, "they've worked hard with me, fencing, roofing, making the place safe for the kids."

"They've made the place welcoming with a fish pond, built a fire pit for our night activities, planted gardens.

"We've cleaned up the cottage and installed a commercial kitchen for catering."

"And just recently we've been donated a multipurpose room and ablution block. All things we need to cater for the kids safely", she said.

"I know what I want but it's too much work for just one person - RESQ's help has been mighty", she explained.

Phyllis went on to describe the simple things that mean the most to the kids who visit.

"We do bush walks, looking at bush foods, bush medicines, doing some tracking activities.

"We pass on our stories around the campfire, use our language, do stargazing - all things being lost with life in town."

"I've learned over the years not to push things, let the kids settle at their own pace."

"Show them how to be respectful of themselves and others through my behaviour and language - showing them how to communicate and look after themselves and property."

"We had a launch and so many from all around came - mums and kids, businesses and community - all mixing together and discovering what we had to offer."

The schools, scout groups and even families are coming out and the quiet of Ngai Mulli Gooka is now replaced with the happy shouts and laughs of children finding their Country.



Thomson River Weed Project



The RESQ Drought and Weed Project has been a major contributor to the Central West's landcare for the second year in a row.

A partnership between RESQ, all our regional Councils, Desert Channels Natural Resource Management Group, Biosecurity Queensland and rural landholders it has concentrated this year on areas along the Thomson River south of Blackall like Adavale, Hobartville and Muttaburra. A huge project.

Weeds Project Co-ordinator Clayton Dolgner gave some perspective when he explained the Longreach Common alone covers 20,000 acres.

"It's a huge, very physically demanding job", he said.

"Our guys and girls are motivated and dedicated - you have to be to walk 10's of kilometres a day carting a 10kg weed spraying pack on your back in the heat and the wind all day."

"They are on the job to learn how to be good employees for a Station, not just weed spraying skills but self-motivation, team work and understanding the big picture of what they do."

"How their 8 hour work day makes a difference to the whole grazing industry and the environment", he explained.

"One of our participants Tony Layton, has two part-time jobs now, and has the skills to keep him employed in cattle country for life", Clayton added. "And a health benefit for Tony was all the exercise saw him get really fit including losing 8kg."

"We've tackled Prickly Acacia, Rubbervine, Cactus, Parkinsonia, Mother of Millions - all pest species that have been spread further and further as the drought pushes animals' further seeking feed and water. It's not the animals fault - roos, emus, pigs and cattle all spread the seeds as they try and survive."

The work RESQ Drought and Weed Project participants do is a great way to help their community, and saves Graziers and the State huge amounts of money in weeding and in remediation. In turn the land can be more productive and sustainable.

Clayton's final comment makes sense "without RESQ being active through the drought times, the weed would just take over."



Longreach Wild Dog Fence

Driving along the highway outside Longreach you can see a group of men in hi-vis working at a fence line. To the tourist their work seems meaningless. To the Longreach Pastoral College their work is crucial.

Having lost about \$100,000 worth of stock to wild dogs, the Pastoral College has partnered with RESQ to build 7km of wild dog fence to protect their training stock from dogs, the sparse pasture from kangaroos, while teaching job seekers valuable skills that will help them secure employment in the region once the rains come.

RESQ have invested in 25 job seekers working on the fence. The Pastoral College has invested around \$60,000 in materials. And the priceless outcome - three workers have secured jobs already.

Program Co-ordinator Paul Kuhn explained fencing skills gave the job seekers more opportunities for work.

"We teach them to tie knots, strain wire, level site posts, drive posts, work safely with barbed wire, tie prefab, as



well as good work habits and communication skills", he said.

"There is nothing like actually working on a job, that when well done gives our job seekers self-respect, pride in their work and employment prospects."

"Fencing skills are highly sought after. When the rains come, the graziers will want to restock and their paddocks need to be ready to protect those valuable sheep."

"Fencing work will be in demand and will generate wages for the men that live and spend in their community. It all helps to revitalise the towns after the drought breaks", he explained.

This project between RESQ and the Pastoral College is investing in the future today.

RESQ partners

with Anglicare CQ

Not for profit community care organisation Anglicare Central Queensland, like all Not-For-Profits in small communities, is always on the lookout for assistance to help its needy.

A conversation 'over the fence' saw RESQ help out on a few small tasks that needed sorting out. And after helping to clean up the office yard and a couple of tenancy yards, and moving some crisis accommodation furniture, a more formal arrangement was brokered.

Longreach Centre Manager Louise Willersdorf had been impressed with the job seekers RESQ had provided. They were keen to learn new skills and she approached the employment team at RESQ for some admin support.

Kirsty Girdler, one of RESQ's Work-for-the-dole job seekers was keen to get out of the heat and try her hand at work indoors.

"I've really enjoyed the transition from outdoor work like fencing to admin work in the office", she said. "It's funny how much there is common between the two."

"You still have to dress appropriately, turn up on time, organise your kid's day care, work co-operatively with your co-workers, and do what you're told", she smiled.

"I'm really enjoying it."

And Kirsty's boss Louise is also happy with progress.

"Kirsty has good work habits, she's on time and takes direction well. I love that she's keen to get everything on her list done before the end of her shift", Louise said.

"We love that we can help job seekers gain new skills and practice doing a normal day's work."

One of the guys who helped with the tidy up has found work locally and if we can help Kirsty get a permanent position we will be very pleased", she finished.



Get up, Dress up, Show up

Apprentice Diesel Mechanic, Lindsay Warren appreciates the mentoring he received from the RESQ team.

The successful job seeker now works full-time at Hirst Mechanical in Longreach, finishing his last year as an apprentice. He'll soon have both his general mechanical and diesel trades complete.

"It can be hard to just get up in the morning and show up when you haven't been working for a while", he said.

"I'd done three years of my apprenticeship when I went off travelling and doing contract mustering around Queensland", he continued.

"I only came back to Longreach to be with family and I was just doing a bit of casual work when Hirst were busy."

"I needed to get my mojo back - get some motivation for the future."

Lindsay explained "The RESQ guys kept me moving - gave me something to do between jobs. They got me into doing some tickets - I ended up with my Dozer, Loader and Bobcat tickets."

"I don't want to stop now - it's too hard to get going again", he said.

"I'm pushing through my final apprentice year at Hirst Mechanical, finishing off what I should have done years ago."

"My boss had been great giving me work and I've got close to the RESQ team. They're all more than just colleagues, they're great motivators", he said.



"I've got more hope for the future now and I'm looking forward to travelling again, maybe Europe this time, but I want to get this chapter finished first."



Snakes and Ladders

Who'd have thought going back to school would be so much fun for a group of eight RESQ job seekers.

But when invited by Isisford Primary School Principal Tamikah Mawn to come and paint games on the undercover area concrete floor the job seekers turned up ready to 'rock and roll'.

Tamika explained the job seekers made a number of visits over a couple of weeks preparing the area and then using the school colours to make an inviting play area for the kids.

"Our 10 students loved watching the progress as their drab play area was transformed with bright slabs of green, yellow, red and purple colour", she said.

"A lot of our kids had never seen these sort of floor games, so it was a big surprise."

"The kids absolutely love using the snakes and ladders, chessboard, hopscotch and handball court. And from a teacher's point of view they are learning practical maths as they play."

"We have playgroup starting in the new year and they will be able to use this play area too."

RESQ Project officer, Gerard Bell said the job seekers took their work very seriously, treating the school as a proper work site, taking care to keep it safe for the kids as they renovated the area.

Some of the skills learned included cleaning and preparing concrete, mixing paint, measuring both volume and distance, using stencils and brands to mark the floor and applying paint appropriately to ensure a long and colourful working life.

Gerard explained the job seekers also prepared and painted the seats and posts in the undercover area which gave the whole area a facelift, not just the floor.

"Most of our job seekers did not enjoy their original time at school, but this project taught them that school can be a good place to learn skills, it just takes a positive approach", he smiled.

