

Relationships Australia[®]
QUEENSLAND

2014 ANNUAL REPORT



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Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are advised that this publication may contain images or content relating to deceased persons. Some images are models only. Please see photo credits for details.

CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD

I am pleased to present the 2014 Annual Report for Relationships Australia Queensland (RAQ). This has been an extremely positive year for RAQ in which we have seen longer term federal contracts signed which provide stability, as well as the addition of new federal government services to bolster community support.

This year, for the first time, Relationships Australia ran the Neighbour Day campaign nationally. In 2003, following media coverage of the discovery of a woman's skeletal remains in her home in Melbourne two years after her death, Melbourne-based Andrew Heslop wrote to The Age decrying a society where a woman can die and remain undetected by neighbours for years.

He subsequently decided to promote the value of neighbourhoods and has for the past ten years, promoted Neighbour Day throughout Australia on the last Sunday in March. This year, Andrew decided that he would find a new home for Neighbour Day and sought expressions of interest from NFP organisations interested in taking it on. Relationships Australia was selected to take on the campaign in

2014. In Queensland, people in local communities all over the State met with their neighbours and formed new connections. I am proud of our efforts to improve the social fabric of our communities and commend the efforts of RAQ staff in helping to achieve this vision.

I would like to thank my fellow Board members. Being part of a Board is a huge responsibility and understanding and supporting the distinction between management by staff and governance by the Board requires a capable group of people. This year we will farewell one our longest standing Directors, Dr Eva-Marie Seeto, and I feel we are very fortunate to have had the opportunity to work with such a great talent on the Board over the past decade. We wish Eva-Marie well on her next endeavours. This year, I have also decided to step down as Chair of the Board and hand over the role to another Director. I intend on staying involved with RAQ and am passionate to see it continue to grow and develop. I look forward to working with the CEO, Shane Klintworth, and his management team over the coming year to achieve the strategic priorities and changes needed to take RAQ to the next level.



"I am proud of our efforts to improve the social fabric of our communities..."

Peter Swarbrick, Chairman

Peter Swarbrick
Chairman
RELATIONSHIPS AUSTRALIA (QLD) Board of Directors

FROM THE CEO

The 2013/2014 year has been a productive and exciting year for Relationships Australia Queensland (RAQ). The past year has been characterised by widespread external environmental change which has resulted in a number of challenges and opportunities for RAQ and our sector more broadly. Perhaps most significantly has been the change in Federal government. The election of the Coalition saw a range of policy initiatives, including offers of five year contracts (up from three), the reduction in reporting requirements, and the transition from output measures to a focus on client outcomes - all of which have served to provide stability and greater certainty in the delivery of Family Support Services.

This dynamic external environment has also provided RAQ with the opportunity to focus time, effort, and energy on embedding a number of key objectives from our Strategic Plan into the organisation. Notably, we have:

- Continued to build a strong and positive culture within our organisation through the ongoing roll out of Organisational Health Reviews and associated planning initiatives.

Shane Klintworth
Chief Executive Officer
RELATIONSHIPS AUSTRALIA (QLD)

- Embedded our Clinical Governance Framework, including the transformation of service delivery through the implementation of Models of Service.
- Delivered upon our virtual services strategy.
- Continued to refine our financial and performance reporting.
- Devolved key responsibilities from Head Office to a venue level.
- Built research capability and using findings to inform our practice.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge all of the RAQ staff for their enthusiasm, continued commitment and hard work; the Board for their leadership and commitment to our vision of strong, safe, and healthy communities; and also our funders for their continued commitment and confidence in our work delivering effective high quality services.

Finally, I would like to thank Dr. Eva Marie Seeto and Peter Swarbrick who are stepping down from their positions on the RAQ Board after many years of service. Both have been an inspiration to the Executive Team, and their long-term involvement has been a testament to their passion for the sector, RAQ, and the important work we do.

I am proud of what we have achieved in the past year, and look forward to another exciting year ahead, serving our community. Our community and our clients are our reason for being here everyday, and we will always strive to make a difference in their lives, with humble and thoughtful support, giving hope for a better future.



OUR MISSION

Our mission is to promote healthy and respectful relationships, particularly where individuals, young people, families and communities are at risk or vulnerable.



PHOTO BY GARY RADLER (MODEL ONLY)

THIS IS RAQ

We are a leading provider of relationship and family support services in Queensland, assisting over 100,000 people each year. We are proud to have the resources to support the community with a range of services, including counselling, mediation, dispute resolution, education, community work and early intervention services.

We have been providing family and relationship support services for 65 years. Relationships Australia (Qld) was originally founded as the Marriage Guidance Council of Queensland in 1949 and changed its name to Relationships Australia (Qld) in 1996.

Now with a team of over 380 dedicated staff in 21 venues and multiple outreach centres, we work continuously to promote respectful relationships that are strong, safe and healthy, particularly where individuals, young people, families and communities are at risk or vulnerable.

We work continuously to promote relationships that are respectful, fair and safe...

OUR VISION
Strong, safe
and healthy
communities



OUR VALUES

CLIENT FOCUS

We commit ourselves wholeheartedly to our clients' success - understanding and responding to the individual needs of people accessing our services.

SOCIAL JUSTICE

We are committed to equity and social justice.

HEALTHY, RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIPS

We believe that healthy and respectful relationships are fundamental to individual and community wellbeing.

ACCOUNTABILITY

We are accountable and open in our operations.

INTEGRITY

We act ethically, honestly, and in the best interests of the community.

RESPECT

We respect each other and the principles of equity and diversity.

PROFESSIONALISM

We value the contribution and expertise of staff and commit to high standards of service and performance.

RECONCILIATION

RAQ's vision for reconciliation is that Australia's First Peoples, the Aboriginal people of the Mainland, connected islands and the Torres Strait Islander peoples are recognised, engaged and respected in all our work.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Peter Swarbrick - Chair

Bachelor of Arts with Honours (Psychology) Queensland University, Registered Psychologist (1989 -), Member of the Australian Psychological Society (1989 -)

26 years continual practice in state and federal agencies and private practice, former Chair of APS Central Qld, Project Challenge Rockhampton, RA Rockhampton Committee, former Board Member RAQ (2005-2010).

Registered Family Consultant to the Federal Magistrates and Family Court of Australia.

Appointed Director and Chairman in 2012.



Barry Mahoney - Deputy Chair

Graduate Certificate of Applied Finance & Investment (Securities Institute of Australia), Master of Business Administration (University of Southern Queensland), Graduate Diploma in Computing Studies (Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology), Bachelor of Science (Griffith University)

Appointed Director in 2009.



David Abbott - Treasurer

BA Economic Studies (Newcastle upon Tyne, UK), Graduate Certificate in Business Management (Monash Mt Eliza), Fellow Chartered Institute of Management Accountants, Fellow CPA Australia, Senior Member Australian Computer Society

David started his working life in the UK as a management accountant with the Ford Motor Company and came to Australia in 1974 to take up the position of financial controller in the manufacturing and engineering sector in Melbourne and later in Brisbane. In 1986 he joined the PricewaterhouseCoopers consulting practice in Brisbane working mainly in the government and not for profit sectors in the areas of strategic and business planning and financial management. Since retiring from PwC in 2007, he has continued his interests in not-for-profit organisations that provide community support services, particularly for people with a disability.

Appointed Director in 2010.



Shane Klintworth - Secretary

Bachelor of Applied Science & Health Education (University of Canberra), Graduate Diploma in Community Counselling (University of Canberra), Masters in Business Administration HRM (Charles Sturt University), Member of Australian Institute of Management, Graduate of Australian Institute of Company Directors.

Appointed as Secretary and CEO in October 2009.



Dr Eva-Marie Seeto - Board Director (Non-Executive)

Doctor of Social Science (University of Queensland), Master of Social Science Health Practice (University of Queensland), Post-Graduate Diploma of Social Science Health (University of Queensland) Diploma of Psychological Studies (Edith Cowan University)

Appointed Director in 2007.



Dr Lucy Cradduck - Board Director (Non-Executive)

Master of Laws (QUT), Bachelor of Laws (QUT), Certificate of Professional Development in Online Facilitation, Doctor of Juridical Science (QUT), Graduate Certificate Academic Practice (QUT), Solicitor (Supreme Court of Queensland)

Dr Lucy Cradduck is an experienced Lawyer and Lecturer in Intellectual Property Law and Property at QUT. Dr Cradduck's legal career has included working within the corporate and government sectors, as well as pro bono work within the community and education sectors. Dr Cradduck has previously held positions on St Andrews Anglican College, Buderim War Memorial Community Association and St Marks Anglican Church Parish Council. Dr Cradduck was also the inaugural Student Ombudsman at the University of the Sunshine Coast.

Appointed Director in 2012.



Helen Poropat - Board Director (Non-Executive)

Arbitrator (Institute of Arbitrators and Mediators, Australia), Mediator & Facilitator, Conciliator, Mediation Trainer and Assessor

Helen has extensive experience as a dispute resolution specialist for over 19 years. In the last 11 years Helen has worked for Ergon Energy providing consumer advocacy services and representing the Corporation in mediation, conciliation, and arbitration processes across multiple jurisdictions. Helen has provided strategic advice and driven improvements for Ergon Energy in response to consumer detriment in service delivery, compliance to regulatory instruments, corporate social programs such as a financial hardship program. Other specific areas of responsibility include the development and deployment of programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Groups. Helen is a Non Executive Director with the Society Consumer Affairs Professionals Australia.

Appointed Director in 2012.

EXECUTIVE TEAM



Shane Klintworth – CEO
Shane is responsible for RAQ’s strategic agenda and has been instrumental in transforming the organisation from a traditional service model which offers face to face counselling, mediation and education, to a dynamic organisation that offers services across a multitude

of channels, including telephone, video, email and web chat (will be added late 2014). Shane is responsible for successfully running a series of projects that resulted in RAQ forming a contact centre offering national services. Shane has extensive experience in the not-for-profit sector with a particular focus on disability and counselling support services.



Natasha Rae – General Manager Operations
Natasha is the Head of Operations and oversees service reform and the development of systems to control, monitor and improve operational delivery of services. Natasha has led the RAQ Operations team to successfully roll-out state and

national services including the national Telephone Dispute Resolution Service and the Family Relationships Advice Line (FRAL). Natasha is an admitted solicitor in Queensland with extensive experience in family dispute resolution.



Grant Hawgood – General Manager Service Design and Improvement
Grant has significant experience in health service planning and design and undertaking business analysis initiatives to reform and improve service offerings. Grant has been instrumental in the development of RAQ service models and policy

frameworks and has successfully led large research projects in conjunction with University of Queensland to inform contemporary practise. Grant has over 15 years experience as a registered psychologist and has worked in public, private and the not for profit sector.



Amanda Chalmers – General Manager Governance and Culture
Amanda is the Head of the group which leads key support functions such as strategic planning, reporting, HR, payroll, training, quality, marketing, board liaison and business development. Amanda runs the newly established Project Management Office and has extensive

experience in project, programme and portfolio management. She has successfully led large-scale change projects and is currently working on digitising service delivery to meet client access needs. Amanda has a background in child protection, disability services, affordable housing, transport and health.



Stuart McFarlane – General Manager ICT
Stuart has a long and accomplished history in ICT across a multitude of organisations both in not for profit and government. Most recently, Stuart has successfully deployed the new VoIP telephone & multimedia system, begun converging voice and data networks,

introduced change control across both ICT and Virtual Services and led the re-invigoration and replacement of key infrastructure, assets and applications. Stuart is currently progressing initiatives to improve and streamline information management.

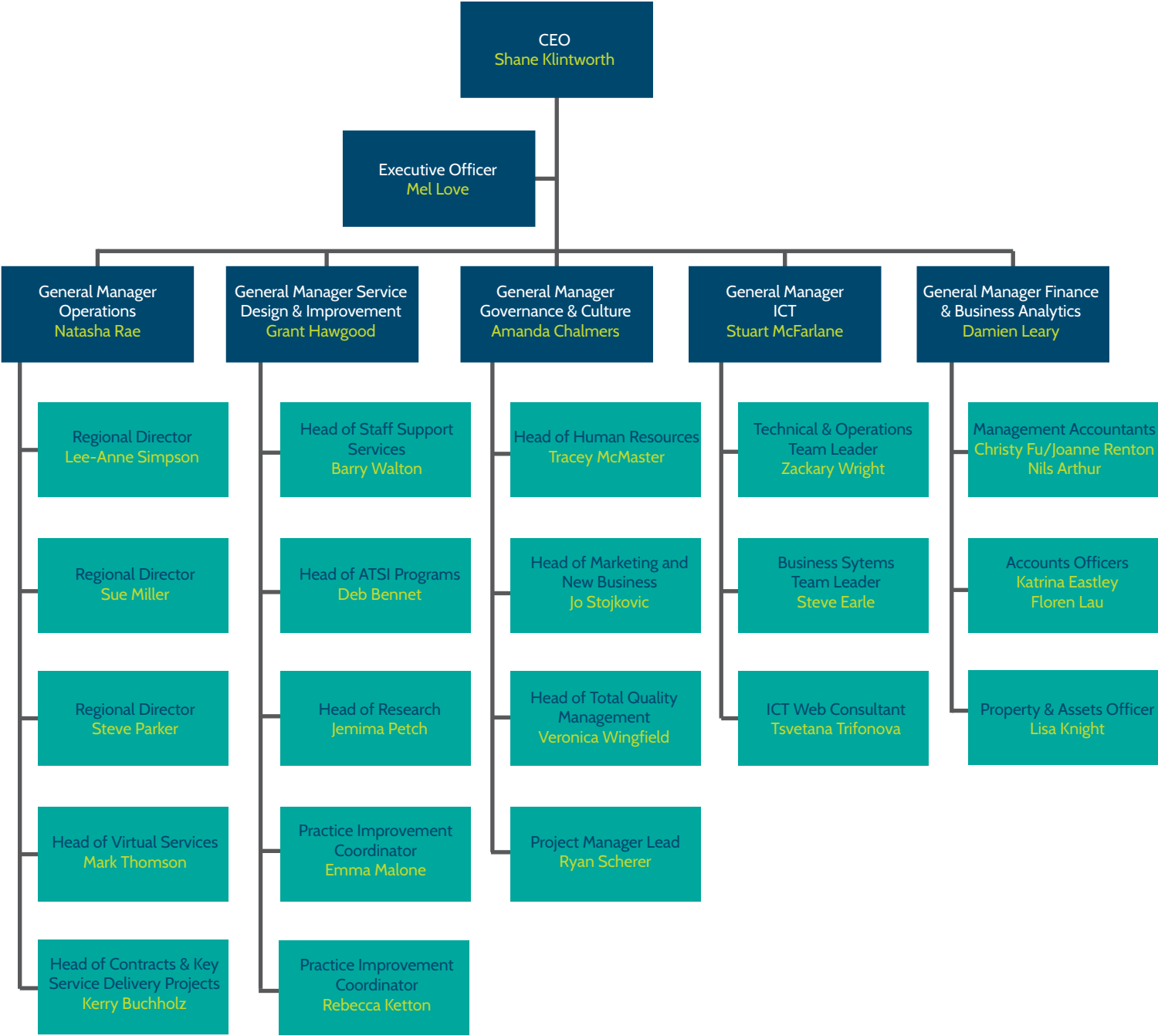


Damien Leary – General Manager Finance and Business Analytics
Damien is responsible for the Finance and Property Group within RAQ and has a broad range of skill and accomplishment in finance, accounting, budgeting, asset management, contract management, service design, business analysis and human resources. Damien has recently

delivered key projects which have resulted in significant design enhancements and improved client access/uptake within the Gambling Help Service. Damien is responsible for tight budget controls and risk monitoring within RAQ.

OUR PEOPLE

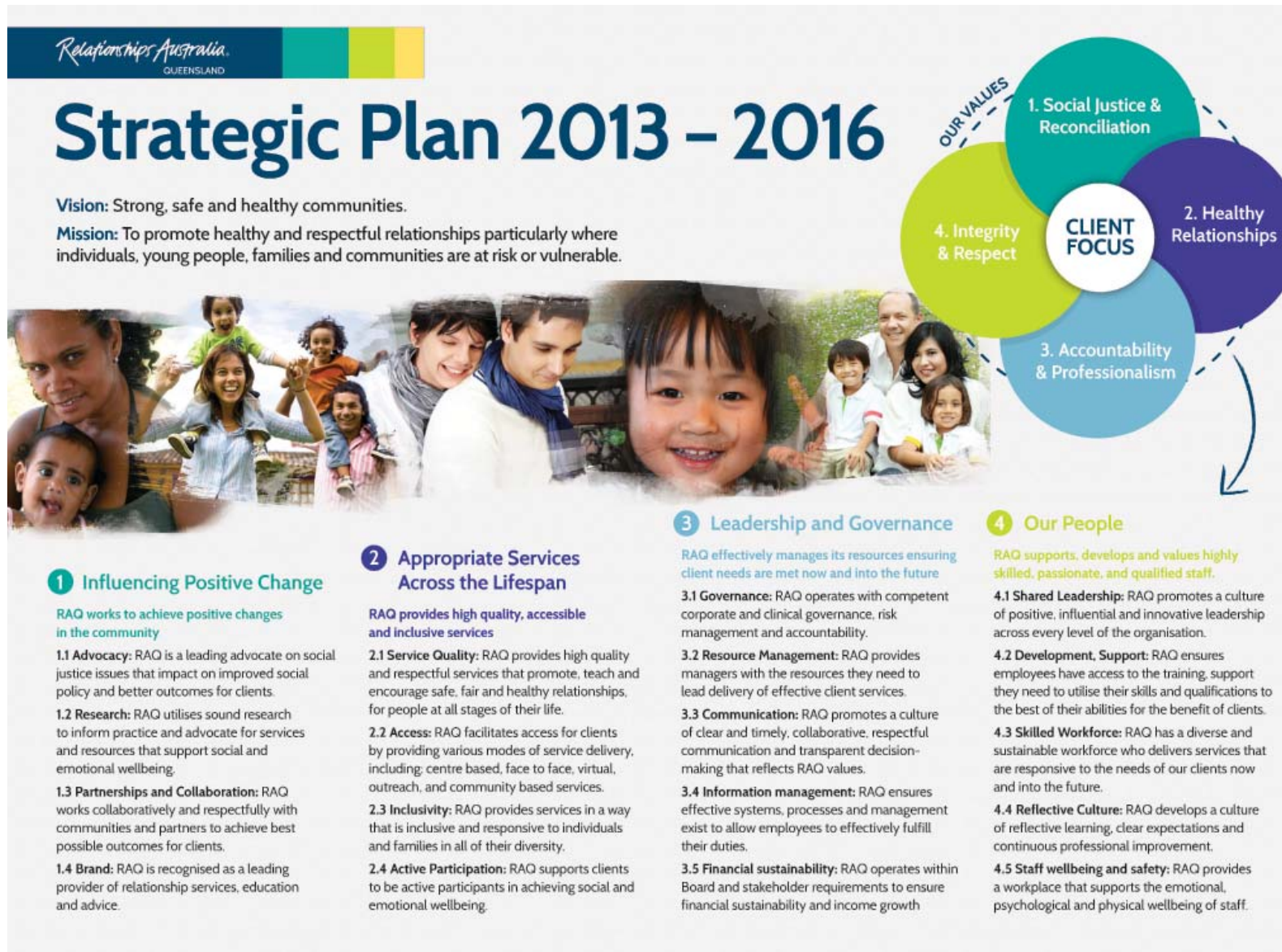
RAQ’s average headcount across the year was 377 employees. We have a high proportion of employees undertaking part-time work arrangements (43% of the workforce). The average total FTE for RAQ during 2014 was 287. Approximately 20% of the organisation’s headcount are in the age bracket of 55 to 64 years. RAQ is tracking retirements over time to understand trends and patterns and the number of staff approaching retirement eligibility. This is important for forecasting future workforce availability and is a critical element in workforce planning. RAQ has 27.1% of its workforce approaching retirement eligibility (or having already reached retirement eligibility). This is a high proportion of the workforce and succession planning is underway.



**Read more operational information from page 41

STRATEGIC PLAN

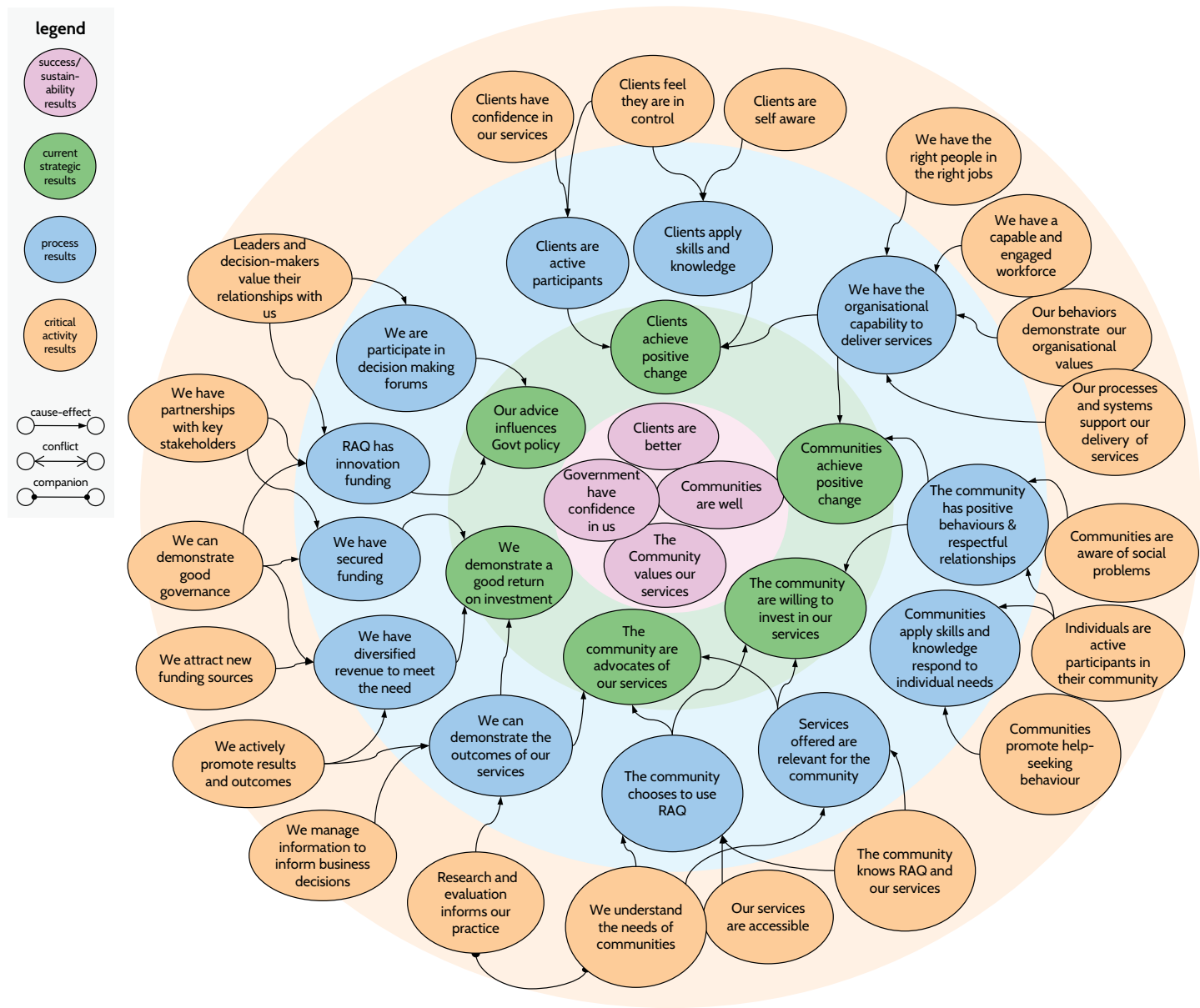
Last year saw the roll out of our Strategic Plan for 2013-2016. At the heart of our strategic priorities remains a focus on client outcomes. We are driven to achieve enduring positive change and making a difference in the lives of our clients and the community. We have a key focus on achieving transformational change by delivering all of our services across digital channels – including email, web chat, video and telephone. We believe this will complement our face to face services and give us the best reach while ensuring that services are accessible and timely.



OUR RESULTS

This past year has seen significant focus on documenting and measuring our key results so we can improve our performance and deliver high level services. The results map below has informed our suite of performance metrics to track progress against the Strategic Plan.

Results Map



Notes:
All Pink and Green Results are interdependent
There are one too many relationship between the Blue Results and the Green Results - arrows indicate primary links only.

WE WORK WITH INDIVIDUALS

As we move through the various stages of the human lifespan we encounter a wide range of situations that bring with them just as wide a range of accompanying emotions. Growing up in and being influenced by our families of origin, navigating the insecurities of leaving home and moving into the world of education, managing the changeable emotions associated with adolescence, the excitement and anticipation of falling in love, the opportunities provided through employment, the losses associated with broken relationships, bereavement, redundancy, the joys and challenges of parenthood, the realities of ageing and acceptance of our own mortality. Throughout all of these cycles there is potential for discomfort, anxiety, happiness, anger and grief – it is with these social and emotional issues that people come to RAQ for assistance and this is evidenced through the wide range of services we provide.



Enhancing Emotional Health

Enhancing Emotional Health is a self-esteem and empowerment program designed for women, held over seven sessions. Participants learn to acknowledge the strengths they have gained throughout their own individual lives, learn to recognise destructive thought patterns and means of adjusting thinking, develop an understanding of a healthy lifestyle balance, learn relaxation skills, learn how to apply self-care strategies and develop an understanding of appropriate boundaries for themselves and for others. This program enables participants to recognise self-determination and feelings of individual empowerment. Rapport develops quickly in this group and participants are able to gain important networking and support strategies, along with appropriate referral options to both RAQ counselling and education services and to alternative support agencies within the community.

A recent program participant was able to identify that her ex-partner had used domestic violence towards her during their relationship and was attempting to regain control after she had left the relationship. She was able to share with other group members her current situation and discuss suggestions on how to keep herself safe and develop a safety plan which also included seeking support from the Domestic Violence Resource Service. Other participants were able to reality check the degree of risk the participant was in and the importance of taking steps to reduce that risk.

By the end of the program participants have developed a myriad of personal skills including: available supports, understanding boundaries, self-care, strengths, human needs, the connection between thinking and feeling, how we experience emotions in our bodies, be more able to relax, understand that self-esteem is fed by internal and external sources, and that we have some control over the internal messages and our attitude to the external ones.

Participants also tend to value themselves more and feel more in control of their lives, appreciate the need to take personal responsibility for their own psychological and physical health, understand that we all have the right to set boundaries in accordance with personal physical and emotional safety and have gained an awareness of positive changes that can be made if they decide.

PHOTO BY DUNDANIM/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM (MODEL ONLY)

Gambling Help Service

The Gambling Help Service (GHS) is a free and confidential service which provides counselling assistance to individuals, families and significant others experiencing the harmful effects of gambling. In addition, the GHS aims to increase the level of community awareness for problem gambling related issues by providing community education through information and networking sessions in order to minimise the risk and prevalence of problem gambling in the Queensland community.

The GHS focuses on providing good client access and outcomes. In August 2013, the Service Design and Improvement Group conducted a review of the GHS and consulted with staff around the development of RAQ's model of service for the GHS. RAQ's analysis identified a number of barriers to access and client engagement for those experiencing problems with gambling. A key component of the model of service development was to address access. As a result, RAQ has developed a statewide GHS model of service that responds to the GHS client enquiries with immediate therapeutic client engagement and a brief Motivational Enhancement Therapy (MET) intervention. This shift in focus, has improved client access so that it better responds to the immediate needs of the GHS client resulting in more appropriate interventions and better client outcome.

Indeed, preliminary analysis of RAQ GHS data since the model of service redesign indicates that these improvements have in fact enhanced both initial client engagement and reduced treatment drop out.

Victims Counselling and Support Service

The Victims Counselling and Support Service (VCSS) is funded through the Queensland Department of Justice and Attorney General to provide counselling and support to victims of crime and their family members living in Queensland. The service will celebrate its 10th year of service delivery to victims of crime in 2015.

VCSS counsellors are able to provide services to victims of crime throughout Queensland through a range of service delivery options including face to face counselling, telephone counselling, support during the Youth Justice Conferencing process and assistance with the preparation of Victim Impact Statements.

Recently VCSS was granted a one off funding envelope to develop the capacity to provide online web chat to victims of crime who might have difficulty accessing service delivery outlets or who live in regional and remote areas of Queensland. VCSS is excited about this project and believe that once developed and implemented, will provide easier and immediate access to a range of crime victims who might prefer this mode of service delivery.

VCSS is a free service that victims of crime can access 24 hours a day via the 1300 139 703 number.

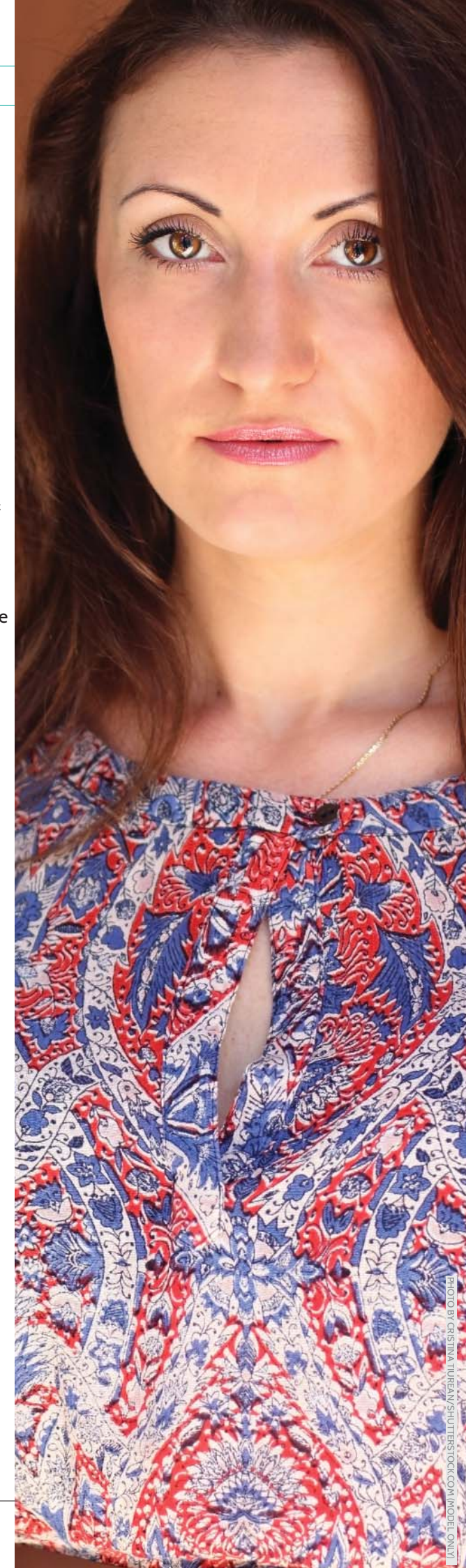


PHOTO BY CRISTINA TUBERAN/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM (MODEL ONLY)

Rainbow Program (for people who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bi, Transgender or Intersex)



The 2013/14 financial year has been a fruitful period in the evolution of the Rainbow Program at RAQ.

The program saw its inception in August 2008, with the launch of a face-to-face counselling service to specifically meet the needs of Queensland's lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) communities.

It has long been recognised that the 'Rainbow Community' has faced marginalisation and discrimination over the years and, like other marginalised communities, finds itself over-represented in statistics on poor mental health, suicidality and other risk factors.

RAQ recognises the continued pressures of homophobia and transphobia on the lives of many in the Rainbow Community and the scarcity of support services tailored to their specific needs. With our focus on building safe and healthy relationships, particularly for those who are vulnerable and at risk, we are committed to the valuable work of the Rainbow Program through the following initiatives:

Rainbow Counselling

RAQ has 15 practitioners across the organisation, who have received intensive training in working confidently and competently with Rainbow clients. The Spring Hill venue, which remains the central hub of the Rainbow Counselling Service, has this year, recruited its third Rainbow Counsellor, adding to the high level of skills and experiential knowledge comprising the Spring Hill Rainbow team. With phone counselling also offered from Spring Hill, we are able to extend our reach across the state, reducing isolation for some of Queensland's most vulnerable individuals.

Rainbow Training

Program Leader, Chris Pye, has taken the past year to research and develop a training approach to support all of our staff to become confident and competent in working with Rainbow clients. This year a four-hour introductory workshop was delivered to all of our first-point-of-contact staff, to ensure that the first face (or voice) a Rainbow client encounters is one that is supportive and understanding of their needs.

Positioning ourselves as a leader in the provision of quality services to the Rainbow Community, we have this year begun delivering our training workshops externally, to other human services organisations. With many agencies wanting to be more accessible to Rainbow clients, we hope that our training programs will increasingly provide a valuable revenue stream for RAQ in the coming months and years.

Transcendence

With increasing numbers of transgender clients accessing our Rainbow Counselling Service, in December 2013 we launched Transcendence, a social and emotional support group for transgender individuals or those exploring their gender identity. The group provides a safe, supportive and professionally facilitated space, within which participants can come together to give and receive support and share the stories that continue to shape their journeys. Ten months on, the group has found a valued and respected place in the transgender community and the group is attended by between twelve and twenty participants each month.



"This is the first time I've ever met other trans' people like me. I feel like I'm not the only freak in the world anymore."

Transcendence group participant

Royal Commission

The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse commenced in Sydney on 16th September 2013. It has held public hearings and private sessions across Australia, including Brisbane.

Royal Commission CEO Janette Dines said “All people affected by child sexual abuse while in the care of an Australian institution have the opportunity to tell the Royal Commission of their experiences in a private session with a Commissioner. The information provided in private sessions will help the Royal Commission better understand how child sexual abuse in institutions can be prevented,” she said. “So far, the Royal Commission has received just over 2,000 phone calls from people all over Queensland and around 60 people are scheduled to share their story with the Royal Commission in Brisbane.” (20 May, 2014)

RAQ’s role

Relationships Australia, Qld (RAQ) provides support to any individual affected by the Royal Commission into Institutional Response to Child Sexual Abuse through the Royal Commission Support Services (RCSS). This support includes counselling, both face to face and or telephone, assistance with making statements, attending private hearings with clients, referral to appropriate services, and information about the Royal Commission process. The support services program is funded by the Federal Government

Any community member who has been affected by the Royal Commission into Institutional Response to Child Sexual Abuse can contact our RAQ’s RCSS. Services provided to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders are delivered in a culturally sensitive and respectful manner to support the individual client or family.

When clients contact RCSS they are initially supported by counsellors via telephone who assist in working with the client to determine their individual needs and then refer them to the most appropriate service(s). These services may include the provision of support, information and referrals, and/or connecting them by making an appointment with an appropriate counsellor.

Support in the form of counselling, referral to other relevant service providers and providing information about the Royal Commission processes is available before, during and after engagement with the Commission. Telephone counselling can be arranged to support clients not residing near our RCSS venues.

Go Forward for Men

Go Forward for Men (GF4M) is funded under the Queensland Government Perpetrator Intervention Programs initiative through the Domestic and Family Violence Prevention and Support program. The program seeks to address the abusive behaviour of individuals who perpetrate domestic and family violence. The services also seek to achieve safer communities through prevention and early intervention, through a case management approach and group work. The program will provide clients with information, advice, referral, individual counselling and group programs with the aim of changing the abusive behaviour of clients who perpetrate domestic and family violence and of addressing attitudes that contribute to the perpetuation of violence of this nature.

Each session is structured with a specific agenda when using Cognitive Behaviour Therapy, clients are taught specific techniques and concepts during each session. The session focuses on helping the client achieve their goals not by telling them what to do, but rather, how to make changes that will bring them closer to their goals. During these sessions the practitioner will assist the client to identify emotional and behavioural reactions and help clients to unlearn negative reactions and to learn new more positive ways of reacting.

GF4M provide services at Lotus Glen correctional and farm facility under the Transitions Program for offenders nearing the end of their sentence and transitioning back into society. We work collaboratively with Indigenous organisations such as ATSILS, Goobidy (Mossman), Noonbai (Kuranda), Malingu Wellbeing Centre (Mareeba), Wuchopperen Health Services, Apunipima Aboriginal Mental Health in Cairns.



WE WORK WITH FAMILIES

Whilst families can be foundational in providing children with a safe, stable and encouraging environment within which to grow, learn and prosper, they can also provide negative influences that impact on children's development and well-being. Relationship and family breakdown can have many facets but, without doubt, the impact on children can be significant.

It would be unrealistic to assume that couples never disagree or have differences of opinion, however if these disagreements are frequent and extend beyond a few angry words, the impact can be very detrimental. Children who are exposed to a range of abusive behaviours including demeaning, aggressive and violent actions are seldom left unaffected.

Sadly some couples use their children as unwilling pawns in their conflictual process or use them as a means of exacting revenge on the other partner. Children can be incredibly resilient, but intrinsically they have a need to be loved, cared for, encouraged and to feel safe and secure.

RAQ works with families that are affected by conflictual relationships, family breakdown and who are at risk of entering the statutory child protection system. Our services are all delivered with the best interests of the child in mind and with a view to enabling improved family relationships and dynamics.



PHOTO BY IRINA SCHMIDT/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM (MODELS ONLY)

Children's Contact Service

Children's Contact Services (CCS) occupy a unique and important position within Australia's Family Law system with their core business focusing on the needs of separating or separated families.

CCSs enable children of separated parents to have safe contact with the parent they do not live with, in circumstances where parents are unable to manage their own contact arrangements. Where separated parents are not able to meet without conflict, CCSs provide a safe, neutral venue for the transfer of children between separated parents. Where there is a perceived or actual risk to the child, CCSs provide supervised contact between a child and their parent or other family member. Parents may be ordered to attend a CCS by the Family Court to facilitate changeover or have supervised visits with their children.

The key goal of the CCS is to assist separated families to move, where possible and it is considered safe to do so, to self-management of their contact arrangements, both in terms of changeover and unsupervised contact. CCSs ensure that the children's best

interests are kept central to the contact process. Services only accept cases after careful assessment and where they consider that their facilities and resources allow them to deliver services that are safe and appropriate for all parties.

The overall objective for CCSs is to provide children with the opportunity of re-establishing or maintaining a meaningful relationship with both parents, and other significant persons in their lives, when considered safe to do so.

In May 2014, the Federal Attorney-General's Department released the new Children's Contact Services Guiding Principles for Framework for Good Practice document (the CCS Framework). The CCS Framework has been well-received by CCS workers and managers of CCS services and is the primary reference document that is informing the development of RAQ's model of service for CCSs. An electronic copy of the CCS Framework is available at <http://www.dss.gov.au>

The Service Design and Improvement Group have been consulting with staff around the development of

757
Children's
Contact Service
Clients

RAQ's Model of Service (MOS) for CCS. Primarily this has occurred in the form of Service Improvement Working Groups (SIWGs), consisting of staff, managers and directors from around the state. Meetings took place several times over the year to gather a range of information and knowledge which will assist in forming the new MOS.

We are also working with all levels of the organisation to improve what data we capture and how this might be best presented to staff and managers to support sound decision making at a service level and result in better outcomes for clients.

The MOS will be further developed on the basis of consultation that occurs through the SIWG. It is intended that a final draft of the CCS MOS would be presented to the Service Improvement Executive Committee and endorsed in the first half of 2015.



The future of Relationship Counselling

There was continued high demand for RAQ's relationship counselling services during 2013-14.

RAQ is committed to providing effective, high quality services to couples in all their diversity, at various stages in their relationship. We can assist couples who are forming a new committed relationship, enhancing an already satisfying relationship, or dealing with times of challenge and change, like transitioning to becoming parents, or dealing with separation.

RAQ is progressing with our plan to increase access to appropriate services across the lifespan. In mid-2013, Dr Jemima Petch, Head of Research, released a brief review of relationship interventions, providing evidence supporting different interventions for improving couple relationship functioning. In her paper, Dr Petch outlined some important themes relating to trends in couples and marriage, the potential negative effects of couple distress, as well as interventions that are supported by sound research evidence. The impacts of relationship distress can be deeply felt. Contemporary research suggests that distressed couples (relative to couples in mutually satisfying and stable couple relationships) report:

- poorer health, well-being and coping with major illness;
- less resilience to the negative effects of life stresses;
- higher rates of diagnosed psychological disorder and diagnosed health problems;
- lower life expectancy and social role functioning with family and friends; and
- less personal wealth.

Whilst the majority of children with parents experiencing couple relationship distress adjust well and do not exhibit severe or enduring emotional or behavioural problems, they still evidence higher rates of childhood depression, withdrawal, poor social competence, health problems, poor academic performance and other difficulties, relative to children whose parents are mutually satisfied. Further, children of divorced parents are at twice the risk of problems as the non-separated community. This research highlights the detrimental and far-reaching impact of relationship distress.

RAQ offers a range of interventions to support couples with their relationship issues. RAQ has a long-standing collaborating relationship with The University of Queensland. Together we are implementing several research projects to better understand more effective ways to help couples at various stages in their relationship, be it by improving their relationship through to dealing with separation.

In 2013-14, RAQ took the opportunity to start working more closely with The University of Queensland on implementing Couple CARE (the Couple Commitment and Relationship Enhancement program). The following pages outline Couple CARE, and how we are preparing to implement it across RAQ.

10,101
Relationship
Counselling
Clients



Couple CARE

RAQ offers the Relationship Education program Couple CARE because it is one of the few published evidence-based programs available and research consistently shows that couples who do this program report measureable improvements in their relationship.

Couples who sign up to Couple CARE receive a DVD, workbook (or activity book), and phone coaching calls with a relationship educator. The program helps couples to:

- Assess their relationship strengths and vulnerabilities
- Define the relationship they want
- Develop key relationship skills
- Identify individual actions to strengthen their relationship

Couples work through six units including:

- Unit 1: Relationship vision and self-change
- Unit 2: Communication
- Unit 3: Intimacy and caring

- Unit 4: Managing differences
- Unit 5: Sexual intimacy
- Unit 6: Looking ahead

The DVD covers each of the 6 units explaining why each unit is important in the relationship, provides strategies and examples of what is beneficial in relationships and what is counterproductive in relationships. It is expected that couples will set time aside every week to work on one unit per week. Each unit on the DVD takes approximately 10 minutes.

In conjunction with the DVD couples will also work through the workbook which has individual and couple activities that allow the couple to apply the strategies learned from the DVD into practice. These activities usually take 30 to 60 minutes.

Then once couples have watched the DVD and worked their way through the unit for that week they will have a phone session with a relationship

educator. The relationship educator is an RAQ practitioner who has been trained to facilitate Couple CARE, RAQ's chosen relationship education program. For couple CARE RAQ will typically book 6 consecutive (e.g., weekly) sessions so that couples can progress steadily through the program.

Preparing to implement Couple CARE across RAQ

Couple Care has a strong research base behind it and the program consistently shows positive outcomes for couples who complete the program. The Stronger Relationships trial affords RAQ the opportunity to implement a flexible, evidence-based program across the organisation. This exciting opportunity brings with it some challenges for RAQ to consider, including:

- Appropriate work space is required in venues to facilitate telephone-based service delivery. Ideally practitioners would work out of an office that was equipped with a telephone capable of facilitating conference calls and a desktop PC with wide screen to accommodate entering data into RAQ's client information system.
- Recording of telephone calls – a recording solution is required for supervision purposes and fidelity checks of program implementation (i.e. downloading and coding a random sample of 25% of Couple CARE sessions). RAQ will need to ascertain the feasibility and costs involved with recording Couple Care sessions as part of the Stronger Relationships trial and /or as part of business as usual. This work is being progressed.

Federal Government 'Stronger Relationships' Trial Overview

The Stronger Relationships trial is the implementation of the 2013 election commitment to a one year trial of providing \$200 vouchers to 100,000 couples to assist them to access relationship education and/or counselling including components of parenting education, conflict resolution or financial education. The Stronger Relationships trial is expected to operate from 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015.

The objective of the Stronger Relationships trial is to increase the number of couples who participate in education and/or counselling in order to strengthen their marriage or relationship. The trial is intended to provide incentives for eligible couples to seek support from service providers to strengthen their relationships, especially at crucial life transition points such as moving in together, getting married and the birth of their children.

Relationships Australia (Qld) is a registered provider for the Stronger Relationships trial. RAQ registered two services as part of the Stronger Relationships trial that were accepted by DSS. These services were:

- couple counselling (provided to the couple alone; not in a group format); and
- couple relationship education, namely the Couple Care program.

Initial interest in the Stronger Relationships trial

As of 15 July 2014, RAQ had received 77 expressions of interest from couples wanting to participate in the trial. Six of the potential clients have called through to the Client Contact Centre and the remaining 67 have come through on the RAQ webpage. In addition, there have been four clients who have walked into a venue to express their interest in registering for the trial.



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PHOTOS BY SYDA PRODUCTIONS, FILMERS STEYN, SPECTRAC-DESIGN/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM (MODELS ONLY)

Telephone Dispute Resolution Service

The Telephone Dispute Resolution Service (TDRS) assists separated parents who are affected or likely to be affected by separation or divorce with dependent children. The process can also include other significant people in the children's lives e.g. grandparents. This service exclusively conducts both Telephone and Online Family Dispute Resolution services with at least one party living in Australia. Clients normally use TDRS if there is:

- Distance or
- Parties located in rural or remote communities or
- Safety or legal issues prohibiting face to face mediation or
- Mobility issues (disability, incarceration)

A dedicated team of professional administration and Family Dispute Resolution Practitioners (FDRPs), delivered another significant year of Family Dispute Resolution services.

This high performing team delivered the highest number of Mediations in a single month than had been delivered in TDRS's history. Ongoing high levels of demand were met with a responsiveness to match.

Assistance to families is not only provided by direct front line staff but also through the back up and support of a Practice Coordinator and Clinical Supervisor through individual and group supervision. This coupled with vibrant peer support and a range of learning and training opportunities enabled team members to further develop their skills. Of note were the workshops held by Robert E. Emery, Ph.D. Mediation Expert and Author.

TDRS joined the University of Queensland in a randomised control trial of mediation. This trial involved a group of volunteers, one half of which engaged with FDRPs who were trained in Motivational Interviewing for Family Dispute Resolution whilst the other half of volunteer clients engaged with FDRPs who did not have the training. TDRS staff and many others within Relationships Australia, University Queensland and beyond eagerly await the outcomes of this research.

Core Statistics for TDRS Services 2013-2014

Telephone Intakes	=	3,255
FDR Sessions	=	993
Number new cases opened	=	2,984
Total of Incoming calls	=	17,316
Total of Incoming email	=	25,899

Preliminary Stats for Motivational Interviewing research

FDRPs who participated	=	100%
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50% of FDRPs received 3 days of training in MI (Remaining 50% of FDR Practitioners to receive this before end of year)

Party A cases recruited	=	700+
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Completed mediations to date = 60+ for each condition

Party A's who didn't proceed with mediation will be followed up to clarify their outcomes and determine their next steps.



Family Relationship Advice Line

Since October 2012, Relationships Australia Queensland has been the provider of The Family Relationship Advice Line (FRAL) a Commonwealth Government initiative which provides national telephone based assistance to individuals and families.

Family Relationship Advisor's (FRA's) are tertiary qualified staff who screen, assess and respond to needs of callers. They provide information and referrals which can include:

- Information on services to help maintain healthy relationships
- Resources, education and guidance on developing workable parenting arrangements after separation
- Evidenced-informed support for families experiencing family separation including grief and loss and the effect of parental conflict on children
- Information on and advocacy for, the rights and needs of children affected by family breakdown
- Assessment and referrals to Family Dispute Resolution Services
- Procedural information on the family law system including referrals to external and partnered legal services

Key partnered services to the Family Relationship Advice Line are the Legal Advice Service, which operates on a call-back basis and receives on average of 617 referrals per month and, the Telephone Dispute Resolution Service, which received 3,240 referrals over the past year.

Since the beginning of 2014, FRAL has undergone a number of changes to enhance and streamline service delivery and meet the growing demand for the service. A two tiered design was successfully implemented in January 2014 whereby, callers speak initially with a First Point of Contact operator (FPOC) to discuss their circumstance and, if sufficient to their needs, obtain procedural information and referrals. Callers who present with complex needs or in distress are immediately transferred to a Family Relationship Advisor (FRA) who can assist them further.

Since these changes were implemented, FRAL has been able to assist 50,345 callers which is an average increase of 2,282 answered calls each month. Not only have these changes increased the services capacity to reach out to and assist the target group but it has also achieved greater job satisfaction for staff.



Parenting Orders Program

The Parenting Orders Program (POP) is a continually evolving process engaging often highly complex parents as they traverse the legal system. As in previous years, for 2013-14 the majority of clients were court mandated, however a significant minority were self-referred or voluntary. While RAQ practitioners work to a basic template including intake and assessment, group work, review and coaching the nature of the presentations require a flexible approach to each on a case by case basis. Dependent on available resources at each venue, a cross pollination of ideas and inter-program collaboration has become available, and in some cases preferred practice to achieve the best possible outcomes. Some options include mediation, post-separation counselling, individual counselling, child counselling, problem solving for one, and Children's Contact Centres, naming a fraction of possible pathways.

Venue by venue the demand is disparate, the metropolitan venues experience a solid call for their services that can strain capacity, while some northern venues are able to match demand and service delivery. Similarly with Children's Contact Centres, the expectations of various stakeholders can vary immensely, thus meeting the needs of children and parents are the primary focus in the program. Exposure to international approaches through visiting speakers, research and internal experience, has the potential to create a professional, world leading service with often co-located programs and clinicians able to lend expertise and time to multifaceted parental and legal issues.

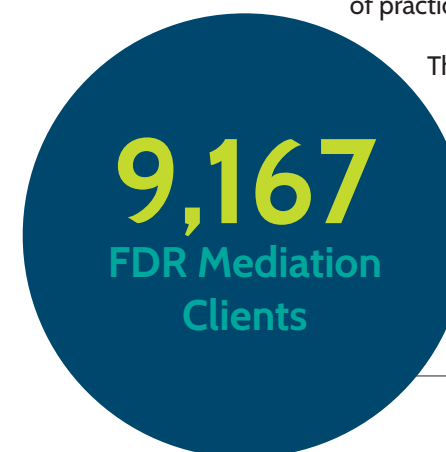


Family Dispute Resolution

It is reported that the Family Court is seeing a trend to more complex cases. This has led to a change in culture within the legal fraternity and an acceptance that Family Dispute Resolution (FDR) is not a one session quick fix certificate issuing process. There has been a recognition that Mediation can empower clients, reduce conflict, and provide better outcomes for children. It is enshrined in the court process that all reasonable attempts must be made to resolve a dispute before litigating. This places emphasis that mediation is expected before a hearing will occur.

Relationships Australia Queensland (RAQ) has been providing mediation services for twenty five years. RAQ is committed to continuous service delivery improvement and this year has seen some innovative trials within our FDR practice team in conjunction with our research team and the University of Queensland. A number of our practitioners have been trained to use a Motivational Interviewing Model of mediation. If this evidences a better way of providing mediation services RAQ will be pioneers in improving FDR practice. The facilitative model of mediation has been predominant in FDR since its conception and has remained unchanged.

In addition to the Motivational interviewing model of mediation RAQ is involved with trialling a Coordinated Parenting Program which involves adding coaching sessions around conflict, communication and emotions to the current model of practice.



The other emphasis on improving client service in FDR was the provision of world class training with Robert Emery to our practitioners. Robert Emery is the Director of the Centre for Children, Families, and the Law at the University of Virginia and is the author of over 100 scientific publications and several award winning books

Several staff members attended the bi-annual Mediation Conference which will assist RAQ up remain up to date with mediation trends.

Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Service

This year, the Toowoomba Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Service (DFVPS) has prioritised community engagement and education, counselling, support, referral and the provision of crisis support and practical care. Major events were held out in the community and within the walls of the service, all resulting in an increased understanding of the insidious nature of domestic violence and the provision of practical, one on one, support for individuals who have left or are escaping violence in the home.

A Candle Lighting Ceremony was held at the Empire Theatre, remembering those 18 people who had died in the past year as a result of domestic violence. We also held a Fun Run, early on a cold Sunday morning. Eager participants ran or walked 2.5 or 5 kilometres to raise awareness of domestic violence and make a stand against violence in any form. Finally, we did a PhotoVoice project in which six incredibly brave women worked with a counsellor, professional photographer and narrative artist to document their journeys through domestic violence through the medium of photography. Not only was this a very powerful and confronting exercise of these women, the resulting canvas art display, shown in a local art gallery for a fortnight was a confronting, educative and emotional journey for all spectators. This display continues to tour the region and state through the generous support of the local Soroptimist International group.

Education, in particular, proactive programs delivered to school aged children has been very popular this year. We have delivered talks to boys and girls from year seven to year 12. Each talk is met with enthusiasm and respect for the subject and feedback has been consistently positive with invitations to return at a later date. We have also partnered with a number of local organisations to deliver the Love Bites program to six local schools.

Generous donations have allowed us to open a free “shop” for our women, in particular, those escaping domestic violence. People can come into the shop at any time and take what they need, completely free of charge, to assist them set up a new home or tide them over until they find permanent accommodation. This is an invaluable resource that sends a powerful message of support to our clients that would not be possible without the generous donations made by local organisations, businesses and individuals.

Further support was given to women and children who had escaped domestic violence around Christmas time. A special lunch was held for a small number of women who were going to be alone Christmas day. Team members cooked a warm lunch and desserts and shared the table with these ladies. Gifts were then presented to each of them, the funding for which was raised through a morning tea we held earlier in the month. Again, relying on the cooking skills of the wonderful women and men of the DFVPS. A two day Christmas craft workshop was also held for children who had been in violent homes and all children had a lovely day, photographs of their achievements and fun were later presented to their mothers as Christmas gifts to them all.

Finally, through Alternatives to Aggression (A2A) groups, one on one counselling and Court support, we have worked extensively with men; providing education and support to address and change violent behaviours. Some of these men have since begun to plan their own White Ribbon Day event for later in the year, as they are keen to spread the message that domestic violence hurts, and those who use violence need to be accountable for their own behaviours.

The service is lucky to have such a dedicated, proactive and engaged group of counsellors, court support workers and administration. Consequently, our clients often come to us scared, in crisis and lost but leave feeling supported, empowered and brave.

570

Women &
Children

(398 new to service)

2,589
People supported
through DV
court system
(Toowoomba region)

Proactive education on
healthy relationships for
2,000
SCHOOL CHILDREN

221
MEN
in A2A Program
(144 new to service)

564
Supportlink
referrals

"The support from the staff have helped me to find my inner strength, they are comforting when needed and have been invaluable in providing support to myself and my son. The counsellors have been emotionally lifesaving and helped me to find out how to live my life..."

WE WORK WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

Avengers

The Avengers group started early 2014 as an off-shoot of the Xmen Youth program (see next page). It is specifically adapted for boys in the Special Education Program at Marsden State High School. These students may have an intellectual disability, speech or language impairment or have some degree of autistic spectrum disorder. The Avengers group retains the Xmen program goals of how to be a man in today's society; how to say no to violence; how to seek help and to be yourself.

RAQ counsellor, Greg, had worked with some of these students over time and because of their vastly differing and specific learning needs had consulted in case management meetings with Hayley Phillips, the behavioural support teacher with the Special Education Unit at Marsden High.

"I really noticed Greg's work with a troubled young man whose favourite

teacher had suicided on the last day of grade seven at primary school", said Hayley. "Greg had an amazing effect on Jacob*".

Greg and Hayley realised they shared the same passion to connect with and care for the "person" of the school student.

"The group was a natural progression", said Greg. "I suggested we work together in a small group setting with students and here we are."

"And the beautiful thing is that age is no barrier in their minds. Hayley is 40 years younger than me. You just have to believe in these kids and care about them. Add a quick sense of humour and a good dose of patience and most, if not all, will want to take you into their world".

Hayley added, "And it's important we see every behaviour as trying to communicate a message; it's not just

about being a naughty boy or girl!"

We sought an update on feedback from a couple of the "Avenger" boys.

Ben*: "I've learnt that I can walk away and control my anger and not end up having to pound someone. Its much better and I don't get into so much trouble and get suspended".

Aaron*: "I like the way Greg expresses his emotions and its good how we talk about our feelings in the group. And we can understand each other and not just get angry".

We've given Aaron, the oldest Avenger member, some leadership tasks.

Hayley, who is on the spot to notice behaviour outside the group commented, "Its good to see Aaron stepping into the role of mentor with the younger boys and to see him go from being a little boy to standing up like a man"

* Names have been changed

"I've learnt that I can walk away and control my anger and not end up having to pound someone..."

Ben*, Avengers participant

XMen

The first Xmen group program started eight years ago at Marsden High as a single session a week, for 10 weeks, with 12 students. It became obvious the program would need to include one-on-one support when many boys began seeking out mentors, Helen Braewood and Greg King, at other times during the week. For some boys that would extend over the years of their high school life.

The Xmen program retains the goals of: exploring what it means to be a man; how to say 'No' to violence; how to ask for help; and how to be yourself."

Guidance Officers at Marsden High are quick to extol the unique partnership the school enjoys with Relationships Australia and their high regard for Greg's work. After many assumptions by the school community that Greg was a staff member, a detailed description of his role, title and services is now on their Student Services Role Description. This informs staff and the community of the unique service now available at the school.

While long time program mentor, Helen, is on extended sick leave, Greg is currently working with the school health nurse, Sarah Mitchell. "She has a great sense of humour, really enjoyed her own teenage years and loves working with the Xmen boys", said Greg. "We hope to offer a training program in this complex and very rewarding area of work".

Two Xmen mentors, Chris and Tim, who graduated from year 12 last year return occasionally to provide mentoring in the current group. We asked them "Why?"...

Chris (who is studying Youth Work) says, "Well I achieved heaps in Xmen, like how to hold my anger back and think before I react. It was just a



good experience and I want to give something back to other young people".

Tim (working with his dad in transport and logistics) said, "Life changing! I found my path in life - what it means to be a man. Self control".

Three current Xmen group members also shared their learning:

Tyson: "Saying things in the right way.

Being respectful to others".

Jayden: "Understanding myself and other's emotions".

Tom: "Learning that anger isn't its only emotion. It's triggered with other emotions".

"And to think I get paid to do this work..." was Greg's emotional response.

Take-a-Step

In 2013, RAQ implemented an exciting new social and emotional learning (SEL) program called Take-a-Step! The program was the product of many months of research and consultation with a variety of key players in education and the youth sector.

Take-a-Step utilises the powerful media of drama and group discussion to explore the fictional narratives of five young people experiencing difficulty in their school environment, based on the 'difference' they represent.

Year 11 peer-mentors are on hand to support the year 7/8 participants in building closer relationships with the characters and the issues they are struggling with, around race and culture, gender and sexual orientation, and levels of ability and disability.

The week-long Take-a-Step program was implemented in three Queensland schools (one metropolitan and two regional) and was met by overwhelming enthusiasm from both students and educators.



"What I've learnt from this project is that when my parents split up it wasn't my fault".

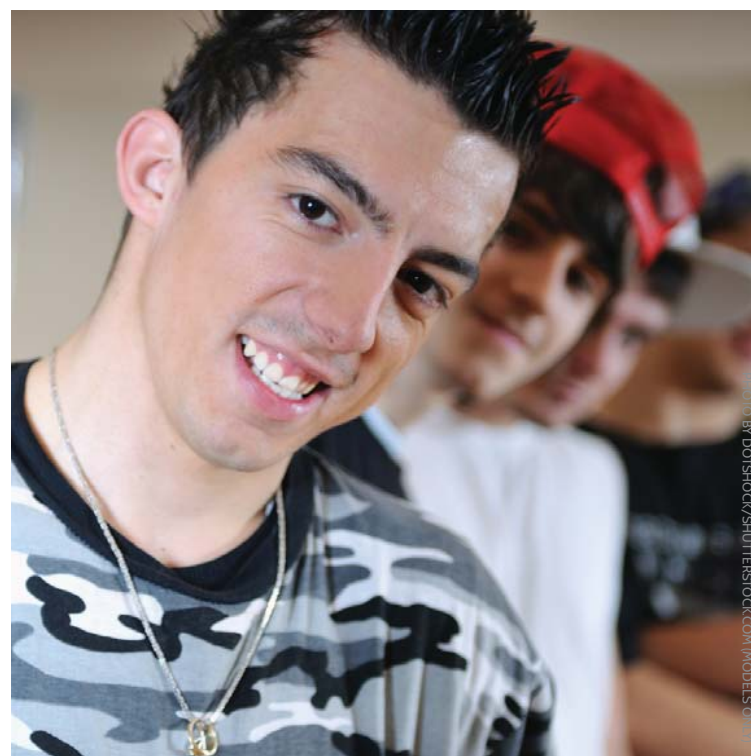
Yr.7 student,
Springwood Central SS

The aim of Take-a-Step is to support students in building empathy for one another in the school community, towards a greater acceptance of difference and a reduction in anti-social behaviours, such as bullying.

In 2014, facilitator, Chris Pye, is working closely with Director of Research, Jemima Petch, to construct a research methodology that will effectively measure the mixed-modality approach of Take-a-step and support future implementations.

Managing Anger Differently

RAQ Mackay co-facilitates a program called Managing Anger Differently (MAD) with a female youth support worker from YIRS (Youth Information Referral Service). The program consists of 6 x 1 hr sessions and runs at Pioneer High School Mackay. The attendees are male and female junior high school students of various ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Some mainstream, others of Asian descent and some Australian Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and South Sea Islanders. Attendees are selected for their behaviours rather than any other criteria. RAQ's facilitator, Denis, said that "often when students first join the program they are at risk of disengaging from the education system and can be quite resistant and challenging in their behaviours and attitudes. Although they are by no means cured by participating in MAD, they often show incremental changes in their ability to self-soothe and display increased levels of self-control. This is often enough to help them stay out of trouble and in school."



WE WORK IN COMMUNITIES

We'd be familiar with the saying – "It takes a village to raise a child" but we could just as easily say – "It takes a community to raise a person". In a society that promotes individualism and a "look after number one" mentality the realities of marginalisation, homophobia, alienation, migration, religious difference, victimisation and asylum seeking are increasingly evident. The notion of "one for all and all for one" has become less of a norm these days and the existence of community spirit is often limited to natural disasters and groups of people who unite in the face of adversity and threat. RAQ reaches out to these communities by developing relationships of mutual trust and respect with members of the Culturally and Linguistically Diverse, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Rainbow communities. Additionally, RAQ is always open to responding to the needs of the broader community negatively affected by events and circumstances.





Culturally and Linguistically Diverse communities

This year, we have had the opportunity to work with migrants from a refugee background. RAQ was approached by Multicultural Development Association to conduct a 3-session workshop with a group from the Rohingya community.

They fled from Burma 20 years ago and took shelter in a Bangladesh refugee camp. When we met them, the group of about 25 men and women, had already been in Australia for about five years and were still supported in their settlement process through the government-funded Settlement Grant Program.

Three of our team from the Spring Hill and Eight Mile Plains venues conducted sessions and facilitated discussions on family relationship, parenting and conflict resolution issues.

As the group had limited reading skills, they used role-play and showed pictures during the session, and had the assistance of an interpreter and caseworker. The group was open to share some of their own cultural experiences with our team, as they began to build rapport.

The group went away being equipped with more understanding on building greater resilience living in the wider Australian society.

The Chermide venue also made special effort to connect with the migrant community throughout the year. The Venue Manager has been collaborating with the Red Cross in Queensland for the past 15 months, with the aim of providing a range of counselling services for couples who are supported by Australian Red Cross – Migration Support Program. This collaboration demonstrates a shared commitment to uphold the principles of access, equity, participation, and integrated services.

The Chermide Venue has also started seeing clients who are asylum seekers

or from a refugee background. In preparation, the team signed up to attend training workshops to gain more knowledge and skills in working with these families. The workshops provided an understanding of the refugee experience; the impact of resettlement process, the impact of torture and trauma on individuals; family roles and relationships. It also provided an understanding on trauma recovery models, family therapy and culturally appropriate practice.

Working with migrants has been an enriching experience for the whole team.

As part of the wider Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) program, these experiences demonstrate RAQ's continuous efforts to provide assistance to these vulnerable communities in Australia from refugee backgrounds.

Working with migrants has been an enriching experience for the whole team

Deadly Families Festival

The Inaugural Deadly Families Festival was organised by RAQ in collaboration with a number of non-government and government partners. It was held on the 21st of June 2014 at the Broadwater Parklands, Southport.

The Festival was a free Indigenous Festival for the Community to bring together both non-Indigenous and the Indigenous community. It provided a fun space for community to experience and learn about Indigenous culture, and a safe space for services to engage the Indigenous Community as well as providing the Indigenous Community a culturally safe environment to access relevant services available on the Gold Coast.

Community attendance exceeded expectations with over 800 people attending the inaugural festival. This was considered by the organisers to be a fantastic response for a first year community festival with a limited marketing budget. Community members came from as far as North as Logan and as far South as Lismore.

23 services attended and supported the Festival which again was a great response from the Community in terms of wanting to engage with the Indigenous Community on the Gold Coast.

All services have provided feedback in regards to their participation numbers and were also surprised at the amount of participation and engagement by the community. The feedback from majority of the services is that they saw 60% engagement by non-indigenous community members and 40% Indigenous.

On top of this it was noted that there was also a big interest from International Community members with people attending from backgrounds ranging from Germany, Japan, Korea, Brazil and France.

The planning committee was also a huge success in regards to engaging the ATSI communities around a conversation about health. By forming the planning committee it began the process of breaking down the barriers of community consultation and engagement both within the community services and community in general. By engaging other Community organisations it gave them ownership of the festival and by engaging the Elders to be a part of the planning committee also ensured that their voices were heard, and that they had an input in to what the day would look like.

For an inaugural event this was such a huge success for the community and it is evident that an event like this is crucial in our mission to improve engagement and accessibility for the Indigenous Community.



Mount Morgan

Mount Morgan is situated approximately 43km south-west of Rockhampton, with a population of approximately 4,447 permanent residents, and the Indigenous population making up approximately 9%.

Founded as a gold mining town in 1882, the Mount was a bustling town boasting one of a hand full of rail tracks as part of the line to Rockhampton to operate in Australia. With the closure of the mine in 1981 and the railway in 1987 there has been a lack of industry and access to Rockhampton to this date, creating huge issues of unemployment, along with social justice issues such as but not limited to: drugs, alcohol, petty crime, isolation and housing crisis.



The Vacation Care program continues to be a success in the eyes of the Mount Morgan Community. This year we have focused on 'culture' and have enjoyed the much valued interaction from elders, parents, children and local community members. Activities are designed to educate and enforce traditional concepts of 'way of life in different cultures' including story-telling, cooking, dance, and painting. Sharing knowledge and having fun, families interact with each other and parents enjoy time with their children. There are a number of excursions to educate and allow children to experience things they would not otherwise be exposed to. These have included surf lifesaving skills, agriculture, museums (history), fishing skills, golf and much more.



The Mount Morgan Play Group was established to give children and parents a forum to interact and learn new skills. In fact the two-hour Tuesday Play Group brings many more families than we originally anticipated. It has supported building networks within families, created an opportunity for families to link in with other services (school, health professionals), address social isolation, allowed parents to make new friends, share experiences, and see their children learn and develop new skills. It is wonderful to see there is now a gradual shift towards the play group being self-managed by community.

With no recognition of sport for women in Mount Morgan, the creation of a netball club this year created a high volume of interest which quickly spread throughout the community. Many community members felt it was an excellent idea, and RAQ believes it will give the Indigenous community a glimpse of hope for families to rekindle and rebuild a better future.

In addition to the benefits of physical activity, it is highly recommended that a distraction or an interest outside of the home is essential for the wellbeing of women and families in small communities such as Mount Morgan. It also gives the players opportunities to succeed for a better choice of life which does increase the way they perceive themselves in society and future goals.

The Rockhampton Netball Association hosts the Claws Netball Squad, which consists of Indigenous players who are also mentors to our Indigenous club members. These mentors have agreed to come to Mount Morgan to do a clinic with the players, which has boosted their morale and confidence.

Overall three out of four teams made the finals, a great effort for the first year in Rockhampton Netball Competition. Four of the players also achieved their Level 1 umpire badges.



PHOTOS BY RAQ STAFF

"I didn't know that play was so important in the development of my children."

Play Group Parent

Diploma of Counselling

Early in 2013 RAQ embarked on an exciting project to deliver a recognised Diploma of Counselling through the Australian Institute of Social Relations. This Diploma course is being delivered to ten members of RAQ's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and students will complete the course in May 2015.

The course is designed to provide this cohort of staff with a formal qualification through the development of basic counselling skills, an increased awareness of a range of counselling theories and the ability to articulate the integration of theory into their counselling practice.

The course is being delivered through a number of one week residential workshops where students have the opportunity to receive formal training



whilst applying this learning through a range of simulated practice related role plays. Outside of the residential workshops, students continue to work within their usual program environment whilst continuing to study and practice their counselling skills. The course will conclude with each student presenting two of their recorded role play counselling sessions and discussing

their work with a panel of facilitators. This process mirrors the clinical review process that all RAQ practice staff participate in. RAQ is excited to have been able to deliver this course and acknowledges and congratulates the staff who have undertaken this commitment to develop their counselling skills.

Thursday Island

This year on Thursday Island, we have completed a project called 'We feel prapa gud, We feel safe'. An initiative from the Torres Strait Regional Authority (TSRA), it involved gathering information from all the islands of the Torres Strait on the issues the islanders are facing today and exploring ways to approach these issues with the suggestion that communities keep themselves safe in every way possible from the ground up.

The ground refers to environmental issues, and like a seed growing to a healthy plant or tree references the growth of healthy children healthy families, and ultimately healthy communities.

Thanks to Uncle John, Aunty Rose, Keneti Galo, Colin Doolah and Deb Bennet who made the initial visits, and set-up the second visits where workshops and information sessions were delivered to discuss issues of significance in the community.

Some of the issues identified during these workshops were environmental sea level rising, domestic violence, suicide, social media, relationship counselling, mediation issues, cultural awareness, language restoration and youth behaviours.



PHOTOS BY RAQ STAFF

This year, RAQ also supported the first Junior League presentation on the Island, presenting children from the Island Rooster Teams with encouragement and achievement awards. These children, from Thursday Island and the Badu Community are the future of the Island, and the North Queensland/Thursday Island RAQ team are passionate about supporting and engaging young people and their families.

Big Eso to staff involved for their hardworking and dedication.



Neighbour Day

This year Relationships Australia assumed responsibility for Australia's annual celebration of community, Neighbour Day. This day, celebrated on the last Sunday in March every year, was founded in 2003 by Andrew Heslop, following the death of an elderly Melbourne woman; Mrs Elsie Brown. Mrs Brown was discovered two years after she had passed away in her home, forgotten by friends, family, and her neighbours.

In recognition of this tragedy, Neighbour Day encourages the nurturing of strong community ties in order to create safer and happier neighbourhoods across Australia.

The principles of Neighbour Day align with the work of Relationships Australia in promoting the importance of positive community engagement to assist personal well-being and prevent social isolation, loneliness, and mental illness.

The five principle aims of Neighbour Day are:

- To strengthen communities and build better relationships with the people who live around us
- To create safer, healthier, and more vibrant suburbs and towns
- To promote tolerance, respect, and understanding
- To break down community barriers
- To protect the elderly, vulnerable, and disadvantaged

Neighbour Day 2014 was a successful celebration that saw more than 30,000 people participating across Australia, and 110 registered events in Queensland.

Relationships Australia (nationally) were honoured to receive support from Ambassadors (Hon Fred Chaney AO and television personality Costa Georgiadis), support partners (Australia Post, Ripefruit and News Community Media), and media coverage across regional and national media outlets.

As part of Neighbour Day 2014, Relationships Australia also implemented the *Tell Us Your Story* competition. Through this competition, Australians were invited to share their stories of an extraordinary community or an outstanding neighbourly act.

A large number of entries were submitted in response to the competition that epitomised community relationships and the neighbourly spirit that Neighbour Day and Relationships Australia both strive to promote.

Relationships Australia values being the new home for Neighbour Day. Following the achievements of Neighbour Day this year, Relationships Australia is moving forward to establishing Neighbour Day as a major day of celebration on the community calendar in 2015 and future years.



PHOTO SUBMITTED BY NEIGHBOUR DAY CONTEST ENTRANT

THE FACE OF RAQ

Uniforms

It is generally accepted that uniforms promote a sense of unity, belonging, and create a feeling of equality. While not compulsory, many of our staff have always chosen to wear uniforms on a regular basis.

With the arrival of new Relationships Australia branding across Australia in 2012, we were very excited to introduce new uniforms in Queensland this year, which are in keeping with the lovely bright greens and blues included in this new brand identity.

There are three coloured polos, three different shirts (with two sleeve length options), a 100% cotton white shirt, plus knitwear, to cater for different personal tastes, shapes, sizes and climates.

Staff are charged cost price for the uniforms, and are generally able to claim them on their personal income tax.

Event Kits

For the first time in many years, we were able to allocate funds towards creating an event kit for community and corporate events.

Community events can get very crowded, and our objective was to create eye-catching, humorous signs which would catch the attention of people walking by.

We have a few different combinations for venues to choose from. There are a total of five 'community' event kits, primarily for outdoor use - and five venue hubs around Queensland will store and maintain them. They contain a selection of pull-up banners, from which venues can choose the ones relevant to the event audience. There is also an RAQ tablecloth, and a hanging banner to complete the kit.

We have also put together a 'corporate' event kit, which contains a three wall, 'stretchy' banner, designed specifically for an indoor, 3m x 3m stand. We recently used this at a large event at the Gold Coast Convention Centre and had several comments about how colourful and professional the RAQ stand looked (see next page).

"The new uniforms are the same as our colours now, so I feel like they make more sense..."

RAQ Staff Member



HOW WE OPERATE

Governance

RAQ is governed by a board of seven non-Executive Directors who have been selected to bring in a range of skills and expertise to the organisation. The role of the Board is to govern, which is broadly to:

- Ensure the relevance and appropriateness of RAQ's strategic direction and policy framework.
- Deal with the role, remuneration, performance and tenure of the CEO.
- Ensure the financial viability of RAQ.
- Ensure compliance with all statutory and common law duties and obligations and the terms and conditions in all contractual, funding, and service agreements.

Members of the Board

Peter Swarbrick (Chair)
David Abbott (Treasurer)
Shane Klintworth (Secretary)
Barry Mahoney (Deputy Chair)
Dr Eva-Marie Seeto
Helen Poropat
Dr Lucy Craddock

To assist the effective governance of RAQ, two sub-committees have been established including:

- The Audit Finance and Risk Sub-Committee; and
- The Nominations and Review Sub-Committee

The Board meets every eight weeks during the year to consider progress against strategy, key risks, finances and overall organisational performance.

Compliance

RAQ is a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee and seeks to comply with the ASX Corporate Governance Principles 2010.

RAQ has been awarded a "fully compliant" rating against all 15 standards and 48 attributes of the Family Services Program Approval Requirements - now called Families and Children Activity Administrative Requirements (FaC).

Our internal quality control measures include:

- mandatory tertiary qualifications for all service delivery staff;
- mandatory on-boarding for all staff;
- ongoing professional development and training;
- in-house clinical supervision;
- accreditation and review processes;
- regular performance reporting and analysis;
- published policies and procedures;



- transparent processes for clients, staff and stakeholders to provide feedback and complaints; and
- regular internal auditing.

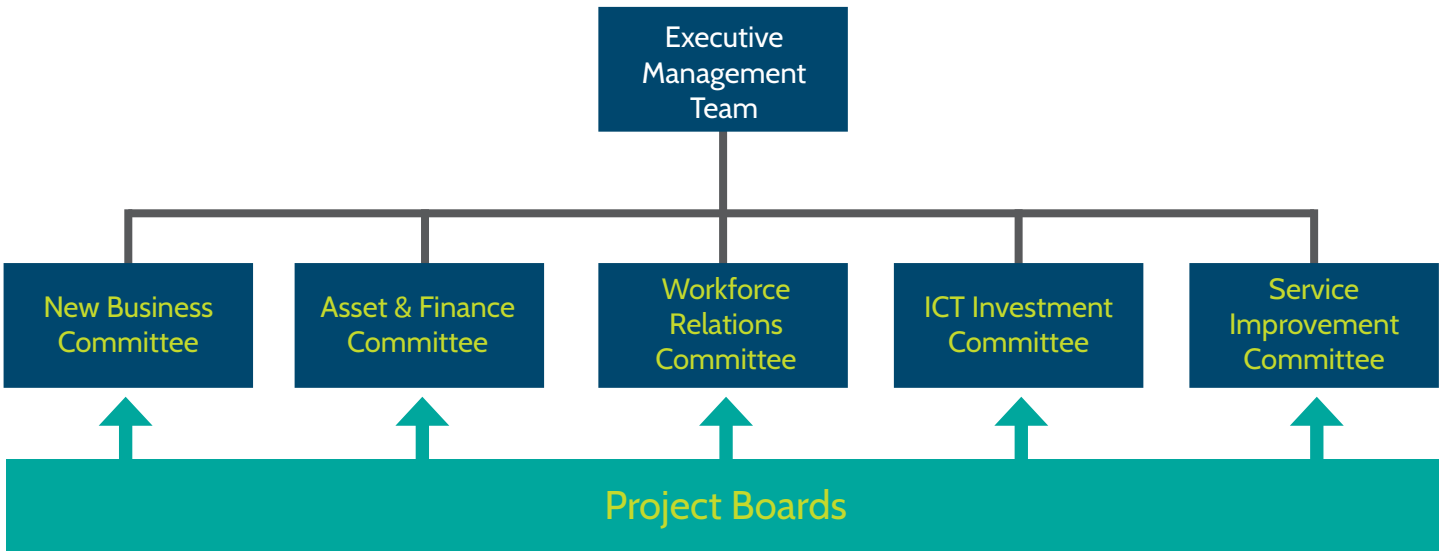
The Executive Management Team

The executive team is the primary decision making group responsible for driving the vision and strategy and is the key group accountable for operationalising strategy and delivering results.

The CEO and executive team are empowered by the Board to manage RAQ by:

- Advising and informing the Board in its governance role;
- Work with the Board to reach agreed strategic and business outcomes within the appropriate budgetary and financial framework;
- Managing all of the day-to-day affairs and activities of the organisation within the Board-endorsed strategic, policy, risk, people and financial framework;
- Attracting, motivating and retaining suitably qualified senior managers and staff to deliver programs and services;
- Providing reports, analysis and recommendations to the board to inform strategy and progress against strategy; and
- Implementing Board decisions and directives.

The Executive Team run a range of internal governance groups aimed at ensuring that key organisational functions receive adequate focus and attention. These groups include the Senior Executives and the CEO as members, along with functional experts from across the organisation. They are supported by working groups of frontline staff as well as Project Boards for major change initiatives.



Committees

Asset and Finance Committee

Key Accountabilities:

- Monitor, control and report on the annual budget and expenditure, which supports RAQ in achieving its strategic objectives.
- Analysis of financial forecasting and trends and taking any necessary corrective action to ensure RAQ remains viable and robust.
- Ensure an Annual Capital Works and Asset Plan for RAQ is developed and monitored in line with strategic imperatives.
- Determine asset-related investment/disinvestment priorities.
- Endorse financial strategies and plans developed to deliver on RAQ business objectives and priorities.
- Monitor, review and improve RAQ Finance and Asset policies, procedures and delegations.
- Reviewing the progress of financial, asset and capital works projects to ensure value is delivered. Realign investments as appropriate.

Workplace Relations Committee

Key Accountabilities:

- Advise the Board and CEO on Employee Relations, Industrial Relations and workforce planning matters to assist RAQ to achieve its strategic objectives.
- Propose any structural changes or staffing profile/competency changes required to implement the strategic direction.
- Consider and provide advice on the cultural/people impacts of major change initiatives occurring in RAQ (e.g. new product delivery, ICT changes)
- Determine workforce/people project priorities arising out of the Strategic and Operational Plans.
- Endorse workforce/people strategies and associated implementation plans developed to deliver on RAQ business objectives and priorities.
- Monitor the staffing Establishment and ensure that any changes are controlled and funded.
- Monitor, review and improve HR, IR and Payroll policies and procedures.
- Review the progress of workforce projects to ensure value is delivered. Realign investments as appropriate.
- Review and distribute workforce reports

Information and Communication Technologies Investment Committee

Key Accountabilities:

- Advise and support the CEO and Board on effective use of ICT to assist RAQ to achieve its strategic objectives.
- Setting direction for ICT to ensure alignment between ICT investment and RAQ strategies
- Determining ICT investment priorities.
- Endorsing ICT strategies and plans developed to deliver on RAQ business objectives and priorities.
- Assessing and recommending funding for ICT/Virtual Services investments.
- Reviewing the progress of ICT projects to ensure value is delivered. Realign investments as appropriate.

The Service Improvement Committee

Key Accountabilities:

- Advice and recommendations on key clinical issues and risks.
- Driving implementation of the Clinical Governance Framework.
- Developing and reviewing Models of Practice.
- Developing and reviewing clinical indicators, clinical audit data, and client complaints related to clinical issues.
- Guiding the research agenda in RAQ
- Reviewing proposals for material changes to clinical practice.

New Business Committee

Key Accountabilities:

- Support and advise the Board and CEO on recommended actions, including conducting market scans and undertaking studies to identify opportunities for business growth and new initiatives that generate income.
- Analyse opportunities for financial partnerships and collaboration between RAQ and other entities and create business networks which provide benefits.
- Engage RA and RAQ staff in identification of emerging and niche business opportunities.
- Consider and approve all business cases for new business products/opportunities.
- Endorse new business products that will deliver on RAQ business priorities and strategic direction.
- Reviewing the progress of new business projects to ensure value is delivered. Realign investments as appropriate.
- Monitor the success, or otherwise, of new products taken to market and make recommendations on corrective action where necessary.

Employee Professional Development

RAQ has engaged various industry experts to deliver training to all employees across QLD. Partnerships have been developed and are growing with a number of external training organisations for the delivery of training to our staff. Below are some highlights of the types of professional development events that RAQ employees received throughout the past financial year:

- Adrienne Burgess, *Father Inclusive Practice*
7 Workshops across QLD, Total of 209 Employees attended
- Professor Robert Emery, *Divorce and Families*
7 workshops across QLD, Total of 191 Employees attended
- Adults Surviving Child Abuse Organisation, *Working with Trauma*
4 workshops for our First Point of Contact staff, 36 Employees attended
12 workshops across QLD for our service delivery staff, 203 Employees attended
- Chris Pye, *LGBTI Training*
6 workshops for our First Point of Contact staff, 104 Employees attended
- Wesley Mission, *Suicide Prevention*
Workshops delivered all across QLD, all Employees were given the opportunity to attend.
- *Mediation*, Facilitated by our own experienced FDRP John Cleary
3 Workshops in Brisbane, 105 Employees attended

"All the content was directly applicable to practice. I appreciated Robert's authenticity and personal sharing, bringing 'realness' and humanity to the theory."

RAQ Staff Member

Employee Personal Development

RAQ has been both creative and proactive this financial year in providing training and personal development. Personal Development (PD) serves many functions; keeping practitioners informed and up to date with the most recent research, affords a forum for discussion and debate on practical application of research with clients, maintains and directs best practice clinical decisions and brings together staff from many venues to create a sense of team and belonging within the organisation.

PD has not been limited to clinical application this year, sessions have been organised for management, practitioners and culture change. Clinicians have had access to such topics as father focused practice, relationship counselling workshops, mediation training in property and family matters, post separation and high conflict.

Some PD has been sourced from known or cited leaders in their field delivering master classes. Other training has been delivered by experienced internal staff, which has the added benefit of both a recognition of in-house expertise and creating a pool of network activator; staff who convey competencies from external sources to motivate and generate a sense of ownership of and leadership in their programs.



Observing Important Days

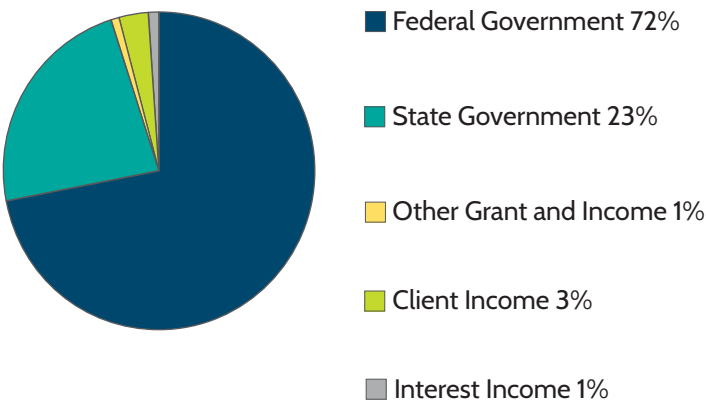
RAQ maintains a keen interest in the broader community and strives to endorse our support through representing our organisation at key days during the year. Some of these include:-

- Attending community education events and promoting services and increasing awareness
- Pride Day
- NAIDOC/MABO Day
- RGAW (Responsible Gambling Awareness Week)
- QHVS (Qld Homicide Victims Support Group annual event)
- White Ribbon Day
- Remembrance Day in honour of the Forgotten Australians community

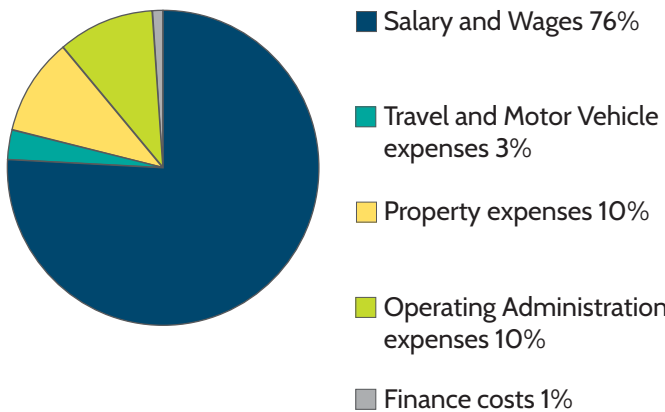
FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

Summary of Income and Expenses

Type of Income (2013/14)



Type of Expenses (2013/14)



Summary of Statement of Financial Position

	2014 (\$)	2013 (\$)
Current Assets	1,606,284	5,611,109
Non-Current Assets	17,159,007	16,458,889
Total Assets	18,765,291	22,069,998
Current Liabilities	4,205,393	10,670,508
Non-Current Liabilities	1,183,183	1,042,754
Total Liabilities	5,388,576	11,803,262
Net Assets	13,376,715	10,266,736

A TIME OF CHANGE

*“All the world’s a stage,
And all the men and women merely players;
They have their exits and their entrances,
And one man, in his time, plays many parts”*

Around 1857 William Shakespeare penned these words in a monologue cataloguing the seven ages of man that include (i) the helplessness of infancy, (ii) the school boy’s lack of confidence, (iii) the frivolous musings of a lover trying to express his feelings, (iv) the hot headed and risky vigour of a soldier/man trying to make a name for himself, (v) the justice and satisfaction experienced by the man who has achieved wisdom and prosperity, (vi) the decline of body and mind in old age and finally (vii) the incapacity and dependence on others as he nears his final days.

Four hundred and seventeen years later, in 2014, mankind still finds himself grappling with a similar backdrop of transitions, emotions, dislocations and challenges experienced in a modern, ever changing world that has shrunk in size through a rapid process of globalisation and technological advancement. Can you remember when you could go out without having to lock your house or when children could play outdoors and explore without fear of being abducted? Can you remember when an airmail letter took a week to get to England or when you had to look for a public call box if you wanted to make a phone call whilst out and about? Can you remember when Relationships Australia Queensland (RAQ) used to be called Marriage Guidance Queensland?

In 1964 Bob Dylan wrote a song called “The Times They are a Changing”. Thirty years later Marriage Guidance Queensland changed its name to Relationships Australia Qld to reflect the changing and diverse nature of relationships as well as the shift towards broader social issues that prompted people to seek help from organisations like ours. Like many other NGOs and NFP organisations, RAQ has adapted and evolved to respond to, and meet the needs of people affected by an ever changing social landscape. The acronyms given to our many and varied programs say it all - RC, FDRP, OFDR, FIS, POP, GHS, ARC, VCSS, TIC, RAI, ICL, RCSS.... the list goes on and on and frequently changes in a similar way to the times Dylan referred to in his classic song.

Sadly, coping with these pressures in an ever changing world presents significant challenges for many people. Thankfully, RAQ has been able to offer a presence and a sense of stability for many of these people. We are charged with the responsibility of helping those in our society who struggle to cope on their own and it is this commission to step into the social breach that makes RAQ so special. When things don’t work out according to plan it’s reassuring to know that RAQ might help turn adversity into hope for a better future. Amidst the challenges of global financial crises, instability, tighter funding opportunities, hostility, fear and family breakdown - let us never forget those whose difficulties present us with an opportunity to do the right thing by the men, women and children whose lives play out on our world stage.

Barry Walton, Head of Staff Support Services, 15 years with RAQ



VENUE CONTACT DETAILS

CLIENT CONTACT CENTRE: 1300 364 277

RAQ WEBSITE: www.raq.org.au

Bowen

54A Powell Street, Bowen
Fax: 07 4786 4420

Bundaberg

14 Tantitha Street, Bundaberg
Fax: 07 4153 2955

Chermside

Unit 1, 671 Gympie Road, Chermside
Fax: 07 3350 3280

Eight Mile Plains

Unit 13 Technology Office Park
107 Miles Platting Road, Eight Mile Plains
Fax: 07 3841 1885

Far North Queensland

125 Grafton Street, Cairns
Fax: 07 4051 8742

FRC Strathpine

16 Mecklem Street, Strathpine
Fax: 07 3881 1858

FRC Upper Mt Gravatt

23 Sanders Street, Upper Mount Gravatt
Fax: 07 3343 5531

Gladstone

10 Tank Street, Gladstone
Fax: 07 4972 9743

Gympie

Unit 3, 22 Barter Street, Gympie
Fax: 07 5481 2270

Head Office

13/107 Miles Platting Road, Eight Mile Plains
Fax: 07 3841 1840

Ipswich

14 Brisbane Street, Ipswich
Fax: 07 3812 0151

Longreach

Unit 4, 19 Duck Street, Longreach
Fax: 07 4926 9954

Mackay

2nd Floor, Worley Parson's Centre
45 Victoria Street, Mackay
Fax: 07 4957 7425

Maroochydore

Suite 22, Cnr Evans & Millwell Road, Maroochydore
Fax: 07 5479 1572

Mermaid Beach

Lvl 2, 5 Markeri Street, Mermaid Beach
Fax: 07 5575 6133

Mount Morgan

63 Morgan St, Mt Morgan
Fax: 07 4938 2202

Rockhampton

Cnr Berserker & High Street, Rockhampton
Fax: 07 4926 9954

Spring Hill

159 St Pauls Terrace, Spring Hill
Fax: 07 3839 4194

Thursday Island

Shop a & B 101 Douglas Street, Thursday Island
Fax: 07 4069 1936

Toowoomba

3rd Floor, 158 Margaret St, Toowoomba
Fax: 07 4638 3660

Townsville (Greater Townsville Region)

745 Riverway Drive, Thuringowa Central
Fax: 07 4755 4217



Greater Townsville Region venue



ANDY DEAN PHOTOGRAPHY/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

Relationships Australia
QUEENSLAND