

## Case Study

### Supporting a Community Patrol Service to increase safety and employment



#### Background

Regional Anangu Services Aboriginal Corporation (RASAC) services Indigenous communities across the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankatjatjara (APY) Lands of north-western South Australia. With limited employment options in the region, RASAC's focus on providing real training and sustainable employment opportunities for local Indigenous people (Anangu) is crucial. The organisation currently employs around 120 people, 75% of whom are Indigenous. In remote communities, as many as 91% of RASAC employees are local Anangu workers.

RASAC's key areas of work are municipal services, homelands essential services, aerodrome maintenance, civil construction projects, short-term rental accommodation in the APY lands and, more recently, Community Patrols. This service was set up in 2015 at the request of the local community leadership and with funding from the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet.

Community safety is a priority in the remote communities of the APY Lands, particularly child safety and reduction of domestic violence and alcohol and drug misuse. In light of this RASAC has established Community Patrols in seven communities to date, with local Anangu workers. For five nights a week, as agreed with the community, Patrollers improve safety in practical ways that include: taking Anangu home to reduce unsafe incidents; helping prevent or calm dangerous situations involving family violence and substance misuse; and checking and advocating for school attendance. Patrols focus on engagement rather than enforcement, based on strong relationships with communities. Patrollers also collaborate closely with police and services such as NPY Women's Council, Nganampa Health, and local schools, using joint reporting and referrals to strengthen prevention initiatives that support the safety of children, women, old people and families.

#### Approach

Jawun secondees supported the Community Patrols program throughout its first year, in three stages.

The first stage was establishment of Community Patrols systems and operations. In late 2015 Kathleen Si'ulua was seconded to RASAC from the Australian Public Service Commission, bringing experience in human resources, customer service and systems improvement. As well as helping establish the remote operations for the Community Patrol Service – covering offices, uniforms, recruitment processes and vehicles – Kathleen assisted in developing the Induction training package for Community Patrollers. Training modules covered RASAC policies and procedures including work health and safety. Given RASAC's focus on relevance to Anangu culture, training presentations were made with Pitjantjatjara language voice-overs. Kathleen worked with an eminent colleague Yanyi Bandicha, also Chairperson of the NPY Women's Council, who narrated the presentations in Pitjantjatjara, and in doing so explained a lot about Anangu culture. Madonna Tomes, RASAC Workforce Development Coordinator, saw that Kathleen formed relationships through which she made a real impact: *"Kathleen has been a pleasure to work with and showed a genuine interest and*

*aptitude for the work she was involved in. Her positivity and hard work have been greatly appreciated. Twelve months later the Patrol Coordinators still sing her praises.”*

The second phase involved establishing an accredited training program for Patrollers to complete the Certificate II in Community Service. Brendan O’Shea from the Australian Government came to RASAC with senior experience in human resources, training and development, and management. To support the Patrollers’ training program, Brendan trialled a new system of obtaining evidence for the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) process required by TAFE SA. This means Patrollers are given credit for their prior skills, knowledge and experience, whether formal or informal, particularly in relation to working in communities. Brendan trained the Patrol Manager and Coordinators in the process and completing RPL documentation. He also spent time mentoring a young Anangu Patrol Coordinator, building his skills and confidence in the RPL process. What Brendan saw and wanted to support, was a strong work ethic among young Anangu Patrollers, contrary to media stereotypes he’d known: *“I saw nothing of the ‘problems’ portrayed in capital city news. Every Community Patroller I worked with was keen, enthusiastic and diligent. These people wanted to work.”*

Thirdly, secondees supported a communication and public relations campaign for the program. Tim Ribet from IAG, and Miah Gibson from the Australian Government, spent time with Patrollers and communities to gather images and interviews for three short films and publicity posters. These will be used in the local communities to promote the Patrols program and its services, and maintain support.

## Outcomes

Establishing Community Patrols has been a high priority for the communities of the APY region, and the success of this is a source of pride. In December 2016 there were around 45 RASAC Community Patrollers working in their communities, and 22 had completed their Certificate II in Community Services qualification. Feedback from community representatives and service providers indicates that the program has become integral to safety services in these communities, particularly in terms of prevention: women and children reported feeling safer due to the Patrollers’ presence in high risk areas and their role taking children home or to a safe place at night; early detection of property break-in or damage has reduced crime; and referrals to other service providers and police have supported victims of violence, increased school attendance, and reduced drug or alcohol related incidents.

Jawun secondments have assisted RASAC to deliver this new and valuable service to the APY Lands communities. As a direct result of the series of secondees, remote offices are set up, uniforms are being used, and training with Pitjantjatjara language translation has been rolled out. The comprehensive training package linked to a formal TAFE qualification (including with RPL) has laid solid foundations for effective delivery of patrol services, and also supported sustainable employment for local Anangu. New community videos and posters are a key plank in the Community Patrol communications strategy, maintaining strong community support for the program.

Demonstrating the program’s ‘shared value’, the secondees placed with RASAC achieved outcomes and transferred skills while also gaining in personal and professional development. They needed to be flexible and self-directed, as plans change frequently, and to be comfortable in their own company since much time is spent travelling around remote communities. All spoke of their increased resilience, as well as the privilege of working and learning alongside Anangu colleagues. Kathleen for example, after working with Yanyi, said: *“I learnt that Anangu are very good listeners. Yanyi taught me to learn by watching and listening, waiting and then acting. Not to rush things, but to let things follow their natural course. I think she was trying to teach me to tune in to what we were doing rather than just focus on finishing a deadline.”* Several secondees spoke of an increased appreciation of the need for Anangu employees to juggle cultural and family obligations with western work practices, and the flexibility required by RASAC and other employers supporting a strong Indigenous workforce.

## Next Steps

In 2017, secondees will assist with an evaluation framework to show the outcomes of the program.