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RACQ Foundation lends helping hand to Yarrabah community

RACQ Foundation volunteers travelled to far north Queensland this month to carry out repairs and upgrades to facilities in the Aboriginal community of Yarrabah.

The group of 29 volunteers including RACQ staff and trades personnel, spent two weeks in the town helping with cleaning, gardening, and roofing, as well as carpentry, mechanical and maintenance work.

RACQ CEO David Carter, who volunteered on the trip, said they were overwhelmed by the warm reception they received from the Gunggandji and Yidinji people.

“Local groups like the RSL, Yarrabah Seahawks Rugby Leagues Club, SES and Women’s Elders’ Hub, are the heart and soul of this community and being able to help revitalise their amenities will go a long way in supporting the entire town,” Mr Carter said.

“This has also been an incredible experience for our staff, having the opportunity to engage with the Traditional Custodians and learn more about their history, culture and local arts.

“Building strong and meaningful relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities across Queensland are at the heart of RACQ’s Reconciliation Action plan.”

King of Yarrabah, Vincent Jaabaan Schrieber, is the fifth generation of his family to hold the traditional title and said RACQ Foundation’s visit greatly benefitted the community.

“RACQ has been a blessing. We’re so grateful there are organisations out there that want to come into our community and help us - giving and not wanting anything back - and that’s something we’ve never seen in my community,” King Schrieber said.

“No matter what community RACQ goes to next, I hope they form the same friendship we’ve formed with them here in Yarrabah.”

RACQ volunteer Philippa Hill, who works in RACQ’s call centre, said she was fortunate for the opportunity to give back.

“We helped the Yarrabah RSL by replacing the roof and gutters, repainting the internal walls and doors, and externally, painting the concrete base that supports a war-time tank, repairing garden beds and general cleaning. The work revitalised the RSL which commemorates Yarrabah’s contribution to World War II,” she said.

RACQ is Queensland’s largest club and peak independent motoring organisation. We were formed in 1905 to represent the interests of the State’s first motorists and today campaign for safer drivers, vehicles and roads on behalf of more than 1.7 million members who own the Club. We offer those members a vast range of motoring, insurance, banking, entertainment and travel services and benefits, and each year respond to more than a million calls for roadside assistance.

"I also felt honoured to spend time with the women Elders who are teaching younger generations about their traditional paintings, sewing and crafts in order to preserve their culture," Ms Hill said.

"It's great to work for an organisation that gives their people volunteering opportunities allowing them to use their skills to support communities - that's what our Club is all about."

Yarrabah Shire Mayor Ross Andrews said the repairs to the RSL will mean so much to the town's veterans.

"The RSL was really run down but the work the RACQ Foundation has done to restore the building will go a long way towards giving the veterans a place where they can come together, sit, and have a cuppa and a yarn."

Since its establishment in 2011, RACQ Foundation has distributed \$11.7 million to more than 370 community groups. It's also delivered 15 Community Assistance Projects since 2016.

For more information visit www.racq.com/foundation.

Media contact: RACQ Principal Media Advisor Kate Leonard Jones 0419 543 514

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