



Staff from Red Door Community Services in Cloncurry have been supported through a COVID-19 Jobs Support Loan from QRIDA

+ COVID-19 Loan helping remote charity plan for the future

Employees at a social enterprise charity focused on supporting young people in remote Queensland are planning for the future once COVID-19 restrictions are lifted.

A **COVID-19 Jobs Support Loan** allowed Red Door Community Services in Cloncurry to continue supporting 15 staff who are already busy planning assistance services for the community in the future.

The loan scheme administered by the Queensland Rural and Industry Development Authority (QRIDA), provides finance of up to \$250,000 for businesses and non-profit organisations impacted by COVID-19 to assist with carry-on expenses such as employee wages, rent and rates and other expenditure.

Director Paul Bashford said the loan allowed the organisation to not only continue paying bills and supporting staff, but provided hope for the future of the business.

“This has allowed us to refocus with a calmer mind. An organisation like ours, a small local charity, doesn’t have the decade of experience and the bank account to match. We run on a small budget and what we spend we put back in the community. This has really saved us as it takes the financial pressure of us that might have pushed us to the edge,” Mr Bashford said.

“We are hopeful for the future. We feel we will be busy at the end of this because the community is going to need the support so in that way we see the organisation will be an essential service.

“Uncertainty creates an emotional toll on workers. Once that is removed it makes a massive difference. We can look at how we would get through this and celebrate what we might be able to achieve post COVID-19.

“If we were trying just to keep the light switch on this week, that forward planning wouldn’t happen and we wouldn’t be in the mindset to do it either.

“We have been able to continue supporting employees primarily due to the help we have received from the loan. It’s meant we can smoothly transition through this process. Without the loan it would have been a very scary time.”

Mr Bashford said the organisation was based on a social enterprise model which supported remote employment and education opportunities for young people.

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Close to 60 people use the service every year.

“We create micro businesses that operate by getting young people to work alongside their mentor as their co workers rather than support people. They’re not sitting down in a classroom, we have a café, recycling centre, a little workshop and business administration area as well,” he said.

“If we were not here and there were no services like ours, people would be stuck unemployed and facing other issues that create a barrier to education.”

For more information see www.qrida.qld.gov.au/covid19jobssupportloans or Freecall 1800 623 946.

QRIDA is delivering the \$1 billion COVID-19 Jobs Support Loan Scheme on behalf of the Queensland Government.