



Case studies

Stars Foundation

Supporting Stars Foundation to empower First Nations girls to shine

Stars Foundation (Stars) provides evidence-based, full-time engagement and wellbeing programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander girls and young women.

Background

QBE Foundation established a partnership with Stars in 2019, with the aim of helping Stars to realise its vision of breaking the cycle of generational disadvantage and empowering First Nations young women to choose their path and participate fully and confidently in the Australian community.

QBE Foundation committed to support Stars' journey to continue its current programs, while also working to expand its offerings to reach more First Nations girls and young women around Australia - a commitment which holds strong as we enter into our second three-year partnership.

Progress

Since its establishment in 2015, Stars has had a significant impact on many young women and communities. This has enabled the charity to expand rapidly and work in high schools across the Northern Territory, Queensland, South Australia, Victoria and Western Australia. It will soon partner with high schools in New South Wales as well. The partnership between Stars and QBE has also continued to evolve and grow over time.



“We’re incredibly proud of everything our students have achieved,” says Andrea Goddard, CEO of Stars Foundation. “Having QBE as a long-term and value-aligned partner, means we can confidently continue creating opportunities for First Nations girls and young women.”



Image source: <https://starsfoundation.org.au/2021/12/celebration-time-come-on/>

The Stars approach

A student-centered approach is a defining feature of the Stars program. Mentors work closely with each young woman to prepare a personalised Stars Plan, to identify current strengths, challenges and aspirations, and establish a pathway towards achieving their goals. Another key focus is improving the health outcomes of the girls, including their social and emotional wellbeing. It's all about enabling the girls to make active choices towards realising their full potential.

As well as aligning with QBE's Reconciliation Action Plan by enabling educational and employment outcomes, our ongoing partnership also reflects our shared commitment to gender equality, diversity and inclusion, and sustainability.

Outcomes

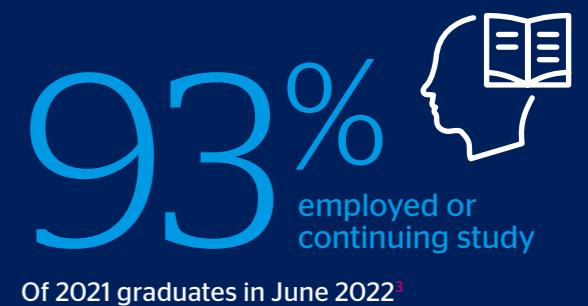
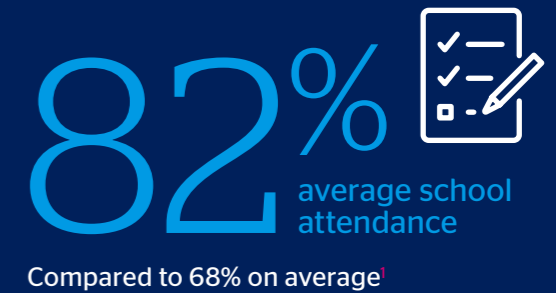
Data shows Stars students achieved an average school attendance rate of 82 percent¹, compared to an average of 68 percent for 'all Indigenous students' in partner schools in 2021.

Stars Foundation is proud to say that every year since 2016, over 90 percent of their senior Stars have successfully completed Year 12.

Future

To build on our three-year partnership with Stars, QBE Foundation aims to:

- Support the expansion of the Stars program into NSW schools
- Help Stars continue to increase opportunities for First Nations girls and young women around Australia
- Identify opportunities for QBE employees to volunteer time and skills to support Stars
- Educate and engage QBE employees, partners and customers on the importance of reconciliation and the barriers faced by First Nations communities.



Foundation Local Grants

QBE Foundation local grants program, supporting impactful community initiatives

In 2021, the QBE Foundation reinvented its local grants program in Australia, to provide more meaningful support for community initiatives addressing areas of need that align with QBE's own vision and purpose.

As well as encouraging applications focusing on climate resilience, the program focused on inclusion - a key priority of which is reconciliation. Across all application categories, not-for-profits were also asked to share details of how their organisation works with, and impacts, First Nations peoples and communities.

Local grant categories

In 2022, we invited eligible Australian not-for-profits to apply to us to be considered for a grant of AUD\$40,000 each. Our approach to working in the community is reflected in our three local grant categories:

- 1. Inclusion**
- 2. Climate Resilience**
- 3. QBE Employee Choice**

Through our inclusion category, we aim to increase access to opportunities for communities who experience exclusion or are marginalised in society. Initiatives aim to ensure our 'whole' community is acknowledged and has the opportunity to contribute, and in doing that we all benefit. We accepted applications in a few areas, including reconciliation. Reconciliation - a focus integrated throughout the application process

We demonstrated our commitment to reconciliation and contributing to Closing the Gap targets throughout our application process. In addition to details about the organisation's initiative and the impact it could have in First Nations communities, local grants applicants across all categories were asked to answer the following questions:

- Is your organisation exclusively or majority led by First Nations peoples?
- If yes, can you tell us about this and how this is structured? If not, how many First Nations peoples do you employ or partner with?
- Do you have relationships and/or partnership with First Nations communities, peoples and cultures? If so, please provide details.
- Does your project aim to benefit First Nations people and communities? If so, how? And how do you measure this?

By asking these questions, we hoped to encourage applications from not-for-profits providing tangible support for reconciliation through all of their operations, not just a single initiative or project. An example of this can be seen in the below case study from our Climate Resilience category: Bush Heritage - an organisation focused on promoting First Nations knowledge and expertise to address climate change.

Bush Heritage

2022 local grant recipient - climate category

Working in partnership with Australia's First Nations people and the agriculture sector, Bush Heritage buys and manages land for conservation, to protect irreplaceable landscapes and native species. The local grant will enable the community organisation to employ the Traditional Owners of Birriliburu Country to conduct a fire management project that will increase climate and wildfire resilience.

ICAN Learn

2022 local grant recipient - inclusion category

ICAN Learn, a subsidiary of the Indigenous Consumer Assistance Network Ltd [ICAN], provides financial counselling, capability and consumer advocacy services with a primary focus on Indigenous Australians. Our local grant will support the adaptation of Yarnin' Money™ - a program designed to build financial capability for Indigenous Australians living in remote areas. This will enable safe and culturally appropriate conversations with women who are victims of financial abuse.

Moving forward, we'll continue to grow our local grants program and hope to support more not-for-profits with a focus on reconciliation and supporting First Nations communities.



Antakirinja Matu-Yankunytjatjara people, Traditional Owners

Source: <https://www.bushheritage.org.au/what-we-do/landscape-management/traditional-owners>



CASE STUDY

Career Trackers

Our ongoing commitment to give First Nations interns a step up

Education and employment pathways are central to our commitment to reconciliation and the Career Trackers internships play a critical role. It gives First Nations university students the opportunity to intern with a business aligned to their degree and career ambitions.

Background

In 2014, QBE partnered with CareerTrackers, a game-changing program that gives students a framework to progress from the classroom to the boardroom. By interning with corporate businesses, students are exposed to opportunities that can accelerate their careers.

Progress

We are working on an improved strategy that strikes a balance between providing internship opportunities to First Nation students, and selecting those with the aptitude - and interest - in becoming a QBE employee.

Outcomes

QBE has hosted 40 interns through CareerTrackers to date.

89%  of CareerTrackers students graduate university

Compared to 47% of Indigenous students not in the program¹

40  interns

Hosted at QBE to date

95% 

of CareerTrackers alumni in full-time employment

Within three months of graduation¹

CareerTrackers success story

Adelaide Dufty

Through CareerTrackers, proud Kamilaroi woman Adelaide secured an internship in QBE's Managed Fund Claims team in 2021. We spoke to her about her journey.

What are you studying at uni?

Bachelor of Secondary Education in Humanities.

How are you finding the internship?

My manager Michelle is determined to ensure my internship is meaningful, so she empowers me to run certain projects which is fantastic.

What type of support did you get from CareerTrackers?

Since helping me get my internship, my advisor Tahu has been with me every step of the way. I report on my progress, and he monitors my experience and wellbeing.

What led you to decide QBE was right for you?

I was lucky to join a team with a supportive leader who values my opinions. She sees the potential in people and pushes them to be their best.

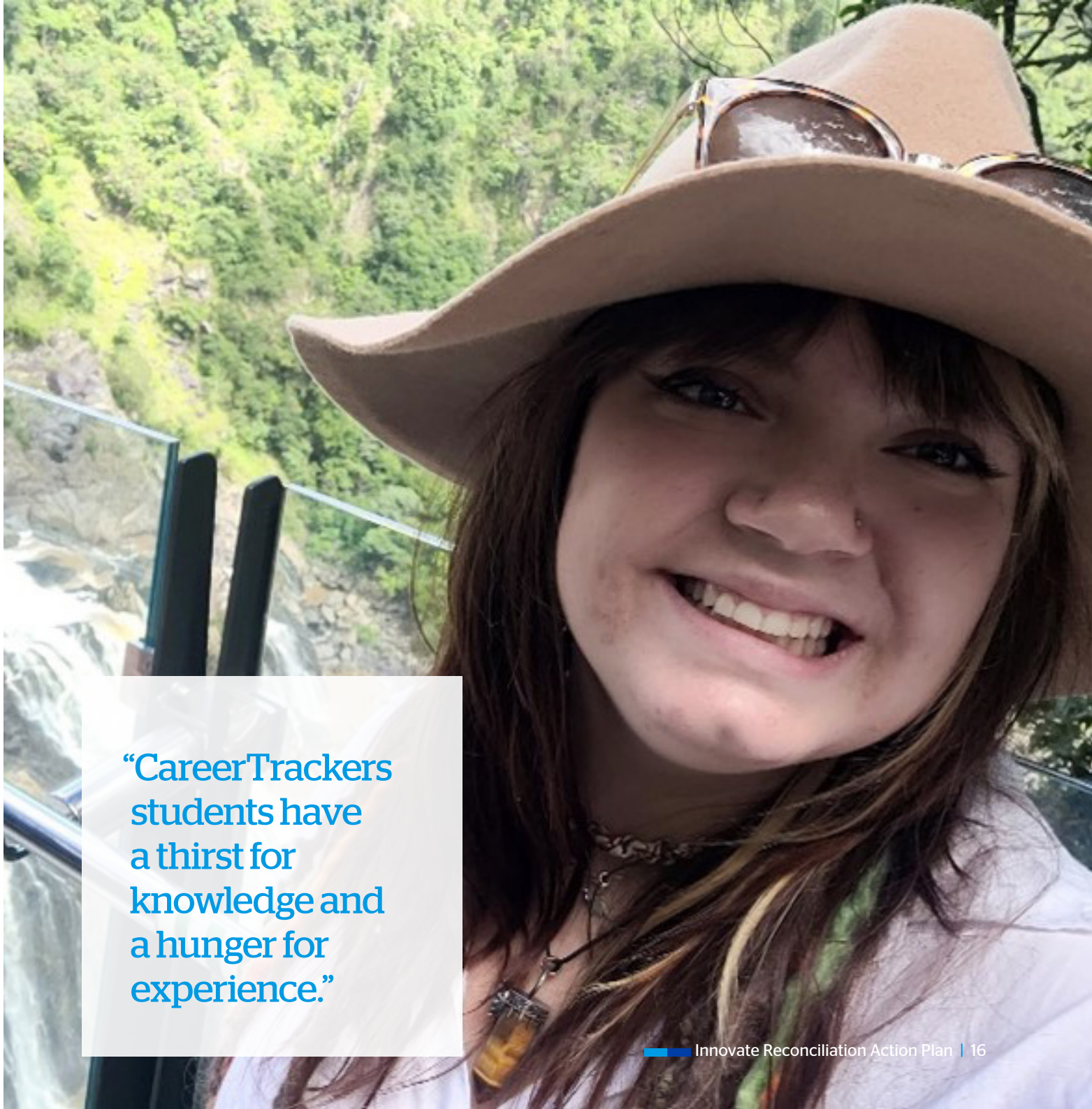
How do you feel supported from a diversity and inclusion perspective?

My manager demonstrated her passion for reconciliation as soon as I joined. She understood issues I was experiencing with culture clashes and helped me work through them. She also encouraged me to join the QBE RAP committee.

I also had the opportunity to deliver the Acknowledgement of Country at Sydney Swans Marn Grook round QBE held during National Reconciliation Week 2022. It was such a memorable experience.

What are your future aspirations?

After uni, I want to jump straight into teaching and be a role model. It's my goal to include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, perspectives and values into every lesson, so students have a greater understanding and respect for our culture.



“CareerTrackers students have a thirst for knowledge and a hunger for experience.”

CASE STUDY

John Briggs Consultancy

Building our cultural confidence

We recognise reconciliation requires an ongoing commitment that requires real action and change. That's why we have a long-standing partnership with John Briggs Consultancy – John is a proud member of the Yorta Yorta and Gunnai nations, facilitator and subject matter expert to advance our commitment to reconciliation.

With more than 30 years' experience, John Briggs is passionate about Indigenous culture, inclusion, employment and engagement, and assists organisations to be better equipped and confident in these areas. John has helped QBE build cultural confidence across our workforce, which extends to our external business partners and brokers. Cultural Confidence is more than awareness, it means you are comfortable using your awareness and knowledge in different settings. This is our aim at QBE as we want to create a workforce that moves from intentional to demonstrative in the reconciliation space.





Background

QBE is committed to an inclusive workplace where our people feel respected, valued, with a sense of belonging. Our commitment to reconciliation commenced in 2015 and remains focused on two-way meaningful and impactful partnerships with First Nations peoples, communities and businesses.

We began working with John Briggs of John Briggs Consultancy over five years ago to help our workforce build our cultural confidence and progress our commitment to Indigenous inclusion. As a proud member of the Yorta Yorta and Gunnai nations in South Eastern Australia, John brings not only his lived experience but also builds awareness of our Nation's shared past and encourages curiosity in a culturally safe, inclusive and approachable way.

Progress and outcomes

We proudly continue to collaborate with John to deliver cultural confidence workshops with our people, external business partners and brokers on an ongoing basis. And in 2022, we expanded our approach, with John acting as RAP Committee advisor providing guidance to support the advancement of our RAP activities and deliverables, ongoing learning and education for RAP Committee members and supporting ongoing change.

John commented

“Having worked in the reconciliation space since 1992 I have seen many changes.

QBE is a lead organisation in the reconciliation space, going far beyond just celebrating NAIDOC and National Reconciliation Week every year to having Indigenous ways of knowing and doing in everyday work practises and conversations. Conducting meetings with acknowledgement of country then sharing fast facts straight after this creates curious minds and constantly reminds us of the power of education at opportune times. Creating curious minds is pivotal to reconciliation. Curious minds go on learning journeys and educate others.”

John also acts as a mentor for Career Tracker interns, their managers and team members by preparing QBE teams to host Career Trackers First Nations interns, to mitigate assumptions and stereotypes and assure positive pathways to further education and employment.

Education and employment pathways are central to our commitment to reconciliation and the Career Trackers internships play a critical role in this. Through John's guidance and facilitation, our workshops help educate the managers and teams of Career Tracker interns with:

- a brief intro to QBE's commitment to reconciliation, Indigenous inclusion and Career Trackers program
- an overview of how past events has led to unequal access to education and employment
- The factors that underpin why the attrition rate of Indigenous University students is twice that of non-Indigenous students
- Understanding family structures, kinship, dynamics and important cultural protocols such as Sorry Business

- The important role that leaders and teams play.
- How to embed and maintain a culturally safe workplace that acknowledges, respects and embraces cultural and social differences amongst all areas of our business.
- Why employment and mentoring is such an important step towards 'closing the gap' in Australia between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous communities.

By asking these questions, we hoped to encourage applications from not-for-profits providing tangible support for reconciliation through all of their operations, not just a single initiative or project. An example of this can be seen in the below case study from our Climate Resilience category: Bush Heritage - an organisation focused on promoting First Nations knowledge and expertise to address climate change.

CASE STUDY

Sydney Swans Foundation

Sydney Swans working hard to get First Nations players on side

We're proud to be into our 37th year of supporting the Sydney Swans through principal sponsorship. In 2022, we were delighted to become the Sydney Swans AFLW team's foundation Principal Partner.

As an insurer of First Nations communities, QBE's partnership with the Swans is incredibly important to us. Our shared value to embrace an inclusive culture is what underpins the relationship.

Honouring the First Nations roots of Australian football

We are honoured to get behind the Sydney Swans' annual First Nations Round match - known as 'Marn Grook' (translates to 'Game Ball') - during National Reconciliation Week. This significant match honours the First Nations roots of Australian football and recognises the valuable contribution of First Nations players.

Sydney Swans Academy, bringing future talent up through the ranks

We are planning for the future together through our continued support of the QBE Sydney Swans Academy, an initiative designed to identify and foster talent among aspiring young football players.

This includes 17 First Nations kids currently in the Academy. We are launching a program in November 2022 with a key focus on lifting First Nations peoples participation.

We're also proud to be paving the way for female footballers in New South Wales by sponsoring the QBE Sydney Swans Youth Girls Academy, an elite training program for 12 and 13-year-old girls.



Support First Nations players in the Academy

To help existing and future players reach their full potential, on and off-field

Increase accessibility of the Academy to First Nations youth

By overcoming practical barriers with discounted registration, football boots and logistics

Conduct annual First Nations engagement days

And engage with schools, local clubs and community groups in the Academy network

Dedicated First Nations Community Development Officers

To provide wellbeing support on the ground

CASE STUDY

Challenge DV

Delivering trauma training to frontline First Nations domestic and family violence services

Background

Challenge DV is a social enterprise that works with organisations and communities across Australia to end family and domestic violence (FDV), through education, strategic partnerships, advocacy and prevention initiatives.

In 2021, the QBE Foundation supported Challenge DV with a QBE Foundation Local Grant to ensure frontline FDV service workers in First Nations communities in Far North Queensland received essential training to support those who have experienced trauma.

Progress

Following sector consultation, Challenge DV identified that many FDV frontline service workers based in Far North Queensland and First Nations communities had not received trauma training as part of their professional development.

Thanks to an investment from the QBE Foundation, Challenge DV engaged a trauma specialist to develop a plan to address this gap.

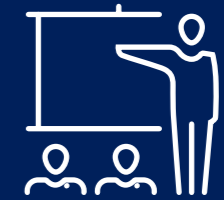
Outcome

Challenge DV Chief Communications and Partnerships Officer, Katrina Swanston, said QBE Foundation's investment in First Nations communities through trauma-informed training for frontline workers demonstrates its deep commitment to FDV prevention.

“Every day, frontline workers provide critical support to some of our community's most vulnerable. Yet they often operate with limited resources and time, which prevents them from accessing support, such as professional development.

“QBE Foundation helped relieve that pressure for our amazing frontline service workers, who work tirelessly within First Nation communities.

“It's great to have that support from QBE - both through the QBE Foundation local grant and other work we do with the organisation - and know that we share similar goals and values. We look forward to working with them on future programs that tackle domestic and family violence prevention.”



The project delivered trauma-informed training for 25 FDV frontline workers, who work in and are part of First Nations communities. Online training modules were also made available to the community.

Through the training, participants were given an opportunity to share their experiences relevant to trauma. This helped everyone gain deeper knowledge of how people experience trauma differently, as well as learning strategies around how to self-care. It also created new connections between those working in shelters.