



Royal Flying Doctor Service  
*The furthest corner. The finest care.*

# Flying Doctor

QUEENSLAND >

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## Message from the CEO

The past twelve months has seen several capital infrastructure projects delivered and some new fields of endeavour introduced to our services. I am pleased to report that we have **now** opened our **ninth base, in Roma**. The Patient Transfer Facility provides improved patient comfort for those being airlifted by visiting RFDS aircraft to and from tertiary hospitals and specialist services.

To **further enhance** our aeromedical capabilities, late last year we also signed a purchase agreement with Hawker Pacific for two **B350C King Air aircraft** to replace some of our existing fleet. These new aircraft have increased payload and flight duration capacity and are in addition to two B200s that were introduced into service late in 2014 and situated in Mount Isa and Cairns respectively.

In October we completed the construction of a new **Charleville Base and Hangar** facility, to consolidate our aviation, medical

and administration teams into one central location. As part of this redevelopment we were also delighted to have opened a brand new **Visitor Centre** to continue to perpetuate our history and add an RFDS flavour to the outback tourism market.

Our **Rockhampton Base** is also eagerly awaiting the construction of a new **Patient Transfer Facility** which we anticipate will be operational in the next few months. This year also marks the 20th Anniversary of operations at both our Rockhampton and Brisbane bases. These two aviation hubs are of vital importance to our inter-hospital patient transport activities and we look forward to celebrating these milestones throughout the year.

Our Queensland operations have unparalleled diversity, seeing close to 90,000 people across a complex landscape of coastal and outback terrains, representing one person every six minutes. Our thanks must go to our growing group of donors and supporters, our key corporate partners, **Ergon Energy Retail, Brisbane Airport Corporation and QCoal Group**, our auxiliary support groups and members of the wider Queensland community for their continued generosity.

With all of that support we will continue to advance our services to ensure all Queenslanders, regardless of their location, have access to life saving medical care.

These two aviation hubs are of vital importance to our inter-hospital patient transport activities and we look forward to celebrating these milestones throughout the year.



**Nino Di Marco**  
**CEO**  
Queensland Section

## Water fun and safety in the bush

Early one morning in July, a Flying Doctor aircraft landed on a remote cattle station, 800km south-west of Cairns. On board was a small Flying Doctor team, but they weren't there for an emergency retrieval... Packed on board the aircraft was basic medical equipment and supplies but special room had also been made for something a little different – eight inflatable stand-up paddleboards. The crew had arrived at Barenya Station to hold an RFDS Field Day with a difference.





Above > The RFDS Cairns team has run stand-up paddle boarding lessons in Aurukun, Coen, Hope Vale, Mossman Gorge and Barenya Station near Hughenden, to help promote water safety.

The Field Day program has been running in Queensland for over 10 years and is tailor-made for each community. Judith Taylor, a Health Promotions Officer from the Cairns Base has been coordinating Field Days for a number of years and has seen the program grow in popularity.

“We used to offer clinical services to different remote locations but we found they were attracting less and less people, and so we decided to focus on preventative health. We ask the community what they want to learn about, each community is so different and their needs change over the years. We can adapt the program depending on how many children are in the community or if they have specific health concerns, like snake bites.”

However, Judith explains that the Field Day program focuses on more than just physical health.

“If you live in the city, you can just pop down to the doctors, or over to a friends place for a chat, but if you live on a remote property, you need a much broader range of skills, not only to cope with any health issues that might arise, but also the isolation.”

Field Days often tie in practical strategies for identifying and coping with mental health issues and provide a day of laughter and relaxation.

“We try to incorporate as many activities as possible and often contact other service providers to see what they might be able to offer the community. This could be as simple as bringing a hairdresser and massage therapist along, or a chef to teach the community some new, quick, healthy recipes.

The Field Day at Barenya Station was the first time the Flying Doctor had partnered with Glide Watersports, who imported eight inflatable paddleboards from the UK especially for the day.

“The community around Barenya Station has a number of families with young children, so teaching them water safety in a fun and safe environment is really important. Even though the area is in drought there are always dams, rivers and drainage tunnels so learning about respecting water and what to do if you get into trouble around water, is a great skill for every person. In fact, surprisingly, more people die in inland waterways, including dams, than at beaches in Australia.”

“For me, a water safety program like the SUPKids Program is one of the most important things for our kids in Hope Vale. We are salt water people and spend a lot of time in the surrounding ocean and waterways.”

Jenni Gibson, Community Development Consultant RFDS

## School holiday fun in the Cape

When the RFDS Wellbeing Centres in Aurukun, Coen, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge, wanted to run a fun school holiday program for the local children, inflatable stand-up paddle (SUP) boards didn't immediately jump to mind. However, after hearing about the SUP Kids program, Shaun Sellwood, Wellbeing Centre Team Leader, thought the program could be adapted for the Far North.

“This is such a great way for the children to build confidence and learn a new skill. We also partnered with the schools and made the SUP Kids program as a reward for those children who had a good school attendance record.”

Most of the children living in these communities miss out on formal swimming lessons but because of their location they have access to some of the most beautiful waterways or beaches in Australia.

“The objective is for the kids to experience the joy of SUP'ing, learn vital water safety skills, increase their self esteem by learning a new sport and understand the importance of respecting their environment.”

The SUP Kids program ran in Aurukun, Coen, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge in August, 2014, and will return to the Cape in late 2015.





## 'Cooee' joins the Mount Isa fleet

Over the past 14 years, Ergon Energy's sponsorship of the Flying Doctor has allowed their customers to make voluntary donations to the RFDS through their electricity bills.

To date, the program has raised in excess of \$8 million, testament to the combined generosity of over 115,000 Ergon Energy Retail customers and employees who recognise the need and importance of the Flying Doctor in regional and outback Queensland.

To celebrate this \$8 million milestone, Ergon Energy Retail recently ran a 'Name the Plane' competition, open to retail customers who donate to the Flying Doctor through their electricity bill. \$8 million in donations represents the total cost of purchasing, then medically equipping, an RFDS aircraft, to a standard equivalent to an intensive care unit.

Maryborough resident Shirley Ashford won the competition to name the new 2014 model Beechcraft B200 King Air which joined the aeromedical fleet at the RFDS Mount Isa Base in October.

Shirley's winning suggestion was 'Cooee' - a name universally identified as a shout to attract attention or a call for help, synonymous with the bush and the Flying Doctor.

Executive General Manager of Ergon Energy Retail, Roslyn Baker said the company recognised the important role the RFDS had in helping regional Queenslanders.

"As a regional Queensland company, Ergon Energy Retail appreciates the important service the RFDS provides and we are proud to work in partnership with our customers to support the RFDS and regional communities," Roslyn said.

RFDS (Queensland Section) CEO Nino Di Marco said that 'Cooee', as Mount Isa's new primary retrieval aircraft, would play a pivotal role in delivering medical care across North West Queensland over the next decade.

"Last year our Mount Isa based aeromedical crews airlifted close to 900 patients, flying around 77,000 kms in the process," said Mr Di Marco.

'Cooee' can expect a similar workload, covering a vast geographical area from its operational hub, ranging from the Gulf of Carpentaria to the north; to the west across the Northern Territory border; to the remote township of Bedourie in the south west and to the east back to towards the coast, including Townsville," he said.

The new Beechcraft B200 King Air is at the forefront of navigation technology and equipped with the most up-to-date navigation and flight management systems.

"This advanced technology provides early warning of other air traffic and allows the aircraft to fly at altitudes up to 11 km (35,000 feet), using less fuel and travelling at greater speeds. Additionally, the enhanced radar system enables it to avoid some turbulent weather," he said.

"While we acknowledge the support of both the federal and state governments, it is the support of corporates and communities that enables us to upgrade and renew our fleet and the associated life-saving medical equipment," Mr Di Marco said.

“Cooee” - a name universally identified as a shout to attract attention or a call for help, synonymous with the bush and the Flying Doctor.

# Welcome Cooee



Ergon Energy Retail customers proudly supporting the Flying Doctor's outreach to regional communities through \$8 million in donations



**ERGON ENERGY**

**RETAIL**

# Ian Odendaal

Principal Dentist,  
QCoal Community Dental Service



Ian joined the Flying Doctor last year as the Principal Dentist for the QCoal Community Dental Service. Working with a RFDS graduate dentist and three dental assistants, Ian and his team travel through rural Queensland providing free oral health care to those who need it most.

“I believe that everyone should have access to dental care, however, in some communities the sheer distance from dental services makes this very difficult.”

Ian and the dental team have experienced first-hand the need for the mobile dental service.

“One patient I saw was unwell and in hospital, so couldn’t travel to see a dentist but needed treatment. As we were positioned right next door to the hospital, we were able to help her and not interrupt her hospital treatment.”

As some people have not had access to dentistry for so long, Ian feels education is just as important as treatment.

“Poor oral health often impacts on a person’s general health but education can be the key to instilling good dental hygiene practices.”

## Governor of Queensland

The Royal Flying Doctor Service (Queensland Section) welcomed His Excellency, Mr Paul de Jersey AC, Governor of Queensland, as patron in late 2014, shortly after he was appointed as the 26th Governor of Queensland.

Kaye and Paul de Jersey are dedicated long-standing Queenslanders.

The Governor was born in Brisbane in 1948, the third son of school teacher parents Ronald and Moya (both now deceased).

He won a Commonwealth Scholarship to the University of Queensland, from which he graduated in Arts in 1969 and Laws (with Honours) in 1971. Also in December 1971, the Governor married Kaye Brown. Mr and Mrs de Jersey have three children and three grandchildren.

The Governor was called to the Bar at the end of 1971 and was appointed as Her Majesty’s Counsel (QC) in 1981.

The Governor was appointed as a Judge of the Supreme Court of Queensland in 1985, when aged 36 years, becoming the 17th Chief Justice of Queensland on 17 February 1998, serving in that role for more than 16 years until 8 July 2014.

In recognition of his contribution to the Australian community, the Governor of Queensland was appointed a Companion of the Order of Australia in 2000, and awarded a Centenary Medal in 2003. He holds honorary doctorates from the University of Queensland (2000) and the University of Southern Queensland (2008), and has recently accepted an honorary doctorate from Griffith University.



# Flying Doctor welcomes partnership with Birdsville Race Club

In August, The Birdsville Race Club and the Royal Flying Doctor Service (Queensland Section) announced the Flying Doctor as the official charity partner of the iconic Birdsville Races.

RFDS (Queensland Section) CEO Mr Nino Di Marco said the Birdsville Races were a quintessential Australian outback experience that should be on everyone's bucket list. The event has raised more than \$150,000 towards aeromedical aircraft and medical equipment for the Service, over many years.

"The RFDS greatly appreciates the generous support of racegoers and the local Birdsville community, and is proud to be both a beneficiary and provider of onsite medical clinic coverage and aeromedical support, as needed, during the carnival," Mr Di Marco said.

Gary Brook, Vice President of the Birdsville Race Club said the Flying Doctor has provided vital aeromedical and primary health care services to regional Queensland communities for over 87 years and has a long association with the Birdsville Races, held annually since 1882.

"Each year the local community throws its support behind the Flying Doctor, by organising a variety of activities," said Mr Brook.

"Racegoers are encouraged to join in and support these activities, to help keep the Flying Doctor flying, including visiting the popular Food Stall, operated by Rotary volunteers from all over Queensland and by making a gold coin donation when using the Kangaroo Bus Lines shuttle service," he said.

Flying Doctor fundraising events at the 2014 Birdsville Races included:

- > The inaugural RFDS Birdsville Races Fun Run
- > Equine Fun Day at the Birdsville Hotel
- > Birdsville Races Cocktail Party, and the
- > Landmark Charity Auction



Above > In 2014, RFDS employees sold drinking water and merchandise to racegoers while RFDS health staff assisted those who needed medical attention, at the Birdsville Clinic.

Dubbed "the Melbourne Cup of the Outback", the Birdsville Races have been held annually in September in the small town on the banks of the Diamantina River, when the population of Birdsville swells from about 100 to 6,000 people from all over Australia and the world, all keen to back a winner and enjoy quality outback racing, entertainment and hospitality.

For further information please visit [www.birdsvillerraces.com](http://www.birdsvillerraces.com).

Each year the local community throws its support behind the Flying Doctor, by organising a variety of activities...



# New era for the Flying Doctor in Charleville

His Excellency, the Honourable Paul de Jersey AC, Governor of Queensland officially opened the Flying Doctor's new Charleville Base, Hangar and Visitor Centre on Friday 31 October, marking an exciting new chapter in its 70-year history in Charleville.



His Excellency, Patron of the RFDS, was joined by Federal Member for Maranoa Bruce Scott and Murweh Shire Council Mayor Denis Cook, as well as current and past staff members, past patients, supporters and station owners, at a morning tea to celebrate this milestone with the Charleville community.

This new development co-locates the base administration and hangar and includes a purpose built Patient Transfer Facility and a new Flying Doctor Visitor Centre.

The new Patient Transfer Facility will provide patients being transferred to and from Charleville with a comfortable, family-friendly indoor waiting area for their carers, as well as disabled toilets and enhanced privacy.

Murweh Shire Council Mayor Denis Cook said the Council was delighted to have been able to support the RFDS by providing the land for the new development, which will help the Flying Doctor better deliver vital health care services.

"Residents in south-west Queensland will benefit from the new facilities, while the new Visitor Centre is sure to be a highlight for visitors to the region," Cr Cook said.

RFDS (Queensland Section) Chairman, Bill Mellor said the opening of the new base was a good opportunity to reflect

on the work of the Charleville team, which services approximately 622,000 square kilometres of south-west Queensland.

"Last year our Charleville Base transported more than 400 patients and conducted more than 4,700 patient consultations and we are looking forward to another 70 years of great service by our team in this remote area of south-west Queensland," Mr Mellor said.

Designed by DM2 Architecture and built by Lanskey Constructions, the new facility has been made possible through the generous support of the Federal Government through its Health and Hospital Fund, and the Murweh Shire Council. It is designed to be low maintenance, energy and water efficient, and incorporates a five kilowatt solar system at the base.

**Last year our Charleville team transported more than 400 patients and conducted more than 4,700 patient consultations**



Residents in south-west Queensland will benefit from the new facilities, while the new Visitor Centre is sure to be a highlight for visitors to the region.



## Flying Doctor Visitor Centre now open at Charleville

Visitors to south-west Queensland have a new reason to visit Charleville, with the recent opening of the RFDS Charleville Visitor Centre.

Opened by the Governor of Queensland, this modern facility celebrates the historical links between the Flying Doctor and Charleville, home to the longest-serving RFDS Base in Queensland.

Visitors can enjoy a self-guided tour which makes the journey from the humble beginnings of the Royal Flying Doctor Service, and its association with the Australian Inland Mission, to the present day operations of this vital outback medical service.

Located adjacent to the new RFDS Base and Hangar, and just a short walk through the mulgas from the popular Charleville Cosmos Centre and Observatory, the exhibit includes interactive and audio-visual features, as well as a range of historical radio and medical equipment used by Flying Doctors of the past.

### Entry is free

**Location:** John Flynn Way, Charleville QLD 4470

**Opening Hours:** Monday to Friday: 8:30am to 4:30pm

Weekends and public holidays: 10am to 4:30pm.

(Closed weekends and public holidays November - February)



# Flying Doctor to fly further with B350C

The RFDS (Queensland Section) has purchased two new Beechcraft King Air 350C Heavy Weight aircraft from Hawker Pacific.

Mr Nino Di Marco, CEO, RFDS (Queensland Section) is eagerly awaiting the introduction of the two new King Air B350s explaining that “the enhanced payload capability of 1,400 pounds will enable us to better fulfil our patient transport obligations in what is a dynamic and ever changing aeromedical environment.

“The new additions to our fleet will be immensely beneficial to our patients both in terms of their comfort and the timeliness of our operations. The increased flying distance of the King Air B350s will provide our flight operations team with more flexible transport options, and provide long-term cost savings, which are extremely important to us as a not-for-profit organisation.”

The new aircraft will be used to provide a combination of life saving aeromedical emergency retrieval services and inter-hospital patient transfers across the network of nine regional RFDS bases, which stretch up the Queensland coast from Brisbane to Cairns and out west to locations such as Mount Isa and Charleville.

Nick Jones, Hawker Pacific’s Vice President, Aircraft Sales, said, “The long range and significantly enhanced payload capability of the King Air B350C will provide the RFDS flexibility within their aeromedical missions that are unique and very well-suited, considering the vast distances and remote airfields their operation necessitates.

“Additionally, the King Air B350C will allow the RFDS to fly direct from Cairns to Brisbane without having to refuel – providing a higher level of comfort for their patients and producing significant time savings for the RFDS team.”

The first of two King Air B350C Heavy Weight aircraft will arrive on Australian soil in April 2015 and will undergo a comprehensive medical fit-out before being incorporated into the RFDS’s existing aviation fleet.



Left to right > Alan Smith, CEO, Hawker Pacific; Adam Johnson, Aircraft Sales Manager, Hawker Pacific; Captain Shane Lawrey, Head of Flying Operations, RFDS QLD Section; Nino Di Marco, CEO, RFDS QLD Section.

# New Flying Doctor base open in Roma

Federal Member for Maranoa Bruce Scott and Nino Di Marco, CEO of the Royal Flying Doctor Service (Queensland Section), officially opened the new RFDS Roma Hangar and Patient Transfer Facility at Roma Airport on Wednesday 20 August, 2014.

Mr Di Marco said the new hangar will house the current Roma based King Air B200 aircraft, and provide undercover facilities for RFDS crew involved in aeromedical tasks to and from the Roma region.

“The Flying Doctor is delighted that the Roma community now has these much needed new facilities to help us to better deliver our services, which involved 254 landings and more than 200 patient transfers in the last year,” said Mr Di Marco.

Mr Scott said the opening of the new Hangar and Patient Transfer Facility was great news for the Roma community and the RFDS.

“The new Patient Transfer Facility will provide patients being transferred to and from Roma, with a more comfortable, family-friendly indoor waiting area for their carers as well as disabled toilets and more privacy,” Mr Scott said.

The new Hangar and Patient Transfer Facility was designed by DM2 Architecture and built by Lanskey Constructions Pty Ltd, thanks to the generous support of the Federal Government through its Health and Hospital Fund.





# A decade of support from Thies

Spending a day with the Royal Flying Doctor Service has given Thies Australian Mining Trainer and Assessor Luke Knight an even greater appreciation of the vital work they do in rural and remote communities.

Luke travelled with the RFDS from its Bankstown Base to Dubbo where he met with members of the medical team who gave him a tour of the facility and medical aircraft.

"I don't think I quite realised the magnitude of the work the RFDS does. The number of transports they do each year is staggering and they are such a vital part of the community," Luke said.

"The majority of us are lucky to have medical help just a few minutes away. Even in regional towns, there is usually a hospital or a doctor close to hand.

"That's just not the case in remote parts of the country and the RFDS is vitally important to fill that gap."

RFDS Queensland Section, CEO, Nino Di Marco said the RFDS greatly appreciated the support of Thies, a long-standing corporate partner.

"Our partnership with Thies has spanned a decade, is highly valued and has directly contributed to the purchase and medical fit-out of the aircraft, used by the Flying Doctor, to deliver our iconic 24 hour aeromedical and primary health care to those living, working and travelling in rural and remote Queensland," Mr Di Marco said.

Thies has a long association supporting the RFDS through a corporate charity sponsorship program and recently raised \$12,000 through the sale of showbags at the Brisbane Ekka.



Above > Janine Gardner and Sommer Davies collecting the cheque raised by Thies showbag sales at Ekka 2014.



Above > Luke Knight, Thies Australian Mining Trainer and Assessor, spent a day with the Royal Flying Doctor Service in New South Wales.

Our partnership with Thies has spanned a decade, is highly valued and has directly contributed to the purchase and medical fit-out of the aircraft

Top > At the 2014 Brisbane Ekka, Thies donated the proceeds from the sale of their showbags to the Flying Doctor.

# Luck changes for Charlotte

When the local doctor opened the splint the ambulance officer had applied to Charlotte's crushed leg, he gasped and swore in shock.

"He just closed it up again and told me I'd be flying out with the Flying Doctor," recalls Charlotte Gerhardt, 24, of her ordeal.

Charlotte and her sister Emily had been mustering cattle on their family's remote property, between St George and Goondiwindi in southern Queensland, when her horse slipped and fell on top of her.

"I've had lots of really bad busters before but never had so much as a sprained ankle," explains Charlotte. "But this time I knew immediately I'd broken my leg and it was bad. I could hear and feel the break and the blood."

"My sister was aghast and just automatically grabbed my foot and twisted it back 180 degrees into a normal position. That saved my leg and quite possibly my life."

The fall was seriously bad luck for Charlotte but her sister's instinctive reaction was the start of a series of luckier 'breaks' which have seen her back on her feet, albeit with the aid of crutches, in less than three months.

"I was in so much shock after it happened," recalls Charlotte.

"My mother decided to drive me to meet the ambulance and she was crying as she was driving and my sister was freaking out and I was thinking, 'hang on, I'm the one with the broken leg!' I started telling jokes to try and cheer them up. I was conscious the whole time."

Charlotte travelled on a mattress in the back of her family's Landcruiser wagon along gravel roads until they met up with the ambulance and was then able to travel in a little more comfort to St. George Hospital, 110km in all, where the damage to her leg horrified the doctor.

The next big piece of luck was that an RFDS aircraft was already waiting at the airport.

"Within an hour I was on the plane to Brisbane," says Charlotte. "My heart rate was high and my blood pressure was very low



Leaving for the RFDS aircraft, Charlotte tries to cheer her worried mother.



and I was very glad once the drugs kicked in, although I was still in shock.”

It has not been an easy road since then for Charlotte, who has so far endured three operations on her leg, skin grafts, and more than a month in hospital. She has also lost her business as a remedial massage therapist and her doctor has told her she will never ride a horse again.

However, despite all of these challenges and the prospect of a further operation to reset her leg, which is still a little twisted, Charlotte remains upbeat.

“I was so lucky that even though I landed on rocks and a prickly bush I didn’t even have a single bruise, not even a prickly stick stuck into me, although I did find one in my hair a few days later in hospital!

“Then I was so blessed that the Flying Doctor was there, waiting, all fuelled and prepped and ready to go!

“And then I needed large skin grafts and the doctor told me that they never get 100 per cent and they never heal 100 per cent and they did for me, they healed so fast, too.”

Charlotte’s luck continued after she returned home from her long stay in Brisbane. “I was feeling pretty down wondering what I was going to do and then when I was at the St George Show a local man came up and started talking to me,” says Charlotte.

“He asked if I wanted a job for two months as a receptionist. I’d never done receptionist work before but I’d lost my business and I couldn’t be a jillaroo on my parents’ property any more so it was a good opportunity to try something new.”

Last November, before the accident, Charlotte had begun to write online to try and explain the difficulties and heartbreak of drought after a city-based friend had enquired about the family’s experiences.

The blog took off, with two of Charlotte’s friends joining her to create ‘Countrygirls Out and About’ Facebook page, which shares stories of life in the Outback. Now Charlotte and her friends are also writing regular columns for the Rural Weekly, their local paper.

“I’ve never been trained in that, either,” says Charlotte.

While Charlotte’s leg is still ‘pretty bad’ and she expects to be recovering for quite a while yet, she considers herself ‘blessed’ that so many things went well after the accident.

“If the Flying Doctor hadn’t been able to take me to a specialist hospital I would have lost my leg and quite possibly my life. Living Outback, the Flying Doctor has always been a presence I’ve been aware of and glad they were there but now I’m just so grateful to them. I want people to know just how important they are. I still have my leg and they’re responsible for that.”



## Yes, I want to help keep the Flying Doctor flying

I would like to make a donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please debit as per my details below / a cheque is attached.

I would like to make regular donations. Please send me information about the Wings regular giving program.

I would like more information about making a bequest in my Will to the RFDS (QLD Section). Please send information to the address below.

I have included the RFDS in my Will.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Ph: H) \_\_\_\_\_ M) \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Birthday: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Type of card:  MasterCard  Visa  American Express  Diners Club

Credit card number | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Card expiry date: \_\_\_\_\_

Q-MAGSUM15



**Royal Flying Doctor Service**  
QUEENSLAND SECTION

**Donations to the Royal Flying Doctor Service are tax deductible for income tax purposes.**

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Reply Paid 64275  
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Brisbane Airport QLD 4008  
Phone: 07 3860 1100  
Fax: 07 3860 1122  
Email: [donations@rfdsqld.com.au](mailto:donations@rfdsqld.com.au)  
Website: [www.flyingdoctor.org.au](http://www.flyingdoctor.org.au)

In accordance with the Privacy Act, the RFDS (QLD Section) will not disclose your personal information for reasons other than the primary purpose of the Service, to third parties without your consent. If you would like to access your personal information held by the Service, please contact the RFDS. You can request to have your details removed at any time from our mailing list.



# True bush spirit

A country boy at heart, RFDS Mount Isa Line Pilot Geoff Cobden joined the RFDS just over two years ago after 13 years as a QantasLink pilot.

Reflecting on the last two years, Geoff said it has been a wonderful privilege meeting and helping Queenslanders living in the remotest parts of Queensland as he recounted the story of a particularly challenging recent emergency retrieval that exemplified for him the “true bush spirit”.

“It was late one night in November when we received the call from a station about a terrible accident,” Geoff recalled.

“In an emergency like this, the Doctor and Nurse pack the aircraft with the appropriate medical equipment and stay in contact with the patient or caller, giving medical advice while the pilot focuses on the logistics.

“My first thought is always about the location of the nearest landing strip. Most of the time the property will have one, but sometimes I need to look at our map of suitable landing locations and see what will be the best option.”

RFDS pilots have a network of around 1,100 regional and remote airstrips included in their flight manuals.

“Once I’ve found the closest runway, I’ll give that station owner a call on their landline. In this case it was around 8pm and the

station owner was relaxing after dinner, however I’ve called people at 2 am in the morning or right as they are sitting down for dinner and regardless of the time, their first question is always, ‘how can we help’.”

Local knowledge of the land is what is most valuable to an RFDS pilot.

“Even though the runway might be listed as suitable, we may not have landed on that strip for over five years, so we need to know if it is still operational and if our details are correct. Recent rain, or simply running behind in runway maintenance, could mean we need to find another option.”

As a general rule, if a 4WD can drive down a runway comfortably, at 80 kilometres an hour and it is at least 1000m in length, then an RFDS aircraft could land.

“When you call the station to ask for permission to land, that true bush spirit comes out, it is extraordinary. I have never been knocked back yet and usually the whole station will be on hand to help.”

It is unlikely that a station runway would have lights, so improvisation is key.



“Some stations will have flares on hand, but if not, toilet paper rolls dipped in diesel work well and in this case, that is what we used.”

“An hour after my first phone call to the station owner, we were coming in to land. Everyone was there to give us a hand. They even brought us a cup of coffee, and had vehicles ready to give us a ride to where we needed to be.”

“A stockman’s swag was laid out on the dirt below the aircraft tail so we could set up a makeshift emergency room without getting the medical equipment too dusty.”

“Like every station, no request was too great and with their help we were airborne again in three hours, with the patient on board for a direct flight to Townsville.”

Geoff, and all RFDS pilots are forever grateful for the station owners that answer their phone at all hours of the day and night, ready to help.

“I have been astounded by the level of support we get. I guess we are there to help the people of the bush as much as they are there to help us and that is a great feeling.”



**I have been astounded by the level of support we get. I guess we are there to help the people of the bush as much as they are there to help us and that is a great feeling.**

# Farewell dear friend of the RFDS

## Alfred 'Bomber' Johnson 1933-2013

Alfred 'Bomber' Johnson was a lifelong supporter of the RFDS. Having lived his life in the Channel Country (south-west Queensland) he knew, through witnessing many emergencies, that the Flying Doctor is an essential lifeline to those living in the bush.

Bomber, a bush pilot, would donate to the RFDS whenever an opportunity arose. When he retired as a pilot he became the custodian of the Burke and Wills "Dig" Tree on Nappa Merrie Station, Leigh Creek. He would collect donations for the RFDS from the hundreds of campers and tourists who visited the Dig Tree.

When Bomber passed away in March 2013, he kindly bequeathed his beloved Cessna 172G aircraft to the Flying Doctor.

Through the generosity of S. Kidman & Co Bomber's Cessna is now to be donated to the Australian Stockman's Hall of Fame, to form part of a public display, dedicated to aerial mustering.



Above > Alfred 'Bomber' Johnson.

He would never have imagined that his pride and joy would end up on display at the Stockman's Hall of Fame.

Faye Corish (Bomber Johnson's niece)



## Change lives with a gift in your Will

87 years ago, the very first Royal Flying Doctor Service flight performed an emergency evacuation – made possible by a bequest from supporter Hugh McKay.

It's no different now – the RFDS relies heavily on donations and bequests to purchase and medically equip our aircraft – at a cost of \$8 million each.

Today, we assist 290,000 Australians each year through emergency aeromedical and essential health care services. Leave a legacy of hope for future generations.

Your bequest will help keep the Flying Doctor flying.

**For more information contact RFDS Qld Section**

> Call us on 07 3860 1100

> Email us at [bequests@rfdsqld.com.au](mailto:bequests@rfdsqld.com.au)

> Visit our website [www.flyingdoctor.org.au](http://www.flyingdoctor.org.au)



Royal Flying  
Doctor Service  
QUEENSLAND SECTION



# QCoal Community Dental Service treats 4000th patient

The QCoal Community Dental Service, operated by the Royal Flying Doctor Service's dental team has visited more than 14 regional Queensland communities since February 2013.



4000th patient Christian May with RFDS Graduate Dentist Christine Farrelly.

While visiting Collinsville in central Queensland, in September, the dental team welcomed Christian May as its 4000th patient.

RFDS Principal Dentist, Ian Odendaal, who leads the five person dental team, said that the service was making a real difference in communities that would not otherwise have access to this level of oral healthcare.

"In Collinsville and many of the other regional towns we visit, my team and I provide both acute and preventative dental care, to counteract years of oral neglect," Dr Odendaal said.

Bronwyn Christensen whose family farms cattle near the central Queensland town of Theodore says it's a one and a half-hour drive to the nearest dentist and when the Royal Flying Doctor truck rolled into her town it was fully booked.

"There is a dental chair in the town of Biloela that services an area of 12,000 people but there is no dentist.

"The issue is recruitment, trying to get people out of the coast to the inland, it's the same problem we have attracting doctors," she says.

Anita Hansen, RFDS General Manager Health Services said that the dental team has provided relief to a number of patients with long term dental disease that had never been treated.

"Dental care matters because it can affect your general health. More than 63,000 Australians are hospitalised each year for preventable dental conditions, it's the third highest reason for acute preventable hospital admissions.

"Oral cancer is the eighth most common cancer in Australia and dental disease has been linked to heart disease, diabetes, stroke and low birth weight babies," she said.

The QCoal Community Dental Service is funded by Queensland mining company QCoal Group through the QCoal Foundation. Comprising of two dental surgeries in a purpose-built semi-trailer, the service provides preventative dental care and treatment in communities where there is limited access to oral health services. Anyone can make an appointment, and there is no out-of-pocket cost for patients.

In 2015 the QCoal Community Dental Service will visit Bluff, Rolleston, Springsure, Clermont, Collinsville, Richmond, Camooweal, Dajarra, Winton, Jundah, Blackall, Sapphire, Theodore and Monto.

For more information about this service please visit [www.flyingdoctor.org.au/dental](http://www.flyingdoctor.org.au/dental) or call: **1800 002 507**.

**Dental care matters because it can affect your general health. More than 63,000 Australians are hospitalised each year for preventable dental conditions, it's the third highest reason for acute preventable hospital admissions.**





## Health Clinic celebrates first birthday

The first RFDS GP Clinic has celebrated its first birthday after opening in Charleville in October 2013. In the first year of operation, the clinic provided more than 7,500 patient consultations and hosted a range of visiting specialists.

Nino Di Marco, CEO was pleased to see the Charleville community had embraced the service over the year.

“We’re delighted to achieve this significant milestone. It’s a reflection of the important role that the Clinic plays in ensuring that the community of Charleville continues to enjoy access to high quality, family-centred health care by locally based medical practitioners, Mr Di Marco said.”

The Charleville community received a further health boost when the RFDS Charleville Health Clinic received the award of accreditation, demonstrating the quality and safety of their practice.

The Practice received the top approval from Australian General Practice Accreditation Limited (AGPAL), a leading provider in accreditation services.

AGPAL Chair Dr Richard Choong said the accreditation award shows that the practice makes a significant investment in quality on a day-to-day basis from the top down.

“Achieving accreditation is a major achievement for any practice and it is a clear demonstration that the RFDS Charleville Health Clinic is seeking to improve their level of service to both patients and the community,” he said.

Barbary Coleman, RFDS Charleville Health Clinic Practice Manager, said that they proudly display the AGPAL symbol for all their patients to see.

“We want to communicate to our patients that their wellbeing is our priority. By being accredited, our patients know we are committed to providing quality care,” she said.

## RFDS Auxiliary support keeps on keeping on

Often referred to as the public face of the Flying Doctor Service in many regional and remote locations, the RFDS continues to receive the generous support of its loyal band of volunteer auxiliary support groups.

In the past year our Auxiliaries have raised close to \$300,000 to support a variety of medical equipment and infrastructure needs required by their local RFDS base operations. Items such as patient monitors and other essential medical supplies have been coupled together with donations to support health promotion field days in remote locations and contributions to capital building projects such as the Rockhampton Patient Transfer facility across the past year.

Raising these funds takes considerable effort, through the conduct of raffles, the selling of merchandise, holding of morning teas and luncheons, sausage sizzles and art and craft stalls, all in support of the Flying Doctor.

If you’d like to join an RFDS auxiliary in your area or learn more about their activities please visit <http://supportus.flyingdoctor.org.au/fundraise/volunteer> for important contact information.



Above > Bundaberg Nurse Manager Jackie Hardy with Auxiliary President Carmel Roden.



Left to right > Don Limpus, Margaret Laughton, John Huddleston, Lyn Huddleston, Dell Limpus and Clinton Stock from the Rockhampton Auxiliary.

# Brisbane Airport welcomes G20

*RFDS congratulates  
Principal Partner BAC*

In November Brisbane Airport Corporation (BAC) hosted one of the most important logistical events in its history, facilitating the arrival and departure of World Leaders visiting Brisbane for the G20 Summit.

Following 18 months of intense planning by a core team of 25, and an extended team of 50 people from across the business, Brisbane Airport in partnership with Airservices, Menzies Aviation, Customs and Immigration, the G20 Taskforce, Queensland Police Service, ISS Security Services, Corporate Protection Australia Group and the Australian Federal Police, delivered an exceptional, efficient and safe experience for VIPs and Heads of State from around the globe.

This incredibly exciting opportunity saw Brisbane Airport handle approximately 70 G20 specific aircraft, ranging from the largest Boeing 747-400 which was operated by China, Japan, Korea and India; right down to the smallest Falcon business Jet which was used by Argentina.

It was also an opportunity to experience some exotic aircraft at BNE, with Saudi Arabia operating the unique Boeing 747SP and Russia with the IL-96-300 Presidential Jet. This array of aircraft was enthusiastically welcomed by our local, national and international plane spotting community who descended on Brisbane Airport for this once in a life time event.

The weekend saw two main peak periods when on Friday evening Russia, Germany, China and Canada arrived within a 90 minute window and on Sunday afternoon when BNE processed six motorcades and departures within 30 minutes. This feat was managed with a 100 per cent efficiency and safety score.

While BNE was turned into the most international, international airport in the world over a four day period, our everyday travellers experienced minimal impact with an on-time performance score exceeding 80 per cent for regular operations.

This was only possible due to the extraordinary planning, attention to detail, communication and round the clock efforts of so many people who deserve the praise and thanks they have been receiving from across the city and around the world.



Above > A Boeing 747-400 carrying the South Korean State Leader raises the South Korean and Australian flag upon their arrival.



Above > A Saudi Arabian Boeing 777-200 parked on the tarmac.



Above > A line up of state aircraft from across the globe with a Saudi Arabian A340-300, Turkish A330-200, France A330-200 and New Zealand Boeing 757-200.



Left > A Japan Boeing 747-400 arrives while an Indian Boeing 747-400 has already begun unloading.

# Thank you for your donations

We are forever grateful to the wonderful people who volunteer their time to help support the Flying Doctor in Queensland. If you would like to hold a fundraiser or are interested in volunteering, please email: [community@rfdsqld.com.au](mailto:community@rfdsqld.com.au)

## Other donors include:

Artesian Droughtmaster Sale – \$3,150  
 Blackall Social Touch Football – \$1,290  
 Breezes Craft Group – \$1,928  
 Bundaberg Babywearers – \$571  
 Doomadgee Fun Run – \$150  
 Encore Events movie night – \$1,350  
 IPL Charity Golf Day – \$5,307  
 Maranoa Mechanical – \$550  
 McIntyre Aero Club Inc – \$358  
 Moreton Beef classic show and sale – \$6,100  
 Open Gardens Australia – \$1,065  
 Qld Country Women's Association – \$3,424  
 QLD Spinners and Weavers Association – \$4,175  
 Rita Crane Trash and Treasure Sale – \$1,000  
 Sarah Mycroft - One Lap no excuses – \$276  
 Takarakka Bush Resort Balloon Pop Off – \$400  
 Wings of Life Fly in Drive in – \$4,000



## The Reedybrook Ashes

Family and friends came together once again at the iconic Reedybrook Ashes, in Greenvale. Bush cricket, fishing competitions, pig races and non-stop fun was on the agenda this year with the weekend raising \$22,400. Special thanks to Raeleen Olditch and the whole community for continuing this fun weekend and supporting the Flying Doctor.

*Above > Colourful outfits were encouraged at the Reedybrook Ashes.*



## Cutlery Hash House Harriers

Cutlery Hash House Harriers' annual, Red Dress Run, through Yeppoon, was held on Saturday 18th September. 22 hashers dressed in their finest reds, ran the streets with Flying Doctor donation tins and raised over \$2,148.

*Above > Hashers from Rocky, Mackay, Newcastle and Illawarra supported Cutlery H3 making it hard to miss the pack dressed in red dresses as they move through the streets of Yeppoon.*





## Geokinetics

Geokinetics is one of the largest independent, land and shallow water geophysical service companies, providing solutions to the petroleum and mining industries. Over the years, Geokinetics has called on the Flying Doctor for aeromedical assistance. To show their support, the Geokinetics team based in Brisbane and field crew 486 have held a variety of fundraising events over the past six months including raffles, BBQs, poker nights and even a sports tournament. So far they have raised \$6,946. Thank you and well done everyone!

*Above > Geokinetics Field Support Crew 486 have helped to raise almost \$7,000 for the RFDS.*



## Australian Wagyu Association

The Australian Wagyu Association (AWA) have helped the Royal Flying Doctor Service enormously with their charity auctions over the years and we cannot thank them enough for their very kind generosity and support. The 2014 Gala Dinner charity auction held at the Gold Coast was no exception, with 250 people digging deep to raise an outstanding total of \$19,812.

*Above > Scott de Bruin President AWA, Janine Gardner Community Fundraising Coordinator RFDS, Dr Enoch Bergman Swan Veterinary Services and auctioneer extraordinaire.*



## Rotary and the races

Thank you Rotary eClub for once again supporting the Flying Doctor at the Birdsville Races. 20 hard working Rotarians sold 1000 steak burgers, 1100 bacon and egg burgers and 600 sausages in bread, with all money donated to the Flying Doctor. Thank you for your continued support.

*Above > Committed Rotarians in their BBQ aprons at the 2014 Birdsville Races.*

## Trusts & Foundations

Thank you to the following Trusts and Foundations for their generous support of the Flying Doctor.

- Annie Danks Trust
- Arrow Energy
- Aussie Farmers Foundation
- Breakwater Island Casino Community Benefit Fund
- Collier Foundation
- Gambling Community Benefit Fund
- Humpty Dumpty Foundation Equipment Funding
- John Villiers Trust
- Julian Burton Burns Trust
- Queensland Country Credit Union Community Grants
- RACQ Foundation
- Reef Hotel Casino Community Benefit Fund
- RP Medical Fund managed by Perpetual Trustees
- Stanwell Power Station Community Fund
- Wesfarmers Curragh Community Funding





# Thank you – update on Damian

Just over two years ago, Damian Summers was flown from Mackay Hospital to Townsville, and then onto Brisbane after being pulled from the wreckage of a devastating car crash that tragically took the life of his mum, dad, sister, and one of his older brothers.

Damian had dislocated his neck in two places and was bleeding internally, and neither Mackay nor Townsville Hospital were equipped to deal with such severe injuries. So, the RFDS was tasked to fly Damian safely to the children’s hospital in Brisbane for emergency care.

It’s in desperate emergencies like this that the RFDS comes into its own. It’s not simply the fact that all the aeromedical teams have critical care experience; it’s the fact that they have access to life-saving medical equipment like Propaq monitors.

A Propaq is a vital signs monitor that is portable, light weight, and ideal for RFDS aircraft. They are able to continuously monitor a patient’s heart rate, blood pressure, temperature, cardiac rhythm and oxygen saturation.

RFDS Flight Nurse, Loretto Harvey looked after Damian on his first flight from Mackay to Townsville and knows just how important the aircraft’s Propaq monitor was in keeping Damian safe during the transfer:

“You cannot move a patient without a Propaq monitor. Every person we transfer has to have one on them, period. We use them with every single patient, on every single flight. We base our clinical judgment on what the monitor tells us about our patient’s health. It’s how we determine the next steps in our patient care.

In Damian’s case, the Propaq monitor revealed that his heart rate and his blood pressure were fluctuating. With that information

in hand we were able to administer treatments that helped keep him stable,” Ms Harvey said.

Thanks to the life-saving equipment and care from RFDS staff, Damian arrived safely in Brisbane. He showed remarkable spirit over the following months as he endured one treatment after another. But, two years on, he’s a happy, grinning four year old enjoying life with his adoring Aunt Belinda, his Uncle Dave and cousin Hayden.

Belinda said that while life had not been easy on the little man, he has kept smiling throughout: “What amazes me is with everything that he’s been through, he’s always done it pretty much with a smile on his face. He’s just been the happiest little thing, and even now – it just doesn’t take much to make him happy. You can sit around and smile at him and he just gives you the biggest smile back.”

Damian’s story shows how important Propaq monitors are on every one of our flights – we simply could not save lives in the air without them. That’s why last year we asked the Queensland community to help raise \$380,000 to help replace 12 of our ageing Propaq monitors and other vital medical equipment. Amazingly, we raised over \$450,000!

**To all who support the Flying Doctor through donations, fundraising, and volunteering – thank you. It is your continuing generosity that will ensure more joy comes out of tragedy in the future.**

## New equipment



Above > Rockhampton Flight Nurse Natalie Sheppard with their new Propaq M monitor.



Above > Brisbane Flight Nurse Donna Porter with their new Propaq M.



Above > Cherie Lowe, Flight Nurse from Townsville Base with their new Zoll monitor. Thank you to the Townsville Auxiliary for their amazing fundraising efforts to help purchase this one!



# Medical First Responder

A total medical first response solution developed in conjunction with RFDS (QLD) Services, QMRS and St John Ambulance (Qld).

- > Expert training from introductory level to advanced emergency response and trauma management
- > Training in mental health issues including Post-traumatic stress
- > The Medical First Responder (MFR) Bag - specialised emergency and trauma equipment
- > Telehealth - 24/7 RFDS telehealth service
- > MFR App - digital quick reference guides operating on iOS and Android platforms

The Medical First Responder program utilises the RFDS Flexible Learning Options, an innovative learning platform that delivers interactive online training together with practical, hands-on instruction from St John Ambulance (Qld).



Medical First Responder - taking first responder mine rescue training to a new level of expertise.



For more information please contact:

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# What's on

## Staying in Touch on the Road eBook

When out travelling on the road for work or pleasure, keeping in touch with family and friends is vital. Grant Nielsen has designed a free eBook showing how to get the best results possible from technology and understand the latest devices, programs and applications that can make life so much easier and safer during travel. When downloading this free, informative and easy to read eBook, travellers will be directed to the Flying Doctor website for an opportunity to donate.

To find out more on this educational resource go to – [www.stayingintouchontheroad.com](http://www.stayingintouchontheroad.com)

## Snowy River Man Show Ute

Keep an eye out for a dark, bottle green ute, travelling around Queensland with the finest air brushing ever seen. Peter Jolly has a passion for cars and anything Australian. He has taken a 2011 Holden SS ute and transformed it into a unique piece of artwork, which tells the famous poem of the Man From Snowy River, by Banjo Patterson. Images of the outback, horses and the man himself are surrounded by the poem in what Mr Jolly calls a moving story book. Peter and the team are driving the ute in the Brisbane Convoy for Kids, to raise awareness and money for the Flying Doctor, at schools, field days and car shows.

For further information please contact [snowyrivermanaust@gmail.com](mailto:snowyrivermanaust@gmail.com) or visit them on Facebook [Facebook.com/ShowUteTheManFromSnowyRiver](https://www.facebook.com/ShowUteTheManFromSnowyRiver)

## Need more information?

### Want your event added to the next calendar?

Please contact our Fundraising Coordinator Janine Gardner on 07 3852 7594 to chat about your event, or email [community@rfdsqld.com.au](mailto:community@rfdsqld.com.au)

## Thank you AusIMM

The Australasian Institute of Mining and Metallurgy (AusIMM) Southern Queensland Branch has been supporting the Flying Doctor (Queensland Section) for ten years, through their annual Mining and Resources Ball. Over the decade of support, AusIMM have raised over \$290,000 through this event.

To thank AusIMM for their unwavering support, Mark Bell, RFDS Brisbane Base Manager presented a certificate of appreciation to Matthew Readford, Chairman of the AusIMM Southern Queensland branch who represented AusIMM and its members.

Thank you also to Mining Consultants, Snowden, for once again donating a selection of beautiful mining photo prints from their international photo competition to be auctioned on the night.

Greg Chalmers from Jellinbah Group also kindly donated a bottle of 2004 Grange from his private collection which was auctioned on the night for \$800 with all the proceeds going to the Flying Doctor.



Above > RFDS Brisbane Base Manager Mark Bell (right) presented a certificate of appreciation to Matthew Readford, Chairman of the AusIMM Southern Queensland branch.



### OUR SUPPORTERS >



### CONTACT US >

This newsletter is produced by the Marketing and Fundraising Department of the RFDS in Queensland.

If you do not wish to receive future editions of this newsletter, please contact the RFDS on 07 3860 1100 or email: [rfdsqld@rfdsqld.com.au](mailto:rfdsqld@rfdsqld.com.au)

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