

RESPONSE READY TO COVID-19



Royal Flying Doctor Service
WESTERN OPERATIONS



Royal Flying Doctor Service Western Operations (RFDS WO) is an iconic and innovative charity which saves lives, increases patient outcomes and serves the communities of regional and remote Western Australia.

Our crews on the frontline of our 24-hour aeromedical emergency service continue to work through these unprecedented times.

Our COVID-19 response has been swift and collaborative. As a vital link in the State's health and emergency services network, we routinely treat patients with infectious diseases and we have effective and excellent infection control protocols and experience.

We have developed an evolving best practice COVID-19 Clinical Guideline, mobilised our teams of doctors, flight nurses, pilots and logisticians to support the State effort to meet the challenges of our times.

We are response ready with our specialist care, aeromedical equipment and deep experience in infection control and serving regional Western Australia.



We have invested in preparation and stand ready to support the Western Australian community throughout COVID-19 and beyond

In Western Australia **we have been part of the COVID-19 response from the very beginning.** Our aeromedical teams stood up for the retrieval of the Diamond Princess cruise ship patients and transferred them back to our Jandakot base to specialist care in Perth.

Since then we have transferred confirmed and suspected COVID-19 patients, including people from mine sites in Western Australia.

We have a **COVID-19 response team** which is operating at its highest emergency management level – meeting daily, communicating daily with our teams and working shoulder to shoulder with government and emergency response agencies to ensure a coordinated response to COVID-19.



We have developed best practice Clinical Guidelines for our COVID-19 response and our retrievals are conducted with the highest clinical governance practice.

Our Infection Control, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and aircraft cleaning / disinfecting protocols are leading the way in aeromedical retrievals. The health and safety of our patients and staff are at the forefront of our operations.

When transferring a patient with potential or confirmed COVID-19, our crews don PPE such as masks, goggles, gowns, gloves which are disposed of as clinical waste. They practice regular hand hygiene throughout the entirety of the patient transfer. Our aircraft are thoroughly decontaminated following transfer.

The response to, and recovery from, COVID-19 will be a critical, ongoing team effort.

We are working in collaboration across the emergency and health system

As a front line responder, we have a seat at the table working alongside the State Health Emergency Coordination Centre (SHCC) and we are a key ally in Western Australia's coordinated emergency response to COVID-19.

We are all actively planning and monitoring any new COVID-19 developments to remain response ready in the coming weeks and months.

Our logisticians at the RFDS Coordination Centre are a pivotal resource in coordinating and mobilising emergency service responses in collaboration with our health network partners. Our medical crews are trained and inducted in cross-agency retrieval platforms and familiar with local hospital environments.

We are actively responding to the needs of regional and remote Western Australia

RFDS WO is an integral part of the Western Australian resource sector's own Business Continuity and Emergency Response plans. **In 2019 alone we undertook 216 mine site evacuations** and countless other retrievals and inter hospital transfers for miners, their families and friends living in the regions.

We have more than 550 medical chests around the state. These medical chests help us deliver on our promise of health care whenever people need us and can stabilise patients when they first need support. Many start up mining organisations have our medical chests on board for the safety of their people when they are out in the field.



Importantly, we also remain committed to delivering our primary healthcare, dental care and mental health programs and telehealth services to our most vulnerable communities across remote Western Australia.

Our capability

By employing the most qualified medical specialists, investing in ground-breaking aircraft and technology, and through a commitment to service innovation, the RFDS in WA is now one of the best aero medical services in the world.

With a fleet of 18 aircraft and 300 staff, the Royal Flying Doctor Service in WA is ready to respond as needed as part of a rapidly deployed emergency response service for health emergencies, terrorist attacks, natural disasters and industrial accidents.

Our five strategically located bases throughout Western Australia are all **equipped, staffed and trained to respond as needed**. Our people in Broome, Port Hedland, Meekatharra and Kalgoorlie are part of the regional community and support the regional health infrastructure.

We are in the community and can provide local solutions.



RFDS WA has an integrated fleet of 16 PC-12 turbo props and two Rio Tinto Lifeflight PC-24 jets which have revolutionised the way we can coordinate our resources across the largest health jurisdiction in the world.



Each of our aircraft are intensive care units in the sky and fully equipped with ventilators, monitors and innovative, purpose-built aeromedical equipment.



We employ our own specialist emergency doctors, flight nurses, pilots, avionics engineers and logisticians to ensure the highest level of professional care.



We have five strategically located bases across Western Australia ensuring a far-reaching geographical impact and prompt aeromedical response.



We have access and experience in servicing 784 landing strips in regional WA.

As we respond to this pandemic, we reflect on the privilege we hold at the RFDS, in being able to serve the Western Australian community at this time when they need us the most.