The Royal Flying Doctor Service of Australia (RFDS) takes the finest care to the furthest corners of our land.

Established in 1928 by the Reverend John Flynn, the RFDS has grown to become the largest and most comprehensive aeromedical organisation of its kind in the world, delivering 24-hour emergency aeromedical and primary health care services to all those who live, work and travel throughout Australia.

Today, the RFDS conducts more than 290,000 patient contacts across Australia every year – that’s one person every two minutes.

In Queensland, the RFDS currently operates from eight bases at Brisbane, Bundaberg, Rockhampton, Townsville, Cairns, Mount Isa, Charleville and Longreach. These bases form a strategic network and help deliver a broad range of health care programs including general practice, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health, child and family health, social and emotional wellbeing, women’s health, oral health and health promotion activities.

The RFDS is a not-for-profit organisation. While supported by the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments, the Flying Doctor relies heavily on fundraising and donations from the community to purchase and aeromedically fit-out our aircraft, purchase vital medical equipment and enhance our operational facilities.
Our mission is to provide excellence in aeromedical and primary health care across Queensland.

Our Vision

We will provide, advocate and facilitate equitable access to comprehensive quality health care for rural, remote and regional Queensland.

We will achieve this through:

> Innovative services and methods of delivery which earn us a reputation for world class quality, safety and efficiency.

> Continually developing our people within a culturally safe environment, so that their satisfaction in their roles is only exceeded by the community respect they have as RFDS employees.

> Being the leading health organisation governments and non-government organisations rely on for the appropriate provision of comprehensive health care services to rural, remote and regional Queensland.

Our Values

The values that underpin the work that we do include:

**Care and Respect** > For patients, employees, communities and cultures

**Reliable & Dependable** > Giving our best and fulfilling our promises

**Safety & Quality** > Continuous improvement through evidence based practices

**Socially & Ethically Responsible** > In all that we do

**Collaboration** > With teamwork, we can make an impact

**Innovation** > Encouraged and celebrated
Chairman’s Report

Mark Gray  Chairman, RFDS (Queensland Section) Board of Directors

The past twelve months have seen continuing developments in health policy and robust reform across Australia, as both state and federal governments experience ongoing budgetary pressures while attempting to drive efficiencies and look to new and innovative ways to deliver health services.

As a trusted partner at all levels of government and a respected provider of health care to those in rural and remote Queensland, the RFDS has experienced a period of sustained demand for our government funded programs, while embarking on some exciting new health initiatives through a recent diversification of our funding streams.

This year, the RFDS Queensland Section conducted close to 90,000 patient contacts, across our aero-medical retrieval and emergency medical services, inter-hospital patient transfers, primary health care clinic programs, oral health and mental health care services, with the latter coming into increasing focus due to the effects of recent climate conditions (drought and flood events) and its impacts on the livelihoods of those that live off the land.

Despite some deficiencies in our operating income from traditional sources, RFDS Queensland Section, was still able to post a year end surplus of $10,491,000 through the generosity of our many donors, volunteers and corporate partners, which will be used to satisfy future asset purchases such as new or replacement aircraft and medical equipment.

As an indication of these capital requirements over the next five years, RFDS Queensland Section will need to replace ten aircraft to the value of approximately $70million.

Our special thanks must therefore go to our dedicated Auxiliary supporter groups, bequestors, Spirit of Queensland entrants, corporate supporters and individual donors that collectively helped us raise an impressive $8.2million in donation income this year.

Special mention must also be made of our Principal Sponsors: Ergon Energy; Brisbane Airport Corporation (BAC) and QCoal whose continued support is of great assistance to the sustainability and renewal of our operations.

Ultimately though, it is our people who embody the vision and values of the Flying Doctor allowing us to continue this organisation’s legacy of delivering the finest care to the furthest corner.

So on behalf of the Board, I thank our CEO, Nino Di Marco, his management team and all of our close to 400 dedicated employees, for their continued commitment to and care of all those across Queensland we are privileged to serve on a daily basis.

Board Members >

Mr Mark Gray
Mr William Mellor
Mr Michael Burnett
Mr Richard Conder
Mr Peter Gartshore
Mrs Julia Leeds
Dr Desley Marshall
Mr Russell Postle
Prof Robert Stable
Mrs Sally-Anne Witherspoon

> Chairman Mr Mark Gray (left) with CEO Nino Di Marco (right) and Her Excellency Ms Penelope Wensley AC, Governor of Queensland, cut the cake at our 85th anniversary celebration at Government House.
CEO’s Report

Nino Di Marco Chief Executive Officer, RFDS (Queensland Section)

The 2012/2013 financial year has been one of significant achievement and service innovation for RFDS Queensland Section, while also being a time to reflect and celebrate our Service’s legacy to the health and well being of Australians across this vast continent.

In our 85th anniversary year, our Queensland operations

- performed over 11,000 aeromedical patient transfers (approximately 1,100 being primary and emergency evacuations).
- conducted more than 5,000 health clinics across rural and remote communities stretching from the far north to the State’s south west.
- administered over 5,000 immunisations
- provided over 14,000 remote medical consultations by phone or video-link.
- flew a total of 7.6million kms in 23,500 hours flying time to help to deliver close to 90,000 patient consultations.

- celebrated the 40th anniversary of the Cairns Base.
- hosted Their Royal Highnesses the Prince of Wales and Duchess of Cornwall when they visited Longreach.

While continuing to deliver the above services on behalf of both Commonwealth and State Governments, we were pleased to have our contributions re-affirmed at a state level in June this year, with Queensland Health agreeing to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding that will see our three aeromedical and inter-hospital transfer contracts consolidated into one all-inclusive agreement through until 2020.

We welcome this new agreement because as well as sustaining our aeromedical services in the long term, it will also enable RFDS to have greater flexibility around the tasking and deployment of our current fleet of 19 aircraft throughout our eight regional Bases, rather than have them tied to a specific location, leading to greater operational efficiency.

The year was not without its challenges with climatic events also again set to test us, with wide spread flooding in the wake of ex-tropical cyclone Oswald, impacting our operations up and down the coastline in January. Bundaberg, in particular was hard hit with torrential rain and localised flooding causing local authorities to evacuate patients from the Bundaberg Hospital to Brisbane.

A massive joint operation in conjunction with police, emergency services and the Australian Defence Force, saw our Bundaberg Base hangar operate as a temporary centre for patient evacuation to awaiting Brisbane hospitals, with RFDS flight crews from our coastal bases helping to also air ambulance several of the acutely ill into care and ultimately assisting in their repatriation home once danger had subsided. My sincere thanks and admiration to all our staff involved in these relief efforts.

> The hangar at the RFDS Bundaberg Base was converted into a makeshift hospital ward.
New Service Innovations

In order to increase our health service footprint further in remote Queensland communities and realise opportunities to provide our medical expertise to continued mining and resource developments across the State, the organisation established a commercial division - RFDS (Qld) Services in November 2012.

One of the first new programs delivered under the auspices of this new entity, was the launch of a mobile dental service which commenced operations across central Queensland in February. Utilising a purpose built semi-trailer equipped with two dental suites, a team of RFDS oral health specialists is now providing much needed diagnostic, corrective and preventative dental treatments to rural and remote Queensland communities. Through the generosity of mining company, QCoal, this service’s operating costs are fully covered allowing RFDS to offer this dental care free of charge to the communities it visits. Such a service initiative would also not have been possible were it not for a generous $1.12million capital grant from the Federal Government to purchase and fit out this state of the art purpose-built facility.

The introduction of another first for RFDS Queensland, which is now close to launch, is the establishment of our first community based General Practice Clinic in the township of Charleville in the state’s south west. Due to open in October 2013, this service will operate like a normal community medical practice with patients able to see a doctor, either on a bulk billed basis or via a Medicare gap payment. While we have operated across a broad network of regional Bases, this is the first time our GPs are permanently based in a community, as distinct from providing care on a fly in/fly out basis via scheduled clinic visits.
RFDS (Qld) Services is now offering accredited Self Aid and Survival courses.

Another initiative which we are proud to have developed this year, has been the formation of a partnership with St John Ambulance Queensland to provide an improved inventory management and supply service for our Medical Chest program, including the design of a new paramedic style bag to improve portability – which, in time, will replace the historical metal cases. In addition to this program, we are also working with St John’s on the development of some online rural and remote and survival first aid training programs, which RFDS hopes to offer to industry groups, travel associations, and anyone who works or intends to travels into outback Queensland.

85th birthday celebrations

As mentioned earlier, 2013 also marked the 85th birthday of the Flying Doctor both here in Queensland and across the nation. To mark the anniversary, the organisation carried a commemorative logo across all its communications and advertising collateral. Various supporter events were held, culminating in the official birthday on May 15th - the highlight being a civic reception at Government House, Queensland. Her Excellency, Governor of Queensland, Ms Penelope Wensley AC, hosted this gathering of key RFDS government, and corporate stakeholders, providing a glowing verbal tribute to the place that the Flying Doctor holds in the development and sustainability of the outback Queensland community.

> The RFDS Queensland Section Board meet with the St John Ambulance Queensland Board to discuss the partnership and newly redesigned Medical Chest.

> RFDS (Qld) Services is now offering accredited Self Aid and Survival courses.

> 85th Anniversary celebration as Brisbane Base.
Our people are our foundation. They exemplify the vision and values of the RFDS and are passionate about providing quality health care...
The Road Ahead

The year ahead holds much promise for RFDS Queensland Section with the opening of the Charleville Health Clinic and a number of capital projects reaching fruition.

These projects include the redevelopment of the Charleville Base to house our administration, aircraft hangar and visitor centre in one central airside location, the establishment of our ninth Base at Roma where a patient transfer and hangar facility will be built and a similar development of Rockhampton Base all due for completion in mid 2014.

Our Mount Isa Base also celebrates its 50th anniversary in 2014, with RFDS set to commemorate this milestone at a number of community events across the year.

I echo the Chairman’s sentiments and admiration of our dedicated staff and their efforts throughout this challenging year and the spirit of innovation they have exhibited in some of our emerging and new program areas.

With governments and health agencies Australia wide, keen to engage with trusted partners as an enabler rather than a provider of health services, RFDS is well positioned and stands ready to further its contributions towards the needs of those living, working or travelling in rural and remote Queensland should we be called upon to do so.
The Year’s Highlights

85th anniversary of the RFDS

more than 5,000 health clinics across rural and remote communities stretching from the far north to the State’s south west

Reached $7 million from Ergon Energy customers since 1999

RFDS delivered primary health care services to 130 Queensland communities.

administered over 5,000 immunisations

evacuated 131 patients from Bundaberg hospital to Brisbane as part of the flood emergency response
celebration of 40th anniversary of Cairns Base

provided dental services to over 1,000 patients across central and western Queensland

22,750 landings

provided over 14,000 remote medical consults by phone or video-link

23,500 hours flying time

Over 11,000 patient transports

7.7 million kilometres flown

provided over 14,000 remote medical consults by phone or video-link

Over 11,000 patient transports

7.7 million kilometres flown
Rachael’s lucky escape

It was the last thing Rachael expected when she set off on a leisurely ride with a friend on a property 30 kilometres south of Gladstone.

As they rode past a group of horses, a gelding broke away and charged them. Rachael and her horse Splash found themselves backed up against a fence with nowhere to go. Splash panicked and went into defence mode, bucking continuously. Rachael was tossed from the saddle to the ground beneath his hooves.

“He came down on me twice with his hooves. When I tried to sit up I knew I had a punctured or collapsed lung because my breathing was so shallow. And my ribs – that was painful. I knew my ribs were gone” Rachael said.

Rachael was taken to Gladstone Hospital by an ambulance however her injuries were too severe and the RFDS was called to airlift a ventilated Rachael to Brisbane. Suffering from multiple serious injuries, it took only 66 minutes to get Rachael from Gladstone to Brisbane, normally a six hour drive – potentially saving her life.

Rachael spent two days in Intensive Care and a further five days recovering in hospital. Along with a collapsed lung and six broken ribs, she had two broken vertebrae, a chipped tooth, and needed stitches to a deep gash in her chin.

“I never truly appreciated the value of the RFDS before this,” Rachael said.
2012/13 Overview

Health Services

Despite some funding challenges and the impacts of climatic events, RFDS continued to experience sustained demand for its aeromedical and primary health care services, while exploring other avenues to contribute to the health and well being of those living and working throughout rural and remote Queensland.

As stated earlier in this Report, three significant service undertakings were developed across the year, with the launch of a mobile dental servicing central Queensland, a partnership with the Australian Defence Force to provide onsite medical support and retrieval services during important combat training manoeuvres, and the establishment of our first community based GP service in Charleville in the south west of the State.

A special acknowledgement to the clinical staff that worked tirelessly through the year to initiate, develop and deliver these new project undertakings while also supporting our traditional core service offerings.

The mobile dental unit, which commenced operations in February 2013, quickly reached an important milestone, with its 1000th patient being recorded in the remote north west town of Camooweal, 200 km west of Mount Isa. Local health authorities and councils have been most complimentary of its service, which has been able to provide vital dental hygiene services, corrective procedures and extraction in its short time on the road.

The Charleville GP clinic project is nearing completion aiming to open its doors in October 2013, following the successful recruitment of our clinical and practice team and the purchase and outfit of the surgery, due in no small part to the generosity of the Murweh Shire Council.

Aside from these service developments, the RFDS was also pleased to establish and launch, in partnership with Bond University, a post graduate program focussed on the unique clinical setting of aero-medical retrieval medicine. The first intake of students into the entry level Graduate Certificate was achieved early in 2013, with our Medical Officers and Flight Nurses responsible for the development and delivery of much of the course content. A further intake of Certificate students is planned for September 2013, with work now being undertaken on the development of a Graduate Diploma for launch in 2014, with the vision to establish an eventual education pathway towards a Masters in Retrieval Medicine.

In addition to this University program, RFDS’ own residential short course STAR (Specialist Training in Aeromedical Retrieval) program also completed three planned intakes throughout the year, attracting a diverse range of health professionals such as emergency physicians, GPs, critical care nurses etc.

As well as service innovation and professional education, future workforce planning was also a focus across the year, with the introduction of a Nurse Practitioner model into our staffing profiles. Two Nurse Practitioners are now included in our workforce (one at our Charleville Base and one at our Brisbane Base). We believe these two specialist nursing roles can prove most beneficial to the efficiency and flexibility of aeromedical and primary health care crews, where these highly skilled nurse practitioners will utilise their advanced skills and knowledge to provide a greater range of services - like prescribing and administering medication and ordering x-rays and pathology, without patients needing to see a doctor. This will allow doctors to concentrate on those patients with more complex needs. Further development of this staffing model is being pursued in conjunction with key stakeholders and funding partners, ultimately leading to Nurse Practitioners playing a pivotal role across RFDS’ service platforms.

A special acknowledgement to the clinical staff that worked tirelessly through the year to initiate, develop and deliver these new project undertakings...
Financial Services

The 2012/2013 financial year saw RFDS and Queensland Health working together to establish long term funding agreements with significant progress in establishing a single contract for the delivery of inter-hospital transport services.

The RFDS also received $2.8million in capital grants from the Commonwealth Government. Included in these grants were:

- $1.1million in Hospital and Health Fund (HHF) support for the Mobile Dental Unit which was launched in February 2013
- $0.5million in HHF funding towards the Roma Patient Transfer Facility ($1.2million in total)
- $1.1million towards the acquisition of two new Beechcraft King Air aircraft (total cost of $14million). These aircraft will be delivered in the second quarter of 2014.

Aviation and Service Platforms

The RFDS is looking forward to the completion of major construction projects in Charleville and Roma with construction due to commence in early 2014, with an expected mid-year completion.

Roma

While a Flying Specialists Service was commenced in Roma in 2011, it existed without the support of any infrastructure on the ground. This year the decision was made to construct a combined aircraft hangar, office and Patient Transfer Facility at the Roma Airport. Our other bases currently service Roma almost daily with patient transports so this new facility will be a huge advantage to our operations in the South-West of the state. It was fortunate to be able to purchase land adjacent to airside for this purpose.

Charleville

Our oldest physical presence in any one location in Queensland is at Charleville. The current Charleville Base is located in town while our flying operations activity occurs from the Charleville Airport. The plan is to bring these two functions together on land that has been provided as a gift by the Murweh Shire Council within the airport precinct. This new facility will enable efficiency gains achieved through co-location and provide modern and fresh facilities for the Charleville Team to operate from.

In late 2012, the decision was also taken to retire two base aircraft. These include the Mount Isa based B200 FFI and the Cairns based B200 NQA. These will be replaced with two new B200 King Airs which have been ordered and are due for replacement in the first half of 2014.

One of the difficulties at our remote bases is their ability to ensure suitable housing for eligible local staff, relief or fly in fly out (FIFO) staff. This is true for Charleville, and we are very excited about building a block of four one bedroom units and one two bedroom unit in an area high above the flood lines of the town. This build will be run in parallel with the Charleville Base and Roma projects. We expect to achieve many cost and build efficiencies from running all three projects in parallel.

The RFDS has been very fortunate to achieve significant financial support for these projects through the Federal Government Health and Hospital Fund.
People and Corporate Services

Our people are our foundation. They exemplify the vision and values of the RFDS and are passionate about providing quality health care to all those living, working and travelling in rural and remote Queensland.

The People and Corporate Services team works to support all RFDS employees, to ensure the highest possible standards of professionalism and to build a positive workplace culture.

A significant focus for the 2012/13 financial year has been the transition of the Human Resources team into the People and Corporate Services Department. This has included the introduction of specialist roles such as a Health, Safety and Environment Advisor and a Records and Information Management Coordinator. The team has supported the ongoing implementation and consolidation of a regionalised structure and also various new projects, under the banner of RFDS (Qld) Services, such as the QCoal Community Dental Service, Charleville Health Clinic and the Australian Defence Force contract.

Other key activities included:

- Implementation of the WH&S Harmonisation action plan including the reconfiguration of the WH&S Committee and introduction of random drug and alcohol testing within RFDS.
- Provision of support for key projects including the QCoal Community Dental Service, Charleville Health Clinic, Offline Availability Initiative and the finalisation of the Strategic Plan, through the Project Support Office.
- Significant progress in records management with the implementation of a Document Management Centre and Contract Management Centre as well as undertook a review and change of our archiving service provider.
- Negotiation and registration of the Pilot Agreement with negotiations for Medical Officer, Health Professionals and Support Services all taking place.
- Introduction of the ‘Above and Beyond’ reward and recognition program, recognising teams and individuals who have demonstrated excellent examples of our core values.
- Extension to a suite of online learning modules to be used for orientation and ongoing training purposes.
- Conducted “Leading Together” leadership program for Regional Managers and key members of their teams (included support services leaders from Head Office). The focus of this series of workshops was on working as an efficient and effective team using team management profiling as a key tool.
Integrated Operations

Over the past year the business has undergone a major structural change in response to rapid growth over the past five years and significant changes in the external environment. The changes have been informed by the SEE the Future project, where “SEE” stands for the three underpinning concepts for our business restructure: sustainable, effective and efficient.

Following the thorough business review the year prior, a regional management structure centred around enhanced local decision making and accountability was made operational.

This restructure collected all service delivery related groups into one functional group rather than multiple disciplines. For the first time in the organisation’s history, aviation, medical, nursing and support services formed part of the same team with a collective goal of delivering the best possible patient care within their respective regions.

The three regions “North West Queensland” based in Mount Isa, “Far North Queensland” based in Cairns and “Coastal and South West” based in Brisbane – are grouped according to their primary functions and also to align with the new Medicare Locals and Health and Hospital Board regions where possible.

Cairns and the Far North

2012/2013 was a busy year for the Cairns and Far North Region, with the recent completion of the first full year operating under the Regional Management structure and the building of a cohesive management team.

Internally, it was a year of immense change with the restructuring of reporting lines, operational decisions moving closer to the front line and increased rigor on contractual management.

Cairns Base leads the largest range of services in Queensland.

The region operates from the main base located in Cairns and has four satellite sites Wellbeing Centres located in Aurukun, Hope Vale, Coen and Mossman Gorge. From the local base we provide aeromedical services, primary health care clinics, nursing clinics, social and emotional services, telehealth, medical chests, personal helpers and mentor programs and capacity building services.

The region was part of a landmark project that saw the team receive national recognition on our leadership and management of health service delivery and improved health outcomes through our involvement in the Single Desk Officer Trial. This trial assesses possible grant administration efficiencies through the bundling of multiple projects into a single entity. The trial centred on the reduction in multiple points of departmental contact and reduction in duplicative contract deliverables and reporting requirements.

The overall aim being to improve service outcomes, through:

> Exploring increased flexibility and innovation in funding arrangements and grant schedule architecture - for example, aggregation of multiple program funds to support a single activity, while maintaining integrity of existing relevant program and Commonwealth financial accountability requirements.

> A greater return on investment through harnessing of grant administration and service operation efficiency gains to support enhanced, expanded, more responsive, integrated and holistic service delivery.

> An increased outcomes-orientated approach to grant administration.

The achievements of improved measures in client outcomes and reduced administration costs saw the organisation receiving praise from the National Deputy Secretary for Health and Ageing.

To promote the RFDS and the local services provided by our staff across the region, the Cairns Base collaborated with the Cairns Life magazine to provide editorial content on a monthly basis highlighting all of the locally provided services and staff.

These regional achievements have been made possible by the dedication of the talented and hardworking Cairns team.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cairns</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Patients Attended</td>
<td>31,181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of Clinics Conducted</td>
<td>3,218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of Patient Transports</td>
<td>1,050</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of Aircraft</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of Landings</td>
<td>4,299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours Flown</td>
<td>4,767</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kilometres Flown</td>
<td>1,458,643</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

> After completing a Certificate IV in Community Development through a 12 month RFDS-facilitated course, Marilyn Kepple is now employed as a Community Development Consultant at the RFDS Coen Wellbeing Centre.
Coastal and South West

A significant development for the Coastal and South West region was the appointment of a Regional Manager in September 2012. Highlights in the region during the 2012/13 financial year included:

> Funding from the Federal Government to enable planning for both Charleville and Roma Base developments to commence. This will include a new base, hangar and visitors centre at Charleville as well as new staff accommodation and a base at Roma which will provide an office for the pilots and a hangar for the aircraft. Both Charleville and Roma developments are due for completion in 2014.

> A new partnership between Australian Helicopters Pty Ltd (AHPL) and the RFDS. RFDS are subcontracted by AHPL as a part of a new contract secured with the Australian Defence Force (ADF). The RFDS plays a significant part by providing the medical personnel to attend training exercises conducted by the ADF in various parts of Australia. Locations include but are not limited to Mount Bundey, Townsville and Shoal Water Bay. The first exercise commenced in May 2013. RFDS provided Medical Officers and Paramedics. These medical personnel were recruited specifically and were not part of existing medical personnel in the RFDS. This is a two year contract.

> The Charleville Base continued to provide additional services to the South West of Queensland by delivering both dermatology clinics and maternity nursing services. These services are able to be provided, having secured funding via the Medical Outreach – Indigenous Chronic Disease Program from the Federal Department of Health and Ageing.

> A further agreement was established between the RFDS (Brisbane Base) and the Australian Defence Force – Amberley (RAAF). Essentially, the Health Operational Conversion Unit (HOCU) at the RAAF Base in Amberley now have an agreement in place with the RFDS in which clinical placements are accommodated for the RAAF from the HOCU at our Brisbane Base. As a reciprocal arrangement, the RAAF Amberley Base provide the RFDS nurses (Brisbane) with further educational training via their specific courses in aeromedical evacuations.

> Our Charleville Base was successful in tendering for funding via the Queensland Department of Justice – District Attorney. This is for two years and will allow the implementation of preventative strategies in chronic disease. The program will be delivered in the form of field days in conjunction with pastoral companies, councils and those on the land. This will roll out in the new financial year. A health promotion officer and primary health care nurses will be recruited for this project.

> Our Bundaberg Base became an integral disaster response unit during the local floods and the inclement weather effects that were felt post ex Cyclone Oswald in January 2013. During this time the Bundaberg Hospital was evacuated and many other patients required evacuation from facilities in surrounding districts. The Bundaberg Base were heavily involved in this evacuation process along with several other RFDS Bases in Queensland Section. Providing a central triage centre for patients awaiting transfer to other hospitals the Bundaberg Base also became the coordination centre where all aviation assets involved in the evacuation process based their operations. This included the ADF, all community helicopter providers and other fixed wing aeromedical groups. The Bundaberg team worked tirelessly with all other service providers out of the Bundaberg Base while also maintaining essential care for the patients, many of them elderly and very ill, while they were awaiting transfer. Some of the Bundaberg staff had also been impacted themselves by this weather event and yet still rose to the fore and stepped in to assist with aeromedical retrievals and assistance from the Base that had become a temporary field hospital. The hours were long but their goodwill never lessened and they are to be commended for their extraordinary and life saving efforts throughout this extreme weather period.

> Flight Nurses from the Brisbane and Townsville Bases are both currently completing Nurse Practitioner Studies. This will pave the way for the RFDS to begin to implement Nurse Practitioners in the aeromedical arena in the coming future. Plans are beginning to be established to along this exciting initiative to eventuate in the future.

> Having identified that the Rockhampton Base would benefit greatly from a separate patient transfer facility, planning has begun to establish such a facility. It is envisaged that the new facility will be operational in mid 2014.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Patients Attended</th>
<th>No. of Clinics Conducted</th>
<th>No. of Patients Transported</th>
<th>No. of Aircraft</th>
<th>No. of Landings</th>
<th>Kilometres Flown</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brisbane</td>
<td>2,625</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>2,296</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4,284</td>
<td>1,333,340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Townsville</td>
<td>1,279</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>2,227</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3,540</td>
<td>4,268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roma</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>470</td>
<td>441</td>
<td>143,017</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charleville</td>
<td>4,929</td>
<td>515</td>
<td>445</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1,319</td>
<td>1,279</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bundaberg</td>
<td>1,708</td>
<td>2,692</td>
<td>2,279</td>
<td>705,203</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rockhampton</td>
<td>2,517</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3,951</td>
<td>1,346,385</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**North West**

The North West Region is responsible for bases in Mount Isa and Longreach as well as managing the Rural Women’s General Practice (RWGP) program across the state.

Like the organisation more broadly, the North West has been undergoing significant change in the last year. The appointment of the Regional Manager in October has been followed with a ‘changing of the guard’ in the senior roles at the Base. Their long standing and dedicated service is greatly appreciated, as is their ongoing commitment to the organisation they demonstrate in their new roles.

The appointment of the Regional Manager has assisted in providing a key contact for local stakeholders interested in establishing or consolidating their relationship with the RFDS. With this in mind, effort has been invested in ensuring strong relationships with health stakeholders including both the North West and Central West Hospital and Health Services and the Central and North West Queensland Medicare Local.

Retrieval and clinic activity (general practice and child health) from the Mount Isa Base has continued unabated with ongoing effort being invested in improving the relationship with key stakeholders in particular other retrieval services operating in the region and the Hospital and Health Services which host many of our clinics.

In addition to our traditional services, the North West region also hosts several primary health care projects aimed at improving the social and emotional wellbeing of our communities. The national health reform process combined with changes in the broader political environment has resulted in considerable uncertainty in terms of the provision of ongoing funding.

### Business Development

The Business Development Unit (BDU) was established in 2011 to identify and source funding opportunities and income streams relating to RFDS that can be used to provide additional services and assist in reducing our financial deficit.

This financial year the accomplishments of the BDU included:

- Establishing new organisational business partnerships with St John Ambulance Queensland, Australian Helicopters Pty Ltd, Queensland Mines Rescue Service, AITEC, QCoal and CheckUp. Organisational partnerships enable RFDS to capitalise on the areas of expertise of our partners, avoiding duplication of effort.

- Re-design of the RFDS Medical Chest to incorporate improved RFDS branding, a more ergonomic design and a revised internal layout for ease of use. The re-design also included moving to a new contents provider, St John Ambulance Queensland. The move to a new provider enables improved stock management and compliance with the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA).

- Achieving over $1.5million in health service tenders in the financial year, with additional funds secured up until 2015. This includes a partnership with Australian Helicopters to provide aeromedical support to the Australian Defence Force, and a contract with the Department of Justice and Attorney-General for chronic disease prevention program targeting industry workers in South West Queensland.

- Development of an online training platform and training programs, including a nationally accredited Rural and Remote First Aid course together with complementary courses in Self Aid and Survival. With easy access at any time and from almost anywhere, participants can work at their own pace and work around existing commitments. Additional benefits of the online format include reduced travel time and travel costs.

- Increased awareness of RFDS service offerings through the development of marketing collateral.

- Provision of FIFO nursing to the mining and infrastructure sector.

- Negotiation and implementation of four Health and Hospital Fund capital infrastructure grants with a combined value of $3.8million.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mount Isa</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Patients Attended</td>
<td>5,221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of Clinics Conducted</td>
<td>547</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of Patients Transported</td>
<td>882</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of Aircraft</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of Landings</td>
<td>2,433</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours Flown</td>
<td>2,130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kilometres Flown</td>
<td>689,459</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Longreach

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Patients Attended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of Clinics Conducted</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Marketing and Fundraising

The 2012/2013 financial year was another highly successful one for the Queensland Section, where more than $8.2 million was received in community support. Donations were received from across the State from an ever generous group of corporate partners, individual donors, bequestors, community fundraisers and Auxiliary support groups.

Thank you to all those who supported us over the past year, your assistance has been particularly valuable to us during a period where there has been considerable health reform and pressures on funding at both a state and federal level. Our goal is to ensure that people throughout Queensland have equal access to vital health care services irrespective of where they live or work. Each donation made brings us closer to this goal and so we thank you for your continued support.

Thank you to our Principal Sponsors who have again maintained their commitment to the RFDS. In May this year we celebrated with Ergon Energy when their voluntary customer donation scheme reached $7 million, since the partnership began in 1999. With many Ergon Energy customers now donating $2 or $5 to the RFDS when paying their power bill, this is a great example of how all donations, no matter the size, can contribute to delivering the finest care to the furthest corners of Queensland. Thank you to Ergon Energy and all their customers who have supported us.

Brisbane Airport Corporation continued their invaluable support of the Flying Doctor throughout 2012-13. Our Brisbane Base is located within the Brisbane Airport precinct, allowing our aeromedical teams to be in close proximity to many of the State’s leading tertiary hospitals. This year the RFDS made a total of 3,244 landings at Brisbane Airport. Thank you BAC for continuing to give a number of our emergency flights, landing priority. Your support means our patients can be quickly transported to Brisbane hospitals and to the care they need. Our relationship with mining company, QCoal Group, celebrated a significant development this year, when in February the QCoal Community Dental Service, commenced operations across central Queensland. Thank you QCoal for generously funding the operating costs of this service, which plans to deliver vital oral health services in its first year to around 13 rural and remote communities that would otherwise not have access to dental care. Poor oral health has been linked to a number of other health conditions and is such an important part of us delivering essential health services to rural and remote Queensland. Thank you to the QCoal Group for their three year commitment to this vital service.

We were also supported throughout the year by a growing number of individuals, community groups and Spirit of Queensland entrants. Thank you to all those who willingly devoted their time and energy in raising funds for the Flying Doctor. Some of the more notable events and activities across the State included the Birdsville Races, the Mount Isa Rodeo Queen Quest, the Mates on Mountain Bikes charity challenge in the far north, and the Condon Treasure Charity Ball in Roma.

Our thanks also go to our Volunteer Auxiliary Groups who collectively raised in excess of $250,000 towards our operations. Funds raised were able to contribute towards the purchase of medical equipment across our eight bases, supporting local operations.

The Flying Doctor exhibit at the Australian Stockman’s Hall of Fame in Longreach, completed in early 2012, enjoyed a successful first twelve months of operations, welcoming over 35,000 visitors, many of whom donated to the RFDS or purchased merchandise while at the exhibit.

Thank you also to those who have chosen to remember us in their Will, you continue to amaze us with your generosity and foresight. All bequests go directly to the purchase and medical fit-out of new aircraft. Your contributions ensure our medical teams have the equipment they need to provide the finest care to our patients.

To those who make regular donations through our Wings program, thank you for your ongoing support. We are grateful for your assistance throughout the year and rely on your regular contributions to keep the Flying Doctor flying.

Finally, thank you to our patients who have shared their story with the RFDS community. Over the last year so many have kindly invited us into their lives to share an often life changing experience. Your stories have helped us explain the need for our services and the difference the RFDS can make to an individuals’ health and wellbeing. In May, we shared with the RFDS community the story of Emily who fell over at school and hit her head on the cement, causing bruising to both sides of her brain and a small bleed. Thank you to Emily and her family for not only allowing us to tell this story but also share photos of Emily during her recovery.

To the entire RFDS community we appreciate your support. Your contributions have meant we can continue to deliver essential primary health care and aeromedical retrieval services to people in need across Queensland.

> Emily kindly shared her story with the RFDS community after she fell over at school and hit her head on the cement.
Aviation statistics for 2012/13

Number of landings: 22,754
Hours flown: 23,560
Kilometres flown: 7,743,951

Locations we travelled to >
An early morning fall was the start of a chain of events that saw Kirsten Walpole needing to fly with the RFDS from Emerald to Rockhampton for lifesaving emergency surgery.

“I suddenly felt dizzy,” Kirsten says. “And then I fainted, falling face first onto a door frame. The result was a nasty injury to my face – a couple of deep gashes and a black eye. Luckily I managed not to break any teeth or bones – or my glasses.”

Kirsten was taken by ambulance to the nearest hospital, 130 kilometres away in Emerald, where she received 16 stitches to repair the damage to her face.

But there was still the question of what had caused Kirsten to faint in the first place. Her attending doctor diagnosed a potentially dangerous ectopic pregnancy. Urgent surgery was required, but could not be performed at the small Emerald hospital.

Far from home, with her partner working 800 kilometres away and unable to be with her, Kirsten needed to be transported to Rockhampton quickly and safely. That’s when the Flying Doctor came to the rescue.

“I want to say thank you to the Flying Doctor for the care and understanding I received, and the flight from Emerald to Rockhampton late at night. I can’t imagine how I’d have coped if I’d had to drive the 300 kilometres to Rockhampton with the state of the flood-damaged roads.”

> Kirsten Walpole back on the farm after her ordeal.
The contents from the Medical Chests are prescribed remotely and on-site by RFDS Medical Officers. Patients can be treated for a range of conditions including antibiotics for infections or pain relief to prepare for an emergency evacuation. Many people living in rural and remote locations find it comforting to have a Medical Chest close at hand. In Queensland, the RFDS is responsible for more than 1,300 Medical Chests located throughout the state.

A review of the Medical Chest supply arrangements in Queensland resulted in the formation of a partnership with St John Ambulance Queensland for the ongoing supply of items for the chests. This will bring about a move to a more contemporary chest with the departure from the old green steel chests, which will be progressively phased out over the coming years. The new layout of the chest has enabled better bundling of products for ease of identification by chest users. For example, a small first aid kit is now in a separate case attached to the outside of the main chest for quick and easy access.

Aeromedical and emergency services

All RFDS Bases in Queensland, except Longreach, provide an aeromedical and emergency service. This service includes the provision of primary responses and the transport of patients between hospitals (inter-hospital transfers). This financial year, the RFDS conducted in excess of 11,000 patient transports including 1,041 primary response transports and 10,258 inter-hospital transfers to definitive hospital and/or specialist care. Aircraft are available to respond to calls 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at all bases except Longreach. Aircraft are staffed with a Pilot and Flight Nurse, and a Medical Officer if required.

Beechcraft Super King Air B200s and Pilatus PC-12 aircraft are used for retrieval work within Queensland. All aircraft are pressurised and configured to resemble mini intensive care units. Aircraft are fitted with either the Lifeport or TAS systems, which incorporate oxygen, suction and power outlets and are fitted in each retrieval aircraft, to act as a stretcher loading system that is fully compatible with road ambulance systems.

Primary response

A primary response involves the RFDS responding to a call from the scene. Usually this call comes direct to RFDS on its medical emergency lines. When calls go to the ambulance for these areas, the calls are referred to the RFDS. Primary responses occur when immediate first line treatment may not be available at the location of the patient. The RFDS provides telehealth support and management advice while flying to the scene, and then provides appropriate treatment upon arrival at the location, before retrieving the patient to the appropriate hospital. Isolated properties, remote health clinics or the scene of an accident are examples of possible retrieval locations.

Inter-hospital transfers

Inter-hospital transfers involve the transport of patients between hospital facilities. This frequently occurs when further treatment or investigations are required for the patient, which are not available at the transferring facility. Transfer is therefore necessary to enable the patient to access the definitive care.

Inter-hospital transfers are coordinated through the Queensland Coordination Centre (QCC), a Queensland Government organisation. In Cairns, Charleville and Mount Isa Bases, local clinical coordination is carried out by the on-call RFDS Medical Officer who also attends flights when a Medical Officer is required. In Brisbane, Rockhampton, Bundaberg and Townsville, the RFDS provides aircraft, Pilots and Nurses and QCC organises doctors when they are required.

Primary health care services

Primary health care has a broad focus and provides a comprehensive range of health services delivered by multidisciplinary teams. The teams include General Practitioners, Nurses, Allied Health Professionals and other health personnel including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers and Health Promotion and Community Development Officers.

The RFDS provides primary health care services at a range of locations such as rural towns, remote stations, mines and oil fields, national parks and island resorts throughout regional and remote Queensland.
RFDS aircraft (Pilatus PC-12s, Beechcraft King Air B200s and Cessna Caravans), charter aircraft and road vehicles facilitate the transportation of RFDS employees to deliver primary health care services to 130 Queensland communities.

The RFDS primary health care services include:
> General practice
> Child and family health
> Women’s health
> Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health including chronic disease management
> Mental health/social and emotional wellbeing
> Health promotion/community capacity building
> Allied health
> Oral health

**General practice**

RFDS Medical Officers provide a comprehensive general practice service and are able to offer or facilitate all aspects of primary medical care. Medical Officers are experienced in providing health services in a rural and remote setting and many have special interests and skills.

General practice clinics are held on a regular basis in remote locations; the frequency of visits depends on local needs. Outside the regular clinic service, primary medical care/ general practice is also provided as part of telephone consultations and RFDS Medical Chests are used to administer medication. Medical Officers work closely with other health professionals, both within and outside the RFDS, in order to provide the best quality care.

**Women’s general practice services**

The RFDS recognises the needs of women living in rural and remote communities in Queensland and continually strives to develop ongoing strategies to improve access to services and information. One of these strategies is the Rural Women’s General Practitioner Service (RWGPS), which is funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing and the Queensland Government.

The overall aim of the program is to promote, maintain and improve the health and wellbeing of women living in rural and remote parts of Queensland, with specific objectives to:
> Provide female general practitioner services to rural and remote communities with little or no access to a resident female general practitioner
> Focus service delivery on preventative health care
> Cooperate with and complement existing local and visiting health care services
> Deliver services in such a way as to ensure continuity of client care
> Consider cultural diversity within communities and its influence on service delivery
> Regularly review service provision to ensure that services are being appropriately allocated to communities of greatest need.

More than 70 locations across rural and remote Queensland are visited as part of the program. Many clinics are conducted in areas where the RFDS does not provide any other general practice service e.g. Torres Strait Islands.

**Child and family health**

RFDS Nurses provide valuable support to families living in rural and remote Queensland. Through regular community visits nurses provide a comprehensive child health service incorporating:
> Routine physical assessments of children
> Childhood vaccinations
> Health education and advice to parents and carers
> Referral to other health professionals
> Counselling and acting as a confidante to parents and carers
> School health screening programs
> Liaison and collaboration with other child health initiatives
> Facilitating projects which enhance child health services.

Vaccination rates of children living in areas where RFDS child health services are provided are some of the highest in the nation.

**Mental health**

Mental health remains one of the critical areas of health need in the rural and remote settings. These areas are impacted by lower socio-economic indicators such as higher costs of living, lower education and higher unemployment.

In addition to this the limited access to services due to the availability of skilled professionals is compounded by low help-seeking behavior, as a result of higher perceptions of stigma associated with mental health issues in these regions as compared with urban areas. Strategies aimed at overcoming these issues include:
> Greater collaboration between all sections of mental health service provision, with strategic re-alignments and the creation of a mental health team, based in Cairns
> A mentorship program supporting mental health professionals and the development of a Clinical Supervision program to provide culturally inclusive mental health supervision to Community based Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees
> Coordinated professional development plans for mental health employees
> Adaptation of the state-wide standardised suite of clinical documentation, and development of accompanying RFDS policies
> Development towards our own unique models of best practice, founded in evidence based models, and presentation of these to the wider mental health field
> Training of local Indigenous community members in community development and mental health
> Facilitation of an Indigenous Employment Strategy and Indigenous Gathering, which aim to increase Indigenous staff participation in mental health service delivery and planning.

A range of other improvements to the service were also undertaken in the past twelve months. This year saw the rollout of a new outcome measures initiative. These measures were able to demonstrate statistically significant improvement in wellbeing of clients across the Social and Emotional Wellbeing services provided to Cape York and Western Queensland out of the RFDS Cairns and Longreach bases. They also demonstrated the efficiency of those services provided by the Wellbeing Centres situated in Aurukun, Hope Vale, Coen and Mossman Gorge.

Enhancements are well under way to the Electronic Medical Records systems of the Wellbeing Centre service with rollout of this system to the broader services anticipated by the end of 2013.
This system has previously delivered a significant reduction in need for administration assistance with client record keeping and is expected to further reduce reliance on administration services once the rollout is complete.

The Single Desk Officer Trial is well under way. This trial is designed to streamline contract administration and alleviate reporting obligations for Department of Health (DoH) funded programs. A significant body of work has gone into the design and production of these reports and they were well received by the DoH. This body of work also incorporates the efforts that have gone into the collection of outcome measures and the upgrade and expanded rollout of EMR previously mentioned.

The RFDS Mental Health Service remains committed to the enhancement of mental health services across rural and remote Queensland. Evidence of this was received in the latest installment of the Health Outcomes International Evaluation of the Wellbeing Centre program in September with the evaluators expressing a strong commendation for the improvements in this service over the past twelve months. Commentary was received on the improved clinical governance of the service along with strong acknowledgement of the efficacy of service demonstrated by the positive outcome measure analysis congruent with that performed by the Wellbeing Service internally. Improvements in perceptions of Wellbeing Centre services were also reported broadly across external agencies and community members, indicating a significant improvement in the establishment of these services as a normal part of community life.

The RFDS Mental Health Service aims to be a leader in the field of Community-based Social and Emotional Wellbeing service delivery, and to this end is exploring partnerships with local service providers and tertiary institutions to undertake research projects to generate the evidence-base for the RFDS and the wider community.

### Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health

In the primary health care context, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people make up approximately 40 per cent of RFDS patients, hence, the RFDS has an important role to play in improving the health status of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The RFDS has a long term and sustained commitment to providing services into Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in response to the issues that each community faces. Services provided include mental health, social emotional and wellbeing, primary health care, GP services, oral health, health promotion and child health.

#### Counselling and wellbeing programs

These programs provide social and emotional counselling services and community capacity building to rural and remote communities served. Many of the services are provided to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities, as well as supporting rural communities. Activities under the program form part of the RFDS primary health care service, with multiple professional disciplines bringing complementary skills to the range of activities.

#### Health promotion

Health promotion is an essential aspect of the RFDS’s work, which underpins all of its primary health care services. Health promotion covers two broad areas: health promotion/illness prevention and community capacity building.

### Health promotion and illness prevention

The RFDS Health Promotion program seeks to increase the integration of health promotion and illness prevention activities into the RFDS’s primary health care services. A major ongoing commitment of RFDS has been the holding of health promotion field days at smaller locations, such as isolated stations/ properties, mining communities and tourist resorts. The field days involve community consultation, health education, skill development sessions and strengthening the relationship between the community and the RFDS. The field days have a focus on building skills to help people better manage health issues encountered in the remote context. The incorporation of health promotion activities into RFDS service delivery not only broadens the role of all health employees but also provides a more comprehensive health service to consumers.

### Community capacity building

A relatively recent initiative of the RFDS has been to implement projects which aim to build community capacity around health issues. Objectives of these initiatives include:

- Increasing community awareness of the factors which create healthy lifestyles
- Strengthening the capacity of each community to identify and address issues of concern to them
- Increasing the level of participation in healthy activities.

The RFDS conducts a number of activities to ensure that health service delivery remains at the highest possible standard. These activities include continuing professional development for employees, training and support of other health professionals, and service review and evaluation.

The Strength Within program was one key strategy undertaken in previous years to build the capacity within Indigenous communities in Cape York to respond to mental health needs. This was achieved through supporting local community members to gain a Certificate IV in Mental Health and Community Development (through RFDS delivering the course as well as supporting participants to undertake the program) and providing roles within their own community after completing the program. After having provided this program, RFDS now employs eight of the 24 participants who complete the program.

### Primary health care service

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Type</th>
<th>Number of consultations for 2012/13</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Remote consultation calls</td>
<td>14,338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasking calls</td>
<td>25,930</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary response evacuations</td>
<td>1,041</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inter-hospital transfers</td>
<td>9,914</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General practice consultations</td>
<td>19,433</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female general practice consultations</td>
<td>4,243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child and family health consultations</td>
<td>12,665</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social and emotional wellbeing consultations</td>
<td>2,613</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wellbeing centres consultations</td>
<td>5,536</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Our primary health care locations >

- General practice services
- Rural women’s general practice services
- Child and family health services
- Social and emotional wellbeing services
- Wellbeing Centres
- Allied health services
- Community capacity building and training services
- Health promotion field days

Dedicated to taking the finest care to the furthest corners, the RFDS travelled to over 200 rural and remote locations across Queensland to provide primary health care services to those in need.
Our People

Anthony Hooper - Senior Base Pilot, Cairns Base

Anthony Hooper is the Senior Base Pilot at the RFDS Cairns Base and has been working for the RFDS for a little over five years.

Joining the RFDS with over 24 years of flying experience, Anthony had admired the work of the RFDS.

“Over my aviation career, I have seen the work of the RFDS and found it appealing. The aspect of using your talents and flying skills for the benefit of others, literally helping to save lives at times, is what motivates me.”

As Senior Base Pilot of the largest RFDS Base, Anthony is responsible for managing the professional and safe conduct of the day to day Base Aviation operations.

“This involves ensuring the effective and efficient use of our eight pilots and five Cairns based aircraft. A key part of my role is ensuring out pilots are working within the RFDS’ flight and duty limitations and that they have adequate rest time.”

An RFDS Pilot needs to be prepared for all situations, from an inter-hospital transfer, to an emergency retrieval of a family from the roadside after an accident.

“I am grateful to have the opportunity to fly where each day or night is different in that you never know where you may be going, or what task you will be doing, until the shift commences.”

“There are many memorable experience of my time so far with the RFDS. The ones that I do tend to remember are those where you have made a difference, no matter how big or small, to the life of the patient being flown.”

Mark Bell - Base Manager, Brisbane Base

Mark Bell lives and breaths administration, he loves every aspect of it, so when he saw the advertisement for an RFDS Base Manager he knew it would be the perfect fit.

“I’d never worked for a not-for-profit before, but wanted to make a difference in people’s lives through my work and this role provided the perfect opportunity,” Mark said.

Mark began with the RFDS three years ago and has cemented himself as an integral part of the efficient operation at the RFDS Brisbane Base.

“It is a really diverse role. On a daily basis I provide administrative support to all the operational departments at the Base, manage the Base budgets, update and issue rosters and aeromedical unavailability notices, manage the Base assets such as building maintenance, and ensure we maintain Base security in line with airport standards,” Mark said.

As the Brisbane Base sits within the Brisbane Airport precinct, Mark also sits on a number of committees, including the Airport Emergency Committee, Airport Security Consultative Group and the Wildlife Working Group.

“My favourite part of the day is often just the simple things from seeing a premature baby be flown into the Base and then transported to a Brisbane hospital, to watching a visitor’s face light up, the first time they are invited inside one of our aircraft,” Mark said.

I’d never worked for a not-for-profit before, but wanted to make a difference in people’s lives through my work and this role provided the perfect opportunity. 
Robert Hong – Flight Nurse, Brisbane Base

Robert Hong knew he wanted to work for the RFDS ever since a trip to the Northern Territory in his final year of a Degree in Nursing.

“I went to the visitor centre in Alice Springs and saw a display about the RFDS, it looked like such an amazing opportunity, so I guess every career choice I made since then was with this goal in mind.”

Robert has been employed as an RFDS Flight Nurse at our Brisbane Base for seven years, but it was a long road of study and gaining experience, before he had the qualifications to apply.

“My wife tells me I need a new hobby, but I enjoy studying and it really helps with my job, I’m currently enrolled in Master Nurse Practitioner studies, through the University of Queensland.”

“In the air, I draw on my training but it is all about being organised and having a plan for the flight. There is no running to a store room for more supplies, like in a hospital. Of course things may not go to plan and I can call an RFDS Doctor for advice, before or during the flight, but I really enjoy the responsibility the role provides. In the air, the patient is relying on you to provide the finest care and I am always humbled by that trust.”

Ali Murphy – Medical Officer, Mount Isa Base

Ali Murphy has worked for the RFDS in Mount Isa since April 2007 in both retrieval medicine and in general practice clinics.

Working throughout the remote, north-west Queensland region, no two days are the same.

“One minute I can be chatting with a patient about why most sore throats are viral, the next I can be responding to a heart attack, plane crash or unexpected childbirth,” Ali said.

The Mount Isa team run approximately 550 primary health care clinics throughout the year.

“At clinics we focus a lot of our energy on chronic issues like type two diabetes, hypertension, and kidney disease, however we also see emergencies such as a serious laceration with arterial bleeding, broken bones and severe asthma,” Ali said.

As a junior doctor, Ali filled a relief position with the RFDS in Mount Isa.

“I am enormously grateful for the advice and support I received from the doctors and flight nurses whilst I was in that relief position,” Ali said.

“As my career progressed, I knew I wanted to work with the RFDS again, and after working for a few years in Obstetrics at a hospital, I applied for a permanent position with the RFDS.

“My most memorable experience with the RFDS was when I attended a plane crash. On the flight to the crash site, I was expecting and preparing myself for the worse. The patient was very badly injured, but with nothing immediately life threatening, my first focus was to relieve his pain so we could straighten out the various broken and dislocated limbs. We then transported him safely and in good humour to the nearest major hospital for orthopaedic surgery. He did very well,” Ali said.
Our Bases

In Queensland, the RFDS operates from eight bases including Brisbane, Bundaberg, Cairns, Charleville, Longreach, Mount Isa, Rockhampton and Townsville. Forming a strategic network across the state, these bases help deliver the finest health care to all those who live, work and travel in Queensland’s regional, rural and remote areas.

Cairns Base
Commenced operations: 1972, following relocation from Charters Towers.
Services provided: telephone consultations, medical chests, aeromedical and emergency services and primary health care clinics incorporating general practice, child and family health, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health, mental health, women’s health and health promotion.
Personnel employed: Medical Officers, Registered Nurses (Flight and Primary Health), Mental Health professionals, Health Promotion Officers, Community Liaison and Development Consultants, Pilots and Support Services employees.
Number of aircraft: 2 Beechcraft King Air B200s, 1 Beechcraft King Air B200C and 2 Cessna Grand Caravan C208Bs.

Mount Isa Base
Commenced operations: 1964, following relocation from Cloncurry.
Services provided: telephone consultations, medical chests, aeromedical and emergency services and primary health care clinics incorporating general practice, child and family health, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health, mental health and health promotion.
Personnel employed: Medical Officers, Flight Nurses, Child Health Workers, Community Liaison and Development Officers, Pilots and Support Services employees.
Number of aircraft: 2 Beechcraft King Air B200s and 2 Pilatus PC-12s.

Charleville Base
Commenced operations: 1943.
Services provided: telephone consultations, medical chests, aeromedical and emergency services, and primary health care clinics incorporating general practice, child and family health and health promotion.
Personnel employed: Medical Officers, Registered Nurses (Flight and Primary Health Care), a Health Promotion Officer, Pilots and Support Services employees.
Number of aircraft: 1 Pilatus PC-12.

Brisbane Base
Services provided: aeromedical and emergency services.
Number of aircraft: 1 Beechcraft King Air B200 and 1 Beechcraft King Air B200C.

Bundaberg Base
Commenced operations: 2002.
Services provided: aeromedical and emergency services.
Personnel employed: Flight Nurses, Pilots and Support Services employees.
Number of aircraft: 1 Beechcraft King Air B200.

Townsville Base
Commenced operations: 1996.
Services provided: aeromedical and emergency services and primary health care clinics incorporating general practice, child and family health and women’s health.
Personnel employed: Flight Nurses, Pilots and Support Services employees.
Number of aircraft: 1 Beechcraft King Air B200 and 1 Beechcraft King Air B200C.
**Rockhampton Base**
Services provided: aeromedical and emergency services.
Personnel employed: Flight Nurses, Pilots and Support Services employees.
Number of aircraft: 2 Beechcraft King Air B200s and 1 Beechcraft King Air B200C.

**Longreach Base**
Services provided: mental health services and health promotion to people living in central western Queensland.
Personnel employed: Mental Health professionals and Support Services employees.

The RFDS Head Office is located at Bowen Hills, Brisbane.
Annabelle’s story

The Fisk family never thought they would need the Royal Flying Doctor Service. After all, they are a young, healthy family living in Rockhampton, only a 20 minute drive from two large hospitals.

However, that all changed when the RFDS was tasked with the emergency transfer of then 12 day old Annabelle and her mother, Belinda.

When Annabelle was just five days old, Annabelle had a high temperature and was unresponsive.

Belinda took Annabelle to the GP and was sent straight to the Rockhampton Base Hospital where a Paediatric Doctor was waiting.

"Things went into a terrifying downward spiral, a lumbar puncture and blood tests were ordered," Belinda said.

Annabelle was diagnosed with Enterovirus Meningitis (viral meningitis), known to attack the heart muscle. Annabelle was now below her birth weight and fighting a very serious virus. Not responding to treatment the RFDS was called and due to the precarious situation, the Mater Children's Hospital provided the RFDS with a specialist Paediatric team from their intensive care unit, to assist the RFDS flight nurse.

The aircraft was fitted out with a neonatal intensive care cot and specialist paediatric equipment, providing Annabelle with both a safe and stable environment while also ensuring that the finest care was available to her during the flight.

After a nine day stay together at the Mater, Belinda flew home to Rockhampton with her baby girl’s health vastly improved.
Our Partners and Supporters

Funding Partners

Queensland Government

Australian Government
Department of Health and Ageing

Principal Sponsors

Ergon Energy
Brisbane Airport Australia
QCoal Group

Major Corporate Supporter

xstrata
Mount Iba Mines

Corporate Partners

THIESS
Sirona
m+k lawyers
Nissan
Rockhampton Regional Council
Hawker Pacific
McCullough Robertson
The Good Guys
Qantas Foundation
How you can help

To help meet the costs associated with running a 24 hour emergency and comprehensive health care service, the RFDS relies on the generosity of individuals, community groups, business and the corporate sector as well as funding provided by the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments.

The money donated to the RFDS helps to:
- buy vital medical equipment
- purchase and medically fit out aircraft
- develop a range of outback and rural health initiatives

Please donate today:
- Mail to 12 Casuarina Street
  Brisbane Airport QLD 4008
- Call us on 1300 669 569
- Visit our website www.flyingdoctor.org.au

A.B.N. 80 009 663 478

RFDS Bases

RFDS Brisbane Base
12 Casuarina Street
Brisbane Airport QLD 4008
T 07 3860 1100
F 07 3860 1122
E rfds_bne@rfdsqld.com.au

RFDS Bundaberg Base
Aeromedical Hangar
Hinkler Airport
Childers Road
Bundaberg QLD 4670
T 07 4131 3000
F 07 4155 2372
E rfds_bdb@rfdsqld.com.au

RFDS Cairns Base
Royal Flying Doctor Street
General Aviation
Cairns Airport QLD 4870
T 07 4040 0444
F 07 4040 0199
E rfds_cns@rfdsqld.com.au

RFDS Charleville Base
Old Cunnamulla Road
Charleville QLD 4470
T 07 4654 1233
F 07 4654 1629
E rfds_cvl@rfdsqld.com.au

RFDS Longreach Base
137 B and C Eagle Street
Longreach QLD 4730
T 07 4652 5800
F 07 4652 5899
E rfds_lng@rfdsqld.com.au

RFDS Mount Isa Base
11 Barkly Highway
Mount Isa QLD 4825
T 07 4743 2800
F 07 4743 0521
E rfds_mtisa@rfdsqld.com.au

RFDS Rockhampton Base
Hangar 5, Aviation Drive
Rockhampton QLD 4700
T 07 4921 2221
F 07 4921 2277
E rfds_rok@rfdsqld.com.au

RFDS Townsville Base
Hangar 117
Corner Gypsy Moth Court and
Viscount Drive
Townsville Airport QLD 4810
T 07 4775 3111
F 07 4775 3511
E rfds_tsv@rfdsqld.com.au