



## Opinion Piece by Grahame Marshall, Chief Executive Officer Royal Flying Doctor Service (WA)

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### **West Australians urged to support relevant and transparent charities**

The Royal Flying Doctor Service is a not for profit organisation that has been delivering life-saving services to every corner of Western Australia now for more than 80 years and we support the Federal Government's, and the public's increasing scrutiny of the charity sector.

Less buoyant economic cycles understandably increase the focus on accountability across Australia's charity sector, and this is demonstrated by the announcement of another 182 organisations being removed last year from the Commonwealth's official register.

There are more than 50,000 charities registered in Australia currently, employing almost 10 per cent of the Australian workforce. So how do Australians decide which ones to support?

I would urge every Australian to consider carefully where their hard earned dollars go, and to examine whether the charity they give to has a documented plan to be efficient, and innovative as to how it can be the most effective with the outcomes it achieves into the future.

How can you determine which charities best deserve your dollars? There's no definitive answer, due in part to individual preferences of causes, but donors also need to consider the ethics and effectiveness of their preferred charities, and decide how, and on what, they want their donations spent.

Taking the time to become more savvy and selective about charitable donations can ensure that your money is helping in the way you intend, and not being spent on excessive overhead costs, nor lining someone else's pockets.

I'm very proud of the RFDS history, the reputation we've established, and our globally recognized leadership as aero medical innovators and experts. And we are pleased to be among the vast majority of registered charities recognised for being accountable and transparent.

In fact the Royal Flying Doctor Service recently confirmed its place as the country's most reputable charity, ranking first in the 2015 Charity Reputation Index, for the fifth year running.

The annual index results released by research consultants AMR indicate excellence by the

Flying Doctor across all areas measured; (Services, Innovation, Workplace, Citizenship, Governance, Leadership and Cost Management).

During current tough economic times it is heartening to not only be able to reassure the many supporters of the Flying Doctor that their donations are put to good use and that resources are used effectively, but to also have that publicly recognised and confirmed.

We realise that trust is a huge factor in determining the value of a charity's brand.

It impacts on whether potential donors will give, whether people leave a bequest, or volunteer their time to assist in some way. In the context of corporate partnering, companies want to partner with trusted charities, and align their own brand with responsible brands which make a real difference in their areas of operation.

The RFDS is proud of its track record and its brand but is only able to deliver its life saving services with the support of generous Western Australians - individuals, companies, and governments - who help fund our services.

As our state's population grows, resulting in ongoing growth in the need for our services, the RFDS must remain at the forefront of innovation by developing and utilising the very latest in technology and state of the art equipment, to be able to expand the reach and range of our services, and continue to deliver the very best aero medical care available anywhere in the world, in the most effective and efficient way possible.

We look forward to continued support from our generous community which will see us realise further milestones including the formal opening during the first half of this year of our new Broome base – the first new RFDS base in 50 years, providing enhanced services to patients in the North of our State.

The RFDS has been providing life-saving services to Western Australians for more than 80 years and today has six operating bases, a fleet of 15 aircraft, and a staff of around 300, providing life saving services to almost 30,000 patients last year alone.

To donate to the RFDS call 1300 669 569 or check out [www.flyingdoctor.org.au](http://www.flyingdoctor.org.au)

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