

Going the

August 2019

# DISTANCE

*Stories of strength and survival, made possible by you.*



*Thanks to you*

Samuel made it to  
hospital just in time



Royal Flying Doctor Service  
VICTORIA





## To you, from Scott

Dear Friend,

Welcome to the first edition of the new-look 'Going the Distance'!

Inside this exciting new edition, you'll read about how your support of the Flying Doctor is helping to save lives and bring vital support to those in remote and regional communities across Australia.

I'm proud to share with you the impact your generosity is having through the Flying Doctor Wellbeing Program, which is bringing much-needed mental health care services to regional and remote areas.

I encourage you to read the article on page 3 to see the difference Flying Doctor Wellbeing is having. With your support we continue to expand this service to isolated communities.

I also hope you'll turn over to page 4 where you'll see the results of our recent supporter survey – and some of the changes we'll be making as a result of your feedback.

On behalf of all of us here at the Flying Doctor, thank you for your commitment and care. Your support means so much to us and to those people we serve every single day of the year.

Scott Chapman  
Chief Executive  
Royal Flying Doctor Service Victoria

## COVER STORY

# WHEN SAMUEL NEEDED HELP MOST, YOU WERE THERE

Samuel Barr, 18, was on a dream holiday riding motorbikes on the sand dunes of a remote beach on the north coast of Tasmania.

But a terrible accident quickly turned this young Aussie's dream into his worst nightmare.

Samuel's motorbike slid off a sandy cliff, crashing heavily many metres below. The bike snapped in two from the impact.

Worse still, the teenager's body was broken in seven places through his pelvis and lower back.

tongue, there was no doubt that his only hope was specialist care in Melbourne.

Thanks to the generosity of friends like you, Samuel was quickly transferred to a waiting plane at Launceston Airport flown by experienced RFDS pilot Captain Steve Wood.

As a father of a boy of his own, Captain Wood was determined to do everything he could to help young Samuel through his nightmare.

16 months later, Captain Wood still recalls how vulnerable Samuel looked on the stretcher,

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## ***"We will forever be grateful"***

MELISSA BARR, SAMUEL'S MUM

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*"I didn't see the drop-off until I was already over the edge," Samuel recalls. "My dad saw me disappear and knew it wasn't good – he was there in seconds."*

Samuel's mum ran to the top of a sand dune to get reception to call 000. But because the family was in such a remote area, there were no ambulances available. Instead, a helicopter took Samuel to Launceston Hospital.

After initial scans showed horrific damage to Samuel's body, including a crushed pelvis, internal bleeding, a deep gash under his chin and a severed

his body broken, bruised, and in urgent need of medical attention.

As Samuel was carefully placed on a stretcher and carried on to the aircraft, Captain Wood thought to himself, "this could be my kid", and was deeply thankful for supporters like you who meant he could be there to save Samuel's life.

Working in partnership with the team of professionals on the aircraft, Captain Wood got Samuel safely to Melbourne for the treatment he urgently needed.

He says rescuing Samuel was a real team effort – and that team

included incredible supporters like you, <<First Name>>. Because without your support, Samuel might not be here today.

Samuel is so thankful for friends like you, who made his life-saving flight to Victoria possible.

*"When I think back now it's crazy that I could fly all the way from Tasmania to Victoria to receive specialist care - simply because people everywhere donate to the Royal Flying Doctor Service," Samuel says.*

**Up until my accident I didn't even know the RFDS operated in Tasmania, yet it's been here helping hundreds of people every year for nearly 60 years! I really wish more people knew what a great job the RFDS does.**

Now, more than a year later, Samuel is back at work on the farm and fully recovered from his injuries.

Samuel's mum Melissa said that in a time of uncertainty and confusion, she knew she could rely on the Royal Flying Doctor Service - and people like you.

*"We will be forever grateful for everyone involved - from the donors who support the RFDS to the paramedics and hospital staff on both ends who gave Samuel the help he needed."*

Thank you for your support, which helped Samuel receive life-saving treatment just in time.



Samuel's body was broken in seven places

Samuel and his mum, Melissa, back on the farm.





## YOUR SUPPORT IS HELPING OUR CREW BE THERE FOR PEOPLE IN NEED

Flying Doctor  
Wellbeing Team

**T**hanks to your help, our mental health care service is bringing hope and support to those doing it tough in remote communities.

In March 2019, the Flying Doctor Wellbeing Service launched in Maffra, Welshpool, Port Albert and Loch Sport.

Psychologist Tess Howells, who works as a mental health clinician says it's an exciting new development because "accessing psychological services is near impossible in regional and remote areas".

Tess is there to help those facing issues such as low mood, stress, worry, relationship difficulties, grief and workplace bullying.

She recalls one client, a 56-year-old man who was referred by his employer and was going through a marriage breakdown and a life-threatening illness.

*"In the first session he told me that he had never cried in front of anyone in his life and felt so humiliated," Tess says.*

*"It's really tough and uncomfortable at the beginning for some, but I tell them it's ok – it's human to feel and express these emotions."*

Tess has already seen incredible results with her clients.

One of our clients recently said; *"I've been trying to find a psychologist in my district for over 12 months. Now I have one here, I'm receiving the*

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***"You can't underestimate the power this service has on people's lives."***

TESS HOWELL, PSYCHOLOGIST

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*help I need. I'm so grateful for this service – it needs to be supported in any way possible."*

The program has already made such a huge difference. And thanks to your kindness and generosity, we're now planning to expand it – and reach even more people in remote communities across Victoria.

**Thank you for making this life-changing service possible!**



## YOUR GENEROSITY WILL HELP SAVE MORE LIVES

**W**e're so thankful to you and everyone who gave so generously to our recent appeal to help equip the RFDS fleet with life-saving medical equipment, such as blood analysers and ventilators.

We're thrilled to share that your support has so far helped raise more than \$700,000, which means more people in remote parts of Australia can receive life-saving treatment when they need it most.

You may remember the story of Georgia, who contracted a deadly infection that almost killed her. The support of friends like you meant the Flying Doctor could rush to her side, carrying the emergency medical equipment needed to stabilise her and airlift her to hospital.

And now, thanks to you, more aircrafts will be equipped and ready to help people like Georgia – so Australians in even the most remote places can receive high quality medical care when they need it.

**Thank you for giving so generously and helping to save lives!**



Georgia had just hours to live – your support meant an RFDS aircraft was on its way to her in minutes.

## YOUR OPINION AND YOUR SUPPORT MATTERS



**W**e recently invited our valued supporters to share their thoughts and opinions by completing a supporter survey. And what we discovered was both inspiring – and extremely helpful – as we plan for the future.

It was heartening to hear that 38% of you consider yourselves to be 'very committed' to the RFDS. But what we discovered through the survey gave us deeper insights into what you care about the most.

For example, we learned the top reasons supporters like you give are because you're passionate about helping remote communities, and want to be there for our heroic pilots and crew.

We also received some really practical feedback from you, which we'll be responding to right away:

- You wanted to read more stories about people you help through the Flying Doctor, so we've relaunched our newsletter – this is the first edition.

- You asked to donate using BPay – and we hear you! We're currently working on getting this up and running.
- Over 80 people asked for information on leaving a gift in their Will. This is hugely generous, and we're so thankful. That information is already on its way.

Some supporters even chose to include a donation, raising \$120,000. Your generous gifts will be put straight to work towards the purchase of new medical equipment for our aircraft.

**We're truly humbled by those supporters who kindly took the time to complete the survey. Thank you for your feedback – and all your support.**





## STORIES FROM OUR TEAM: SUPPORT CREW

Everyone involved with the RFDS is a valued member of our team – doctors, staff members, volunteers. And, of course, incredible supporters like you!

One of your fellow passionate team members is Erol Nalbantich, who meets Australians on the street every day, and encourages them to join the RFDS family of supporters.

In his work, Erol often chats with people who've been saved by the Flying Doctor.

*"We literally meet anywhere between two to five people a day who have been picked up by the Flying Doctor at some point," he shares.*

*"One story that stuck with me was a truck driver who was picked up on the Nullabor. A wedge tail eagle flew straight into his windscreen. The poor bloke suffered severe facial injuries, multiple fractures, broken ribs, a punctured lung, and the eagle perforated the inside of his eye socket. The Flying Doctor landed in front of him on the highway, flew him down to Adelaide and saved his life."*

Supporters like you make incredible stories like these possible. That's why Erol loves talking to the people he meets, and asking them to become donors too.

One donor Erol spoke to shared, *"Erol was awesome! Lots of fun, quintessentially Australian, and 150% passionate about the RFDS."*

**Thank you Erol for your commitment to the RFDS – and thank you, for standing alongside Erol and the rest of the team in support of your fellow Australians in remote and regional communities.**

## WHY JANICE IS LEAVING THE GIFT OF A LIFETIME

Janice Hill has had a strong connection with the Royal Flying Doctor Service since childhood. But it wasn't until retirement that she had the chance to explore the Outback and see first-hand the difference the Flying Doctor makes for people in remote communities.

As she travelled across vast distances, Janice was struck by the need for reliable, efficient and trusted health services for isolated people.

*"It sort of dawned on me, the distance," she says. "It brought home to me what amazing work the Royal Flying Doctor Service has done since the early days."*

Janice decided to look more closely into the RFDS by collecting books and reading up on the history of the Flying Doctor. In the end, she says the decision to become one of the Flying Doctor's valued supporters was simple.

*"It's hard to solve a medical emergency when there is little around you – especially up north," Janice explains, "It's an enormous effort, what they're doing out there."*

Recently, Janice also committed to leaving a gift in her Will for the Flying Doctor, knowing her kindness and support will make a difference for generations to come. Janice says she feels great about having made her decision and encourages others to consider leaving a gift in their Will too.

*"If you have family in Australia, it's something to give a good think about," she says.*

**If you would like to find out more about leaving a gift of a lifetime, by including the Flying Doctor in your Will, we'd love to hear from you. Please contact Teresa Cianciosi directly on 03 8412 0448 or [teresa.cianciosi@rfdsvic.com.au](mailto:teresa.cianciosi@rfdsvic.com.au)**



Janice is delighted to have included the RFDS in her Will.





# A MARATHON EFFORT FROM KESTER

**W**e're so thankful for wonderful supporters like you, and for all other generous members of the community like Kester Baines who give their time and energy to help the Flying Doctor stay in the air and on the road.

At 79-years-young, this Geelong local has completed 26 full marathons in locations around the world, proudly running each time for the Flying Doctor.

It all began in 2005, when Kester signed

*result, as I have chosen to leave a gift in my Will to the RFDS."* Kester says.

More recently, Kester's passion for the Flying Doctor deepened after witnessing the support his close friend Jacqui received during an emergency in the Kimberly.

When Jacqui was suddenly stricken with acute appendicitis, the Flying Doctor was there to fly her to hospital for life-saving surgery.

Like many of our generous donors, Kester is motivated to give by his desire to help Australians in remote and regional communities.

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**"It gives you a good feeling helping to provide those services in remote area"**

KESTER BAINES

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up for the Paris Marathon and raised over \$2,000 for the Flying Doctor.

*"I have always admired the work of the RFDS and have supported them for many years, and I was honoured to become a member of the John Flynn Society as a*

*"It's about the people the RFDS are serving... it gives you a good feeling helping to provide those services in remote areas."*

**Kester was part of the Ground Crew at this year's Run Melbourne. If you'd like to show your support and join the Ground Crew at the Melbourne Marathon on October 13, please get in touch with Rohan Morris on 03 8412 0436 or email [rohanmorris@rfdsvic.com.au](mailto:rohanmorris@rfdsvic.com.au).**

Kester has run 26 full marathons in support of RFDS.



# CELEBRATING THE INCREDIBLE SERVICE OF ANNETTE ALLISON OAM

**A** committed group of RFDS supporters like you are celebrating the service of Annette Allison OAM, who has worked with the Flying Doctor for over 17 years.

Ms Allison was formerly a TV presenter for Good Morning Melbourne. She started volunteering for RFDS as a member of the Bayside Auxiliary. Then later moved into behind-the-scenes roles, including as a Board Member and most recently as the Public Affairs Manager for RFDS Victoria.

But her involvement didn't stop there. Annette Allison OAM, also lead 13 Outback Tours, presented well over 1000 speaking engagements and MC'ed at major RFDS Victoria events each year to the delight of our guests.

With Ms Allison's support, the Bayside Auxiliary has run major events including

their annual fashion parade and luncheons, raising over \$350,000 for the RFDS.

Outside of the Auxiliary, member Mrs Wendy Stone's fondest memory was of Ms Alison's iconic outback tours. *"When the night was over and we went to our respective rooms she would be up, calling the right people and making sure everything went to plan. She was very caring of people and made sure everyone was alright."*

RFDS Victoria Chief Executive, Scott Chapman describes Ms Allison's contribution as "remarkable".

*"You have given over 17 years of dedication and commitment to the Flying Doctor and your passion and energy never waned. I'm pleased you're not retiring just yet, as we look forward to you still doing some work with us,"* Scott says. *"Thank you Annette!"*



## A special INVITATION FOR YOU

As one of our incredible supporters, we'd be delighted to see you at one of our upcoming events.



05  
OCT

### The Flying Doctor Rowathon

Make a splash for mental health on the Murray & Darling Rivers, Wentworth, NSW.



05-17  
OCT

### Flying Doctor Aircraft Simulator

Visit the Flying Doctor and our aircraft simulator at the Yarrawonga, Shepparton and Nhill Shows.



17  
OCT

### Annual Bayside Auxiliary Lunch

The annual luncheon raises funds for the Flying Doctor and include entertainment from 'A Class Act'.



22  
OCT

### An Afternoon with the RFDS

We love meeting our supporters! We invite you to join us in Bendigo for this free event.



13  
NOV

### Drive 4x4 the Doc

Be part of a long-weekend drive in the country in support of RFDS. For more info, go to [www.drive4x4thedoc.com.au](http://www.drive4x4thedoc.com.au)



20  
NOV

### AGM Forum & John Flynn Luncheon

Come together with fellow RFDS supporters for our AGM Forum and John Flynn Luncheon.