



Royal Flying Doctor Service

QUEENSLAND SECTION

The official magazine of the Royal Flying Doctor Service
QUEENSLAND SECTION · WINTER 2019 >

Flying Doctor

INSIDE THIS ISSUE: A MODEST MAN. AN EXTRAORDINARY LEGACY. • A MIDNIGHT FLIGHT TO SAFETY.





Hope and support in the face of adversity.

As Royal Flying Doctor Service (Queensland Section) CEO Meredith Staib celebrates her first year leading the organisation, she reflects on the significant challenges that have faced Queensland in recent months.

In May this year, the State Government declared two-thirds of Queensland in drought. For members of the community living and working in rural Queensland, this news will come as no shock. And for our fellow Queenslanders in the north and west, both drought and flood have added to the many challenges that come with making a living from the land.

While newspaper articles and television programs focus on the damage in terms of financial loss, the effect of these natural disasters on the mental health of people in rural communities can't go unnoticed.

It's disheartening to know that suicide and self-harm rates are higher in remote and rural Australia than in major cities. Residents of very remote areas twice as likely to die from suicide as city residents, and the people who face the greatest risk of suicide are farmers, young men, older people, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians.

It's an alarming situation and one that, with your help, we're determined to improve.

Since 2004, we have been delivering mental health services to people living and working in rural and remote communities. In that time, our mental health teams have worked hard to deliver much-needed services including face-to-face counselling, mental health first aid, training and telehealth services.

Our highly-trained mental health professionals specifically tailor services to the needs of remote communities. Last year alone, our mental health services reached more than 8,000 people right across Queensland.

It takes courage to ask for help, and thanks to the compassion and unfailing support of people like you, I'm proud to say that we are bringing world-class mental health care to those need it most.

Meredith Staib
Chief Executive Officer
Royal Flying Doctor Service (Queensland Section)

A star in the night sky

You will find an RFDS Flight Nurse on every one of our flights. They are the best of the best, and are elite specialists in their field.



RFDS Flight Nurse, Yvette Jenkins, during a scenario of the STAR program training.

RFDS Flight Nurse, Yvette Jenkins, recently attended the internationally recognised Specialised Training in Aeromedical Retrieval (STAR) program, which delivers aeromedical retrieval training in realistically life-like scenarios.

This training is a must for aeromedical professionals to keep their skills up-to-date and ensure they are ready to handle any situation that might occur at 30,000ft.

For Flight Nurse, Yvette, on-going training that is funded thanks to our supporters, has helped her in many ways throughout her career.

“When I first started with the Flying Doctor we were called out for a patient who had had an ectopic pregnancy where the baby was developing in the fallopian tubes. She was in a tiny little town out west and they had very limited access to the critical equipment that they needed,” said Yvette.

During this time the service had to call in a flying doctor to operate on the patient in town.

“I think she had lost around three litres of blood at this stage due to a rupture so the main thing we were tasked with was taking the blood with us to her.

“The most amazing part of the whole aeromedical retrieval was the fact that the doctor was operating on her in a little theatre they had in this tiny town.

“When we arrived, we literally took her off the operating table and incubated her for the flight to Brisbane.

“One of the town's nurses said when we arrived all she could see was the lights coming from our aircraft into town. She described it as a shining star in the black sky. It just gave me Goosebumps and I thought, ‘this is what it's all about!’”

Thanks to supporters like you, and a newly launched partnership with QSuper, on-going training for Flight Nurses, like Yvette, will keep their skills up-to-date and help save more lives.



Finding love in the skies while saving lives

A mid-air medical emergency might seem an unlikely place for a pilot and midwife to find love, but not for one Queensland couple.

For the past 17 years, midwife and flight nurse Justine Powell has been flying to remote communities for the Royal Flying Doctor Service of Queensland (RFDS).

After beginning her career in Rockhampton, she transferred to Brisbane where she met flight standards pilot, James Williams.

“We worked together quite a lot over the years and developed a friendship, and then we fell in love. Now, we’re husband and wife,” Justine said.

“All the while we were in and out of remote communities helping those who needed it.”

James also remembers the time fondly, “I remember seeing Justine for the first time; it mightn’t have been the conventional way to meet someone, but we became friends and it really grew from there.”

Justine said it was a privilege for the couple to be there during extreme moments in people’s lives.

“We transfer a lot of pregnant women and often we’re moving women with twins out of their hometowns at a heightened time for women,” she said.

One of Justine’s most memorable callouts was carrying the last newborn out of Cairns during Cyclone Yasi.

“We were the last aircraft to leave Cairns before they shut the airport,” she said.

“We were evacuating the special care unit and neonatal unit. We were carrying those small babies out of the hospital to bring them to Brisbane to ensure they could receive the best possible care they needed.”

“Brisbane is a gateway to many of Queensland’s key tertiary hospitals, so we’re grateful that Brisbane Airport Corporation (BAC) and Air Traffic Control understand the importance that priority landings play in situations like this,” Justine says.

In her current role as Manager of Clinical and Base Operations, Justine is responsible for the Brisbane Base, its hangar, engineers and aviators.

“My true passion is being a flight nurse, and I still get to fly and look after patients while watching over the Base here.

“You never know what a day is going to bring, and we rely on our close teams to support each other.

“The pilot, the nurse and doctor support each other, and you don’t get that in a hospital setting; it’s an amazing job for the diversity that we see every day.”

James joined the RFDS in 2000 and his current position sees him training and checking in on new aeromedical pilots in the organisation.

“One of the things I realised early on is that the pilot can really help that small team,” James says.

“I remember going out of Mount Isa from Camooweal picking up a patient who went into cardiac arrest and the doctor got me to do CPR on the stretcher.

“One minute I was flying an aeroplane and then I was under a doctor’s tutelage administering CPR.

“For me it’s a sense of altruism and at the end of the day I come home and think, ‘I’ve been part of something good today’. I hope that our supporters feel this way too, because they are truly part of our team.”

James also understands the importance that priority landings plays in his role transporting critically ill and injured patients. “My role combines all the things I love. After nearly four decades of flying, half my time in the sky has been with the RFDS doing my part to fly our patients into and out of Brisbane Airport.”

Although flying together for Justine and James has become less frequent due to changing job roles, occasionally the couple get to take to the sky together.

“We don’t really end up on the same roster anymore as I’m away training people, and Justine’s flying roles are not as frequent as they used to be,” James said.

“It’s not often but it’s great when we do.

“The last time we flew together was on James’s birthday — it was his birthday present that he got to fly with me,” Justine added.

Brisbane Airport provides a gateway to Brisbane’s tertiary hospitals. Over the past 10 years Brisbane Airport Corporation (BAC) has donated over \$3 million to the RFDS and helped more than 25,000 flights come into and out of Brisbane airport.



Above: Flight Nurse Justine Powell carried the last premature baby out of the Cairns Hospital before Cyclone Yasi hit. Below: Pilot James Williams in the air.





A modest man.

An extraordinary legacy.

This year, Flying Doctor in Queensland introduced four state-of-the-art clinical aircraft to our fleet. And it's all thanks to the kindness of a grazier from Einasleigh.

Described by those who knew him as a quiet man, Geoffrey Carrick's one indulgence was a can of cold beer in the evening. But behind the unassuming exterior, was a brilliant grazier and someone determined to use his wealth to help people living and working in rural Queensland.

Throughout his life, Geoffrey gave generously to the causes that mattered most to him. He would mount bullock horns on plaques for auction to raise money for the local community. He never wanted recognition; the knowledge that he was helping others was enough.

Geoffrey never married and had no children. When he passed away in 2018 at the age of 73, he left half of the \$9.85m proceeds of the sale of his property, Maitland Station, to the Flying Doctor.

This extraordinary gift, along with donations and gifts left in Wills, has allowed the Flying Doctor to purchase and fit-out four new clinic aircraft to our fleet - ensuring we can continue to deliver care to Queensland communities. The aircraft have now been flown to our Bases in Roma,

Mount Isa and Cairns, allowing RFDS to expand the reach of our services to more rural communities. The new aircraft will also allow us to run more overnight clinics from our Cairns, Charleville and Mount Isa Bases.

In recognition of Geoffrey's extraordinary gift, one of the new aircraft, a Beechcraft King Air B200 based in Cairns, has been named the 'Geoffrey Carrick'. It took to the skies on Thursday May 9 this year, with its maiden flight including a special flypast over Geoff's former home, Maitland Station.

Heather Stott, our Planned Giving Coordinator, explained the decision to name the aircraft after this extraordinary man:

"We really wanted to show respect to Geoffrey's memory because it's such a substantial gift that will save lives and improve the health of so many people living in remote, rural and regional areas. Geoff was a very humble man, who thought of himself as a Queenslander helping his fellow Queenslanders."



The plaque remembering Geoffrey, proudly displayed onboard the new aircraft.



While Geoffrey's gift is one of the largest RFDS (Queensland Section) has ever received, it's the combination of gifts of all sizes that allow the Flying Doctor to bring life-saving care to thousands of people across Queensland every year.

Gifts in Wills left by many generous supporters mean we can invest in new aircraft and equipment, and expand the reach of our services, including emergency flights and rural health clinics.

In fact, it was a gift in a Will that financed the very first Flying Doctor aircraft back in 1928.

Now, 91 years on, we are proud to honour Geoffrey and thousands like him who choose to leave a gift in their Will to the Flying Doctor. Their legacy will live on through the lives that are saved by their forethought, generosity and compassion.

If you would like to find out more about remembering RFDS in your Will, please contact Heather Stott for a confidential chat on: (07) 3852 7586 or email: hstott@rfdsqld.com.au

One of the new clinic aircraft, made possible by the generous gift left by Geoffrey Carrick.



A midnight flight to safety.

Rural Queensland can be the perfect place to raise a family. But, when Kellie's baby son fell ill, things could have been very different without the Flying Doctor and the amazing support of people like you.



Taige was just seven months old when he fell ill.

As a mum of three young kids, Kellie loves living in rural Queensland. Based in Mount Isa, the family can often be found camping in Adel's Park, near the beautiful Lawn Gorge National Park or out by the Gregory River.

Living in the rural north-west means they've got some of Australia's most beautiful outback scenery right on their doorstep. But it also means they're a long way from specialist hospital care should the worst happen.

Coming from the country, Kellie has always admired the work of the Flying Doctor. But she also has a very personal reason for wanting to support us.

It was Easter Sunday 2010, when her youngest son, Taige, suddenly became very ill. He was vomiting and suffering from painful abdominal cramps. Taige is the youngest of three, so

Kellie was used to her children falling ill from time to time, but she knew this was different. It was obvious that little Taige, only seven months old at the time, was in a serious condition.

Kellie rushed her baby boy to the Emergency Department at Mount Isa Hospital. Once there, her suspicions were confirmed by a paediatrician.

"...the paediatrician came in to assess him. There were only a few words I can remember the doctor saying and that was that he needed to be flown to Townsville for surgery," Kellie recalls.

Just imagine the fear Kellie felt in that moment, hearing her baby was seriously ill. And the added pain of knowing that because of where she lived, the specialist care her child urgently needed was many hundreds of kilometres away.

Kellie with Taige, now 9-years-old, at the 2019 Isa Rodeo Queen Contest.



By 11pm that evening, Kellie and Taige were in an ambulance on their way to the Royal Flying Doctor Service aircraft that

It's in these moments that your support for the Flying Doctor makes all the difference.

would fly them directly to Townsville Hospital. By this point, Taige's condition had worsened and he was screaming in constant pain.

Taige was suffering from intussusception, a condition where the small bowel makes its way into the large bowel. The condition can cause severe complications if not treated immediately. Your kind support means our crew were on hand to give Kellie and Taige the help they needed. Your generosity kept our aircraft fully-equipped and ready to make the one-and-a-half-hour flight to Townsville – a trip that would have taken over nine hours by road.

Taige was treated and recovered quickly. But a month later, the condition returned. Once again, the Flying Doctor was there to take Kellie and her young son to Townsville for urgent treatment.

To look at Taige now, you'd never know how ill he was in those early months. But Kellie will never forget the care shown by our Flying Doctor crew.

This year, Kellie decided to join the 2019 Isa Rodeo Queen Contest to raise funds for the RFDS and increase awareness of the many ways the service supports her local community.

"I wanted to be able to share my story and say how thankful I am for everything that the Royal Flying Doctor Service did for my son and my family at that time in our lives. They will always hold a special part in my heart and for that I will be forever grateful," Kellie said.

Your generous support is providing an essential service for families like Kellie's living across our vast state. Because of you, our aeromedical teams will always be there when young children like Taige need us the most.



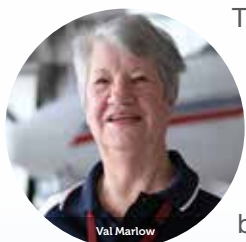
Kellie with her husband Jared and their children Abbie, Ryder and Taige.

Local Hero Awards

Now in its fourth year, the RFDS Local Hero Awards give the Flying Doctor team in Queensland an opportunity to acknowledge and thank those incredible good Samaritans, volunteers and fundraisers who go out of their way to ensure the Flying Doctor will be around for another 91 years.

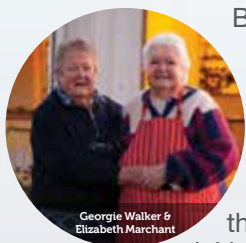
Meet the 2019 RFDS Local Hero Award winners.

Brisbane: Val Marlow



This year the Flying Doctor's Brisbane Auxiliary will have been supporting the service for a 50 remarkable years. Val Marlow has been at the forefront for 30 of those years. She works tirelessly at events all over Brisbane and the South East and has become a wonderful ambassador for the Flying Doctor, conducting tours of the Brisbane Base as well as attending functions and clubs to promote the service and offer people the opportunity to give their support.

Charleville: Elizabeth Marchant & Georgie Walker



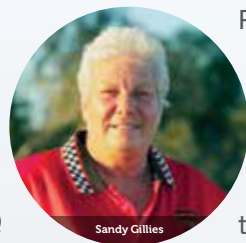
Between them, Elizabeth Marchant and Georgie Walker have racked up over 110 years of hard work, fundraising and support for the Flying Doctor. Long time buddies, they tirelessly raise funds by hosting a monthly BBQ at the Royal Hotel Eromanga. When they're not in the kitchen, you'll find them picking up the Flying Doctor and nurses from the airport when they land, serving them smoko and keeping morale high with their kind nature and friendly demeanor. Alongside this, Elizabeth also remarkably finds the time to manage the care of the local RFDS clinic building.

Cairns: David Durst & Raphael Lansen



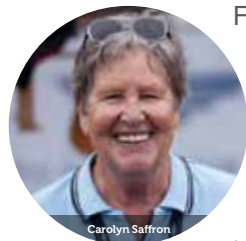
Two dedicated members of the Kowanyama airfield team; Airfield Reporting Officer David Durst and Refueller Raphael Lansen make themselves available to refuel the RFDS aircraft 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Not only do they keep the Doctor flying, but they often help the crew to load patients on board the aircraft too - always assisting with the utmost care and respect.

Longreach: Sandy Gillies



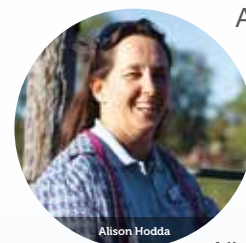
Proud Gunggari woman and Winton local, Sandy Gillies works as the Executive Manager for the Western Queensland Primary Health Network, but her work for the local community reaches far beyond her assigned role. During the devastating Queensland floods earlier this year, Sandy lobbied tirelessly for services and ensured they were reaching the people who needed them most. Her invaluable assistance and strength during the floods is typical of Sandy's selfless contributions to her local community.

Bundaberg: Carolyn Saffron



For over a decade Carolyn Saffron has been the backbone of the local RFDS Auxiliary. Joining the service as Treasurer, she's now the committee's president and reliably sizzles sausages, shakes tins, mans market stalls, organises and inspires the group. She is a wonderful ambassador, travelling far and wide, often on her own, to promote the RFDS. Her motivation is the invaluable service that the Flying Doctor provides to rural and remote Queensland and she gains real satisfaction from being able to give back to the RFDS.

Rockhampton: Alison Hodda



Alison Hodda is one of RFDS's most hard working and dedicated fundraisers, having supported the RFDS for almost 25 years. She continues to raise funds and awareness in equal amount as well as volunteering at events across Biloela & the Banana Shire. Although she lives over two hours away from Rockhampton Alison still manages to attend all the Auxiliary meetings, morning teas and Paradise Lagoon Camp Draft amongst many other fundraising functions.

Roma: The Golden Acres Gala Ball Committee



Andrea Crothers, Tessa Dimond, Annie Jones and Jess Weber joined forces to raise over \$55,000 for the Flying Doctor. The women organised, and hosted the Golden Acres Ball in St George for two consecutive years, donating the proceeds to local charities. The event, which took a phenomenal amount of hard work and preparations, was held on the local football oval and attracted over 500 people from all over rural Queensland and NSW.

Townsville: Richmond Field Days and Turf Club Committee



The Richmond Field Days and Turf Club Committee have raised thousands of dollars for the RFDS as well as supporting health checks and raising awareness for the RFDS in their local community. One couple who helped drive the Committee's success are Club Secretary Patsy Fox and her husband David. They were instrumental in the disaster response when the Queensland floods devastated the region earlier this year. The pair set up a disaster management centre at Richmond Airport and manned it tirelessly providing shelter, safety and peace of mind to those affected in the region.

Mount Isa: Simon Steele, Jim Lillecrapp, Robert & Belinda Worlein



The day before Christmas last year RFDS Mount Isa crews responded to a boating accident at Lake Julius, around 100 kilometres north east of Mount Isa. A family, who were out on a fishing trip, had collided with a submerged log. Whilst seriously injured, they manage to send an alarm using an EPERB device which started a mammoth emergency retrieval involving the Local Heroes and emergency services. Simon, Jim, Robert and Belinda were the first responders. Their calm, caring and skillful assistance meant that the family involved in the accident were able to receive the best quality care as quickly as possible. The family have now made a full recovery and are incredibly grateful to Simon, Jim, Belinda and Robert.

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RFDS CEO Meredith Staib, Flight Nurse Ellie Fitzgerald and Pilot Haydn Frisby turn the first sod at the new Bundaberg Base.

State-of-the-art upgrade and a first for Queensland, *thanks to you.*

Building work is underway on our new purpose-built facility in Bundaberg, designed to meet the growing needs of the city and wider Queensland community – thanks to support from people like you.

The RFDS Base in Bundaberg was established in 2002 and has been providing life-saving care to the local community for the last 17 years. Before we first took flight from our current Bundaberg Base, local communities relied on aircraft despatched from Brisbane or Rockhampton to receive our specialist care. Today, our aeromedical teams can support patients far and wide, from Cairns in the north to Longreach in the west.

In 2011, we welcomed LifeFlight to the Base, beginning a strong partnership committed to improving the health of communities in the Wide Bay area and beyond. Together we transport around 3,500 patients a year. With this increased demand of patient transfers, comes a need to upgrade our current Base so we can meet demand for our services.

Outgrowing our current Base means that we also have restrictions on space.

Currently, there is nowhere to look after our patients in a comfortable and welcoming area while they wait to board or are transferred from one of our aircraft. Our patients are waiting in the back of the aircraft or ambulance, which leads to delayed transfer times. This new co-shared facility will help solve this problem with space for up to four patients and their families, allowing them to be cared for in comfort surrounded by their loved ones.

The new Base will be a state-of-the-art facility being equal to some of the best in the country. It will also be the first facility of its kind in Queensland housing

both rotary and fixed wing aircraft under one roof, allowing us to deliver the finest care to the community of Bundaberg and its surrounding areas.

Senior Base Pilot, Haydn Frisby, explains the difference the upgrade will make to the dedicated staff who work from the Base:

“There will be an increase in space for crew, staff meetings, training and equipment storage. Being purpose-built, it will be tailored to the needs of pilots, nurses and office staff. It will be a lot easier to do our jobs and will also cater for the needs of our patients.”

We are incredibly grateful to the Federal Government for its \$3million commitment towards this \$6million facility, and our supporters for partnering with us to get this important project off the ground.

Your generosity will help us deliver world-class medical care to every Australian, regardless of where they live.

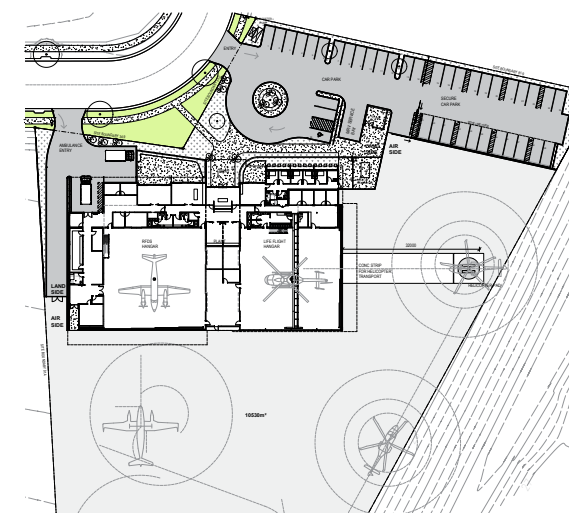
Thank you to all who have helped make history by contributing towards this important project.

If you would like to help fund the new Base, please call us on (07) 3852 7515.

BUNDABERG AEROMEDICAL BASE AND PATIENT TRANSFER FACILITY



Architect drawings showing the plans for the state-of-the-art facility. The hanger will house both rotary and fixed-wing aircraft.



In 2018, our crews completed:



1,893 patient transfers



800,000 kilometres flown from the Base



2,980 landings and flights



RFDS BUNDABERG BASE coordinated over **4,800** tasking calls

Leading the way in remote oral care

Since 2013, the Royal Flying Doctor Service in Queensland has been working to address the need for improved oral health care for people in rural and remote communities.

Research by the RFDS found that poor oral health is one of the most common health problems affecting regional and remote Australians compared to people living in major cities.

As a result, the RFDS Dental Service was established in 2013 thanks to a partnership with QCoal Foundation. The vision was to provide a regular service to help transition remote communities out of chronically poor oral health and move towards a preventative service by providing regular oral health checks.

During the first five years of operation, this service has travelled more than 54,000 kilometres, treating over 10,000 patients in 21 regional and remote communities across Queensland.

The service visits communities across rural Queensland that would not otherwise have access to a local dentist and stays in each town for at least two weeks.

The dental team provides basic check-ups and education on oral health, spreading the message that prevention is better than cure.

“When we first visit a community, there may be a lot of extractions and emergency work and pain relief. The more often we go back and visit, the more we see a shift to preventive treatments,” says Principal Dentist Alexandria Stipis.



RFDS Dental Service Principal Dentist
Alexandria Stipis treating a patient

“In Springsure in April this year, it was the first time we left the community without a single tooth ache or filling on our waiting list, we only had general examinations left and those people had previously seen us in the prior 12 months.

“We’re slowly beginning to see more of the communities we visit move towards preventative treatments and it’s something that the team is really proud of!”

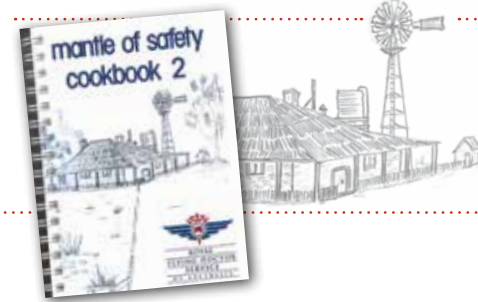
Chairman of Founding Donor QCoal Foundation, Christopher Wallin, reinforced this view.

“When the service was first established, both the RFDS and QCoal Foundation shared the vision of moving regional communities to preventative oral health care. It’s extremely exciting to see this now becoming a reality in communities RFDS has visited regularly since 2013.”

Thanks to you, our generous supporters, the Flying Doctor is able to continue to provide essential primary health care services, like our dental service, to the people in rural and remote Queensland who need it most.



A partnership dedicated to the health and wellbeing of the community.



A taste of ROYAL FLYING DOCTOR SERVICE Mantle of safety cookbook 2

Pumpkin Soup

- 1 tbspn. margarine
- 1 onion, diced
- 1 potato, diced
- 1 tspn. curry powder
- Pumpkin, peeled and diced fairly small
- Approx. 1 litre water or milk
- 1 tspn. nutmeg
- Chicken stock cube (or powder mixed as directed)

METHOD:

Melt margarine in large saucepan. Brown all the vegetables, stirring occasionally to prevent sticking, and brown all surfaces. Mix the dry ingredients and add with the stock. Add water/milk and simmer until soft. Puree. If preferred, thicken with a tablespoon of flour mixed with ¼-½ cup cold water. Serve garnished with chopped parsley or chives.



Bread & Butter Pudding

- ½ loaf bread broken into pieces
- 3 eggs, beaten
- ¼ cup sugar
- 1½ pints milk
- ¾ cup sultanas
- 1½ tspns. vanilla
- 1½ tbspns. butter

METHOD:

In a bowl soak bread in milk until softened. Mix until smooth. Stir in eggs, sugar, sultanas, butter and vanilla. Pour mixture into buttered dish. Bake in slow oven 1½ hours until browned.



What's on?

Make sure you get these events in your calendar!

Find out what's happening in your part of the state and how you can support the RFDS (Queensland Section) at flyingdoctor.org.au/qld/events/

JULY

11 - 12 • Smoke of the West BBQ

16 - 18 • Big Red Bash
www.bigredbash.com.au

21 • Weipa Running Festival • www.weiparunningfestival.org.au

25 - 28 • Georgetown Boars & Bowls

AUGUST

09 - 18 • Ekka • www.ekka.com.au

22 - 25 • Gympie Music Muster • www.muster.com.au

SEPTEMBER

06 - 07 • Birdsville Races • www.birdsvillerraces.com

07 • 4U2 Music Concert Moranbah
hornerygroup.com.au/4uloc-and-4u2-concert/4u2-concert/

NOVEMBER

11 • Brisbane Mining Club Luncheon

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