



Royal Flying Doctor Service  
The furthest corner. The finest care.

# Flying Doctor

QUEENSLAND >



The right place, the right  
time in Kowanyama

A miracle across the seas

RFDS Townsville base turns 20

# Message from the CEO

I trust you, our loyal supporters, had a safe and enjoyable festive season with family and friends. As we commence a new year, it's an opportunity to reflect on our successes from the past 12 months - many of which we could not have achieved without your support.



**Nino Di Marco**

**CEO**

RFDS Queensland Section

A key focus for the RFDS throughout 2016 was planning for our future sustainability and this is a theme which will continue into 2017. We are living in an age where technology is advancing at an unprecedented rate and we are now focusing on how we, as a service, can best-utilise new technologies, practices and delivery methods, to continually improve our services to the people of rural and remote Queensland.

Having achieved full health service accreditation under the National Quality and Health Safety Standards earlier this year, our focus has turned to achieving further service innovation, this time the introduction of our new B350 Super King Air aircraft. I have written to you previously around the importance of this new aircraft type to our operations, with its unique three stretcher configuration and ability to fly faster and further than our B200 fleet. After an exhaustive period of implementation, we are thrilled to have now placed the first two B350's into operational service recently, initially based in Brisbane and in Rockhampton, two of our busiest aeromedical bases that perform vital inter-hospital patient transfers. In the coming months, our third B350 will be introduced into our fleet, with Townsville its most likely location, providing us with great coverage to the north up to Cairns and the Cape and west out to Mount Isa.

Associated with these important aircraft fleet changes, we are also moving ahead with important logistical changes, including the establishment of a joint Operational Centre with our fellow aeromedical provider, LifeFlight, who provide rotary wing services, complementary to our fixed wing services. Together, we service the majority of aeromedical flights across Queensland, so it has made sense for the two organisations to combine our aircraft tracking, rostering and tasking into a central coordination centre, manned 24 hours a day.

In other service news, we were pleased to learn recently that the Federal Government has announced its intention to pursue a contract extension with the RFDS, which will see our health service continue to provide vital primary health care clinics, telehealth services and the medical chest program to rural and remote communities, through until June 2020. The government has also announced that it will provide further funding support through the establishment of a national RFDS dental outreach program for the next two years to the value of \$11 million. Our Queensland-based oral health services will receive a proportion of this funding allocation in the coming months, which will ensure the sustainability of our current program, which currently survives through the generosity of the QCoal Group and its philanthropic arm, the QCoal Foundation. So there is much to be optimistic about as we focus our attention on 2017 and continuing our services to the Queensland community.

In closing, I would like to take this opportunity to personally acknowledge the dedication and leadership of Bill Mellor our Chairman these past three years, who stepped down at our most recent Annual General Meeting, having been an influential member of our Board since 2005. Joining Bill in retirement is former Board Member Dick Condor. Both have served us with distinction and grace during some important times, in particular the last couple of years as we've faced some significant regulatory challenges in health and aviation.

Succeeding Bill as Chairman is Mark Gray, who returns to this role, having previously served as our Chair from 2011-2013, before he took a leave of absence to assume a senior role in the Queensland Treasury. Mark re-joined the Board in August 2015. With his knowledge and commitment to the RFDS, Mark is well-placed to once again lead the Service into the future.

I wish you all a safe and prosperous 2017 and thank you for your continued generosity and interest in our health service. The year ahead will be an exciting one as we prepare for our 90th anniversary in 2018 which we hope you and your fellow RFDS admirers will join us in celebrating.

Best wishes, Nino.



**Mark Gray**

**Chairman**

RFDS Queensland Section



# An exercise in trust

The Royal Flying Doctor Service has been ranked as Australia's most reputable charity for the sixth year running.



The Flying Doctor's authentic and sincere message and service have contributed to it being named Australia's most reputable charity for the sixth year running.

The results, released in early December by research consultants AMR, show the RFDS scored an impressive 96.9 out of 100, to take the top honours once again.

The news comes as trust felt towards the charity sector hits its highest point since records began in 2011, according to AMR.

"The results this year are a clear indication that Australians still have an immense trust for the charity sector despite continued global economic uncertainty, driven recently by Brexit and the US election result," AMR's Managing Director, Oliver Freedman said.

"Charities such as Royal Flying Doctor Service continue to top the index as they have an authentic and sincere message and service, which resonates with Australians and helps the high level of trust felt towards them."

Mr Freedman said the RFDS ranked first across all the individual measurements of Services, Innovation, Workplace, Citizenship, Governance, Leadership and Cost Management.

It is the first time a charity has ranked first across all these dimensions.

"The RFDS has now ranked first for the sixth year running. The consistent level of trust, admiration and respect highlights the ongoing emotional attachment felt by Australians and the fact the Service was ranked first across all reputation categories speaks volumes for the organisation's solid foundation," Freedman said.

## A grand moment of thanks

More than 70 long-term supporters of the RFDS (Queensland Section) gathered at Government House in November as the Flying Doctor said thanks for the many years of support.



Included on the guest list were Roma residents, Brooke and Lachlan Dunsdon and their sons George and Thomas. Thomas was airlifted by the Flying Doctor when he was only a newborn, suffering a life-threatening viral lung infection.

The event gave them a chance to reunite with RFDS Pilot Matthew Gregg and Flight Nurse Marie Rayner, both of whom transported young Thomas when he was ill.

His Excellency, the Honourable Paul de Jersey AC, Governor of Queensland, thanked our supporters, made note of retiring Chairman, Bill Mellor's 10 year tenure on the board, and acknowledged guests in the room including the current Queensland Bar Association President, and supporter of RFDS, Christopher Hughes QC.

Guests mingled with His Excellency and Mrs de Jersey, alongside RFDS (Queensland Section) CEO, Nino Di Marco who personally thanked all the guests for their valuable support.

Enjoying the reception at Government House is (from left) RFDS Pilot Matthew Gregg, Flight Nurse Marie Rayner, Brooke Dunsdon with baby Thomas, The Honourable Paul de Jersey, AC, Governor of Queensland, , Lachlan Dunsdon with son George, RFDS (Queensland Section) CEO Nino Di Marco and former RFDS (Queensland Section) Chairman, Bill Mellor.



# Collaboration is the key

Residents and visitors in north west Queensland will receive even better lifesaving aeromedical services through a closer collaboration between the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) and RACQ LifeFlight rescue helicopter service.

The establishment of a new Aeromedical Joint Operations Oversight Committee for the Mount Isa-based services will have the benefit of a more coordinated use of available aeromedical assets to ensure optimum patient outcomes by using the most appropriate aircraft depending on the medical emergency.

The committee, which held its first meeting in Mount Isa in October, is chaired by former Mount Isa Mayor Tony McGrady.

In welcoming the forging of closer ties with LifeFlight, RFDS (Queensland Section) CEO, Nino Di Marco, said:

“Our association and commitment to work together with LifeFlight will provide the community of north west Queensland with enhanced services, with the patient’s needs and location determining whether a rotary wing or a fixed wing response is required.

“The RFDS is committed to this initiative believing it will help response times and ultimately assist the Flying Doctor to carry on its mantle of safety to the people of this remote region”.

LifeFlight CEO Ashley van de Velde welcomed the chance to further strengthen the collaboration with RFDS and the local emergency services.

“Since LifeFlight merged with the Mount Isa based NQ Rescue Helicopter Service in July last year, we have been slowly working towards closer co-operation with the RFDS and a service model that puts the patient needs first,” said Mr van de Velde.

“Our approach is to work collectively and cooperatively to provide operationally efficient and cost effective lifesaving aeromedical services to the communities we serve.

## Change lives with a gift in your Will

89 years ago, the very first Royal Flying Doctor Service flight performed an emergency evacuation – made possible by a bequest from supporter Hugh McKay.

The RFDS relies heavily on donations and bequests such as those generously left in their Will by Moreton Boyle and Ailsa Duce. Bequests such as these contribute towards the purchase and medical fitout of our aircraft, at a cost of \$10 million each.

Today, we assist 290,000 Australians each year through emergency aeromedical and essential health care services. So please consider leaving a legacy of hope in your Will, just like Mort and Ailsa for future generations.

### For more information

- > Call us on 07 3860 1100
- > Email us at [bequests@rfdsqld.com.au](mailto:bequests@rfdsqld.com.au)
- > Visit our website [www.flyingdoctor.org.au/qld](http://www.flyingdoctor.org.au/qld)

*Your bequest will help keep the Flying Doctor flying.*



A gift in your will, such as that generously left by Moreton Boyle and Ailsa Duce, goes a long way in helping keep the Flying Doctor flying.



Ergon Energy Retail call centre employee, Deanna, was lucky enough to have the opportunity to attend an RFDS Field Day.

# Community Day an eye-opener



Thanks to the Royal Flying Doctor Service (Queensland Section), a member from Ergon Energy Retail's local call centre was given the opportunity to experience a day in the life of the RFDS at one of their community days. Deanna joined the crew at Barenya Station in North Queensland.

While Deanna hasn't experienced first-hand the life-saving work the RFDS undertakes in regional Queensland, it was a valued experience to see the proactive health work the team undertook with local communities.

"Living in a regional area as a parent of a child with a heart condition, I am aware first hand of the fantastic work the RFDS does. Many families I meet, as a result of my child's heart condition, have required the RFDS and have only gratitude and positive experiences to share," Deanna said.

"I however didn't realise that they did all of the mental health side of things or brought teachers out and all those sort of extra little things that make it such a holistic service."

It was a great experience for Deanna given she also has a role where she promotes the RFDS on a daily basis through her work at Ergon Energy Retail.

"I feel one of the best things about working for Ergon is the opportunity to promote the RFDS on a daily basis to the public and helping to raise needed funds through Ergon's donation program as often as possible. It also gives me an opportunity to inform Ergon's customers about the RFDS and the important

role the service plays in medically assisting members of their community.

"The vast remoteness of our communities and population make access to critical health care difficult for Australians living in not only regional areas but on isolated properties, the people that are important in Australia's way of life and industry.

"I am passionate about giving back to services like the RFDS who provide amazing community service to not only my community, but my personal friends and family."

### Thank you to our customers

Thank you to our customers across regional Queensland for your ongoing generous support of the Royal Flying Doctor Service in Queensland. Due to your kindness, we have managed to raise \$11 million for the RFDS since our partnership started in 2000. Your passion for the Flying Doctor's work has seen us extend our charitable partnership out until 31 January 2019. We look forward to working with our customers in support of the vital work the RFDS undertake in our local communities.

# The right place, the right

At the Royal Flying Doctor Service, we pride ourselves on our health professionals' level of expertise and training. We believe they are the best trained people in Australia for the varying roles they have to perform. But sometimes events occur where even they are pushed to their limits.

The devastating incident which occurred in Kowanyama in October, 2016 was one of those events.

On a Friday morning in the remote Aboriginal community on the western coast of the Cape York Peninsula, a group of about 50 locals were gathered at a funeral. Held in a small home on the outskirts of town, the lives of the mourners gathered at the ceremony were changed in an instant when a four-wheel-drive crashed through the house, killing one woman and injuring 25 others.

On any other day, the ability to be able to quickly assist so many injured people, some critically, in such a remote area would be extremely difficult.

According to RFDS Far Northern Services Manager, Angela Jarkiewicz, our aeromedical crews were tasked and airborne extremely quickly. We knew this was shaping up to be one of the largest retrieval operations for the RFDS in the Far North in recent history, with 15 people needing aeromedical evacuation, so availability to respond was paramount.

Back in Kowanyama, by pure coincidence, there was a very small team of four RFDS staff members running a primary health care clinic in town. The three medical staff members, primary health care registered nurse, Kylie Slade, long-standing primary health care GP, Bernie Carty, and Megan Pilkington, a recently employed primary health care GP, were the first on the scene and have been credited with helping to save the lives of numerous injured people following the terrifying incident.

They were also joined by administration support officer Therese Seden.

"It is purely coincidental that our primary health care team was in Kowanyama that Friday.

"Normally we run daily clinics Mondays to Wednesdays, but the recent public holiday meant we had to reschedule for Friday," Angela said.

The RFDS primary health care staff members were praised by senior medical staff for the incredible work they performed on the day to care for the many injured in Kowanyama, particularly due to the fact they are employed in a primary health care capacity and don't often deal with emergencies.

However when a situation calls for it, action must be taken, and between the three clinical staff members and Ms Seden, they assisted the most severely injured, coordinated the triage of patients, delivered effective communication between those on the ground and responding emergency services, and assisted in the smooth coordination of operations once medical backup arrived.

Their efforts even drew attention from Queensland Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk and other MPs who made special mention of the entire RFDS team in Parliament the following day.

Dr Tonia Marquardt, RFDS (Queensland Section) Medical Educator said while aeromedical retrieval always played its role, the fortune of having three, highly skilled medical practitioners on the ground before flight crews could even take off was paramount to the successful treatment of so many injured people.

"We were really fortunate to have these medical officers on the ground with the primary health care staff from the clinic who could



# nt time

It is purely coincidental that our primary health care team was in Kowanyama that Friday. Normally we run daily clinics Mondays to Wednesdays, but the recent public holiday meant we rescheduled for Friday.



ABOVE> RFDS crews prepare an injured person for transport in Kowanyama. BELOW: The first responders on the day (from left) Therese Seden, Dr Bernie Carty, Nurse Kylie Slade and Dr Megan Pilkington.

respond immediately and stabilise the patients in preparation for transfer,” Dr Marquardt said.

“The requirement to be a remote general practitioner who not only manages the wide range of patients who walk through the door, but is also called on to be the first responder in a resource limited setting, with no preparation or planning, is a huge testament to our highly skilled primary health care staff.

“I have no doubt that their presence in the community where they are known and could respond immediately made an enormous difference to those having to deal with such a tragedy.

“Furthermore, thank you to all those who will be dealing with the aftermath in the coming months and years in helping an already traumatised community to try to move on after such a tragic incident.”



# When a day of celebration turns to a day of fear

It's not uncommon for players to play their heart out in a footy grand final. Nick Morton on the other hand, may have taken the adage a little too seriously.



Nick with his wife, Victoria, and his baby daughter, Isabelle after the game.



Above> Nick was flown from Mackay to Townsville where he received specialised care.



After four weeks on the sidelines with a hamstring injury, Nick was given the all clear to hit the paddock as his AFL side, the Mackay City Hawks looked to complete the season on a high by taking out the grand final.

And that they did, with Nick leading from the front as his side's top goal scorer, the 30 year old kicking five goals in total.

But the memory of his sporting achievements was short lived, when the celebrations were winding down in the locker room and the symptoms began to take hold.

"We were all just sitting around gathering our thoughts after the initial celebrations when I told one of the guys I was just feeling awful," Nick remembers.

"He said it was probably just the adrenaline, but I knew something wasn't quite right. I was short of breath and just didn't feel right at all.

"I thought I probably just needed to get home and have a feed and a hot shower."

When Nick, his wife Victoria and their daughter Isabelle arrived home, his concern escalated along with his symptoms, so he asked Victoria to call an ambulance.

"While I was waiting for the paramedics to arrive, I was alternating hot and cold showers to try and regulate my body temperature. Just before they showed up I started to throw up."

What Nick originally thought might just be exhaustion after a big game in 34 degree heat, was actually his body going into cardiac arrest.

When the paramedics arrived, Nick walked out to greet them, but collapsed before he could make it across the room.

Launching immediately into action, the paramedics began CPR and were required to use the defibrillator no less than eight times, according to Nick.

After a gruelling 25 minutes of trying to stabilise Nick, the paramedics transported him for treatment at the Mackay Hospital where he remained overnight.

However it was apparent to attending doctors that the Royal Flying Doctor Service would need to be called in to transport him to the Townsville Base Hospital for more specialised care.

RFDS Flight Nurse, Sarah Freeman said although Nick was stable when they arrived, the process of transporting him was not entirely straight forward.

"Nick was stable throughout the retrieval, but it did take myself and the attending doctor at least two hours on the ground in Mackay to load him onto our aircraft stretcher with specialised cardiac monitoring, medication infusions and invasive ventilation assisting him to essentially breath," Sarah said.

"Throughout the transfer, I was providing reassurance to Nick's stoic and understandably concerned partner and their beautiful baby, both of whom were present when we left Mackay Hospital ICU.

"Often as a flight nurse you spend a lot of time and considerable care in preparing a patient for travelling on our aircraft and the time actually flying to the next destination without ever knowing the outcome for that patient.

"Obviously the care Nick experienced throughout his ordeal resulted in a really positive and healthy outcome, which I feel so happy to have contributed to."

Nick said he could not be more grateful to the paramedics and the Flying Doctor crew.

"It's one of those things, I never really understood what the Royal Flying Doctor Service was for. I do now, and wow, I'm glad they are there when you need them," Nick said, not mincing his words.

It's clear the incident left Nick shaken, however he remains in high spirits as he continues his road to recovery.

"I've started cardiac rehab and obviously have to take it pretty easy for the time being. Unfortunately my playing days are over," he said.

"Although there are worse games you could have as your last, even if I can't remember any of it."



Nick, obviously delighted to see his little girl, Isabelle.

RIGHT > His playing days might be over, but Nick is just grateful to be on the road to recovery.

# A miracle across the seas

An ongoing, life-threatening illness and a new arrival on the way leads a mother on a traumatic, yet harrowing journey across land, sea and air.

Dalsy is a 40-year-old woman from Irupi Village in the western province of Papua New Guinea. She is married to her husband Sam, with whom she has four children; Samuel (10); Jessie (8); Isaiah (6); and Lux (4).

The primary source of income for the family comes from Sam, who hunts deer using traditional methods such as bow and arrow, and spears, occasionally having access to a gun to make things a little easier. He then travels to Daru Island, about two hours by dinghy, to sell the meat.

It was at Daru where Dalsy had been staying for three months in 2015 after she became extremely unwell. Staying with a friend at the time, she would go to the hospital every day for medicine. When her treatment ended in March, 2015, she returned to her village in Irupi.

However once she was home, her condition continued to decline. Often her pain was so bad that Sam would stay up all night, trying his best to comfort her. By October, 2015, Dalsy had become so ill that she had to be carried out of her village on a stretcher made of bamboo and rope, on her way to make another long trip via dinghy to Mabudawan Health Clinic. At this stage, Dalsy had been sick for eight months, the cause of her illness still unclear to medical staff at Daru. In the past eight months, Dalsy had also fallen pregnant.

Once she arrived at Mabudawan, it became immediately evident to medical staff that Dalsy would require more extensive treatment at Saibai Island. This would mean another hour long dinghy ride, perhaps her most trialling yet.

Sam offered his dinghy to a member of staff from Mabaduwan and accompanied his wife on the journey to Saibai, about 50km by sea from Dabu. Leaving in the afternoon, they arrived about 5pm just as darkness was falling. Dalsy said her husband had to support her for the entire journey as waves broke over the bow of the boat. She said she was covered by a tarp in order to keep her dry throughout the hour-long journey.

Once she arrived at Saibai Island, Sam and his older brother, Swai carried her to the hospital where she was admitted.

An understandably exhausted Dalsy had drips applied to both arms and administered medicine, however she was not responding to any of the treatments. It was at 10pm when the nurse told Dalsy a "choppa" would be taking her to Thursday Island for immediate treatment.

But her mammoth ordeal would not end there. As Royal Flying Doctor Service Flight Nurse Croydon Cole explains: "It was at 2:10am that the Townsville night crew were paged for a P1 (time critical) retrieval from Thursday Island," he said.

"The information we had, described an acutely ill person who was 24 weeks pregnant. The initial clinical picture indicated septic shock with severe anaemia."

RFDS Pilot, Captain Russell Ive landed at Horn Island at 5.30am, while Flight Nurse Cole was transferred to Thursday Island by helicopter.

"We had to carry a variety of special packs containing life support, monitoring, and drug infusion equipment to ensure the patient needs would be met for almost any medical event that may occur during transfer," Nurse Cole said.

"On arrival at Thursday Island Hospital, we were relieved to find the medical staff had done an outstanding job of stabilising Dalsy.



ABOVE> Dalsy holds new born Abraham for the first time. BELOW> Abraham gains more strength every day.

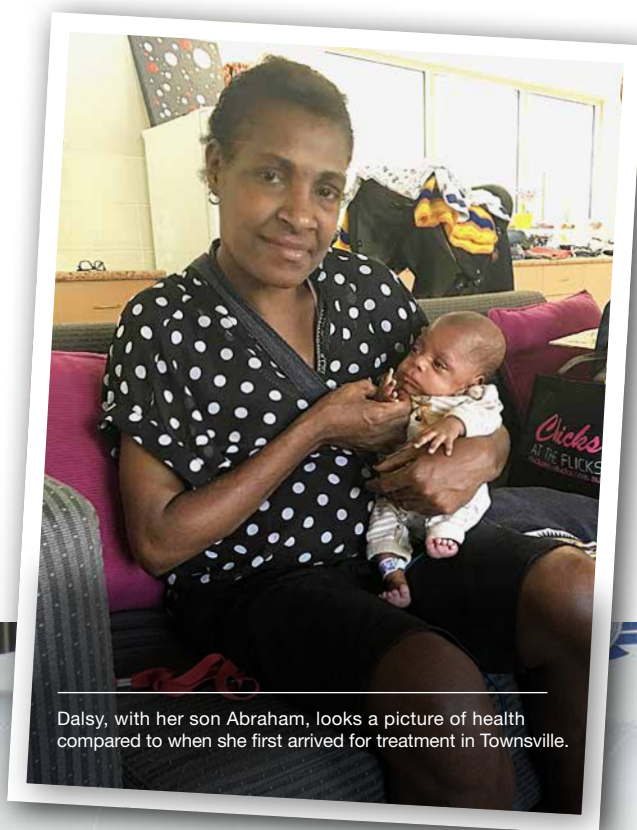


“Although she remained acutely ill, it was decided that any further intervention would only waste precious time.”

Throughout her flight to Townsville Hospital, Dalsy required ongoing support to direct blood circulation to her vital organs, as well as continuous transfusion of blood. She arrived safely at Townsville Hospital Intensive Care Unit at 9:15am.

Dalsy’s baby, Abraham, was an unexpected arrival while she was a patient in the ICU, arriving on October 11. Abraham was released into Dalsy’s care at the Ronald McDonald House North Queensland a few months later, where they both received regular out-patient check-ups before returning to Irupu to be with their family.

“Although our retrieval service is often just a link in the chain of survival it is very fulfilling to learn that patients (two in this case) make a full recovery, particularly when I reflect back on Dalsy’s critical state. The bright and bubbly Dalsy that I had the chance to meet at the base was the polar-opposite to the patient who was fighting for her life that night,” Croydon said.



Dalsy, with her son Abraham, looks a picture of health compared to when she first arrived for treatment in Townsville.



## SEPTIC SHOCK

Septic shock is a serious medical condition that occurs when sepsis, which is organ injury or damage in response to infection, leads to dangerously low blood pressure and abnormalities in cellular metabolism. The primary infection is most commonly by bacteria, but can also be by fungi, viruses, or parasites, and can be located in any part of the body, but most commonly in the lungs, brain, urinary tract, skin, or abdominal organs. It can cause multiple organ failure and death.

ABOVE> In a visit to the Townsville RFDS Base organised by the Ronald McDonald House North Queensland, Dalsy was able to meet her rescuers, Flight Nurse Croydon Cole (left) and Pilot, Captain Russell Ives.



# PEOPLE WHO KNOW AVIATION TRUST **HAWKER PACIFIC**

Representing and Servicing the World's Finest Aircraft.



For over 35 years, Hawker Pacific has been delivering a diverse range of integrated aviation solutions from aircraft sales, product support and flight services throughout Australia, Asia, the Pacific and Middle East.

Hawker Pacific's product support activities include MRO, structural modification and spare parts sales to a wide range of fixed wing aircraft and helicopters for corporate, charter, defence and special mission operators throughout the region.

Other services include aircraft and engine maintenance, repair and overhaul, special mission aircraft modifications, design engineering, avionics, plus the provision of spare parts, exchange rotables and equipment sales.

Hawker Pacific is also Asia Pacific's premier fixed base operator (FBO) with a network of facilities in Sydney, Brisbane, Cairns, Perth, Singapore and Shanghai. The company's FBOs offer VIP services and crew facilities 24/7, on demand aircraft charter from a modern aircraft fleet, flight operations and total aircraft management.

Contact us today to discover how we can support you.

Phone: +61 2 9708 8555 Email: [enquiries@hawkerpacific.com](mailto:enquiries@hawkerpacific.com)

# RFDS goes to Rio

Held in August 2016, the Wings for Life Gala Ball held at the Royal International Convention Centre in Brisbane went off like Carnivale.

All the colour and excitement of the massive Brazilian festival filled the venue as all 660 guests ate, drank and danced the night away.

Entertainment was provided by Australian icon, Todd McKenney who reprised his renowned stage performance featuring popular song favourites, *I go to Rio* and *I still call Australia home*.

The Master of Ceremonies for the night was Australian Olympic legend, Haley Lewis, who oversaw the night's main charity auction.

The night was a massive success, raising more than \$120,000 for the Flying Doctor.

The RFDS would like to thank all of its supporters who attended the event. In addition, special thanks must also go to those partners who made the Gala Ball possible through their generous sponsorship.

If you missed out on last year's event, it's time to dust off your dancing shoes and get ready for the 2017 Wings for Life Gala Ball. It is definitely not to be missed as it all kicks off again on July 29.



Diamond Partners

**HAWKER PACIFIC**  
Aviation's Trusted Choice

Platinum Partners

**JBS**

**Ray White**

**Beechcraft** **Cessna** **Hawker**  
TEXTRON AVIATION

## SAVE THE DATE

### RFDS Wings for Life 2017 Gala Ball

Date: Saturday, 29 July, 2017

Location: Royal International Convention Centre,  
600 Gregory Terrace, Bowen Hills, Brisbane, Queensland

An RFDS Event  
**WINGS FOR LIFE**  
GALA BALL 2017



RFDS (Queensland Section) Chairman, Mark Gray addresses the crowd gathered at the Townsville Base.

# Happy 20th Birthday to our Townsville Base

From 794 patients transported in its first year, to almost 2,000 today - the Townsville RFDS Base sure has grown up in 20 years.



LEFT > One of Townsville Base's B200 King Air about to leave the hangar to pick up a patient in Mackay.  
RIGHT > Flight Nurse Debbie Schmitt was on the first flight from the Townsville base in 1996.



## RFDS Townsville base: Then and now

### 1996

- 4 Flight Nurses
- 4 Pilots
- 1 Admin Officer
- 1 x Super Kingair VH-FDA (B200)
- 794 patients transported

### 2016

- 14 Flight Nurses
- 11 Pilots
- 3 Admin Officers
- 2 Dentists
- 3 Dental Assistants
- 1 Senior Clinical Counsellor
- 2 x Super King Air B200
- 1,980 Patients transported

On December 2, local dignitaries, past and present staff members, supporters and family and friends came together to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Townsville Base.

In its first year of operation the Townsville Base had one aircraft and nine staff including four flight nurses and four pilots. Today there are two B200 King Air based there with a team of 14 flight nurses and 11 pilots.

Speaking at the event was Flight Nurse, Debbie Schmitt. Debbie was on the first flight tasked from the Townsville Base in 1996.

“On the first flight we picked up an elderly lady in Mackay. Since then I’ve been to Mackay a further 795 times,” she joked.

Deputy Mayor of Townsville, Cr Les Walker thanked the RFDS for providing vital aeromedical service, saying the service helped contribute to the ongoing viability of people living, working and travelling in rural and remote Queensland.

His sentiments were backed up by RFDS Chairman, Mark Gray, who told the gathered crowd of the amazing work carried out by the Townsville Base staff.

“As part of their enduring legacy of service, the Townsville team provide aeromedical care to close to 2000 patients annually, while flying 3865 kilometres per day or nearly 1.4 million kilometres a year,” Mr Gray said.

“They provide a vital link to the state’s north and south and Queensland’s major acute hospital facilities in Townsville and Brisbane, while assisting patients as far south as Brisbane, north to Morningson Island, west to Mount Isa and all towns and several stations in between.”

Since 2013, the Townsville Base has also assisted in the operational management of the QCoal Community Dental Unit, a service that has delivered vital oral health care to more than 7,000 patients across central and northern Queensland. When the dental team are not travelling, many of them call Townsville home.

The entire team at Townsville pride themselves on their operational performance and service availability and everyone at the RFDS is justifiably proud of them for what they have achieved and will continue to achieve in the future.





Robert Raymond is a regular at our Field Days.

## A day to remember

Operating since 2001, the Royal Flying Doctor Service Field Day program was set up with the goal of promoting the benefits of health and wellbeing to people living in rural and remote areas of far north Queensland. **Judith Taylor, Health Promotion Officer - RFDS Health Field Days**, explains why these days are such a crucial part of our overall service.

I've had the privilege of coordinating the program from the RFDS Cairns Base for the past eight years, overseeing the tremendous efforts we put in to delivering health care and information to people where they live. It's important to make sure the information and care we deliver is relevant and worthwhile, which is why our team consists of a doctor, nurse, mental health professional and a health promotion officer.

These units visit about 18 cattle properties each year, setting up a medical clinic and running health promotion activities covering topics such as first aid, nutrition, mental health and exercise, among many more.

But just as important as any of the services we provide is the community aspect of the Field Days. People travel up to three hours from neighbouring properties to attend the sessions. And while the medical and health services we provide are invaluable, the rare opportunity for people to get together in a social setting is also highly treasured.

People attending Field Days rely on the RFDS on an ongoing basis for medical support and evacuation, if required. Topics such as burns treatment, cardio-pulmonary resuscitation and wound care are routinely delivered, in order to ensure vital first aid treatment is learnt in case of an emergency.

A regular at our Field Days is Robert Raymond. He is a walking, talking case-in-point of how these events are actively helping people in these remote parts of the State. When Robert's young daughter was bitten by a snake, he was able to take the information he had learnt and apply it while awaiting retrieval by the RFDS.

By keeping calm, and therefore also keeping his daughter and family calm, and knowing he had bandaged and splinted her leg as he had learnt, his daughter was successfully and safely treated by RFDS medical staff.

Emphasising just how important this kind of information is, Robert's sons were also able to deliver the correct first aid treatment when Robert himself was bitten by a snake at a later date.



The actions of the Raymond family are one example of the value of our Field Days, which is proven time and time again by attendees. In future columns I will focus on the other important aspects we cover, such as our mental health sessions and specific activities with children.



# Cultivating wellbeing through the seasons

In April 2015, RFDS (Queensland Section) was tasked with the privileged role of delivering wellbeing support into rural communities impacted by what is considered the worst drought in decades. **Drought Wellbeing Service Coordinator, Allira Power** explains how the vital service has been received and what comes next for those hit the hardest.

Introducing new clinicians into rural communities where stigma around mental health has often resulted in poor uptake of services, and given that the RFDS was known predominantly as an aeromedical service, some resistance to engagement and accessing this new program was anticipated.

We were wrong.

During the 18 months since its inception, the Drought Wellbeing Service (DWS) has been welcomed into the homes and workplaces of people in these communities, offering support and education to those affected by drought, including the hidden, and often unspoken stressors of living on the land.

DWS has provided support, counselling and education to individuals and groups, in workplaces and to the broader community, while working alongside RFDS primary health care clinics. Education as well as practical, and protective, strategies have been provided on a range of topics including better sleep practices, stress management techniques, and strategies about how to approach and support family, friends, or workmates who are doing it tough to assist in building individual and community resilience.



ABOVE > The RFDS Drought Wellbeing Team (from left) Senior Clinical Counsellor Cath Walker, Allira Power, Clinical Counsellor Georgina Woods and RFDS Nurse Claire Illes. RIGHT > Clinical Counsellor, Georgina Woods meets with a patient at a recent clinic.



Due to the remote locations our Drought Wellbeing Service operates, sometimes we have to improvise when it comes to office space.

In recent months, rain has started to fall. As the land slowly recovers, rivers flow and dams fill, we have witnessed relief and hope for those living and working on the land. But the quiet wisdom of the bush warns us that all the stress isn't washed away with a few good showers of rain.

Rural communities and the people living on the tough land in western Queensland are some of the most resilient and resourceful people anyone will ever meet. But even the toughest men and women, like the toughest land, needs time to recover and rebuild.

Yes the drought may have passed for the moment, but this only means a time to rebuild depleted resources, prepare the soil, and hearts and minds, for the next season. And like the farmers and graziers and people living in rural and remote Queensland, together we are learning from the wisdom of the land, that mental health also has its seasons, and now is the time to prepare and cultivate, ready for the next tough times ahead.





## BRISBANE AIRPORT CORPORATION

Proud to have donated over \$2 million to the Flying Doctor in Queensland.

**A proud supporter since 2009.**

For more information on our community engagement visit [www.bne.com.au](http://www.bne.com.au)

Proudly supporting



Royal Flying Doctor Service  
QUEENSLAND SECTION



# The QCoal Foundation: Proudly partnering with the RFDS

The QCoal Foundation aims to enrich rural and remote Queensland communities through a social venture approach, based on recognising community need; identifying creative solutions; trialling those solutions to prove their effectiveness and achieving sustainable outcomes.

## Health - Royal Flying Doctor Service

The QCoal Community Dental Service provides oral care to rural and remote communities throughout Queensland at no out-of-pocket cost to patients. Since 2013, the Dental Service has travelled over 40,000 kilometres to visit 21 rural and remote Queensland communities and treated about 8,000 patients.

The QCoal Community Dental Service is committed to ensuring the sustainability of this unique dental service-delivery model for rural and remote Queenslanders. With the support of the RFDS, the Foundation will continue to explore additional funding streams so rural Queenslanders can continue to access oral health care.

## Liveability - REX Program

Developed through the Collinsville community forum, the innovative REX program is a university student placement program that provides students an opportunity to complete mandatory work experience in a regional community and the community a chance to attract young professionals to the regions.

Since 2014, over 20 students from James Cook University have completed practical vocational experience in teaching, engineering, geology, pharmacy, nursing and town planning in Collinsville. The Foundation is exploring opportunities to replicate the model to other Queensland towns next year.

## Education – QCoal Foundation Scholarship

The Foundation has partnered with James Cook University (JCU) to provide the QCoal Foundation Scholarship for one student each year from rural and remote communities. The scholarship facilitates a pathway to further education without the economic challenges often associated with relocation to attend university.



ABOVE > 2016 recipient Muskaan Singh who is studying Medicine at JCU

To learn more about the QCoal Foundation programs visit [www.qcoalfoundation.org](http://www.qcoalfoundation.org)



QCoal Foundation, QCoal Group and Royal Flying Doctor Service – a partnership dedicated to the health and wellbeing of the community.



Presenting the cheque to RFDS (Queensland Section) CEO, Nino Di Marco (right) is (from left) Michael Batycki, Woolworths General Manager - Operations and Wendy Brindley, Woolworths State Administration Manager.

**Woolworths**

PAY: Royal Flying Doctor Service

THE SUM OF: Four Hundred and Three Thousand, Four Hundred and Eighty-Six Dollars and Five Cents

FROM: Woolworths Customers and Staff

**\$403,486.05**

Royal Flying Doctor Service QUEENSLAND SECTION

*The fresh food people*



# Thanks Woolfies

Throughout September 2016, RFDS worked with Woolworths stores in Queensland and northern New South Wales to raise funds for our life-saving work.

Woolworths team members and customers helped raise more than \$400,000 for the Flying Doctor in Queensland.

Lynda Inglis, RFDS (Queensland Section) Partnership Coordinator, said the support was overwhelming.

“Woolworths has been a supporter of the Flying Doctor for some time now and their fundraising efforts have always been tremendous,” Mrs Inglis said.

“But to see this kind of fundraising effort in only four weeks has well and truly exceeded our expectations.

“We cannot thank the Woolworths team and their customers enough for supporting us. It really means the world to everyone at the Royal Flying Doctor Service.”



# Our amazing Auxiliaries



Our Auxiliaries are volunteer committees in the community who work tirelessly to raise vital funds for the RFDS. There is a lot of 'fun' in fundraising, and people join the groups for many different reasons. Here's what some of them have been up to lately.

## Darling Downs

On Friday, November 25, members of the Auxiliary were invited to a special cheque presentation by the retiring Glennon House Committee. Glennon House was established in Toowoomba in 2007 as a crisis accommodation facility for patients and carers predominantly from south west Queensland.

The owner of the Glennon House site, advised the Committee four years ago that plans were in place to redevelop the site and that they would need to find alternative accommodation to continue their operation. Since that time, the Committee has sadly been unsuccessful in sourcing suitable accommodation, despite receiving a substantial sum of money for this purpose from a private benefactor family in the Redland Bay area. The Committee was initially instructed to use the donated money to purchase or build accommodation and if these options were not possible, the money was to be returned to the family.

After much searching and discussion, the decision was taken by the Committee to cease operations and close Glennon House. The Committee then contacted the benefactor family and attempted to return the money, however, the family insisted the Committee retain the money and allocate the money to significant and worthy charities.

The Royal Flying Doctor Service was chosen as a worthy recipient of the money, worth \$101,271.65, and was humbly accepted on behalf of our organisation by members of the locally based Darling Downs Auxiliary.

LEFT > The Bundaberg Base receives its new John Deere tug. (Middle) Members of the Near and Far Auxiliary. (Right) members form the Sunshine Coast Auxiliary raising funds at their recent sausage sizzle.

## Bundaberg

On October 17, members of the Bundaberg Wide Bay Burnett Volunteer Auxiliary were delighted to present the RFDS Bundaberg Base with a John Deere 1025R aircraft tug. The funds (\$17,450.00) for this important piece of equipment, were raised by the Auxiliary with the generous support of the local community and the surrounding districts. Adrian Smith, Senior Base Pilot thanked the Auxiliary at a celebratory morning tea, before the tug was shown in action. Last year the Auxiliary raised more than \$50,000 and is working toward raising at least the same amount this year.

## Near and Far

The Near and Far Volunteer Auxiliary recently received a cheque worth \$10,000 from the Atherton Rotary Club. The generous donation will be used to upgrade the lights in the RFDS Townsville hangar.

## Sunshine Coast

Sunshine Coast RFDS Volunteer Auxiliary held two major fundraising events in the past year which included the traditional Annual Luncheon held at the University of the Sunshine Coast and Race Day at the Sunshine Coast Turf Club. Both events attracted guest numbers of approximately 200. The Race Day also included the participation of seven local Sunshine Coast businesses as major sponsors.

The Auxiliary has also conducted local fundraising events including sausage sizzles and Christmas present wrapping at local shopping centre venues. These fundraisers have helped raise about \$27,000 for the RFDS.

For more information on RFDS QLD Auxiliaries near you near you, email Robert Needham, Executive Manager - Fundraising at [Rneedham@rfdsqld.com.au](mailto:Rneedham@rfdsqld.com.au)

# Walking in their footsteps



For some it was a life-affirming trek. For others, it was just a tough slog through 96km of slippery mud and relentless rainforest. But for everyone involved in the recent RFDS Kokoda Challenge, it was an adventure that meant the world to so many people in remote areas across Australia.

In early November last year, 16 brave individuals from across the country set off on the walk of their lives, tackling the infamous Kokoda trail in Papua New Guinea. Participants endured 96km of ankle deep mud, pouring rain, gnarled and obtrusive tree roots and hill climbs which felt as though they would never end.

But they were trekking for a cause.

In the lead up to their adventure the 16 participants, including RFDS (Queensland Section) Community Fundraising Coordinator, Janine Gardner, managed to raise more than \$138,000 for the Flying Doctor.

"I climbed up hills that felt like they had no end and slid down hills that almost broke my knees," Janine said. "I cried, I laughed with beautiful people and

I remembered lives lost, all the while seeing some of the most spectacular scenery."

Janine said while the chance to raise much needed money to help keep the Flying Doctor in the air was extremely rewarding, the bonds she formed with the other participants was something she would never forget.

"We all bonded from the very beginning," she said. "From the moment they signed up to raise funds for the RFDS, they began the journey of mateship. We all learned our own lessons and it was different for each of us.

Memories of the Kokoda Track will stay and live within me forever.



*Join in on the adventure!* In 2017, the RFDS Outback Adventure will see participants take on the famous Australian Larapinta Trail in the Northern Territory.

Registration is now open for anyone wanting to help raise funds for the Flying Doctor and experience one of Australia's most iconic outback treks.

The RFDS Outback Adventure will take place between June 18-25, 2017.

For more information visit <https://www.flyingdoctor.org.au/qld/outbackadventure/>





## Charity golf day a swinging success

Allen and Janet White's daughter – jockey, Zoe White – was seriously injured when she fell off her horse while racing in Targool.

The Royal Flying Doctor Service flew her from Rockhampton to Brisbane where she received specialist treatment.

Wanting to give something back to the team who helped their daughter, Allen and Janet organised a charity golf day in October, raising more than \$3,000 for the RFDS and the Capricorn Helicopter Service (who airlifted Zoe to the Rockhampton Hospital).

ABOVE > Allen and Janet White present the cheque at the RFDS hangar.

The family was overwhelmed by the outstanding support from the community on the day, with ARB, Drummond Golf, DC Motors, Mount Morgan Golf Club and many other businesses donating prizes, lunch and the location of the event.

The White family hopes to make the day an annual event as a way to give back to everyone who contributed to Zoe's retrieval, treatment and recovery.

### Yes, I want to help keep the Flying Doctor flying

- I would like to make a donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Please debit as per my details below / a cheque is attached.
- I would like to make regular donations. Please send me information about the Wings regular giving program.
- I would like more information about making a bequest in my Will to the RFDS (QLD Section). Please send information to the address below.
- I have included the RFDS in my Will.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Ph: H) \_\_\_\_\_ M) \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Birthday: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Type of card:  MasterCard  Visa  American Express  Diners Club

Credit card number \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Card expiry date: \_\_\_\_\_

Q-MAG17S



**Royal Flying Doctor Service**  
QUEENSLAND SECTION

**Donations to the Royal Flying Doctor Service are tax deductible for income tax purposes.**

**Please complete and send this form to:**

Reply Paid 64275  
Royal Flying Doctor Service (Queensland Section)  
Brisbane Airport QLD 4008

Phone: 07 3860 1100

Fax: 07 3860 1122

Email: [donations@rfdsqld.com.au](mailto:donations@rfdsqld.com.au)

Website: [www.flyingdoctor.org.au/qld](http://www.flyingdoctor.org.au/qld)

In accordance with the Privacy Act, the RFDS (QLD Section) will not disclose your personal information for reasons other than the primary purpose of the Service, to third parties without your consent. If you would like to access your personal information held by the Service, please contact the RFDS. You can request to have your details removed at any time from our mailing list.

# What's on

## RFDS Outback Adventure

The Larapinta Trail is regarded as one of Australia's premier walking tracks. From the old Alice Springs Telegraph Station to the peak of Mount Sonder, the trail stretches 223 kilometres along the backbone of the West MacDonnell Ranges.

As part of this incredible – yet challenging – adventure, you will stand on ancient escarpments and gaze out upon the ochre-coloured landscapes of Central Australia. You will follow Aboriginal Dreaming tracks and trek beside one of the world's oldest river systems.

With every step you take, you will raise vital funds to help the Royal Flying Doctor Service reach the furthest corners and provide the finest care to those in rural and remote Australia that need it most.

For more information, contact Laura at Inspired Adventures at [laura@inspiredadventures.com.au](mailto:laura@inspiredadventures.com.au) or call 1300 905 188.

## Birdsville Races

Tick an item off the bucket list and head out to the Birdsville Races. The iconic Australian event sees the population of the tiny, western Queensland town swell from about 100 to about 10,000.

The uniquely Australian event is held on the first Friday and Saturday in September. This year's event includes the 135th running of the Birdsville Cup on Saturday, September 2.

For more information, visit [www.birdsvillerraces.com](http://www.birdsvillerraces.com)

## Outback Car Trek

The Outback Car Trek is an annual event that donates the funds it raises each year to The Royal Flying Doctor Service.

Trek 2017 will commence in Griffith NSW on Sunday, June 4 and will finish at Port Macquarie NSW on Saturday, June 10.

The event is open to older 2WD cars, and all cars are specially prepared to endure the rigours of outback dirt road driving. It's easy to become a Trekker - you can enter a car by yourself, or you can form a team with some friends and enter a couple of cars.

For information regarding what's involved, and how you can participate, simply contact the event organiser, Bill Patrick, on 0418 626 799 or by email at [billp@outbackcartrek.com.au](mailto:billp@outbackcartrek.com.au)

For more information or to register your interest, visit [www.outbackcartrek.com.au](http://www.outbackcartrek.com.au)

## Like more information?

For more information about these events and more, visit: [flyingdoctor.org.au/qld/events](http://flyingdoctor.org.au/qld/events)



## Nominate a Local Hero today.

For more information on how to nominate an outstanding local who tirelessly supports the work of the Flying Doctor please visit:

- > Online: [flyingdoctor.org.au/qld/localhero](http://flyingdoctor.org.au/qld/localhero)
- > Phone: 0407 595 014
- > Email: [localhero@rfdsqld.com.au](mailto:localhero@rfdsqld.com.au)

Terms and Conditions apply



RFDS Local Hero Awards are proudly supported by Ergon Energy Retail.



## OUR SUPPORTERS >



## CONTACT US >

This newsletter is produced by the Marketing and Fundraising Department of the RFDS in Queensland.

If you do not wish to receive future editions of this newsletter, please contact the RFDS on 07 3860 1100 or email: [rfdsqld\\_bne@rfdsqld.com.au](mailto:rfdsqld_bne@rfdsqld.com.au)

> 12 Casuarina Street, BRISBANE AIRPORT QLD 4008

> Ph: 07 3860 1100 > Fax: 07 3860 1122 > [www.flyingdoctor.org.au/qld](http://www.flyingdoctor.org.au/qld)

