



Royal Flying Doctor Service

Going the Distance

VICTORIA >



Contents

Saved from horror holiday	p4
Mental health report	p6
Go Kart go-getter	p8
Specialist connection for Ron	p9
Dig deep for the Doctor	p11

Chief Executive's message



Firstly may I say thank you for your ongoing trust in us, your commitment and kind generosity. Because of you we continue to reach people across Victoria and the entire country with care.

Many of our loyal supporters responded to Sophie's story and you gave generously to help babies like her to weather the storm. Together you helped exceed our target of \$700,000 to assist the funding of essential life-saving equipment, like the infant incubator that kept Sophie safe and secure during that critical flight to Perth. Thank you!

We are pleased to advise that we will also be helping families by working with Very Special Kids (VSK), a not for profit organisation that supports families affected by childhood illness or bereavement. In partnership with VSK, we have been awarded a grant to provide transportation for sick children to travel from regional Victoria to VSK facilities in Melbourne. We are delighted to have families trust us to provide carriage for their loved ones in a time of greatest need.

In June the Royal Flying Doctor Service was invited to accept an award at the Australasian Report Awards, receiving a Bronze Special Communication Award for Not-For-Profit Sector. This award is great acknowledgement of our transparency, as is our standing as the most reputable charity, as per the AMR Most Reputable Charity index.

You may have heard a mention of our Mobile Patient Care on 3AW on 12 July when caller Mark phoned the station to acknowledge the care our crew gave his mum. Mark's mother fell and lay on the lounge room floor for 12 hours until he found her. RFDS MPC was called and he was so pleased with the RFDS service that he called 3AW to give a 'shout-out'. This is heartening for all of our dedicated staff. In fact, since my last update we have 30 additional staff and 10 vehicles providing Non-Emergency Patient Transport (NEPT) in Taree, Bankstown and Wollongong.

Still in NSW, I would like to thank everyone who took part in and supported the Outback Car Trek in June. I joined the event from Griffiths to Port Macquarie working as a marshal. It was great to meet so many passionate supporters as we travelled outback roads raising awareness of the RFDS. The trek injects much needed funds into small towns through expenditure in food, fuel and accommodation and this year raised more than \$1.2m for the Flying Doctor. Since its beginning 28 years ago, over \$26m has been raised for RFDS across Australia.

Last but not least, I want to thank you for taking the time to respond to our 2017 Supporter Survey. What matters to you, matters to us. We have been so pleased to receive feedback on how you feel, what you like to know and how we share with you, including this newsletter. You can see an overview of feedback from the survey on the following page.

Truly, thank you for your generosity and commitment to the Flying Doctor. I hope that this edition of *Going the Distance* is of great value to you, as you are to us.

Scott Chapman

Chief Executive
RFDS Victoria

Going the Distance is the official fundraising newsletter of the Royal Flying Doctor Service Victoria.

This newsletter is produced three times a year to provide information and give acknowledgement to our supporters across the state.

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Cover: Patient Transport Officer Belinda Hands is part of an expanding RFDS team providing Mobile Patient Care, in Victoria, New South Wales and Tasmania.

Your opinion matters!

Thank you for taking the time to complete the 2017 Supporter Survey. We received more than 4,000 responses. Your honest feedback and opinions really matter and will help shape the Flying Doctor into the future.

What we learned

- > You are inspired to support us because you feel that rural and regional communities deserve equality of access to medical care.
- > You have seen our dental truck and ambulances caring for patients around Victoria and have noticed our increased health service delivery in rural communities since we last surveyed in 2015.
- > More than 70% of those surveyed have spent time in the Outback.
- > You have indicated a desire to see some stories or features on your health and wellbeing in this newsletter. This is something we will focus on in the coming year.
- > Many of you are part of Rotary, Lions, Probus or other social clubs or church groups.
- > You enjoy reading, gardening and physical activities.
- > You have an interest in RFDS branded merchandise items, and we look forward to bringing an extended range of Christmas merchandise to you in September.

We also appreciate how many of our supporters have shared with us an intention to include the Royal Flying Doctor Service in their Will. Leaving a lasting legacy is such a wonderful way to dedicate your support to those living in our rural communities. You are welcome to contact Naomi Lehrer, Donor Relations Manager, if you have any questions about leaving a lasting legacy. Please call her on **(03) 8412 0431** or email naomi.lehrer@rfdsvic.com.au.

Thank you again for taking the time to give your feedback.



The hearts of Lions

There are so many amazing groups across Victoria that support the Flying Doctor. We want to give a special thanks to all of the Country Women's Associations, Probus, Lions and Rotary Clubs that provide heart felt support and funds.

If you are part of a service club in Victoria and would like more information about supporting the Flying Doctor, please contact Heather Rendell on **03 8412 0436**.

Last Mother's Day you chose us over slippers for Mum, thank you!

By purchasing a Mother's Day card from us last May, you gave the gift of support to all mums. Mums like Debbie who now has a healthy daughter after her baby was born with her arteries flowing the wrong way. Without open heart surgery baby Haile had only weeks to live. Thanks to you, we were able to fly her from a small town in WA to specialists 3000 km's away in Melbourne.

In times of distress or emergency care, your donations help us go the distance. **Thank you!**



Saved from horror holiday



Faye and Jim Johnston were on a dream holiday in The Kimberley region of Western Australia when Faye began to feel unwell one night in Kununurra.

“We’d flown from Brisbane to Darwin and then travelled by coach from Darwin to Broome,” explains Faye, who lives in Brunswick Heads, NSW. “We’d got as far as Kununurra to stay for a couple of nights. We’d visited the Hidden Valley and climbed to all the lookouts.

“That night I woke up around 11.30pm feeling nauseous. At first I thought it was just a stuffy room, then I got the shakes. Something was just not quite right.”

“Because we were due to get up to fly over the Bungle Bungles in four hours time I thought I’d just get things checked.”

Faye called the ambulance and was soon given an ECG by the paramedic at the motel.

“Everything was normal and apparently it was when he was packing up to go I just had a heart attack in front of him!” says Faye.

“The next thing I woke up crying in Kununurra Hospital, not knowing what was wrong. The paramedic had to use his defibrillator and some CPR on me before getting me to the hospital.”

The next morning the Flying Doctor was called in to transfer Faye, first to Port Headland. There she changed RFDS aircraft to fly on to the Fiona Stanley Hospital in Perth for specialist treatment.

“I had a stent put in the day after I arrived,” explains Faye.

Meanwhile Faye’s husband organised to travel to Perth, where their daughter joined him for a few days.

“He says he was never so glad to see anyone in his life,” says Faye. “We had to stay over for a week until I had clearance to fly home.”

Faye shares a warning to others to be open and honest with their doctor when asked about their health.



Left: RFDS aircraft PC12 over Western Australia. Left inset: Faye and Jim Johnston on holiday in the Kimberley. Above: RFDS responds to emergency in the Kimberley.

“I’d gone to the doctor’s a week before we went away for a check-up,” says Faye. “He’d asked me if I was short of breath when I climbed hills or went up-stairs. I said no, but I didn’t tell him that I was. I put it down to getting older.”

“My friends all said they thought I’d be the last person to have a heart attack as I’m slim and reasonably fit. But my father died fairly young of a heart attack. I gave all my family a scare.

The Flying Doctor was absolutely amazing. They couldn’t have been any better. They were so professional, wonderful, friendly and caring. Without the RFDS I might not be here.

Faye Johnston



Since recovering Faye is happy to spend time at home in NSW, tending to her garden.



Farmer Brendan Cullen says "life's a hell of a lot easier now than what it used to be."
Image ABC News: David Maguire

You're making life a 'hell of a lot easier' for Aussies in the bush

Like so many in the bush, Brendan Cullen has a lot on his plate.

He manages a 40,000-hectare property south of Broken Hill. There are 8,000 sheep to keep track of. And that's just a fraction of the number he looked after previously at another station.

A few years ago, the mustering, the maintenance, juggling bills and family – it all caught up to him.

"You just bottle stuff up. And sometimes you can't find an out," he said.

"In the bush you have a lot of time by yourself."

He spent a lot of that time thinking about his problems. But Mr Cullen was lucky.

He heard about a mental health clinic being run by the Royal Flying Doctor Service in a nearby community and decided to go along.

"Catching up with one of the mental health nurses gave me the tools to be able to work out how I go about living a day-to-day life," he said.

"My life's a hell of a lot easier now than what it used to be."

One in five Australians aged 16 to 85 will experience a mental disorder in any given year, no matter where they live, as found in the report, *Mental Health in Remote and Rural Communities*.

Unfortunately, a combination of lack of access to facilities, social stigma, and cultural barriers present challenges that RFDS is working to overcome in order to prevent emergency hospital treatment for a mental disorder, or suicide in the most extreme circumstances.

➤ Read the report and view ABC's coverage at www.flyingdoctor.org.au/research

Making change in Yarriambiack

The Shire of Yarriambiack, located 370km from Melbourne, can claim one of Victoria's most staggering statistics. With a population of 7000, unfortunately 70 per cent of Yarriambiack adults are overweight or obese.

For the past year we have supported the program 'Yarriambiack for Creating Health, Active, Nourished Generations', also known as YCHANGE.

The Royal Flying Doctor Service recently signed up to continue to assist initiatives, along with Rural Northwest Health, Deakin University, Dunmunkle Health Services, and Yarriambiack Shire Council. The ultimate goal is to help decrease dependence on health services and reduce avoidable hospital admissions.



Glimpses of doing good for the Doc!

We're so grateful to each and every single person who goes the distance to raise funds to support the Royal Flying Doctor Service.



Clockwise from left: Dust flies as trekkers make their way through NSW; a 1966 Chevrolet Impala on the road north of Whitecliffs on the second day of the 2017 Outback Car Trek; students from Enngonia Primary School greet trekkers; trekkers glimpse an RFDS Beechcraft KingAir on emergency strip at Shannons Creek. Images by Allan Coker.



Clockwise from above left: RFDS Ambassadors Stefan Dennis, Jennifer Adams, Annette Allison OAM, Steve Bastoni, Dani Venn and Catherine Skinner bring the \$20 note to life with camel and John Flynn look-a-like; generous donors 'Flick us a Flynn' at Federation Square; models at the RFDS Bayside Auxiliary Fashion parade - Ruth Rechner (front) Julie Westcott, Wendy Johnson, Rosalyn Lucas and Jan Jamieson; Rosalyn Lucas models as part of the Bayside Fashion Parade, a unique fundraiser for the Flying Doctor; Catherine Skinner joins staff and RFDS volunteers with celebrity chef Dani Venn.



Flying around the track for the Doc

Steven Tsesmelis is an 11-year-old with a need for speed. He's flying around Go-Kart tracks across Victoria to raise \$5,000 for the Royal Flying Doctor Service.

From the age of two Steven liked cars and trucks, so his mum and dad suspected early on that he would somehow be involved in something with wheels. When he was just six, Steven declared he wanted to be a V8 Supercar Driver. Thinking the phase would pass, in 2014 Steven's parents gave in and bought him a Go Kart and signed him up at the local club.

Steven commenced his first season of racing in February 2015 and was quickly achieving significant results for a racer of his age and of his timeframe. With hard work, dedication and passion for the track, Steven's lap times were turning heads. Off the track Steven is committed to helping the community and has seen the impact of the work of the Flying Doctor while travelling across Australia, inspiring him to support the service.



Junior Go Kart Driver No 47 Steven Tsesmelis is flying around Victorian tracks to raise funds the Flying Doctor.

DIVISION:
Junior
- Go Kart Driver No 47

REPRESENTING:
Oakleigh Go Kart Club,
Victoria Australia

AGE:
11 Years

> You can follow Steven's fast flying progress on Facebook @Ste47en

Our real life stories inspire kids to learn

In the past financial year we have met 7,750 students, offering learning experiences through our Look! Up in the Sky Education program.

With our Education Program Manager, Tom Ryan and many volunteers, we have travelled across Victoria, Tasmania and into New South Wales engaging kids with powerful storytelling, using real life examples of the work of the Flying Doctor. This enables us to share important messages of health, safety and community.

We're proud that since its creation in 2011, the Look! Up in the Sky program has grown significantly and gained a reputation for providing quality education outcomes. The Department of Education has, for the 6th consecutive year, supported the program through funding our participation in Education Week.

> Learn more online at www.flyingdoctor4education.org.au

Flying Doctor Kids Club reaches 1300 members!



In the last donor survey you told us you want the next generation of Australians to understand and appreciate the Flying Doctor as much as you do. That's why we created the Flying

Doctor Kids Club. We listened to you and now more than 1300 children between 5 and 12 are learning about history and health through the Kids Club newsletter, events, and are even sharing in birthday celebrations when 'Flynn the Flyer' sends out a birthday card.



> If you know of any kids that would like to join the club, signup via our website: www.flyingdoctor.org.au/vic



New technology allows specialist connection for Ron

According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Australians in rural and regional areas have higher mortality rates and lower life expectancies than those in urban areas.

Living in a rural area often means it's difficult to see a specialist. You may have to wait months for an appointment and then have to travel a long way to attend. And for some, the long distances and wait times are enough to prevent them from seeking the specialist care they need.

The Royal Flying Doctor Service has worked since 1928 to overcome the barrier of distance, especially with the use of the latest innovation. Whether it was the peddle radio in John Flynn's time, or video conferencing in the present, everyone should be able to access quality health care.

For patient Ron Hick, based in Kerang, the 300 kilometres between him and a diabetes specialist meant an eight hour round trip to Melbourne every three months. However, since the launch of the Flying Doctor Telehealth Service, Ron now receives specialist treatment without having to leave his home town.

The Flying Doctor Telehealth Service uses video conferencing along with secure document management, advanced clinician scheduling and an online booking system to connect Ron with his endocrinologists based at Baker Heart and Diabetes Institute in Melbourne.

Describing how this service has impacted him, Ron said: "The greatest impact for me has been the fact that instead of having to travel four hours each way to see my specialist, I now travel four minutes. I have great respect and admiration for the service."

Delivering telehealth to rural communities in Victoria since November 2013, the Flying Doctor has partnered with Telstra Health, local health services and diabetes educators to provide more than 1000 appointments to patients.



With support of Diabetes Educator Alex Carter, Ron links with his Melbourne based Endocrinologist from the Northern District Health Service.

You've stepped up to the Cloud Climb challenge



Left: Cloud Climb participant Anita Moss is congratulated on fundraising efforts by RFDS Victoria Chief Executive, Scott Chapman.

Above: Cloud Climbers take on 1000 Steps at Dandenong.

Melbourne based Mother of two, Dr Anita Moss raised almost \$3000 and improved her fitness when she took on the Cloud Climb challenge from 21 May to 2 June.

When Anita read that Cloud Climb challenged participants to climb 1000 stairs a day, for 10 days, she thought of stairs near her home and stepped up to the challenge.

"I learned about Cloud Climb on social media and had been running up steps near my home in the lead up to Cloud Climb, but not to the degree of the challenge set with Cloud Climb."

Hoping to improve her fitness, Anita took on Cloud Climb, motivated to step up to the equivalent of an RFDS plane at 40,000ft.

"I also wanted to raise money for the Flying Doctor because in my work in rural and regional Australia as a locum GP, the Royal Flying Doctor Service has bailed me out on lots of occasions.

They have always been available for advice," says Anita.

"I trained in Western Australia and worked in Geraldton for nine months delivering babies out there where the Flying Doctor would fly lots of women down to Perth if they had issues delivering. In 2014 and 2015 I was working in Cape York with an Indigenous council and RFDS provided services in that region. If I wasn't working directly with RFDS doctors, I was calling on them to fly patients out, or even calling for advice."

Anita says she really enjoyed Cloud Climb and didn't find it as difficult as she thought it would be.

"I didn't suffer as much as I thought I would, but I still had to find time."

As a busy Mum, Anita would get up early and run up stairs in the cold and the dark.

"Cloud Climb reminded me of the benefits of exercise and to get back to the basics of health care and emotional and physical benefits of keeping active."

When it comes to fundraising, Anita says "I got a bee in my bonnet about fundraising because I have worked closely with RFDS doctors and they are so gracious, every single one."

"When you're a solo GP in a little country town with patients who are really sick, you can always turn to the RFDS, so I asked all of my friends for support."

Anita says she contacted everyone she knew to support her fundraising efforts.

"The people who dug deep were health care card holders, aged care pensioners and single parents. People were giving me fifty bucks, which for them was a couple of bags of groceries, it was humbling."

Thank you Anita and all 214 dedicated Cloud Climb participants.

> If you would like to know more about Cloud Climb, visit www.cloudclimb.org.au



Flying Doctor BBQ

The smell of sausages is sure to bring people together and that's just what we saw in April, for the Flying Doctor BBQ.

There were 24 different Flying Doctor BBQ events held across Victoria as groups of friends, sports clubs and associations raised more than \$15,000. That's a lot of bread and sausages. **Thank you!**

> If you would like to host a BBQ to support the Royal Flying Doctor Service, visit www.flyingdoctor.org.au/vic/bbq or call us on **(03) 8412 0400**.

Dig deep for the Doctor

Flying Doctor donor Ted Metcalfe shares why he supports the Flying Doctor.



I came to Australia from Canada on a two-year work assignment in the oil and gas industry. That was about 35 years ago. I've been very fortunate to have seen much of remote Australia, perhaps more than most Australians – much of that from the front left seat of a helicopter.

Australia's outback is a fascinating place of spectacular scenery, populated by hardy but genuine souls. However, it's also a place which can be very harsh, and I've spent a lot of time in the last 35 years in places where only the Flying Doctor would be able to help if I were badly injured or seriously ill.

My first remote work assignment in the mid-80's was at the Jackson Oil Fields in far south-west Queensland. I recall one day noticing a large green metal trunk in the boss's office, so I asked what it was. He said "That's the First Aid Kit". I replied "Seems a bit large for a First Aid Kit!" He said "Son, out here the nearest doctor is a few hundred kilometres away. If you get really crook or banged up badly, only two things are going to save you...the Flying Doctor on that HF Radio, and whatever he tells us to use from that box."

I thought about that, then wondered to myself whether or not the box was actually big enough!

Also on that project I was introduced to the Australian concept of "rattling the tin".

We lived in a remote construction camp and, the Camp Administrator would walk around with the Flying Doctor collection bucket calling out loudly "Dig deep for the Doctor lads...we need their support and they need ours". The construction workforce always donated generously, and I guess I have just kept on doing that.

While seeing the outback from the air has been a great experience for me, what I really value most is the opportunity to have met and got to know some of the people who live in remote areas, and who depend all the time upon the Flying Doctor to attend to their medical, dental and other health needs.

I don't know the people in our monthly newsletters, but I've met a few just like them. They know better than I do how important the Flying Doctor can be in the remote areas of Australia, where life can be unforgiving and dangerous.

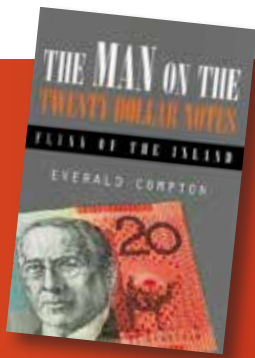
It's a very different story for ringers mustering cattle in the middle of nowhere, for wives struggling with a difficult childbirth far from any doctor, and for children suddenly taken seriously ill on some outback station.

They truly appreciate what the Royal Flying Doctor Service means for them.

I am happy to add my support to the RFDS and ask you to, "dig deep for the Doctor."

Ted Metcalfe

Join us for the RFDS Annual General Meeting Forum and John Flynn Luncheon



Author of, *The Man on the Twenty Dollar Notes*, Everald Compton will be sharing stories of John Flynn as special luncheon keynote speaker.

Date: Wednesday 29 November 2017

Time: **Annual General Meeting Forum:**
10.15 am – 11.45 am, Level 2, RACV City Club

John Flynn Luncheon:
12.00 pm – 2.30 pm, Level 17, RACV City Club

Venue: RACV City Club, 501 Bourke Street, Melbourne

Cost: Annual General Meeting Forum is free to attend, and tea and coffee will be served.

John Flynn Luncheon is \$100 per person including a two course lunch with beverages.

Tickets on sale 2 October 2017.

For further information contact RFDS Victoria on (03) 8412 0400.

Are you, or another wonderful supporter of the Flying Doctor 90 or older?

We are commemorating 90 years of service in 2018 and would like to celebrate with our supporters. Please contact us on (03) 8412 0400 if you would like to be involved.



Calendar of events 2017

We look forward to you joining us at these events.

Going the Distance Dinner
17 August, Plaza Ballroom, Melbourne

Bayside Auxiliary Annual Luncheon
5 October, Uniting Church Beaumaris St. Martins

Flying Doctor Rowathon
7 October, Murray River, Victoria

Outback Tour
9-22 October, Western Australia

Bust Rallies
12-14 October, Geelong, Victoria to Barossa Valley, South Australia

Melbourne Marathon with Ground Crew
15 October, Melbourne

Open Cockpit Weekend
28-29 October, Moorabbin Airport

City2Sea with Ground Crew
12 November, Melbourne

Drive 4 The Doc
15-19 November, High Country Victoria

Annual General Meeting Forum
29 November, RACV City Club, Melbourne

John Flynn Luncheon
29 November, RACV City Club, Melbourne

For more information about any of our events, please call us on (03) 8412 0400.

Please cut here

I would like to support the essential work of the Flying Doctor in 2017.

I authorise the Royal Flying Doctor Service to debit \$ per month from my credit card below.

Or, please find enclosed my one-off donation of \$

I would like to pay by: Cheque Money order Credit Card

Credit Card payment details:

Visa MasterCard AMEX

Cardholder's name:

Card number:

Expiry: / Signature:

Please send me information about including the RFDS in my Will

I have already included a gift for the RFDS in my Will

My details:

Title: Name:

Address:

Postcode:

Phone no.

Email:

Donations \$2 and over are tax deductible and a receipt will be issued.

Please return with your payment to:

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