

The official magazine of the Royal Flying Doctor Service
CENTRAL OPERATIONS | ISSUE 270 | MAY 20



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

AirDoctor

SPECIAL EDITION | INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE NURSE & MIDWIFE



From the Chairman & CEO >



PETER DE CURE
Chairman

TONY VAUGHAN
Chief Executive

NOBODY WOULD have predicted the extreme and volatile start to this year. After bushfires tore across the country in January, Australia found itself heading straight into another emergency – this time, a health crisis that has circled the globe.

At the time of writing, the COVID-19 pandemic has changed much of society as we know it. The risk of infection has rightly compelled Australians to stay at home.

‘Social distancing’ and ‘self-isolation’ are now part of the common vernacular. Shops are shut, sports and the arts have been cancelled and special occasions among families and friends have been postponed.

But in times of change, it is important to seek the constants.

The Flying Doctor’s mission – to provide a mantle of safety for remote and regional Australians – remains as true as it was when it was first articulated in 1928.

In fact, it is stronger than ever.

The RFDS routinely treats patients with infectious diseases and, at the time of writing (mid-April), the RFDS had already transported more than 150 suspected or confirmed COVID-19 patients by air and road across the country. Our first aeromedical response was the airlift of patients infected with the virus from Darwin to Perth, Adelaide and Melbourne in late February.

The Flying Doctor is playing its part during this time, not only in playing a pivotal role in helping our State, Territory and national health systems respond and manage the COVID-19 pandemic, but also in continuing to deliver our essential health services, including:

- > 24/7 aeromedical evacuations from outback communities or country hospitals;
- > 24/7 emergency telehealth consultations with our on-call Doctors;
- > scheduled ‘fly-in’ primary health clinics to remote communities and stations;
- > videoconference consultations with the Mental Health & Wellbeing Team;
- > operation of our Remote Area Nurse (RAN) clinics at Andamooka, Marla and Marree; and
- > cultural and social support for Indigenous patients by our Aboriginal Health Coordinator.

Furthermore, our teams are assisting with the national awareness effort and community education of best practice prevention, identification and pre-screening strategies to help protect our remote communities from the spread of COVID-19.

Meanwhile, your Flying Doctor is also forging ahead with projects that will demonstrate long-term benefits to regional and remote communities.

The Mount Gambier Patient Transfer Facility (page 6) will deliver an improved patient care and experience for residents and tourists to South Australia’s Lower South East region where RFDS crews land at least twice a day, while the new Remote Area Clinic in Marree (page 7) will be a community asset for generations to come.

As 2020 progresses, you can be assured we will continue to walk towards the challenges of the present, while remaining steadfast in our vision for the future.

We are indeed in the best position to manage this pandemic because of our skilled and dedicated workforce combined with the amazing past support we have received from the community – our loyal donors, community fundraisers, volunteers and corporate partners. Your Flying Doctor will continue to call on the community to donate and share our story as we deliver our essential health services during this time of crisis and will continue to do so when this pandemic is behind us.

In closing, we reflect on the privilege we hold at the RFDS, in being able to serve the community at this time when they need us the most.

PETER DE CURE
Chairman

TONY VAUGHAN ASM
Chief Executive

AirDoctor is the official magazine of the Royal Flying Doctor Service of Australia Central Operations.

Street Address: 1 Tower Road
Adelaide Airport SA 5950

Postal Address: PO Box 381
Marleston SA 5033

Phone: 08 8238 3333

Email: enquiries@flyingdoctor.net

Fax: 08 8238 3395

flyingdoctor.org.au/sant

facebook.com/royalflyingdoctorservice

@RoyalFlyingDoc

instagram.com/RoyalFlyingDoc

OUR COVER: Flight Nurse Marie Maddox in the back of a PC-12 Aircraft.

Generations of care >

WHILE MANY AUSTRALIANS have had a personal Flying Doctor encounter, Amber Driver concedes she has a few more stories than most.

The mum of two who lives on Elkedra Station – 500 kilometres northeast of Alice Springs – has had reason to call upon the Flying Doctor multiple times over the last two decades.

“I could spend hours talking about the times we’ve needed the RFDS,” Amber says.

“The Flying Doctor has a huge influence on remote families feeling confident about living out here and getting through a crisis. Because of them, we know support is there when we need it.”

Elkedra Station is a cattle station, owned and operated by the Driver family for the past four generations.

One of Amber’s earliest interactions with the Flying Doctor was in 2006 when her father-in-law Roy was involved in a serious car roll-over on the property.

“He was in a critical condition. He was bleeding from the ears, had broken ribs and a punctured lung – it was a really scary time,” she says.

“We weren’t able to move him by road to the airstrip, so the doctor and nurse came to us.”

Last year, Amber’s eldest son Sonny had a motorcycle accident while riding out to the station’s airstrip. His leg was badly crushed in the accident.

“It took just three hours for the RFDS to get here, which by our standards, is super quick. The doctors got him stabilised and we were able to get him to Alice Springs Hospital for several operations and for rehabilitation. We’re thankful every day that Sonny’s leg was saved.”

Four months before Sonny’s accident, Amber’s younger son Ruben, aged six at the time, also required the assistance of the Flying Doctor when he was bitten by a redback spider.



Amber Driver with husband John and sons Sonny and Ruben.

“Living remotely, there is such a connection with your community – it’s such a different dynamic. People need to rely on each other.”

You never know how you’re going to react in an emergency but for our family, I know we can’t talk highly enough of the Flying Doctor. They’ve been there every time.



Peter de Cure

Loretta Reynolds

Board update >

PETER DE CURE is the new Chairman of RFDS Central Operations, endorsed by resolution of fellow Directors at the April Board Meeting.

Peter replaces Loretta Reynolds, who will remain on the Board as Deputy Chairman and the Central Operations delegate on the RFDS Federation Board of the Royal Flying Doctor Service of Australia. Loretta joined the Board in 2011 and has served as Chairman for the past three years.

A long-time RFDS supporter, Peter joined the Central Operations Board in June 2018 and has been Chairman of the Finance Committee since October 2018.

“I would like to thank Loretta for her professional support and tireless service as Board Chairman over the past three years and formally welcome Peter to the role. Our Board remains very supportive of our mission in these unprecedented times as we collectively respond to the COVID-19 pandemic,” says Tony Vaughan ASM, Chief Executive of RFDS Central Operations.

“Our Board will continue to focus on strategic direction, financial security and sound governance. In their capacity as volunteers, Peter and Loretta will be able to concentrate their expertise and efforts on the respective sectional and national agendas of the organisation.”

Simpson Desert Drama >

WALLY ROSS KNEW his son Casey was in trouble. When Casey would drift back into consciousness, he'd tell Wally, "I'm not afraid to die. I know I'm dying."

Like a good dad, Wally Ross assured his son Casey he wasn't dying. But inside, Wally wasn't entirely certain.

The Ross family trip had begun in normal circumstances.

A group of 25 four-wheel-drivers and motorcyclists tackling the expanse of the Simpson Desert on an ultimate off-road adventure.

Wally was travelling with Casey, as well as Casey's two children, his brother, brother-in-law and three nephews.

The travellers had already been driving and riding for a couple of days when they reached a locality near Poeppel Corner – 174 kilometres west of Birdsville – where the borders of South Australia, the Northern Territory and Queensland meet.

Casey was riding a motorbike, travelling a short distance from the rest of the group. At one point, the sound of Casey's bike changed. What Wally and his fellow travellers found was shocking.

Casey had fallen from his bike and was staggering around in the baking red dirt – disorientated, delirious and incoherent.

The group quickly dragged Casey into the shade of a tree, and then he started to convulse and fell unconscious.



"Let me tell you – the minute something goes wrong in the outback – it's then you realise how dangerous and remote it is," Wally said.

"Casey was clearly very sick, but we were a very long way from help. We all knew who we needed the Flying Doctor."

But they also knew that these first moments were the start of a frantic race against time and distance.

Our group leader used a satellite telephone and was connected immediately to the on-call Doctor at the RFDS Port Augusta Base.

"It was such a relief to know we had straightaway reached someone who could give expert help, but we were still very frightened, worried that we were too far away – and too late – to get Casey the help he desperately needed," Wally said.

The RFDS Doctor learnt that one of the travellers was a veterinarian who had packed some intravenous fluids, and the Doctor guided the use of the fluids by injection to try to help stabilise Casey. Thinking that he may have been suffering heat exhaustion, some cans of cold drinks were stacked around Casey's neck, arms and wrists to try to cool him down.

Unseen by Wally and the rest of the travelling group, people were moving quickly to marshal people and aircraft to get expert medical help to Casey's side as fast as possible. First to arrive at the scene was the Cooper Medivac 24, a helicopter operated by corporate partners of the

RFDS – Senex Energy and Beach Energy – with a Nurse from the Moomba Clinic on board.

"When Casey was loaded into the helicopter, I thought that would be the last time I would see him alive," Wally said.

The helicopter flew Casey to Birdsville, where he met the very fast and superbly-equipped *RFDS Medi-Jet 24* for his dash to Adelaide.

In fact, when the helicopter arrived in Birdsville, the *RFDS Medi-Jet 24* and RFDS crew were ready and waiting. The RFDS Retrieval Doctor and Flight Nurse on board gave Casey crucial medical care from take-off to landing. On arrival in Adelaide, Casey was rushed to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. Near midnight, our group-leader's satellite telephone rang.

It was Casey.

"Dad," he said to Wally in a weak voice. "I think I'm going to be OK."

Then the telephone cut out and he was gone again.

During a week in hospital and after thorough medical tests, the doctors treated Casey for a dangerous viral infection and he recovered quickly.

Wally said the family was "eternally grateful for the RFDS that day".

"We're sure Casey would not have survived without them."



Rinehart Foundation funds COVID fight >

THE ROYAL FLYING DOCTOR SERVICE of Australia (RFDS) last month was grateful to receive a generous \$6 million donation from Mrs Gina Rinehart and the Rinehart Medical Foundation to boost its capability to respond to the emergency and primary health care needs of rural and remote Australians.

The donation towards additional critical care equipment and telehealth technology has assisted the Flying Doctor to build its surge capacity to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

At the time of the donation, the RFDS had already transported more than 110 suspected or confirmed COVID-19 patients by air and road across the country.

This is in addition to its daily workload of more than 100 aeromedical missions and more than 900 episodes of telehealth, primary health, mental health and dental care across the country every day.

Mrs Gina Rinehart and S. Kidman & Co Pty Ltd, one of the nation's largest beef companies and a member of the Hancock Prospecting Group, of which Mrs Rinehart is Executive Chairman, have been long-standing advocates and benefactors of the RFDS.

S. Kidman & Co is the inaugural Jet Partner of RFDS Central Operations (serving SA/NT), helping to bring the first RFDS aeromedical jet to SA and NT, and today's contribution from Mrs Rinehart and the Rinehart Medical Foundation will equally benefit RFDS operations in New South Wales, Queensland, the Northern Territory and South Australia.

The \$6 million donation is targeted and strategic. It will ensure the full complement of life-saving medical equipment for all aeromedical bases and all aircraft, as well as investment in portable automated external defibrillators (AEDs) and telehealth technologies stationed in isolated communities to help the RFDS better manage chronic disease and isolation for outback Australians.

RFDS Central Operations Chief Executive, Tony Vaughan ASM, said the impact of Mrs Rinehart's and the Rinehart Medical Foundation's significant – and immediate – financial support would be far reaching.

"The RFDS has an excellent baseline level of critical care equipment across its network to respond to rural and remote Australians, but we require more in order to have surge capacity to

meet anything that comes our way," he said.

"This includes ventilators, more cardiac monitors, IV infusion pumps and more point-of-care testing to enable aeromedical teams to serve every patient, on every aircraft or at any one of our locations across our vast RFDS network."



Regional Patient Transfer Facility ready for service >



Mount Gambier Support Group President Bill Russon with RFDS Central Operations Chief Executive Tony Vaughan ASM and District Council of Grant Deputy CEO Jane Fetherstonhaugh celebrate the purchase of the hangar.

THE FIRST RFDS Patient Transfer Facility in regional South Australia is set to open its doors soon – with thanks to the local community. The RFDS announced the landmark project to build a patient facility at Mount Gambier Airport last October.

The news was met with extraordinary local support, with the project attracting more than \$250,000 in community donations and corporate support (both cash and in-kind) to finance the project.

RFDS crews land twice a day in the South East – at least once a day at Mount Gambier alone – to airlift patients for life-saving care or specialist medical treatment.

Together with local tradespeople and suppliers, head contractor Ahrens Group has converted an existing hangar for RFDS use, adding a climate-controlled stabilisation bay where RFDS and SAAS/MedSTAR retrieval teams can stabilise patients prior to flight.

The hangar space itself provides an undercover area with optimum lighting for engineers to

perform unscheduled aircraft maintenance.

Mount Gambier patients, like those at other regional and remote locations across South Australia, are currently transferred onto RFDS aircraft on the tarmac at all times of day and in all weather extremes.

“Every part of this facility – from floor to ceiling – has been made possible through the generosity of the South East community and our wonderful Flying Doctor supporters,” says Tony Vaughan, Chief Executive, RFDS Central Operations.

“This Patient Transfer Facility will benefit the region for generations to come, providing an extra level of care and comfort for people when they need it most.

“It has been truly humbling to see how Mt Gambier locals have embraced this initiative as their own. This has been a tremendous instance of community spirit coming together.”

The RFDS will officially launch the Mount Gambier Patient Transfer Facility later this year.



Artist impression of new Marree Health Service

First look at new Marree Clinic >

THE RFDS is progressing its plans to develop the existing Marree Health Service into a new state-of-the-art health precinct to benefit Far North residents and tourists.

Due to open later this year, the new Marree Health Service will feature dedicated spaces for a range of services provided by the RFDS Remote Area Nurses (RANs) and ‘fly-in’ health services – from emergency treatment through to primary health, dental care and mental health.

The project received a \$716,000 boost from the South Australian Government’s Regional Growth Fund late last year, with the remaining \$1.06 million for the redevelopment funded by the RFDS through corporate sponsorships, fundraising and donations from the community.

With the Outback Highway to Marree now sealed, the town has become more accessible than ever for tour groups and caravanners en route to Lake Eyre and the Birdsville and Oodnadatta Tracks. When Lake Eyre flooded in May, almost 15 per cent of the clinic’s patient contacts at Marree were tourists to the region.

SA Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development, Tim Whetstone MP, acknowledged the importance of access to healthcare in remote communities.

“With booming tourism in the Far North region, emergency medical services and our Royal Flying Doctor Service are in demand,” Minister Whetstone said at the project’s announcement.

This \$1.73 million investment will ensure outback residents and our visitors can be given the right care, and the precinct will create a new benchmark for remote primary health services delivery.

– Minister Tim Whetstone

Thank you to our Nurses & Midwives >



The World Health Organisation has marked 2020 as the International Year of the Nurse & Midwife.

Here at the RFDS Central Operations, our nurses and midwives are the lifeblood of our organisation.

We have more than 70 dedicated nursing staff working throughout South Australia and the Northern Territory.

They are the faces our patients see when they visit a remote clinic for a health check, when they seek mental health support and when they are seriously ill or injured on a stretcher in the rear of an aircraft.

The RFDS is extremely proud to celebrate their work and dedication not only this year, but every year.

To our nurses and midwives – thank you on the behalf of the Flying Doctor and all who support regional and remote health care in Australia.

Together with our capable team of doctors, pilots, engineers, operations coordinators and support staff, our nurses and midwives deliver close to **58,000 patient contacts every year.** That's one South Australian or Northern Territorian receiving RFDS care **every 10 minutes.**

JACKIE MATEAR Flight Nurse



It was Jackie Matear's childhood experience that led her down the path of nursing. "I was about 12 or 13 years old and living in Indonesia, where my dad was the administrator of a hospital, when I got sick with typhoid fever," she said.

"I was put in hospital and got to know the nurses looking after me – I knew then I wanted to become a nurse when I grew up. "I did my graduate diploma in emergency nursing and we visited the Flying Doctor as part of our study. The senior flight nurse started telling us about her job and that was it – I knew it was the job for me.

"I'd always loved travel and this was a job that combined that with looking after others." Jackie completed her studies, including her midwifery qualifications, and joined the RFDS nine years ago as a Flight Nurse.

"I love meeting people from all over the place and especially in regional areas. People are so thankful of the work you do as a nurse. You're doing something that will change their life. "It's such a rewarding job and the people I work with are brilliant. We're a diverse group, but there's such a high level of expertise and we are all working towards the one goal, which is what is best for the patient."

MANDY SMALLACOMBE Primary Health Care Nurse



Outback stations, country races and gymkhanas – Mandy Smallacombe's 'office' is as diverse as the patients she cares for. Based in Port Augusta, Mandy manages the Primary Health Care team that delivers the finest care through fly-in clinics across remote South Australia.

"We run fly-in clinics Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays year-round, visiting communities including Marla, Oodnadatta, Blinman, William Creek, Kingoonya, Glendambo, Marree, the Nullarbor and Yalata," she said. "We also visit all the stations in the area too – we call that the 'station hop'. It's a busy schedule!"

Mandy started with the RFDS three and a half years ago as a Chronic Disease Coordinator specialising in diabetes management. Being a vocal advocate for preventative medicine remains her passion.

"My absolute favourite part of the job is engaging with people to promote better health. We attend a number of community events every year to meet locals and chat about testicular and bowel cancer prevention. We love trying out new programs, such as personal training and yoga in remote areas. "I absolutely love being here and working with some really experienced clinicians who also love what they do."

ANNE ALEXANDER Remote Area Nurse



Anne Alexander worked as a nurse in Port Augusta, the East Kimberley and at Prominent Hill mining site before landing a job with the Flying Doctor almost a year ago. Her role as Remote Area Nurse is based at Andamooka, an outback town located 600km from Adelaide in the Far North of South Australia.

"Andamooka is a really lovely community and the people we get to see are all supportive of the clinic and our staff," she said. "I think that's what I like most about remote nursing – the fact that you can immerse yourself in the community. I've joined the local Country Women's Association and Probus Club in the past couple of months and people are always inviting you out to places to make you feel welcome.

"We have a lot of elderly people coming to our clinic and much of the work is around helping patients manage chronic disease. "I live in Port Augusta, which is only a three hour drive home when I'm not on shift. So this job has been the perfect opportunity for me to be part of an awesome community while still be able to stay in touch with people at home."

NIAMH GALLAGHER Mental Health Nurse



As a Mental Health Clinician, Niamh Gallagher is a member of a growing team at RFDS Central Operations. Originally from Ireland, Niamh moved to Australia six and a half years ago and began working with the Flying Doctor seven months ago.

"I'd read about the RFDS online and thought it sounded like a brilliant way to travel around Australia while doing what I loved," Niamh said. "So many people go on about their purpose in life and I feel mental health is obviously mine. I believe you can do so much for people through simple gestures and kind words."

As the RFDS Mental Health team expands, so does its capacity to visit more towns and reach more patients. The team provides confidential support to people struggling with family and work issues, drought and isolation. Late last year, the team visited Andamooka for the first time.

"My colleagues and I are constantly inspired by the resilience of the people we meet, especially when we learn about how much they've overcome. It feels very different to working in metro areas "My family has seen the old 'Flying Doctors' show on Irish TV. I've told them that not every day is like the show, but my own RFDS experience so far has been an amazing journey."

Teamwork at its best >

Every year >



& Midwives >

DAVID CARPENTER Flight Nurse

From the wintry Apple Isle and Central Australia's ochre heart – David Carpenter's RFDS career was inspired after a nursing stint in the remote communities of the APY Lands.

David accepted a midwifery scholarship through the RFDS and has now been based in Alice Springs for the past decade.

"This time of year, Alice is just beautiful – I don't miss the cold days and grey skies of Tassie," he said.

David works in a tight-knit team of clinicians, pilots and task coordinators that respond to every manner of health incident in the Territory.

While he concedes that he is sometimes called out to respond to dramatic events, he says chronic disease among regional and remote Australians is a long-term and lesser-known reason for Flying Doctor care.

"We do a lot of work around chronic disease such as diabetes, kidney disease and cardiovascular issues. There's a great understanding within the team that chronic disease can easily exacerbate other urgent medical conditions too.

"We are always assessing what's going on with a patient, what the variables are and what's going to make a difference.


"I get a lot of satisfaction out of helping people out at their point of need and being able to problem-solve as part of a team.

"The RFDS is such a widely respected and iconic organisation and that's the truth of it. It has a great legacy but it has also moved with the times and is really open to using contemporary technologies.

"It really is the definitive health care option for people who are living, working or travelling a long way from anywhere."

Every year >

 **5,000+**
Oral Health
Consultations

 **130+**
Patients supported by an
Aboriginal Health Coordinator



Did you spot the special RFDS Nurses & Midwives badge on the front cover of your AirDoctor?

This striking commemorative design will soon be taking to the skies, with the badge to be temporarily added to our Central Operations aircraft.



Keep your eyes peeled as this badge pops up in more places throughout 2020.

If you support our nurses and midwives, please consider getting in touch with us to share your stories. You can email us at enquiries@flyingdoctor.net or share a post on the Royal Flying Doctor Service of Australia Facebook page.

 Crafted in Switzerland




PC-24
THE CRYSTAL CLASS

 **PILATUS**

THANK YOU FOR FLYING PILATUS

From outback strips to city airports, the Pilatus PC-12 has operated day and night for over twenty five years to keep the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) in the air. As an operator of the new PC-24, the RFDS Central Operations continues its tradition as a loyal and valuable member of the Pilatus family. We are all extremely proud to be associated with the RFDS and their provision of the finest care to the furthest corners with our aircraft – yesterday, today and in the future

Pilatus Australia Pty Ltd · Adelaide · +61 8 8238 1600 · www.pilatus-aircraft.com



Justine Cooney, Mental Health Clinicians, RFDS Central Operations

Banishing 'the blues' in the bush >

WINTER'S ON THE DOORSTEP and life has taken a few unpredictable turns of late. A positive mindset is key to getting through tough times, but how is it that some people can maintain that crucial forward – thinking approach every day? RFDS Wellbeing & Mental Health Team Leader Justine Cooney works with regional and remote Australians every day, helping people manage difficult situations including drought, family crisis and chronic illness.

Here, Justine shares her top five sure-fire mood boosters for better living.

1. STAY CONNECTED

"Humans are social creatures and even if we can't see our family and friends regularly, we can still stay connected online or over the telephone. Take advantage of technology to have face time or zoom catch ups, which can give us the connection and social support needed to sustain us during difficult times."

2. REDUCE EXPOSURE TO NEGATIVITY

"Exposing ourselves to a constant news cycle for most of our waking day can leave us feeling helpless and distressed. Limit exposure to the media, and only trust information from respected sources."

3. SELF-CARE

"Self-care means different things to different people, but it is important to build it into your routine in whatever form you enjoy. Lots of people hold stress in their upper bodies – head, shoulders, chest, neck – so pay attention to these areas and consciously release muscle tension during a 'me time' session. That could mean during a hot bath, a nature walk or a meditation or yoga session."

4. EXERCISE... EVERY DAY

"The quickest way to boost your mood is to move your body. And it doesn't need to be much, it just needs to be regular. As little as 15 minutes of activity can make a big difference, but aim for 30 minutes per day. Research has shown that regular exercise can impact our mood as much as anti-depressant medication, and it also has significant benefits in treating anxiety."

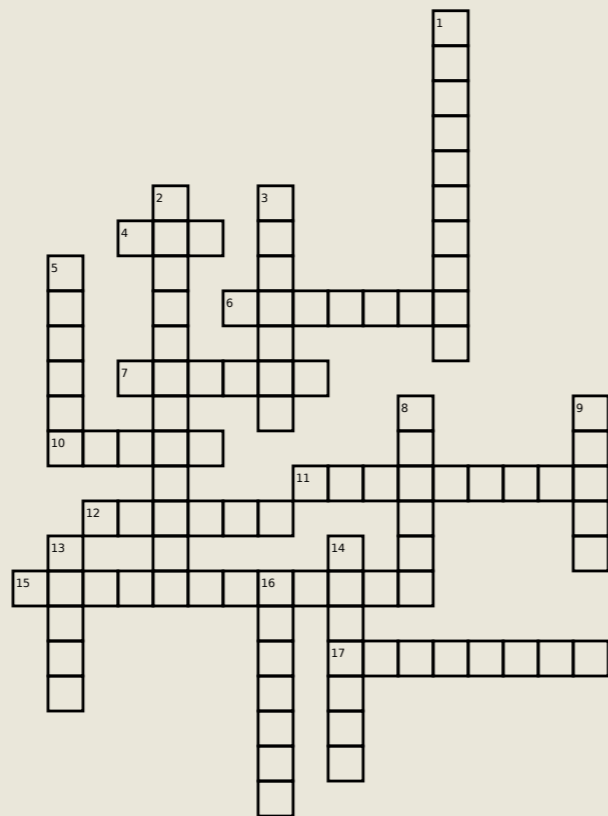
5. CONTROL THE CONTROLLABLES

"Anxiety is the body's way of telling you to take action to stay safe, but sometimes our brains can remain focussed on what's threatening us, rather than what we can do to reduce the threat. It can be helpful to write down a list of things you can't control, and also a list of what you can control and how. Be proactive in problem solving and continually taking steps to build your 'resources' toolkit (which can include supports, strengths, routine, emotional regulation tools, relaxation strategies, substance misuse levels, diet and exercise). The more resources we have, the better equipped we are to negotiate the stressful demands of life."

Happy Birthday, Flying Doctor >

To mark the Flying Doctor's birthday on May 15, try your hand at the Flying Doctor crossword which features clues marking our rich heritage and our exciting present-day operations.

Send your completed crossword with your name and address to the **Royal Flying Doctor Service, PO Box 381, Marleston, SA 5033** or email a picture of your crossword to enquiries@flyingdoctor.net by 30 June 2020 and you could be in the running for one of three Flying Doctor birthday prize packs!



Down:

1. The use of computers or mobile devices to access health care remotely.
2. These life-saving kits were introduced to outback stations in 1942. (2 words)
3. Inventor of the pedal-powered wireless to call upon the Flying Doctor in an emergency.
5. The RFDS was originally named the Australian Mission Aerial Medical Service.
8. Building to house aircraft.
9. Founder of the Royal Flying Doctor Service.
13. The letter H in the phonetic alphabet.
14. The modern RFDS fleet is built by this Swiss manufacturer.
16. A health professional supporting women through pregnancy, labour and birth.

Across:

4. The RFDS assists someone in SA/NT every minutes.
6. The name of the RFDS PC-24 aeromedical jet.
7. One of the RFDS Remote Area Clinics in South Australia is located here.
10. The fate of this Kimberley stockman inspired the formation of the RFDS.
11. The first RFDS flight left here on 17 May 1928.
12. The RFDS founder appears on an Australian banknote of which denomination?
15. The newest RFDS Patient Transfer Facility opens here in 2020. (2 words)
17. Miethke started the School of the Air, using Flying Doctor two-way radios.

Five minutes with a Pilot Instructor >

Exactly what is involved in taking to the skies for the Flying Doctor? We speak with our Head of Training & Checking, Matthew Cosier, to find out what he looks for in a successful RFDS pilot.

How does someone get their foot in the cockpit of a RFDS aircraft?

Firstly, we look for commercial pilots with experience flying in rural and remote Australia. This could be prior experience with a tourism charter flight company, for instance.

Each candidate needs a minimum of 2500 flying hours, including night flying experience.

What do you look for beyond flight experience?

Practicality, problem solving and autonomy.

We really seek out pilots who are able to use their initiative, especially when little things don't go to plan. That's where the rural and remote exposure comes in.

In terms of a job, being a RFDS pilot can be a fairly demanding role as there is a lot of night flying and we fly in many types of weather.

It's also important for candidates to understand that flying for the RFDS is more than just being a pilot. It's a culture of a common purpose. You're

there every step of the way – planning for the task, helping the doctors and nurses where you can and supporting an environment where they can get on and do their job.

How long does training take and how many pilots are successful?

We've just gone through a fairly busy period, but generally we would be training around six new pilots a year in South Australia and the Northern Territory. They are a diverse bunch – our youngest pilots would be in their early 30s and we have hired pilots well into their 60s.

On average, it takes about two or three weeks of in-house training before you can start flying with patients. On-the-job training with another pilot takes another four to six weeks. Our pilots are trained in the Pilatus PC-12s, which make up the majority of our fleet.

How did you become an RFDS pilot?

Mum and Dad were both pilots. They met when they were both learning to fly Tiger Moths. Mum



ended up being a private pilot, while Dad worked as a commercial pilot then as an agricultural pilot.

I started flying in 1988, starting out as a commercial pilot. I then became a flying instructor and worked for an airline, training cadets around the world.

I wanted to go back to something a bit more hands-on, so I joined the Flying Doctor. Getting up in the morning and not knowing exactly where I was going to go during the day really appealed to me.

You get to go to a lot of places you don't usually get to see. You get to see some pretty amazing places in Australia. You realise that you've made a difference. You've turned up when somebody really needed you to be there and you got them to where they needed to be. That sort of job satisfaction is hard to describe, but it creeps up on you.

Visit flyingdoctor.org.au/careers to find out more about working for the RFDS.



Burra Picnic Races >

THANKS to the organisers of the Burra Picnic Races, who donated \$15,000 to the Royal Flying Doctor Service after another successful race meet last October.

The Burra Picnic Race Club has contributed more than \$75,000 to the RFDS since 2015.



Hats off to Roy >

TWO-YEAR-OLD COWBOY ROY might not look like a literary sensation but that's exactly what he is.

The kid from Wertaloona Station – 50 kilometres from Arkaroola in the Flinders Ranges – inspired his mum Anna to write a best-selling children's book with part proceeds going to the RFDS.

The book, "Where Is Cowboy Roy's Hat?", has sold more than 1,200 copies to date, with more than \$2,200 in sales directed straight to the Flying Doctor.



Vale Robert >

IN OCTOBER, the Oz Outback Odyssey community farewelled long-running and highly-respected event manager Robert Goode.

Sadly, this year's Oz Outback Odyssey has been cancelled due to COVID-19 – however, the organisers are looking forward to hitting the outback tracks in 2021 on the 3,500 kilometre trek from Adelaide to Broome.

Registrations now open
ozoutbackodyssey.com.au.



Campbelltown Rotary >

THE CAMPBELLTOWN ROTARY CLUB raised an incredible \$25,000 last year through its diverse Outback Experience program. The Club has been a long-standing supporter of the Flying Doctor, with its total fundraising efforts in excess of a quarter of a million dollars.

In October, members headed to 160-year-old Anlaby Station, a picturesque homestead in the Flinders Ranges.

Strathalbyn Campdraft >

MORE THAN 90 RIDERS ranging from eight to 76 years old competed at the Strathalbyn Campdraft last November.

Over the last three years, the family event has gone from strength to strength. The Flying Doctor was the fortunate beneficiary of more than \$7,000.

Stealth Support >

WHILE THE KANSAS CITY CHIEFS officially took out the US 2020 Super Bowl, the Flying Doctor also won on the day.

Adelaide-based drilling product company Stealth Tools hosted its annual Super Bowl Party in February, raising close to \$1,000 for the RFDS.



Border Dash >

MORE THAN 30 participants dashed the 13km stretch along the Eyre Highway between the Eucla Motel and the SA/WA border last October in aid of the Flying Doctor.

The walkers and runners were joined by RFDS Community Fundraising Specialist Kristen Newlyn, with all crossing the finish line within two and a half hours.

The 13th annual Border Dash, together with auction and raffle, raised more than \$12,000 to support the RFDS and fellow not-for-profit, Silver Chain.



Generous to a tee >

THE MARCH 2020 course event may have been cancelled, but the PESA Golf Day team still chipped in for the Flying Doctor.

More than \$15,000 was raised from generous participants and sponsors in lieu of event refunds.



Congratulations to Clare >

THE RFDS CLARE Support Group was awarded Community Event of the Year at this year's Clare & Gilbert Valleys Council Australia Day Awards.

Themed 'Bubbles and Bling', the group's Melbourne Cup event featured a five-course lunch in a private marquee.

The lunch raised more than \$10,000 for the Flying Doctor. Well done to all members for their amazing efforts!



Solid Effort >

THE HENLEY AND GRANGE Community Woodworkers have been long-time supporters of RFDS Central Operations. The group handcrafts wooden toys, furniture and artwork for sale with all proceeds directed to our capital equipment program.

The group invited the RFDS late last year to attend a surprise celebration for a major milestone – an amazing \$50,000 donated to the RFDS over 14 years.

Save lives from the ground.



As an RFDS Regular Giver, we make it easy for you to help us deliver urgent care in regional, rural and remote areas throughout South and Central Australia.

You can arrange automatic donations with your credit card, or by direct debit from your bank account – you choose the frequency and the amount – and we look after the rest! With one receipt summary issued annually we also make it easy for you at tax time.

To begin your regular giving today, please call
1800 813 318 or visit flyingdoctor.org.au/sant/regular



Royal Flying Doctor Service

CENTRAL OPERATIONS