



Royal Flying Doctor Service
SOUTH EASTERN SECTION

Year **in** review

2019/20



Contents

03	Ready to help. Wherever. Whenever.	16	How we help
04	Our Mission, Values and Strategic Approach	26	How we work
06	A message from the President and CEO	34	Our People
09	Patron's message	36	Our Funding
10	Our COVID-19 response	47	Stakeholders and Acknowledgements
12	Where we work		

Credit: Cover photo by Malcolm Esling



CASE STUDY

Ready to help. Wherever. Whenever.

Jed was two hour's drive from Broken Hill when he came off his motorbike. A shooting pain in his wrist and ankle quickly told him how much trouble he was in.

Jed was helping muster sheep on a friend's property when his accident happened.

"I was coming around some of the sheep," he remembers, "and this creek bed just seemed to come out of nowhere. I couldn't brake in time and flipped over the front bars of my bike."

Jed fractured his wrist and shattered his ankle, but he says the pain didn't kick in until he tried to stand up. He was helped into the back of a ute for the long journey back into town with nothing but a couple of pillows to cushion the agonising impacts of the bumpy road.

Jed called his mother Tammy on the journey, who in turn called an ambulance. They met halfway and Jed was rushed straight to Broken Hill Hospital.

By the time he arrived, Jed's foot was badly swollen. X-rays soon revealed his ankle was badly shattered and he needed to get to Dubbo for urgent treatment. Tammy said she felt enormous relief when the Flying Doctor arrived the next day to take him there.

"It would have been really daunting for him to travel eight or nine hours in a car in so much pain. There are kangaroos and things on the road, and the stretch between Cobar and Dubbo is really rough."

Soon after arriving in Dubbo, Jed went in for surgery and a plate and pins were put in his ankle to support his recovery.

After surgery, the Flying Doctor team was there again to get him home safely and comfortably. He says they were a very welcome sight, as he had been dreading the trip home.

"I'm six foot two. I wouldn't have fit in a car very well with my leg up."

While he'll have to spend the next couple of months off his feet, Jed's recovery is going well. He says he's looking forward to going out with his mates and playing rugby again, and yes, even getting back on the motorbike. ***"I'm even missing school a little bit to be honest,"*** he admits.

Jed believes his ordeal would have been much tougher without the Flying Doctor by his side.

"They're real lifesavers," he says. "All the team was very nice to me. They're good people."

And Tammy couldn't agree more. ***"I love the Flying Doctor. I think it's amazing what they do, and I felt good with my son in their care. They're absolute saviours."***

Thank you to all our donors and partners, without whom our emergency retrieval work would not be possible.





Our Mission, Values and Strategic Approach

Improved access supporting better health outcomes to remote, rural and regional communities.

Our Statement

The furthest corner. The finest care.

Our Strategy

Community, Healthcare, Service, Funding,
People and Stakeholders.

Our Values

Reliability, Trust, Care and Safety.

For Australians living in rural and remote areas, there are few services more important, trusted and respected than the Royal Flying Doctor Service.

In some of the most remote areas of New South Wales, Queensland, and South Australia, emergency care, health and wellbeing services provided by the Royal Flying Doctor Service (South Eastern Section) are a vital lifeline for communities.

Traditionally, the sheer remoteness of communities in outback Australia, coupled with smaller populations and vast travelling distances, has meant people living outside our major towns and cities have poorer access to many services, including healthcare, compared with their city-based counterparts.

We also recognise that the challenges of living in smaller, isolated communities, such as fewer job opportunities, limited access to educational opportunities, and the impact of the drought, can impact negatively on the overall health and wellbeing of people living and working in these areas.

Through the delivery of broad-ranging, high quality healthcare services, the Royal Flying Doctor Service (South Eastern Section) aims to close the healthcare gap and improve the health outcomes of those living in our regional, rural and remote communities.

Our Values defined

Our Values of Reliability, Trust, Care and Safety have long guided the way we do our work, and the commitments we make to our patients, communities, stakeholders and each other.

This financial year, as an organisation, we undertook a project to explore our staff's understanding of our Values, and agree on clear, practical and authentic definitions. Our aim was to deepen our understanding of the Values, not just as a promise to our communities and stakeholders, but to frame them in active terms that all staff can bring to life in their work every day for the Flying Doctor.

The project involved every role across all our locations, and through our research we discovered proud and energetic participation that told us that our Values, and the reputation of our organisation for upholding them, are points of pride and importance for our teams.

Our strategic approach

Identifying and meeting the healthcare needs of people who live and work in rural and remote communities over the full spectrum of their lives is our focus. That's why, today, the Royal Flying Doctor Service (South Eastern Section) is far more than just an emergency aeromedical service.

Our services now also include primary health clinics in towns and remote communities, mobile dental care services, telehealth GP consultations, face-to-face and phone-based mental health consultations and counselling, and a range of alcohol and other drugs rehabilitation services.

Increasingly, we are providing a broader range of health and wellbeing services, through various delivery channels, to ensure we can support all aspects of a person's healthcare needs regardless of their age and where they live. All our services – from life-saving emergency retrievals to school-based wellbeing programs – are delivered with the highest quality care and safety provided to our patients and clients.

We also provide the vital service of training other clinicians and health professionals in rural areas with the skills they need to respond effectively to the unique challenges and situations faced by those living in remote communities.

While Commonwealth and state government funding and contracts support a large proportion our services, generous supporters including monthly donors, community support groups, partners and major philanthropists also make a significant contribution to our programs and services. Without this combination of funding sources, we would not be able to continue evolving our services for the people in the outback we serve.

The coming year

Continuing to adapt to and manage the ongoing COVID-19 health crisis to ensure our staff and patients stay safe will remain a focus. While many new processes and procedures are now well in place, as the pandemic continues to unfold we will be ready to respond quickly to the needs of those we serve. At the same time, our healthcare teams will continue to deliver high quality care, while growing the reach and diversity of our services. As always, we remain committed to ensuring the people we serve have access to a broad range of healthcare services and facilities long into the future.

Guided by our strategy which focuses on communities, healthcare, service, funding, people and stakeholders, we will continue to provide improved access supporting better health outcomes to remote, rural and regional communities. In doing so, we will work towards ensuring the Royal Flying Doctor Service (South Eastern Section) has a sustainable future as a leading healthcare provider for Australians living, working and travelling in the outback.

A message from the **President** and **CEO**



Ruth Sandow
President



Greg Sam
Chief Executive Officer

Throughout 2019/20 the Royal Flying Doctor Service (South Eastern Section) has continued to operate through unprecedented challenges to deliver quality healthcare to our regional, rural and remote communities.

In looking back on 2019/20, it is tempting to view much of the last four months through the lens of COVID-19 and the impact on our workforce, communities, and operations. While we would certainly like to reflect on the many unique challenges presented by COVID-19, and the demands the changing situation placed on our frontline teams and operations, we should also reflect on the achievements of the eight or so months of this financial year before the pandemic commandeered much of our attention, both as an organisation and country.

Throughout the year we worked against the background of travel restrictions, border closures, and unique clinical challenges caused by additional infection control measures to ensure that we continued to be the reliable healthcare resource for people located or travelling through rural and remote Australia. Emergency retrieval continues to be a priority alongside primary health services and clinics, dental, mental health and alcohol and other drug services. While traditionally the Royal Flying Doctor Service has been one of the few ways people could access these vital medical services, in a year when domestic travel and movement of people in general was radically curtailed, being there for our communities has been an even greater imperative.

Here are some of the highlights from 2019/20.

Resilient and resourceful healthcare services

In a year of disruption, the Royal Flying Doctor Service (South Eastern Section) developed new and resourceful ways to meet community needs, among them delivering respiratory clinics, deploying more telehealth facilities and adapting to the required aircraft sterilisation and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) wearing practices.

In doing so, the service capably held ground on healthcare delivery with 53,000 contacts with patients including alcohol and other drugs and mental health clients, putting us on par with the number of patient contacts in the previous year. We delivered 4,229 clinics and healthcare services across the network, and expanded telehealth services to ensure social distancing did not create undue barriers to healthcare for those in need.

Sustainable and steady growth in healthcare delivery across the Section was fortified further by the delivery of two new remote clinics located in Louth and Tilpa. With a third clinic to be opened at Innamincka, access to quality healthcare has taken a positive leap forward, an advancement made possible through the extraordinarily generous gift of a Flying Doctor supporter.

Clinical challenges presented by COVID-19 curtailed our efforts to deliver dental clinics to the same level as the previous year, but with 760 clinics conducted in 47 locations, we still managed to see well over 5,000 patients.

This year, with the generous support of our health service partners and State Government funding for mental health and chronic disease management, we commenced primary health services in the North West. This was in response to community need, and involves the delivery of services including dental, mental health, alcohol and other drugs, peer support, primary health (nursing) and significant groundwork for the placement of our first General Practitioner in the region, to be based at Grawin.

South Eastern Section board

Left to right: Mrs (Elaine) Ruth Sandow (President), Mr Alex Scamps (Vice President), Mr Tony MacRae (Treasurer), Mr Terry Clark, Dr Saranne Cooke, Ms Elizabeth Johnstone, Professor David Lyle, Mrs Sanchia Treloar, Mrs Joan Treweeke OAM, Mrs Brooke Curtin (Associate Director).



Innovative approaches to mental health services

This year, many communities across our network endured another year of crippling drought. The mental health needs of many in our communities are becoming increasingly more complex, particularly as the ongoing challenges of life on the land became interwoven with the concerns, restrictions and demands of COVID-19. Through the year we opened the Wellbeing Place in Broken Hill and with it, launched an integrated, holistic approach to mental health support and broader wellbeing, an approach elaborated upon further within this Year in Review. Already tremendously successful within the community from Broken Hill and the Far West, the welcoming environment offers a range of complimentary therapies and mental health support resources. This rapid uptake of the Wellbeing Place, in combination with insights into the mental health needs of people in the region, have strengthened our resolve to expand this offering, an endeavour which is now well under development.

Likewise, the 'We've Got Your Back' peer-to-peer program continues to gain momentum and provide valuable support. Each program provides more contact points with our mental health team, and the ability for those in need to see one of our mental health workers in their times of distress and be sure to find themselves in a confidential and supportive care environment. We share more about this program in this edition of the Year in Review.

Launch of industry-leading facilities at the Dubbo base

The inaugural year of our new Royal Flying Doctor Service Visitor Experience at Dubbo has been a resounding success. Made possible through the vision and hard work of the Dubbo Support Group the Royal Flying Doctor Service (South Eastern Section) has delivered a magnificent tourism attraction into the Dubbo community, and with it, a new era of public connection with the Flying Doctor. The centre builds on our tourism agenda by educating how and where we

work as a service, and reinforces the ongoing relevance of our work, both supporting our fundraising endeavours and generating valuable revenue to fund our activities.

Our team at Dubbo have been capably balancing the social distancing demands and the impact of restrictions presented by COVID-19, and we thank them for their perseverance.

Building on the base facility, the new medical and flight training facilities were launched by the Governor of NSW and our Patron, Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AO QC. Now in active use, these training facilities offer both industry-leading education programs and the supporting technology to deliver them to both our staff and external partners.

Our response to COVID-19

Whilst the challenges of COVID-19 may not broadly count as highlights, aspects of our response do deserve mention. The efforts of our teams in adapting to new ways of working should be acknowledged and recognised. The service has played an important role in the broader health system's response to the virus whilst maintaining emergency retrieval services – including for patients with suspected and confirmed cases of COVID-19 – throughout the pandemic. Our dedicated respiratory clinic in Broken Hill and testing clinics around NSW have made it possible for those with symptoms to be tested locally. The suspension of commercial flights to regional centres has limited healthcare access to many regions in NSW so, through agreements with Murrumbidgee and Western NSW Local Health Districts, the Royal Flying Doctor Service (South Eastern Section) transported health workers to ensure continuity of health services. Our thanks go to our frontline teams and staff who make this work possible.

Our generous supporters

In reflecting on the year and the accomplishments of our teams, we are reminded of the many dedicated and generous supporters who made varied and meaningful contributions



to the Royal Flying Doctor Service (South Eastern Section). Drawing on myriad resources, skills, and commitments of time and energy, none of the achievements of the year would have been possible without them, and we would like to express our deepest gratitude to those who contributed including our staff, supporters and volunteers.

As mentioned, three new remote clinics in Innamincka, Louth and Tilpa, with the latter two already operating, were made possible through the determination and vision of a greatly appreciated supporter; we wish to recognise and applaud the dedication of this very special contributor, and to thank them for contributing so actively to our growth. Thanks to you, these communities now have greatly improved clinical facilities.

The successful debut of the Wellbeing Place owes a debt of gratitude to both the Broken Hill Woman's Auxiliary and the Silver City Treadlers. Without the generous support of both, the project would not have been possible. The energy and dedication of these two groups to the health and wellness of the Broken Hill and Far West communities is commendable. We are excited to be working with donors and funding partners this year to realise the next stages of this important project.

To support our service delivery throughout the complexity presented by COVID-19, we received a very generous donation from the Rinehart Medical Foundation. This contribution enabled the preparation of our COVID-19 response, in turn building capacity for future health service

development. Through this gift we expanded our telehealth capability and improved our electronic medical records to help us to better connect with people and communities and aid in rapid patient diagnosis.

We would like to acknowledge Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AO QC and her husband Mr Dennis Wilson, who continued to serve as our patrons. Thank you for your commitment to raising awareness for equitable access to healthcare for those who live, work, and travel in the bush.

We would like to thank the Royal Flying Doctor Service (South Eastern Section) team, our Board, donors, volunteers, supporter groups and organisations for the generous contribution you have made throughout the year. Please know that your efforts are seen, appreciated, and making a vital difference to the lives of Australians in the outback.



Ruth Sandow
President,
Royal Flying Doctor Service
(South Eastern Section)



Greg Sam
Chief Executive Officer,
Royal Flying Doctor Service
(South Eastern Section)





GOVERNMENT HOUSE
SYDNEY

Message from

Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC QC
Governor of New South Wales

As Co-Patrons of the Royal Flying Doctor Service South Eastern Section, Dennis and I are honoured to convey a special message for the Annual Report of an organisation and a service that has been - and continues to be - so critical to the health and well-being of people in rural and remote areas.

This has been an unrelentingly challenging year for the people of New South Wales, with drought, bushfires, floods, and the health, economic and social challenges wrought by the pandemic. Of necessity, in our second year as Patrons of the Service, much of 2020 has been spent closer to home.

Nevertheless, the second half of 2019 offered exciting opportunities for both Dennis and I to witness the operations of the Royal Flying Doctor Service. In October, we were pleased to launch the new Flight Training Device and Medical Training facilities at the Dubbo base, with the Board, staff and friends of the Service. We were also able to partake in the unique experience of climbing aboard the Flight Training device and taking the wheel during a simulation take-off and landing. These training facilities are state-of-the-art, confirming the Service as a leading training provider, and we were proud to officially launch them.

We were also delighted to tour the spectacular Visitor Experience, a tourism facility that demonstrates the Service's ingenuity and rich history, and its importance to the people of outback Australia.

This year, we have seen the Service respond with great foresight and planning to a new and widespread health emergency - COVID-19. This has meant a huge amount of training and preparation to prepare for a possible spike in cases, while demand for emergency, dental, mental health and primary health services has remained high. In rising to these ongoing challenges, we commend the staff who have banded together and demonstrated utmost resilience and determination over the course of the year.

As the inspiring and life-saving work of the Royal Flying Doctor Service continues unabated, Dennis and I look forward to further contributing our support throughout 2020-2021.

Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC QC
Governor of New South Wales

Mr Dennis Wilson

Our COVID-19 response

Like every organisation in the community, the Royal Flying Doctor Service (South Eastern Section) has had to change many things about the way we work in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.



One thing hasn't changed, however: our commitment to providing continued access to healthcare for those living in rural, regional and remote communities.

Protecting the health and wellbeing of our staff members and patients has been our highest priority during this difficult time. At the beginning of the pandemic we established new protocols, procedures and processes designed to keep our people and those we serve safe. These included new cleaning and decontamination zones and regimes. Clinical staff attending COVID suspect or positive patients are now required to shower at the base before leaving work and returning home – and all uniforms are laundered on site in hot water when a shift is completed. We have also delivered thorough training for team members in COVID-safe practices – including the use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) on the road, in the air and in our clinics.

Throughout the pandemic, our strategic decision-making has been driven by a COVID-19 Executive working party comprising representatives from all key business units across the organisation. This has allowed us to maintain a consistent, best-practice approach to managing the risks posed by the virus.

The Flying Doctor has played a critical role in the broader health system's response to COVID-19. We have continued to provide crucial emergency retrieval services – including for patients with suspected and confirmed cases of COVID-19 – throughout the pandemic. We have also been running a dedicated respiratory clinic in Broken Hill and COVID-19 testing clinics around NSW.

The cancellation of domestic flights to regional centres has provided a challenge for many NSW districts. Through agreements with Murrumbidgee and Western NSW Local Health Districts, the Royal Flying Doctor Service (South Eastern Section) stepped up to transport health clinicians to these regions when commercial airlines pulled their services. A Royal Flying Doctor Service Health Transport Service has conducted dedicated flights between Sydney, Wagga Wagga, Griffith, Orange and Dubbo.

Keeping communities informed and reminding them we are still here for them has been another key priority throughout this pandemic. While not able to meet face-to-face, our Community Engagement team has continued to share important information with people through Zoom Q and A sessions, newsletters and our social media channels.

We would like to thank the Rinehart Medical Foundation for their generous contribution to our COVID-19 response. This \$2 million donation has played a critical role in the purchase of PPE and other equipment vital to ensuring the safety of our patients and staff.

We are proud to be standing with regional communities and connecting them with the medical services and care they need at this challenging time. As our nation's response to COVID-19 evolves, we will continue to innovate to keep our staff and our patients safe, while delivering the finest care to the furthest corner.



Where we work

The people we support are as diverse as the communities they call home. Some live on remote single-family stations. Others reside in small towns, and others still are based in large regional centres like Broken Hill or Dubbo. From families with young children to older people living on their own to Aboriginal communities, our patients reflect the unique and rich cultural mix of the region we work in.

What they share is the experience of geographic isolation, and the lack of access to services that comes with it. No one should be denied access to medical care because of where they live. That is why the Royal Flying Doctor Service (South Eastern Section) is committed to meeting the unique physical and mental healthcare needs of all the people who live in the communities we serve.





Our service reach >

Key

- Frequently visited primary (emergency) evacuation locations
- RFDS clinics including fly-in clinics, mobile dental clinics and alcohol and other drugs services
- Interhospital transfers including Air Ambulance locations
- RFDS bases and healthcare facilities
- Rural Aerial Health Service
- Rural Women's GP Service clinics
- Contracted Aeromedical Service Delivery



Our bases

Broken Hill

Broken Hill was the foundation base for the Royal Flying Doctor Service (South Eastern Section) network. For more than 80 years it has been providing health and emergency services to people living in remote communities across five different states.

A 24/7 emergency evacuation service operates out of our Broken Hill base, capable of putting an aeromedical team in the air within 60 minutes of receiving a call. They are supported by an engineering team who maintain our aircraft at a heavy maintenance facility, located on site.

From Broken Hill, our primary healthcare teams travel out to deliver services at 23 clinics in remote and outback communities across the region. These include general practice, mental health, alcohol and other drugs counselling, chronic disease management, oral and dental health as well as women's, child and family health.

The Clive Bishop Medical Centre is also located at our Broken Hill base. It delivers non-emergency health services including immunisations, children's health, chronic disease management, wound care and skin checks. A specialist Breast Care Nurse, funded by the McGrath Foundation, also works from this base.

Broken Hill base is also home to the Bruce Langford Visitor Centre, which features a museum, theatre and shop. Visitors to the Centre can explore the Flying Doctor's rich history, tour the base and see one of our aircraft up close.

Dubbo

Having served communities in the North West of NSW for more than 20 years, our Dubbo base underwent a significant upgrade. The new multipurpose facility features a state of the art aeromedical terminal and training hub, clinical training facilities, four aircraft shelters to facilitate patient transfers and an immersive Visitor Experience. It was designed to support improved patient care and the continued growth in demand for our emergency retrieval services and health services in the region.

A range of healthcare services and clinics in remote communities are delivered from our Dubbo base. These include general practice, women's, child and family healthcare, and alcohol and other drug counselling. We also run specialist clinics with visiting medical consultants including ear, nose and throat specialists.

A team of dentists also travel out from the base to deliver oral and dental care services and clinics in remote communities including Bourke, Lightning Ridge, Goodooga and Collarenebri. With the use of our dental van, the team also visits 13 smaller remote communities, where they provide dental care and deliver monthly Aged Care Oral Health programs and school-based Toothbrushing Programs.

Flight crew teams deliver 24/7 aeromedical emergency retrieval and inter-hospital patient transfer services which includes supporting NSW Ambulance. Additionally, non-emergency patient transfer services are provided from our Dubbo base.

Mascot

Our team of pilots, engineers and support staff based at Mascot are primarily responsible for delivering 24/7 aviation support to NSW Ambulance. Medical staff from NSW Ambulance fly in our aircraft to metropolitan, rural and remote locations delivering emergency and inter-hospital patient transfer services.

Bankstown

In a program delivered for the Rural Area Health Service, we provide pilot and aircraft services to enable Rural Area Health Service clinicians travel to towns such as Bourke and Brewarrina to deliver GP and other primary services.

Cobar

We deliver an Alcohol and Other Drugs program from our facility in Cobar in partnership with other service providers and health organisations. We aim to expand these services to include mental health staff and programs.

Other bases

Launceston

Our team of pilots and engineers based at Launceston are primarily responsible for delivering 24/7 aviation support to Ambulance Tasmania, which provides medical teams supporting communities across Tasmania and the Bass Strait Islands.

Essendon

From this facility, our team of pilots and engineers are contracted to support Royal Flying Doctor Service Victoria in the provision of weekly aeromedical services. The team supports RFDS Vic Section in the provision of non-emergency patient transfer services, including transportation of neonatal and paediatric patients.

CASE STUDY

Tilpa gets a brand new clinic

April 2020 saw the opening of two new, state of the art clinics – one in the remote community of Tilpa. Clinic Coordinator, Belinda Bennett, says the local community have been quick to embrace the new facility.



“People are very excited about it. It’s extremely special and we’re very honoured to have been chosen as one of the communities to get one of these clinics.”

“The building gives you the feeling of being in a real medical centre.”

Made possible thanks to a generous gift from our longstanding supporter Lysia, the new building has two consultation rooms, a mental health room and a fully equipped dental room. Doctors, dentists, nurses and other health practitioners working at the clinic now have access to the specialised equipment they need to deliver a broad range of vital health services. Telehealth facilities will also enable those unable to get into town to access specialist appointments. The new building in Tilpa replaces the makeshift ‘donga’, which had provided a base for the health clinic in the community for the last 50 years. Belinda says the services provided at the clinic are paramount to the health and wellbeing of locals.

“A couple of years ago a little girl fell and hurt her leg when she was playing on a pile of wood. Just by luck we had a clinic here the same week and the doctor who was on that day was quite concerned, and wanted her flown to Broken Hill. She was flown there that afternoon and it was lucky he requested that because the hospital later discovered that she had acute leukaemia,” Belinda recalls.

Belinda also had a health scare which was picked up by the Flying Doctor. *“I had bowel cancer, which was discovered at the clinic. Without that doctor there that day, who knows where I’d be now.”*

While COVID-19 has restricted the number of visits to the clinic in its first few months of operation, Belinda is looking forward to consultations slowly returning to normal from June. She says the clinic provides so much more than a medical service to the community.

“Clinic day is a day people enjoy coming together. It gets them out and about and gives us the chance to have a coffee, a chat and a laugh.”

A second remote clinic in Louth also opened in April, and another is due to open in Innamincka in the coming months thanks to Lysia’s gift.



How we help: **Emergency retrieval and patient transfer**

10 Evacuations on average per month

Responding to medical emergencies in the outback has been a critical service of the Flying Doctor since its inception. Today, our Emergency Retrieval team continues to rescue and treat critically ill and injured patients, some of whom have life-threatening conditions. This service operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week, responding to emergency callouts in aircraft that are fully equipped critical care units.

To support patients in the outback and rural communities with limited access to medical services, we also operate a Non-Emergency Patient Transport service seven days a week from 6am to 10pm. This team coordinates and manages the transfer of patients living in Western and Southern NSW who have non-life-threatening conditions but require transportation to and from hospitals for surgery, treatments or diagnostic testing in larger centres. These patients are cared for by a flight nurse who travels with them on the flight and between the airfield and hospital.

We conduct the Non-Emergency Patient Transport service with NSW Health using two of our own aircraft, which are based at Dubbo Airport, and nine patient transport vehicles housed at airfields in Dubbo (3 vehicles), Bankstown, Orange, Wagga Wagga, Griffith, Bourke and Lightning Ridge.

Snapshot of the Year

- Adapting to the COVID-19 pandemic was by far the most challenging task of the year for the emergency retrieval and patient transfer team. Within a short timeframe, we established new protocols, procedures and processes to ensure the safety of staff and patients. This included implementing new equipment and cleaning regimes, and training all staff – our pilots, clinicians, flight nurses and drivers – in the use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and respirators. With no access to testing of suspected cases, all patients showing symptoms of COVID-19 were transported and treated as positive cases and new safety practices were adopted during these retrievals. We are grateful for significant funding from the Rinehart Medical Foundation towards our COVID-19 response and preparation, including the purchase of PPE and vital equipment required for the safety of patients and staff. We also thank the NSW and Federal Governments for providing funding for cars and iPads for our clinics.

7,937 Inter-hospital patient transfers

- Our role as an education and training provider has continued to grow. In addition to working with NSW Ambulance to train new doctors and paramedics in emergency medical procedures, our new medical simulation centre at the Dubbo base has provided more opportunities to deliver new and varied training courses. Doctors and nurses from Dubbo Base Hospital completed specialist trauma training at the new training centre. We also ran General Practitioner (GP) Training and Emergency Skills workshops for staff from Western NSW Local Health District (WNSWLHD), and developed a new Advanced Airway Management course, which achieved accreditation by the Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists and Australasian College of Emergency Medicine.
- In November 2019, we ran a farm-based simulated training course for 23 local GP Registrars in the network. In addition to gaining critical skills to manage farming injuries such as quad-bike accidents, snake bites or arm injuries, the participants learned how to support patients until emergency help, such as the Flying Doctor, arrives. The training also including practical tips for GPs such as the type of information to communicate to the retrieval team to aid a rescue.
- Together with teams from other emergency services organisations, we participated in an intense simulated emergency training exercise at Dubbo Regional Airport. The mock scenario saw a simulated collision between two planes that were taxiing on the runway, causing multiple people to be injured. The protocols, procedures and capabilities of each agency's response to the incident were monitored and evaluated.
- Recruitment is underway to increase staff at our Operations Centre at Dubbo Base, which will soon move to a 24-hour service. Our expanding operations function is designed to support the efficient growth of our health service delivery. We are broadening the range of tasks managed by this Centre to improve the services for our health and medical crews in Dubbo and Broken Hill.

How we help: Primary Healthcare

From our traditional bases in Dubbo and Broken Hill and our remote clinics, our Primary Healthcare team delivers a broad range of health services to people living in rural, regional and remote communities. These include general practice, women's child and family health services, mental health, alcohol and other drugs services, dental and general healthcare throughout life as well as a current focus on chronic disease management.

Our experienced and hard-working team of clinicians and allied health professional includes GPs, nurse practitioners, remote area nurses, primary health nurses and Aboriginal health practitioners as well as dentists, eye specialists, dermatologists, mental health workers and ear nose and throat specialists. A specialist Breast Care Nurse, generously funded by the McGrath Foundation, also operates out of our Broken Hill base, offering much-needed care, counselling and psychosocial support to patients.

We also provide 24-hour support and access to a medical officer through our telehealth services, and a five-day-per-week telehealth GP service for those unable to travel long distances for a face-to-face consultation.

Our Primary Healthcare team plays an important role in delivering key health information and education in remote communities.

Our medical chests, which are located at remote locations across the network, offer access to emergency pharmaceuticals and medical supplies.

Snapshot of the Year

- COVID-19 provided a significant challenge for the entire Primary Healthcare team. Many new policies and processes were promptly developed to ensure our response was the best it could be for people and communities in the case of a surge in coronavirus cases. All of this was achieved above and beyond our 'business as usual' responsibilities.
- Every member of the team has gone the extra mile to make sure we have continued to deliver on the healthcare needs of the communities we serve during this difficult time. The fact our business has continued to deliver on the vast majority of what we had planned is testament to their dedication and hard work.
- Our telehealth service continues to grow with units installed in Wanaaring and other locations across the West and Far West this year. Our Digital Health Steering Committee has developed a plan for telehealth to take us into the future, and a full-time Telehealth Doctor is now available for consultations. A large amount of telehealth equipment will be installed in coming months thanks to support from our donors.
- Our new clinic facilities in Tilpa and Louth are now open for consultations. A third clinic at Innamincka is ready to be moved into location and will open when COVID-19 border restrictions are lifted. Our thanks go to a longstanding donor who made these clinics possible and the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, who have so generously provided consulting spaces and accommodation, free of charge, for the last 12 months.
- We revised our Service Plan and added Pine View and Durham Downs stations to the list of locations we deliver primary health clinics. We also stepped up our delivery of services in the north west of NSW in communities such as Grawin, using a fly-in-fly-out and drive model for our healthcare teams. Our Primary Health Vehicles continue to increase the number of remote communities we can reach – and are particularly useful in supporting those living with chronic diseases.
- The Primary Healthcare team continued to grow this year. We welcomed two new registrars, two Quality and Safety Officers based in Dubbo, an Infection Control Nurse and a Health Information Manager into our team. We also employed a Nurse Practitioner, who will operate primarily out of Clive Bishop Medical Centre, giving our team greater capacity to prescribe medications, bill through Medicare and deliver a range of additional services.
- Looking to the year ahead, we are focused on moving forward with our rural and remote Clinical Training Agenda. Our longer-term goal is to develop a Royal Flying Doctor Service Centre of Excellence for the training of new and existing team members. Ultimately, we will continue to work towards the Royal Flying Doctor Service (South Eastern Section) being a leader in training in rural and remote health.

CASE STUDY

Training indigenous dental champions



Tellulah Mahoney got much more than she bargained for when she visited a Flying Doctor dental clinic in her hometown of Lightning Ridge. She went in for a clean and came out with an opportunity for a rewarding career change.

This year Tellulah became the Flying Doctor's first indigenous trainee dental assistant to complete her Dental Assistant Course. She says she was over the moon.

"It means a lot to me. I absolutely love this job and it has been an amazing experience to be part of this team."

Tellulah completed her course over 12 months, working three days a week in our remote dental clinics while completing a Certificate III in Dental Assisting. She then travelled to Penrith to complete the practical component of the certificate.

Since completing her course, Tellulah has become a permanent member of our Dental Team. She is now delivering a range of oral health programs and services in Lightning Ridge and other remote communities in the region including Goodooga and Collarenebri. We would simply not be able to offer many of these services on a regular basis without her hard work and dedication.

As part of her work, Tellulah runs toothbrushing and oral health programs in local schools and pre-schools, as well as with aged care residents in Lightning Ridge and Collarenebri. She says they are vital to the general health of her community.

"It's super important to keep educating people about dental health. From our point of view, their mouth is probably the most important part of your body. Everything goes through it."

"I give them some tips and explain why good dental care is so important. And I make sure they have all the equipment they need to keep cleaning their teeth."

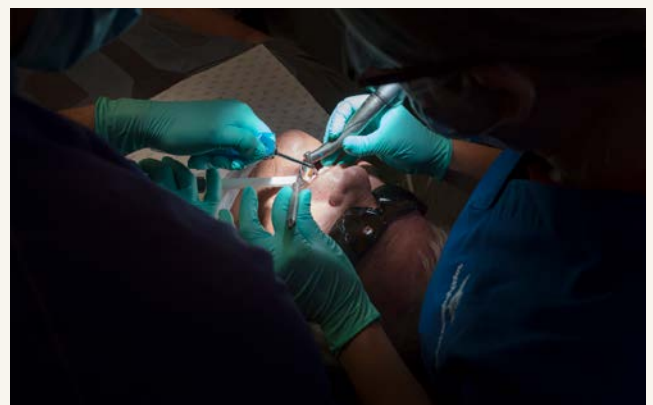
Born and bred in Lightning Ridge, Tellulah says she loves being able to connect with her community and make a difference to people through her work.

"I like that people enjoy coming in to see us. Nobody likes seeing the dentist, but I feel like people are more comfortable when they come to see us."

"And I've noticed a big improvement. People are taking better care of their teeth for sure."

Tellulah has a simple message for anyone thinking about getting involved with the Flying Doctor's indigenous trainee dental assistant program.

"Go for it. It's awesome. It's an amazing job."



How we help: Dental Care

From our bases in Dubbo and Broken Hill, our remote clinics, and our specialist dental van, we deliver dental and oral health programs and services that would otherwise be unavailable in the remote communities we serve.

757
clinics
conducted

185
child
clinics

572
adult
clinics

5,012
dental
patient visits

Snapshot of the year

- We celebrated with Tellulah Mahoney, our first indigenous trainee to complete her Dental Assistant Course. Now qualified, she has joined our team on a permanent basis, representing the Flying Doctor on the ground in Lightning Ridge. She will run a range of oral health and education programs in her community, including one targeted at new and expecting mothers and babies.
- A second indigenous Dental Assistant, Keah Gibbs, based in Bourke, is due to complete her course in June. These trainees are playing a vital role, improving the way we consult and engage with local communities. Having local people as part of the team means we can continue programs we may not be able to run on a regular basis, or at times that suit residents.
- Dubbo-based Oral Health Therapist, Rachel Herbert, stepped up into the leadership role for the dental team at the base. We were pleased to be able to fill this role internally, as it demonstrates our strong commitment to providing career development opportunities to all team members.
- We launched Aged Care programs in Bourke, Collarenebri and Lightning Ridge, providing dental assessments and oral health education for both residents and staff at facilities. Our indigenous trainee Dental Assistants will play a vital role in the delivery of this program.
- Our new, purpose-built remote clinics in Tilpa and Louth have been fitted out with specialist dental rooms. The equipment available in these fully functional, state-of-the-art surgeries will allow our practitioners to provide a full range of dental procedures and improve patient care.
- Our mentoring program for final year dentistry students from Sydney University proved a great success, with more than 20 students taking part in the five-week program. The students gained valuable, hands-on experience, and supported the running of clinics across the network. At the time of writing, this program is on hold temporarily due to COVID-19 restrictions, however, we plan to get it up and running again as soon as possible.
- The oral healthcare program we deliver to the inmates of Macquarie Prison continues to go from strength to strength. It is a great example of the flexibility our dental van provides to take services to where they are needed most.
- The COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on where and how we delivered services in the last quarter of the financial year. It limited the number of communities we were able to visit, and the types of procedures we were able to provide. We listened closely to individual communities throughout this time to find the best way to meet their oral health needs. With restrictions easing, our dental care programs and clinics began returning to normal in June.
- Despite the disruption caused by COVID-19, all our existing agreements and contracts remain in place at the time of publication. It is a significant vote of confidence in our service at a difficult time.

How we help: Community Engagement

To learn more about the health needs of the communities we serve, we visit patients at clinics and facilities, as well as people in their homes and on their properties.

We also meet with other stakeholders including local businesses, councils and Aboriginal land councils to find out how we can work collaboratively to deliver the best health outcomes for people living in remote areas.

From these conversations we gather vital information about the needs and demographics of our patients, as well as the accessibility of our services and the suitability of our buildings and facilities. These insights underpin our model of healthcare and help us better shape our services and programs for the future.

Snapshot of the year

- The Community Engagement team played a key role in the Flying Doctor's step up of service delivery in the Far North West of NSW. We consulted extensively in the region and conducted needs assessments in remote communities like Grawin and Goodooga. As a result, we were able to respond to community requests for additional services such as dental and mental health care. Better understanding of what these communities need means we can staff remote clinics with the right people to meet those needs.
- We did a significant amount of consultation work around the design and delivery of the new health service model for the Royal Flying Doctor Service (South Eastern Section). We went door-to-door in numerous communities, listening closely to what people need from us in the communities we work. The outcome is a more flexible service model, that allows us to go to where the need is greatest. In response to community requests, we also added new remote clinics at Pine View and Durham Downs stations.
- With consumers now represented on each of our committees, community consultation and engagement are now heavily embedded at every level across our organisation.
- COVID-19 restrictions presented some significant challenges when consulting face-to-face with community members. Where possible, we have continued to visit communities in person, ensuring to observe strict social distancing rules. In cases where that has been impractical, we have made use of telehealth facilities.
- Keeping our communities informed during the pandemic – and reminding them we are still here for them – has been a key priority for our team. Throughout the period we have run Zoom Question & Answer sessions with communities to keep them up to date with the latest developments. We have also set up a Facebook page and distributed newsletters dedicated to sharing important COVID-related information.
- Our Community Engagement team was heavily involved in producing new instructions and manuals for our medical chests. With a range of new drugs added to the chests, we consulted with our community advisory group to make sure all information made sense and was easy to read.
- We kept graziers informed about necessary and recommended changes to airstrips.



How we help: Mental Health services and Alcohol and Other Drugs programs

The Royal Flying Doctor Service (South Eastern Section) has a growing team of multidisciplinary mental health and wellbeing professionals who provide services and supports so people in remote and rural communities can live healthy and positive lives across all stages of their lifespan.

3,810
face-to-face consultations

2,885
telehealth sessions

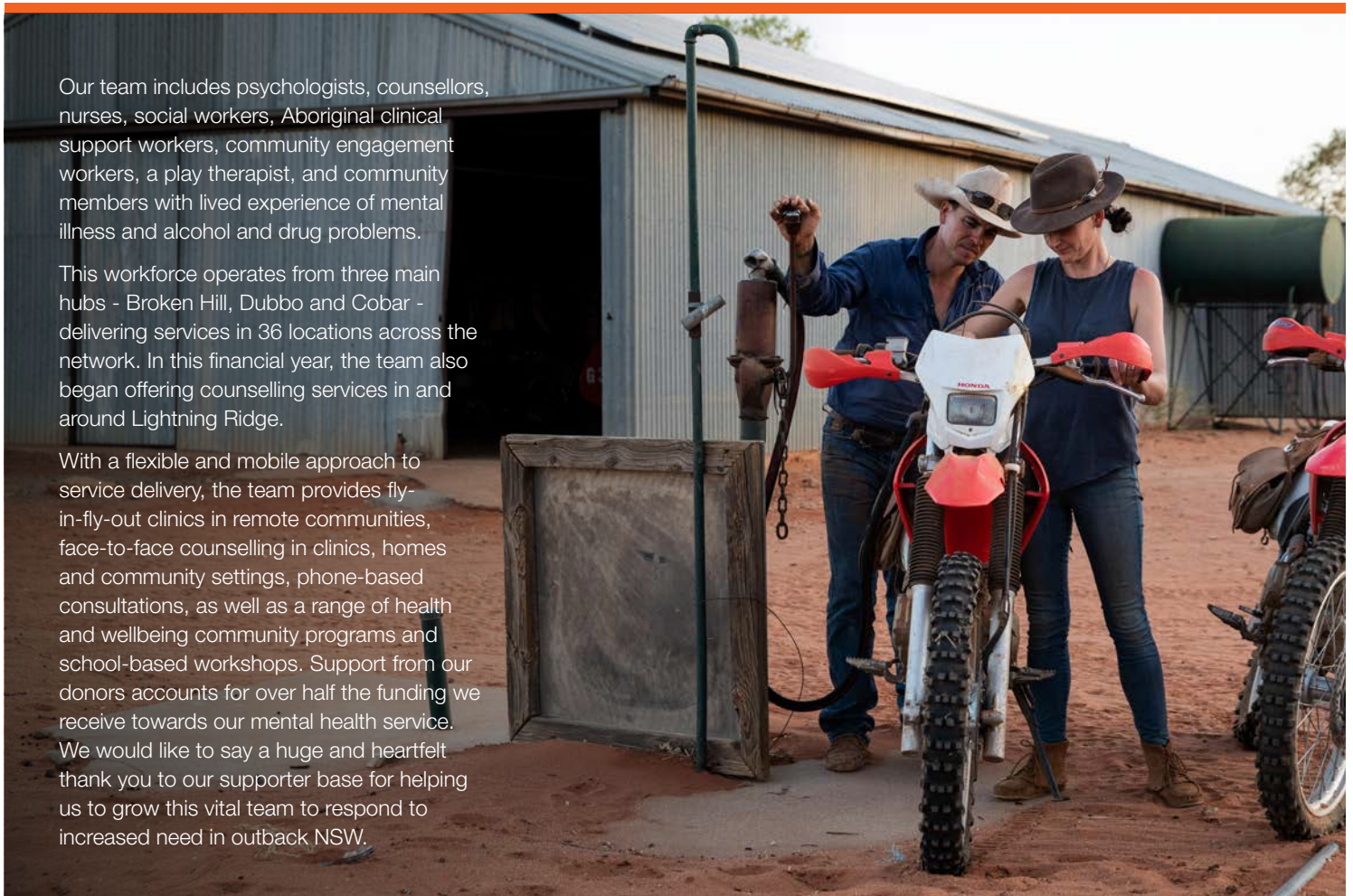
1,613
clinics

36
Service/clinic locations

Our team includes psychologists, counsellors, nurses, social workers, Aboriginal clinical support workers, community engagement workers, a play therapist, and community members with lived experience of mental illness and alcohol and drug problems.

This workforce operates from three main hubs - Broken Hill, Dubbo and Cobar - delivering services in 36 locations across the network. In this financial year, the team also began offering counselling services in and around Lightning Ridge.

With a flexible and mobile approach to service delivery, the team provides fly-in-fly-out clinics in remote communities, face-to-face counselling in clinics, homes and community settings, phone-based consultations, as well as a range of health and wellbeing community programs and school-based workshops. Support from our donors accounts for over half the funding we receive towards our mental health service. We would like to say a huge and heartfelt thank you to our supporter base for helping us to grow this vital team to respond to increased need in outback NSW.



Snapshot of the year

- Following a successful pilot, our newest mental health program, 'We've Got Your Back' has grown significantly. This program, which is delivered in partnership with Lifeline Broken Hill Country to Coast, offers face-to-face peer support to people living on the land via a network of trained 'Champions' who have experienced mental health issues and hard times in the past. Our Champions are trained and supported by mental health professionals to engage in genuine conversations about mental health and wellbeing, provide advocacy for people impacted by drought and illness, and link others in their community to appropriate services. In this financial year, our team of champions grew to seven, all of whom are graziers living in rural communities served by the Royal Flying Doctor Service (South Eastern Section). See our story about this program on page 24.
- In May 2020, we moved our Mental Health and Alcohol and Other Drugs workforce to dedicated premises in the heart of Broken Hill that is welcoming, nurturing and comfortable for our clients. The new space, known as the Wellbeing Place, provides the opportunity to expand our range of services, as well as offer workshops and wellbeing programs such as yoga, art therapy and meditation in a more appropriate venue. Clients can visit counsellors in this warm and welcoming environment. This relocation was made possible thanks to generous donations from the Broken Hill Women's Auxiliary and the Silver City Bush Treadlers. See our story about the Wellbeing Place on page 28
- In December our Alcohol and Other Drugs team launched a new health and wellbeing program focused on encouraging young people to live healthy lives through learning about growing and producing the food we eat. Known as 'Guiding Rural Outback Wellbeing (GROW)', the program aims to encourage students to look after their health as well as the health of the planet. With the goal of building resilience and practical skills, GROW provides the young participants with wrap-around peer support, opportunities to connect with nature, a way to learn about food systems, and a connection to the country. This program is a highly effective way to engage with youth around early intervention for mental health and alcohol and other drugs and provides an effective pathway to offer education to teachers, parents and the wider community. Although the program successfully kicked off in the small town of Gulargambone on the Western Plains of NSW, further roll-out was put on hold as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- We enhanced our child and family-focused mental health services and support in Far West NSW with the addition of a play therapist, who commenced in September 2019 in one of two positions funded by the Commonwealth Government. This therapist is based in Broken Hill and travels throughout our remote network to work with children and families, and in schools. We also have a dedicated child and family social worker. This focus on child and family mental health services aligns with our strategy to provide support across an individual's entire lifespan.
- In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, our counsellors switched from face-to-face to phone-based consultations for a brief period. Feedback about the phone-based consultations was positive, with clients continuing to access support and services despite the change in delivery method. Face-to-face consultations resumed in late May with some clients beginning to attend our new Wellbeing Place.
- We commenced a mental health service in the North West of NSW, providing support in Lightning Ridge and outreaching to surrounding communities. Based on a 'farmgate' model, this service is provided by a qualified counsellor with a farming background, who visits properties offering mental health and wellbeing support. The counsellor is supported by a 'champion' with lived experience who is also available for people to speak with. Delivering counselling through this farmgate model is a new service approach for our team in this region.
- Our Alcohol and Other Drugs program continued to offer counselling and community engagement programs in communities across the network. A mentoring program delivered in Broken Hill Prison was one new initiative, however, unfortunately the COVID-19 pandemic meant this program was put on hold. We hope to reinstate it at a later stage.
- We received funding to employ a Senior Alcohol and Other Drugs Practice Specialist who provides professional development, education and supervision to Alcohol and Other Drugs professionals in and around Broken Hill, Dubbo and Cobar, as well as in three Aboriginal communities managed by our partner Lives Lived Well.



CASE STUDY

Showing people in the bush that 'We've Got Your Back'

Our latest mental health initiative, 'We've Got Your Back', is providing vital face-to-face support to people struggling with hardships associated with drought and living in remote areas. Delivered in partnership with Lifeline Broken Hill Country to Coast, the program trains rural 'Champions' to provide one-on-one support to others in their community who are going through a tough time.





Champions are local graziers who have personal experience dealing with a mental health challenge. They connect with people in their homes, over the phone or at local events, engaging in genuine conversations about mental health and connecting people with the services they need.

Champion Richard Wilson knows how important those conversations can be.

“I went through a scary time myself. I didn’t know what was happening to me. I was sleeping 15 hours every day and I lost all my energy and enthusiasm. I knew there was something wrong, but I couldn’t put my finger on it. Was it old age? Was I getting sick?”

“I dodged social interactions and became a recluse.”

For Richard, the penny dropped after a chance encounter with a visitor to his property who had experience of living with depression.



“I went and saw the GP the next day and was diagnosed with depression straight away. I felt a weight lifted off my shoulders when I finally understood why I was feeling the way I was. I did six weeks of counselling, and ended up in tears every session, but every time I walked out of there I felt better.”

“I look back to where I was then and where I am now and they’re worlds apart. Thank god that first conversation happened.”

When Richard first heard about the ‘We’ve Got Your Back’ program, he saw it as a chance to become a “link in that chain of support to help people through difficult times”.

He says he is humbled by the opportunity to use his experiences to help others facing mental health challenges as a result of drought, fire, floods or the pressures of isolation. He has a simple and powerful message for anyone thinking about reaching out for help:

“It’s not a sign of weakness. I believe it’s a sign of strength to say you’re suffering.”

Project Coordinator Emma Osman agrees. She says peer-support programs like ‘We’ve Got Your Back’ are known to reduce stigma around mental health and help people feel connected and understood. They also provide an important source of mateship and hope.

Our wonderful ‘We’ve Got Your Back’ team continues to grow, with seven Champions now on board.

How we work: fleet and equipment

Our doctors, nurses, dental team and allied health professionals deliver vital health services by air, road, phone and in person. These frontline teams are supported by engineers, aviation experts, operations staff, safety and training professionals and aircraft and ground crew who all work together to ensure our patients and clients receive the highest quality care wherever they are.

In 2019/20, our teams delivered 4,229 primary health clinics, answered 6,698 telehealth calls, treated more than 5,000 dental patients, supported more than 1,100 mental health/ alcohol and other drugs clients and transported some 8,058 patients for emergencies or hospital transfers. The COVID-19 pandemic impacted the delivery of face-to-face services and clinics, but we adapted by increasing access to phone-based consultations across the network.

Snapshot of the year

- Modification of two Beechcraft King Air B350 aircraft was completed, with the final aircraft entering service in March 2020. The interiors of the aircraft were modified for emergency retrieval use, but also allow for the aircraft to be switched to seats-only configuration. This brings our fleet of 'multi role' aircraft to five. These new aircraft interiors were developed in close consultation with clinical and aviation staff based on experience with the existing fleet.
- We installed a high-tech Flight Training Device in the new training facility at Dubbo base for use by our aviation teams. See Safety and Training for more on this.
- In response to the COVID-19 pandemic which forced regional airlines to reduce their flight schedules and routes making it difficult for medical staff to travel where they are needed, we were able to step up and offer some flights for the Western NSW Local Health District and Murrumbidgee Local Health District. This 'Health Transport Service' received great feedback from the clinicians using it.
- The technical Flight Data Analysis Program was extended to now monitor more of our fleet. This system captures all flight data recorded on the aircraft. In-depth analysis of the flight data helps to identify trends in the aircraft operations and performance. The trend data is used to identify operational efficiencies and improve pilot training outcomes.
- A trial of a five-blade composite propeller (current propellers have four blades) manufactured by BLR Aerospace is underway using one of our B350 aircraft. Our aim is to find ways to improve aircraft flight performance and reduce propeller noise and cabin vibration for the comfort of patients and staff.



5,175,211
Kilometres flown



21
Aircraft



10
Road Vehicles



3
Primary Health Vehicles



1
Dental Van

How we work: facilities and upgrades

Ensuring our patients, clients and staff have access to the best possible health services, medical equipment and facilities is vitally important for the continued success of the Royal Flying Doctor Service (South Eastern Service). We invest in new facilities and equipment, and commit to ongoing improvements for our existing infrastructure, bases and remote airstrips.



Snapshot of the year

- In September 2019, our new multipurpose redevelopment at the Dubbo base was officially opened. This project - which has been under construction for several years - comprises a state of the art aviation and medical training facility coupled with a first-class visitor experience centre. The training facility is built around a world-class Flight Training Device which is used to train our in-house pilots in the highest of safety standards. The adjacent Medical Training Centre comprises a hospital skills lab, control room, lecture room, learning centre and cabin trainer. The Visitor Experience is an exceptional tourist attraction that tells the history of the Flying Doctor and our role today in providing vital healthcare services to outback communities. See page 32 for more about the training precinct and see page 46 for a story about the Visitor Experience.
- In April 2020 two purpose-built clinic buildings were opened in the remote communities of Louth and Tilpa. Staffed by fly-in-fly-out health teams, the clinics are equipped to provide dental care, mental health and other primary healthcare services. These clinics also offer a dedicated telehealth space which is accessible at any

time between scheduled clinic days. Previously, our clinics in these communities were run from community spaces such as community halls or dongas. These dedicated health clinic buildings are the first for both communities, bringing healthcare facilities up to the standard regional communities deserve. See our profile on page 15, for more about the Tilpa clinic.

- A third purpose-built health clinic in Innamincka, South Australia, has been constructed and will also provide accommodation for permanent staff in the town to service the community and surrounding areas. The delivery of the Innamincka clinic is delayed, as a result of COVID-19 disruption to imports and domestic travel restrictions.
- The design and build of all three clinics were funded through a generous donation from a longstanding donor. The South Australian Government Regional Growth Fund also provided funding for the Innamincka clinic.
- Our Broken Hill Mental Health and Alcohol and Other Drugs team was moved from the base to a dedicated rental space in the heart of Broken Hill where consultations and wellbeing workshops and programs will be offered when COVID-19 restrictions are lifted. The space has been renovated and fitted out by the team as a welcoming and comfortable centre for everyone from the community to enjoy. See our profile on page 28 for more on the new Wellbeing Place.
- In mid-June, we opened new a corporate office in Elizabeth Street, Sydney. All staff from our CBD and Mascot offices were relocated to the refurbished premises. The new office space has enabled the consolidation of two Sydney office locations which housed the Marketing & Fundraising Team and Aviation Team along with the Office of the CEO and People, Culture and Technology.



CASE STUDY

Our new warm and welcoming Wellbeing Place

Accessing mental health support can be difficult for families in remote, rural and regional Australia. Despite mental illness having a similar prevalence in both rural and metropolitan regions, those in the city are 80 percent more likely to access services.



With growing need for mental health services, our plans for a new and welcoming 'Wellbeing Place' in Broken Hill are well underway. Thanks to the support of the Broken Hill Women's Auxiliary and the Silver City Bush Treaders, our rapidly expanding Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drugs Team moved from our Broken Hill base to a newly rented space in the heart of town where they will be more accessible to those living, working and travelling through Broken Hill.

Approximately 45,000 people live within a 90-minute drive of Broken Hill. With the drought and COVID-19 pandemic impacting on livelihoods, we are finding that more and more families in the outback are requesting our vital mental health services to help them develop coping strategies to support them through the tough times ahead.

The rental space is the first stage of a multi-year project, which will bring holistic and evidence-based mental health and therapeutic services to Broken Hill and surrounding towns.

"The idea is to bring our team together under one roof and create a safe and trusting entry point for people to access professional support and engage in activities to enhance or maintain their sense of wellbeing," explains Vanessa Latham, Mental Health Manager and passionate advocate of the project.

"When people travel to town, they will now be able to access our team more easily and in a more homely and warm environment."

The aim of the Wellbeing Place is to engage with individuals and communities as early as possible in the cycle of health and wellbeing. This will prevent mild and moderate mental ill health from becoming severe, and reduce reliance on emergency mental health care, including retrievals. The new facility will also help to reduce stigma, and support families to recognise when a loved one's mental health is deteriorating; helping them to seek treatment and recover.

The Wellbeing Place will enable our team to broaden the scope of activities provided to achieve these aims, and will align with the team's strategic focus to treat people holistically and promote positive health and wellbeing.





“The Wellbeing Place provides an opportunity to expand our range of services from clinical mental health treatment to workshops and programs for wellbeing and preventative health. There is space for yoga, meditation practice and group workshops, a ‘shed’ for skills building, and areas for people to mingle and hang out. We also have a library full of books and resources to enhance wellbeing,” Vanessa says.

Mental Health and Alcohol and Other Drugs Administrator, Kate Clarke has been involved in the planning and setup of the new facility.

“We started opening our doors at the rented Wellbeing Place by appointment in May. The clients are all astounded by it. People have said it is calm, welcoming and peaceful. The clinicians love it too!” she says.

While many of the plans for the space have not yet come to fruition due to COVID-19 restrictions, Kate says it will be a great place to accommodate workshops and programs run by Flying Doctor staff or external organisations for the benefit of the community or visitors from outlying towns.

We are excited to be working with significant donors and funding partners this year to realise the next stages of this important project.



How we work: Clinical Quality and Safety

2019/20 saw significant changes to our Clinical Quality and Safety team – as well as how we work.

COVID-19 has presented an enormous challenge for the Royal Flying Doctor Service (South Eastern Section). However, it has also provided a unique opportunity to review our clinical governance systems and processes, change management and emergency response plans to better meet the health needs of the communities we serve.

Snapshot of the year

- In response to the pandemic, we introduced a range of measures to protect the health and safety of both patients and team members. These included:
 - Providing Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) for all team members – not just frontline medical staff – as well as training on how to use and wear it
 - Creating specific decontamination areas, where team members can safely shower and decontaminate their skin before going home to their families
 - Changing the way, we intubate and manage patients with respiratory conditions
 - Changing some of the medications we carry.
- In addition to these measures, we worked closely with the Aviation Safety team to develop an internal emergency response plan. This was a great example of the collegial, organisation-wide approach we have taken to our COVID-19 response.
- The Clinical Quality and Safety team has also played a key role in the Royal Flying Doctor Service (South Eastern Section) COVID-19 working party, assisting the senior leadership group in their decision-making in response to the pandemic.
- The Community Engagement and Clinical Education teams have been brought under Clinical Quality and Safety umbrella. This reflects their vital role in getting key health messages out to remote locations, and consulting with communities about their health needs. The team is now known as the Governance, Engagement and Development Team.
- With the implementation of the new Manager of Governance, Engagement and Development, we have created two dedicated Health Quality Safety Officer roles. These positions have been filled and have commenced providing clinical governance support to wider health services.
- An external consultant completed the medico-legal framework for the organisation.
- Despite the challenges of COVID-19 we achieved accreditation this year with the Royal Australian College of General Practice (RACGP) for our clinics at Menindee, Ivanhoe and other bush locations. Our health services continue preparation work towards the National Safety and Quality in Health Care Standards survey planned for 2021.
- Demonstrating our commitment to provide career development opportunities to young medical practitioners, we have continued to maintain student placements throughout the pandemic in partnership with the Broken Hill University Department of Rural Health. More stringent clinical governance processes have been put in place to protect the health of these students.



How we work: Aviation Safety

Responsibility for ensuring our patients are transported safely rests with our flight operations and engineering teams. All our pilots and engineers are highly skilled in the maintenance and operation of our fleet. All our aircraft and on-board equipment are checked prior to each flight, and routine maintenance is conducted every 200 hours of flying.

Snapshot of the year

- The Royal Flying Doctor Service (South Eastern Section) Health and Aviation teams were actively involved in the annual emergency exercise, 'Bolt', at Dubbo Airport. Our participation involved a practical, onsite response by the Health team and an initial assessment by our Emergency Response team. Our objects for participating in the emergency exercise were to test our:
 - Internal Emergency Response Plan
 - Clinical Emergency Retrieval Team response
 - Ability to respond at short notice with limited staff on duty
 - Ability to assist as a responding agency after a significant event
 - Clinical facilities for suitability.
- We reached out to airstrip owners across the network, asking them to provide accurate and updated information on the length and condition of their airstrips and any changes that may have occurred. This was done in order to ensure the airstrips are fit and equipped for safe retrievals and clinic visits.
- Our Remote Airstrip Upgrade program completed 42 airstrip surveys, 36 airstrips with lighting surveys, and provided 28 emergency flares for night operations. This program was made possible through a combination of donor and Commonwealth (Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications) funding.
- Area Navigation (RNAV) procedures were designed and activated at Wilcannia, Ivanhoe and White Cliffs. The activation of the RNAV procedures provide improved access to the aerodrome in poor weather conditions.

How we work: Aviation Training

Providing training and upskilling to our Aviation team is vital not only for meeting our regulatory requirements, but also ensuring the health and wellbeing of the people we serve.

All members of our team are required to participate in an ongoing training program which includes mandatory workshops as well as skills refreshers and simulation training for our pilots. Our flight nurses, pilots, engineers and ground staff also participate in a joint training program with NSW Ambulance, where they practice non-technical skills including communication, managing time pressure, handling stress, decision making and situational awareness.

Snapshot of the year

- Our brand-new Aviation Training Precinct in Dubbo was completed and commissioned this year. This state-of-the-art facility is part of our Multipurpose Aeromedical, Aviation Training and Tourism complex. It reflects our commitment to training excellence and gives us the capacity to design high quality training courses that reflect industry best practice and exceed regulatory requirements. This new facility was made possible partially thanks to a very generous gift left to us in a Will.
- We took delivery of – and received Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) qualification for – a new Pro Line Fusion King Air 250/350i Flight Training Device. Located in our Aviation Training facility in Dubbo, the device is the first flight simulator to be owned and operated by any section of the Royal Flying Doctor Service. It will support improved training outcomes for our pilots and engineers.
- We introduced four Training and Checking Captains who will support onsite flight training as well as monitor other safety activities and service delivery. The Captains will operate across all the network's bases.

CASE STUDY

State of the art training hub

Mannequins that speak, cry, sweat and give birth. A flight simulator that is as close as you can get to the real thing. Welcome to our new, world-class Multipurpose Aeromedical, Aviation Training and Tourism complex, which opened at Dubbo base this financial year. Equipped to simulate real-life medical emergencies and aviation scenarios, the hub has taken the training of our medical teams and flight crews to a whole new level - with more opportunities to come.

The medical training centre, which has been operational since July 2019, comprises a hospital room where staff can practice their skills, a control room, lecture room, functional learning space and a cabin trainer, which will be operational later in 2020. These new facilities were made possible by a generous donation from a longstanding supporter.

Michael Cook, Flight Nurse and Flight Nurse Educator, says the facility's sophisticated mannequins and equipment have been putting the medical staff through their paces with simulations of a range of medical emergencies in a hospital setting, aircraft cabin and out in the field.

"The facility is set up for use by all health staff. Internally, new retrieval nurses and doctors are inducted at the facility through a week-long multi-modal program of presentations, lectures, simulated scenarios and practical demonstrations. This type of introduction into the aeromedical setting would not be possible without these facilities," Michael explains.

The new facility is also being used for annual competency-based assessments. It has already hosted six external courses run in conjunction with NSW Health, NSW Ambulance Service, Western Local Health District, NSW Fire and Rescue and





Sydney University. Plans are also afoot to commence an in-house continuous education program and daily scenario-based simulation training for retrieval staff across the Dubbo and Broken Hill bases.

“There is a motto in retrieval that practice makes perfect and the harder we train, the simpler the real-life emergencies seem,” says Michael.

The centrepiece of the Aviation Training Centre is the FAA Level 6 King Air 250/350i Flight Training TRU Device, the first of which to be equipped with Proline Fusion Avionics in the southern hemisphere.

“The acquisition of the TRU device is a first for the Flying Doctor during its 91-year history,” says Glenn Todhunter, Head of Flight Training, Aviation Training Team, at the South Eastern Section.

“Moving from outsourced to in-house simulator training allows us to tailor specific training programs that reflect our single pilot instrument flight rules (IFR), which are one of two sets of regulations governing all aspects of civil aviation aircraft operations; the other is visual flight rules. This will greatly enhance the process of upskilling and educating our pilots and engineers. The simulator will enhance the quality of the service provided by our aviation teams.”

Glenn says the leap forward to in-house training is supported by a clear vision to grow a sustainable, modern, technology based and compliant training system engaging TRU, Flight Safety Textron Aviation Training and CASA in meaningful partnerships to ensure success.



Our People

It takes a diverse, highly skilled and dedicated team of people to meet the changing healthcare needs of those who live in the remote communities we serve.

We believe passionately in providing every one of our staff members with the support and development opportunities they need to do their best work. We are also focused on maintaining a workplace culture where people feel safe and valued, no matter where they work. There is no higher priority than the physical and emotional health and wellbeing of our people.

In 2019/20 our People and Culture team continued expanding to meet the growing demand for our services in rural, remote and regional areas.

Snapshot of the year

- We conducted a series of workshops to explore, refresh and re-engage our team with the Values that guide the work we do.
- We launched a Lunch and Learn program, delivering five informative sessions to leaders across the organisation. So far, these sessions have covered how to support teams during COVID-19, developing leadership capabilities in having difficult conversations, the benefits of diversity of thought, how to write effective positions descriptions and how to build more effective interview skills.
- We established a Diversity and Inclusion Committee to support the progress of our Reconciliation Action Plan. All locations and departments across our organisation are represented on this committee.
- We successfully negotiated and ratified new Enterprise Bargaining Agreements (EBAs) with our Regional Engineering and Administration and Maintenance teams. EBA negotiations are currently underway with our Mascot engineers, NSW pilots and NSW nurses.
- We established and refined a bi-annual intake of Emergency, Anaesthetic and GP registrars, and welcomed the largest intake of Australian-trained doctors to our Emergency Service.
- We introduced a fly-in-fly-out system for our Broken Hill flight nurses to ensure ongoing and stable resourcing.
- We partnered with the Far West NSW Regional Training Hub and the Far West Local Health District to promote medical careers in Broken Hill.
- We began examining pathways into Rural Generalism and are a committed member of the Far West Medical Steering Pathway Committee.
- We reviewed our pre-employment functional assessment activities, to ensure the safety of new recruits to our workplace.
- We employed a new People and Culture Coordinator in Dubbo to support the growth within the services we are delivering from this base.
- We rolled out our new Your Safety and Wellbeing policy suite, designed to keep all our staff members safe and well in the workplace.
- We launched our Mindful May campaign to support the wellbeing of our staff during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- We worked closely with the Clinical Governance team to develop a new process and committee for credentialing to ensure all health practitioners are experienced, trained and qualified, promoting safe healthcare for our people and our consumers.
- Our bi-monthly employee orientation sessions continue to be a great success, with 71 new staff onboarded this year.
- We partnered with the Dubbo Operations Centre team on consultation in the lead-up to the implementation of the 24/7 Operations Centre that will provide around-the-clock service to our rural and remote communities.
- We developed several contingency registers in response to the threat posed by COVID-19. These included:
 - Eligible clinicians
 - Working from home
 - Secondary employment
 - Providing meaningful work through a crisis.

Staff profile: Kiri Oates, Emergency Medicine Registrar

“I’ve always wanted to do medical retrieval work, and I’ve always been a hardened traveller, so working for the Flying Doctor ticks a lot of boxes for me.”



“I work out of both Dubbo and Broken Hill bases doing a mix of retrieval work and emergency medicine. I also work in the Emergency Department (ED) at Dubbo Hospital to keep my skills nice and sharp – and do the odd bit of teaching to medical students.

I get bored easily, so I love the variety of my work as an ED doctor. Some days I’m talking to a patient over a camera, using photos they’ve taken to decide whether to send a plane to them. On other days I’m on that plane.

Back home in the UK I worked in the city. I’d studied in Scotland and had some experience of being in rural areas, but the Australian outback is something else again. The medicine is the same, but the logistics are a whole new ball game.

It’s very rewarding work. You don’t get into medicine without wanting to help people and out here you are a lifeline, whether you’re just calming their worries or going out there to save their lives.

It’s hard work, but I feel very supported. I’m lucky to work with a really great team.

COVID-19 has been an interesting time for all of us. I got stuck in quarantine for two weeks after returning from a holiday and spent the time writing guidelines and protocols for how our healthcare team deals with the virus.

I’ve also cycled 400 kms – the distance from Bondi to Dubbo – to raise much-needed funds for the Flying Doctor in our Bondi to Bush event. My fiancé tried to convince me to join him in riding the extra 800 kms to Broken Hill, but I decided I’ll take it one step at a time.”



Our Funding

Thank you to our supporters

Philanthropic donors, community fundraisers and volunteer speakers who have an enormous impact on our ability to deliver healthcare to rural, regional and remote communities.

We rely on the generosity of all our loyal supporters to ensure Australian communities, regardless of their location, have access to healthcare wherever they live. As the demand for emergency retrieval and healthcare grows, donations enable us to be there, no matter what unfolds.

Over the last year, we saw an exceptional level of support from our donors. We received over \$27 million from generous individuals, trusts and foundations, businesses, community groups and gifts in Wills. We also saw an increase in strategic partnerships with corporate partners and philanthropic donors; with their support directly contributing to new health initiatives and aviation programs. The guarantee of multi-year donor commitments will allow us to deepen our impact on the long-term health of our communities for years to come.

Our supporters stood with us, not only to help prepare and respond to the changing landscape of the COVID-19 pandemic, but also to carry out our everyday work.

Thank you to each of our supporters who have made a difference. From those who have left a gift in their Will, to volunteer speakers, community fundraisers, generous individuals, and large funding partners. Each have helped provide extensive primary healthcare and 24-hour emergency retrieval to people over an area of 5,175,211 square kilometres across the South Eastern Section.



The Gerrard family taking part in 'Bondi to Bush'

For more information on how you can help bring healthcare and support to the growing needs of rural, regional and remote communities, please contact our Fundraising team on supporter@rfdsse.org.au or call 1300 669 569.

Hear from our supporters



"Volunteering allows us to repay the Royal Flying Doctor Service for the enormous contribution it makes to this fantastic country of ours. Being part of the Speaker Program is wonderful. We get the opportunity to not only talk about the origins of the Service but the current operations and innovations that will take the Service into the future." - Doug and Karen Roser, volunteer speakers.



"I joined the Broken Hill Women's Auxilliary as I believe it is important to support the Royal Flying Doctor Service South Eastern Section which has provided essential services to my community for many years. This year, alongside the Silver City Bush Treadlers we were able to contribute to a new Wellness Place in Broken Hill that will continue to change the lives of people living in remote areas." - Carol Holden, President of Broken Hill Women's Auxilliary.



"Health is wealth. Thanks to Royal Flying Doctor Service for the opportunity to take part in this event. I got fitter and was able to raise awareness and money for a worthwhile cause. Without the support of the general community, generous donors and participants in the Bondi to Bush event, the Royal Flying Doctor Service would not be able to provide extensive primary health care and 24-hour emergency service to rural, regional and remote communities in Australia. I am certain with many helping hands and feet we can rally to support the Royal Flying Doctor Service ensuring its aim 'the furthest corner, the finest care' is fully realised." - Sailash Krishan, took part in the 'Bondi to Bush' challenge.



"The Royal Flying Doctor Service is the best charity in Australia, if not the world. I wanted a chance to give back to the country that has treated me so well over the last 46 years. I believe, if people don't leave something behind then we're going to go downhill." - Jack Burke, volunteer since 2005 and Gift in Will supporter.



"I love seeing how the Royal Flying Doctor Service is helping communities in the middle of nowhere, and how my contribution is supporting the magnificent jobs they do." - Yang-Tze has been supporting as a dedicated donor since 2005.



"Recognising the importance of having such a long-standing service in our country and even more so in recent times of a global pandemic, I am proud to be a part of the Royal Flying Doctor Service." - Matthew Young, Regular Giving supporter since 2019.

Our Community

Despite the challenges faced by Australians over the last year, our community has gone above and beyond in their efforts to raise critical funds. When faced with the unprecedented challenges of isolation and event cancellation, teams had to adapt their fundraising to the virtual world. One of these innovations was the 'Bondi to Bush' virtual challenge where supporters rallied together to walk, run and cycle to raise funds. Many fundraising events have been cancelled or postponed to later in the year and we look forward to seeing our dedicated supporters then. We would like to acknowledge the extraordinary efforts of our community groups.

Outback Car Trek

In March, the Outback Car Trek 2020 was launched at iconic Bondi Beach. Each year, the Trek musters people from all over the country, united in purpose. Trekkers not only have fun, see remote parts of the country and give back to isolated communities, they also raise significant critical funds for our life-saving programs and services. Unfortunately due to COVID-19, the Car Trek has been cancelled this year. We look forward to seeing the trekkers back in action in 2021.

\$515,860.43 raised so far (nationally)

Broken Hill Women's Auxiliary

Every year, our long-standing supporters, the Broken Hill Women's Auxiliary, raises significant donations through a range of activities including raffles and their famous Christmas Pudding sales. This year they raised funds towards a new innovative mental health initiative, the Wellbeing Place in Broken Hill.

\$90,000 raised

'Bondi to Bush' Challenge | Participants: 300

The 'Bondi to Bush' challenge is a brand-new virtual fundraising event that was developed in response to social distancing due to COVID-19. Supporters took part by running, walking or cycling the distance from Sydney to one of four outback towns, over six weeks.

\$90,266.38 raised

Lightning Ridge Support Group

Associated with the Dubbo Support Group, the Lightning Ridge Support Group raised funds through community 'Return and Earn' recycling efforts. Their support enabled us to fund a garage in Lightning Ridge to protect our vehicles from the extreme weather.

\$55,514 raised

Silver City Bush Treadlers

Since 1996, a team of avid cyclists from Broken Hill headed up by June Files OAM, have explored some of the roughest roads and spectacular landscapes of the Australian outback on an annual 2-week bicycle ride undertaken to raise funds for the Flying Doctor.

In 2019 the Treadlers took on their biggest challenge yet. For 13 days, the cyclists travelled the rugged roads of Tilpa, Wanaaring, Hungerford, Fords Bridge, Bourke and Louth, all in aid of the new innovative mental health initiative, the Wellbeing Place in Broken Hill.

\$37,567 raised

City2Surf | Participants: 100

Thank you to our RFDS Team members who got out there, put on their running shoes and took part in the iconic City2Surf in 2019. Thanks also to their many friends and family members who got behind them and supported their inspiring efforts.

\$27,000 raised

Pymble Ladies College

The students at Pymble Ladies College chose to get behind rural, regional and remote communities by raising vital funds from many different fundraising events throughout the year, including their annual garden party and raffle.

\$20,022.21 raised

WorldFlight Australia | Participants: 20

WorldFlight is an annual seven-day event where participants from across the globe, raise funds for the Royal Flying Doctor Service in a virtual round-the-world simulated flight. The event has raised in excess of \$300,000 since 2001.

\$18,373 raised

Khans IGA

Community supermarket, Khans IGA showed their incredible support for outback communities over the last year through various events and generous customer donations.

\$15,651 raised



Dubbo Support Group cares for the community

Continuing their support this year, the Dubbo Support Group highlights the deep sense of community that exists among the people of remote, rural and regional Australia. This year, they made the Dubbo Visitor Experience possible with an exceptional gift of \$2,000,000. In addition, they also gave a gift of vital engineering and aviation equipment including \$18,000 for a forklift and \$60,204 towards a Borescope. We celebrate this ongoing partnership and the inspiring dedication of each group member.

Philanthropy

Our significant funding partners and private donors have made transformational contributions to our work and to the issues they care about.

This year, we were pleased to work with certain donors to realise multi-year funding for long-term programs. These initiatives will ensure the future sustainability of new services and provide lasting change for the communities we seek to help. We look forward to keeping in close contact with these donors every step of the way to tell them about the incredible impact of their support.

We have also been working closely with a select group of corporate partners to develop long-term strategic partnerships that will provide significant opportunity for our organisation and engage their employees in the work that we do. This year has seen many visits to our aeromedical bases in Dubbo and Broken Hill, where our corporate partners and significant donors have been able to meet with our pilots, engineers and medical staff and see firsthand what their support has enabled us to achieve – and learn about our vision for the future.

After a visit to remote NSW to meet our staff and communities, one long-standing donor worked with us to increase our outreach through **three new purpose-built clinics** to improve the quality and access of local healthcare services.

Our partners have also helped expand the reach of our work and invested in strategic programs. Some donors and corporate partners have contributed towards the **installation of telehealth units in remote locations** across our network. This has ensured around the clock care during the increased health challenges of this year. Others have supported the acquisition of **health equipment for our aircraft** to stabilise patients during emergency retrievals.

Looking to the future, we are excited to engage our dedicated supporters in our plans for next year. This will include establishing **new permanent wellbeing centres**. These dedicated facilities will help respond to an increased need for **mental health services** that we expect will continue to grow following the COVID-19 pandemic.

With the support of significant funding partners, in line with our vision, we will be expanding **our service footprint** to more communities in the upper north west of NSW where local healthcare services are limited and people in need are often required to travel great distances to receive basic care.



Senior Aboriginal Health Practitioner David Doyle with community members in Menindee

Funding for Aboriginal Healthcare

Thanks to generous financial support from a private foundation in 2019/20 and for the next three years, our Aboriginal health practitioners can support more communities for years to come.

Research suggests that indigenous Australians generally experience poorer health than non-Indigenous Australians, particularly in relation to chronic and communicable diseases, mental health, infant health, and life expectancy.

To provide comprehensive primary health care to Indigenous patients and meet community and cultural needs, **three dedicated Aboriginal health positions were created.**

The work of our Aboriginal Health Practitioners spans chronic disease management, alcohol and other drugs support, infant and maternal care – all customised to the individual as one-to-one or group support. There is also a strong focus on community engagement, which allows the team to work with communities to determine their specific needs and priorities, while fostering trust in our services. These positions have enabled: better access to preventative health services in the Aboriginal communities we serve, stronger collaboration within our multidisciplinary healthcare teams, better health outcomes for Aboriginal patients and communities and improved facilitation between Aboriginal patients and other health professionals.

Once again, we cannot thank the foundation enough for their incredible gift that will **ensure the future sustainability of these crucial positions** within our Primary Health team.

Please see page 46 for some of the very generous trusts and foundations that supported our work in 2019/20.

Corporate support

Generous contributions made by our corporate partners have been essential to the sustainability of healthcare services delivered in outback communities over the last year. These partnerships supported our work in the form of direct donations, in-kind gifts and pro bono services.

Over the last year, companies supported employees to make individual contributions through workplace giving. In addition, employees of our partner organisations volunteered their time and skills to assist with health service delivery, community engagement and fundraising in the areas we serve.

This year, we are grateful to our longstanding corporate partner Hare & Forbes for their support of a new forklift for our Broken Hill base. We would also like to thank Santos for donating an ambulance to our operations in Innamincka and for making a significant contribution to our core operations.

With thanks to our funding partners:



Selwyn Hester, Senior Director at Tyre Doctor, during a demonstration of the new ventilators at Dubbo base



Tyre Doctor provides life-saving ventilators

Thanks to a very generous contribution from our partner, Tyre Doctor, we were able to purchase three new Hamilton ventilators for use within our aircraft during medical emergencies.

The Hamilton T1 Intensive Care Transport Ventilator provides portable oxygen therapy and breathing support independent of any oxygen source, filling a critical need in aeromedical service for remote areas. The ventilators also feature specialist equipment for neo-natal ventilation support and high-flow nasal oxygen therapy in very young children. Our

medical staff had the opportunity to train on this new model of ventilator in a controlled environment before they were fitted into our aircraft for emergency retrievals.

This equipment will be vital for our continued COVID-19 response when transporting suspected cases experiencing respiratory distress. We cannot thank Tyre Doctor enough for their very generous support of this lifesaving equipment, which has ensured our organisation is ready for an increased demand on our emergency retrieval services.

A life-saving legacy

We are incredibly grateful for our supporters putting their trust in us when considering the future of outback health.

Leaving a gift in a Will to the Royal Flying Doctor Service (South Eastern Section) has an extraordinary impact on the lives of men, women and children for generations to come.

In 2019/2020, \$11,600,658 were received from 68 estates and distributions from our Federation office.

This special act of generosity helps us plan with confidence, to meet the growing demand for services to families in rural, regional and remote Australia.

Cheryl continues the Australian spirit of helping others

A donor since 1995, Cheryl has made many gifts over the years, as well as a regular monthly donation. She is passionate about the work The Royal Flying Doctor Service does for remote communities across the South Eastern Section. Cheryl has recently decided to extend her generosity by leaving a gift in her Will to ensure her passion for the service and impact can live on.

"This is an organisation I believe in. There's a real need for the services that the Flying Doctor provides. We can help Australians who are enduring difficulties through no fault of their own. I'm glad to be paying it forward by helping fellow Australians in difficult situations. To me, that's the epitome of the Australian spirit. I know that there are a lot of people alive today who would not be if it weren't for the work of The Royal Flying Doctor Service. Knowing the service is there is a relief and I'm glad to know that my contributions are helping the community." - Mrs Cheryl Craig



Government funding

Approximately two thirds of funding for the Royal Flying Doctor Service (South Eastern Section) comes from Commonwealth and state government grants.

Without this significant government assistance, many of the communities and people we support would have limited access to the vital healthcare services they need to lead productive and healthy lives.

Commonwealth and state government funding supports services including our Emergency Retrieval service and Non-Emergency Patient Transport Service, as well as primary health clinics and oral health and mental health programs we run in remote communities.

This financial year, state contributions also went to capital expenditure projects including, the Dubbo Multipurpose facility and the Innamincka Clinic.

State government grants continued to support the Rural Aerial Health Service (RAHS), which operates from our Bankstown and Dubbo Bases, transporting clinicians and allied health specialists throughout the NSW Area Health service. Funding from NSW Government grants also helped to fund dental programs across the network, as well as the dental services we deliver in partnership with Maari Ma Aboriginal Health Service, the Far West Health Service and Corrections Health Service in Broken Hill and Ivanhoe.

Contracts

Government contracts such as agreements with NSW Health, Ambulance NSW and Ambulance Tasmania, are an important source of revenue. These contracts (which make up close to 40% of our funding) not only ensure we can deliver services on behalf of other health service providers and organisations, but are vital for the future sustainability of the Royal Flying Doctor Service (South Eastern Section).

Revenue generated from commercial contracts and partnerships is reinvested to fill funding gaps and increase economies of scale across our traditional services and programs.

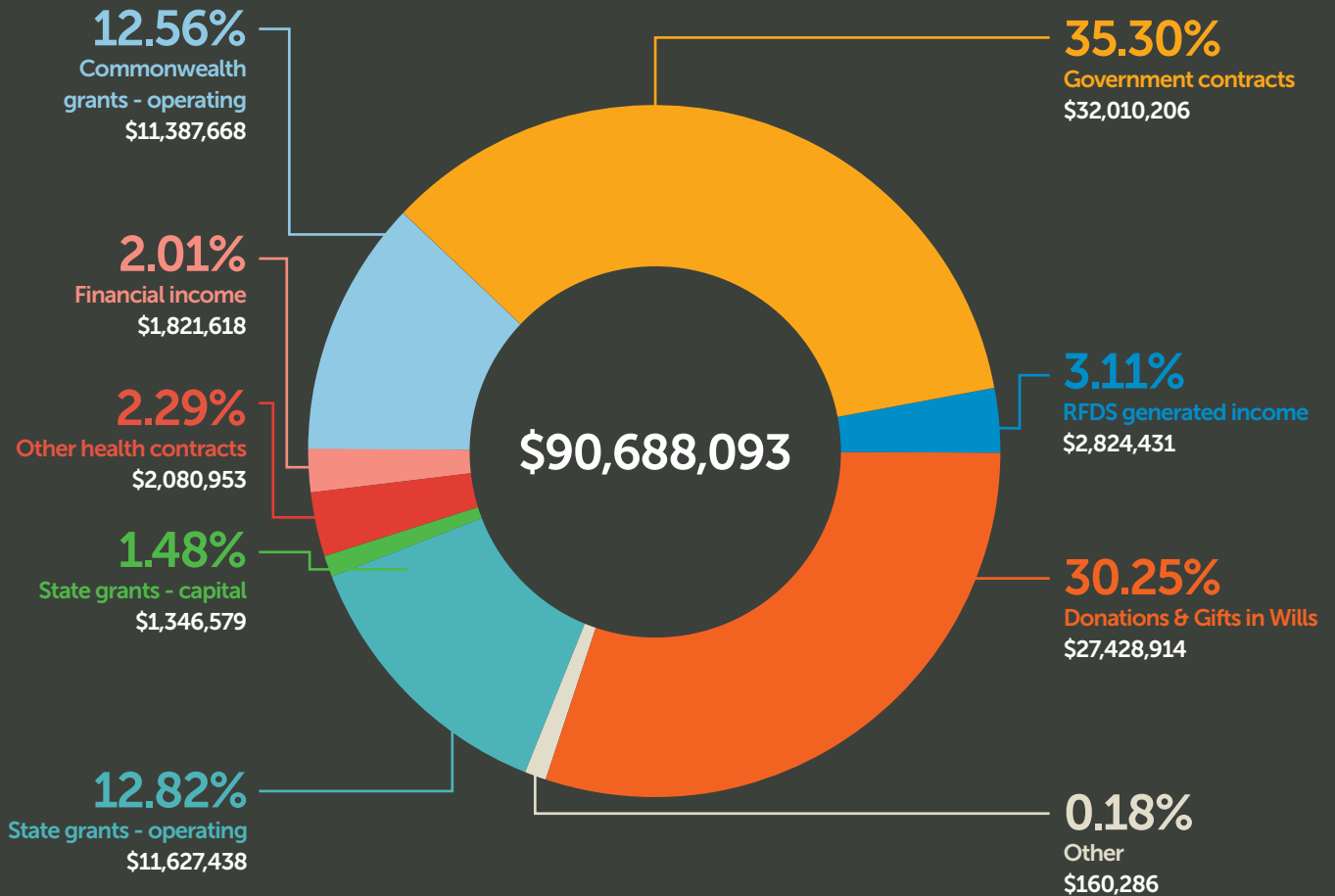
This year, to meet anticipated demand as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, we identified a need to invest heavily in new staff and equipment. We also saw a shift in the way some services were delivered, as our teams responded to community needs. As such some funding was used to deliver services in a different way, such as via increased telehealth sessions.





Where our funding comes from

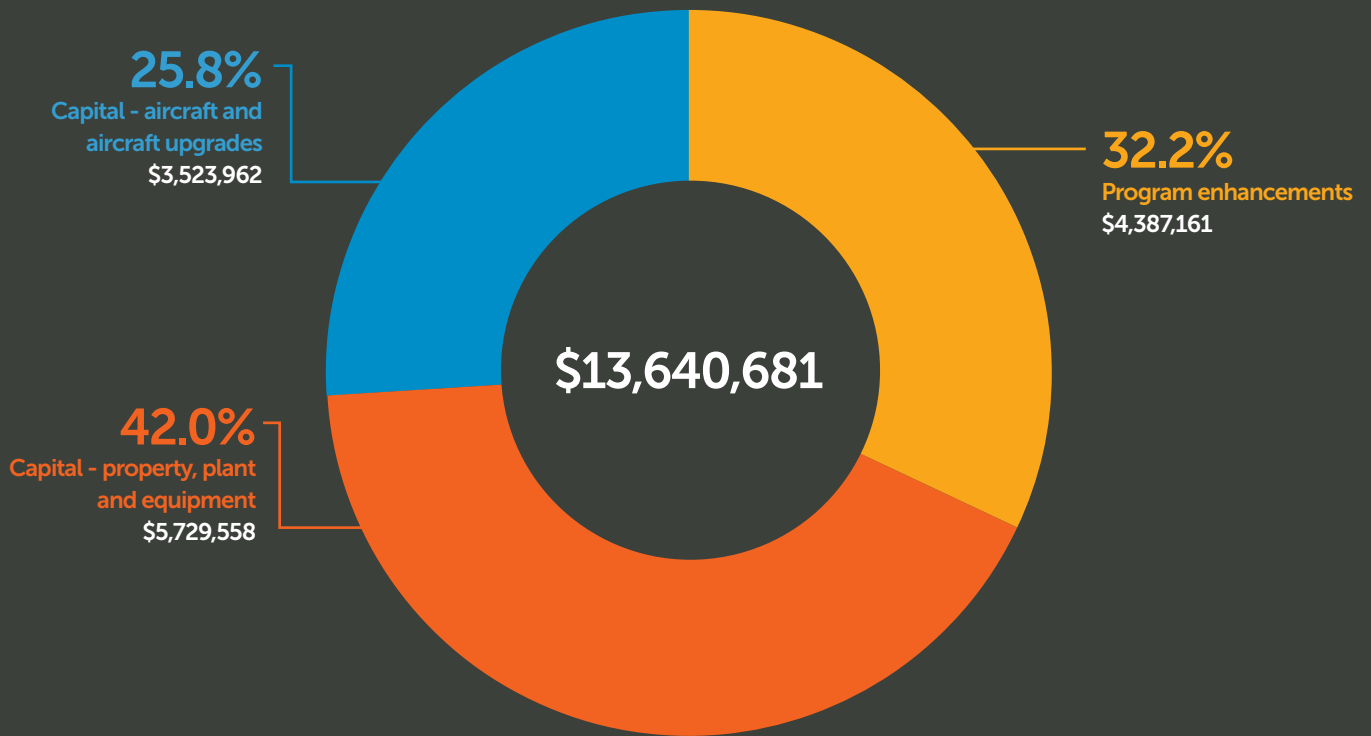
To 30 June 2020



Source	Revenue	Percentage
Government contracts	\$32,010,206	35.30%
RFDS generated income	\$2,824,431	3.11%
Donations & Gifts in Wills	\$27,428,914	30.25%
Other	\$160,286	0.18%
State grants - operating	\$11,627,438	12.82%
State grants - capital	\$1,346,579	1.48%
Other health contracts	\$2,080,953	2.29%
Financial income	\$1,821,618	2.01%
Commonwealth grants - operating	\$11,387,668	12.56%
	\$90,688,093	100.00%

Where our donor funding is used

To 30 June 2020
(After fundraising costs have been met)



Category	Amount	Percentage
Program enhancements	\$4,387,161	32.2%
Capital - aircraft & aircraft upgrades	\$3,523,962	25.8%
Capital - property, plant & equipment	\$5,729,558	42.0%
	\$13,640,681	100.00%

CASE STUDY

New Visitor Experience for Dubbo

Our new Dubbo Visitor Experience Centre opened its doors to the public in September 2019.



Part of the broader redevelopment of our Dubbo base, the centre showcases the Flying Doctor's rich and living history through photography, interactive exhibits, a cinematic experience and even augmented reality displays. Visitors also have the unique opportunity to explore the fuselage of a Royal Flying Doctor Service plane.

Volunteer Visitor Experience Ambassador, Noel Pearce, says the new Visitor Experience has quickly become a major attraction for tourists and locals alike.

"It's unbelievable. There's so much to do and see here. There's an old pedal radio and Morse code device that people can try out for themselves. There are fully equipped dental and nursing rooms for people to explore.

"And I don't know anyone in Dubbo who hasn't been to the café."

Noel started volunteering for the Flying Doctor seven years ago after he "got crook a couple of times" and was transported to hospital in an Royal Flying Doctor Service aircraft.

He now volunteers two days a week at the Visitor Experience, where he meets and greets visitors and guides them through the exhibits. He says sharing the Flying Doctor's story with the public has brought him out of his shell.

"I used to be very shy and didn't talk very much. Now they can't shut me up when I'm talking about the Flying Doctor."

While Noel says it's hard to pinpoint a favourite exhibit, he admits to having a soft spot for one particular display.

"There's a fantastic interactive piece about a woman named Judy Jakins. She got the Flying Doctor started here in Dubbo back in 1998. She was living in Bourke and realised she was out of range of the service operating out of Broken Hill.

"We invited her back for the opening and she just stood out the front and cried at how far we've come."

The new Visitor Experience was made possible thanks to an extremely generous contribution of \$2 million from the Dubbo Support Group, of which Noel is a member. We would also like to thank Dubbo City Council, the NSW Government and other generous supporters for providing land and vital funding. The Centre is expected to attract about 42,000 visitors each year and provide a valuable boost to the local economy. Proceeds from the Visitor Experience will be used to help fund vital services.

Government and Corporate Supporters

Commonwealth Partner



State Government Partners



National Partners



Corporate Partners & Workplace Giving



Supporting Partners



Trusts and Foundations

- Allen Family Foundation
- Baxter Charitable Foundation
- Bruce and Joy Reid Trust
- Lady Fairfax Charitable Trust
- Maple-Brown Family Foundation
- McGrath Foundation
- Rinehart Medical Foundation
- Skipper-Jacobs Charitable Trust
- The Dunn Family Trust Fund
- The Knappick Foundation
- The Profield Foundation
- The Rydge Foundation
- The Vernon Foundation

How you can help

With your help, we will be able to continue to deliver healthcare, no matter how remote. More than ever, we are grateful for the generosity of so many individuals, families, volunteers, businesses, workplaces and community organisations. Help us continue to make an impact into the future by making a donation.

Send your donation to:

Royal Flying Doctor Service of Australia
(South Eastern Section)
Reply Paid 3537
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Phone: 1300 669 569

Email: supporter@rfdse.org.au

Donate: flyingdoctor.org.au to make your donation online.



Royal Flying Doctor Service
SOUTH EASTERN SECTION

Bankstown Base

Hangar 276, Airport Ave
Bankstown Airport NSW 2200
T: 02 9941 8880

Broken Hill Base and Visitors' Centre

Broken Hill Airport, Airport Rd,
Broken Hill NSW 2880
T: 08 8080 3777

Dubbo Base

RFDS Dubbo Hangar
9R Cooreena Road (Judy Jakins Drive)
Dubbo NSW 2830
T: 02 6841 2555

Dubbo RFDS Visitor Experience

21 Judy Jakins Drive
Dubbo NSW 2830
T: 1800 847 487

Mascot Base

Cnr Ross Smith Ave & Eleventh St,
Sydney Airport
Mascot NSW 2020
T: 02 9941 8880

Sydney Office

Level 5, 418A Elizabeth Street,
Surry Hills NSW 2010
T: 02 9941 8859
E: enquiries@rfdse.org.au

Connect with us



1300 669 569



GPO Box 3537 Sydney NSW 2001



Flyingdoctor.org.au



[Facebook.com/royalflyingdoctorservice](https://www.facebook.com/royalflyingdoctorservice)



@RoyalFlyingDoc



[royalflyingdoc](https://www.instagram.com/royalflyingdoc)