



Royal Flying Doctor Service
SOUTH EASTERN SECTION

Year in Review 2024-2025

STRONGER TOGETHER,
FURTHER THAN EVER



Contents

Acknowledgement of Country

Royal Flying Doctor Service (South Eastern Section) acknowledges Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and recognises the continuing connection to lands, waters and communities.

We pay our respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures; and to Elders past and present.

We are more than a not-for-profit – we are a frontline partner in the healthcare system, trusted to deliver critical care across regional, rural and remote NSW. As we prepare for our centenary, we're building the future of outback health.





Where we work

Map for illustrative purposes only

Across NSW and beyond, we deliver a range of health clinics and services, respond to medical emergencies and transfer patients with life-threatening conditions.

The South Eastern Section collaborates in service delivery with RFDS sections across state borders, in particular with RFDS Queensland, Central Operations, Victoria and Tasmania.

● **Primary Health Clinic**

We provide early intervention, prevention, health information and screening, as well as chronic disease management services. We also provide visiting specialist clinics with medical consultants including ear, nose and throat specialists, dermatologists, eye specialists and a specialist cancer care nurse (with the McGrath Foundation), who supports patients from diagnosis, and throughout treatment.

● **Remote Area Nurses on site**

Remote Area Nurses work from a fixed location 24/7, providing the community with reliable access to vital primary and emergency healthcare services.

● **GP Medical Practices**

Our GP practices provide non-emergency healthcare including immunisations and children's health checks, men's and women's health, chronic disease management, wound care, skin checks and minor surgical procedures.

● **Dental and Oral Health**

We deliver regular, vital dental and oral health services through our specialist dental van and fly-in fly-out (FIFO) clinics.

● **Mental Health and Alcohol and Other Drugs support services**

Our mental health team provides direct clinical services to people living in remote communities to improve their overall health and wellbeing.

● **Wellbeing Places**

Our Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drugs team operate in these locations, providing a range of services from clinical treatment to educational workshops and programs to enhance wellbeing.

● **We've Got Your Back (WGYB) – Far West Region**

In partnership with Lifeline, we provide a mental health peer support program that engages people in the topic of mental health, provides advocacy for people impacted by drought and illness, and links people to services in their community.

● **Guiding Rural Outback Wellbeing (GROW)**

The RFDS GROW (Guiding Rural and Outback Wellbeing) Program is a wellbeing engagement platform servicing schools and communities in rural and remote areas across Western NSW. The GROW Aquaponics Program supports schools with GROW Units that assist with STEM outcomes, sustainable food production, healthy lifestyle choices and early education and intervention for Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drugs. The GROW Community Program provides wellbeing education, support pathways and facilitates events to bring health and wellbeing services to isolated communities.

● **Emergency retrieval service – provided to all regions within the state of NSW**

Our specialist doctors and flight nurses are on call 24/7 to provide emergency aeromedical retrievals (also called primary evacuations) for patients who are experiencing a medical emergency. These patients are provided with lifesaving medical care and are immediately transported, in our specially fitted-out medical aircraft and vehicles, to hospital for continued emergency treatment.

We also provide more than 400 medical chests with emergency pharmaceuticals and medical supplies in remote locations across the network.

● **Inter-hospital transfers including Air Ambulance locations**

This service is delivered from our bases in NSW. Transporting critically ill patients by air to the specialist, lifesaving care they need, when they need it.

Our highly qualified medical teams are on call 24/7 to provide vital healthcare and transfer severely unwell (acute) patients, where there is a need for lifesaving, specialised care or equipment that is available at another hospital.

● **Non-Emergency Patient Transfers (NEPT)**

We transfer patients to and from the state capitals' world-class hospitals or to their home to recover long-term.

● **Rural Aerial Health Service (RAHS)**

We improve access to healthcare for people in these communities by flying visiting doctors and medical specialists in and out on a regular, rostered basis.

● **Contracted Aeromedical Service Delivery**

We provide aircraft, pilots and engineers who work in partnership with healthcare personnel from Ambulance Tasmania, RFDS Tasmania, RFDS Victoria and the Ministry of Health.

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

Essendon – From this facility, our team is contracted to support RFDS Victoria in the provision of weekly aeromedical NEPT services, including transportation of neonatal and paediatric patients.

● **South Eastern Section Bases**

We fly and drive out of our bases, delivering healthcare to people living in rural, remote and regional NSW.

Our bases in Dubbo and Broken Hill are also home to our state-of-the-art tourism Visitor Experience centres.

● **Support Office**

Our Support Office provides a range of services that support the RFDS operations, such as Fundraising and IT.

Message from our CEO

Nearly a century ago, Sister Myra Blanch – our first Flight Nurse – took to the skies with little more than a mat and a brush shelter. She delivered babies, treated injuries, and supported families in some of the most remote corners of Far Western NSW. Her courage and compassion laid the foundation for what the Royal Flying Doctor Service has become today.

While our aircraft are now equipped with advanced medical technology and our clinicians supported by digital tools and satellite communications, the heart of our mission remains unchanged: to bring the finest care to the furthest corner.

This year, that mission has been more important than ever. Across regional, rural and remote NSW, demand for our services continues to grow. Communities are facing a perfect storm of challenges – ongoing natural disasters, rising costs of living, workforce shortages, and limited access to local health services. At the same time, the cost of delivering care is increasing, from aviation fuel and aircraft maintenance, to the clinical staffing required to meet 24/7 operational needs.

Despite these pressures, we've continued to deliver. One of the most powerful examples is our 24/7 telehealth service, which provides real-time clinical support to nurses and doctors working in small rural hospitals and multipurpose service Emergency Departments in the Far West. In the past year alone, we responded to more than 1,800 calls, supporting local teams to treat patients safely and confidently, often avoiding the need to transfer the patient by air to a hospital far from home.

We also continue to play a vital role in strengthening the broader healthcare network. Through partnerships with government, local health districts, and other service providers, we're helping to build a more connected, responsive system of care, one that ensures no one falls through the cracks because of where they live.

This year, we were recognised by the NSW Government with a \$15 million funding commitment to help maintain our services. This support reflects the trust placed in us as a frontline partner in the state's healthcare system. We are especially grateful to one of our local MPs, Roy Butler, Member for Barwon, whose advocacy has been instrumental in securing this support.

We also took a significant step forward in our commitment to cultural safety and community-led care with the establishment of our inaugural First Nations Community Advisory Group. This group brings together respected voices from across our service footprint to guide how we plan, deliver and evaluate care. Their insights will help ensure our services are not only accessible, but culturally informed, safe and grounded in lived experience.

As we prepare to celebrate our centenary in 2028, we remain focused on the future – investing in people, partnerships and innovation to ensure that the Flying Doctor continues to be a constant presence in the lives of those who need us most.



Greg Sam
CEO, Royal Flying Doctor Service
(South Eastern Section)

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Dr Saranne Cooke
(Chair)



Professor David Lyle
(Deputy Chair)



**Anthony
(Tony) MacRae**



David Ryan



Sanchia Treloar

Message from our Chair

As Chair of the Royal Flying Doctor Service (South Eastern Section), I'm proud to lead an organisation that not only delivers care – but delivers hope. For me, this mission is deeply personal.

While I was born in Condobolin, I spent part of my childhood in Wilcannia, where my parents worked as teachers in outback communities. That experience shaped my understanding of rural resilience and the critical importance of access to healthcare. It's why I'm so passionate about the work we do, especially in the Barwon electorate, where half of our services are delivered.

This year has been one of extraordinary challenge and achievement. When a violent storm brought down transmission towers and caused a prolonged power outage across Far Western NSW, including my old hometown in Wilcannia, our teams responded with speed, skill and compassion. Clinics stayed open, aircraft remained operational, and our Wellbeing Place became a refuge for those needing safety, connection and care. It was a powerful reminder that in times of crisis, the Flying Doctor is more than a service – we're a lifeline.

We've also made tremendous strides in expanding primary care across Western NSW. From Condobolin to Grawin, our fly-in clinics and permanent medical centres are transforming access to everyday healthcare. Families now have access to a regular GP or nurse-led clinics, and entire communities are experiencing the benefits of consistent, compassionate healthcare. Our ability to deliver dependable, high-quality care in some of the most remote parts of the state is a testament to the dedication of our staff and the trust placed in us by the communities we serve.

One of the highlights of my year was sending off the Outback Car Trek from my current hometown of Bathurst. This iconic event raised over \$1.6 million for the RFDS and brought together a convoy of passionate supporters who believe, as I do, that distance should never be a barrier to care. Earlier this year, the RFDSSE took ownership of the Outback Car Trek, Drive 4x4 The Doc and Bright Smiles Charity Ride. We look forward to curating, protecting and enhancing these beloved events alongside participants, ensuring they continue to drive impact and connection for years to come.

As we approach our centenary, we remain committed to building the future of outback health – one that is equitable, innovative, and grounded in community. Because for people in places like Wilcannia, Pooncarie, Grawin, Wanaaring and beyond, healthcare should never be out of reach.



Dr Saranne Cooke

Chair, Royal Flying Doctor Service
(South Eastern Section)



Andrew Monaghan



John Baird



Sam Maroulis



GOVERNMENT HOUSE
SYDNEY

Message from
Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC
Governor of New South Wales, and Mr Dennis Wilson

For over six years now, Dennis and I have been proud to be Patrons of the Royal Flying Doctor Service South Eastern Section (RFDS SE). Over this time, we have visited the bases in Dubbo and Broken Hill and seen firsthand the life saving and life changing impact of the RFDS across New South Wales.

Our experiences, including at a clinic in Louth and a health facility in White Cliffs, have shown us the evolving breadth of services offered by RFDS in mental health and wellbeing, oral health programs, remote consultation services, alcohol and other drug services and inter-hospital transfers.

In the 2024-25 period RFDS SE provided more than 93,000 occasions of care, including 1,006 primary evacuations and inter-hospital transfers, and 933 non-emergency patient transport flights. In addition, they provided 82,000 occasions of primary healthcare.

Making primary healthcare available within remote communities by bringing nurses, GPs, dental teams and mental health professionals in via air and road, is having a remarkable impact in our State, saving thousands of kilometres of travel, allowing better care of chronic illness, and leading to earlier detection of serious diseases.

Over the past year the RFDS SE has also shown itself to be ready to help our regional and remote communities in times of natural disasters. When a storm resulted in a power outage to more than 10,000 homes across Far West NSW, the RFDS established Broken Hill Wellbeing Place as a refuge centre and staff went to check in on vulnerable people, ensuring they had enough food, water and medication. In March 2025, when the small Western NSW town of Wanaaring was cut off by flood waters for more than a month, the RFDS was there again, delivering primary health clinics and flying in their mental health team to support and connect community members.

We thank the staff and generous supporters of the Royal Flying Doctor Service (South Eastern Section), for your magnificent support of communities in rural and remote New South Wales, as you live out your commitment to provide "The furthest corner the Finest care".

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

Mr Dennis Wilson

Where our funding comes from

Across regional, rural, and remote New South Wales, the Royal Flying Doctor Service is often the only link between urgent medical need and life-saving care. From emergency aeromedical evacuations to primary health clinics, chronic disease management, mental health support, and First Nations health programs, our services are not just important, they're essential to keep people well and in their communities.

This work is made possible by a powerful network of supporters and partners. Philanthropic contributions, including donations, bequests, and fundraising, remain a vital foundation, enabling us to reach further, respond faster, and invest in the infrastructure and innovation that keep our aircraft flying and our clinicians equipped. Government funding and health service contracts also play a critical role, helping us maintain continuity and scale.

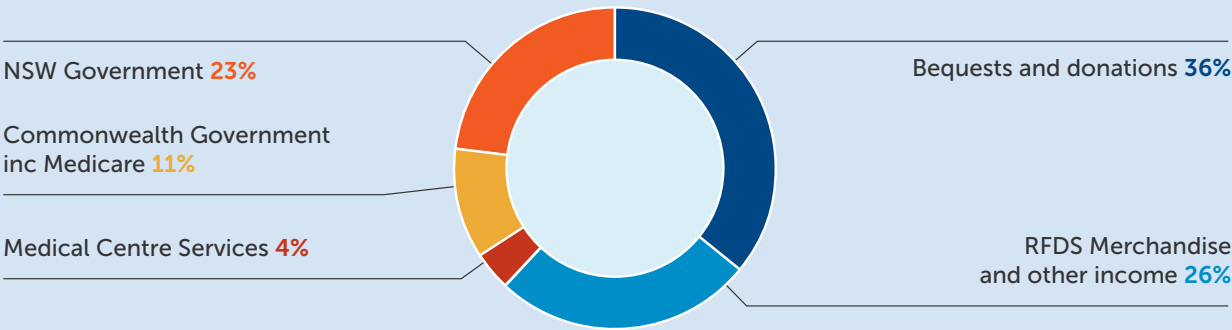
However, delivering care in the outback is becoming increasingly complex and costly. Rising aviation fuel and maintenance expenses, inflationary pressures, and the need for expanded clinical staffing to meet 24/7 operational demands are all contributing to a more challenging financial environment.

In addition to this, we continue to see a year-on-year increase in demand and requests for support from rural and remote communities as the nationwide shortage of healthcare professionals continues to disproportionately affect rural and remote communities. These pressures underscore the importance of continued and growing support to ensure our services remain strong and responsive.

Looking ahead, a key pillar of our long-term strategy is to further diversify our income streams. Through targeted grants, corporate partnerships, and new service models, we're building a more resilient financial base, one that allows us to evolve with future demands and offer increasingly innovative care to the communities that rely on us.

With your support, we're not just keeping the RFDS in the air – we're securing its future. Thanks to everyone who plays a part in making sure the Flying Doctor is there for outback communities, now and into the future.

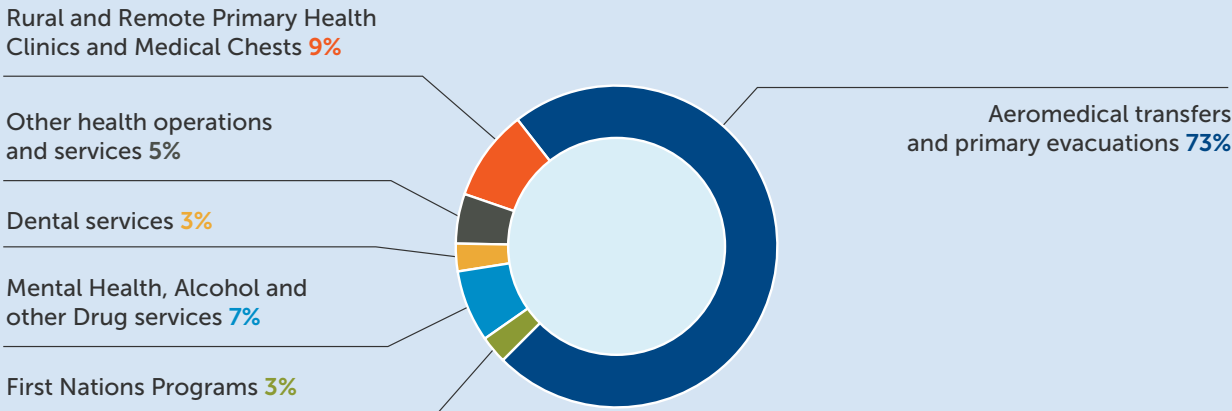
WHERE THE FUNDING COMES FROM



WHAT OUR FUNDING SUPPORTS



HOW FUNDING SUPPORTS OUR HEALTH AND CLINICAL SERVICES



2024-25

Snapshot of our year

We provided more than

93,000

occasions of care

60,000

GP / nurse occasions
of primary healthcare



5,123

mental health
consultations



2,418

Telehealth
consultations



1,407

remote clinics



2,054

primary evacuations and
inter-hospital transfers of
patients ranging from low
to high-acuity



24/7

Our specialist doctors and
flight nurses provide emergency
aeromedical retrievals



2,525

dental consultations



933

non-emergency
patient transports



51%

female

49%

male

Gender split of our
primary care patients

The RFDSSE holds
primary care clinics in

21

rural and remote
communities



4

medical centres in
Broken Hill, Condobolin,
Gilgandra and Warren.



66

RFDS road vehicles across
our regional locations



Our dental team
delivered

768

oral health sessions
to children across
9 schools.



Our GROW team
worked with

3,856

students over
180 school sessions
on horticulture and
aquaculture.



The MHAoD
team supported

2,320

students across
173 school
wellbeing lessons



Employed

374 people across Broken Hill, Cobar, Condobolin, Dubbo, Bankstown, Essendon, Gilgandra, Launceston, Lightning Ridge, Warren and Sydney including:

52 GPs and Medical Registrars

38 pilots

33 registered nurses with a midwifery qualification

17 engineers

22 registered nurses

36 fundraisers

19 mental health, alcohol and other drugs clinicians

10 visitor experience specialists

11 dental health practitioners

136 support services



3/5
of our registered nurses
are qualified midwives

57% female
43% male
Gender split of our employees

4.5%
of employees
identify
as First Nations

3/4
of our workforce
are regionally based



275,000
people were welcomed at our Visitor Experience
centres in Broken Hill and Dubbo



14 aircraft have flown more than
3,155,000 km

Our fully equipped dental van travelled
20,000 km



Named Australia's
Most Reputable Charity
by Charity RepTrak for
the 13th time



Voted as Australia's
Most Trusted Charity
by Reader's Digest



2024 Mundi Mundi Bash

Supporting communities

In many of the towns and remote properties we serve, the Royal Flying Doctor Service South Eastern Section is more than a health provider, we're a constant presence, a trusted face, and often the only lifeline for care. When there are no other services nearby, we are the GP clinic, the emergency department, the mental health team, and the dental practice. Without us, some remote communities simply could not exist.

This year has again shown the depth of that commitment. Whether it's providing primary health care to outback stations, flying critically ill patients to specialist care, delivering mental health support to isolated families, or running community first aid training so locals can be ready for the unexpected, we've been there – not just in the moments of need, but in the everyday rhythm of regional life.

On the ground when pressure is high

When communities face their toughest challenges, the Royal Flying Doctor Service is more than an emergency responder, we are a constant. Our crews are trained to perform under the most intense pressure, whether it's stabilising a patient on a station airstrip, coordinating care during a flood, or supporting a township through the long tail of drought or bushfire recovery. That depth of training and experience means we can adapt quickly, stay the course through prolonged periods of stress, and deliver the same high standard of care no matter how long the crisis lasts.

Because we live and work alongside the people we serve, we understand the challenges that ripple through a community during tough times, from interrupted access to medical supplies, to mental health strain, to the impact on chronic condition management. We're not outsiders who fly in and out; we're neighbours, partners, and familiar faces, trusted to be there long after the news crews have gone.

In the outback, dependability is everything. And for nearly a century, the RFDS has proven that in moments of need – whether sudden or sustained – we'll be there, ready to help communities not just survive, but recover and thrive.

On the ground when pressure is high

Blackout in Far Western NSW: Powering hope

In mid-October 2024, a violent storm brought down seven transmission towers 120 kilometres south of Broken Hill, cutting power to around 10,000 homes and businesses across Far Western NSW. Towns including Broken Hill, Wilcannia, Menindee, Tibooburra, White Cliffs and Silverton were left without electricity. The damage was so severe that many residents endured rolling blackouts for up to 19 days.

The outage didn't just turn off the lights, it disrupted communications, refrigeration, fuel supplies, school operations, and healthcare. For many vulnerable people, the risks grew by the hour as temperatures climbed and access to services fell away.

At the heart of our community support was the Wellbeing Place, which remained open as a safe, cool refuge thanks to personal generators brought in by staff.

"The Wellbeing Place has really been a hub during this blackout. We've had people coming in just to cool down, charge their phones, have a cup of tea, or simply sit somewhere safe while they wait for the power to come back on. For some, it's been the only place they can check in with friends and neighbours," said Kayelene Crossing, Mental Health Manager for Far West NSW.

Even while keeping the counselling rooms and support groups running, the team extended their reach beyond the centre's doors.

"Our team were out visiting people in their homes, especially the elderly and those living alone, making sure they've got enough food, water, and medication, and letting them know they're not forgotten," Kayelene said.

Staff members themselves were without power at home, yet continued to serve the community.

"Even though we've all been affected, everyone's just pitched in. It's been about looking after the community, because that's what the Flying Doctor does."

Drawing on nearly a century of experience delivering care in the toughest conditions, RFDSSE moved quickly to keep critical health services running:

- **Keeping the base operational:** We ran the Broken Hill base on its primary generator, ensuring aeromedical retrievals, primary healthcare clinics, and the Clive Bishop Medical Centre could continue.
- **Redundancy secured:** A secondary generator was brought in to safeguard our maintenance operations.
- **Fuel supply protected:** We worked with fuel providers to maintain essential reserves for our base infrastructure and regional airports.
- **Flight readiness maintained:** We liaised with Far West airport operators to confirm generator or solar-powered lighting for night operations and ensure fuel pumps – many manually operated – remained functional.
- **Clinic continuity:** Where in-person clinics were disrupted, we switched to Telehealth or rescheduled to keep patients supported.
- **Alternative communications:** All Broken Hill base numbers remained operational, and we provided satellite phone contact details for communities experiencing telecommunications outages.
- **Close coordination:** We worked hand-in-hand with local emergency management teams and service providers to adapt operations as conditions evolved.

When NSW Premier, The Hon Chris Minns visited Broken Hill, he thanked our staff personally and listened to how we'd adapted to keep communities safe.

Our CEO, Greg Sam reflected on the incredible spirit shown by RFDS staff:

"You're dealing with sleepless nights in the heat, lining up for petrol many blocks deep, and checking on loved ones, yet you still come to work ready to support others. You exemplify the very best of what the Royal Flying Doctor Service represents."

Greg Sam

NSW Premier Chris Minns, MP for Barwon Roy Butler and Broken Hill Mayor Tom Kennedy meet with the team at the Wellbeing Place in Broken Hill





Wanaaring

Wanaaring: Connection after a month of flood-induced isolation

When floodwaters from ex-Tropical Cyclone Albert cut Wanaaring off for over a month, isolation took a toll on every aspect of life. Children attended school online, families couldn't visit each other, and the community's mental wellbeing began to fray.

While our primary health team could still fly in, RFDSSE mental health staff Lesley Harvey and Glynis Thorp recognised that connection was just as essential as medical care. They organised a Mother's Day-themed afternoon, complete with outdoor play equipment, craft activities for children to make gifts, and a special afternoon tea for mothers and carers.

The event had multiple aims: to foster togetherness, provide play opportunities, strengthen community bonds, express gratitude to carers, and support overall wellbeing.

The impact was immediate. Parents expressed gratitude for the chance to connect face-to-face after weeks of isolation, children relished the chance to play, and residents asked for more events like it.

As Lesley put it: "A point of connection through play, food, laughter and a good chat was exactly what Wanaaring needed to start feeling whole again."

Easter Long Weekend: Service never sleeps

While much of Australia took a break over Easter, our Operations Control Centre (OCC) and frontline crews kept the wheels turning – and the aircraft flying – to ensure critical care reached regional NSW.

Over four days:

- Nine OCC shifts were covered non-stop by five coordinators, triaging calls, rostering crews, allocating aircraft, and liaising with Ambulance NSW.
- From our Dubbo and Broken Hill bases, 12 pilots, 14 nurses, 10 doctors, and four patient transport vehicle drivers delivered 24/7 care.
- Sixty-five calls to the medical assistance line supported 49 patients – from station owners and mine sites to rural hospitals and clinics needing virtual support.
- Twenty-four emergency transfers were completed, including a complex mission to Lord Howe Island.
- Six non-emergency transfers were managed seamlessly from hospital to hospital.

Among the many cases: a redback spider bite during a late-night roo shooting trip, a severe toothache hours from the nearest dentist, a motorbike accident, an e-scooter crash, a mental health crisis, and a sheep farmer with a stick through their boot.

These were real people, in real need – and we were there, because our teams were there.



Louth

First Aid in Louth: Empowering communities of all ages

In Louth, Registrar-Retrieval Patricia (Toosie) O'Morchoe shared her skills in first aid with locals, ranging from seasoned station owners to children as young as four. The helpful session covered lifesaving basics: bandaging and snake-bite immobilisation, calling for help, performing CPR, and recognising when immediate action is needed.

Patricia also provided refresher training for Medical Chest Custodians, ensuring they could safely handle glass vials and measure accurate dosages – skills that could prove critical in emergencies such as anaphylaxis.

"Effective first aid can be the difference between life and death, especially in the bush."

Patricia O'Morchoe

These sessions didn't just build skills; they built confidence, ensuring communities could bridge the gap until professional help arrives.

Dr Toosie with one of her students in Louth



Maternity and women's healthcare in the bush

In the city, preparing for a new baby might mean decorating a nursery or timing the drive to the hospital. In the bush, it can look more like a community muster – neighbours moving stock so dad can drive mum to the nearest birthing unit, friends filling the freezer with meals, and grandparents travelling days to lend a hand. It's a coordinated effort that speaks to the strength and resilience of rural communities.

But even the best-laid plans can be upended when labour starts early, complications arise, or a health concern needs urgent attention. That's when expectant mothers and their families can rely on the Royal Flying Doctor Service to bridge the gap between home and safe care.

"It's really difficult for young women between Dubbo and Broken Hill who live miles and miles from any health service to get really good obstetric care when they're having their children," says RFDS Senior Flight Nurse Karen Barlow. "There is no place between Dubbo and Broken Hill that you can have a baby."

The scale of the gap is stark. Smaller hospitals have closed maternity wards, and workforce shortages mean recruitment is harder than ever. Women make up around half of all the patients we serve, unfortunately those living in very remote areas are likely to die up to 16 years earlier than their city counterparts.

For the RFDS South Eastern Section, maternity and newborn emergencies have climbed from 82 in 2022 to 129 in 2024, with 149 projected for 2025. Each number is a mother, a baby, and a journey that began far from the care most Australians take for granted.

When minutes matter

When labour starts hundreds of kilometres from a birthing unit, every minute counts. RFDS aircraft, nurses and doctors are often the only link between a remote property or rural hospital and a maternity ward equipped for complex deliveries.

Flight nurses are dually trained in critical care and midwifery, prepared for everything from breech births to postpartum haemorrhage, sometimes at 18,000 feet in the confined space of an aircraft cabin.

In the last five years, four babies have been born mid-flight in NSW. Flight Nurse Micheal Harper recalls one:

"I recently transferred a woman in early labour from a small rural hospital to a larger birthing centre. Her baby had other plans and decided to make a rapid appearance into the world not long after take-off. It was such a calm birth, and mum got to have skin-to-skin cuddles until we reached our destination."

Micheal Harper



Micheal Harper is one of our many qualified midwives

Others, like Kerry Lyn Ukena, have only learned later how things turned out:

"We went to Lightning Ridge to get a young mum and her partner. She'd gone into premature labour and needed to be taken to Dubbo. A few days later I was back at Lightning Ridge and a patient I was transferring was so excited – he'd just become a great-grandfather. It turned out he was the grandfather of the woman I had transferred days earlier. He was showing me pictures and telling me how it went. He was so excited."

Caring for women, every day

Sometimes the most moving missions are reunions. Flight Nurse Lydia Newton remembers:

“The woman had birthed a beautiful baby boy the day before via Caesarean section and he had some respiratory distress and required transfer for ongoing treatment. She was delivered direct to the door of her baby’s nursery bed where tears were shed by all people involved. It was a very special moment.”

And for Karen Barlow, one tarmac delivery stands out:

“We had this beautiful couple on board and as we taxied for take-off, she looked at me funny and said, ‘I think my waters just broke.’ We taxied back to the Walgett Airport terminal and we had this beautiful, calm delivery. The cargo door was up, the sun was shining in. Despite where it happened, it was a really nice delivery.”



When Joelene went into labor at just 31 weeks, she never imagined her little one would make an airborne entrance mid-flight! With the Sydney skyline below and an RFDS midwife by her side, baby Indi arrived before the wheels even touched the ground.

Listen to Joelene Grace talk about how baby Indi’s early arrival became ‘airborne’ on [The Flying Doctor Podcast](#)

Above: Joelene and husband Jake with baby Indi

While urgent retrievals save lives, most of our women’s health work is about stopping emergencies before they happen. With women representing a little more than half of our primary healthcare patients, we bring care to where women live, so distance, cost and weather aren’t barriers to staying well.

Regular GP clinics bring doctors directly to towns for antenatal/postnatal care, chronic disease management and preventative screening.

Monthly nurse-led clinics offer longer, holistic appointments focused on prevention and early detection.

“Nurse-led clinics give us the opportunity to dig a little bit further to find out how our patients are really going, and if there are any underlying risks to their health,” says Primary Care Nurse Kerri Rothery. “It’s about prevention and early detection to help our regional families live healthy lives and keep them in the bush.”

Care coordination ensures women stay connected to specialists across vast distances without having to relocate.

Mental health and family wellbeing programs support mothers and children through counselling, social and emotional wellbeing initiatives, and play therapy.

As Chief Medical Officer Dr Shannon Nott notes:

“For decades, the RFDS has worked to close the gap in healthcare access between city and country, and this effort continues as we develop our organisation to meet the needs of the communities we serve.”

Dr Shannon Nott

For women across NSW, the Flying Doctor is both the lifeline when minutes matter and the steady presence that keeps everyday care within reach, so postcode never decides a mother’s, or a baby’s, future.

In early 2025, we held

4

dedicated women’s health clinics to encourage women to think holistically about their own health.

The heartbeat of the outback: how RFDS keeps primary care close to home

In the far reaches of NSW, seeing a doctor isn't as simple as driving down the road. For many communities, the nearest GP or dentist can be hundreds of kilometres away. It means arranging time off work, finding someone to mind the kids, and making a trip that might take all day – or longer.

That's why the Royal Flying Doctor Service brings care to the people. From remote stations to small-town halls, RFDS clinics make health a part of everyday life in the bush, rather than another barrier to overcome.

Patients arriving at
one of our remote
clinics in the Far West



Wiawera

Wiawera: a clinic built on commitment

For more than five decades, Wiawera Station has hosted regular RFDS clinics, thanks to the dedication of long-time volunteer coordinator Jenny Treloar OAM.

Jenny's role isn't just about opening the doors. She makes sure people know when the team is coming, keeps the clinic space ready, and welcomes patients who might have driven hours for their appointment. In 1997, when the original building was lost to floods, her family rebuilt on higher ground to ensure services could continue without interruption.

"The RFDS has always been a lifeline for us, and we wanted to do our part," Jenny says.

Her efforts mean people don't have to make the long and costly trip to larger towns for routine check-ups, medication reviews, or health advice – the care comes to them.



Jenny Treloar (centre) with Dr Angela Gray
and Primary Healthcare Nurse Carol Doyle

When care comes to you

The expansion of Primary Health services from Dubbo to serve six key remote communities in north-west of NSW is an example of the continuing efforts of the RFDS South Eastern Section to meet the needs of our people.

Over the last three years the provision of these clinics has evolved from the delivery of services by a primary health nurse and ad hoc General Practice clinics, to scheduled, frequent full GP clinics, supported by additional nurse-led clinics and diabetes education.

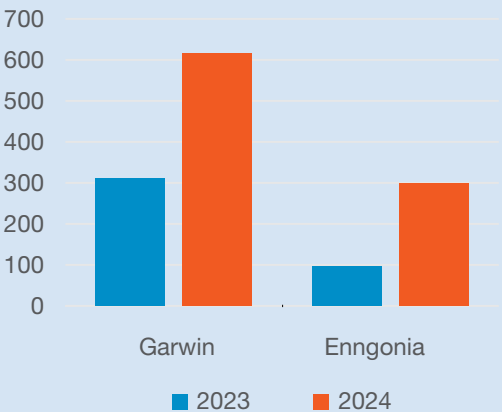
“The RFDS has been providing fly-in, fly-out clinics to Far West NSW from Broken Hill for decades and these clinics are an integral part of the work we do, in addition to the emergency retrievals. We are working hard to produce similar results in the north-west and we are very proud of the result so far,” Primary Health Team Leader Kerri Rothery said.

“In 2024 we effectively doubled the number of clinics we held across the six sites, compared to 2023 and this resulted in a doubling of the number of patients seen.



Grawin

“In particular, Grawin, a mining community that is quite isolated and with no access to healthcare without travelling to Lightning Ridge, has increased from 19 clinics and 311 occasions of care in 2023 to 43 clinics and 615 occasions of care in 2024. Enngonia was a jump from nine clinics seeing 96 patients in 2023, to 22 clinics and 298 patients seen in 2024.”

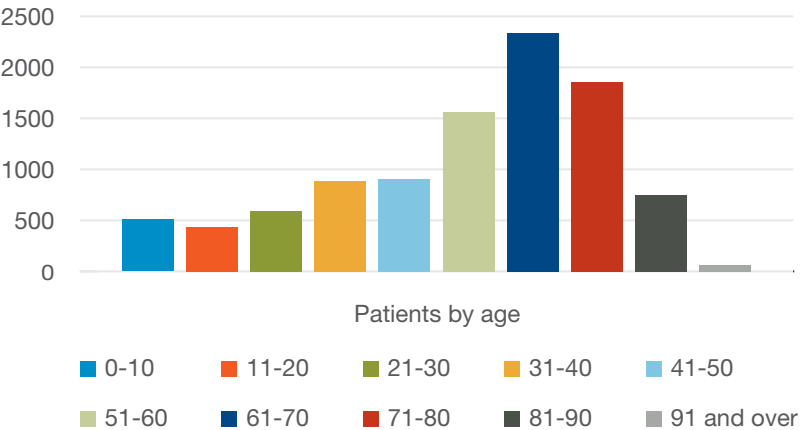


Patient having a check-up with our primary health team

We delivered

9,892

occasions of care across 1,407 remote clinics last financial year.



The Dubbo Support Group provided funding to make substantial improvements to the Grawin Opal Fields clinic in June 2025, including sliding doors for greater privacy, bariatric and clinic furniture, accessibility ramp and air conditioning. These upgrades have contributed to a more comfortable and accessible environment for both patients and our primary healthcare team.

Kerri says the teamwork with everyone who visits our clinics to improve their health and empower them to stay in their community. “We work with so many people to manage chronic illness, but we also encourage people to undertake all appropriate screening. We have identified and diagnosed cancers and other high acuity diseases that need immediate treatment.”

The heartbeat of the outback: how RFDS keeps primary care close to home

A reason to smile again

For Lightning Ridge couple Emma-Lee and Tiarnie, RFDS dental visits have been life-changing.

Tiarnie had endured painful dental problems and bad experiences in the past, leaving her terrified of treatment. Emma-Lee, a former dental assistant, gently encouraged her to try the RFDS dental service she had trusted for years.

“They were so patient. They let me stay in the room, hold her hand, and made sure she felt safe. They never pushed her too far,” Emma-Lee says.

When Tiarnie needed a root canal – a procedure not normally available in Lightning Ridge – the RFDS team found a way to make it happen.

“If the RFDS weren’t coming, I think Tiarnie’s teeth would have rotted. Now she’s getting more confident to smile,” Emma-Lee says.

Rural & Remote Dental Services Manager, Dr Lyn Mayne, says the demand for care is huge.



Lightning Ridge



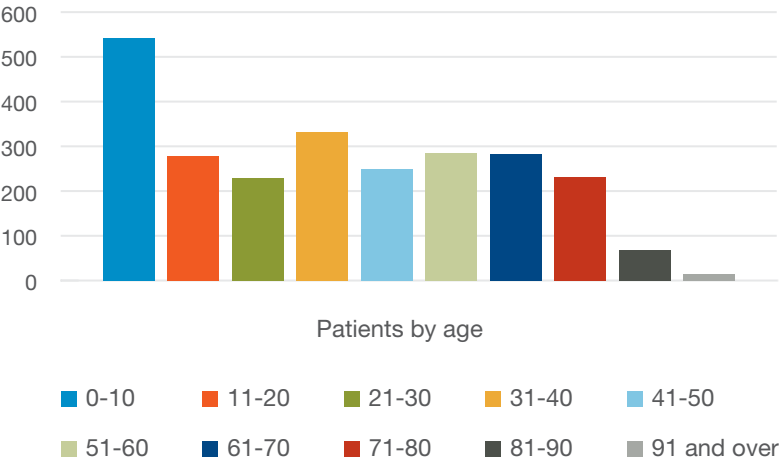
“Everybody deserves a healthy smile. Our team works extremely hard to bring that to people in the most isolated communities.”

Dr Lyn Mayne

Emma-Lee and Tiarnie greatly value our RFDS oral health service

1/5

of the patients we see are 10 and under. We are helping the next generation to learn healthy oral hygiene habits to last a lifetime.



Mental Health and Wellbeing support for all stages of life

In communities where isolation can be felt as deeply as the vast landscapes that surround them, our mental health and wellbeing team is a vital presence. Strategically placed across Broken Hill, Dubbo, Cobar and Lightning Ridge, our specialists travel far and wide, offering compassionate, confidential support to people navigating challenges like loneliness, stress, and addiction.

Over the past year, they've delivered over 5,100 one-on-one consultations across 28 locations, but their impact goes far beyond the clinic room. Nearly 17,000 people have come together through our group wellbeing activities, which are designed to foster connection, creativity and community. Whether it's yoga in Broken Hill, woodworking in Menindee, or painting under the outback sky in Cobar, these gatherings help bridge the emotional distance that physical isolation can create.

We also know that building resilience starts early. That's why our child therapy specialists are regular visitors to remote schools, helping children develop emotional literacy and wellbeing strategies that will support them for life. In the past financial year alone, we've hosted 173 school wellbeing lessons, reaching over 2,300 students with tools to help them thrive.



For the youngest members of the family, we also host regular story time in Packsaddle, an opportunity for the smallest in the community to test out their creativity and connect with their neighbours in a friendly environment.

In every corner of our footprint, we're working to ensure that mental health care is not just available – but approachable, inclusive, and tailored to the unique rhythms of life in the bush.

Ali Lloyd from our child and adolescent mental health team hosts Storytime in Packsaddle for the youngest community members

Specialist care, close to home

In communities where seeing a specialist would normally mean an expensive and exhausting trip to a major city, RFDS brings them in instead – ensuring patients can get expert care without leaving home.

One of those specialists is Dr Richard Rawson OAM, who has been visiting remote towns for more than 20 years. As the only ophthalmologist to regularly visit places like Menindee, Tibooburra, Ivanhoe and Brewarrina, Dr Rawson provides critical eye care, from prescribing glasses on the spot to screening for cataracts and glaucoma.

"People appreciate having someone they can talk to about their concerns, without the rush of a city clinic."

Dr Richard Rawson



Ophthalmologist Dr Richard Rawson's services are in high demand

The heartbeat of the outback: how RFDS keeps primary care close to home

This visiting model doesn't just save travel time, it prevents conditions from going undiagnosed or untreated simply because the nearest specialist is hundreds of kilometres away.

Our busy dental team also receive support from amazing volunteers, like David and Jenny. After over a decade with our Dental team in Broken Hill and Dubbo, plus countless trips in the dental van to remote towns like Hebel, Pooncarie and Grawin, David and Jenny say their greatest reward has been seeing how their dental education and treatment has transformed lives.

In one of the communities where they volunteered, children once had an average of six cavities each. After years of teaching dental care and regular visits, that number dropped to nearly zero. We cannot thank David and Jenny enough for their tireless efforts, dedicating over 100 weeks of dental care to some of Australia's most remote families.

Jenny recalls a patient who drove two and a half hours each way to get his tooth fixed. If he had not been able to get an appointment with David, it would have been a six-hour drive each way.

"People in the city don't realise the distances people have to travel and why a sore tooth gets ignored until they're in agony," Jenny said.

Stories like this motivated them to continue volunteering long after retirement age. David left his private practice in 2012, but continued volunteering with us in the dental van. David and Jenny are now officially retiring to spend more time with their children and grandchildren. However, they are hopeful others will be inspired to give back to communities in the bush like they have.

"It should be our role to help other people because that's what makes the world go round," David and Jenny shared.



David and Jenny with a patient

"Growing up in a small country town, we know the RFDS are a lifeline for everybody. We had to help. It's almost in your DNA to give back to the RFDS."

David and Jenny



Members of the RFDS team in Tilpa

Spotlight on skin health in the Far West

A recent study from the Cancer Institute of NSW suggests melanoma is projected to be one of the most common cancers diagnosed in the Far West Local Health District, where UV exposure is among the highest in the country. Early detection is critical – and our clinical teams in Far Western NSW are leading the charge.

Thanks to the generous support of Broken Hill's Silver City Bush Treadlers, we acquired three new dermatoscopes, handheld diagnostic tools that help identify skin cancers not visible to the naked eye. This enabled us to run dedicated skin clinics in White Cliffs, Ivanhoe, Tibooburra and Tilpa across April, May and June.

More than 60 patients attended, and our clinicians identified a number of pre-cancerous lesions, basal cell carcinomas, squamous cell carcinomas, and melanomas that may have otherwise gone undetected. Two dermatoscopes are now in use across our network, with one dedicated to the Clive Bishop Medical Centre, helping us continue this vital work year-round.



Condobolin

Condobolin: answering the call

When Condobolin's only full-time GP closed their books in 2023, the town was left without reliable primary care. The ripple effects were immediate. Patients faced weeks-long waits in other towns, and people were missing out on vital check-ups and treatments.

RFDS SE stepped in, launching a permanent clinic staffed by doctors, nurses and support staff. The response from the community was overwhelming, with hundreds of people booking in within weeks.

In its first year, the Condobolin clinic served more than 1,300 patients, achieved AGPAL accreditation, and was named Rural/Remote Health Employer of the Year alongside the Medical Services clinics in Warren and Gilgandra. Locals now have access to a consistent GP service, allied health, and visiting specialists – all without leaving town.

"The Flying Doctor has given our town hope again," one patient told A Current Affair, when the story of Condobolin's turnaround aired nationally.

From Wiawera to Lightning Ridge, Condobolin to Tibooburra, the Royal Flying Doctor Service continues to be a constant in an ever-changing landscape – delivering care, building trust, and keeping health within reach.



The clinic in Condobolin recently celebrated its one-year anniversary



The RFDS is proud to support the community of Condobolin



The primary healthcare and front-of-office team have been welcomed by the community

Our 24/7 aeromedical lifeline: Care where and when it counts

In the most isolated corners of Australia, when a crisis strikes, the Royal Flying Doctor Service is often the only thing standing between life and loss. Our aeromedical teams are not just skilled, they are specialists in delivering hospital-level care in some of the most challenging conditions imaginable.

"In a hospital, you have a large, well-equipped resuscitation bay. In the back of a plane, you have a stretcher, two seats, and a couple of backpacks. Everything you do has to be streamlined and efficient."

Dr Mina Arsanious

That efficiency comes from meticulous preparation. Before the wheels ever leave the ground, our teams have already considered every possible turn the case could take. Space is tight, the drone of the engines is constant, and turbulence can turn even simple procedures into high-stakes challenges.



Dr Mina Arsanious in front of one of our emergency retrieval aircraft



Dr Mina Arsanious is from the UK

"The moment you take off, everything changes," Mina says.

"There's turbulence, pressure shifts, and G-forces, all things that don't exist in a hospital setting."

In the air, there's no backup team to call in – every doctor, nurse, and pilot must be ready to adapt instantly. That means anticipating worst-case scenarios, having contingency plans for each, keeping vital tools within arm's reach, and using precise, closed-loop communication to make sure nothing is missed.

"You need a plan A, B and C... and sometimes you end up using plan D," Mina says with a smile.

It's that combination of technical precision and mental readiness that allows the RFDS to respond when the stakes are at their highest – like the day our team was called to help Charlie, a burns patient from rural NSW whose survival depended on quick thinking, advanced skill, and calm under extraordinary pressure.

Charlie survived burns to 70% of his body

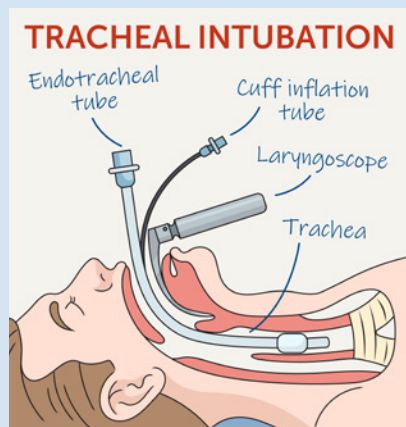
Charlie, a young father from northern NSW, was refuelling his water truck near Terrie Hie Hie, 50 kilometres from Moree, when it exploded, engulfing him in flames. With burns to more than 70% of his body, Charlie dived into a creek to douse the fire, and then with no one else around, he made the difficult decision to climb back into his burning truck cabin and call for help on his UHF radio.

His mayday call was answered by two men and he was found and rushed to Moree District Hospital, Charlie was stabilised and prepped for urgent transfer to a specialist burns unit in Sydney. Dr Mina Arsanious, Flight Nurse Kerry Lyn Ukena, and Pilot Stuart Robinson flew in, expecting a direct transfer.

But on assessment, they realised Charlie's airway was at risk – his high-pitched voice a sign of swelling from suspected inhalation burns. "If we'd taken off without securing his airway, it could have closed mid-flight," Dr Mina recalls. He intubated Charlie before departure, a move that likely saved his life.

As they prepared to leave, another hurdle emerged: Sydney Airport was closed due to thick smoke from back-burning fires. Without hesitation, the crew diverted to Brisbane, coordinating with ground teams to ensure a seamless handover.

It was a mission marked by split-second decisions, multiple backup plans, and the steady professionalism that defines the RFDS. Charlie endured weeks in intensive care, multiple surgeries, and a long recovery – but he is alive because, when the worst happened, the RFDS was there.



Charlie's family is happy he is alive and doing well.





Excellence in safety, quality and performance

For almost 100 years, the Royal Flying Doctor Service has reinvented how care reaches people who live far from it. From pedal radios and dirt strips to simulated flight training and a digitised Operations Control Centre, every leap we've made has had one purpose: to deliver safe, high-quality healthcare to rural and remote communities, every day of the year.

That legacy of innovation is alive across the South Eastern Section. Pilots, clinicians, engineers, coordinators and volunteers turn distance into access and urgency into outcomes, because in our world, safety and quality aren't projects; they're habits.

Collaborating with our communities to enhance safety, quality and performance

At the RFDS, excellence isn't achieved in isolation, it's sustained through continuous collaboration with the communities we serve. Everyday contributions from local custodians, property owners, and volunteers underpin our ability to deliver care that is safe, dependable, and ready at a moment's notice.

Medical Chest program – Our community-based lifeline

Established decades ago, our Medical Chest program now includes 410 chests distributed across remote homesteads, stations, roadhouses, schools, and outback sites throughout NSW and ACT.

Each chest, maintained by local, trained Medical Chest Custodians, serves communities of up to 30 people and is equipped with pharmaceuticals, diagnostic tools, and essential supplies. When emergencies arise, custodians access RFDS doctors via our 24/7 advice line, enabling them to administer treatment guided remotely.

To uplift this vital network, Lead Pharmacist Rochelle Olsen is revitalising the program with:

- A new online hub housing up-to-date resources, manuals, and support materials
- A bi-monthly newsletter connecting custodians directly with clinical teams and training updates

These initiatives ensure Custodians are empowered, confident, and equipped to act swiftly during medical crises.

Our fleet is dedicated to reaching the most remote locations

Did you know there are two different sizes of aircraft in three different configurations that the Royal Flying Doctor Service uses in NSW?

It's the mix of aircraft that means we can deliver the wide range of services we provide – from aeromedical emergencies and inter-hospital transfers, through to remote clinics.

Ten out of our 14 aircraft – or 70% – are King Air B200s, fitted out for a mix of emergency retrievals and clinic transport around Western and Far West NSW, north-east of South Australia and south-west of Queensland.



Our medical chests are a lifeline for people in the bush

Medical Chests are typically on properties at least

80 km

away from professional medical care.

In the last financial year, we received

558 calls

from community related to accessing a Medical Chest.

Not only for emergencies, our Medical Chests have many items for respiratory infections and minor injuries.

We also have four King Air B350s which have impressive range and are prioritised to transport low to high-acuity patients the long distance between airports without the need to stop to refuel.

There are three main points of difference between the B200 and the B350: size, airstrip requirements, and how far it can fly before needing to be refuelled.

The B200 can operate into shorter airstrips and is especially well-equipped for remote and privately owned airstrips. If you have had a visit from the Flying Doctor in a remote location, it's more than likely you've seen or been in one of our B200s.

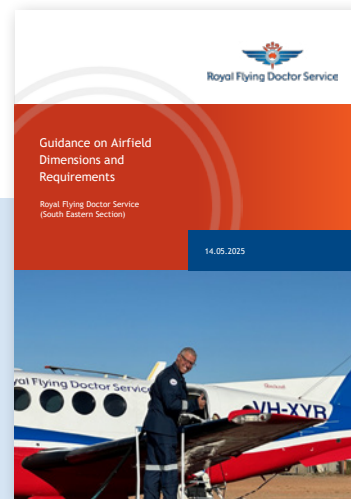
The B350 is a heavier aircraft and requires a longer airstrip. It also has a longer range – ideal for transport between big centres like Broken Hill and Adelaide or Dubbo and Sydney. If you have travelled with our team to a capital city for specialist care, you were probably in a B350.

Private airstrip collaboration – Groundwork for safe landings

Approximately 400 private and rural airstrips across NSW, ACT, north-eastern South Australia, and south-western Queensland form a crucial part of our operational network. Many of these airstrips are privately owned, and their maintenance and readiness directly impact our ability to deliver care safely. In fact, something as simple as boggy airstrip prevents more landings than any other factor.

To support our airstrip owners in the community, we've developed a clear Airstrip Maintenance Handbook, now available online. This resource provides practical guidance – from runway length and surface condition to lighting and fencing – for maintaining airstrips to RFDS landing standards.

Complementing this, we've launched a bi-monthly newsletter for airstrip owners, ensuring owners have the guidance and support they need to meet safety expectations and keep our pilots and patients safe.



Regional Advisory Committee – Community voices shaping our services

Our Regional Advisory Committee (RAC) is another way we embed community perspectives directly into our planning and delivery. Made up of respected representatives from across our service footprint, the RAC plays a pivotal role in:

- Identifying emerging health priorities in local communities
- Providing feedback on service delivery and community engagement initiatives
- Ensuring cultural, geographical, and operational considerations are factored into decision-making

By harnessing the lived experience and on-the-ground insights of RAC members, we can design and refine services that respond to real needs, strengthening the safety, quality, and relevance of everything we do.

These community-driven enhancements demonstrate our commitment to sharing the responsibility for safety and performance. By empowering custodians, airstrip owners, and community representatives with the right tools and opportunities, we build a collaborative healthcare network that's resilient, responsive, and deeply rooted in local expertise.

A long-standing commitment to quality care

We place immense value on listening to the voices of those we serve. Whether it's a patient receiving primary care in a remote clinic, someone navigating mental health challenges, or a family relying on our dental services, their feedback helps shape the way we care.

Over the past financial year, we've invited our patients and consumers to share their experiences with us – what worked, what could be better, and how we made them feel. Their responses have been overwhelmingly positive, with a remarkable 99% satisfaction rating across all services. This isn't just a number; it's a reflection of the compassion, professionalism, and dedication our teams bring to every interaction.

It's also a powerful reminder that when care is delivered with heart, it resonates deeply. And it's why we remain committed to continuous improvement, so every journey with us feels supported, safe, and deeply human.

Smart technology: from simulators to digital records

Innovation is how we turn challenges into better outcomes. This year, two investments in technology have transformed the way we train and the way we care for patients.

Precision in the skies: aviation simulation built for the outback

The RFDS aviation team trains for the real world, and in our world, that means flying into some of the most isolated airstrips in Australia, often in unpredictable conditions. Our state-of-the-art flight simulator replicates the actual remote communities and airstrips we serve, complete with unsealed runways, short approaches, and limited lighting.

Crews can rehearse missions from take-off to touchdown, with the simulator replicating the unique challenges of RFDS operations. Variable weather, low-visibility night landings, and challenging terrain can be programmed to mirror the conditions our teams face every day.

Beyond flying the aircraft, the simulator trains pilots and aircrew in full mission profiles – integrating patient retrieval scenarios, airstrip coordination, and in-flight decision-making. This means when our crews are called to land on a dirt strip lit only by vehicle headlights, they've already done it before in training.

This advanced capability is made possible through the generosity of our donors, whose support helps us invest in technology that directly translates into safer flights and better patient outcomes.

By combining technical precision with the realities of outback flying, our aviation simulation program ensures that when lives depend on every decision, our teams are ready.



Head of Training and Checking David Connell practices a flight in our state-of-the-art flight simulator

Sharper skills with the Vimedix ultrasound simulator

The new Vimedix ultrasound simulator allows us to teach and accredit our retrieval doctors and flight nurses in-house for the first time. It comes loaded with over 150 pathologies and can display a 3D or 4D animated model alongside the corresponding ultrasound image in real time. This unique split-screen view accelerates understanding, especially for beginners, and builds confidence before they're faced with a real patient in the field.

With online theory modules and demonstration videos being developed by our own Dr Jess Kracht, we're moving towards running live-streamed workshops to other RFDS bases, ensuring consistent, cost-effective training across our network. In a world where simulation training is the gold standard but not widely available in retrieval medicine, we believe we may be the only aeromedical organisation in Australia to offer this capability.



Dr Jessica Kracht demonstrates the Vimedix ultrasound simulator

Digital records that travel faster than we do

Paper charts once meant juggling folders, handwritten notes, and time-consuming data collation – especially when our teams moved across state lines. In one regional base in Queensland, it was estimated that paper-based recording contributed to a staggering 30% documentation error rate and required up to 40 hours per week for staff to manually reconcile data.

Our new Electronic Health Record (EHR) system changes all that. Clinicians can now record patient information in real time – even mid-flight – with secure offline storage that synchronises when connectivity returns. This has reduced administration time, improved data accuracy, and freed clinicians to focus entirely on care, especially when every second counts.

100%

of our IHT, PE and NEPT flights use our EHR system

20

iPad devices are dedicated just to the EHR

Around

2,680

records were created using the EHR last financial year

The EHR devices also support portable ultrasound viewing and uploading images to share with next stage of care



Pilot Tim Solomons helps the NSW Ambulance team to pack the aircraft with their gear

Partnering for impact

Every mission we fly, every clinic we run, every patient we see – none of it happens in isolation. The Royal Flying Doctor Service (South Eastern Section) is part of a far-reaching network of government, healthcare providers, community organisations, and generous supporters who share one goal: ensuring people in the most remote corners of NSW and the ACT receive the care they deserve.

Working hand in hand with government

Our work in partnership with government spans both urgent responses and long-term service delivery.

Supporting our emergency services partners during Cyclone Alfred

In October last year, NSW Ambulance called on the RFDS to transport 24 paramedics to the flood-affected Northern Rivers following ex-Cyclone Alfred. Over two days, our pilots flew teams and vital medical equipment into Ballina – navigating challenging weather windows to get help to the communities who needed it most. While the storm may have been downgraded, the damage was severe, and our ability to rapidly mobilise ensured NSW Ambulance crews could be on the ground delivering critical care.

On call 24/7 for six health facilities in the Far West

With a national shortage of doctors and nurses continuing to challenge healthcare delivery, our telehealth service has become an essential lifeline for local health districts.

Every day, nurses working in remote communities know they're never alone. With just a phone call, they can connect with our emergency doctors, seeking advice on everything from minor infections to complex injuries. This immediate support means patients can often be treated safely and confidently close to home, without the need to travel long distances.

And when a situation calls for more specialised or critical care, we're ready to take flight – ensuring help is not just available, but on the way.

Last financial year, we responded to over 1,800 telehealth calls from remote local health districts; an average of five calls every day. Each one reflects the deep trust and collaboration we share with our local health partners. Together, we form a seamless extension of the rural and remote healthcare network, ensuring that no matter how isolated a community may be, expert medical support is always within reach.

Over

1,800

telehealth calls from
remote local health districts

Working hand in hand with government

\$15 million from the NSW Government to maintain services

This spirit of collaboration is reflected in the NSW Government's recent \$15 million funding commitment to support RFDS services for regional, rural and remote communities. This funding recognises the role we play as part of the NSW health system's frontline – from our GPs and emergency doctors to our aircraft and crews ready for both emergency and non-emergency care.

NSW Minister for Health Ryan Park said "[The funding] is absolutely critical because this organisation fills the gaps when New South Wales Health, when the Australian Government, simply can't make it work".

"This service is iconic in Australia and we know that each and every year, over its last 97 years of operation, it has been filling the gaps, providing rural, regional and remote health care to some of the most far-flung parts of our country and, and our state."

NSW Minister for Health Ryan Park

"We're really delighted to make what is a significant commitment of \$15 million to make sure, going forward, this service can remain in the air," Minister Ryan said in a statement.

Greg Sam, our CEO, said the funding recognises the key partnership role the RFDSSE plays in the NSW health system, particularly in rural and remote communities where our services are needed most.

"From our GPs at our local medical centres, our emergency doctors on call, and our planes at the ready for both emergency and non-emergency healthcare, we are proud to work as part of the NSW health system frontline, providing vital healthcare services to rural and remote communities in need," Greg says. "The funding announcement by the NSW Government is appreciated. It will contribute to ensuring that regional, rural and remote communities can access vital life-saving, medical and healthcare services."

Outback Heritage Experience captures the essence of Flying Doctor Country

Another example of this partnership in action is the opening of our award-winning Outback Heritage Experience in Broken Hill, one of only two RFDS tourism attractions in New South Wales. Made possible through \$5.5 million in NSW Government funding, the upgraded facility shares the remarkable 97-year history of the RFDS, honours the doctors, pilots, flight nurses and community members who have shaped our story, and celebrates the resilience of the people we serve.

Housed in a refurbished hangar, the attraction features interactive displays, a theatre, and a showcase of aircraft dating back to the 1930s, creating an immersive experience for visitors. The Outback Heritage Experience is more than a museum – it is a tourism drawcard that supports the local economy, creates jobs, and inspires future generations to pursue careers in healthcare and aviation. By working closely with government, we have created a space that not only honours our past, but also strengthens the Far West's future.



NSW Minister for Health Ryan Park and MP for Barwon Roy Butler are taken on a tour of the Broken Hill Base with Head of Health Strategy and Planning Jackie Hanniver



The Fox Moth is a tourist favourite for visitors



Broken Hill



NSW Local Government Minister Ron Hoenig and MP for Barwon Roy Butler spend some time with the Broken Hill team

A significant portion of RFDS operations is concentrated in the electorate of Barwon, where approximately half of our services are delivered

Roy Butler, the Member for Barwon has been an advocate for accessible healthcare in his electorate throughout his tenure as the local member. He is also a close ally of the Royal Flying Doctor Service.

“In NSW, 50% of the services that are provided by the RFDS are provided in my electorate of Barwon,” Mr Butler said. “In many of my communities, the RFDS is the only service provider for medical services. You can’t overstate the importance of the RFDS for regional NSW.”

The Royal Flying Doctor Service also cannot overstate the importance of the support we receive in community from advocates like Mr Butler.

“We deeply appreciate the unwavering support from our local MP, the Member of Barwon, Roy Butler, who understands the scope, breadth and value of our services and whose advocacy has been instrumental in securing this funding,” Greg Sam said in response to the \$15 million funding announcement.

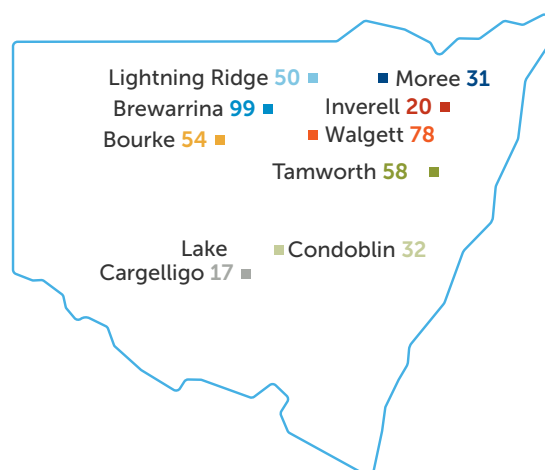
Connecting specialist healthcare to remote communities

One of the strongest examples of our role in the NSW public health system is the Rural Aerial Health Service (RAHS), delivered under contract to the NSW Ministry of Health. Through RAHS, we fly doctors, nurses and allied health professionals to and from regional, rural and remote areas so communities can continue to receive high-quality health services.

In 2024–25, RAHS operated 474 flights, transporting 1610 health professionals and travelling just under 180,000 kilometres across NSW. These flights carried primary healthcare workers such as ophthalmologists, podiatrists, radiologists, oncologists, occupational therapists and sexual health specialists from organisations including the Outback Eye Service, Rural Doctors Network, and The Skin Hospital. Many of these providers would not otherwise be able to reach the communities they serve.

Whether it’s a chartered flight from Bankstown to Moree, or our own Beechcraft King Air 350 taking allied health teams to Narrabri or Glen Innes, RAHS ensures the right care reaches the right place at the right time.

Top 10 locations we transported specialists to by number of flights:



Strengthening the healthcare chain

Our ability to make an impact every day comes from more than what we do alone. It comes from the network we're part of, the government agencies, healthcare providers, community groups and supporters who share our mission. Together, we create a stronger, more connected system of care for the people who need it most.

In the most remote corners of Australia, access to care depends on connection. No single organisation can meet every need alone, which is why the RFDS works as part of a broader healthcare ecosystem, partnering with government, other providers, and community organisations to deliver complete and continuous care.

Our partnerships strengthen the healthcare chain, ensuring patients don't fall through the cracks. Whether it's cancer care, mental health, or alcohol and other drug support, we work side-by-side with others to make sure rural and remote Australians have the same opportunities for health and wellbeing as those in the city.

Standing beside women with breast cancer – the McGrath Foundation partnership

For more than a decade, the RFDS South Eastern Section has partnered with the McGrath Foundation to bring breast cancer care to women in Far West New South Wales. Since 2011, this collaboration has funded a dedicated Cancer Care Nurse based in Broken Hill, bridging a gap of more than 300 kilometres to the next closest specialist in Mildura.

Funded entirely through the RFDS and the McGrath Foundation, the service is free to patients, with no out-of-pocket costs or Medicare claim. Women diagnosed with breast cancer, or recovering post-treatment, receive expert clinical care alongside psychosocial and emotional support to help them navigate the health system, understand complex information, and make informed decisions about their care.

Beyond one-on-one consultations, our Cancer Care Nurse travels thousands of kilometres each year to deliver workshops, talks, and community education sessions on healthy living and life after treatment. Since 2011, Jo Beven – our inaugural and current Cancer Care Nurse – has conducted over 5,000 consults and flown more than 57,000 kilometres to reach women across the Far West.

“Early detection is the best chance of survival, but for women living in the country and a long way from health services, achieving this early detection and diagnosis can be especially challenging. Part of my role is visiting remote communities to educate and empower women of all ages to check their breasts.”

Jo Beven

Chief Medical Officer Dr Shannon Nott says the partnership is a prime example of the RFDS's commitment to building the healthcare chain in the bush: “By working with the McGrath Foundation, we're delivering a service that simply wouldn't exist otherwise – and we're ensuring that women facing breast cancer in the outback are never facing it alone.”

Building resilience through the award-winning GROW program

In June 2025, the Network of Alcohol and Other Drugs Agencies (NADA) Conference recognised the sector's leaders in their prestigious awards ceremony. We are proud to share that our Guiding Rural Outback Wellbeing (GROW) program won the *Excellence in Health Promotion* award – a testament to years of hard work, persistence, and our unwavering commitment to supporting the communities we serve.

Communities and service providers gather for GROW Narromine Day



GROW is an innovative health initiative led by RFDSSSE that strengthens community resilience and wellbeing in rural and remote areas. It supports and upskills communities to better respond to mental health, alcohol, and other drug challenges through a range of proactive and locally tailored programs:

- School Support Program – Delivers evidence-based mental health, alcohol and other drug education to high school students, along with wellbeing and resilience-building activities.
- Aquaponics Program – Provides schools and communities with sustainable 'GROW Units' that integrate aquaculture and hydroponics, supporting STEM learning and promoting healthy lifestyle choices through therapeutic horticulture.
- Community Program – Brings health and wellbeing education, service access, and events to isolated communities, fostering connection, early intervention, and improved pathways to support.

These components work together to empower communities to lead healthier lives through early education, prevention, and local solutions to complex wellbeing challenges.

The aquaponics program has helped schools like Menindee Central supplement their canteen meals, feed children in after-school care, and provide fresh produce to local families, all while supporting mental health education. In the last financial year, we held 180 school sessions, with over 3,850 student participants.

GROW Community Days bring dozens of service providers together in one place, making it easier for people in isolated towns to access critical services and support. We welcomed 73 partner services across five GROW Community Days in Nyngan, Cobar, Lightning Ridge, Grawin and Gulargambone.



Cultural partnerships

Our work in regional, rural, and remote NSW is built on deep respect for the communities we serve. This respect is reflected in our Statement of Commitment to First Nations Health and Wellbeing, which sets out our priorities: embedding cultural safety into every part of our service delivery, working in genuine partnership with First Nations communities, supporting the growth of a strong First Nations workforce, and ensuring services are accessible, responsive, and grounded in community need.

Embedding First Nations voices into the RFDS

In 2025, we launched our inaugural First Nations Community Advisory Group (FNCAG). The first meeting will take place later this year, bringing together First Nations representatives from across our service regions. Once convened, the group will provide lived-experience guidance on how our services can be culturally informed, safe, and community-led. Their input will help shape service planning, strengthen connections between our teams and community leaders, and ensure First Nations voices are central in decision-making.

Cultural connection through Ancestors Gathering and the Wellbeing Garden

This spirit of partnership extends to cultural and community-led initiatives, such as the Ancestors Gathering project and the Native Barkindji Edible and Medicinal Wellbeing Garden at the Broken Hill Wellbeing Place.

Created by local Barkindji woman Tannya Quayle of Menindee, Ancestors Gathering is an artistic installation symbolising outlying communities coming together in a central space, a reflection of the Wellbeing Place's role as a safe, welcoming hub for health and connection.

The piece was inspired by a mandala first created at Menindee Lakes and later replicated in Uruguay at the International Community Psychology Conference, where Indigenous Charrua and international delegates joined in the process. This participatory approach strengthened cross-cultural relationships, encouraged shared learning, and fostered healing, without the hierarchy of more traditional models.



Unlike formal clinical programs, the Ancestors Gathering project and the Wellbeing Garden invite gentle, organic engagement. By not labelling it a “service,” it removes barriers to participation while still having a profound impact on wellbeing.

Completed in November 2024, the garden is a living space for nature-based counselling, cultural learning, cross-cultural relationship building, and community events.

It was a community effort to create the Wellbeing Garden

Powered by community and corporate support

The Flying Doctor has always been powered by more than just our aircraft. Every day, we are lifted by the generosity, passion and ingenuity of people, businesses and communities who believe in keeping the heart of Australia healthy. From tiny outback towns to bustling city centres, our supporters are the reason we can continue delivering care where it's needed most.



Adventure with purpose: Birtles and the Bean

In 1927, legendary Australian adventurer Francis Birtles drove his Bean 14 Sundowner across some of the harshest terrain in the country, from Darwin to Melbourne – an extraordinary feat of endurance and innovation for its time.

Nearly a century later, Daily Telegraph Editor-at-Large Matthew Benns and Cartoonist Warren Brown retraced that exact journey in a lovingly restored Bean 14. Their expedition wasn't just a tribute to Australia's motoring history – it was a living expression of the same qualities that underpin the Flying Doctor: bravery, ingenuity, and service to the people of the outback.

Like Birtles, the RFDS works in remote areas where the odds can be stacked against you. Where roads are rough, distances vast, and help is often far away, both journeys represent the determination to get through, no matter what it takes.

The modern-day Birtles and the Bean odyssey raised over \$120,000 for the RFDS, proving that the pioneering spirit is alive and well – and that adventure, when driven by purpose, can change lives across the most remote parts of Australia.

Watch Warren Brown talk about why they are raising awareness and funds for the Flying Doctor: Birtles and the Bean team set to raise money for the RFDS¹



The hardest leg of the long trip was navigating the difficult Australian outback terrain



Prime Minister Anthony Albanese was on hand to welcome our intrepid supporters to their final destination in Melbourne

¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hbXzmThpJ6c>

The Outback Car Trek – driving change for decades

In 2025, the RFDS South Eastern Section proudly became the owner of the Outback Car Trek, one of Australia's premier motoring fundraising events. This year marked the 35th Trek, with a convoy of classic cars travelling from Bathurst to Cairns and raising more than \$1.58 million for the Flying Doctor.

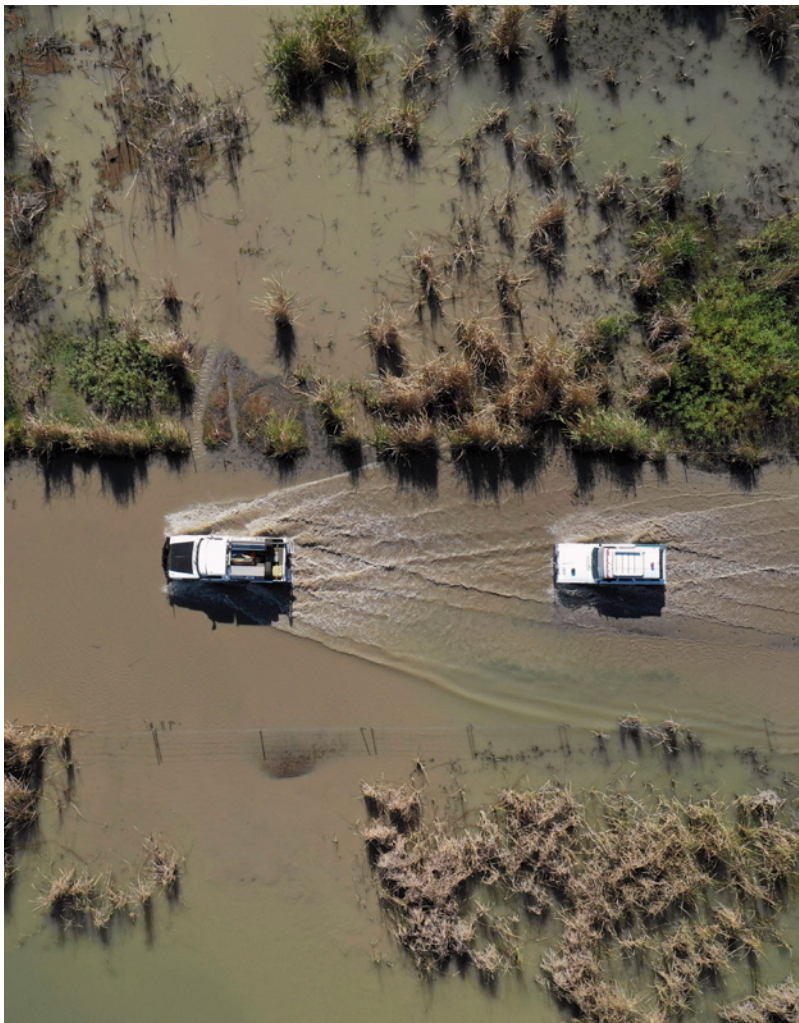
Since its inception, the Outback Car Trek has raised over \$37 million, funding countless flights, clinics and telehealth calls. It's more than just a motoring event, it's a community on wheels, united by the belief that distance should never be a barrier to healthcare.

The Trek has also become a launchpad for innovative outreach initiatives. Through Bright Smiles, the RFDS brings dental care to communities that might otherwise go years without seeing a dentist, transforming lives one check-up at a time. And with Drive 4x4 the Doc, RFDS clinicians can reach patients in the most remote corners of our service area, travelling off-road where planes can't land but care is still urgently needed.

By pairing the adventurous spirit of the Outback Car Trek with these vital healthcare programs, every kilometre driven delivers more than just an adrenaline rush – it delivers real, tangible impact for rural and remote Australians.



A trekker, Outback Car Trek RFDSSE medics Dr Guy Hardwick and Kerry Lyn Ukena, and Chief Excitement Officer Bill Patrick during 2025's Outback Car Trek.



Trek cars navigate water-logged roads on their way to Cairns.



Chief Excitement Officer Bill Patrick waving the RFDS flag at the start line.

A personal commitment – Sophie Hamley

Not all our supporters live in the bush. Sydney-based publisher and author Sophie Hamley decided to make a generous ongoing regular gift in September 2023 after travelling through remote parts of New South Wales, Queensland and the Northern Territory.

"I admire the Flight Doctors and Nurses who travel to remote communities, often in challenging conditions, to provide critical care to families who would otherwise have no help at all."

Sophie Hamley

Sophie may never need the Flying Doctor herself, but she chooses to give regularly because she wants farming families and primary producers to have the same access to healthcare as those in the city. Her generosity reflects the many metro-based supporters who champion our mission from afar.



Thank you Sophie Hamley for your amazing support



Future doctors going the distance – the McDreamy's

In 2024, a group of medical students from Charles Sturt University's School of Rural Medicine—affectionately known as The McDreamy's—signed up for our Oceans to Outback fundraising challenge.

They walked, ran and cycled their way through October, raising vital funds while juggling exam preparation and placement commitments. From falling into lakes to dodging curious cows, their efforts were filled with laughter, camaraderie and determination.

As the next generation of rural doctors, the McDreamy's understand the critical role of the RFDS in bridging healthcare gaps, and they are already living the values that will one day define their medical careers.



The McDreamy's leveraged social media, made posters to share around their hometowns and even featured in their school's newsletter to drive their fundraising efforts.

A movement powered by you

From adventurous treks across the country to small-town auctions, from metro donors who give monthly to university students pushing themselves for a cause – the Flying Doctor is powered by people. Each dollar raised, each kilometre travelled, and each story shared helps us fly further, reach more people, and deliver the healthcare every Australian deserves, no matter where they live. On behalf of every family in Australia's rural, regional and remote communities, thank you.



Our people

At the Royal Flying Doctor Service (South Eastern Section), our people are the heartbeat of everything we do. Doctors, nurses, pilots, mental health professionals, oral health specialists, engineers, administrators, and cultural knowledge holders – each plays a vital role in delivering world-class healthcare to the most remote corners of NSW.

Working in the bush isn't without its challenges. That's why we've built an organisation where people can forge meaningful, rewarding careers while making a tangible difference to rural and remote communities. We blend professional growth with cultural respect and genuine community connection.

Taking care to new heights

Our team members aren't just skilled professionals, they're deeply committed, community-minded individuals who find purpose in helping others. The line between colleague and family often blurs, and service is not a slogan but a lived reality.

Senior Base Pilot David Rogers knows this well. Over the Christmas and New Year break, while many were at home with family, he was on call in Broken Hill. For him, the festive season was "business as usual" for a team that knows emergencies don't take holidays.

Crews working Christmas Day have a tradition of sharing a meal together, a small way to celebrate while staying ready to launch into action at a moment's notice. But for Dave, the most important part of the day happens before he leaves the house: explaining to his four young children why Dad won't be there to open every present or sit at the table for the whole lunch. "I tell them there's someone who's sick, and Daddy needs to go help them," he says. "They get it. They know it's important."



Dave Rogers in the cockpit



Learn more about
Dave Rogers on the
Flying Doctor podcast:

The rewards of rural generalism

That same spirit of service drives our rural generalists, doctors who work across the full spectrum of healthcare, from vaccinations, skin checks and family health, through to chronic illness management and mental health check ins, often in the same shift. This scope of practice is rare in metropolitan areas.

Rural generalists form close bonds with the communities they serve, develop long-term relationships with patients, provide care that spans generations - embodying the RFDS commitment to compassionate, patient-led service. In remote settings, rural generalists are often the first (and only) line of emergency care. Their broad skillset and ability to work across acute and primary care services directly enhance clinical safety for underserved populations, reducing the need for urgent retrievals and ensuring timely intervention.

To inspire the next generation, we recently partnered with the Rural Doctors Network to host 20 health students from metropolitan areas at our Dubbo base. Led by Emergency Doctor Dr Jessica Kracht, they toured aircraft, explored real-world scenarios, and saw firsthand how rural healthcare changes lives. At the inaugural RACGP Rural Showcase in August 2024, 31 registrars expressed interest in joining RFDSE, drawn by sustainable, team-based primary care roles with genuine community impact.

ACRRM and RFDSE gather after their workshop.

Advanced Skills Training for Rural Generalists

On 20 March, RFDSE welcomed 30 registrars and educators from the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM) to our Dubbo base. Led by Chief Medical Officer, Dr Shannon Nott, Dr Jessica Kracht and Clinical Director Primary Care, Nici Williams, the group toured our operations and met frontline staff.

In the afternoon, we ran hands-on workshops in emergency airways, POCUS, and exam prep—showcasing our world-class simulation centre and sharing practical skills for rural care.

Stepping beyond the standard, RFDSE and ACRRM also launched a state-first Remote Medicine Advanced Skills Training (AST) post in NSW – taking registrar training beyond hospital walls and into the heart of outback primary care. Open to ACRRM registrars, this one-year post is based from hubs such as Broken Hill, Condobolin, Warren and Gilgandra, with rotations across remote clinics that reflect the true scope of rural generalism.



Six weeks that change everything

Over the last financial year, we welcomed 43 medical and nursing students for placements across Far Western and Western NSW.

For final-year medical student Emma, a six-week placement with RFDSSE was transformative. The Flinders University student travelled to 14 remote locations across NSW, clocking over 6,500 km in the air and more than 4,000 km on outback dirt roads.

"The cases weren't entirely different from metro hospitals," she says, "but their complexity multiplied when you factor in remoteness and limited resources. Every case was more urgent. Every decision mattered more."

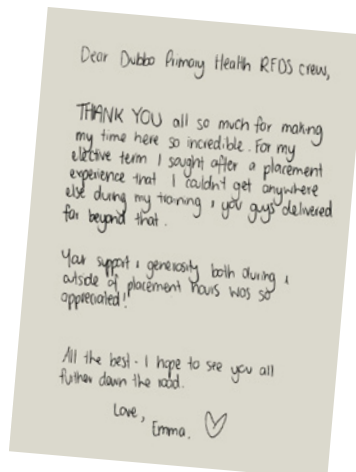
What struck her most wasn't just the medicine, but the welcome – warm tea, air-conditioned rooms, home-cooked treats at every clinic. "The outback's hospitality feels like family," she says.

"This placement taught me that remote medicine demands more than clinical skill – it needs resourcefulness, resilience, and a deep commitment to community.

For Emma, her time with the RFDS was career-altering.

"Anyone considering primary care should spend time with RFDS. You'll grow clinically – but more importantly, you'll see how health can be transformed when services are trusted, connected, and made local."

Emma



Emma formed relationships with the RFDS team who supported her placement.

From recognition to retention

In 2024 our Medical Services team were named Rural / Remote Health Employer of the Year – recognition of a model that sustains fulfilling rural careers.

The RFDS continues to evolve to meet the needs of modern regional, rural and remote communities, and one way we do this is to help communities save their General Practices. Since December 2022, the RFDS has taken over the operations of three medical practices – in Warren, Gilgandra and Condobolin.

While moving into these communities has meant we can provide certainty to communities at risk of losing access to vital primary healthcare services, it's been equally important for us to ensure that our teams are set up for success and have meaningful careers with us.

In just three years, our practices in Warren, Gilgandra and Condobolin have grown into trusted hubs serving 12,000+ people, many who would otherwise drive hours for care. Around 28% of patients are First Nations, and 90%+ rate their care as good or excellent. It's proof that clinical excellence and cultural safety go hand-in-hand.

In addition, we are investing in improved training opportunities and pathways for medical staff, innovative new care delivery models for patients, sophisticated administration and back-office functions, and effective use of nursing and multidisciplinary health professionals.

We want these practices to succeed, and we see strong potential for RFDSSE Medical Services to be an important training ground for future rural generalists, underpinned by our national recognition as an award-winning employer.

The rewards of rural generalism

Meet Dr Jet

Dr Jessica Driver-O'Keefe, better known as Dr Jet to the Condobolin community, is a rural generalist registrar and part of the amazing team at RFDSSE Medical Services Condobolin.

Dr Jet worked in the emergency/critical care/anaesthetics space for seven years before adding primary care to her rural generalist belt this year, deciding to make the move to general practice.

In February, Dr Jet joined RFDSSE Medical Services – Condobolin as part of the NSW Government's Rural Generalist Single Employer Pathway program and quickly won over all of her patients and those she met.

"In some strange twist of fate, I was actually in Condo about 20 years ago as a nanny and a drover just after school. Despite growing up in the country, it wasn't until I was out bush here that my understanding of rural health inequity really began," Dr Jet says.

The opportunity to work for the Royal Flying Doctor Service, and its rich 97-year history of helping regional, rural and remote Australians, was another attraction for Dr Jet. "It is the quintessential icon of Australian medicine to me – responsive, adaptive, innovative and most importantly, benevolent," Dr Jet says.

"Responding to underserved communities means doing medicine differently – and this is what the RFDS has always done. This ethos is the foundation of the kind of doctor I aspire to be. I am profoundly proud to work for the RFDS."



Condobolin

Dr Jet loves working in Condobolin



Flying careers with purpose



Senior Base Pilot Jesse Hawtree is in his element at the RFDS Launceston Hangar

For our pilots, flying with the RFDS is not about clocking hours or repeating the same routes, it's about flying with meaning. Every take-off is a mission with a human story at its heart.

Mark "Woody" Woods, with us for 18 years, calls it "the most dynamic aviation job you will ever find." He recalls a night mission to Lord Howe Island where a patient had to be paddled out to the aircraft before being flown to lifesaving care. "We did whatever it took to get them to safety. That's what makes this job the most rewarding in aviation," he says.

The difference from the private sector is stark. In commercial aviation, flights are about efficiency and repetition. In the Flying Doctor, every flight is urgent, every plan adaptable, and every decision could change – or save – a life.

Pilots here do more than fly: they plan routes, refuel, load the aircraft, and often assist with patient handling. They work shoulder-to-shoulder with medical teams, adapting to weather, terrain, and patient needs. It's a role that demands skill, adaptability, and a commitment to the mission.

Senior Base Pilot Jesse Hawtree puts it simply:

"When we move organ transplant recipients... they might have been waiting months. Getting them to care – it's humbling."

Jesse Hawtree

Emergency medicine: record doctor intake for a critical mission

In February 2025, RFDSSSE welcomed its largest cohort of emergency and retrieval doctors in over a decade – eleven clinicians from Australia and abroad, including the UK, Germany and Norway. This wasn't just an expansion of staff; it was a full immersion into RFDSSSE's rigorous training culture tailored to remote realities.

Onboarding and simulation

- Primary rescue simulation in partnership with VRA Rescue NSW
- Hands-on experience at a Sydney helicopter base
- Immersive "Farm Day" scenarios staged in genuine rural environments: snakebite management, cardiac arrest, high-speed MVCs, and injuries you only see in the bush – like head trauma from a horse kick

Dr Shannon Nott, Chief Medical Officer, expressed the importance of this milestone:

"Our aim is to have a steady cohort of 15 highly trained doctors to support our aeromedical services across our Broken Hill and Dubbo bases. We are in a privileged position that so many of our doctors will go on to tell their colleagues about how amazing the Royal Flying Doctor Service is..."

Many of the new doctors had not come for comfort – but for challenge. Dr Mina Arsanious, who moved from the UK in 2024, captured the appeal succinctly:

"I'm pinching myself that I'm actually working for the RFDS. I'm looking after an area nearly 2.5 times bigger than the whole of the UK and seeing cases like nothing I would see back home."

What makes this intake transformative is not just the numbers, but the opportunity it represents. For these eleven doctors – and for the communities they will serve – it's more than medicine. It's trust, impact, and care, delivered to Australia's most remote corners.

Extending our reach even further, the RFDS and RACGP collaborate every year on a Farm Training Day designed to provide trainee GP registrars with the opportunity to refine their emergency medicine skills through the same kinds of simulations our own doctors are onboarded with.

From poisonings, electrocutions, quad bike rollovers, snake bites, farm tool injuries and gunshot wounds, each simulation is carefully designed to mirror real-life emergencies that local GPs might face in rural settings while waiting for the RFDS emergency retrieval team to arrive.



Above: Group learning is an invaluable component of the induction

Below: New recruits getting excited for the induction – and career – ahead of them



Three-quarters of our team are based in the communities they support



With nearly one hundred years of providing the finest care to the furthest corner, we know how important it is to have people on the ground and embedded with the communities we support. This is why we are proud that three-quarters of our team are regionally based.

In addition to ensuring that our teams are close to the care they are delivering, we are creating opportunities for people who have grown up in rural and remote communities to have fulfilling and interesting careers in regional NSW.

Meet Kurt Andrew

Kurt Andrew grew up on a property in Tullamore, southwest of Dubbo. These days, Kurt works as an Operations Coordinator, taking calls for help from across the Far West. And when Kurt isn't talking someone through an emergency, he is also a casual patient transport vehicle driver supporting our nurses and pilots to get patients to ongoing healthcare.

As Kurt puts it, he's all about the patient. "If we can get the patients to where they need to be, then I'm happy."

While there are plenty of memorable moments, one in particular sticks in Kurt's mind about the importance of the RFDS – and the she'll be right attitude of the communities we serve.

"About a year ago, I took a med line call from a man on a remote property that had been bitten by a brown snake. The way he was speaking it was clear he had been envenomated, I grabbed his details and transferred him to the on-call doctor," Kurt says.

"I put the call through to the on-call doctor who asked me to keep the patient talking while he organised the flight crew. So, striking up a conversation with the man, he tells me "I reckon I'll be right, I've been bitten by a black snake before and was all good".

"Anyway, long story short, he was retrieved and taken to Adelaide and in his words, was "all good," I'll never forget it."

The Royal Flying Doctor Service is an iconic outback healthcare provider, constantly innovating and adapting to meet the needs of modern regional, rural and remote Australia. This would not be possible without the dedication, professionalism and passion of all our people.



Kurt Andrew loves helping people



Broken Hill

Meet Peter Crossing

Peter Crossing grew up on Topar Station, a grazing property 58km east of Broken Hill. With a mental health career spanning about 25 years, Peter has had a diverse and interesting role with the Royal Flying Doctor Service.

"My initial position was mainly providing clinical support for the 'We've Got Your Back' Champions in the Far West area, but my role quickly grew and I now cover seven of the bush clinics for Mental Health, Alcohol and other Drug issues.

One of the challenges Peter has had to overcome is being seen as the "mental health guy" in some small bush clinics. "There is still some stigma around mental health and AOD issues in some areas, but most people have worked out that it is much smarter to engage with a worker instead of trying to deal with their issues on their own," Peter says.

Peter makes it easier for people to approach him by mingling with the locals when he's not counselling at clinics. "This makes it easier for them to call me if they need help later, as some trust and rapport have already been established in a casual and friendly way," Peter explains.



Mental Health Professional Peter Crossing is closely connected with the rural communities he serves.



Dubbo

Meet Meg Kingham

Meg Kingham is one of our dental assistants based out of Dubbo. Originally from Charters Towers in Far North Queensland, Meg had seen the RFDS Dental Truck pass through her hometown on its way to a clinic in North Queensland.

"Living in regional Queensland, I knew quite a bit about the RFDS retrievals, medical chests and the mobile dental clinic. After seeing the mobile dental clinic pass through my hometown, it was a goal of mine to work with the RFDS dental team."

Meg Kingham

As a dental assistant, Meg acts as the dentist's right hand. Not only does Meg help with procedures, but she and the team are also busy assisting rural and remote communities to understand the importance of oral hygiene and helping people of all ages develop better habits.



Dental Assistant Meg Kingham always knew she wanted to work for the RFDS dental team

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Wednesday - 9:00am - 5:00pm

Thursday - 9:00am - 5:00pm

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Saturday - 9:00am - 5:00pm

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HOW YOU CAN HELP

Our work is not possible without the generosity of individuals, corporations, the government and the community.

We thank all the kind supporters of the Royal Flying Doctor Service of Australia (South Eastern Section). With your contributions we have proudly served outback Australians for more than 95 years. Help us continue this vital work well into the future by making a donation.

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