Queensland’s Royal Flying Doctor Service

How you can help
The RFDS relies on the generous support of individuals, community groups, businesses and the corporate sector, as well as funding provided by the Commonwealth and State governments, to operate its 24 hour emergency and health care service.

Each year the RFDS must raise in excess of $8 million through fundraising initiatives, to purchase and medically equip our aircraft, and to finance other health and capital initiatives.

There are many ways people can support the RFDS:
- Make a tax-deductible donation
- Join our monthly giving program, ‘Wings’
- Leave a gift in your will
- Give in memory of a loved one
- Ask your friends and family to donate in lieu of gifts
- Hold a fundraising activity
- Volunteer your time
- Join our workplace giving program
- Become a corporate partner

With help from people like you, the RFDS can continue to deliver the finest care to furthest corners of Queensland.

For more information on how you can support the RFDS, visit www.flyingdoctor.org.au or call (07) 3860 1100.

Help is just a phone call away
Like most of us, Kirstine never dreamed that a simple playground tumble could turn into a life-threatening injury.

She and her six year old daughter Emily had gone to Emily’s school in Dalby for a barbecue. Emily was playing with her friend when suddenly the two collided and Emily fell heavily, hitting her head on the cement. Kirstine describes what happened next:

“She wasn’t moving. Her eyes were open, but she was knocked out cold. Her eyes were rolling back and she was making a moaning sound, it sounded so horrible.”

After being rushed to Dalby hospital, she went downhill fast and started having terrifying seizures.

Emily’s doctors quickly realised that she needed more help than their small regional hospital was equipped to give. She needed to see a neurosurgeon, so they called the RFDS to airlift her to Brisbane for emergency specialist care.

When they arrived, Emily was rushed to hospital. She had bruising on both sides of her brain and a small bleed. She didn’t regain consciousness until the next day. Kirstine recalls,

“She looked at me and I said, ‘Mummy loves you,’ and she nodded a tiny bit. It was such a relief – I thought, ‘Okay, she knows who I am.’”

Thankfully, after a week in hospital, Emily pulled through. She still has to travel back to Brisbane for follow-up appointments, but Kirstine is really happy with how she’s doing.

Emily’s story shows why it’s so important that we can be there, 24 hours a day, no matter how remote the location.

Every day, for hundreds of Queenslanders, we provide the most comprehensive emergency aeromedical service in the world. It’s caring people like you who make our work possible.
A proud history
The Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) was established by the Reverend John Flynn (Flynn of the Inland) in 1928, during his association with the Australian Inland Mission. During his travels as a young missionary through the Australian Outback, Flynn was amazed and horrified at the lack of medical care available to those attempting to settle and raise families in isolated areas. With the birth of aviation in the country, Flynn seized the opportunity to reach those who were once unreachable, except through journeys of days or weeks, over roads that were mostly unsealed.

The first Flying Doctor was Dr Kenyon St Vincent Welch who performed his first duty on 17 May, conducting two minor operations at Julia Creek, 137km away from their base in Cloncurry. The first Flying Doctor aircraft was a De Havilland DH86 named Victory, flown by pilot Arthur Allbeck. The doctor, aircraft and pilot provided the beginnings of the lifeline that was to extend throughout the country.

In 1928, transport was not the only problem facing those living in isolated areas. Communication was practically non-existent over the distances Flynn’s aeromedical service had to travel. In 1929 a brilliant electrical engineer, Alfred Traeger, solved Flynn’s problem of communication over long distances by inventing the pedal wireless. Traeger’s invention of a pedal operated generator to power a radio transmitter gave isolated Australians the ability to contact the Flying Doctor in emergencies. Two fledging industries of radio and aviation joined with the age-old profession of medicine, and the Royal Flying Doctor Service took off.

The finest care to the furthest corners

The Royal Flying Doctor Service is dedicated to providing vital health care to anyone living, working or travelling in Queensland. Today, the RFDS provides more than 90,000 patient consultations across Queensland each year.

The iconic RFDS emergency retrieval service operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and has expanded to provide regular transfers of patients for life-saving medical care, such as organ transplants and heart surgery, delivering critical support to those who live in regional and rural areas.

A broad range of essential health care services are also delivered by the RFDS to rural and remote communities. These include the primary health care services shown on the following map, a mobile dental service, a telehealth service and a medical chest program.

Our aircraft

The RFDS (Queensland Section) has a fleet of 19 aircraft, including 14 Beechcraft King Air B200s, three Pilatus PC-12s and two Cessna Grand Caravan C208Bs. The distance flown by these aircraft is over 7 million kilometres each year.

All RFDS aeromedical aircraft are fully medically equipped, enabling them to operate as mobile intensive care units. They are all pressurised, enabling patients to be flown at the equivalent of sea level – an essential requirement in the treatment of many serious injuries. A neonatal unit can also be carried for the emergency care of newborns.

The RFDS (Queensland Section) will not divulge or sell personal information for reasons other than those identified in the Privacy Policy. If you would like to access your personal information held by the Service, please contact the RFDS. You can request amendments to any personal information held by the Service.