



Royal Flying Doctor Service
QUEENSLAND SECTION

Your

Flying Doctor

WINTER 2024



Adventure TURNS TO disaster

How your support
helps children
in outback
Queensland

MEDICAL CHESTS

LIFE-SAVING
MEDICATION IN
THE BUSH.

INNOVATIVE TRAINING

AIRCRAFT SIMULATOR
SET TO OPEN IN BUNDY.

AFTER THE STORM

HOW YOU'RE HELPING
HEAL THE SCARS OF
CYCLONE JASPER.



A huge thank you to our Greenvale clinic team for the opportunity to see the brilliant work they do and meet the lovely community they serve.

None of this would happen *without you!*

Welcome to the winter
edition of *Your Flying
Doctor* magazine.

It's been an incredibly busy start to 2024, as our aeromedical crews have crisscrossed the state to reach some of our most remote patients.

In recent months, I've had the privilege of visiting our Queensland bases. The direct impact on our communities is something you have to see and experience first-hand. It brought home to me the

immense value of the work we do together. As ever, I was struck by the extraordinary local support for our teams, from Cairns to Mount Isa, to Brisbane... and everywhere in between!

It's been heartwarming to hear of generous donations made to our local bases from individuals, local businesses, and community groups. The simple truth is, without these kind acts, we couldn't deliver vital health services, fund life-saving equipment and recruit

more doctors, nurses, and pilots.

As we inch closer to our centenary, I'm delighted to share some fresh developments happening now – and on the horizon.

Although the Flying Doctor is best known for emergency retrievals, that's only one part of the support we offer to Queensland's remote, rural and regional communities. Inside this edition of *Your Flying Doctor* magazine, I'm excited to share how you're helping us deliver even more health services to Queenslanders, including skin cancer clinics, on page 10.

In recent years, our beautiful state has been hit hard by cyclones, floods and fires with little relief in between. Turn to page 8 as we reveal how you helped Far North Queenslanders cope with a recent traumatic event.

Whether you're reading about a young boy's farm stunt gone wrong, cutting-edge new pilot training infrastructure, or a policeman's life-altering accident, I hope you feel proud of your indispensable role in each instance of care.

With heartfelt gratitude,



Meredith Staib
Chief Executive Officer
RFDS (Queensland Section)

AEROMEDICAL TRAINING ACADEMY **virtually ready** AS SIMULATOR ARRIVES

It's time to celebrate a major milestone in the construction of our very own Aeromedical Training Academy in Bundaberg.

In exciting news, the Aeromedical Training Academy being built in Bundaberg is now home to a world-class flight simulator to train our highly skilled pilots.

A flight simulator is a vital training device for pilots, replicating the experience of operating an aircraft. The new simulator can be configured to support training for the entire RFDS King Air fleet of aircraft, including the Beechcraft King

Air 350 and King Air 360.

Each year, RFDS pilots from across Queensland will spend at least two weeks at the training facility, which is located next to the existing Bundaberg Base. Non-RFDS pilots will also be able to use the simulator for their training on these types of aircraft.

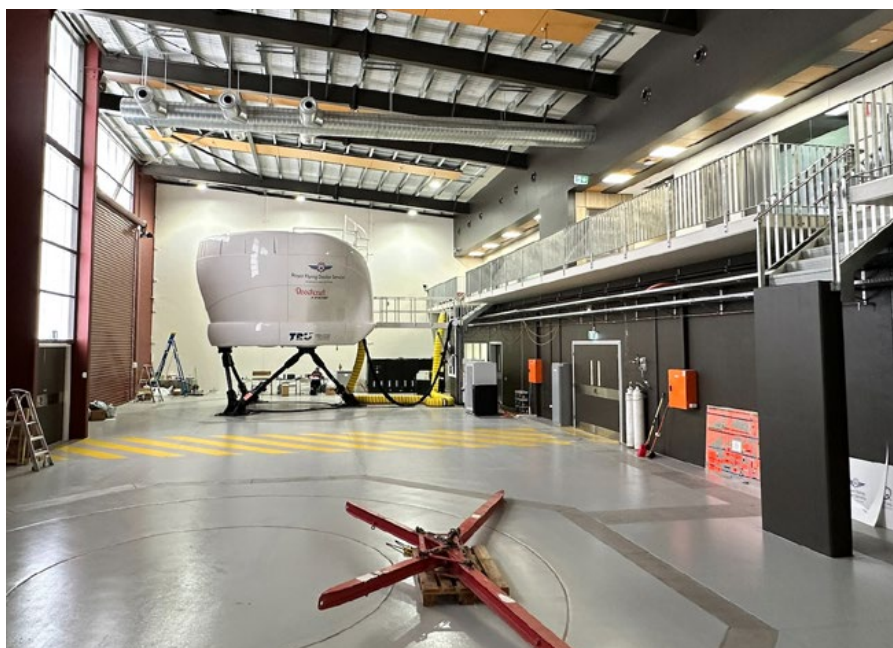
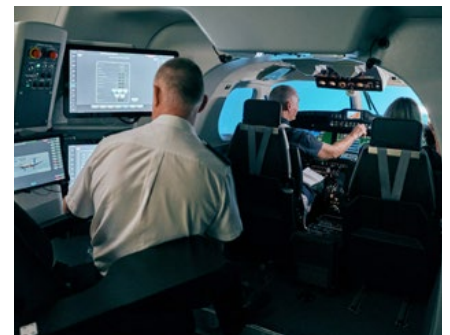
Importantly, the facility will support local jobs. It will also deliver an economic boost to Bundaberg and its surrounds, as the pilots who come to train will stay to visit and shop in the region.

Peter Elliott, our Executive General Manager of Aviation, Engineering and Logistics said with the simulator completed, the team can now focus on ensuring the pilot training facility meets requirements

set by the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) and other agencies.

"We've had a busy past few months getting our simulator installed within the academy," Peter says.

"The team is working towards ensuring the simulator is ready for Level D CASA certification, and we are looking forward to the academy opening later this year."



Because of you,

trainee pilots can continue to get the outstanding training they need to provide first-class care for patients no matter where they live.



ADVENTURE TURNS TO DISASTER

Four-year-old Ash was visiting family friends, when a fun game turned serious.

Tara, Tony and their children Ash (4 years old), and Belle (6 years old), were staying with friends at a South Queensland homestead. Tara was relaxed

as she watched Ash, full of bravado and secure in his helmet, attempt a favourite game of riding a sheep – known as mutton busting. Ash is a true outback kid. He loves fishing and never touches an iPad. *“He’s a daredevil,”* says his mum Tara, who is a neonatal intensive care nurse. *“He gets into scrapes, falls over and gets*

back up again.”

Now Tara watched in horror as the sheep Ash was gripping ran into a low-hanging branch. Ash flew off and hit his head on the ground, hard. ***“The sheep flipped and landed on top of him, then took off,” she recalls. “But Ash didn’t move. He was lying face down in the dirt in his helmet, knocked out cold.”***

Tara was terrified. The hit to the head was so forceful that Ash could have a brain or spinal injury. She rolled up towels to make a neck brace for Ash and they carefully carried him inside the house. *“I was beside myself,”* she admits.

The nearest ambulance was a two-hour drive from the homestead. The wait was agonising as Ash drifted in and out of consciousness.

When the ambulance arrived, the paramedic assessed Ash and it was clear he needed specialist

care, without delay. It was 720km or 10 hours by road to the Queensland Children's Hospital – the Flying Doctor was the only option.

An RFDS aeromedical aircraft was immediately dispatched, but to add to the complications, the accident occurred more than 25km from the nearest airstrip. As they drove to the airstrip, Tara's brain raced thinking about what could go wrong. *"We were in the middle of nowhere, and Ash had hit his head ... I was thinking he was going to get built-up pressure in his brain, and we wouldn't make it to the hospital in time."*

At the worst time in her life, Tara will never forget seeing the RFDS plane waiting. The crew carefully boarded Ash, and soon, the plane was in the air. Ash was now becoming more alert. *"He knew who I was, but he couldn't remember falling off*

the sheep," Tara says.

Throughout the flight, the doctor, nurse and pilot were exceptionally calm and caring. As a healthcare worker, Tara could truly appreciate the way they operated – like a well-oiled machine to care for her son.

"I handed my worries over that night to focus on being a mum," Tara says. "They did what they had to do and let me worry about cuddling Ash and reassuring him."

Ash was fortunate there was no serious damage. He stayed in hospital for observation for two days, then he and Tara flew home.

This little Steve Irwin in the making is now eight and still loves hunting with his dad, climbing trees and chasing rabbits. But the terrifying mutton busting incident has certainly deterred him from a career in rodeos!

"Even though I had medical training, and Ash was wearing a helmet, we were in the remote outback when this



happened and when it's your own child that's just terrifying," says Tara. "The sense of relief when I saw that plane was huge because the RFDS crews are highly skilled specialists. If I met them again today, I'd say thank you very, very much. I'm sure Ash would thank them too. He's older now and understands just how lucky he was."



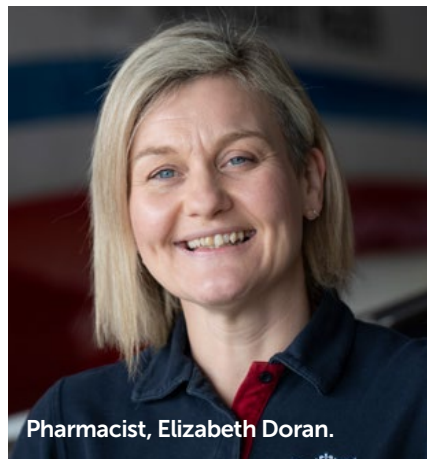
Thank you

for ensuring outback kids like Ash have access to world-class medical care.



Life-saving chests GO UNDER THE MICROSCOPE

Meet our first pharmacist, Elizabeth Doran. She's on a mission to ensure the most isolated Queenslanders get immediate care.



Pharmacist, Elizabeth Doran.

The journeys that people take to join the RFDS team are fascinating. Pharmacist Elizabeth Doran's is no exception.

For 12 years, she worked by the bedside of patients with severe injuries and life-threatening medical conditions at the Royal Brisbane and

Women's Hospital.

It was there that the seeds of a new passion were sewn, to help Queenslanders in the most remote communities.

"I would often see the RFDS crew arrive with patients from remote and regional areas," she says. **"I saw a unique opportunity to work on the medical chests program."**

RFDS medical chests are filled with life-saving medications and supplies. They are kept in communities

that are furthest from a pharmacy or medical service. A person needing medical help can receive advice from an RFDS doctor via telephone. They can prescribe the sick or injured person the right medication from the on-site chest.

Medical chests have been a vital tool since 1942 and now, they can get even better.

Elizabeth vigorously reviews the program. She identifies medications that could be added to improve patient care.

Opportunities to improve pharmaceutical care for people in remote, rural and regional areas are limitless, Elizabeth says. It's something she's proud to be a part of. *"A medical chest is so much more than a box in someone's kitchen,"* she says. ***"It's a privilege to have access to these medicines and an incredible service offered by the RFDS."***

Thanks to you.

over 1,300 medical chests have been transported to communities in areas without hospitals or clinics. They can be found at cattle stations, mines, marine vessels, police stations, campsites, caravan parks and remote health clinics.



Contents of an old medical chest.

He was keeping others safe when his own life needed saving

Senior Constable John Kenworthy's motorcycle crash changed his life, but he's determined not to let it hold him back!

Senior Constable John Kenworthy was at work in Mackay, responding to a serious traffic crash, when his bike came off the road. "My bike went straight over the side of the road and into a small hedge and through a barbed wire fence," he recalls. "I thought I was going to die there in that paddock."

That day, the RFDS would play a crucial role in the desperate race to preserve John's sight and save his eyes. The crew transported him to Brisbane for urgent medical care.

"Without the RFDS pilot, doctor, and nurse, I wouldn't have the very little vision that I've got today," John says. "The kindness they showed my wife on the flight was next level."

John has found strength through the support of his wife, and a passion for supporting the Flying Doctor. Incredibly, he's raised almost \$10,000 to help fund a new RFDS aircraft and recently visited our Brisbane Base.

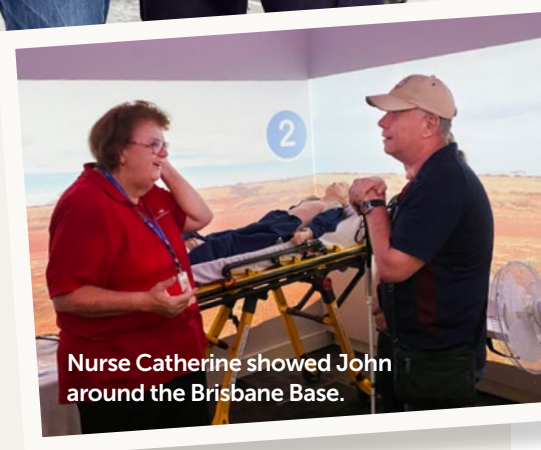
"The RFDS is the organisation



Cortney from the RFDS, John and police officer Ty.

people wish they never had to use," he explains. "But if they do, they want to know you've got the best equipment and staff you can have."

John is now legally blind, but he doesn't let that hold him back. He remains actively involved in training the younger police at his station and contributing to investigations. John has this advice: "Worry is like a rocking horse," he says. "It'll give you something to do, but it gets you nowhere. The rest of my life is in front of me, and that's what I need to concentrate on."



Nurse Catherine showed John around the Brisbane Base.

Your support

provides Queenslanders like John with help they never expected to need.

Healing the scars OF TROPICAL CYCLONE JASPER

When Tropical Cyclone Jasper left Far North Queensland reeling, our Mental Health and Wellbeing team was on the ground helping devastated communities rebuild emotionally.



Tropical Cyclone Jasper was dangerous and life-threatening. It was also the wettest tropical cyclone in Australia's history, dumping over 2,250 mm of rain, with wind gusts peaking at 270 km/h last December.

The category 2 cyclone made landfall on the east coast of Cape York Peninsular on 13 December, flooding many communities across the Cooktown region.

It caused the destruction of many homes and severely

damaged hundreds of others. Along with homes, families lost their animals and all their belongings. They were also disconnected from services at a time when feeling connected was needed most.

Cyclones, floods, and other natural disasters can cause injury, death and physical damage.

They can also have an emotionally devastating influence on communities and a significant impact on people's long and short-term



mental health.

That's why our Mental Health and Wellbeing team switched into emergency response mode when the cyclone hit, with extra services offered to the many people affected by what had taken place.

Jos, who manages these mental health services for communities in the Far North, says her team was determined to reduce feelings of isolation, and enhance feelings of safety. Their goal was to help people regain a sense of hope whilst embarking on the journey of recovery and rebuilding. The team's success lies with their adaptability, and the awareness that people would react differently and need support delivered in the way that was right for them.

"For one individual, the trauma could be due to the natural disaster itself and for others it could be the grief and loss of their belongings," Jos says.

"We should expect a range of emotions from people in these circumstances – it's completely normal."

COMMUNITY SPIRIT IN ACTION

Thank you for helping take care of your fellow Queenslanders' wellbeing when disaster strikes.



SUPPORTING WUJAL WUJAL: Community spirit in action

One of the worst-hit towns was the Indigenous community of Wujal Wujal where flood waters had cut off all road access. At one point, nine people, including a child, spent a night trapped on the roof of the local health clinic. Wujal Wujal's 300 residents had to be evacuated by air 90 kilometres north to Cooktown, where support was waiting.

In the aftermath, work began to rebuild homes and key infrastructure, but many of the people of Wujal Wujal remained dispersed across the region in temporary accommodation.

Senior mental health clinicians, Stephen, Chrissy and Jess prioritised providing psychological first aid in the first instance to those impacted by the flood, as well as continuing the ongoing psychological therapies for existing clients and others who

may have been referred to the program in Cooktown, Rossville and Ayton.

Mental health consultations were provided in person, via telehealth calls and in group sessions – whatever people needed. The team were already known to locals, having spent a lot of time in these communities.

Stephen, one of our senior mental health clinicians, says: *"By having a familiar face in the community, locals could sit down and grieve and talk about their story of survival."*

"There were times, even as a clinician, when I cried with them."

Jess, another senior mental health clinician from the team adds that: *"There was a noticeable feeling of loss in this community."*

"We were doing everything we could to reconnect communities and remind them that they were not alone."



Flying in to check your skin

Melanoma and other skin cancers are a significant health issue in the Australian community. But the more remote you get, the harder it is to access medical care.

Dr Stephen Andrews wears two hats, he's a passionate specialist dermatologist and a keen recreational pilot. Now he's added a third: assisting in skin cancer surveillance for remote Queenslanders who may live hundreds of kilometres away from established medical services. And he's doing it for a crucial reason.

Here in Queensland, we have an outdoor lifestyle. For some, this is recreational. For others, being outside is a vocational necessity. Those who work on the land are often unavoidably subject to significant levels of sun exposure, and many grew up in a time when sun-smart behaviours were not widely practised.





It's well-documented that Australia has one of the highest rates of skin cancer in the world¹. Two-thirds of us will be diagnosed with the disease before the age of 70.

Worryingly, one study has suggested that Australian male farmers are almost 60% more likely than the general population to die from melanoma and other skin cancers².

This is why, in collaboration with a number of other doctors at Charleville Base, Dr Andrews flies in and out of locations across South-Western Queensland. There they offer locals potentially life-saving skin cancer surveillance and treatment.

"The program I am involved in was previously provided by Dr Jon Outridge – a highly experienced rural GP with an interest in the detection and treatment of skin cancer," Dr Andrews explains.

"I was offered the opportunity to continue some of Dr Outridge's valuable work. I'm very pleased to join Charleville RFDS's small, but very skilled



team of rural GPs who see patients in remote areas."

It's not Dr Andrews' first time with the team. As a medical student over a decade ago, he undertook three training rotations with the Charleville crew. He has fond memories of this time and meeting members of the team – many of whom are still here today. *"I am privileged to now consider them colleagues,"* he says.

Along with participating in this important program, Dr Andrews is determined to help train the next generation of Australian specialist dermatologists. The Queensland Institute of Dermatology sponsors an accredited dermatology registrar to accompany Dr Andrews and the RFDS team, so they can experience

first-hand the challenges of remote healthcare delivery, and appreciate the unique difficulties that living in the bush can entail.

What Dr Andrews finds particularly rewarding is being part of a multi-disciplinary team that sees a wide range of medical cases and continues to overcome the unique hurdles of practicing medicine in the bush. *"As clinicians, we can share experiences and educate each other,"* he says. *"Ultimately, for the benefit of our patients..."*

Dr Andrews is also a qualified mechanical engineer and has been flying light aircraft since he finished high school.

1. <https://www.aihw.gov.au/getmedia/0368fb8b-10ef-4631-aa14-cb6d55043e4b/18197.pdf>

2. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/21771158/>



Prevention IS BETTER THAN CURE

WHEN IT COMES TO REMOTE HEALTH

A light aircraft touches down on a dusty airstrip in the isolated regions of northern Queensland. A general practitioner, a mental health clinician, and a dentist disembark, prepared to face the day.

The GP is Dr Tom Battisson. He and his colleagues will now drive an hour to reach a primary health care clinic, where they will remain for the next three days. With no permanent doctor here, it may be the local community's only chance to see a GP for a month.

The RFDS is well known for emergency retrievals of seriously ill and injured patients. But primary health

care now makes up two-thirds of our daily workload. **The goal is to nip chronic illness, disease and mental health problems in the bud, so they don't escalate and become life-threatening emergencies.**

And there's no such thing as a typical day, Dr Tom says.

"It is rarely a case of A+B=C in primary care medicine with the RFDS," he explains. "Every day presents a fresh challenge. We need to get to our patients, understand their needs and provide appropriate care."

From the Cairns Base, teams like Dr Tom's fly into Cape York communities, including Lockhart River and Gulf Coast communities like Pormpuraaw. They also fly to remote western towns like Pentland.

It's a challenge, but that's what Dr Tom loves about his

work. He's passionate about providing healthcare services to communities that may otherwise go without.

"Every vaccination, health education program or diabetes consultation makes a difference," Dr Tom says. *"It reduces the consequences for the patient and the need for complicated and expensive secondary care."*

In primary health care, little things really matter."

Because of you,

more Queenslanders are getting access to potentially life-saving GP check-ups, no matter where they live.

Two goats, a lamb and one dedicated supporter

Remote grazier and photographer Wendy Sheehan, who lives at Trinidad Station with her family, is a true-blue supporter of the RFDS Oceans to Outback fundraising challenge. Despite her busy life tending to sheep, cows, and alpacas, she has committed to walking over 100km for the cause, driven by personal experiences with the RFDS.

Wendy, her mother, and her brother have all needed the Flying Doctor for medical retrievals in the past, making the service invaluable to her family and community. She also visits the primary health care clinic in Yaraka for doctor consultations, and couldn't be more grateful that this essential service exists.

Over the last two years, Wendy has walked 193km and raised an impressive \$13,000 as part of Oceans to Outback. Her fundraising efforts have been bolstered by the company of her lamb 'Baby Sheep' in the first

year and baby goats in the second year, which have become hits on social media and helped in raising funds.

Wendy's approach to fundraising is straightforward—she uses simple templates from the Oceans to Outback website and keeps donors informed of her efforts via social media and emails. Many of her supporters have also relied on the RFDS, fostering a communal spirit of support.

"I encourage everyone to give Oceans to Outback a go. It's good fun for an incredible cause!"



WE INVITE YOU

to walk, ride,
or run in

October to raise funds for the Flying Doctor crew in Queensland. Pre-register for the Oceans to Outback challenge now at <https://rfds.co/oceans>





What growing up on a remote island taught Karl

After spending his formative years on Norfolk Island, aviation enthusiast Karl is a big believer in Queenslanders coming together to look out for each other.

Karl is a humble man who describes himself as a jack of all trades and a master of none.

Growing up 1,500 km from the mainland on idyllic Norfolk Island, Karl learnt early on the importance of resilience, adaptability, and cooperation.

The tyranny of distance was never far from his thoughts. As the island only had a tiny hospital, it was well understood a serious accident or illness could leave you very vulnerable and require an aeromedical retrieval.

After school, Karl moved to Queensland to study mechanical engineering so he could work on planes. His awareness of the critical role of the RFDS grew, and this understanding deepened after a career change to work in the mines.

"Working in remote communities driving trucks and things in North Queensland, I've watched trucks roll over in front of me and go off the side of embankments and highways," he says.

"Australia is very, very remote and I've come from a remote

place. When something goes wrong, you need to know the RFDS can come and get you out of a sticky situation."

Helping others is part of Karl's DNA. *"It's meaningful to me to help. I suppose that's what you call a community?"*

Recently Karl had an exciting opportunity to tour the Brisbane Base. There he discovered just how essential monthly giving to the RFDS is.

"The crew showed me exactly what my money was doing. I didn't realise there is a struggle to get some of the basics, like sterile gloves and bandages. That was an eye-opener for me."

**JOIN THE
SUPPORT
CREW!**



Discover how a monthly donation can make sure each and every one of our patients gets the expert care they deserve. Become a member of our Support Crew today by scanning the code or calling 07 3852 7515.

Kate reflects on legacy and connection

WITH THE RFDS AND SCHOOL OF THE AIR

In the vastness of rural Queensland, education takes on a different look to city schooling, one of composite classes, family-filled schools, and tales of horse rides to lessons in the outback. As the RFDS Supporter Relationship Specialist, and a rural child myself, the legacy of the School of the Air resonates deeply with me.

My connection to rural schooling runs through generations. My grandmother rode to school on horseback in the 1930s and my mother was one of only 20 children at her remote school.

I was one of seven students in my primary school graduating class. **But nothing quite illustrates this unique education like the RFDS connection to the School of the Air, an initiative that has long bridged the lonely distances for children in Australia's most remote corners.**

Founded in the 1940s by Adelaide Miethke, a visionary educator who recognised the isolation of outback children, the School of the Air utilised the RFDS radio network to revolutionise education. It wasn't just about lessons; it was about community, connection, and overcoming the vast solitude of the outback.

Today, while pedal radios are a thing of the past, our mission at the RFDS has evolved to include mental health services. You bring a sense of belonging to those grappling with isolation. You provide support, care, and a lifeline to communities, reinforcing the invaluable sense of connection that Adelaide Miethke once envisioned.

Your support helps us continue this legacy. With every mental health program and community event, you aid individual wellness, and



Adelaide Miethke

fortify resilient communities.

Reflecting on the School of the Air's historic impact, I'm filled with gratitude for the pioneers who laid its foundations, the teachers who've transformed lives, and of course the supporters like you who enable us to continue connecting and enriching outback families.

You create a ripple effect that reaches far and wide across the outback, fostering education, wellness, and community. I hope being part of this community brings you as much joy as it does me. Thank you.

— Kate





PAULA'S remarkable LEGACY

Paula grew up in a compassionate family and learned early on the importance of caring for others. Those values still guide her most important decisions.

Paula has fond memories of a very happy and loving childhood at Ashgrove with two great sisters and amazing parents. "We had a house at Northcliffe, so we lived in the surf and dad taught us to swim in the Nerang River," she



says. *"I was a keen runner too."* She admired her parents immensely. ***"They were always giving to charities, so we grew up looking out for people in need."***

When Paula was in her 20s, she began a deeply rewarding teaching career in Queensland's country towns and learnt about the life-saving work of the RFDS.

Soon after Paula met a fellow teacher Peter, who had direct experience with the RFDS's excellent service while teaching in remote locations of Thargomindah and Cheepie. The soulmates

lose it", says Paula. *"I do yoga twice a week and pickleball. I go swimming, and I walk every day. I've got my health – and you've got to be grateful for what you've got."*

Paula and Pete are also aware of how fortunate they are to have easy access to healthcare services. *"If I got sick, Pete would have me at the emergency room in seven minutes,"* Paula says.

"But outback communities don't have that luxury."

She finds inspiration in her previous doctor, who travels to treat patients at distant clinics, and in

the close friend she made while teaching in Mount Isa, who worked as a nurse for the RFDS. *"I admire them, and I'm fascinated with planes too, so I would have loved to be on the Flying Doctor crew,"* Paula says.

The RFDS was front of



mind when Paula and Pete considered how best to make a difference in the world beyond their lifetime. After taking care of their family, they decided to leave a gift in their Will to the RFDS to help save lives for generations to come. *"The Flying Doctor crews are just like intensive care teams – on the ball all the time. And I used to believe that the government funded all of this. **Then I realised the Flying Doctor is also depending on people like us to keep showing up in an emergency in years to come."***



married and moved to Caboolture, north of Brisbane. There, they welcomed two children, Scott and Katie, and built a wonderful life. Now retired and in their 70s, Paula and Pete keep busy on the principle of "use it or



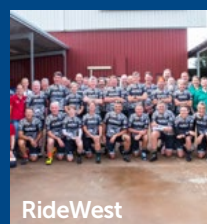
LEAVE YOUR MARK – If you've already included or are considering including the RFDS in your Will, we'd be grateful if you could let us know. We'd love to thank you personally and answer any questions you may have. Please contact Michela Everett, Special Supporter Coordinator on **07 3541 4312 | meverett@rfdsqld.com.au** or Heather Stott, Senior Manager – Key Relationships on **07 3852 7586 | hstott@rfdsqld.com.au**



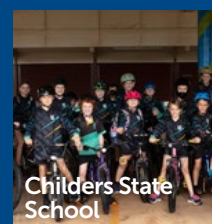
Brisbane Region Sponsor



YOUR LOCAL HEROES RECOGNISED



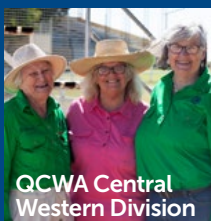
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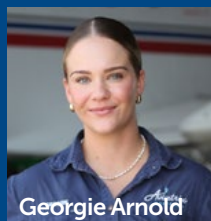
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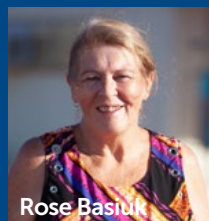
Zoe Miller



QCWA Central Western Division



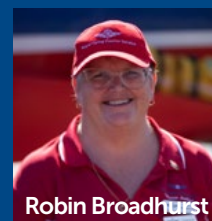
Georgie Arnold



Rose Basiuk



Matthew Minz



Robin Broadhurst

The RFDS Local Hero Awards recognise individuals and groups who have a profound impact on their community.

With the votes tallied, let's applaud our nine regional finalists and celebrate the announcement of this year's RFDS Queensland Hero.

In Brisbane, **RideWest** cyclists undertake a biennial ride of 1,300 km, having raised more than \$2 million in ten years for mental health support in the outback.

Childers State School Mountain Bike Group from the Bundaberg region cycled 1,000 km in the Oceans to Outback challenge, raising \$1,300 to aid the RFDS.

Townsville's **Georgie Arnold** is passionate about promoting young women in

the aviation industry, while also committed to raising vital funds for the RFDS after her family's experience with the Service.

Zoe Miller from Mount Isa, inspired by her own retrievals by the Flying Doctor, embarks on a half marathon to contribute to the cause.

Roma's acting sergeant, **Matt Minz**, is recognised for his frontline service, educational efforts, and support for at-risk community members.

Robin Broadhurst from Rockhampton tirelessly raises funds and awareness for the Flying Doctor, driven by her personal experience with the Service.

Charleville's **Rose Basiuk** is the key custodian for the RFDS Medical Chest in Yowah, providing invaluable support to healthcare teams and the community.

The **QCWA Central Western Division** in

Longreach, steered by Lyndall and Gail, unites country women and raises funds for life-saving medical care.



Jodi Hamilton

CONGRATULATIONS

In the Cape York town of Coen, **Jodi Hamilton** is renowned for her unwavering support for the community. She coordinates vital healthcare resources and is always there to assist with emergencies. As the 2024 Queensland Hero, Jodi will use her \$20,000 grant, courtesy of Ergon Energy Retail, to enhance Coen's palliative care capacity.

THE QUEENSLAND COUNTRY WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION (QCWA)

has a long-standing relationship with the RFDS. In the 1930s, QCWA branches fundraised to provide pedal radios to support the RFDS and this partnership carries on today.

The QCWA was born to improve the lives of Queensland women and their families. We continue to do this by arranging social and network opportunities to alleviate social isolation, providing crisis funding, in-kind aid, and financial assistance including scholarships and acting as a voice for women, especially those in regional, rural and remote communities. Alongside QCWA, RFDS have had a profound impact on such communities. Together, we connect, collaborate and create a social impact across all communities.

Our Country Kitchens program builds capacity for health promotion and improves the health and wellbeing of Queenslanders through food and nutrition literacy education within local communities. We are delighted to share with you some of our Country Kitchens recipes and hope that you are inspired to try something new.

– QCWA State President,
Sheila Campbell

Empowering women through education and health is a priority for the Queensland Country Women's Association (QCWA). The QCWA Country Kitchens program, funded by the Queensland Government through Health and Wellbeing Queensland, supports Queenslanders to adopt healthier lifestyles. To find out more about the program visit <https://qcwacountrykitchens.com.au/>.

Chicken and Vegetable Casserole



Serves: 6

Prep time: 15 minutes

Cook time: 45 minutes

Fruit and veg: 2 serves per portion

INGREDIENTS

3 tablespoons extra

virgin

olive oil

2 chicken drumsticks

4 chicken thighs

1 brown onion, diced

1 bay leaf

1 tablespoon rosemary sprigs

Black pepper to taste

100 g bacon, diced

100 ml white wine

300 g baby mushrooms, sliced

6 small white potatoes, cubed

1 cup sweet potato, cubed

1 cup green peas, frozen

METHOD:

HEAT two tablespoons of oil in pan, brown chicken pieces for 2 minutes.

ADD onion, bay leaf, rosemary and black pepper. Add bacon and cook for further 2 minutes.

ADD white wine and bring to the boil.

STIR in mushrooms and cook for 30 minutes over low heat.

HEAT remaining oil in pan and fry potato (white and sweet) for about 15 minutes until almost cooked through.

TRANSFER potatoes to chicken dish, add peas and gently heat through for 5 minutes.

WHAT'S GREAT ABOUT IT?

The combination of flavours makes this recipe the perfect winter dinner! The sweet potato adds a bit of extra fibre and the peas can be replaced by green beans if you prefer.

RECIPE COURTESY OF THE COUNTRY KITCHENS TEAM

Thank you for being with us on every flight



We are humbled to receive feedback from grateful patients – as an invaluable part of our crew, we wanted to share them with you.

"All staff are very well trained in all aspects of medical services. I appreciate the service provided to the regional areas. Thank you so much RFDS."

"I feel we are very lucky to have excellent healthcare via RFDS in conjunction with PHC staff working as a team communication between both services means my whole health experience is covered."

"Very thorough and professional assessment/treatment plan; service and follow up within 24 hours, provided by doctors and nurses was outstanding."

"Thank you to the wonderful staff who transferred me down from Rockhampton to Brisbane when I went into preterm labour at 26 weeks gestation! Incredible service I'm so grateful to have had the privilege of using! Thank you!"

"The RFDS is just amazing, and I am so thankful for the nurse and pilot who looked after me. Living remotely can sometimes feel very isolated when it comes to healthcare. The fact that the RFDS exists is such a lifeline, thank you for all that you do!"

"Both the pilot and the nurse were exceptional: personable, pleasant, friendly, and funny. They took great care of me, communicated clearly and thoroughly, and put me at ease. The whole experience gave me the impression of being in exceptionally professional and experienced hands. I could not have felt in better care, and I think such professional care contributed positively to my subsequent recovery."

OUR PRINCIPAL PARTNERS



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