



ROYAL
FLYING DOCTOR
SERVICE

OF AUSTRALIA

Central Operations Incorporated



Always there for you

When I joined the Royal Flying Doctor Service last year I, like many of my friends, was not aware of the remarkable service that the RFDS offers. In the eight months that I have been here, I am amazed to hear of stories such as those of Alex and Sarah and the way in which our medical staff and pilots touch so many peoples lives every day of the year.

Only a few weeks ago I was enjoying a quiet meal at Henley Beach when a friend tapped me on the shoulder to say that his sister had been taken by the RFDS from Adelaide to Sydney for an urgent operation that evening. I now make a point of watching the skyline over Adelaide and am amazed at the number of times I see one of our aircraft in the air.

In the past year the RFDS made contact with over 200,000 people across Australia and in South Australia and the Northern Territory, the region covered by RFDS Central Operations, over 47,000 patient contacts were made.

When going and making presentations across the community, I'm often asked what kind of services we provide. Having had time to reflect on this, I think I would describe the RFDS as being more like a mobile health service – one which provides our traditional emergency services and more than ever, a comprehensive preventative health care system to those who otherwise would not have access to such services.

I am also constantly delivering the message that we are not just for the people in the bush, we are for everyone that lives or travels in Australia.

At the same time, the staff of the RFDS are the first to recognise that we can only continue to provide this remarkable level of support because of your generosity. Without the support of the community, both at a corporate and individual level, the RFDS as we know it would not exist.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all once again for your tremendous loyalty and trust that you have had the opportunity to wind down a little and spend some quality time over the holiday period with your family and friends.

Best regards

John Tobin
Public Affairs & Marketing
Manager



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Central Operations Inc
PO Box 381 MARLESTON BC SA 5033
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A Family Affair

The Smyth family certainly appreciates the importance of the Royal Flying Doctor Service. Two sisters, Alex and Sarah, have each had to call on the Flying Doctor on two separate occasions and in different regions of Australia and fortunately, both have a happy tale to tell.

Last autumn Sarah went into unexpected labour whilst on their property at Willalooka, around 45 kilometres outside of Keith in South Australia. Sarah was rushed into the Keith Hospital but was soon told she needed obstetric services as a matter of urgency which meant calling in the RFDS to get her to Adelaide.

As soon as the Pilatus PC-12 landed at Keith, Sarah was in the expert hands of one of the RFDS' team of midwives who was able to assure Sarah that, even in the event of a mid-flight birth, the aircraft was equipped with a full range of medical equipment and that everything would be OK – all particularly reassuring for Sarah who was by now very anxious!

“The thought of having my baby here and now had never crossed my mind but suddenly there we were, thousands of feet up in the air and with the very real possibility that I might actually deliver at any time! I can laugh about it now but it was all pretty nerve-wracking at the time” recalls Sarah.

Gentle smiles and a comforting hand from the RFDS crew and twenty minutes later Sarah arrived in Adelaide and a little later than expected, gave birth to her second boy, Max, who weighed in at 6 pound 9 ounces much to the delight of his dad Guy and brother, Edward.

Young Max and Edward are now at home in Willalooka helping to look after Mum and Dad's farm where they enjoy the wide open spaces and watching over their favourite animals.



As for Sarah's sister, Alex, her story is another uniquely Australian experience that could so easily have ended in tragedy if it wasn't for the Flying Doctor.

Some years ago Alex was travelling in a remote part of the Northern Territory near the Queensland border with a group of friends when their tyre blew which caused the car in which they were travelling to roll over multiple times.

The accident was a serious one and the trouble was that the group was hundreds of kilometres away from any town of significance. Fortunately, with assistance from a nearby homestead owner, contact was made with the RFDS.

There was a problem however in that there was no proper airstrip within the vicinity of the accident scene and the sun had already set. Using typical outback ingenuity, a temporary landing strip was prepared through the use of kerosene tins to help light the makeshift runway and the pilot was able to guide the aircraft down safely.

Alex was rushed to the Mt Isa Hospital where fortunately, having sustained serious injuries, she made a complete recovery.

“I don't know what would have happened if the RFDS wasn't there. It's something I'd rather not even think about. You really just never know when you might need the Flying Doctor. I even think of all of us that live here in the city and how often we take our cars and 4 wheel drives on trips to regional towns or go camping up in the Flinders”, says Alex, who now lives and works in Adelaide.

“I really hope everyone out there, no matter where they live, understands just how important the Flying Doctor is potentially for every Australian”.

As Sarah and Alex can attest to, you just never know when you might need to call on the Flying Doctor.