

# The Flying Doctors

The RFDS (the Royal Flying Doctor Service) is an organisation that provides healthcare across Australia. It provides emergency medical services to anybody who needs it within Australia.

This is extremely important for anybody who lives in rural and remote locations who cannot access other medical services because they are too far away.

The service provides emergency assistance to accident victims and patients with serious illnesses in remote areas. Although the Flying Doctors is best known for emergency work, it also has a range of additional services for outback communities such as:

- Providing medical advice from nurses and doctors over the telephone or radio.
- Moving patients from small rural hospitals to larger city hospitals.
- Running health clinics in remote areas such as dentists and other specialist services.

The RFDS has 66 aircraft, 23 bases and 48 ambulances. The RFDS has many planes, each one built differently to suit the special job that they need to do. They are like flying emergency rooms, carrying lots of medical equipment and medicines.



Most flights are run with just one pilot and one nurse. Sometimes, an extra doctor flies with them if there is a serious case. Pilots are very skilled and need to land in some very difficult places. Sometimes, flares or car headlights are used as airstrip markers.

The Flying Doctors was founded by Reverend John Flynn. It began flying in 1928.



# Questions

1. What do the letters RFDS stand for?

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2. In which country is the RFDS based?

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3. Who does the RFDS assist?

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4. How many aircraft does the RFDS have?

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5. Write down one way that the RFDS can help remote residents of Australia.

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6. Who founded the RFDS?

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7. How many pilots are needed for each flight?

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8. Would you like to be a nurse for the flying doctors? Why or why not?

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# Answers

1. What do the letters RFDS stand for?  
**RFDS stands for the Royal Flying Doctors Service.**
2. In which country is the RFDS based?  
**The RFDS is based in Australia (mainly rural and remote Australia).**
3. Who does the RFDS assist?  
**The RFDS provides assistance to accident victims and patients with serious illnesses in remote areas.**
4. How many aircraft does the RFDS have?  
**The RFDS has 66 aircraft.**
5. Write down one way that the RFDS can help remote residents of Australia.  
**Various answers are acceptable e.g.**
  - **Providing medical advice from nurses and doctors over the telephone or radio.**
  - **Moving patients from small rural hospitals to larger city hospitals.**
  - **Running health clinics in remote areas such as dentists and other specialist services.**
6. Who founded the RFDS?  
**John Flynn founded the Royal Flying Doctors.**
7. How many pilots are needed for each flight?  
**Only one pilot is required for each flight.**
8. Would you like to be a nurse for the flying doctors? Why or why not?  
**Answers will vary between students.**

# The Flying Doctors

The Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) is an aeromedical organisation and provides healthcare across Australia. It is the world's largest aeromedical organisation and offers a 24-hour emergency service to anybody who needs it within Australia. This service is extremely important for anybody living in rural and remote locations. Without it, they would not be able to reach vital medical services.

The RFDS provides emergency help to accident victims and patients with serious illnesses in remote areas. Although the Flying Doctors is best known for emergency work, they also have a range of other services for outback communities such as:

- Providing medical advice from nurses and doctors over the telephone or radio.
- Transferring patients from small rural hospitals to larger city hospitals that may have better resources.
- Running health clinics in remote areas and communities such as dentists, mental health workers, community health nurses and other specialists.

The RFDS has 66 aircraft, 23 aero-bases, 48 ambulances... and a 'waiting room' that's 71.6 million square kilometres! The RFDS has many planes, each one adapted to suit the special job that they need to do. Each one is like a flying emergency room, carrying medical equipment, batteries and a special communications system so that the pilot and medical staff can talk to each other.



Most flights are run with just one pilot and one nurse with an extra doctor for serious medical cases. Pilots are very skilled and have to land in some very difficult locations, sometimes using flares or car headlights as airstrip markers. These brave teams will do anything to help their patient.

The Flying Doctors was founded by Reverend John Flynn. John Flynn wanted to provide a 'mantle of safety' (as he called it) for the people living in rural and remote Australia. The service began soon after the First World War. Reverend Flynn called this area Inland Australia. He was very conscious of the isolation of Inland people, who were so cut off from medical care.



# Questions

1. Who does the RFDS assist?

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2. Name two ways that the RFDS can help remote residents of Australia.

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3. Who founded the RFDS?

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4. Why don't all flights require a doctor?

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5. Why does the author say that the 'waiting room' is 71.6 million square kilometres?

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6. Why do the flight crew sometimes need to use flares or car headlights as airstrip markers?

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7. What does the word aeromedical mean? What clues can you see in the word to help you find its meaning?

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8. How do you think people in remote places coped before the Flying Doctors?

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# Answers

1. Who does the RFDS assist?

**The RFDS assists accident victims and patients with serious illnesses in remote areas.**

2. In which is the RFDS based?

**Various answers are acceptable e.g.**

- **Providing medical advice from nurses and doctors over the telephone or radio.**
- **Transferring patients from small rural hospitals to larger city hospitals that may have better resources.**
- **Running health clinics in remote areas and communities such as dentists, mental health workers, community health nurses and other specialists.**

3. Who does the RFDS assist?

**Reverend John Flynn founded the RFDS.**

4. Why don't all flights require a doctor?

**A nurse is sufficient in most cases and a doctor is only needed in serious incidents.**

5. Why does the author say that the 'waiting room' is 71.6 million square kilometres?

**The author says that the waiting room is 71.6 million square kilometres because the 'waiting room' is the whole of Australia. It's a joke.**

6. Why do the flight crew sometimes need to use flares or car headlights as airstrip markers?

**Sometimes the flight crew are required to use flares or car headlights as airstrip markers because there isn't always a clear runway for the aircraft due to the unique locations that they are required to access. Sometimes they need to make do with the resources that they have available to them.**

7. What does the word aeromedical mean? What clues can you see in the word to help you find its meaning?

**Knowing that aero is a base word meaning air, we can tell that the word aeromedical relates to the use of aircraft for medical purposes.**

8. How do you think people in remote places coped before the Flying Doctors?

**Example answer. Before the Flying Doctors, people in remote places would have had to provide medical help themselves. Many would have died from disease or serious injury.**

# The Flying Doctors

The Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) is a not-for-profit aeromedical organisation which provides healthcare across Australia. It is the world's largest aeromedical organisation, providing a 24-hour emergency service to anybody who needs it within Australia. This is extremely important for anybody who is located in rural and remote locations and cannot access other medical services due to distance.

The RFDS provides 24-hour emergency assistance to accident victims and patients with life-threatening illnesses in remote areas. Although the Flying Doctor is best known for emergency work, they also have a range of additional services for outback communities such as:

- Medical advice from nurses and doctors over the telephone or radio;
- Transferring patients from small rural hospitals to larger city hospitals that may have better resources;
- Conducting health clinics in remote areas and communities, such as dentists, mental health workers, community health nurses and other specialists.

The RFDS national fleet has 66 aircraft, 23 aero-bases, 48 road patient vehicles and a waiting room spanning 71.6 million square kilometres. The RFDS has many planes, each one specifically modified to suit the special job that they need to do. Each one is similar to a flying emergency room, carrying medical equipment, additional batteries and a special communications system for interaction between the pilot and medical staff in the cabin.



Most flights are run with just one pilot and one nurse with an extra doctor occasionally assisting on flights to serious medical cases. Pilots are incredibly skilled and are required to land in some very difficult locations, sometimes using flares or car headlights as airstrip markers. These brave teams will go to great lengths in order to help their patient.

The Flying Doctors was founded by Reverend John Flynn. John Flynn's vision of providing a 'Mantle of Safety' (as he called it) for the people living in rural and remote Australia began just after the First World War. Mr Flynn referred to this area as Inland Australia. He was very conscious of the isolation of Inland people, who were so remote from medical care.

John Flynn began his missionary work in 1912. At this time, there were only two doctors who together served an area of over 1 800 000 square kilometres across Western Australia and the Northern Territory. As you can imagine, this proved to be very difficult and it did not take long to realise that air transport and radio were needed to break the isolation that accompanied living in this area of the country. Using these would help provide adequate medical care for its people. This is where John Flynn's vision of the Flying Doctors service came alive. However, he had to wait many years before he could translate his vision into practice due to the lack of available aircraft and radio technology.



# Questions

1. Who does the RFDS assist?

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2. Name three ways that the RFDS can help remote residents of Australia.

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3. Who founded the RFDS?

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4. Why do some flights require a doctor but not all flights?

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5. Why was John Flynn concerned about the isolation of inland people?

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6. Why do the flight crew sometimes need to use flares or car headlights as airstrip markers?

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7. What does the word aeromedical mean? What clues can you see in the word to help you determine its meaning?

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8. Reverend Flynn picture appears on the \$20 note. Why might he deserve such an honour?

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# Answers

1. Who does the RFDS assist?

**The RFDS assists anyone who requires medical assistance in rural and remote Australia.**

2. Name three ways that the RFDS can help remote residents of Australia.

**Various answers are acceptable e.g.**

- **Emergency medical treatment**
- **Medical advice via telephone or radio**
- **Hospital transfers**
- **Health clinics with specialists such as dentists and mental health workers**

3. Who founded the RFDS?

**Reverend John Flynn founded the RFDS.**

4. Why do some flights require a doctor but not all flights?

**A nurse is sufficient in most cases and a doctor is only needed in serious incidents.**

5. Why was John Flynn concerned about the isolation of inland people?

**John Flynn was concerned about the isolation of inland people because they were quite far away from medical treatment, social connections and educational opportunities.**

6. Why do the flight crew sometimes need to use flares or car headlights as airstrip markers?

**Sometimes the flight crew are required to use flares or car headlights as airstrip markers because there isn't always a clear runway for the aircraft due to the unique locations that they are required to access. Sometimes they need to make do with the resources that they have available to them.**

7. What does the word aeromedical mean? What clues can you see in the word to help you determine its meaning?

**Knowing that aero is a base word meaning air, we can determine that the word aeromedical relates to the use of aircraft for medical purposes.**

8. Reverend Flynn picture appears on the \$20 note. Why might he deserve such an honour?

**Example answer. Reverend Flynn deserves his image on the \$20 notes because of his contribution to the health of people in rural and remote Australia. If it weren't for him, people living in the outback might die or suffer needlessly. He created a lifesaving service for Australia.**