

14 February 2005

Royal Flying Doctor Service

The Australian Royal Flying Doctor Service was started in 1928 to help people who live far away from cities and towns. Find out more by watching today's story on the Royal Flying Doctor Service.

MAUDE FORSHAW, YELDHAM STATION: You can [get in touch with](#) the flying [doc](#) any time of the day and night with the emergency button, and they're very good.

PETER LEWIS: Maude Forshaw and her husband Elton raised 7 kids here at Yeldham station, and despite their isolation, especially during the wet season when roads to the outside world might be cut for weeks, they've always appreciated their [top-flight](#) medical cover.

MAUDE FORSHAW: Well to be honest with you we have a doctor quicker than you get if you're in [Mt Isa](#) or in any of the cities.

We can get on and we've got a doctor within 5 minutes, talking to us, telling us what to do and course you don't see a doctor but at least they're there and they tell you and we've got the [medical chest](#) with all this stuff in it, that's in, they give you medicals out of the medical chest.

So you're able to [handle things](#), and so we get attention within about 15 minutes they're taking the medication and that's a lot quicker than you'd get in most hospitals.

PETER LEWIS: For families like the Forshaws, HF radios were the lifeline of the outside world, and the first contact point between flying doctor and patient in an emergency.

MAUDE FORSHAW: They've got to calm people down and they do that a lot just by talking to them.

DON BOWLEY, DOCTOR, RFDS: It's a very different way of doing medicine, I guess. It's something that most people when they come, most doctors when they come here, are not used to and I think there's a bit of a [rapid learning curve](#) to become familiar with it.

MAUDE FORSHAW: They're pretty good, they just seem to be able to do it, that's all. They ask you a lot of questions, you answer their questions, and 9 times out of 10, they can tell you what's wrong.

DON BOWLEY: I guess there's a degree of educated guessing in it, but the majority of the time you get familiar with the people, you've met them before, and you get a pretty good idea from the stories you're given what's wrong with them.

NIC WALDRON, NURSE, RFDS: It's [interesting](#) when people, if I tell someone I'm a nurse they go "oh yeah, you're a nurse", and then you say "I'm a nurse and I work for the RFDS", and immediately everybody's [interested](#) but I'm still doing the same job. I'm just doing in a plane.

I like the variety, the fact that you're working in rural areas, meeting rural people. I like flying. My father had his pilot's license and so I used to fly in small aircraft as a child. Just the whole bit, really, and the fact that you can use all your skills in the one place.

JOHN O'HALLORAN, PILOT, RFDS: Being a pilot for the Royal Flying Doctor Service is different to a lot of aviation's jobs. It's not everyone's [cup of tea](#).

There's a lot of hard work involved with it, but I don't think that there is a job in aviation that will give you the kind of rewards this will.

This job is one of those jobs where you have to [think on your feet](#), you're given a lot of responsibility and because of that, you get great rewards at the end of the day, and it's nice to be in a job where you make a difference.

DON BOWLEY: The people out here really [appreciate](#) your efforts, they're very thankful for what you do, they make you feel part of the community and you are their friend.

You're not their doctor, you're their friend and I think that's a very good thing and I get a lot of satisfaction out of my job because I'm working with people I know very well. I grow old with them as they grow old, and I see them through their ups and downs, and they see me through my [ups and downs](#). It's like a long-term friendship.

story notes

thing that you like

Example: Working on the weekends is not my **cup of tea**.

think on your feet

think very quickly; think under pressure

Example: You have to **think on your feet** when a student asks an awkward question.

appreciate

are very thankful for

ups and downs

times of happiness and times of sadness

Example: Every marriage has its **ups and downs**.
