



**25**  
YEARS OF SERVICE

CQ RESCUE  
RACQ

# RACQ CQ RESCUE

## 2021 Community Report

[WWW.CQRESCUE.ORG.AU](http://WWW.CQRESCUE.ORG.AU)



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# CEO report

**For 25 years, RACQ CQ Rescue has been assisting those in dire need, whether it be the search for a man missing in the outback, retrieving an injured fisherman from a trawler or transferring a premature baby to life-saving specialist care.**

**This Mackay-based community-funded rescue helicopter has grown from very humble beginnings to become a well-respected, world-class organisation and an integral part of emergency services across this region.**

Who would have thought that the words “stay at home to stay safe” would become the new mantra of life in 2020?

The Covid-19 virus outbreak created an unprecedented set of challenges for RACQ CQ Rescue, seriously impacting resources, finances and potentially, our long-term capacity to serve the community.

We had to ramp up safety measures, to ensure our community helicopter remained on the frontline to combat COVID-19. Protecting our crew and aeromedical teams wasn't only about their personal well-being, it also ensured they were healthy and available to respond to the many other types of missions, which were still being performed daily throughout the pandemic such as attending emergency situations, undertaking search and rescues and transferring patients between hospitals.

It's certainly been an unprecedented year for all of us, but one that has also taught us many valuable lessons, albeit also at a great cost. Covid-19 pulled the rug out from under the entire world. This year forced us all out of our comfort zone, it pushed us to find resources and strengths within us that we did not even know we had, and more importantly it made us realise

how difficult social isolation is, how much we thrive in our own communities and how much good we can actually do together.

For RACQ CQ Rescue, Covid forced the cancellation of many fundraisers and events this year including 2020 Annual Appeal and the 2020 Gala Fundraising Dinner. This meant a total loss of about \$900,000 in revenue for our community-funded rescue helicopter service.

Still, every day our highly skilled crew are tasked to a variety of assignments – motor vehicle accidents, workplace accidents, beacon searches, search and rescue missions and hospital transfers. We've been this region's lifeline in your time of need, winning, rescuing and transferring 10,000 patients in our 25-year history.

With 2020 now behind us and as we move into 2021 and beyond, it's important to realise we will still encounter challenges. Together, our entire team will be determined to overcome them. Thank you to the board, staff, crew and volunteers for their dedication throughout this challenging time.

In 25 years, our rescue helicopter has become an integral part of the emergency and disaster network and have proved its worth to this community countless times. It's by no means an easy job – every day with every task our crew are faced with making difficult assessments and decisions. Our trauma team is often dealing with multiple injuries, performing in the dark and on the side of the road what is normally done in an emergency ward in a hospital.

2020 may have been the most difficult year in our short 25-year history, but despite the chaos, and with your support, we continue to provide a world-class aeromedical emergency service to this region. We should all be incredibly proud of that.

*Your lifeline when you really do need it most.*

*Ian Rowan, CEO*



# from the CHAIRMAN



**2021 is the 25th anniversary of the service and time to reflect on enormous growth and lives saved and touched by this community-funded service. How times have changed since we commenced operations in September 1996.**

**In 25 years we've come a long way from operating out of a demountable building that flooded when it rained to a multi-faceted and dynamic not-for-profit organisation boasting two aircraft with advanced avionics and an operating budget of \$10.5 million.**

But the challenges we all faced this year have really made us stronger, wiser, more resilient, and for many of our new and existing supporters, actually more involved in our communities. In hard times communities need to stay united and work cooperatively. After all, we are all in this together!

Many in our community and across this country have come to the realisation that we are all vulnerable to unexpected injury/illness – you never know when you or your loved ones will need help and we all have a responsibility to cooperate and assist others overcome such obstacles.

That is why your donations, sponsorship and support of our service is so important to this community, to those who live, work and visit here and obviously to our rescue helicopter service.

But in 25 years, one thing remains unchanged. Patients in dire situations, whether it be accident, injury or illness, tell us of their

immeasurable relief and overwhelming gratitude when they hear the throb of the helicopter blades approaching. We remain proud to be your lifeline in a time of crisis.

Since that first life-saving mission 25 years ago, times have undoubtedly changed, but our enduring commitment to serving this community and people who live, work and travel here has never wavered.

With our operational expenses expected to rise to \$10.5 million in 2021, now more than ever, your support for our service is absolutely critical to keep our crew flying to the rescue. Without your help, we literally couldn't get off the ground.

On behalf of the entire CQ Rescue team, along with my fellow directors, I extend a personal 'Thank you' to our colleagues at Queensland Health, Queensland Ambulance Service, Retrieval Services Queensland (RSQ), Queensland Police Service, Queensland Fire and Rescue, Babcock Mission Critical Services, Lifeflight Retrieval Medicine, Volunteer Marine Rescue, the State Emergency Service and the Australian Maritime Safety Authority.

I also extend my sincere appreciation to the CQ Rescue board and to all our staff members and volunteers who work tirelessly, giving their time and expertise. We thank the numerous organisations, groups and individuals who have supported the service in so many ways since our first flight in 1996, allowing us to be a lifeline to more than 10,000 people and their families.

It's an honour to help oversee the ongoing success of this life-saving rescue service which this region should be incredibly proud to call their own.

*Chris Wright, Chairman*





# MESSAGE

from RACQ

**As Queensland's largest club, RACQ's goal is to be there for our members wherever, whenever we are needed.**

**RACQ's core values include generosity of spirit, being of service, inspiring trust and dedication to excellence. We exist for our members and judge everything we do by how well we serve their needs. Contributing to the wellbeing and welfare of Queenslanders, wherever they live in the state, is the cornerstone of RACQ community sponsorships and related programs.**

RACQ is committed to looking after the communities in which our members live.

We live, work and contribute to the same community as our members. We hold ourselves to the very highest standards of corporate citizenship and work in collaboration with communities for the better.

RACQ provides naming rights sponsorship across the Queensland rescue helicopter network including the CQ Rescue helicopter based in Mackay. Our 20-year association with CQ Rescue is a highly appropriate way of contributing to the Queensland community where our club has progressed and prospered. Like RACQ, your region's rescue helicopter provides peace of mind 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The service they provide is literally often the difference between life and death.

The Royal Automobile Club of Queensland Limited (RACQ) was formed in 1905 to advocate on behalf of the state's early motorists. For the past 116 years it has been the voice of members and their families, ensuring safer drivers in safer vehicles on safer roads.

Much of CQ Rescue's lifesaving work involves response to road crashes. What price can you put on a service where rapid helicopter response, expert medical care on the scene and swift retrieval to hospital can make all the difference to the trauma outcomes?

Overwhelmingly the majority of RACQ members obviously agree our support is vital, with 99.4% of those most recently surveyed supporting this major sponsorship.

To continue delivering emergency medical aid in remote regional centres, your rescue helicopter needs your help. Please donate to the 2021 Annual Appeal today. RACQ CQ Rescue is a vital, lifesaving service so please join us in supporting them so they can continue to be your lifeline when you need it most.

*David Contarini, Head of Community and Education RACQ*

# SNAPSHOT of 2020



Total flying hours  
**1135**

Longest mission  
**9hrs**

Longest flight  
Dysart - Townsville  
**960km**



Busiest months  
**October**  
63 missions

**September**  
62 missions

**July**  
60 missions

Average per month  
**52.5 missions**



631  
Tasks



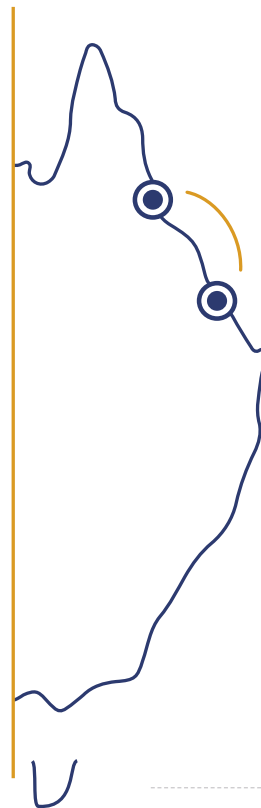
164,000km



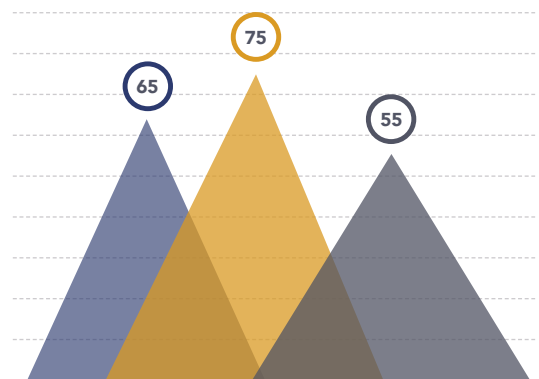
1135  
Flying  
Hours



98%  
Availability



**40 flights**  
to Townsville  
Each costing on  
average \$35,000



Bowen Proserpine Moranbah

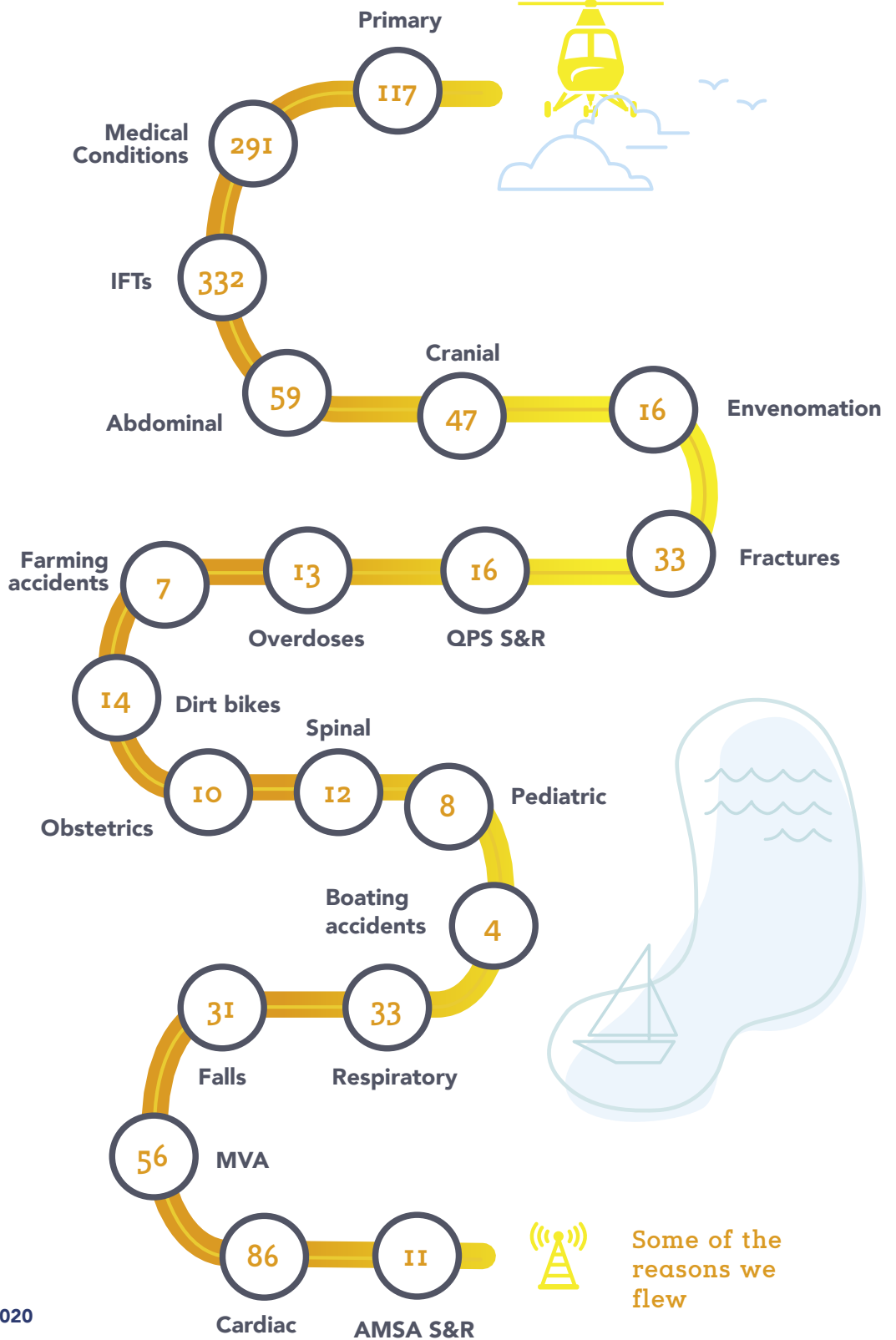
Most frequented destinations

# REASONS *we flew*



## 291 Medical Conditions

in 2020 (both new & pre-existing)



## 44% increase in MVAs since 2019

Patients airlifted as a result of MVAs drastically increased from 34 missions in 2019 to 56 in 2020



Some of the reasons we flew





# PLANS SET FOR *lift off*

## CQ RESQ History

1992 // 1995

**A horrific car crash near Lake Elphinstone, 92 kms west of Mackay, in 1992 highlighted the urgent need for a rescue helicopter in the region. The assistance of a helicopter from Mount Isa Mine helped save the lives of those injured in the smash, prompting hospital and ambulance workers to call a meeting to discuss the establishment of an aeromedical organisation to serve areas in Central Queensland which were remote or difficult to access.**

**By mid-1993 the need for a rotary wing aeromedical capability to be based in Mackay had been established by the Queensland State Parliamentary Selection Committee of Inquiry into the Ambulance Service and an independent report from Queensland Regional Health. From 1993 to 1995 the Queensland Ambulance Service and Mackay Base Hospital chartered helicopters on an itinerant basis as required. A total of some 200 aeromedical missions were flown under these arrangements. Mount Isa Mines (MIM) often made their corporate helicopter available from Newlands Mine for this purpose at subsidised charter rates.**

A meeting to gather community support for the establishment of a community-based, government subsidised, rotary wing aeromedical service was convened by the Mackay Mayor Cr Greg Williamson on July 6, 1993.

The next Mayor of Mackay, Cr Gordon White, convened a public meeting of some 30 community leaders on October 20, 1994 at Canegrowers Mackay to inform business people of the need for a helicopter rescue medical retrieval service. The meeting resulted in unanimous support for the concept from those present, and nine nominated to form a committee to work towards provision of the service. At the meeting on November 16, 1994, a five-member committee was elected: President John Bird, Secretary Dick Marshall, Treasurer Denis Connole, Vice president Dr Peter Bastable and Keith Callinan. The Community Committee produced a Memorandum and Articles of Association for the creation of the Central Queensland Helicopter Rescue Service Ltd and at a meeting on December 9, 1994, chaired by Dr Bert Sadleir, the Community Committee approved applications received for membership and approved the appointment of the committee elected on November 16 as the Board of Directors of the Central Queensland Helicopter Rescue Service Ltd. Subsequently, Denis Connole resigned from the Board on May 11, 1995 and was replaced on January 24, 1996 by Col Meng.





## THE EARLY YEARS

*our first mission*

**On August 27, 1996 while training was in progress, Dr Bert Sadleir was helping fit out the not-yet-commissioned helicopter and deciding with colleagues where the stretcher should go in CQ RESQ's Bell Longranger when the emergency call came in.**

A guest on Hayman Island was critically unwell with a ruptured ectopic pregnancy and needed to be airlifted to hospital. Time was of the essence. Her life depended upon it. Bert remembers quickly bolting the stretcher into the helicopter and jumping aboard, still in his civilian clothes, to fly to the rescue. Such effort and her subsequent rapid transfer to hospital and immediate surgery absolutely save her life. Later Dr Bill Boyd, the surgeon who performed the operation and Dr Bert Sadleir, Director of Emergency Department at the Mackay Base Hospital, commented to news media that CQ RESQ had been instrumental in saving the patient's life.



## FIRST BOARD

*of directors*

**President CQ RESQ**

**John Bird**

Certified Practising Accountant

**Vice-president CQ RESQ**

**Dr Peter Bastable**

MBBch. BAO (Nat Uni Ireland) FACEM

**Members**

**Keith Callinan**

Managing Director, New Pioneer Motors

**Dick Marshall**

Secretary, Mackay Sugar Co-operative

**Col Meng**

Managing Director Meng Tyre Service

**Co-ordinator**

**Tony Shields**

BA (Economics and Financial)



# A FLEDGLING SERVICE

*takes flight*

## CQ RESQ History

// 1996

**During the first four months from the inception of CQ RESQ flight operations until December 31, 1996, the service flew a total of 43 active service missions excluding training and promotional flights.**

**On average during the first four months an active service mission was flown every three days. The total distance flown was about 10,300 kilometres which represented an average distance of 240 kilometres per mission. On about 85% of missions, CQ RESQ flew directly to the scene of the incident which was its core role and represented a dramatically improvement in on-scene capability in the Mackay region. Most of the remaining missions were for patients with conditions which required urgent transfer from Dysart, Proserpine and Moranbah regional hospitals to Mackay Base Hospital for further investigation and treatment. During the first four months, CQ RESQ only conducted one down-the-wire-winch of an ambulance crewman to a patient and conducted only one search and rescue task.**

Missions flown by the service in its first four months of operation included a number of serious cardiac patients, Irukandji envenomations, a diver injured in a moray eel attack, motor vehicle accidents, industrial accidents including some on rural properties and at the Bowen Basin Coal Mines and mishaps such as a water skiing accident and falls from buildings. Medical equipment in the Bell Longranger helicopter enabled it to provide a mini intensive care environment with an emergency physician from the Mackay Base Hospital aboard.

The service received strong support from the very beginning with some coal mining companies and their employees in the Bowen Basin, with many employees opting for payroll deductions of one dollar per week in support of the service. Significant support was provided by the end of 1996 by BHP Coal, Thiess and members of the United Mine Workers Union (later CFMEU). During the same period, funding was provided by the Newlands MIM mine and Blair Athol mine. Major media in the region provided considerable support and sponsorship, notably the Daily Mercury newspaper. Sponsorship was also provided by the Seven television network and radio 4MK/HOT FM. Funding was assisted considerably by a \$100,000 donation from the Tom and Dorothy Cook Memorial Trust and the Mackay District Canegrowers Organisations provided strong support and hundreds of Canegrower members have provided donations for the helicopter rescue service.

In recognition of the high start-up costs of establishment a fully-fledged world-class helicopter rescue service, the Queensland Government announced on December 24, 1996 that a one-off additional grant of \$300,00 would be paid to CQ RESQ during the six months of 1997.



# SNAPSHOT of 1996



## February

A business plan was approved by directors



Tender from Lloyd Helicopters Pty Ltd for provision of a Long Ranger helicopter and associated pilots, services and equipment was accepted. Lloyd had extensive experience in the provision of aeromedical and rescue services.

The CQ Rescue premises consisted of two dongas and a quarter of a shared hangar, affectionately known today as the 'Old Hangar' at Casey Avenue.



Total operating expenses were just \$1 million; public donations made up the difference between that and funding provided by Queensland Government.



CQ RESQ's first helicopter was a small single-engine, blue and white Bell Longranger 206 (VH-LHP) and our initial sponsors include Thiess, BMA, Queensland Rail and CFMEU.



Queensland Ambulance Service paramedics are trained to be winch operators and rescue crewmen.



## June

Queensland Government service agreement is signed which provided a minimum of \$300,000 funding per annum.



Queensland Government contributes



Three experienced pilots on roster providing a 24-hour a day service, ready to takeoff within a maximum of 15 minutes of activation or a maximum of 30 minutes for missions more than 150km seaward.



## August 28

The first task completed was on August 28 in 1996 while the helicopter was still being outfitted and crew trained – it was a woman with a life-threatening ectopic pregnancy on Hayman Island. Before the service even officially commenced, the helicopter service was already instrumental in saving a life.



## September 1

CQ RESQ completes its first official flight.



CQ RESQ's flight crew consists of a mix of paramedics, flight nurses and doctors from Mackay Base Hospital.





# 25 YEARS

*of saving lives*

This year RACQ CQ Rescue celebrates the milestone of 25 years of service to Central Queensland and nearly 10,000 missions completed in that time. We've been trawling through the archives and encountered some fantastic stories, amazing achievements and incredible patient outcomes.

**Our patients come from all walks of life and the injuries and illnesses they've endured which necessitated the help of the rescue helicopter are all unique.**



## JANUARY 1997

Derek Burrows was treated aboard CQ RESQ and flown direct to Mackay Base Hospital and into the operating theatre after he suffered extensive muscle damage to the bone from two shark bites on his left leg



Dave Ross // Full Time Crewman

## MARCH 1998

CQ RESQ's first full-time crewman, Dave Ross, was appointed in March 1998 on secondment from the Queensland Ambulance Service. He was one of the original crew members trained by CQ RESQ in August 1996 and from that time onward flew on many CQ RESQ mission of all types.

## MARCH 1998

Acute illness of a 17-month-old boy on Lindeman Island in the Whitsundays. Treated by crew and nurse aboard CQ RESQ on transfer to hospital.



## 1997



## SEPTEMBER 1997

Lee-Anne Wilkinson and daughter Casey in Mackay Base Hospital after being transported from Moranbah by CQ RESQ when she was born five week premature. She was transferred in the neonatal intensive care unit.

## 1998



## JULY 1998

Landing on a small pontoon. 145km north east of Mackay, an emergency physicians and full-time crewman aboard CQ RESQ treated a 34-year-old trawler fisherman. A deadly sea snake from the catch spread its fangs on the back of his hand, drawing blood and transferring venom to the patient. He was flown to hospital by CQ RESQ and made a full recovery.

## 1999

## MAY 1999

A 55-year-old woman at South Molle island was transported to the island helipad following onset of a sudden cardiac condition. Here she receives treatment from the CQ RESQ paramedic crewman and nurse, prior to being flown to Mackay Base Hospital aboard the helicopter.





AUGUST 2000

## CQ RESQ's 1,000th mission

an impressive milestone for a service only operational less than four years.



AUGUST 2000

CQ RESQ clinical crewman and emergency physician clamber under the wreckage of an overturned cabin to stabilise a 41-year-old truck driver who sustained neck and chest injuries when his semi-trailer was sliced in half by a collision with a freight train at Bloomsbury. The helicopter landed on scene and flew the seriously injured man to Mackay Base Hospital.

2000



JULY 2000

A 50-year-old man sustained severe head injuries when the ultra light aircraft he was flying plummeted into trees near Dysart. CQ RESQ landed at the scene to stabilize the patient for flight to Rockhampton Base Hospital and surgery.

SEPTEMBER 2000

CQ RESQ arrives on scene where a 24-year-old miner has been crushed underground by a vehicle, 2.5km from the pit head at North Goonyella Mine. The man is stabilized above ground by a CQ RESQ paramedic crewman and nurse and is flown to Mackay Base Hospital for treatment.



2001

FEBRUARY 3, 2001 **Patient Story**

Professional Fisherman // 38 years old // Shot Wound

# SHOT AT SEA *and winched to safety*

**A 38-year-old Gladstone professional fisherman was shot aboard a fishing vessel on the night of Saturday, February 3. The man had caught a three-metre shark on a line and was holding it alongside the boat so that another fisherman could shoot the shark, but the rifle accidentally discharged. The .22 rifle bullet entered his right side just above his hip and travelled through his body across towards his lower spine, lodging in tissues close to his spine.**

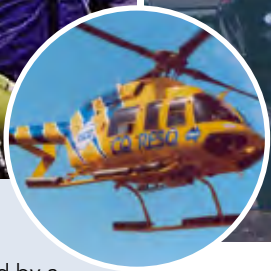
**The patient retained good movement in his legs and did not lose consciousness, but suffered severe lower spinal pain. The incident occurred aboard a line fishing vessel from Gladstone which had been operating 180km east of Mackay, near High Peak Island.**

With Captain Warren Rittson at the controls, the CQ RESQ helicopter departed Mackay at 6am with paramedic crew members Darren Pirie and James Cunnington aboard. The helicopter arrived overhead the fishing vessel at 7.10am and prepared for winching by directing the boat crew to place the injured man in a dinghy 20 metres from the main vessel. Paramedic crewman Darren Pirie was winched down about 15 metres to the patient and upon examining him, they were both winched back up into the hovering helicopter. The helicopter landed at Berwick Island, about 2km away, to stabilize the patient who was in urgent need of fluids and high level pain control. The rescue helicopter had to be refueled at Percy Island before flying the final 130km to Mackay Base Hospital arriving at 9.55am.

***"I sort of felt the whack and lifted my shirt and blood was squirting out. I yelled out to Kenny, 'you've flaming well shot me.'"***

Speaking to The Daily Mercury the next day in hospital, the injured man said: "The bullet got stuck in the breech. He's trying to dislodge the bullet when the gun's gone off. I didn't fall to the ground. I sort of felt the whack and lifted my shirt and blood was squirting out. I yelled out to Kenny, 'you've flaming well shot me'. He goes 'bullshit'. I said 'you've shot me'. We were in a bit of a panic for a while ... I was probably the one least panicking."





**MARCH 2001**

A 44-year-old woman with spinal injuries is treated by a RACQ CQ RESQ paramedic at the scene of a single vehicle accident on the Peak Downs Highway, 24km east of Nebo.

In 2001, the value of CQ RESQ services to the eight major Whitsunday Island resorts over five years topped the \$1 million mark. The actual costs of emergency missions to the resorts amounted to \$1.12 million to September 30, 2001.

**MAY 2001**

On a property 120km west of Mackay, a 24-year-old woman is attended to by RACQ CQ RESQ paramedics and emergency physician and placed on life support in the middle of a paddock. The woman suffered a serious blow to the head when she was dragged along the ground with her foot entangled in the stirrups by a startled horse.



In the full year of operating the new Bell 407 helicopter, the total operating expenses increased to about \$1.8 million. The advantages of the new aircraft included its capability to fly further, faster and ability to lift more weight than the Bell Longranger which was now being used as the backup aircraft. This was vital to the service's rapid delivery to patients of emergency physicians, nurses, paramedics and ambulance officers who provided clinical

life support, utilizing high level equipment specified for the purpose by Mackay Base Hospital at the request of RACQ CQ RESQ, purchased by CQ RESQ and installed aboard the helicopter. With such capacities and an emergency physician aboard, the service was capable of delivering many medical procedures on location which otherwise would have waited to be conducted at a hospital intensive care unit.

In 2002, the operating cost of providing the CQ RESQ service and its two aircraft was about \$21.73 per kilometre flown, a significant increase from the \$12.05 per kilometre flown in 1999.

**2001**



**JULY 2001**

RACQ director Kevin O'Shea, left, and CQ RESQ director Keith Callinan at the announcement of the RACQ three-year sponsorship, which enabled CQ RESQ to operate a new Bell 407 helicopter.

**JULY 2001**

July 15, 2001. Two men, brothers both aged 60, are reunited with their families after an extensive overnight sea search by RACQ CQ RESQ. The search for the men, both who had cardiac conditions, was hampered by thick fog and tides.

**SEPTEMBER 2001**

September 12, 2001. A 27-year-old Hamilton Island staff member suffers an acute illness and is placed aboard the RACQ CQ RESQ helicopter for treatment by the trauma team and flight to hospital.

**2002**

**2003**

**Reunion**

**MARCH 2003**

During the shooting of an Australian Story TV episode, 26-year-old former patient Gayle Shann inspected the RACQ CQ RESQ helicopter. This was the same helicopter which flew the first emergency physician who provided treatment to stabilize her on her property 180km west of Mackay on August 9, 2002, following the traumatic amputation of her right arm at the shoulder in a horrific farming accident with a post-hole digging machine.

**Remarkable Recovery**

**MARCH 2003**

Only three months after breaking his neck in a high-speed car accident at Nebo on March 20, 2003, 23-year-old Ross Butcher was able to begin pushing himself through grueling training to rejoin Souths Rugby League team. Lucky to have survived the crash, Ross was flown to hospital by RACQ CQ RESQ. He had a brace supporting his fractured vertebrae at the base of his neck and required 40 stitches to a deep gash on the top of his head. Ross later visited the hangar to thank pilot Mark Hamilton who flew him to hospital. Ross, seen here in hospital with his partner Jade, was pictured on the front of the 2003 RACQ CQ RESQ Community Report.







# DARKEST DAY IN *service's history*

## CQ RESQ History



// 2003

**October 17, 2003 is a tragic day in Mackay and RACQ CQ RESQ's history – the day the rescuers could not be saved. On that dark night, three RACQ CQ RESQ crew members were killed when the Bell 407 ditched into the sea between Cape Hillsborough and Little Green Island, off Shoal Point.**

It started off as a routine Friday night medivac mission, but ended tragically three kilometres east of Cape Hillsborough when the RACQ-CQ Rescue helicopter suddenly plunged into the sea. On board were the pilot Andy Carpenter, crewman Stewart Eva and paramedic Craig Liddington. All men were aged just 31. There were no survivors. The helicopter crew were en route to Hamilton Island for a medical transfer at 9.35pm. Fifteen minutes into the

flight, the Bell 407 (VH-HTD) went down at high impact without any warning or mayday calls received from the crew.

Pilot Andrew Carpenter was born in New Zealand where he began flying helicopters. He worked in Gladstone before joining the RACQ-CQ RESQ team in August 2003.

Crewman Stewart Eva had been with the team since 2002 after a 10-year stint in the Australian Army. He'd flown in Army Black Hawks in Australia as well as in East Timor and the Solomon Islands. He was also involved in special operations for the Olympic games and CHOGM.

Intensive care paramedic Craig Liddington, who began his career in Emerald, had been in Mackay for four years. All three were held in very high regard by their colleagues and the community.

Despite an extensive investigation, the cause of the crash has never been determined. The coroner found "these three young men died serving the public of Queensland in very responsible positions and had assisted many people in times of physical distress, bringing them safely to the medical facilities which would not have been immediately available to them but for the intervention of the community-based helicopter rescue service".

The darkest day in CQ Rescue's history resulted in state-wide changes that made aeromedical helicopters safer and the introduction of the safer twin-engine IFR machines. The enduring legacy of our lost rescue crewman has been to use this tragedy as a source of strength and respect and to always seek out the seed of triumph in the face of tragedy and adversity.

The tragic deaths of three crewmen were felt by everyone at both RACQ CQ RESQ and within the entire region. They were well-liked and respected by their colleagues and the community. While the service was stunned by their death, the work of operating a rescue helicopter service had to continue. The service was taken offline until October 31 while it was decided the original helicopter, then being used as a back-up machine, should be temporarily brought into full service. This involved the Bell Longranger 206 undergoing a \$60,000 refit. On November 10, 2003, the revamped 206 responded to its first medical emergency. Ironically, it was to Hamilton Island.

The public rallied to support their rescue helicopter service. Organisations and individuals came up with money-raising ideas. Some, like a trailer push through Mackay by local Army Reserve soldiers, raised thousands of dollars, while others, such as a Weetbix-eating competition at Whitsunday Anglican School, raised several hundred. But no matter the amount, every dollar was gratefully received.

## JULY 2003 Patient Story

Woman // 45 years old // Tractor Roll



RACQ CQ RESQ's rapid delivery of intensive capability was needed when a tractor rolled crushing a 45-year-old woman working on a Gargett property in July 2003. The woman sustained a fractured pelvis and internal haemorrhaging. RACQ CQ RESQ landed at the scene and paramedics stabilized her on-scene and then flew her to Mackay Base Hospital. Alice Jensen said her husband Dick's quick action to rescue her from beneath the rolled tractor saved her life. Alice and Dick are seen here at the Mackay Base Hospital just 11 days after the accident. "Just five minutes more and I probably would have died under the tyre," Mrs Jensen said.



**It had been an incredibly busy and tragic year for RACQ-CQ RESQ, having lost three colleagues in October 2003 when the Bell 407 helicopter crashed off Cape Hillsborough on a mission.**

A new French-designed Eurocopter 365 C1 Dauphin twin-engine helicopter (VH-PVK) had now become a familiar sight in skies over Central Queensland and the Whitsundays. The Dauphin arrived in Mackay in April 2004 to replace the Bell Longranger and was a much bigger machine than any of the previous RACQ CQ RESQ helicopters. There was enough room to carry two intensive care patients instead of one as well as an extra paramedic so both patients could be treated at the same time.

The helicopter, with all its life-saving equipment, oxygen and monitors, was described as a 'flying emergency room'.

These rotor blades could certainly tell a few tales! The Eurocopter Dauphin twin-engine, single pilot helicopter (VH-PVK), which was used by CQ Rescue from 2004 to 2010, had a very colourful history.

It was originally the private aircraft of Romanian president and Communist leader Nicolae Ceausescu prior to his execution in 1989, and was later used in Australia by the Victoria Police Air Wing, the police aviation support unit of the Victorian Police. The striking Dauphin helicopter even appeared in a couple of episodes of the Australian television series Blue Heelers!

#### **MARCH 2004**

The aircraft came to CQ Rescue in Mackay and was a huge bonus to the service with a greater range and up-to-date safety gear. It was also bigger with the capacity to carry more patients and crew members. The Dauphin served as CQ Rescue's primary aircraft until 2006 and then as a back-up aircraft until 2010 when it was replaced by second Bell 412.

2004

**In its 9th year of operation, there were 2300 missions completed by the crew, the majority of these tasks in areas west of Mackay, predominantly in the mining region.**

2005 2006

**In 2006, the organisation celebrated 10 years of service to the region and five years of sponsorship association with RACQ. In this decade, RACQ CQ Rescue overcame tragic adversity and had to quickly re-establish itself as a leading provider of aeromedical and search and rescue services in the country. It couldn't have been done without the strong support of the local community.**

#### **APRIL 23, 2006**

RACQ CQ Rescue flies its 3000th mission on April 23, 2007, an inter-hospital transfer from Proserpine.

#### **APRIL 14, 2006**

A permanent replacement Bell 412 (VH-NSV) arrived and was officially launched by the Hon. Pat Purcell, Minister for Emergency Services on June 19.

Having the use of a Bell 412 helicopter and the availability of medical personnel saw a huge increase in tasking for the rescue service. By year's end, tasking increased by 41% since the beginning of 2006 and the trend was set to increase through to 2008. The service now boasted two, twin-engine IFR helicopter with 98% availability, the highest in the state. RACQ CQ Rescue employs two full-time crewmen and two trainee rescue crewmen who, along with a pilot and medical crew, offered a professional extensive aero-medical and search and rescue service to the people of this region.



## FEBRUARY 27, 2007

Dr Vip Thiagarasah aboard RACQ CQ Rescue on a patient transfer from Moranbah hospital to Townsville.



## APRIL 20, 2007

The RACQ CQ Rescue crew were involved in a search for three missing yachtsmen near Airlie Beach.



## MAY 15, 2007

A patient with spinal injuries is transferred from Bowen north to Townsville for further specialist care.



## JULY 1, 2007

RACQ CQ Rescue crewman being winched to a boat at Bait Reef.



# 2007



## JULY 2006

G & S Engineering became the first Mackay-based company to become a major sponsor of RACQ CQ Rescue. Their Rescue 100 Club membership was following by the company pledging to match employee's payroll contributions. In July 2007 they increased their commitment to a full major sponsorship of the helicopter rescue service.

# 2007

Throughout January and February, the floods in the Whitsundays, Emerald, Rockhampton and Mackay kept the crew busy. Helping the Whitsundays by transferring SES personnel to areas in need and ensuring a number of pregnant women reached hospital in time to give birth. In Emerald, the helicopter visited about 18 different properties ensuring residents had sufficient food and water and medical supplies to see them through until flood waters subsided. From Emerald, the RACQ CQ Rescue crew were deployed to Rockhampton and then to Mackay as floodwaters devastated the region.

## Patient Story APRIL 2, 2008

Rosey Cameron // 5 years old // Accident

RACQ CQ Rescue came to the aid of five-year-old Rosey Cameron when she was hit by a van on the Peak Downs Highway at Eton on April 2, 2008. She was treated at the scene of the accident and flown in the Bell 412 rescue helicopter to Townsville. In the accident, Rosey sustained horrific injuries



and her prognosis was not good with the crew later admitting Rosey's life was hanging by a very thin thread. On her sixth birthday, Rosey came to the hangar to celebrate and share cake with the crew involved in her rescue. Rosey Cameron was the face of the 2015 RACQ CQ Rescue Annual Appeal, seven years after her horror accident. Hers is a tale of incredible survival – today Rosie is in high school and is an Australian and world karate champion for her age level.

# 2008

## Patient Story APRIL 12, 2008

Chris Galow // Boating Accident

Chris Galow and his four mates were also fortunate to have RACQ CQ Rescue available in their time of need, having set off on a two-day fishing trip to Cole Reef on Saturday, April 12, aboard the catamaran Alley Cat. The men had landed several sharks just prior to their vessel capsizing. Fortunately, the men were able to activate their EPIRB which triggered emergency services into action. RACQ CQ Rescue was launched at dusk and after a two-hour search, located the stricken crew clinging to an esky in the vast open ocean. The helicopter crew passed on the co-ordinates to a fisher trawler who in turn transferred the men to the Volunteer Marine Rescue vessel. Chris and his mates were returned to the safety of Mackay Harbour about 2.30am on Sunday, April 13. It was an incredible story of survival and another positive outcome for RACQ CQ Rescue.

## Patient Story MAY, 2008

Allyson Dalton & Richard Neely // Missing at Sea

Some tasks prove more memorable for the crew than others. The RACQ CQ Rescue helicopter took part in a major search and rescue event in May 2008 when two tourists were separated from their dive boat near Bait Reef in the Whitsundays. American Allyson Dalton and UK citizen Richard Neely were missing at sea for 19 hours when they were spotted by searchers. RACQ CQ Rescue was the first helicopter on scene and the on-board crew were amazed the couple were located alive and reasonably well after such a long period of time in the water.





# RESCUE CREW

## honoured

The region was proud to see the rescue helicopter crew honoured for their heroic involvement in Australia's largest civilian maritime helicopter rescue operation. During the two-and-a-half hour mission, 37 people were winched from Romance, an 18-metre ketch which broke its moorings and smashed into rocks at Cape Cover, off Hook Island about 3am on February 12, 2008. The twin-masted vessel was wedged on jagged rock, listing at a 45-degree angle and the weather was extreme with wind gusts up to 80 kilometres per hour and waves up to three metres high crashing against the yacht. Whitsunday Water Police Senior Constable Brett Norris, who was among the first on the scene, swam 500 metres through the three-metre swell to reach distressed passengers on the vessel. His heroic act was rewarded with a silver bravery medal from the Royal Humane Society of Australasia. The RACQ CQ Rescue crew arrived on scene soon after daybreak and worked together to winch the passengers two-by-two from the yacht. The treacherous weather conditions, coupled with the fact the vessel could sink or break free from the rocks at any time, made the marathon rescue mission even more dangerous. Once six passengers were on board, RACQ CQ Rescue ferried them to Hayman Island before returning to rescue the next group. At the time, the crew had no idea they were entering the record books for being involved in Australia's largest civilian rescue off a single vessel. RACQ CQ Rescue chief executive officer and crewman Phillip Dowler, pilot Heath Scanlon and air crewman Dan Hoare were honoured with bronze bravery awards at the ceremony in Brisbane in April 2009.



2008

2009

### APRIL 4, 2009 Patient Story

Tracee Fontelera // Missing at Sea

On April 4, my partner Karl, our dog Sider and I were on our way home from a great day fishing when our boat started taking on water. Karl called Volunteer Marine Rescue, but within five minutes the boat had flipped over. Even with a life jacket on I was freaking out. Karl stayed calm and retrieved the EPIRB from under the boat and activated it. The RACQ CQ Rescue chopper was the best sight I've ever seen. The crew winched me up first, followed by Karl and Sider. We cannot thank CQ Rescue enough – those guys did a fantastic job. To this day, hearing them in the air is music to my ears. Even Sider looks up at the helicopter! Thanks ever so much.

### Award

RACQ CQ Rescue chairman of the board Peter Bastable is awarded the Order of Australia medal for services to emergency medicine and RACQ CQ Rescue.

### Retirement

VH-PVK is retired this year and a second Bell 412 helicopter (VH-BZH) enters the service.



### Patient Story MARCH 10, 2009

James Palmer // 20 years old // Missing at Sea

"Hi, my name is James." The RACQ CQ Rescue crew were very relieved to hear these words on March 10, 2009, as they rescued 20-year-old James Palmer who had miraculously found an EPIRB bobbing amongst debris after being lost at sea for more than 24 hours. James spent an entire day and night in waters more than 300km from the Queensland coast after his fishing trawler and then his life raft capsized in rough seas associated with Cyclone Hamish. His amazing survival story proved there was always hope and attracted national and international media attention. It's moments like this which make the job worthwhile for the RACQ CQ Rescue, but it was certainly very tough for all involved when all hope was lost for James's missing uncle and their colleague.



**RACQ CQ Rescues flies its 4000th mission on January 15, 2010. The operational budget hits an all-time high of \$4.9 million with \$2 million provided by the State Government and the remaining raised through sponsorships including naming rights partners RACQ, business donations, community donations and fundraising events.**

One of the main incredible outcomes in RACQ CQ Rescue's history includes the first-ever birth aboard a rescue helicopter in Queensland, when a newlywed on Hamilton Island went into labour at just 26 weeks gestation. The baby girl was delivered by paramedic Mel Bernas in the RACQ CQ Rescue helicopter over Mt Blackwood at 7.09am on September 4, 2010. Mum and baby were later transferred to Townsville for specialist care but undoubtedly, circumstances may have produced a very different outcome without the availability of the rescue helicopter.



**RACQ CQ Rescue celebrated its 15th anniversary in 2011. It was hard to believe how far the service had come and how many people it had helped since its first life-saving mission to Hayman Island in 1996. During that time the service completed almost 5000 missions with, no doubt, the thumping of its rotors a welcome sound to the many who are injured in car crashes, lost in the bush, in danger at sea and those who are seriously ill.**

When disaster struck much of Queensland in early 2011, RACQ CQ Rescue was quick to extend a helping hand to those impacted by Cyclone Yasi and Brisbane's devastating floods. While some of our crews delivered supplies to isolated areas and responded to medical emergencies in Brisbane and Townsville, other RACQ CQ Rescue crew members stayed at home to ensure those living in Mackay, Whitsunday and Isaac area retained access to a rescue helicopter. In January VH-NSV is flown south and flies 10 life-saving tasks in seven days. In February, RACQ CQ Rescue provides disaster assistance to Townsville in the wake of Tropical Cyclone Yasi where VH-NSV flies 9 tasks in 4 days. In May, VH-NSV is relocated to Brisbane again to undergo its 3000 hour service. A replacement Bell 412 helicopter (VH-EPK) arrives in Mackay, allowing RACQ CQ Rescue to continue operating as a two-aircraft base.



**2010**

**2011**

**DANNIELLE // PREMMIE BIRTH**

Mackay mum Danielle contract pneumonia when she was pregnant and gave birth to Emily at only 29 weeks gestation. Danielle and her daughter were transferred by RACQ CQ Rescue back to Mackay Base Hospital from Townsville when the baby was only three weeks only, which was still eight weeks prior to her due date. She stayed in hospital in Mackay for a further six weeks.



**MARKWELL STATION // MOTORBIKE ACCIDENT**

A 20-year-old Mackay man would have endured a very long and painful journey by road if not for RACQ CQ Rescue after a horror motorbike accident. He severely injured both his hands in the accident and RACQ CQ Rescue landed at Markwell Station to administer treatment and pain relief before transporting him back to Mackay Base Hospital. He went on to undergo at least six operations on his hand.



**PADDY TRUMBULL // SHARK ATTACK**

Sydney tourist Paddy Trumbull and her husband had been enjoying the Great Barrier Reef when a two-metre bull shark bit into her backside while she was swimming near Dent Island in February 2010. She was immediately transferred by boat to Hamilton Island where she was met by the RACQ CQ Rescue flying trauma team. The medical crew on board the helicopter administered pain relief and she was transferred to Mackay Base Hospital for further treatment of her wounds. Paddy lost substantial amounts of blood and flesh and required extensive skin grafts.



**Task Profile SEPTEMBER 2011**

**53 year old // Helicopter Crash**

In September 2011 RACQ CQ rescue winched the only survivor of a helicopter crash at Shoalwater Bay Military Training Area, near Rockhampton, to safety. The pilot and other passenger on board the aircraft were killed when the helicopter plunged into the ground and landed upside down. The 53-year-old male survivor was from Canberra and suffered serious injuries including a crushed right shoulder. The RACQ CQ Rescue crew said the man had been incredibly lucky to escape by cutting himself free with a knife considering the horrendous wreckage.



**Patient Story** **FEBRUARY 14, 2011**  
**Warrick Smyth // Cerito Station // Quad Bike Accident**

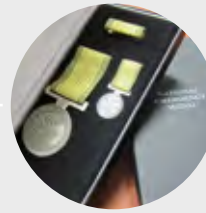
On February 14, 2011, I was fencing on a four-wheeler at my property near Collinsville when my life as I knew it, changed instantly. As a result of the wet weather and remnants of Cyclone Yasi, a tree had fallen across a road on the property. The four-wheeler I was riding struck the tree and I sustained spinal injuries in the accident. I was in a great deal of pain as I lay on the ground waiting for help to arrive. The ground was so wet the only way out was in the rescue helicopter. I had such a feeling of relief – I just wanted to get to the hospital. I'd hate to think what would have happened if not for RACQ CQ Rescue. I am extremely grateful to them.



**Patient Story** **JULY 12, 2011**  
**Sam, Jane & Alexander Barton // Huntley Station // Paediatric**

In 2011 my baby Alexander became quite ill after a weekend trip to Sydney. After several days of becoming gradually worse, the doctor advised us he would have to be flown out and admitted to the paediatric unit at Mackay Base Hospital. The RACQ CQ Rescue helicopter was our emergency transport from Clermont to Mackay on July 12. The team aboard the chopper was compassionate in both the care of the baby and myself and I am truly indebted to these people who went out of their way to make us at ease during this highly stressful time. I would like to extend a very big thank you to the CQ Rescue team and their ongoing efforts to ensure quality care for all their patients. It is comforting to know that even in rural and remote areas we are able to receive such high quality critical care assistance.

In July 2012, RACQ CQ Rescue reached another milestone with completion of the 5000th mission. Given increased demand and increased expenses, the cost per flying hour to operate the service's helicopters to \$6850.



**CREW MEMBERS**  
*to emergency medals*

In March 2012, six crew members are awarded National Emergency medals for their work during the natural disaster stricken start to 2011. The recognition centre around the crew's deployments to Brisbane and Townsville to assist with flooding and post-cyclone Yasi medical tasks.

Crew members recognised were

- **Justin Craib** (rescue crewman)
- **David Jibson** (base engineer)
- **Brendon Barron** (pilot)
- **Darren Bobin** (air crewman)
- **David Williams** (air crewman)
- **Alex Crawford** (pilot)

Past crew members Heath Scanlon and Phillip Dowler were also recognised with national Emergency Medals. It was a very proud day for RACQ CQ Rescue's history and special mention to intensive care paramedic Mel Bernas from Queensland Ambulance Service who also played a vital role during these deployments.

**2011**

**2012**



**Patient Story** **OCTOBER 7, 2011**  
**Butcher Family // Boating Accident**

The Butcher family was involved in a freak boating accident on October 7, 2011 which nearly claimed the lives of three family members. "My husband Mick and I and our two children, 5 year old Lilly and 3 year old Leeroy, were heading out on a boat trip in the Whitsundays when we felt a sudden great surge at the back of the boat and I immediately saw my husband being thrown overboard. Anticipating the boat would capsize, I grabbed Lilly who was sitting beside me and an instant later we were thrown into the water.

"It felt like being in a washing machine as the boat drove around us several times. When it miraculously stopped circling out of control we realised that Leeroy was luckily still in the boat, and as we all struggled back on board we discovered Lilly had suffered serious injuries to her leg. The prop of the boat had carved the top of her thigh. We knew she needed urgent medical attention. We

quickly called 000 and were directed to drive the tinny straight into Hamilton Island marina where medical officers were waiting. Within 20 minutes Lilly and I were safely on board the RACQ CQ Rescue helicopter, being rushed to Mackay Base Hospital. Two hours later, Lilly underwent surgery to repair the damage to her leg. The whole ordeal was an absolute nightmare, something you see on a TV documentary and think 'I hope that doesn't ever happen to me'.

**"If it was not for the RACQ CQ Rescue chopper our daughter would not have received the medical attention she did so quickly and her recovery and final outcome would not be the success it is today."**

**- Melinda Butcher**





# A TIMELINE *of bravery*

2014

The RACQ CQ Rescue crew were instrumental in the survival of 26-year-old Chinese tourist Peng Linling when she was pulled unconscious from the water while diving near Hayman Island. The trauma team on board the rescue helicopter treated her on scene before transferring her to Mackay Base Hospital where she remained in a coma for several days. Ms Peng was on her honeymoon in the Whitsundays when the incident occurred and later met with the helicopter crew to show her appreciation.

**AUGUST 10, 2012** **Damien Summers**

**8.30am** - RACQ CQ Rescue pilot on duty Rick Kendall receives a tasking via phone call advising urgent helicopter assistance is required at the scene of a head-on crash on the Bruce Highway at Yalbaroo, 70km north west of Mackay.

**8.53am** - The RACQ CQ Rescue helicopter departs with a team of four aboard including pilot Rick, air crewman Darren Bobin, doctor Siva Sivanujan and intensive care paramedic Mel Bernas.

**9.20am** - RACQ CQ Rescue lands at the scene and the medical crew begin work on critically injured two-year-old Damien Summers, who was travelling in the car with his father, mother, brother and sister. He is the only survivor.

**9.57am** - After an anxious 20 minutes of work to stabilise Damien, he is carefully loaded on board the rescue helicopter for a quick flight back to Mackay Base Hospital. The crew take off with their precious cargo only clinging to life.

**10.18am** - Damien arrives at Mackay Base Hospital, the first of four hospitals he is treated at over the next six months and his journey to recovery begins. His only surviving family member, 18 year old brother Matthew, is by his side for the long journey ahead. Damien suffered serious head and neck injuries. A halo brace was used to keep his broken neck still while it healed and a shunt was put in to drain excess fluid from around his brain.



SEPTEMBER 2014  
RACQ CQ Rescue reached the milestone of 6000 missions.



2013

2014



**Patient Story** **DECEMBER 24, 2013**

Nicholas Ditchburn // 10 year old // Chemical Burn

## CREW SHARES *shark tales*

When rescue crewman Jarrod Holmes was winched down from the helicopter into the ocean on Christmas Eve, 2013, the last thing he expected to encounter was sharks circling a fishing trawler he was attempting to board. RACQ CQ Rescue had been tasked to Wackett Reef, 175km north east Mackay, to help 10-year-old Nicholas Ditchburn. Nicholas had been working with his dad on a fishing trawler during the school holidays when hydrogen peroxide was accidentally splashed in his eyes causing a serious chemical burn.

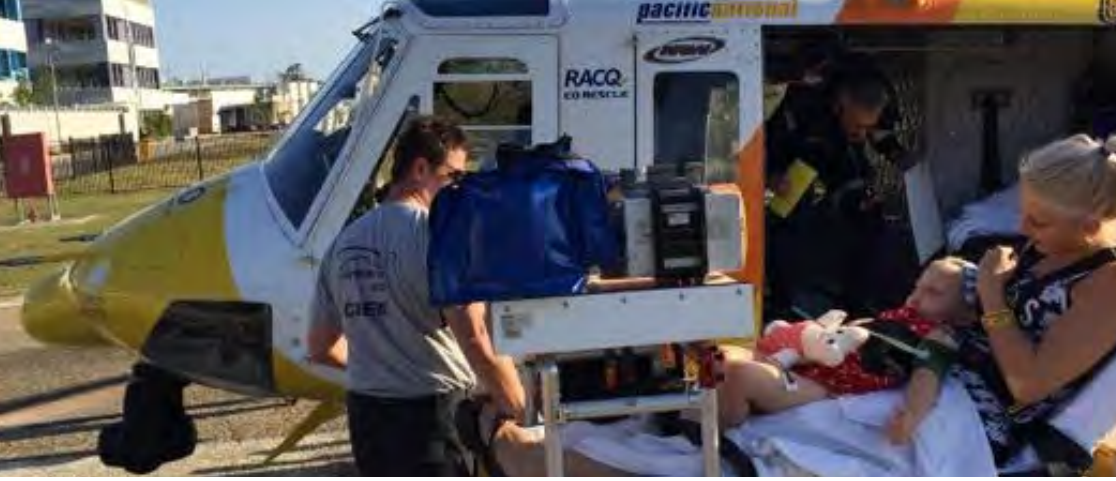
With the boat so far from shore, RACQ CQ Rescue was activated to bring Nicholas to

hospital and into the medical care he needed urgently. The rescue crewman was winched into the water with sharks circling the vessel and the skipper casually suggesting "Don't worry mate, we normally have about 30 swimming around - they're only sleep sharks and don't have teeth!"

"His eye has healed nicely and luckily he has retained perfect eyesight - I am sure this is due to how quickly the helicopter crew got him to hospital. We are sincerely grateful to all at RACQ CQ Rescue for their care and concern for Nicholas throughout the whole experience." Shark repellent devices have now been added to the rescue crewman's kit.







**Patient Story 2015**

Ruby Osborn // 4 years old // Paediatric



Ruby Osborn, 4, was a very sick little girl when she was airlifted from Moranbah to Mackay Base Hospital by RACQ CQ Rescue. Her mother, Emma Osborne recounts that terrifying day. "When a doctor looks you in the eyes and tells you they need to urgently airlift your little princess to hospital more than two hours away you go into shock. It took me only seconds to comprehend just how sick our little girl was and it was one of the most frightening experiences of my life. Our flight seemed like just minutes and I only just had time to smile at our flying saviours and mouth the words 'thank you'. The flight was certainly the fastest part of little Ruby's illness over the next five days but knowing it was one of the most important makes my heart smile both for the people who helped us that very scary day and for those who continually help keep these saviours in the air. Thank you to the RACQ CQ Rescue team and also to everyone who supports these amazing people and the job they do."

**"Ruby was lying in bed unable to talk, had a temperature through the roof and was shaking and vomiting. She needed specialist attention and a big hospital now."**



**2015**



**OCTOBER 2015 Patient Story**

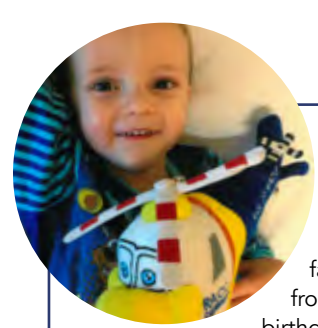
**THEY'VE GIVEN ME**  
*my family back*

**"No words can express my gratitude. RACQ CQ Rescue has truly given me so much. I do consider that I've won the lottery three times as no amount of money could ever replace the lives of your family."**

**Like any doting grandmother, wife and daughter, Janice Trenow absolutely cherishes the lives of each of her family members. But the Bowen family has more reasons than most to be grateful.**

Three members of Janice's family including her husband Mark, grandson William and her father Colin Smith have been airlifted by RACQ CQ Rescue.





**Patient Story** JULY 2016

Ethan Watson // 2 years old // ATV Accident

Life changed in an instant for the Watson family in July 2016 whilst they were visiting from Brisbane to celebrate dad Shane's 40th birthday at his parent's farm at Koumala. That horrific day, two-year-old Ethan fell from an ATV on the farm and suffered critical head injuries.

His father and the local ambulance officer administered first aid but Ethan was in an altered state of consciousness when the RACQ CQ Rescue helicopter landed. He was transferred to the Mackay Base Hospital in a serious condition accompanied by his pregnant mother Renee. Overnight, the toddler was transferred to the intensive care unit of Lady Cilento Children's Hospital in Brisbane, his condition now critical.

**"The medical attention the RACQ CQ Rescue team, Queensland Ambulance Service and the 000 operator gave us at the farm we are sure saved Ethan's life."**

"He was in hospital for eight weeks and for a time we were unsure of his long-term prognosis and noticed severe weakness in his left side," Renee said.

"Several nerves on the right side of his brain had been severed so he had to re-learn to use the left side of his brain to move the left side of his body. The doctors told us that given the extent of his injuries, if he had been any older his head would have needed plating. Given his age and the fact that he was premature when born, his head was still very soft and was able to expand as needed with the swelling from his injuries."

Renee and Shane spent the two long months in hospital working on Ethan's rehabilitation, rubbing his little legs and trying to improve his hand and eye co-ordination.

## 2016

In October 2015 Colin was transferred by RACQ CQ Rescue to Mackay Base Hospital with severe internal bleeding, the result of an existing medical condition. Earlier that year, one-year-old William Trenow, Janice's first grandchild, had been aboard the same helicopter being transferred to Mackay Base Hospital. The very sick little boy was again transferred to Townsville General Hospital aboard RACQ CQ Rescue with a life-threatening illness.

The Trenow family was already familiar with the life-saving work of the Mackay-based rescue helicopter as Janice's husband Mark had been airlifted 10 years previously after a serious quad bike accident.

In July 2005, Mark rolled a quad bike several times at a property near Gumlu 70km west of Bowen. He sustained seven fractures of the skull and had a 'bubble' on the brain. Mark was not expected to recover. Janice even had to sign organ donor forms as her husband was transferred to Townsville Hospital in the helicopter to start a very long recovery process.

"The RACQ CQ Rescue helicopter and crew are really our guardian angels," Janice said when she and her family visited the hangar recently.

"We are forever grateful to RACQ CQ Rescue and care given to our three family members - Mark, William and Colin. You hope you never have to use their services, but thank goodness they are there. Their prompt, dedicated and professional care helps save lives - I know first hand how vital their service is."

"Without them, my family wouldn't be able to make the memories we are."



**Patient Story** NOVEMBER 2016

Peter Mackenzie // 56 years old // Mine Accident

Peter Mackenzie, 56, of Townsville, is lucky to have survived a horror accident when the dump truck he was driving rolled at remote Wirralie Gold Mine, 26km north of Mt Coolon on November 15, 2016. His injuries were both extensive and life-threatening with severe chest trauma including broken ribs and a collapsed lung, a fractured pelvis and broken left shoulder as well as two fractured bones in his left leg. RACQ CQ Rescue flew nearly 300km and landed at the remote mine site to stabilise and transport him. He was heavily sedated for five days after the accident and spent three weeks in Mackay Base Hospital.

**"If it wasn't for the RACQ CQ Rescue helicopter and the paramedics on board, dad never would have made it to hospital in time"**

"While he was responsive on the flight to Mackay hospital, about 400km away, his condition was very serious and his condition deteriorated significantly - he was really lucky he made it out of the accident alive.

"Dad is a pretty determined guy and he's still pushing on in his recovery. He has now started physio and is slowly gaining movement back in his arm. After all of his bones healed and he came out of intensive care he needed a shoulder reconstruction. He has a lot of nerve damage in the left arm so there's going to be another operation and a long road to recovery but he will get there. He is alive so that is the main thing.

**"My family is forever grateful for the work RACQ CQ Rescue do. Sometimes 'thank you' just doesn't seem enough. You really are lifesavers."**

- Jane Mackenzi, Townsville.

Rob Bredl // Croc Attack



# BAREFOOT BUSHMAN

*bitten by big croc*

Barefoot Bushman and experienced croc wrangler Rob Bredl was feeding a 4.5 metre crocodile at his wildlife farm, near Bloomsbury, on September 22 2016 the huge animal attacked, grabbed his left hand and rolled him towards the water's edge. Fortunately, the 66-year-old managed to free his hand from the croc's jaws before he was fully submerged. RACQ CQ Rescue, with a paramedic and doctor aboard, was tasked about 1pm to retrieve the severely injured bushman and landed at the Lakeside Air Park, 90km north of Mackay. An RACQ CQ Rescue crewman said although Mr Bredl was very fortunate to have been able to free his hand from the crocodile's jaws, he had suffered very serious injuries to his hand including lacerations and broken bones as well as an injury to his thigh.

The crew aboard the rescue helicopter commented at the time that Mr Bredl, who is nationally-renowned for his exploits in the bush and for wrangling wildlife including crocodiles, could possibly lose some of his fingers or part of his hand.

He was in a stable condition when he arrived at Mackay Base Hospital about 2.30pm. Mr Bredl was later airlifted to Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital amid concerns he might lose part of his hand.

Aylah Camilleri // 2 years old // Car Accident

# LITTLE FIGHTER'S

*second chance at life*

Mirani mum Anita Camilleri realises how precious life is after she and her two-year-old daughter Aylah were seriously injured in a horrific head-on smash on the Mackay-Eungella Road. Both mother and daughter were transported by ambulance to Mackay Base Hospital, Aylah in a critical condition with a very serious head injury and Anita with serious pelvic and abdominal injuries. A paediatrician diagnosed Aylah with a serious bleed on the back of her brain and determined that she required urgent specialist care in Townsville. "I remember it all just happened so fast. We were told she needed to go to Townsville and in what seemed like an instant the CQ Rescue helicopter was there," she said.

Little Aylah was sedated for the flight and accompanied to Townsville by her grandmother while her father Luke drove north to be by his critically ill daughter's bedside. RACQ CQ Rescue departed the Mackay Base Hospital at 1.45pm with a doctor and Critical Care Paramedic on board and arrived in Townsville just after 3pm.

"We are just so incredibly grateful for all the help we received," she said. "It was such a terrifying time but we knew Aylah was in great hands and getting the best possible care on board the helicopter at that critical time on her way to Townsville."

2015

2016

2017



Zoey Baillie // 3 years old // Freak Accident

# FIGHT FOR LIFE

*after freak swing accident*

**Little Zoey Baillie's recovery after a horrific backyard playground accident is nothing short of miraculous.**

Zoey was seriously injured in a freak accident involving a tree swing on August 25 2016 and was flown by RACQ CQ Rescue to Mackay Base Hospital. Only hours later about 3am, RACQ CQ Rescue again flew the three-year-old to Townsville hospital in a critical condition.

Zoey was playing on the swing with her mother Shanah Grandison at a property in Koumala, south of Mackay when her mum briefly turned away to feed some animals. When she turned back, she found her daughter unconscious, with the rope from the

swing wrapped around her neck. Ms Grandison immediately began resuscitation until ambulance officers arrived and the little girl was then transferred to a nearby sporting field to be airlifted to hospital by RACQ CQ Rescue.

Little Zoey's life was hanging in the balance and many, including the RACQ CQ Rescue crew, feared the worst. Two days after the ordeal, Zoey woke up in hospital asking for her sister, much to the delight of her incredibly relieved family. There is no doubt that Zoey's mum's quick thinking and actions helped save her life as did her quick extraction and transfer to urgent medical attention in hospital.





Teleah Szepanowski // 23 years old // Locomotive Accident

# TELEAH'S COURAGE

*inspires crew*



**Life changed dramatically in a matter of seconds for Teleah Szepanowski on May 27, 2017.**

**The 23-year-old locomotive driver was working with a crew to repair a damaged railway line after Cyclone Debbie and lay new ballast on a section of track at Mt Christian, about 70kms south of Mackay, when she was run over by a fully loaded ballast wagon.**

RACQ CQ Rescue landed on the Bruce Highway south of Koumala after flying direct to the scene of the accident on the railway line running parallel to the Bruce Highway just after 11.30am. The Bruce Highway was closed by police for about an hour to allow the chopper, with a Critical Care Paramedic (CCP) and doctor aboard, to land within 30 metres of the rail line and the accident scene.

Teleah had broken her femur, tibia and fibula, with the lower leg bones being compound fractures. She had cracked a bone in her ankle and heel and her foot had been degloved, meaning an extensive section of the skin had been completely torn off the underlying tissue. She had damaged muscles and veins and was missing kilos of skin, tissue and fat.

Her first surgery was the same afternoon of the accident to insert rods in her femur and tibia and insert screws and plates.

"I feel that the RACQ CQ Rescue helicopter and crew do a fantastic job in this region and that they don't receive enough recognition or praise," Teleah said.

"If the helicopter wasn't available for me that day, there would have been a greater chance that I would have lost my leg. I have since been told by the treating doctor in emergency that they were extremely worried that I was going to either lose my leg and/or have kidney failure," she said.

"I never thought I would need the RACQ CQ Rescue helicopter but I am really so thankful and very, very grateful that they were available that day to help me."



Darren Parkins // Boating Accident

Darren Parkins still considers himself lucky even after one of the most tragic and horrific events of his life. Darren was forced to hold on to the body of his father and cling to the nose of an overturned boat for close to two hours waiting to be found after their boat sank more than 40km offshore on October 26, 2017.

Darren and his father William Parkins, 73, had set off from Mackay Harbour earlier that morning and spent the day fishing in their 4.5 metre open-style console boat near Penrith Island. About 5pm on the return trip home, the pair noticed the boat was taking on water.

After Darren retrieved and activated the EPIRB from the sunken vessel, he turned his attention back to his father – only to find him floating face down in the water. He had suffered a fatal heart attack.

After two hours in the water, Darren was winched up into the rescue helicopter and flown back to the RACQ CQ Rescue hangar at Mackay Airport suffering exhaustion, exposure, cuts and bruises and in severe pain. Volunteer Marine Rescue and water police headed to the scene of the sinking vessel to retrieve William's body.

"I'm just grateful we had an EPIRB as I wouldn't be here today without CQ Rescue. If it wasn't for them our family would be mourning two lives instead of one."



### NOVEMBER 30, 2017

RACQ CQ Rescue evacuated 10 people from Eungella as a large bushfire front threatened the town and closed the Range Road. The Mackay-based rescue helicopter, with a Critical Care Paramedic and rescue crew officer on board, departed base at 5pm and flew 80km to the mountain-top village. They were directed by Queensland Police to fly to a meeting point two kilometres west of the township on Bee Creek Road. The helicopter then landed in a grassy clearing on the northside of the road just 20 minutes after take off. The evacuees were assisted by police officers at the scene and first on board the aircraft was a man and three young boys, one with a medical history of asthma. They were secured and quickly flown to Finch Hatton, disembarking at the showgrounds just eight minutes later. The helicopter then returned to the Bee Creek Road scene to transport another six people, including an adult, an infant, two teens and two young girls.

MEET: **Ben McCauley**

As a creaman on board RACQ CQ Rescue, Ben has attended three shark attacks in the Whitsundays, assisted with evacuation efforts at Eungella during bushfires, winched unwell tourists from cruise ships, rescued fishermen stranded on islands in bad weather, retrieved sick sailors from bulk carriers and transferred patients with life-threatening illnesses and injuries to urgent medical care. In December 2018, he was named by The Courier Mail as of the Most Inspirational People in Queensland.

### 2017



### SEPTEMBER 19, 2018

47-year-old Tasmanian tourist Justine Barwick is mauled by a shark while swimming in Cid Harbour, in the Whitsundays and in a lengthy, challenging mission, RACQ CQ Rescue rescue crewman Ben McCauley swims to a tender to secure her so she can be winched into the aircraft and flown to Mackay Base Hospital, effectively saving her life. Just 24 hours later 12-year-old Hannah Papps is bitten by a shark and suffers a partial amputation. Again the RACQ CQ Rescue team responds and airlifts her to hospital. On November 5 Whitsundays with two colleagues, was the third person to be attacked by a shark at Cid Harbour in just six weeks. He was attacked about 5:30pm while swimming at Cid Harbour. The doctor was also airlifted to Mackay Base Hospital by RACQ CQ Rescue with critical leg and wrist injuries and was rushed to surgery, but died a short time later.

### 2018

### OCTOBER 2, 2018

## A SON'S Legacy



Mackay man Jake Gibbons, 31, was critically injured in a tragic abseiling accident at a popular, local landmark on October 2.

Jake and his friend had trekked up The Leap, about 2.30pm, and taken abseiling equipment with them, but he fell about 10 to 15 metres over a cliff and hit his head causing massive injuries.

RACQ CQ Rescue was tasked to assist and lowered a Rescue Crew Officer and Critical Care Paramedic to the scene, a short five-minute flight from base at Mackay. Due to the rugged terrain, Jake had to be stretchered about 100 metres to the top of the mountain by emergency personnel, while the helicopter circled overhead. Once stabilised enough for transport, Jake

was winched up into the helicopter where he was quickly transferred to Mackay Base Hospital.

Jake arrived at Mackay Base Hospital at 6.50pm and was later transferred to Townsville hospital. He died two days later surrounded by his family.

"We think having the rescue chopper and the very skilled crew available that day gave Jake the very best chance of survival," his father Kevin said.

Jake's organs were donated to five people. "It makes us incredibly proud that Jake donated his organs to five men who will hopefully get to live long and healthy lives, see their children grow up or even have families of their own thanks to our son," Kevin said.



Patient Story OCTOBER 2018

Levi Verwoest // 29 years old // Vessel Capsize

# LONE SAILOR *lost at sea*

On November 22, 2018, RACQ CQ Rescue winched a lone sailor from the hull of his overturned catamaran about 7.45am after an emergency beacon had been activated off the coast. A 29-year-old American tourist, Levi Verwoest, had been sailing his 23-foot catamaran 'Isis' along the Queensland coast when he noticed the boat slowing and taking on water at sunset, about 40km south of Mackay between Cape Palmerston and Knight Island. Within minutes, the vessel capsized and the sailor was forced to spend a very long, cold and lonely night sitting on the hull of his overturned vessel as it drifted on the tide. At first light, he was finally able to activate his Personal Locator Beacon (PLB) which meant RACQ CQ Rescue was tasked to the search and was able to quickly hone in on the distress signal and find the vessel just 12 minutes after take off.



Patient Story OCTOBER 2018

# FINCH HATTON *fall*

It took 30 emergency services personnel more than three hours to rescue an injured teenager, carrying her on a stretcher along a narrow, rocky and uneven walking track at Finch Hatton Gorge on October 21 so she could be airlifted to hospital. The 17-year-old Mt Pleasant girl had been climbing on rocks at the top of the Wheel of Fire waterfall when she slipped and fell more than 15 metres. RACQ CQ Rescue winched a paramedic and rescue crewman down 40 metres through the rainforest canopy and on to rocks at Finch Hatton Gorge, about 70km west of Mackay, to treat the seriously injured teenager. The Mackay-based rescue chopper airlifted the teenager to hospital with neck and wrist injuries and serious cuts and lacerations to her head and body.



2019

# STOCKMAN CRUSHED *by horse*

MARCH 2019 Patient Story

Peter Bella // 53 years old // Work Accident



**A tragic accident that happened five minutes before stockman Peter Bella would have knocked off after a day of mustering means he has a long, hard road ahead to recovery after sustaining serious internal and pelvic injuries. The 53-year-old was crushed when his horse tripped and rolled on top of him while he was helping on his brother's Coppabella farm, 150km south-west of Mackay.**

RACQ CQ Rescue was tasked about 3.30pm and flew direct to the scene in 40 minutes to find the stockman still lying in the paddock about 1.5 hours after he was injured.

RACQ CQ Rescue landed in long grass in the middle of the paddock, close to the scene and administered pain relief and first aid immediately. Within an hour, Peter was loaded into the helicopter and transferred to Mackay Base Hospital in a stable condition.

His brother, Councillor Martin Bella, said his brother was still in a "very bad way" still weeks after the fall but was looking forward to returning home after a long stay in hospital in Brisbane.

"It will be a very long hard road to full recovery if ever for Peter," he said.

"He's a really tough bugger but he's been through a hell of a time. Unfortunately on the land, it's not a case of if but when you need a lifesaving service like this."

OCTOBER 29, 2019

# ENGLISH TOURIST

*shark attack*



An English tourist had his foot bitten off by a shark and another has suffered serious lacerations to his lower leg while swimming in the Whitsundays on October 29. Danny Maggs, 22, from Plymouth, and Alistair Raddon, 28, were attacked by a shark while swimming at a popular snorkelling spot in the Whitsunday Islands, during a day trip on a tourist boat. Maggs received four deep lacerations to his right calf. Raddon, from Southampton, had his right foot amputated.

The two men were transported from Hook Passage back to the mainland by boat, a 20-minute trip, and taken by ambulance from Abell Point Marina to the sports oval to meet RACQ CQ Rescue with a doctor, Critical Care Paramedic and rescue crewman on board.

The helicopter had to be reconfigured for a dual stretcher transfer and was on the ground in Airlie Beach for about 40 minutes while the patients were transported to the oval from the marina and prepared for the flight to hospital.



**Patient Story** AUGUST 2019

Trent Atto // 17 years old // Car Accident

# TRENT DEFIES

*the odds*

Trent Atto is called the “miracle boy” after defying the odds to fight back from a traumatic brain injury suffered in a horror accident.

The 17-year-old was flown to Townsville Hospital by RACQ CQ Rescue from Moranbah after being squashed between two cars in August 2019. The Mackay-based rescue helicopter flew more than 800km over six hours to transfer the critically ill teen to hospital.

His initial prognosis was grim with a minimal life expectancy but Trent refused to give in and amazed his family and the hospital’s medical staff with his steady recovery.

After two weeks in intensive care he moved to a surgical ward and then the hospital’s acute rehabilitation unit receiving daily physiotherapy, speech therapy and occupational therapy sessions. “This amazing machine has saved so many lives,” his father Ray Atto said of the region’s rescue helicopter.

2019

SEPTEMBER 18, 2019

# DREAM HOLIDAY

*becomes nightmare*



**It was a meant to be a dream holiday; camping, kayaking and snorkelling in paradise. But it suddenly turned into a horrible nightmare for Victorian tourist Scott Grant.**

The 33-year-old man had been hiking and camping with his partner on Hook island, 117km north of Mackay in the Whitsundays, when late in the afternoon on September 18 last year he spilled boiling hot water. Scott suffered serious burns to 20% of his body including his groin.

RACQ CQ Rescue was en route back to base in Mackay about 7.30pm after transporting a critically ill patient from Bowen to Townsville hospital when they were tasked to retrieve the burn victims in the dark from the remote island. A paramedic was winched down onto the beach in the dark to administer pain relief and secure Scott into an Air Rescue Vest to transport him to hospital.

“What I do remember is the crew were extremely efficient, clear with instructions on what they were doing and explaining things very well. They were also very reassuring,” he said.

Scott was flown to Mackay Airport about 9pm to meet an ambulance to transport him to Mackay Base Hospital before being flown to a specialist burns unit in Brisbane the following day for a week-long stay.

“I am now fully recovered and am really incredibly lucky really that it wasn’t a lot worse,” Scott said.

“I think the rescue helicopter service and staff that assisted me are doing an amazing job and I will be forever grateful for their help. I’m not sure what would have happened otherwise. If I’d gone by boat from where we were camping on Hook Island, it would certainly have taken me a lot longer to get the necessary pain relief, treatment and to get to the hospital.”





### FEBRUARY 21, 2020

#### **There was yet another royal exit - this time in Mackay when RACQ CQ Rescue winched two elderly tourists off the Queen Elizabeth cruise ship, flying more than 600km in a marathon five-hour mission.**

The Mackay-based Bell 412 rescue helicopter was tasked about 9am that two patients from the 294-metre long Cunard cruise ship, currently on a 14-night South Pacific cruise and located near Creal Reef, 150km east of Mackay, required medical evacuation and transportation to hospital.

RACQ CQ Rescue arrived at the ship about 40 minutes after departing base and once it made radio contact with the vessel, was able to winch down a Critical Care Paramedic and rescue crewman with medical equipment to the deck of the ship as the helicopter hovered overhead. In two separate trips, two patients, an 86-year-old man with a broken femur and an 83-year-old woman with serious abdominal complaint, were winched into the helicopter and delivered to Mackay Base Hospital.

### MARCH 2, 2020

#### **RACQ CQ Rescue found Yalbaroo woman, Barbara Marinic, 83, lying in a cane field "caked in mud" four days after she went missing.**

The elderly woman wandered away from her home early one morning in March and rescuers spent days scouring nearby cane fields and bushland between Yalbaroo and Pindi Pindi, about 70km north of Mackay.

The Mackay-based helicopter was tasked for four days in a row to search an area adjacent to the Bruce Highway.

A rescue crewman in the back of the chopper spotted a "hole" in a cane field at about 100 feet. The helicopter circled around and hovered about 50 foot above to find the missing elderly woman "caked in mud, lying flat on her back, with her hand across her face and leg on a strange angle".

The rescue helicopter landed on a dirt clearing about 200 metres from the cane paddock and the Critical Care Paramedic and rescue crewman waded through knee-deep mud and dense sugar cane to the woman's location.

"As we approached her, she lifted her hand slightly – we couldn't believe she was alive," a crewman said.

## 2020

MAY 2020 **Patient Story**

Alligator Creek // Hiking Accident

# CHOPPER WINCHES *couple to safety*

#### **RACQ CQ Rescue has winched two hikers to safety after they were injured in a serious fall at a popular waterfall near Townsville in May.**

The Mackay-based rescue helicopter was tasked on May 13 to fly to Alligator Creek, about 350km north, after a 000 call was received from the injured couple. The two hikers, a man and woman believed to be local and aged in their 20s, had fallen down Alligator Creek waterfall about 30km south of Townsville. It is believed the man slipped in the wet conditions and fell about 15 metres down rocks before slamming into a tree. The woman, who was attempting to make her way down the slippery rock face to assist the injured man, then also fell but managed to grab onto the same tree to break her fall. Fortunately, they were able to make a 000 call for help.

RACQ CQ Rescue landed at a staging area on private property about 5km from the accident scene at Alligator Creek about 2.40pm, just as firefighters reached the injured pair on foot having walked for an hour up steep and slippery rock faces in the rain to find the injured pair.

RACQ CQ Rescue winched a paramedic and rescue crewman down into the heavily wooded area at the scene and was able to secure the injured man, who suffered only serious cuts and bruises, into an Air Rescue Vest (ARV). He was then winched up into the helicopter with the rescue crewman and flown back to the staging area to be met by ambulance officers.

The helicopter quickly refuelled before returning to the waterfall site where firefighters, ambulance officers and the RACQ CQ Rescue paramedic and rescue crewman then secured the injured woman into a stretcher and carefully transferred her about 10 metres down a rocky cliff face to a clearing where she could be safely winched into the helicopter.

She was then flown to Townsville Hospital with neck and shoulder pain as well as cuts and bruises, arriving in a stable condition about 5.30pm.

It is believed the Townsville rescue service, which is fully funded by the government, was on another mission hence the Mackay community-funded rescue helicopter was tasked.



**A lone hiker injured and stranded on a treacherous rocky ledge was winched by RACQ CQ Rescue off a mountainous peak near Clermont on August 18. The 63-year-old Victorian tourist was attempting to climb the volcanic plug Wolfgang Peak, about 50km north of Clermont, when she became disorientated and slipped more than 10 metres down a rock face, seriously injuring her ankle.**

Fortunately, the woman had a mobile phone and called 000, but ground searchers were unable to determine her exact location on the mountain due to the rocky terrain and how far from the path she had strayed and fallen.

RACQ CQ Rescue was tasked about 3pm and flew direct to Wolfgang Peak, about 260km south-west of Mackay, landing in a grassy paddock nearby to speak with rescue crews about retrieving the injured woman and her exact whereabouts on the mountain.

Once airborne, the RACQ CQ Rescue crew, including a doctor, Critical Care Paramedic and rescue crewman, quickly located the stranded hiker on a precarious rocky ledge on a cliff face. As the rescue helicopter hovered about 10 metres overhead, the rescue crewman was lowered down onto a small rock ledge to secure the woman into a rescue strop before both were winched up into the helicopter. The entire winch rescue of the woman off the rock face took less than 10 minutes.



AUGUST 18, 2020

## LONE HIKER'S *lucky escape*

2020

AUGUST 18, 2020

## BOATIE SLASHED *by propeller*



**A TRIP to visit family at Seaforth took a horrific turn when a Gold Coast father of three's face was slashed open by a boat propeller after a turtle caused him to pitch overboard.**

"It's going to be a hell of a recovery for me but at least I'm alive," Andrew, 48, said.

The jolt caused the boat, steered by his father, to pitch from side to side sending Andrew flying over the edge and under the water. "Then I got run over by the tinny," Andrew said. The boat propeller slashed his cheek, chin, ear and forehead.

RACQ CQ Rescue chopper arrived at the Seaforth boat ramp early Saturday afternoon to treat the seriously injured man and transport him to Mackay Base Hospital. Later that night, the chopper was

tasked again to fly the injured boatie to Townsville for further treatment in a serious condition.

"There's lines all over my body ... four or five lines over my face ... where the engine hit," he said. "Very lucky. That's what the surgeon said to me ... 'you're very lucky to be alive'."

Andrew said he was in surgery for about eight hours as doctors sutured his face back together and repaired the damage to his body.

In terms of boating safety Andrew said his father, who was an experienced fisherman, was very safety conscious, but they could not have foreseen the turn of events.

"You got to always try and plan for the worst case scenario because life really can change in a moment," he said.



AUGUST 2, 2020

# RESCUERS ARE VITAL

*- that's no bull!*

**Cody Smith knows there's only eight seconds to glory. But his recovery from serious injury is more long term as is his return to the sport he is passionate about – bull riding.**

Mirani High School student Cody was airlifted from Middlemount to Mackay by RACQ CQ Rescue on August 2. He was attending a bull riding school when he was violently bucked off and his hand was still trapped in the rope.

Cody's helmet was cracked on impact and his head and neck were whiplashed into the dirt. He was knocked out and unconscious for about five minutes during which time he suffered a seizure which lasted for about a minute.

Cody suffered short-term memory loss, swelling to the brain, swollen blood vessels, fluid in the stomach and numerous bruises and grazes to his body after being jumped on by the bull. He was in Mackay Base Hospital for three days and underwent many CT and MRI scans.

"This was a very serious, potentially life-threatening injury so thank goodness a service like RACQ CQ Rescue was available to us," his mother Jodie said.

"We are ever so grateful that services such as CQ Rescue are available - it is a necessity. Without them a lot more families would suffer. It's an incredible service and they do an amazing job."



2020

OCTOBER 2020

# GOLFER'S

*brush with death*

MORANBAH man Mclver Watene has survived two bites by one of the world's deadliest snakes. Venom from a brown snake left 24-year-old in Mackay Base Hospital's Intensive Care Unit for two days while doctors worked to stabilise his blood and kidney function.

Mr Watene was playing golf with friends in October when the snake struck.

"I was playing golf and hit my ball into the rough, so I went looking for it," he said. "I felt a prick on my leg, so I looked down and I was standing on a snake. The snake has then come around and taken another bite."

Luckily, Mr Watene and his mates knew what to do thanks to their first aid training. Mr Watene was airlifted to Mackay Base Hospital's Emergency Department where he was treated with anti-venom. He was then transferred to ICU for ongoing management. Quick thinking, correct first aid and his emergency evacuation to hospital by helicopter saved Mr Watene's life.



## MISSION Costs



Average cost of a mission per hour is \$10,500

### Mission to:

Sarina	\$10,500
Proserpine	\$15,750
Moranbah	\$17,850
Bowen/Collinsville	\$21,000
Clermont	\$29,400
Townsville	\$39,000

Average fuel bill per month \$60,000

Leasing costs \$490,000 per month

(primary and back up helicopter plus crew)

## GIVE WHERE you live

**Making a difference starts at home. You can help us save lives and improve our local economy by donating to RACQ CQ Rescue.**

Where you spend your charitable dollar is important as is how you can make a difference to those around you. Investing in your own community is really important. When you donate your money to a vital not-for-profit organisation like CQ Rescue that spends its money locally, you are boosting your own economy. By supporting a charity that is close to home the entire Central and North Queensland region will enjoy benefits that can't be found through donating to big national or global charities.

Giving locally means you get to concentrate your limited resources into your community which means even small donations can make an enormous difference. More donations locally means more people aided in your community.

Many of us are drawn to causes that are close to our homes and hearts and there's certainly a lot of people in the community who have friends and family whose lives have been touched or changed by the region's rescue helicopter. You never know when you or a loved one might need the help of RACQ CQ Rescue, so giving to our not-for-profit supports local business, aids those residents, workers and visitors in need, and increases the overall wellness of our community and the industries which sustain it.

The money you donate to CQ Rescue directly benefits our region – the funds stay local and help people in your community better their lives. This way your donation has a direct impact on those around you.

There's a number of ways you can help us save lives. Drop your loose coins in moneyboxes, swipe at a Tap and Donate terminal, workplace giving and donate through your payroll, make a donation to our annual appeal – all of this is an investment in your community. RACQ CQ Rescue does so much to help workers, residents and visitors in Central and North Queensland, but we can't do it alone.

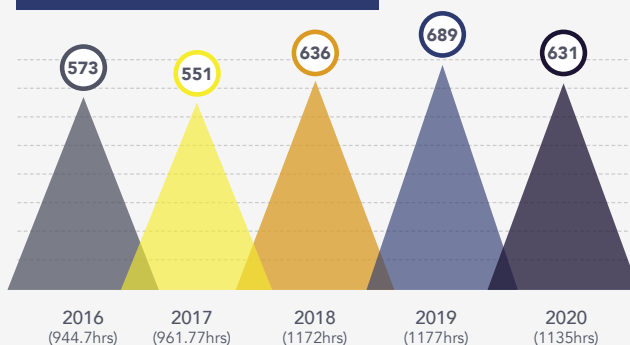
You know exactly where your money is going and how it is being used. No need to wonder how your donation is making a difference as you can see firsthand the impact being made on a daily basis. It's the blue and yellow helicopter flying directly overhead to assist those in need.



## BELL 412 EP Helicopter Costs

Composite main rotor blade	\$250,000 ea (x4)
Aluminium tail rotor blade	\$43,000 ea (x2)
Skid tube of Bell 412 EP	\$10,000 (x2)
<b>Pratt &amp; Whitney PT6T-3D Twin-Pac Engine</b>	\$800,000
<b>Powerplant of 412</b>	
2 power sections	\$690,000 ea
C-box (combining gear box)	\$750,000
<b>Tail rotor drive system</b>	
42 degree tail rotor gear box	\$126,000
90 degree tail rotor gear box	\$138,000

## YEARLY TASK NUMBERS



## COST TO OUTFIT A Crew Member



**Boots**  
\$250



**Helmet**  
\$4000



**Flight Suit**  
\$690



**Flight Gloves**  
\$120



**Wetsuit**  
\$700



**Harness**  
\$2500



**Mask/Snorkel**  
\$120



**Split Fin Boot**  
\$240



**Switlik Air Crew Vest**  
\$620



# 12 WAYS TO help:

## donate today

Please support RACQ CQ Rescue by making a donation to our vital, lifesaving service. We have several convenient ways to support us and donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible.



### BY MAIL

Post your cheque/ money order to:  
PO Box 1850,  
Mackay, Qld 4740



### ONLINE

Donate securely online  
at [www.cqrescue.org.au](http://www.cqrescue.org.au)



### BY PHONE

Call us on  
1300 SAVINGLIVES  
(1300 728 464)



### IN PERSON

Visit us at  
16 Mike Jones Street,  
Mackay Airport



### DIRECT DEBIT

Contact us for a copy  
of our Direct Debit  
Request form to set  
up easy automatic and  
regular donations.

## 06 coin or card DONATIONS

Drop your spare change into one of our money collection boxes or use one of our Tap and Donate terminals. If you are a business and would like to host a money box or Tap and Donate terminal to assist with fundraising, please contact us on 1300 SAVING LIVES (1300 728 464) or email [office@cqrescue.org.au](mailto:office@cqrescue.org.au).



## 07 become A SPONSOR

There are several levels of sponsorship: Platinum Partner, Major Sponsor and Corporate Supporters.

The higher levels of sponsorship entitle organisations to have their logo on the helicopter as well as ample opportunities for cross promotion.



## 08 volunteering AND EVENTS

We warmly welcome offers from organisations and individuals who would like to organise events on our behalf or fundraise for our service. We are always looking for new volunteers to assist at the many events we take part in.

For more information about these opportunities, please contact us on 1300 SAVING LIVES (1300 728 464) or email [office@cqrescue.org.au](mailto:office@cqrescue.org.au).



## 09 workplace GIVING PROGRAM

Payroll contributions are a no-fuss method of making small, regular tax deductible donations through your pay to support RACQ CQ Rescue. Simply ask your payroll officer about making donations through your pay or us on 1300 SAVING LIVES (1300 728 464) or email [office@cqrescue.org.au](mailto:office@cqrescue.org.au) for more information.



## 10 matched giving BY YOUR EMPLOYER

Matched giving is a benefit offered by some employers to encourage their workers to support charitable organisations. Your donation to RACQ CQ Rescue could be eligible for matched giving so talk to your employer about matching staff contributions.



## 11 gift IN YOUR WILL

By leaving a bequest to RACQ CQ Rescue, you can ensure your legacy will make a lasting impact and help save the lives of others in your community.

Contact us on 1300 SAVING LIVES (1300 728 464) or email [office@cqrescue.org.au](mailto:office@cqrescue.org.au) for further information.



## 12 rescue 412 PROGRAM

Rescue 412 participants donate a minimum of \$1000 each year to RACQ CQ Rescue. The amount is tax deductible and contributors are invited to quarterly events which allow them to meet and network with other supporting organisations.

For more information about the Rescue 412 Program, please contact us on 1300 SAVING LIVES (1300 728 464) or email [office@cqrescue.org.au](mailto:office@cqrescue.org.au).



# SERVICE PARTNERS

*keep us flying*



## What a rollercoaster the year 2020 has been!

**The year started watching 12.6 million hectares of land burn across Australia, destroying 5,900 buildings, one billion animals were killed, and 34 people lost their lives. With all number of individuals and businesses digging deep to assist in the recovery, the year ahead was always going to be exigent for CQ Rescue's funding demands.**

The CQ Rescue team remained positive however and were determined to ensure our financial demands were not only met but exceeded.

However, things were about to get a lot worse. Although there was talk of a pneumonia of unknown cause detected in Wuhan; China no one could anticipate what was to come. The outbreak was declared a Public Health Emergency of International Concern on the 30th of January and on the 11th of February the World Health Organisation (WHO) announced a name for the new corona virus disease COVID-19. Not only did it mean a whole new way of living but there was a very genuine concern for our service and the communities who support us.

*'By sticking it out through tough times, people emerge from adversity with a stronger sense of efficacy'*

We identified our community and supporters would be experiencing varying levels of hardship within our region and RACQ CQ Rescue certainly did not want to compound individuals and organization's stress during this time and therefore felt it appropriate to cancel our 2020 Annual Appeal. With the ever changing environment it was hard to know how our year was going to end up with the cancellation of all our fundraising events the

financial deficit could have a significant impact on our service.

*'Through adversity we find our heroes'*

Although our crew are commonly referred to as heroes, we maintain the real heroes are those who support our service enabling us to continue flying. CQ Rescue experienced unwavering support from our partners as every single Sponsor maintained their support with a few also increasing their Sponsorship levels.

We also welcomed a new Major Sponsor in CPH Mining and Civil and look forward to having them on board in 2021.

In addition to our corporate partners we received an amazing response from individuals and businesses who donated so generously throughout the year. With everyone facing their own challenges the continued support has been extraordinary and has certainly put a heartfelt positive on an otherwise negative social climate.

Our gala event with early promise of fantastic support including BHP as a Platinum Sponsor, also fell victim to COVID-19, we then had to re-focus our energies on our 25th Anniversary Gala among





our other events in 2021 keeping everything crossed the pandemic would by that time be under some sort of control and restrictions relaxed enough to go ahead with our fundraising activities.

An event we were actually able to go ahead with which was new to our calendar of events was the "Rescue in the River", a display showcasing the crew's skills and another opportunity to work alongside VMR who provided a seclusion zone in the river for the winch exercises and transported our training dummy 'Darryl' and one of our Rescue Crew Officers. Richglen Maintenance Services came on board as the display's Sponsor and we look forward to working with them again in 2021 to support another event.

Just because COVID stopped most of our events from going ahead, it certainly did not stop or reduce the number of tasks or distances travelled for our helicopter and crew, completing 631 tasks and racking up thousands of kilometers.

We did make it to the end of 2020, although not completely unscathed but relatively well considering the challenges we all faced through the course of the year. Although cautious, albeit

better educated now in the ways of everything COVID we are now looking forward to 2021. Like our crew, our admin and events team are preparing for another challenging and exciting year with our service hitting an important milestone providing world class aeromedical rescue and transport for 25 years.

With operational costs reaching \$10.5 million it is a big job to keep our helicopter flying, however with the stunning amount of support we receive from our partners and community we know 2021 will be covered.





# OUR sponsors

We proudly recognise our strong relationships with our generous partners:

NAMING RIGHTS SPONSOR:



GOVERNMENT PARTNER:



PLATINUM PARTNERS:



MAJOR SPONSORS:



Mike Jones Street, Mackay Airport  
PO Box 1850, Mackay, QLD, 4740  
p. 1300 SAVING LIVES (1300 728 464)  
e. office@cqrescue.org.au  
www.cqrescue.org.au



IN KIND SUPPORTERS:



And many more...