



RACQ CQ RESCUE

2022 Community Report



Saving lives 24/7

WWW.CQRESCUE.ORG.AU



From the BOARD

198,108km - that's the total number of kilometres flown by RACQ CQ Rescue in 2021. That's almost five times around the world (given the distance around the Earth at the Equator, its circumference, is 40,075km) and an amazing 34,000km more than what we achieved in 2020! That's an impressive achievement.

There were 704 missions completed in 2021 marking a milestone number of taskings for this service in our 25th year of operation. That's another 73 lives changed and potentially saved than in the 12 months prior.

The increase in demand for our service speaks for itself. RACQ CQ Rescue is available to anyone, any where, any time and is proud to be making a world of difference and saving the lives of residents, workers and visitors in Central and North Queensland.

The last two years have been very challenging for anyone in healthcare as well as business in general. But the steadfast loyalty and gratitude of our supporters has ensured that, despite the cancellation of some key events, RACQ CQ Rescue has continued to grow and prosper.

It taught us to be humble, to be present and to be grateful.

Organisational change is also upon us in 2022. RACQ CQ Rescue was very sad last year to see one of our longest-serving board members Peter Bastable retire. Peter was a Founding Director and served as Chairman for a number of years. He has worked tirelessly for more than 25 years to ensure this community has a world-class aeromedical service. In 2008 Peter was awarded the Order of Australia medal for services to emergency medicine and RACQ CQ Rescue. We have now welcomed newest board member Lisa Davies Jones who you may recognize as the Mackay Hospital and Health Services Chief Executive.

In April we also farewelled CEO Ian Rowan who retired after five years at the head of this not-for-profit service which saves hundreds of lives each year. The board extends our heart-felt thanks to Ian for his contribution to the service and this community, acknowledging that his extensive experience in the not-for-profit sector, risk mitigation and event management ensured CQ Rescue had continued to grow under his tenure.

We welcomed the service's new CEO Tim Healee in April. He brings a wealth of experience in the aviation industry combined with a passion for charity work. Tim is a former pilot who has more than 20-year experience in both senior management and the aviation industry. He has worked in helicopter training centre management, aeromedical operations and most recently, as the CEO of a regional airline based in Far North Queensland. He has also been closely involved with charities across Queensland, helping to improve the lives of disadvantaged youth and marginalised communities.



Tim has embraced the challenge of leading a world-class organisation which is held in such high esteem by the community and its supporters and is looking forward to further building upon the stewardship of Ian. His extensive experience and knowledge in aviation and business management will help ensure the Mackay-based rescue helicopter service continues its high standard of professionalism and providing the best aeromedical emergency service to the Mackay, Whitsunday and Isaac communities

Again, we thank our naming rights partner RACQ and every platinum, major and in-kind sponsor of our service who has helped us be a ray of hope for those plunged into darkness or despair. Your incredible ongoing sponsorship speaks volumes about our service and your commitment to this community and those who live and work here.

To our dedicated crew, medical teams and engineers on the frontline and up in the air and saving lives, we thank you.

To our colleagues, staff and board members who toil to keep the service airborne, we thank you.

To our loyal volunteers and to every individual or organisation who donated or supported an event or fundraiser for our service this year, we thank you.

In a year full of dark days, we never lost the spark of your support. And for your trust, loyalty, belief and faith in our work, we are truly grateful.

Although you may not have actually been a recipient of our care in 2021, we thank you for still being part of our incredible journey in delivering hope and help across Central Queensland.

Thank you for staying the course with us this year CQ.

*Chris Wright,
Board Chairman*

“Whether you are a RACQ CQ Rescue crew member, an engineer, office staff, a volunteer, a sponsor, a donor, an event participant, or someone who simply shares a Facebook post - every contribution made is important to the operation of this vital service and we simply couldn’t do it without your loyal and unwavering support!”

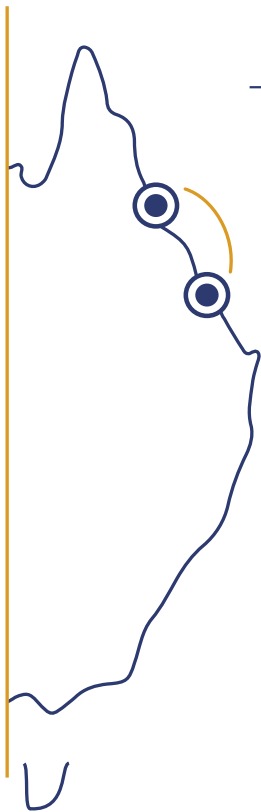
SNAPSHOT of 2021


704
Tasks


1312
Flying
Hours


98%
Availability


Ages
0-93

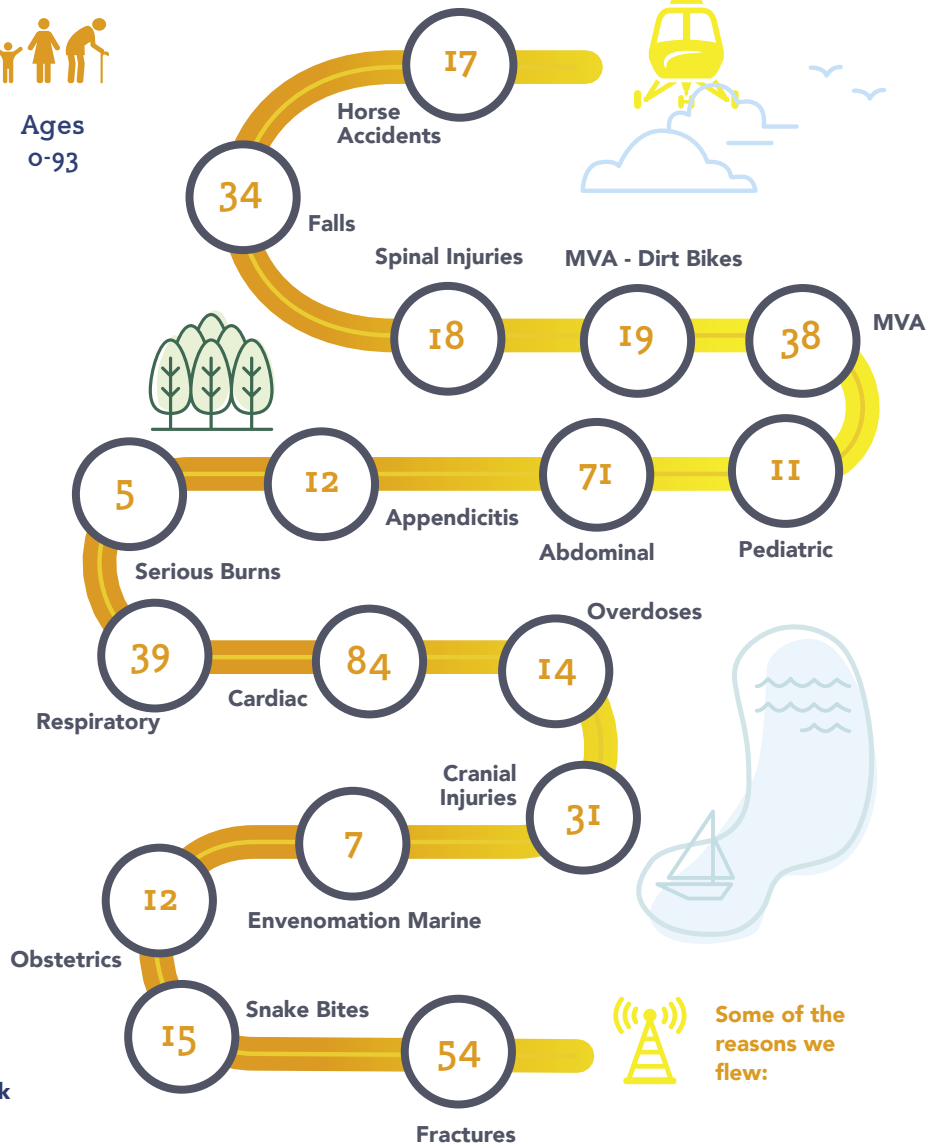



63 tasks
to Townsville

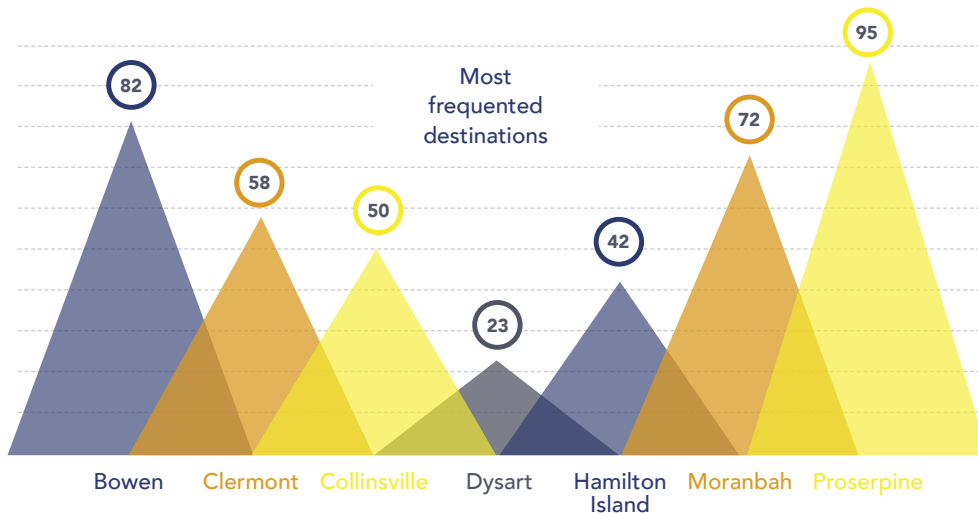

198,108km
Distance
Flown

Longest Distance
1037km
Transfer of a sick worker
from Labona Airfield to
Mackay Base Hospital.

Longest Flight on Task
6.82 hrs
Searching for a man missing
for 7 days near Belyando.



 Some of the reasons we flew:



Search and Rescue
20 tasks

Busiest Month
Sep & Oct

66 missions
(record for 25 year history)

Average Per Month
58 missions



RACQ 2022 MESSAGE

KEEPING OUR LOCAL HEROES *in the air*

Being member owned means we can do more for Queensland communities every day - that's why we've proudly supported the RACQ Air Rescue Network for more than 25 years.

RACQ CQ Rescue provides lifesaving care and transportation when it's needed most to anyone, anywhere, anytime across central and north Queensland. From heart and respiratory events on rural properties, to car crashes, search and rescue missions, and inter-hospital patient transfers, the service helps people who need lifesaving care.

Much of CQ Rescue's lifesaving work involves responding 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 trauma outcomes?

We live, work, and contribute to the same communities as our members, and we're committed to working with locals to ensure the Sunshine State remains an amazing place to be.

Our 21-year association with RACQ CQ Rescue is a highly appropriate way of contributing to the Queensland community where our Club has progressed and prospered.

There are other ways RACQ is looking after Queenslanders.

Since its inception in 2011, the RACQ Foundation has distributed more than \$10.6 million in disaster-relief funding to 350 community groups and clubs. The RACQ Community Sponsorships Program funds dozens of initiatives including school kits for underprivileged kids, community gardens, Men's Sheds, and historic car rallies. Our Mobile Member Centre, an RACQ store on wheels, responds to the needs of our members in times of emergency with immediate, on-the-spot help and claim lodgement. As Queensland's peak motoring organisation, RACQ works hard to lobby decision makers for safe, affordable, and sustainable mobility solutions for our 1.7 million members.

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 the difference between life and death.

*MJ Bellotti
Group Executive Member and Community | RACQ*



THE TEAM BEHIND YOUR RESCUE HELICOPTER

MEET: **KEELEY** Wakefield

ROLE: Rescue Crew Officer (RCO), I perform down the wire duties whether it is an over land rescue where I recover the patient and assist the CCP and Doctor on board or a water job where I will act as the rescue swimmer. Also, to keep the helicopter shiny!

HOW LONG: I'm the newest member of the CQ Rescue Team.

EXPERIENCE: My last job also involved working in helicopters throughout Australia and over in the United States as well. This was a huge learning curve with regards to working in and around helicopters – a lot of which I transposed over to this role.

POSITIVES: Offering others what I have to give, working with an amazing team who all have a common set of values in the helicopter and around the hangar and showing up every day to do what I love. Staying fit at work and keeping my body ready is also a huge advantage for myself in the RCO role!

CHALLENGES: Above all else, I would say the 24/7 nature of it. You can go all day without a call and still have the chance of being woken up at 2AM by the task phone and spring into action at a moment's notice.

MOST MEMORABLE TASK: We were tasked to a plane crash on Christmas Eve last year. Tasks like this can be a bit confronting to hear at first, but when you know it's your duty you just have to put the game face on and show up.

MY TEAM: A huge thank you is in order for the incredible team at CQ Rescue – there is no place I would rather begin my career in Search and Rescue. Also, to our amazing local community and sponsors – without you, the show simply cannot go on.

MEET: **CHRIS** Muffett AKA Muffin Man

ROLE: Rescue Crew Officer (RCO). Conduct retrieval operations via the winch, assist in search and rescue operations.

HOW LONG: I started with RACQ CQ Rescue here in Mackay in November last year. Previously I have spent six-and-a-half years as a rescue swimmer and rescue crew officer with Babcock Mission Critical Services up at Horn Island in the Torres Strait. I have also been a CPL (H) holder /chief helicopter pilot conducting tours/ charter flights around the Whitsundays with more than 1600 hours flying experience.

POSITIVES: Here at RACQ CQ Rescue it's the team work, the mateship and the absolute trust we have in each other to work at our very best in a sometimes very high pressure environment.

CHALLENGES: I think the hardest part of my job is having a complete stranger trust me 100% when they are in a very dangerous situation. Also not knowing what we are going to when we are tasked or what changes can actually eventuate on a mission is a real challenge.

MOST MEMORABLE TASK: Really hard to say as I've been involved in some very challenging situations in this line of work, each being as memorable as the last experience. The CQ Rescue team is very passionate and dedicated and I'm proud to be part of this well-established group of professionals providing a lifesaving and respected service in this region.



MEET:  **JOSH** *Kearney*

ROLE: Critical Care Flight Paramedic (CCP). My primary role is to undertake a retrievals role in inter-facility transfers, primary scene and winch environments.

HOW LONG: I have served 15 months with this amazing RACQ CQ Rescue team

EXPERIENCE: During my rural beginnings I was able to complete an Associate Diploma (ambulance), a Bachelors Degree of Paramedic Practice and a Graduate Certificate of Rural and Remote Practice and a Graduate Diploma in Intensive Care Paramedic Practice. During this training I gained an Interest in aeromedical retrieval and retrievalist medicine and as such completed a Masters Degree in Specialised Paramedic Practice.

POSITIVES: The most positive aspect of this role is the favourable outcome of the patient - This can only occur with the joint involvement of the entire team! the immense gratitude expressed by the patients and their families which often filters back to the team makes this role even more worthwhile.

CHALLENGES: One of the biggest challenges is the retrieval of a patient from a stricken vessel, rough seas or from the side of a cliff face. This is why the entire team always has their game face on to ensure appropriate communication, identification and aversion of dangers in the face of a stressful environment.

MOST MEMORABLE TASK: My most memorable task at RACQ CQ Rescue involved a winch retrieval from a mountain side on dusk in developing weather.

MY TEAM: It is reassuring for me to come to work with this amazing team and know that we are all on the same page when it comes to task orientation and crew safety. This enables me to focus on the clinical task at hand in support of my doctor, all the time knowing that at shifts end we will be home safe with loved ones.

MEET:  **NATHAN** *Rogers*
AKA Buck

ROLE: Pilot/Captain. I'm responsible for flying the helicopter safely, the overall supervision of operations and completing the mission effectively and safely.

HOW LONG: I've been with RACQ CQ Rescue since August 2021.

EXPERIENCE: I started flying 23 years ago with dropping skydivers. Aviation jobs range from sweeping floors in hangers to media and fire work.

POSITIVES: I really enjoy the difference in terrain in which RACQ CQ Rescue operates in. We could be out to the Great Barrier Reef one day or far out west in a remote area the next. I always love meeting new people and working as a team to figure out a solution to a sometimes complex problem.

CHALLENGES: Ensuring a good outcome for our patients, who are sometimes in remote and difficult to reach areas and keeping the crew on board the helicopter safe day and night which is my ultimate priority.

MOST MEMORABLE TASK: Most memorable task would be a call from Queensland Police at midnight to ask for our help in tracking down a car with a kidnap victim on board. That night we spent two hours tracking a speeding car using Night Vision Goggles and assisting police apprehend suspects after they fled the car on foot. It was a very high adrenalin situation but ultimately had a good outcome for all concerned.

MY TEAM: Working for RACQ CQ Rescue, I am aware of the enormous community support for the service and now realise how valuable corporate support is to us. This region is very lucky to have such a professional team who operate in varied environment. It's really a great place to work. We get to save lives and there's no greater calling in the world than that.



DRAMATIC END TO *odyssey of love*

Patient Story

Bruce Dorrell // 71 years old // Boating Accident

It was a dramatic end to Bruce Dorrell's odyssey of love. Both his heart and his home were left smashed upon rocks in the Whitsundays.

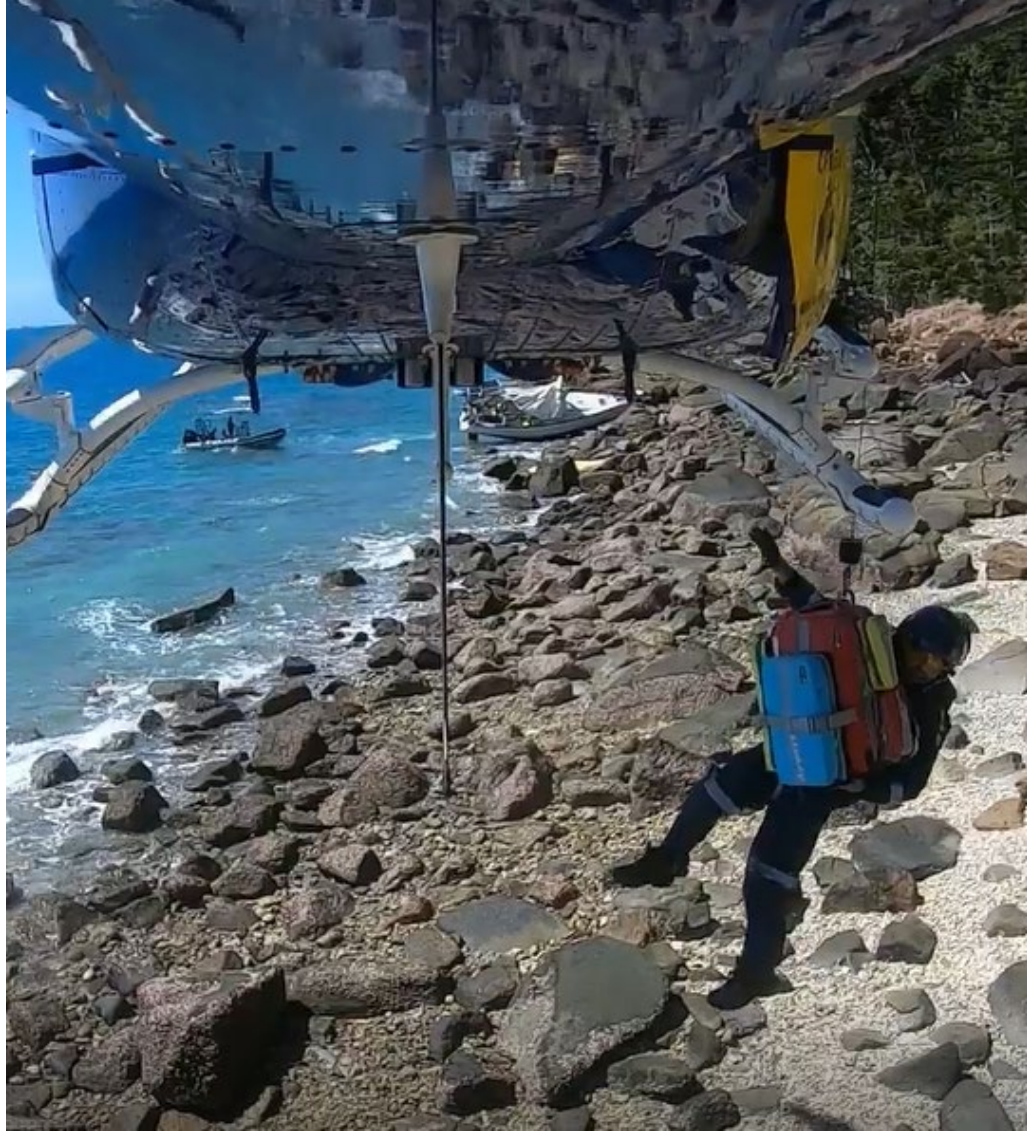
The extremely experienced skipper from New South Wales was forced to radio for help after his yacht Joyous ran aground in gusty weather at Hook Island in October last year. Fortunately, RACQ CQ Rescue was available to help.

Bruce, 71, was three days into a trip sailing from Cairns to his home in Evans Head when he suffered a medical episode and his yacht Joyous smashed on to rocks.

He had bought the yacht after the death of his wife of 40 years Joy and was attempting to retrace the solo trips they had shared. Joy suffered a stroke in July 2015 and was later diagnosed with cancer. Bruce cared for the love of his life without complaint and after her death, he moved to Cairns to buy the boat. Bruce was an avid and extremely experienced skipper and he decided to bring the yacht home to Evans Head and scatter Joy's ashes at Cape Byron. After many months of careful planning, he set sail on October 15.

He left Bowen the morning of October 19, heading south towards a location where he and Joy had spent some of their happiest days together.

Tragically, Bruce suffered a heart episode which caused him to black out for a period of time as he was walking down to the galley. He fell head first and was pinned under a table.



SURVIVOR: Bruce Dorrell with this late wife Joy.



Some hours later, Bruce was woken by loud crashing and banging as his yacht rammed into rocks on the north-side of Hook Island.

RACQ CQ Rescue was tasked about 12.30pm after an EPIRB was activated near Hook Island, about 118km north of Mackay, and passing boaties rang 000 to report a yacht aground on rocks and an unwell sailor on board.

RACQ CQ Rescue flew direct to the scene to find the 15-metre sailing vessel with a 50 foot centre mast listing on a 45-degree angle on the south-western side of the island about 1pm.

An RACQ CQ Rescue Critical Care Paramedic and rescue crewman were winched down with a 406 stretcher onto rocks about 30 metres from the stricken vessel with winds gusting between 30 and 40 knots.

The yacht was structurally sound but Bruce was very confused about what had happened and was suffering serious neck and back pain.

It took a small team of rescuers, including the two rescue helicopter crewmen, ambulance officers and a police officer from Airlie Beach, more than 1.5 hours to relocate Bruce from the cabin below deck and off the vessel and another 20 minutes to carry him in the stretcher to a suitable winch position on rocks nearby. During this time the helicopter landed at Hamilton Island and was refueled before returning to the scene.

The paramedic and Bruce were winched up into the helicopter, followed by the rescue crewman and he was flown to Mackay Base Hospital about 5pm. The crew described it as "complex operation which took more than 4.5 hours to complete".

Bruce suffered broken ribs and a fractured lumbar vertebrae in the accident, but really was incredibly lucky to survive. Sadly, everything was ruined but they did find Joy's ashes though

The community rallied to assist after the salvage of the boat and dry-docking for repair came to more than \$20,000.

But no amount of money can mend a broken heart.



Patient Testimonial

Cory Atherton // 19 years old // Motorbike Accident

SURVIVOR DEFIES *the odds*

Cory Atherton recalls very little of the day his life changed in an instant.

The 19-year-old Sarina lad was riding a motorbike along the deserted beach at Cape Palmerston with his dad, two brothers and two mates when his tyre hit a sandbar at speed and the dirt bike crashed in the sand. He was flipped over the handlebars and describes the fall as being “tossed like a rag doll”.

The impact was so severe Cory's motorbike helmet was actually dislodged during the crash and he suffered numerous serious internal injuries and fractures.

RACQ CQ Rescue was tasked to the scene after a 000 call and departed Mackay Airport about midday, landing on the remote beach 88km south of Mackay just 15 minutes later. Fortunately, it was low tide and there was plenty of beach for the pilot to land the Bell 412 helicopter.

The doctor and Critical Care Paramedic on board the chopper treated Cory at the scene for what were potentially life-threatening and very serious injuries. They worked on him for about 30 minutes to stabilise him before he was loaded in the helicopter with spinal precautions and transported to Mackay Base Hospital.

Cory's list of injuries was extensive. He suffered a bleed on the brain, a fracture in his neck, two back fractures, a laceration to the kidney, a bleeding bowel, a hairline pelvic fracture and his femur was smashed in three places.

Cory spent the next five days in the Intensive Care Unit at Mackay Base Hospital and a total of 14 days in hospital. He underwent surgery the same day he arrived, had a second bowel surgery the next day and another leg surgery eight days later to remove a haematoma which had formed.

Fortunately, Cory remembers nothing of the accident or of the helicopter flight to hospital. He does recall waking days later in hospital and thinking he “was going to die”.

“I would have probably died too if not for the speedy response of the rescue helicopter that day on the beach,” Cory said.

“The chopper service is vital to saving lives. Without it, more patients like me would actually die at accident sites.”

Three months after the accident Cory was back on light duties at his work. It took 12 months for his leg to mend fully, but his bowel function still isn't back to normal.

His mother Tracey sent the rescue helicopter service a card and donation just weeks after his accident to show her appreciation.

“As his mother, I cannot thank you enough for saving Cory on this day, A day that altered our lives in an instant,” she said.

“We are forever in your debt.”



Patient Story

Peter Stowers // 22 years old // Car Accident

INCREDIBLY *lucky to be alive*

Peter Stowers is incredibly lucky to be alive.

Without the lifesaving care of the region's rescue helicopter, he probably wouldn't have survived a horror crash which saw him lose an arm.

The Sarina Beach local, 22, was critically injured when the ute he was driving collided with a semi-trailer on the Peak Downs Highway at Coppabella about 8am on April 27 last year.

He was the sole occupant of the vehicle and to be cut from the wreckage and was flown by RACQ CQ Rescue to Mackay Base Hospital.

He had finished work near Moranbah and was headed for home that morning when the incident occurred. Tragically, his arm was amputated in the accident.

Pete's colleague, Scott McIntosh, said the close-knit team had been 'pretty rattled' to hear about the crash.

"It definitely shocked a lot of people," he said. "You hear about these accidents but when it's someone you see every day, it's a bit of a shock."

Mr McIntosh said Mr Stowers' friends and colleagues wanted to help in some way, and after speaking with his family, decided to fundraise for the region's rescue helicopter service which assisted in saving their friend's life.

"Pete was seriously injured in that accident but thankfully he was able to receive aid at the crash site and was transported to hospital via the RACQ CQ Rescue helicopter service," he said.

"They were able to give him blood at the scene and fly to hospital, but without those two things he probably wouldn't have survived."

"Everyone who lives in the region knows someone who has been helped by the service," Mr McIntosh said.

"They get people back to care when they need it, so it's a great cause to get behind.

"It would be good to reach the goal, knowing that as a community, as a region, we've raised this much to help them out."





FOOTY STAR TACKLES *huge challenge*

Patient Story

Lona Kaifoto // 30 years old // Car Accident

Lona Kaifoto cannot remember anything from the day his life changed forever.

Such was the severity of the car crash which nearly claimed his life, he cannot recall the two weeks prior to even that. Try as he might, not even driving by the Abbot Point accident site triggers his memory.

But what the former Townsville Blackhawk, Burdekin Rooster, Mackay Cutters and Whitsunday Brahman player will always remember is the monumental support he had received from his family, friends and the community as he seeks to return to the pillar of strength he embodied on the footy field.

On April 26 this year, Lona was driving back to his home in Bowen, having dropped his family off at Townsville Airport to fly home to New Zealand. His mother and sister came to Australia to celebrate his 30th birthday just three days prior.

The plumber's car collided with a semi-trailer about 7.30am and came to rest in a dry creek bed. He was initially taken to Bowen Hospital by ambulance and then flown by RACQ CQ Rescue to Townsville University Hospital.

Lona's injuries were life threatening – he had a fractured skull, broken ulnar, radius and humerus as well as serious internal bleeding. He was also placed in an induced coma.

It is a journey he has no recollection of, with the impact of the accident damaging his short term memory. The former rugby league forward was in a state of amnesia for more than 30 days,

undergoing intensive rehab and multiple surgeries on his head, stomach and arms.

But as testing as that period was, a constant reminder of the ordeal he could not recall, it was the sight of his daughters Indy and Willow which came with a harrowing yet profound realisation.

"The biggest thing for me was when I came back to my senses and seeing my two little girls for the first time when they came to hospital," Lona said.

"I looked at them and something hit me: 'that's what I could've missed out on'. I could've missed them growing older and that hit me pretty hard."

"But I've learnt to accept what's happened. I'm really relieved it could've been something worse, but at the same time I count my blessings and consider myself quite lucky.

"In hospital I would read the paper and you would read about an accident every day. There's people getting pronounced deceased on site, that gave me goose bumps and I realised I was lucky.

"I look at life in a different way now. You don't take things for granted, it's really living life to the fullest and doing what you want to do."

After two months in hospital, Lona was finally able to leave, however he remained in Townsville as an outpatient. Throughout his stay in the north he admits he felt as though he was making no progress.



Lona said each rehab session he did, he still felt lost. Every stride he was told he was making, it simply did not resonate. However his partner, Tara Stocker, was there to ensure he never wavered.

Now he does not just believe he is getting better. He knows he is winning the fight.

“My two little ones have been really good. My oldest is turning five and she’s slowly catching on, putting me on the spot all the time asking questions,” Lona said.

“But my partner has been really strong for my little family while I wasn’t doing much in hospital. She’s been the rock of our family and I’m really grateful.”

Rugby league has always been a part of Lona’s life and the sporting community is continuing to play a vital role in it.

Lona Kaifoto believes while he will not play again, there will always be a place for him in rugby league.

While doctors have confirmed he will never play contact sport again, Lona is looking forward to returning to the game in some fashion.

He said already his oldest daughter Indy had expressed her desire to line up on the field just like he did.

“I can definitely see it, that’s what I’ve been saying to myself – it just looks like I’ll have to take up coaching,” he said.

“I think rugby league will always be a part of my life, that’s all I’ve known and I love being competitive”

For now, Lona is still recovering and has ongoing speech, occupational therapy, and specialist appointment for his brain injury.

It was the second time his family had used the Mackay-based rescue helicopter service, his daughter Indy having been airlifted by RACQ CQ Rescue on April 10, 2019, from Bowen to Mackay Base Hospital with a serious illness.

“We never thought we would ever need this service, especially on two occasions now and given what happened to Lona,” Tara said.

“We have received the most amazing care, the level of care in this part of the world is second to none. We still have a long way to go but as you all could imagine, we are all so grateful to have Lona here with us and to have been given a chance to be on this journey”

“It’s extremely important for the Bowen community to have such an amazing aeromedical service like this available. If we didn’t have this helicopter, it could be a totally different outcome for patients like Lona. For this we are incredibly grateful and from our family to you, we thank you all.”



SICK NURSE IN NEED *of critical care*

Patient Story

Emily Staples // 33 years old // Allergic reaction

As a Critical Care Nurse who works in retrieval medicine, some might say it was ironic that Emily Staples' life was actually saved by a rescue helicopter. Twice.

The 33-year-old New South Wales woman was sailing on a yacht with her family near Shaw Island in Central Queensland on June 18 last year when she suffered a life-threatening anaphylactic reaction.

"We had hired a yacht and took it out for our first overnight trip," she said. "We put the table up on the deck and were having a cheese platter when I suddenly felt like I was slurring my speech. I went downstairs to the bathroom to check my face and realised that my tongue was swelling out of my mouth," she said.

The registered nurse, who works for Careflight in New South Wales, realised immediately she was suffering anaphylaxis but had left her epi pens back at her hotel. She did have Ventolin and Claratyne with her.

Increasingly concerned, the family called 000 to report her serious and potentially life-threatening allergic reaction and were dismayed to be told that medical help was 3.5 hours away back on land.

"I knew I didn't have that long as my airway was closing fast so they dispatched the rescue chopper to us"

My sister and partner were crushing antihistamines and putting them on my tongue, and I was using the Ventolin to try and keep my airway open. I was conscious throughout and I remember all of it. My poor family were very traumatized to see me struggling to breathe like that and were worried help would not arrive in time. It was a very long 45 minutes but I was so relieved to see the light from the helicopter and hear it approaching."

As RACQ CQ Rescue made contact with the vessel and circled overhead, Emily's dad and her partner lifted her into the yacht's tender and transported her to the sandy beach on Shaw Island.

"The chopper had to land on the beach in the dark to get to me. They circled the island several times before finding a safe place to land. I also remember being covered in a blanket as sand whipped

up around us as the helicopter landed and I was shaking and so cold and it was so loud," she said.

"Once they gave me the adrenaline and the IV steroids and I started to feel much better I actually really enjoyed being in the helicopter and chatting to the crew on the way to hospital. They were great with a wonderful sense of humour and were really kind. As a nurse working in retrieval, it was certainly not nice being on the other side of critical care, but they made it a little more fun for me and communicated brilliantly."

Emily spent the night in the Critical Care Unit at the Mackay Base Hospital on cardiac monitoring and required more adrenaline and steroids overnight.

"I have had anaphylaxis for several years now but this was by far the most terrifying experience as I was so far from help and this is the only time I feared it would kill me," she said.

The incident was Emily's second trip in a rescue helicopter.

She had been airlifted the first time in New Zealand after a very serious skiing accident where she was unconscious after breaking her femur in four places.

"I work in retrieval myself on fixed wing aircraft for Careflight in New South Wales, so I am really passionate about retrieval and emergency services.

"RACQ CQ Rescue is a vital service provided to the community which saves people's lives. Anyone who has been unlucky enough to need this service most likely owe their life to it and the crew. This service is paramount to the community. I most likely would not have survived if CQ Rescue had not been able to get to me in the time that they did. I am really so grateful"

"I think RACQ CQ Rescue is incredible and provides access to places that road and boat services cannot necessarily get to and or don't have time to get to, which obviously leads to better patient outcomes and less patient deaths."



BOATIE SHARES TERRIFYING *tale of sinking*

We woke to the sound of ankle-deep water sloshing in the cabin of our boat.

"We woke the rest of the crew on board, there were four of us in total and realised suddenly we were in significant danger of sinking. The bilge pumps were working at some point, but then not at others, and unfortunately, we were unable to find where the water was coming from. The inboard motor was filling up with water as well so we tried motoring in an attempt to drain some water out without any success.

"Once the water got into the air intake the motor failed completely. We started bailing the water out at this point and decided to set off our EPIRB. We also attempted mayday calls on the radio but got no response.

"It was very dark and I remember praying for the dawn to come. The darkness definitely added to the fear we felt.

"We kept busy with bailing for three hours in an attempt to stay afloat, but just as the dawn was breaking we heard the sound of a helicopter approaching. It was heading straight for us! Then it veered to the left and we thought they hadn't spotted us so we decided to set off a flare. They then turned and headed straight for us again. The sense of relief at that point was just incredible!

"The RACQ CQ Rescue rescue crewman Arno was winched down into the water to retrieve us one at a time. We had to jump off the boat and swim towards Arno to be secured into the vest. It was right on dawn and I can remember thinking that of all the times to be jumping into the water, this had to be the absolute worst. We had caught lots of sharks at Parker's Reef before, big ones too!

"But I went first and Arno was already in the water waiting for me, signalling me to jump in and swim to him. I thought if he can do it, then so can I. It's not really like there was another option.

First-hand account of rescue

Vanessa Page // April 9, 2021

"The water from the chopper was whipping my face so hard it feels like you could drown with your head above water. As I was winched up we started spinning. I really felt like I could have passed out at that point, so just tried to close my eyes and waited for it to be over.

"The CQ Rescue crew were absolutely awesome. They were all very calm and clear with their direction, a lot of which were hand signals as the chopper is so loud! You can tell they are incredibly well trained and really practise what they do. They made it all seem so easy.

"The whole experience really seemed surreal at the time. Once the four of us were all on board the chopper we were checked for injuries and began the flight back to base at Mackay Airport. I've never been in a helicopter before. The day was dawning and it was going to be a beautiful day out there. The view was spectacular from the chopper but under no circumstances would I wish that experience on anyone!

"We all have recovered well enough. It actually seemed more traumatic afterwards than what it was at the time.

"This rescue helicopter service is incredibly important to this community. Mackay has a big population of recreational boaties and you just never know when you might end up in trouble at sea. We feel like we are responsible and maintained our boat well, but you just can't predict what might happen.

"I am incredibly grateful for RACQ CQ Rescue and I don't know where we would be without them. They do amazing work all over the region, not just over the water, and I think they deserve all the support they can get.

"They really are true blue lifesavers."



PARTNERSHIPS

powering our service

RACQ CQ Rescue is immensely proud of the work we do, day in and day out but even prouder of the support we receive from the communities we service. Without this, our crew and helicopters simply could not take off and be available to those who need us most. Individuals, groups and our corporates partners give testament to the service by standing beside RACQ CQ Rescue, contributing generously to the shortfall in government funding which is needed to keep the helicopter flying.

Although 2021 proved to be a hangover from 2020 with the ever-evolving COVID situation, the team were determined to ensure it was a memorable year for the right reasons celebrating RACQ CQ Rescue's 25 years of service to the Mackay, Whitsunday and Isaac regions. We kick started the celebrations by landing outside of the Mackay Regional Council building, presenting an anniversary cake to the Mackay Mayor. Not only did RACQ CQ Rescue reach 25 years of service, 10,000 tasks ticked over in October. The "Angels of the Sky" mural was also completed mid-March after successfully applying for the Regional Arts Development grant. Celebrations continued with a cocktail party held in the hangar including a digital exhibition showcasing the services history. Mackay and Whitsunday Life also published a story on RACQ CQ Rescue's service history with many local businesses coming on board to advertise ensuring an extensive 10-page feature went to print.

The funds raised at the annual gala dinner in November wasn't the only record broken during 2021 for RACQ CQ Rescue. The service completed 704 tasks last year, the highest annual total in our 25-year history. The last quarter of the year saw us flying to the rescue on 192 occasions also exceeding all previous quarterly statistics. The distance travelled also hit an all-time high travelling to Townsville alone on sixty-four occasions. The service also attended the largest number of



motor vehicle accidents in its history. A spokesperson from our naming rights sponsor RACQ stated 'the rate of people dying on our roads this year is truly staggering and we must not forget those who are seriously injured in these crashes, many of whom will never fully recover. While RACQ CQ Rescue crews do a phenomenal job saving lives on Queensland roads we'd rather you didn't have to meet them so we're asking all motorists to drive like their lives depend on it.'

RACQ CQ Rescue are always open to new and innovative ways of supporting our service and we were lucky to have a range of businesses come on board with different ways of raising funds. Our first production of CQ Rescue branded Bolle Safety eyewear received fantastic support which we are hoping to repeat in 2022. City Auto Group also nominated RACQ CQ Rescue to receive contributions when their customers sign up for CTP insurance.

Watch out for our new project in 2022 'Change for Choppers'. We have teamed up with Anything Environmental to encourage every workplace, mining camp and work site to join our campaign to not only improve our environment but generate lifesaving funds for our vital rescue service. Everything you need to know is set out on our website.

We're also looking forward to expanding our payroll giving program and hope to encourage more businesses to get involved. Our longest local supporter G & S Engineering has successfully implemented this in their workplace for over fourteen years.

We saw a 'changing of the guard' for our Glencore crewman with Ben McCauley Rescue Crewman, transferring to Horn Island and Grant Bollington Air crewman taking over the reins. Aside from

saving lives one of Grant's first duties as Glencore's crewman was to help Santa out when he was stuck for a lift to the Carols in the City event.

Our back up helicopter and crew took part in an emergency exercise with Arrow Energy who have been supporting RACQ CQ Rescue since 2009. It is an opportunity for the Arrow Energy team and our crew to identify any potential issues ensuring a smooth process in the event of a real emergency.

Through the good and bad RACQ CQ Rescue is very appreciative of those who stick by us and support the service. We welcome those who came aboard as partners in 2021 namely Channel 7 and Dalrymple Bay Infrastructure and look forward to a long working relationship. We also love our existing family who have stuck it out through a couple of tough years and keep returning to ensure our vital lifesaving service continues to be there for anyone, anytime, anywhere. One of our longest partnerships has been with BHP who has been there since our inception in 1996 and we are extremely thrilled to have renewed our partnership last year and forever grateful for their support. We also celebrated 25-year partnerships with CFMEU and Thiess and a 20 year anniversary with our naming rights Sponsors RACQ. Without support like these our service simply would not exist.

How important are our supporters and partners? With operational expenses expecting to exceed \$10.5 million in 2022 the loyalty and ongoing support we receive from our community and corporate sector is invaluable. Like the JETA-1 in our aircraft, we could not continue to operate without your help fueling the incredible lifesaving work of RACQ CQ Rescue.



EVENTS HELPING *us take off*

2021 was an incredible year for fundraising and events for RACQ CQ Rescue, but such success would not have been possible without the dedication and tireless work of our fundraising and events team and the ongoing support of our volunteers, sponsors and supporters.

Without this vital support from the community we serve, we literally couldn't get off the ground.

2021 started with a huge donation from the ESA Alpha Rho Mackay who worked incredibly hard in December at the charity gift wrapping stall in Caneland Central. Despite the challenge of the Covid-19 pandemic, they managed to 'wrap up' their fundraising with a fantastic \$35,000 donation to our service. RACQ CQ Rescue are thrilled so many shoppers and volunteers supported this fundraiser after what was such a difficult year. This marked a fantastic start to our 25th anniversary celebration.

In 1996, one of the first flights undertaken in the region's earliest rescue helicopter (VH-LPZ) before the service officially commenced was landing at the Mackay Council chambers to herald the start of aeromedical service that would go on to save more than 10,000 lives. In February 2021, the crew re-enacted this flight with our current Bell 412 helicopter, delivering a special 25th birthday cake to Mackay Mayor Greg Williamson to officially mark the occasion and silver celebration.

RACQ CQ Rescue embarked on a special project to acknowledge our 25 years of service and support in the Mackay City Heart. Through a local government grant and with support from local businesses, we completed a stunning blue and yellow mural titled 'Angels of the Sky'. A Brisbane-based urban visual artist Jordache was commissioned to create the mural in a laneway off Wood Street as a tribute to the region's rescue helicopter service. The eye-catching artwork also features augmented reality.

The hangar was the location of a very special Silver Celebration on April 9 to acknowledge the growth of the service in 25 years. Some long-term supporters, sponsors and key stakeholders joined us for cocktails, canapes and a unique digital art installation featuring our history since 1996 to celebrate our quarter century of service to Central Queensland. Our guests enjoyed viewing a variety of photographs, task footage, media coverage, patient stories, event history, art works, model helicopters, equipment and talking to past and present crew.

The 2021 Emergency Services Day was another fantastic community event. We were supported by more than 17 exhibitors who presented, demonstrated and displayed various vehicles and tools used to help the community in times of struggle. We welcomed new exhibitors including Clayton's towing and the Queensland Remote Area Tracking team who help emergency services find lost people in tough terrain. We also welcomed back Surf Lifesaving Club and the Australian Army with their impressive Chinook helicopter which was a huge hit with young and old alike.

The annual One Stop Medical Beach 2 Gardens Charity Fun Run was held on a cool and crisp morning in July, and with Covid-19 still threatening restrictions,



we were incredibly pleased to welcome more than 400 participants. Runners and walkers took to the Blue Water Trail, along the Pioneer River, to help us raise money to keep the rescue chopper in the air. Whether it was 5km, 8km, 16km, or 21.1km tackled, those who joined in had a great time with many personal bests achieved. Participants celebrate their achievements at the finish line with a sausage sizzle in the sunshine. We are thrilled that, despite reduced participant numbers, more than \$26,000 was raised.

Our quarterly Rescue 412 function proved popular with supporters in 2021. In September we welcomed special guest and past patient Justine Barwick to present her unique take on tackling life after trauma. In the three years since Justine was seriously injured in a shark attack at Cid Harbour in the Whitsundays, she has had to work hard at navigating what she calls her new normal. Adapting to lifelong mobility impairment, coming to terms with the trauma of her experience and continuing to build on her career in the community sector, Justine spoke at our function about giving her second bite at life her best shot. It was a privilege to welcome this inspiring woman and hear what she has learnt on her journey to recovery.

Rescue Chopper Week in October aims to encourage the younger generation to raise awareness and educate about our lifesaving work in this region. Every school who registered to fundraise was entered into a draw to win a helicopter landing at their school. Marian State School was the lucky winner in 2021 and the crew were thrilled with the welcome they received from the Pioneer Valley school. The crew spoke about the aircraft, their work and some of the challenges they face.

The 2021 CQ Rescue One Magical Night Gala Fundraising Dinner at the Mackay Entertainment and Convention Centre on November 26 was enormously successful raising more than \$170,000 for our region's rescue helicopter service.

More than 500 people attended this highly-anticipated event, which was postponed back in August due to covid restrictions. But finally, Cosentino The Grand Illusionist, who was brought to the stage by entertainment sponsor Babcock, was able to wow the huge Mackay crowd with his incredible (and humorous) act. Enormous thanks to

our presenting partners BHP and IMS as well as our Gold, Silver and Bronze sponsors as well as Reef Properties who sponsored our raffle, and Ausgroup Industrial who sponsored our Lucky Envelopes. Such wonderful support from this community for events like our Gala Fundraising Dinner is absolutely critical to keeping RACQ CQ Rescue up in the air and saving hundreds of lives across CQ every year.

RACQ CQ Rescue prides itself on delivering hope and help to those in dire need. In December, we were able to make an extra special delivery to BB Print Stadium for the community event Carols in the City. Santa Claus hitched a ride on board our aircraft to arrive just in time for the festive celebrations. Our crewman even escorted him to the stage as a video played on the stadium big screen of his flight. The Grant Broadcasters' event was proudly sponsored by one of our own sponsors Glencore.

RACQ CQ Rescue are supported by so many individuals, community groups, clubs and businesses throughout the year. The variety of these events and how our community shows their support and appreciation for our vital service is truly astounding. These fundraisers include golf days such as Sarina Golf Club's annual Tee Off For Lift Off and Moranbah's Community Golf Day; membership donations from the Shamrock Hotel and Magpies Sporting Club; raffles at Leo Hotel Motel in Clermont and Mac's Laser Solutions; donations from the Nebo Bushman's Carnival Association, Domino's Pizza, Mumma's Boys Chopper Club. We also have very special individuals like Robert Walker who shaved his beard and mullet for extra donations for our service and little Addison who requested donations to CQ Rescue for her 9th birthday. This is the second birthday where she has forgone gifts in a bid to help keep us flying.

We are incredibly grateful for all the efforts and assistance we received and are continuously humbled by the passion and enthusiasm of our supporters. Without your invaluable help, we literally couldn't get off the ground.



BE A CHANGE *for choppers champion*

RACQ CQ Rescue is joining forces with Containers for Change and Anything Environmental in 2022.

It's a very simple way your workplace and worksites can help raise vital, lifesaving funds for our region's rescue helicopter service to ensure its continued availability to anyone, anywhere, any time across Central and North Queensland.

Your workplace's donation will be reported and feature on the RACQ CQ Rescue website. It will also be promoted through CQ Rescue's social media channels acknowledging your support as a Change for Choppers Champion.

Challenge other businesses and organisation to further promote your corporate generosity to a lifesaving local service.

Such a small change in your own workplace, wherever it is located across Central and North Queensland, can make a very big difference to hundreds of lives in this community every year. The next person we help save could be your friend, loved one or even a colleague.

RACQ CQ Rescue is a lifeline to anyone, anywhere, anytime across Central Queensland. Last year the service completed a record 704 missions. You just never know when injury or illness can strike and when you will need RACQ CQ Rescue's help.

Organise your collection bin today by contacting Anything Environmental on (07) 4952 6866 and become a Change for Choppers Champion today!

"Bravus employees at various mine and rail sites in this region have already raised \$30,000 for RACQ CQ Rescue in just one year by binning their workplace trash and donating the Containers for Change refund. This incredible donation has the potential to fuel three lifesaving missions for our rescue helicopter."

Here's how you can turn your workplace trash into lifesaving cash to keep our rescue chopper up in the air and flying to the rescue.



Contact Anything Environmental to arrange for delivery of a Containers for Change bin for your work site or premises



Encourage your staff and employees to bin their eligible containers



Phone Anything Environmental to arrange collection when the bin is full of containers



Anything Environmental will collect and tally your collection and donate your refund to RACQ CQ Rescue.

14 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



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. Contact us if you are a business and would like to host a money box or Tap and Donate terminal.



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.



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.



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.



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.

13 follow OUR SOCIALS

Get a behind-the-scenes look at our service and find out about our lifesaving work.

Follow us on:



14 donate your CONTAINERS FOR CHANGE

When you take your eligible containers to an over-the-counter depot, drop-off, Reverse Vending Machines, mobile or pop-up site, you can donate your refund to RACQ CQ Rescue.

Use our CQ Rescue ID code: **C10042112**



OUR *sponsors*

We proudly recognise our strong relationships with our generous partners:

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