



Royal Flying Doctor Service

QUEENSLAND SECTION

**Drought Wellbeing  
Service:  
A Clinician-led,  
community engagement  
service delivery model**

**Cath Walker, Drought Wellbeing Service**







# Royal Flying Doctor Service

QUEENSLAND SECTION



# Who we are

- The Royal Flying Doctor Service of Australia (RFDS) is one of the largest and most comprehensive aeromedical organisations in the world.
- As the trusted face of primary health care in the bush, RFDS is well placed to reach people in the most remote parts of the State.
- Since April 2015 RFDS (Qld Section) have operated the Drought Wellbeing Program (DWS) across Queensland, providing community based primary mental health services to people in drought declared areas.





# What we do

DWS focuses on mild to moderate, high prevalence mental health conditions, and aims to:-

- provide mental health support to remote and rural areas with limited or no access to appropriate services;
- improve overall mental health and treat stress or adversity related conditions;
- Provide early intervention and prevent serious and chronic mental health conditions; and reduce suicide rates.









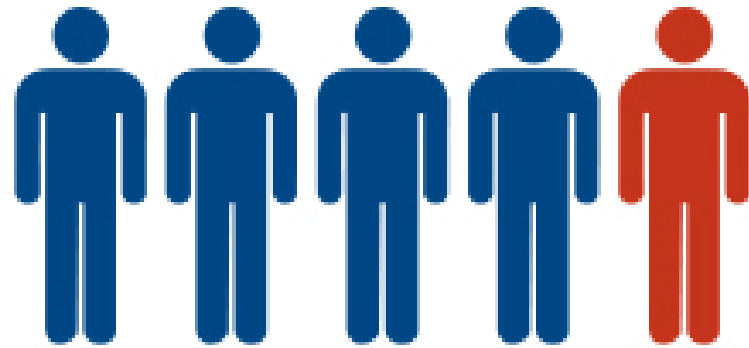


**Why we do it**

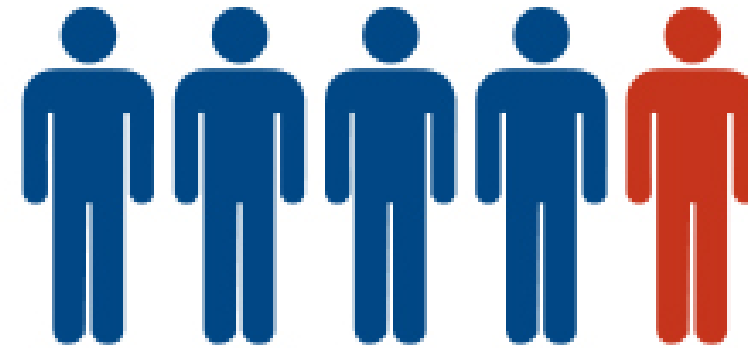


# 1 IN 5 AUSTRALIANS 16–85 YRS WILL EXPERIENCE A MENTAL DISORDER

in any given year no matter where they live



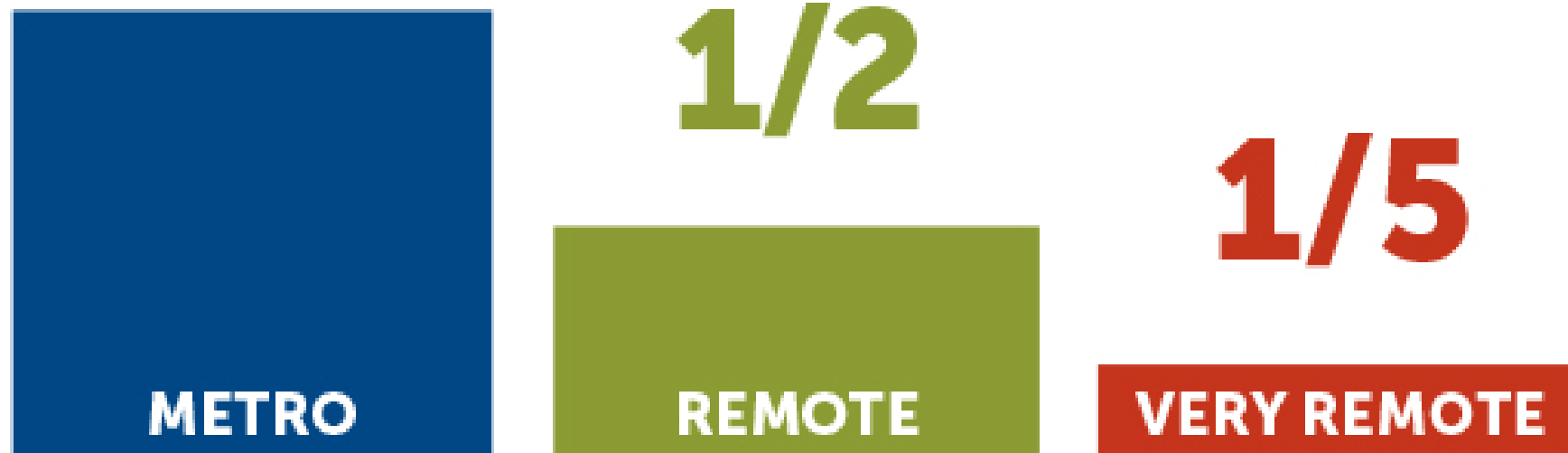
**METRO**



**REMOTE**



# ACCESS TO MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES



Access to Medical Benefit Schedule

# SUICIDE DEATHS BY REMOTENESS

**9.9** MAJOR CITIES

**13.1** INNER REGIONAL

**14.4** OUTER REGIONAL

**19.6** REMOTE

**22.3** VERY REMOTE

Persons per 100,000 population



**2,567** 

**PATIENTS UNDERWENT AN  
RFDS AEROMEDICAL RETRIEVAL  
FOR A MENTAL DISORDER**



0:29 / 3:08





# How we do it

Using a clinician-led model allows us to:-

- Build and establish networks and partnerships to increase mental health literacy and education;
- Identify issues specific to local communities and broader issues relating to the region in general;
- Utilise identified areas of need and community feedback to design appropriate clinical services.



# Why it works

Using a clinician-led model :-

- Breaks down barriers to accessing clinical service;
- Introduces remote and rural residents to clinicians in informal settings;
- Encourages self-referral;
- Answers clinical questions which arise during education or community sessions;
- Encourages ongoing interventions such as individual counselling, group sessions and workshops.





An aerial photograph of a rural landscape. A wide, winding river flows through the scene. To the left, there is a small building with a satellite dish and a fenced-in area. The background shows a dense line of trees. The text "EVALUATION and RESEARCH" is overlaid in the center.

# **EVALUATION and RESEARCH**



**Since April 2015, the  
Drought Wellbeing Service  
has reached over 5000  
people across remote and  
rural Queensland.**

