

# ANNUAL REPORT

2023



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## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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# CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE



In the past year, CapRescue has continued to be a beacon of hope, with a steadfast commitment to saving lives. We are proud to report that we have successfully completed over 400 rescue missions, amassing a cumulative flight time of approximately 750 hours. This represents a remarkable 9.5% increase in our operational capacity compared to the previous year.

Our achievements would not be possible without the invaluable support of our esteemed partners, including Queensland Health, Queensland Ambulance Service, and Babcock MCS Australasia. Their collaboration empowers us to maintain an exceptional aircraft availability rate, consistently exceeding 98%, and ensuring that we deliver world-class services.

The escalating demand for our services has presented economic challenges, as reflected in our financial statements. Notably, we are confronted with the task of increasing our operational hours, along with adapting to new CASA fatigue management requirements. This financial outlook will continue to be our primary challenge in the upcoming years.

In a significant development, we established the "WorkReady" Social Enterprise, offering Drug and Alcohol Testing, as well as Respiratory Protective Equipment and Hearing Protection Fit Testing Services. We are thrilled to announce that this initiative is now fully operational, aligning with our mission to serve our community comprehensively.

We extend our deepest gratitude to our generous sponsors, RACQ, AngloAmerican, Australia Pacific LNG operated by ConocoPhillips, BMA, Coxons Australia, Glencore, Hastings Deering, MM Electrical Mining and Industrial Suppliers, Orica, Rockhampton Regional Council, Rookwood Weir Project, Santos GLNG, Thiess, Yarrabee, as well as the unwavering support of local governments and businesses. Your commitment to our cause is a testament to our shared dedication to saving lives.

We also extend our heartfelt thanks to our donors and the individuals who support our various fundraising activities throughout the year, such as our Colour Runs, Golf Days, Raffles, and numerous other events. As well as our staff and volunteers who make them happen. Your contributions ensure that we can continue to be the lifeline for those in need.

Last but certainly not least, we express our gratitude to our fellow directors for their invaluable contributions throughout the year. Together, we remain committed to our mission and look forward to another year of making a positive impact. Thank you, and let's continue to make a difference.

Clark Cooper  
Chairperson

# NEWS ACROSS THE REGION

## CapRescue Praised

Mitchell Bouwens was going about his usual job of mustering cattle, when a horse he was breaking decided it was done for the day.

Thrown to the ground, Mitch was unable to move, a scary situation when you are 20km north of Dingo and without phone signal.

“The boss rode up to the road and called the ambos and the other worker stayed with me and made sure I was ok,” said Mitch.

First on site were the Queensland Ambulance Service Paramedics who treated Mitch for suspected broken ribs.

Upon arrival of RACQ CapRescue the onboard Critical Care Paramedic and Flight Doctor, stabilised Mitch for transport by air to Rockhampton Hospital.

Mitch complimented the emergency crew saying they were very friendly and attentive and helped keep him comfortable.

“If it wasn’t for them (RACQ CapRescue), I feel the journey would have been much more distressing and painful traveling by road.”

“It’s been a struggle, the injury has caused me to be unable to work and do the things I enjoy, it was also hard for my family living another state away, they have now flown up to be with me and help where they can,” he said.

Mitch took the time whilst in hospital to message thanks to the CapRescue crew.

“Thanks for your help today guys still laying in hospital in Rocky have three broken ribs and getting reassessment to decide if they need to do surgery to put them back where they belong”

He also encourages everyone to donate to the service, that really made a difference.

Just as the CapRescue crew have helped in other similar situations by airlifting on average just over 30 people each year from rural properties across Central Queensland.

Often with patients suffering serious injuries and hours from sufficient medical treatment, the Rescue300 crew provide a faster lifesaving link to medical care.

Helicopter crewman Todd Robinson said that communications from remote locations to emergency services is also vital.

“If you’re in a paddock without any form of communication back to emergency services, you’re stuck.

Devices have been designed to send a GPS signal of the exact location, as well as modes such as ‘OK’ and ‘Need help’, and ‘SOS’ and these save lives,” said Todd.

Thanks to the efficiency of RACQ CapRescue and accessibility of patients in remote areas, rural communities can rely on the service when things go wrong, because a big region needs a fast response.





## NEWS ACROSS THE REGION

### November Presents Mixed Month Of Rescues

November 2022 saw RACQ CapRescue tasked to a variety of incidents across Central Queensland. Displaying the numerous possibilities of situations where our service is vital.

Starting on the 2nd of November, Rescue300 attended a vessel in Shoalwater Bay to retrieve a woman in her 50s. It was suspected she had suffered lacerations to her head after falling and impacting with the propellers of a tender. The on-board medical crew stabilised the patient and she was transported to Rockhampton Hospital.

Early on the evening of the 5th November, a male patient in his 30s required assistance after suffering from a suspected dislocated / fractured ankle.

Initially, the crew were tasked to the Marlborough township to meet with Queensland Ambulance Service (QAS). Unfortunately, there were some difficulties moving the patient by road, so Rescue300 picked up the flight paramedic from Marlborough and diverted to the Clarke Creek Wind Farm.

The patient was initially treated on scene by the company medical staff and QAS Paramedics. Upon arrival, the onboard flight medical team provided further assistance and relocated the joint back into place. He was then airlifted to Rockhampton Hospital in a stable condition for further treatment.

On November 12th, RACQ CapRescue was tasked in the afternoon to attend to a male patient in his late 30s on a property approximately 340 kilometres southwest of Rockhampton.

The man was working in a yard when the incident occurred. He sustained possible pelvic fractures in an altercation with a beast and was treated on scene by QAS Paramedics.

He was in good spirits when the helicopter arrived and was packaged for the flight back to Rockhampton and remained in a stable condition. He was to undergo scans to ascertain the full extent of his injuries.

Another animal was the cause for the crew to be called out in the afternoon of the 20th November. It was suspected that a male patient in his early 30s had been envenomated by a sea snake on Great Keppel Island.

The man was walking in shallow water when he looked down and saw a sea snake under his foot and thought it might have bitten him. As sea snakes are potentially deadly, it was decided by the family to ring 000.

Upon arrival on the Island, the Rescue300 Intensive Care Paramedic assessed the man, who was not showing any clear symptoms. He was treated as a precaution and flown to Rockhampton Hospital, where he remained in a stable condition for the duration of the flight.

From boats to properties, islands to wind farms, you can rely on RACQ CapRescue to be there for you on your worst day.



## NEWS ACROSS THE REGION

### CapRescue Off To A Flying Start

RACQ CapRescue had very busy start to 2023.

With 50 tasks and a significant amount of flight hours, the monthly operational costs were the highest in over a year.

In January, Central Queenslanders relied on the Rescue300 crew for access to advanced health care and so much more.

On January 12th RACQ CapRescue left the hangar tasked to a horse fall south of Theodore.

The patient, a man in his early 30s, was thrown from his horse whilst mustering on a property.

Queensland Ambulance Service was on scene treating for suspected chest and spinal injuries.

Upon the arrival of Rescue300, the onboard Doctor and Critical Care Paramedic stabilised the patient in preparation for transport to Rockhampton hospital for further scans and treatment.

With a return flight time of just under 3 hours, the Rescue300 crew really makes a difference. Facing over 3 hours by road from the accident site to the hospital, RACQ CapRescue provides the fastest and most efficient means of assistance for those in remote areas.

Wet weather in January meant less than ideal road conditions with two families experiencing some distress when they were trapped in their car on a road between flooded areas.

RACQ CapRescue, successfully completed the retrieval of nine people including five adults, a child and three infants.

Transport to hospital by Rescue300 was not required with no injuries reported.

In the final days of the month, RACQ CapRescue continued to be busy, tasked to a property in the Bauhinia area to attend to a suspected snake bite.

It was reported that a 2-year-old was playing with his dog when he alerted his Mum that he had an injured leg.

On inspection of the marks on the toddler, the mother applied effective first aid treatment for a snake bite.

Queensland Ambulance Service road paramedics were on the scene upon arrival of Rescue300. It was determined that the child should be transported to Rockhampton Hospital by air for further assessment and treatment.

It is a reminder to all about the importance of First Aid, especially when in remote areas where help may be some distance away.

# NEWS ACROSS THE REGION

## Road Toll At 13-year High

RACQ and the RACQ CapRescue helicopter service are urging Queenslanders to be more mindful on the road after last year's road toll reached a 13-year high.

In recommendations put forward to the State Government's Road Safety Roundtable, RACQ Chief Executive Officer David Carter said we need to act fast and get back to basics.

"We need more highly visible police on our roads immediately, and it has to be targeted through blitz campaigns in regions like central and far north Queensland, which saw shocking increases in road fatalities last year," Mr Carter said.

RACQ CapRescue Air Crew Officer Patrick Norton also agrees, saying there are common factors that are seen on-site at Motor Vehicle Accidents.

"Often, we see people that are fatigued and tired and trying to get to their destination quickly and not taking appropriate rest breaks," Mr Norton said.

Mr Carter said we must also rethink education, designing peer-to-peer, local-to-local campaigns to improve our road safety culture.

"We need education campaigns where truck drivers, motorcyclists and motorists champion road safety to improve our road safety culture."

In February, RACQ CapRescue were tasked to a single motor vehicle accident involving a tank truck on the Dawson Highway.

It was reported that the driver of the truck suffered injuries after his vehicle, which was allegedly carrying nitric acid, left the highway and rolled shortly after 11am.

This was the 40th Motor Vehicle accident the Rescue300 crew had been called to during the period of March 2022 to February 2023.

## Near-record Month of Rescues

These are real lives and the Rescue300 crew are real heroes.

In May, RACQ CapRescue performed 48 tasks, with a near-record number of hours in the air, costing over \$1.2 million.

Just some of the rescues included a night vision search of a rural location south of Agnes Waters, a bull altercation in Baralaba, a motor vehicle accident south of Gladstone and more than 30 inter facility transfers throughout the region from Dysart to Thangool.

We are grateful for the 60% in funding contributed by the Queensland Government. However, with estimated annual operating costs of \$12 million, the remaining 40% must come from within our community to ensure we continue at no cost to Queensland residents.

At \$1.2 million, the May 2023 operational costs exceed the previous record from January 2023 of \$1.1 million, the average number of tasks per day also continues to grow.

"When lives are at risk, Central Queensland can trust our crew to be there. The speed of response and capability to swiftly rescue and transport a patient can be the difference between life and death," said Operations Manager Kirsty Wooler.





# COMMUNITY NEWS

As we look back on the remarkable year from July 2022 to June 2023, one thing is abundantly clear - the Central Queensland community has been the driving force behind RACQ CapRescue's incredible successes. This year has been a testament to the unwavering support, dedication, and enthusiasm of the local community, making a real difference in the lives of countless individuals.

One of the highlights of this past year has been the incredible community events that have continued to capture the hearts of Central Queensland. These events serve not only as platforms for enjoyment but also as critical fundraising opportunities, helping to sustain the life-saving missions of RACQ CapRescue.

It all started with the Gladstone Community Open Day, thanks to the generous sponsorship by Australia Pacific LNG downstream operator ConocoPhillips. The event brought people of all ages together to experience the thrill of emergency services. Young aspiring helicopter pilots, future rescue personnel, and those who were simply curious about the vital work of RACQ CapRescue came to connect and learn. Sophie Ovenden, Community Relations Advisor for ConocoPhillips, dubbed the day a "success," noting the fantastic community and services turnout.

RACQ CapRescue Communications and Engagement officer Kim Walters shared her enthusiasm about this event, describing it as "fun, energetic, and educational." Not only did visitors have a great time, but they also left with a heightened appreciation for the crucial role played by Emergency Services in the region.

A delightful rivalry emerged between the emergency service crews, each using sirens and engaging activities to draw in more of the crowd. Sue Neaton, an enthusiastic RACQ CapRescue volunteer, highlighted the popularity of the event mascots and the friendly competition between displays. "Of course, the helicopter was a big hit," she said, "but the bubbles kept big kids and little kids entertained for ages." This memorable day exemplified the engaging and educational experiences that the Central Queensland community embraced.

National Student Volunteer Week (NSVW) in August 2022 was another opportunity for the community to shine. RACQ CapRescue celebrated NSVW with the students who were part of their StepUp CapRescue Volunteers program, supported by Thies. The addition of students from The Rockhampton Grammar School (RGS) in 2022 proved to be a significant milestone.

Caitlin Buttenshaw, Community Fundraising Officer for CapRescue, remarked, "Our StepUp CapRescue Volunteers program, supported by Thies, continues to excel with the addition of RGS students in 2022, who have eagerly stepped up at a number of different



events throughout our region."

RGS students, who had been supporting various charities through their pastoral care program for years, expanded their support by adding a minimum of 20 volunteer hours through a Certificate II in Active Volunteering. This community involvement enabled them to witness the life-saving work of RACQ CapRescue up close.

Cindy Murray, Head of Vocational Education and Training at The Rockhampton Grammar School, emphasised the positive impact the program had on students. "With this vision in the forefront of their minds, we have been inundated with volunteers every time students have the opportunity to support CapRescue events. Our students really have been wonderful!"

These students' engagement with organisations like CapRescue represents the Central Queensland community's spirit - appreciating and recognising the positive difference their support can make beyond a monetary contribution.

NSVW was also an occasion to express gratitude to Thies, the naming rights partner of the StepUp CapRescue Volunteers program since 2017. Thies has consistently supported CapRescue volunteers and remains an essential part of the community that sustains these initiatives.

The inaugural Spring Picnic on the 28th of August, proudly sponsored by Civil Support, marked another highlight of community engagement. At the beautiful St Aubins Village, guests celebrated the start of Spring, enjoying delicious food, entertainment, and each other's company.

Kim Walters, Communications and Engagement Officer, explained that the event was inspired by the owners of St Aubins, who witness

RACQ CapRescue's work firsthand. Their proximity to the helicopter operations fosters a unique connection with the service.

The Spring Picnic kicked off with music from the Capricornia Silver Band. Attendees savoured individual boxes of savory and sweet treats while exploring the latest spring fashions. A mini flower workshop allowed attendees to exercise their creative talents, while others relaxed on blankets, enjoying live entertainment from Damo and Lee.

The Spring Picnic, the first event of its kind hosted by RACQ CapRescue, was met with enthusiasm and appreciation. Mark Prideaux, from Civil Support, expressed his delight and called it a "must-do for next year." The event's success showcased how local businesses and CapRescue could come together to create a wonderful afternoon.

This year, the Central Queensland community also brought colour and vitality to the region with the Colour Me Capricorn events. The Gladstone, Rockhampton and Emerald events, presented by Jemena and DC Motors Nissan, respectively, turned the cities into vibrant canvases for participants to enjoy a colourful, fun-filled day.

Over 350 participants in Gladstone, 550 in Rockhampton and 250 in Emerald added their energy to these events, raising over \$17,000, \$13,000 and \$6,000, respectively, for RACQ CapRescue. These events reminded everyone that it's not just about clocking up some steps; it's about getting colourful, having fun, and supporting RACQ CapRescue's life-saving mission.



The annual RACQ CapRescue Golf Day, presented by Champ Group, gathered 105 players in June, raising over \$20,000 for the organisation. The event was an incredible success, driven by spirited competition, dedicated volunteers, and generous sponsors. It's a day that underscores the profound impact that the community has on RACQ CapRescue's mission.

However, the standout moment of the year was the community's overwhelming response to the RACQ CapRescue Annual Appeal. The goal of \$150,000 was not just met; it was exceeded by \$40,000. Operations Manager Kirsty Wooler expressed deep gratitude to all the businesses, individuals, and groups who contributed to this incredible achievement.

"RACQ CapRescue relies on the community to cover 40% of its annual operational costs, and this outpouring of support ensures that we can continue our life-saving missions."

Through the volume of rescues performed each year, RACQ CapRescue continues to demonstrate the ongoing need for their services. The role of RACQ CapRescue is to provide the fastest and most efficient means of deploying medical and rescue teams in Central Queensland, covering a wide range of emergencies, from major accidents to inter-hospital transfers and search and rescue missions.

As Executive Officer Mark Fewtrell noted, the fundraising for RACQ CapRescue will continue, and the community's support will be as vital as the service is for saving lives.

In the words of a past patient, Kev Mauger, "Without the help and experienced hands of the chopper rescue team, I wouldn't have survived. I truly believe that."



# THANKS TO OUR RESCUE300 MEMBERS

**RACQ CapRescue would like to thank all our valued Rescue300 Members for jumping on board another year. In 2023, the Club that Saves Lives reached a new milestone and hit 162 members!**

1 Maintenance & Supply  
A Fortunate Lens Photography  
Almafi Cattle Company  
Almost Anything Webdesign  
Anderson Consulting Engineers  
Anita & Craig Hayes  
APH Glass & Aluminium  
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# THANK YOU WORKPLACE GIVING

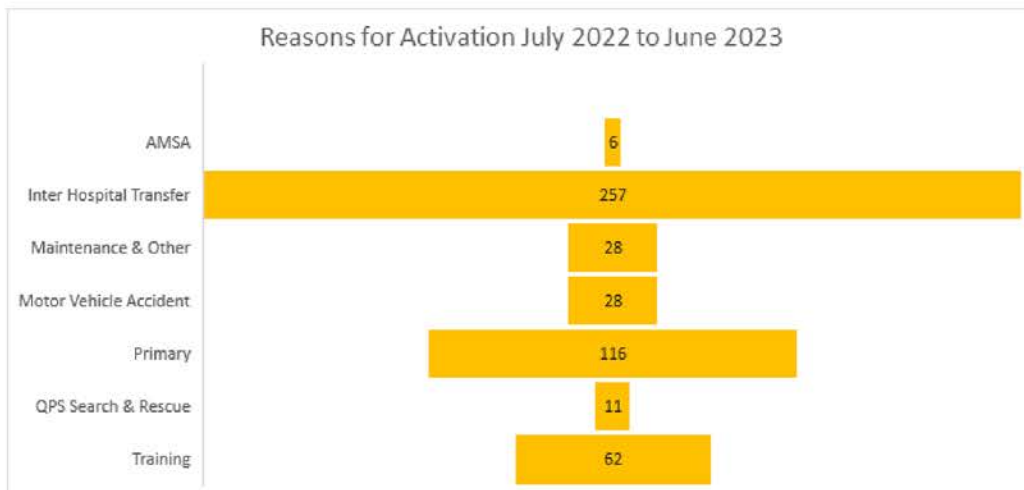
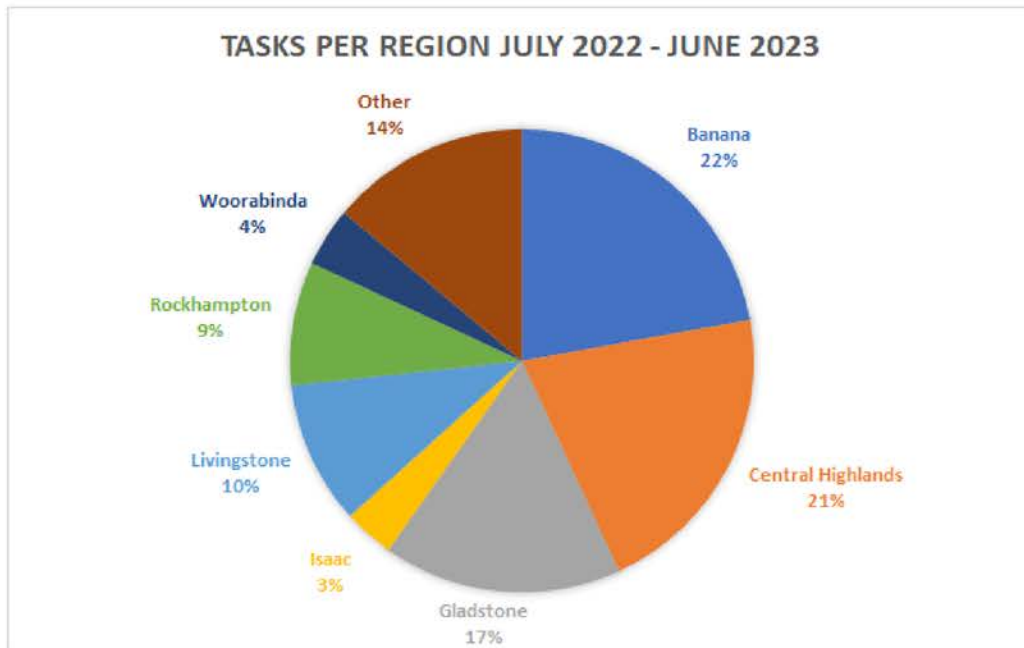
Thank you to the following organisations for their support through our Workplace Giving Program.



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Ashton Engineering  
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Banana Shire Council  
Benevolent Aged Care  
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CHRC (Central Highlands Council)  
CQU (Central Queensland University)  
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Stanwell Corporation  
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Wesfarmers Curragh Pty Ltd  
Yarrabee Coal Company

# ANNUAL STATISTICS







*A big region needs a fast response.*

### Government Partner



### Naming Rights Partner



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### Blue Sky Partners



### Lift Off Partners



### Media Partners



### Local Government



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