



THE OUTBACK CAR TREK

proudly raising funds for The Royal Flying Doctor Service



THE FLYING DOCTOR OUTBACK CAR TREK

(updated December 2024)

GETTING STARTED KIT



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Royal Flying Doctor Service

Outback Car Trek Pty Ltd

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Have you heard about the Flying Doctor Outback Car Trek, and want to know more?

Have you decided you would like to enter the Outback Car Trek but not sure where to start?

Have you ever wondered how you get to visit places that most Australians only ever dream about?

Do you want to have the most amount of fun you will ever have with your clothes on and at the same time make a demonstrable difference to some of Australia's most vulnerable and disadvantaged people?

If your answer to any of these points is **YES**, we are here to guide you on your way to entering a car in the Flying Doctor Outback Car Trek.

WHY IS IT?

The Outback Car Trek is an annual event that donates the money it raises to the Royal Flying Doctor Service. Now in its 35th year since its inception in 1990 the Trek has raised in excess of \$35 million for the RFDS.

The RFDS is a registered charity or association in every state and territory of Australia. It costs in many tens of millions of dollars per year to keep the Doctor flying and, although it receives funding from State and Federal Governments, the Service relies on the generosity of the community to continue serving the people of Outback Australia. Government funding does not cover capital expenditure, in particular the replacement of aircraft.

WHEN IS IT?

The Trek is normally held in June each year and it is an event for older 2WD cars (a little more about the cars later). The Trek is not a competitive event, there are no timed sections, and it is not a car rally. The only competition is to see who can raise the most money for the Flying Doctor.

The Trek is simply an opportunity for people with common goals to enjoy a week away together.

Much as the first two tenets of the Trek are to

1. Have Fun, and
2. Travel to some of the most remote and beautiful parts of Australia, and
3. Create a positive social and financial impact on the towns we visit

However; we are never far away from the third and most important tenet of the Trek;

4. the Trek is designed to raise funds for the Royal Flying Doctor Service.

The Trek traditionally finishes on the June Kings Birthday long weekend each year. Finishing on the long weekend gives people an extra day to fly loved ones into the destination town to enjoy some quality time at the end of the event, or to get back home before work on the Tuesday morning.

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The exception to the rule is every 5 years we traditionally run a longer event (10-12 days or so), enabling us to get to more far-flung destinations. For example, in 2014 we celebrated our 25th Anniversary by travelling from Alice Springs to Margaret River, but via Broome!

In 2019 we travelled from Renmark to Darwin. In 2025 (our 35th birthday year) we will travel from Bathurst in central west NSW to Cairns starting on Thursday 29th May and finishing on Sunday 8th June.

WHERE IS IT?

One of the (many) great things about the Trek is that we start and finish in a different location each year, and we do not go back to the same towns for many years (if ever). Our objective is to take you to as many and varied towns and locations as we can. Trekkers come from all over Australia, New Zealand and the world, but statistics tell us that most Trekkers live in Sydney, followed closely by Melbourne, so our start town is normally within striking distance of one of those cities, often both. Registrations and the traditional Cut-A-Rama hair cut night are held on the Saturday evening, the Trek itself commences with breakfast on the Sunday morning.

WHO CAN COME ?

Participation in the Flying Doctor Outback Car Trek is a reward for a car raising a minimum donation for The Royal Flying Doctor Service. The minimum donation currently is \$7,500 per car and is 100% tax deductible.

Anybody who holds a full (non-provisional) drivers licence recognised in Australia can participate, subject to a small number of terms and conditions.

WHAT ABOUT THE CARS?

A big part of the fun revolves around the cars. The Trek is an event for older model 2WD cars that have been specifically strengthened to meet the demands of outback road driving. Often, we will travel along farm tracks, trails or roads that are not used frequently, and as a result are not well maintained. Sometimes weather plays a part, changing the quality of road surfaces without warning. That's part of the fun.

We provide a "Supplementary Rules & Regulations" document that spells out car eligibility, specifics regarding mechanical strengthening, and so on. You can download a copy of the Supp Regs from the website, or I can send you a copy.

CAR ELIGIBILITY

In general terms, most 2WD motor cars that are more than 30 years old on the 1st January of the year of the event will be accepted into the event, *subject to the written confirmation of the event organiser*. Identical model run-ons will also be allowed. If you are thinking about building or entering a car onto the event for the first time, you must request written confirmation of your vehicle's suitability from the Trek office.

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N.B. In certain cases, some vehicles that might be considered “unusual” or “mechanically complicated” may be refused entry at the discretion of the event organiser.

The Outback Car Trek has for many years prided itself on being able to fix most types of mechanical failure whilst out on the event. As cars became more complex in the late '70's and the 1980's the ability to fix some types of mechanical problems whilst out on the road has become severely diminished. Fuel injection, turbo/super chargers, onboard engine management systems, are just some examples of this issue.

For this reason, please contact the event organiser prior to committing to buy or build a car. We don't want to see you stuck on the side of the road due to mechanical failure.

The Trek is followed each day by a number of mechanically minded volunteers driving “sweep” vehicles, whose role it is to tend to tired and wounded cars and try and keep them on the road. Miracles are performed daily by the sweeps, and their objective is to try and get everybody to the finish line. But no guarantees.

HOW DO I GET MYSELF A CAR?

Pretty simple really – either build one or buy one.

As we have stated the cars are required to be specifically strengthened to withstand the rigors of prolonged dirt road driving and are subject to a safety check prior to each event. If you are going to build a car from scratch, make sure you talk to the Trek office about what is required before you even purchase the shell.

If you prefer to buy a car that has already been Trek prepared (recommended), we keep a list of cars for sale at the Trek office, and from time to time publish a “Trek Classifieds” document that we can send you.

At the risk of repeating myself, I strongly suggest you talk to the Trek office **prior** to building or buying a car.

WHAT ABOUT THE MONEY?

We spoke earlier about the donations. There is a minimum requirement of \$7,500 per car required to be donated to the RFDS 60 days prior to the commencement of the event.

As well as donations, there are two other payments required;

1. Entry Fee. The entry fee must accompany your entry form and is payable to The Royal Flying Doctor Service.

The entry fee for the 2025 Trek is \$1,100.00 per car.

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2. Disbursements & Meal Money. This fee is required with your entry form and is payable to The Outback Car Trek Pty Limited. This money includes all of your meals on the Trek, from breakfast on the Sunday morning up to and including the gala dinner on the Saturday night. It also includes a multitude of other payments, such as National Parks fees, camping fees, bus transfers, public liability insurance, photography, volunteer officials costs, and more.

The disbursements & meal money for the 2025 Trek is \$1,350 per person.

As well as the fees above, you will need to cover your own costs for running your car, accommodation, beverages, souvenirs and the like, and perhaps a small amount to support local community raffles, etc. Plus on a few days during the week we run fund-raisers where we split the money raised 50/50 with the RFDS and a local community group. This helps get much needed money back to the locals at a grass roots level.

SOME IDEAS FOR RAISING FUNDS, WRITING LETTERS ETC

Raising funds to take part in the Flying Doctor Outback Trek is carried out in many ways. Some entrants use donations from their own company whilst others have contacts in their industry. They may approach suppliers who have enjoyed good trading terms with the entrant's business. (This can be a straight cash donation or the provision of goods or services to raffle in the lead up to the event.) There are some who conduct lunches, raffles, lamington drives, fashion parades, theatre parties, old-fashioned dances, harbour cruises, golf days and barbecues. And more.

In this day of the internet, people are starting to use the web to raise funds and the RFDS currently have a relationship with www.raisely.com and an event specific web page is set up 9 months prior to the start of each event. We can help you set up your personal page under the Trek umbrella, using your own pictures, text, etc. Viral marketing is an ideal way to raise extra funds from your contact base, friends, staff, clients, etc.

N.B. Fundraising web pages cost money – they generally take a % of the donation. Please do not open your own fundraising web page – please go through the Trek office.

Local Councils and service clubs such as Rotary and Lions, and Leagues, Bowling and RSL Clubs almost all make donations to charities. It is a good idea to approach them and find out how to be considered for inclusion in their allocation.

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Whatever *you* do, there are some things you should know about the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS). If you are writing to a prospective donor, your letter should include certain things that the person needs to know. The following notes contain some facts and figures and there are some examples of letters you might write. Don't forget that as a Trek entrant, you have access to supplies of colour brochures each year to send to prospective sponsors.

THE FLYING DOCTOR OUTBACK TREK

If we had to describe the Flying Doctor Outback Trek in fund-raising terms, we might say it is an experience which people can rarely provide for themselves, a reward for the hard work in raising a not inconsiderable amount of money for the RFDS. It began in 1990 and by the end of the 2024 event the total donation made to the Service has reached **\$35 million**.

The Trek gives us the chance to see parts of Australia that most people never see, to meet those people who live in such remote areas and to begin to understand the problems they face, particularly in times of drought and other hardship.

Having fun is a big part of the Trek - entrants enjoying the experience but also Trekkers bringing enjoyment to the people we visit. The Trek also brings to country towns something else which is very important - outside money. Trek participants spend money that has originated from outside the area on meals, accommodation, drinks, fuel, vehicle spares and souvenirs, and contributions to local charities. Several times during the week we work with locals to raise money from Trekkers that is shared with the local community.

RFDS IS AUSTRALIA'S MOST TRUSTED CHARITY

In its most recent annual poll on trust, Readers' Digest surveyed 1,500 Australians to find out the professions, institutions and brands they trust and why. The Royal Flying Doctor Service achieved the number one ranking for the tenth consecutive year.

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THE ROYAL FLYING DOCTOR SERVICE

Here is a short list of facts and figures that a prospective donor likes to know:

- The RFDS was started by the Rev John Flynn, the man whose face appears on our \$20 note. Many of us learnt of him at school as “Flynn of the Inland”, the title of Ion L Idriess’ biography.
- The RFDS provides its expert emergency telephone consultation and routine health care services free of charge.
- The RFDS is a registered charity or association in every state and territory of Australia. It costs in excess of \$120 million a year to keep the Doctor flying and, although it receives funding from State and Federal Governments, the Service relies on the generosity of the community to continue serving the people of Outback Australia. Government funding does not cover capital expenditure, in particular the replacement of aircraft.
- The RFDS is the oldest, largest, most experienced and comprehensive aerial health and emergency service in the world.
- As an increasing number of people travel to country areas on business or holidays, the RFDS is called to attend to more and more city people.
- The RFDS is there for everyone who travels or works in the bush, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.
- RFDS annual statistics at a glance to 30 June 2014:
 - Has 23 aircraft operating bases
 - Flies 81 aircraft and charters a number more
 - Employs 1,800 staff
 - Services more than 80% of Australia (7,150,000 km²) - an area nearly the size of the United States of America
 - Attended 336,316 patient contacts (average of **921 per day**)
 - Carried out 36,951 patients transported by aeromedical aircraft
 - Conducted 24,889 health care clinics (average of 68 per day)
 - Flew 27,475,543 kms (average 75,275 km per day)
 - Conducted 71,704 tele-health clinics (average 196 per day)

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SAMPLE LETTER OF DONATION REQUEST

Probably the first thing you might like to do will be to write letters to prospective sponsors. The use of the Trek letterhead is recommended as it gives your request the stature it deserves. Each request should be accompanied by a Trek brochure, which sets out the relevant details of the event and the charity.

Everyone has his or her own way of writing a letter, but we recommend it should contain certain elements:

- i) a description of the event
- ii) mention of the charity
- iii) very importantly - what's in it for them

Here is an example:

Dear.....

Moved by the plight of many people in remote areas and by a long felt admiration for the work done by the Royal Flying Doctor Service, a group of us has set out to raise money for this great Australian charity. The enclosed brochure contains some important information about the Service, which needs more support from the cities now than ever before, as country-based fund-raising declines, and growingly uncertain weather patterns affect rural incomes.

The "vehicle" for this exercise is the annual Flying Doctor Outback Trek, and after thirty-five events participants in the Trek have already donated over \$35 million to the Service. The Trek, which travels through the Outback, also spends a lot of money in the townships and communities it visits and supports local charities along the way. Please take the time to read the brochure to understand our aims.

To support our entry in the Trek we are seeking \$..... from your company. Your cheque would be made payable to the "Royal Flying Doctor Service of Australia" and an official receipt for the entire amount will be issued by the Service. The donation will be fully tax deductible.

In return for your generosity, your company's name will appear on our car (give description) and (our crew will wear clothing displaying your logo, etc. etc.). When the Trek is over, we will provide you with a framed photograph to display where others can see your involvement (you may offer some kind of sponsor's "thank you" pack or even host a sponsors' get-together).

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Our team would be very proud to have you on our side and the RFDS and the people of the Outback whom they serve will be forever grateful.

Signed

Here is another example:

Dear.....

There is probably no organisation that is more closely identified with the Australian ethos than the Royal Flying Doctor Service. It is recognised nationally and internationally as the great saviour of the Outback - the lifeline to those for whom medical services would otherwise be almost non-existent. What is not as widely understood is that people from the cities are becoming increasingly dependent on the Service.

The RFDS covers an incredible 80% of this continent. That is 7,150,000 sq kms, an area greater than Western Europe. We enter 'RFDS Territory' less than an hour's drive from most capital cities. Emergency services, including attending to road accident victims, are free and do not discriminate between residents of city or country. As Australians we are lucky to have the world's oldest, largest, most experienced and comprehensive aerial health and emergency service at our disposal.

To run this service requires tens of millions of dollars per year and, although they receive Government funding, it does not cover the replacement of aircraft and most of this money must come from donations. In 1990, the Flying Doctor Outback Trek was established to raise money for this worthy cause. Inspired by the efforts of Dick Smith who conducted a car rally in 1985 which combined fun and adventure with fund-raising, the first 'Trek' left Sydney and headed for Hamilton Island. Since then, Treks have covered much of Australia, and the RFDS has received over \$35 million.

The 2024 Flying Doctor Outback Trek leaves Bendigo in Victoria and travels north to finish at the jump-off point to the Barrier Reef – Cairns. We are hoping you will consider supporting our efforts. If you agree, your cheque would be made payable to the "Royal Flying Doctor Service of Australia" and an official receipt for the entire amount will be issued by the Service. The donation will be fully tax deductible.

In return for your generosity, your company's name will appear on our car (give description) and (our crew will wear clothing displaying your logo, etc. etc.). When the Trek is over, we will provide you with a framed photograph to display where others

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can see your involvement.

Our team would be very proud to have you on our side and the RFDS and the people of the Outback whom they serve will be forever grateful.

Signed

ADDITIONAL HELP

Additional help is available by contacting the Trek office where you can arrange everything from stationery to guest speakers.

CONTACT US

The Outback Car Trek office is located in Dora Creek NSW, on Lake Macquarie, although we spend much of our time on the road. If we can fit it in we are happy to travel just about anywhere to assist those who wish to participate in the Trek and raise money for the RFDS.

We are more than happy to attend, and help out where we can, with your fund-raising activities and marketing efforts.

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I look forward to helping where I can.

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