

The Royal Flying Doctor Service

1 Before you read

a) Read the text and then listen to an interview with a member of the Royal Flying Doctor Service.

Many people in Australia live in remote areas, far away from towns or cities. Some sheep stations or big farms are thousands of miles from schools, post offices and hospitals.

People generally don't drive to get to their homes in these places, it would take too long. They fly there in small planes.

So what happens when someone is ill or when there is an emergency¹? How can they get help, advice, and medicine²? They can't just phone the doctor and ask him or her to visit them. Or can they?



b) Are these statements true or false? Tick the correct box. Then correct the false statements.

1. Mitch Mitcheson is a medical³ assistant.
2. He worked at a hospital in the past.
3. They take medicine and equipment with them on flights.
4. Sometimes they take someone from a hospital to a health⁴ centre.
5. In an emergency someone may need help quickly.
6. They always land at small airports.
7. The pilots don't like to fly when it's raining.
8. There are over 15 planes.
9. The government pays for everything that the RFDS needs.
10. The RFDS is not able to go everywhere.

true	false

¹emergency [i'mɜ:ɔʒnsi] Notfall • ²medicine [ˈmɛdɪsn] Medizin • ³medical [ˈmɛdɪkl] medizinisch • ⁴health [helθ] Gesundheits-

Lösung: b) 1. false (He's a doctor), 2. true, 3. true, 4. true, 5. true, 6. false (They may land at a sheep station.), 7. false (They can't take off when it's windy or dusty), 8. false (There are over 50 planes.), 9. false (The RFDS is a charity), 10. true

Listening text: The Royal Flying Doctor Service

- Interviewer:* Good morning. In this morning's 'World of Work' programme I'm going to talk to somebody who does a really interesting job. It's a job I've always wanted to find out about, so let's see what Mitch Mitcheson can tell us about working for the Australian Flying Doctor Service. Hello, Mitch.
- Mitch:* G'day. And that's the Royal Flying Doctor Service, the RFDS.
- Interviewer:* OK. So are you a doctor?
- Mitch:* Yes. I worked in a hospital in Adelaide for a few years and now I work for the Royal Flying Doctor Service.
- Interviewer:* Is it just you in a plane, Mitch?
- Mitch:* Well, not usually. It's me and at least one medical assistant, with lots of medicine and equipment. And we have a pilot to fly the plane of course. And often we have someone from a hospital with special medical training. We take them to a health centre in a remote area. They can hold a one-day clinic there and see all the local cases in just a few hours. Then they fly back home with us again.
- Interviewer:* I see, so it's not just emergency flights?
- Mitch:* Oh no. But those can be the difficult jobs. People can hurt themselves really badly on machines at farms and mines, and then they need help fast. But sometimes it's hard for the pilot, too. I mean, OK, at our end we're flying from an airport with all the equipment you need. But in an emergency we may land at a sheep station or near a mine, where the pilot's happy if they've just got a piece of ground with no big rocks in the way. And then there's the weather.
- Interviewer:* You mean, it's not always hot and sunny in Australia?
- Mitch:* Oh, we don't mind if it rains. No, it's the wind that the pilots worry about. It could be too windy for the plane to take off. And when it's windy, it's dusty, and then we can't see what we're doing.
- Interviewer:* How many planes are there?
- Mitch:* There are over 50 planes and the RFDS flies from 21 places all over Australia. We pick up about a hundred people every day.
- Interviewer:* A hundred? That's a lot. How many people work for the RFDS?
- Mitch:* Well, with medical workers, the people who organize things, the people who look after the planes ..., that's nearly a thousand people who work for the charity ...
- Interviewer:* Charity!? You mean the service isn't paid for by the government?
- Mitch:* Well, some of the money comes from the government and the states, but not all of it. Lots of people give money to support the work we do. We get money from private people and big firms. People know they're getting a good service for the money they give. We help people in an emergency, we travel to remote areas, and we also help by taking people from one hospital to another.
- Interviewer:* That's when it's too far to drive there.
- Mitch:* That's right. But although we flew nearly 24,000 kilometres last year, we still can't reach the whole country. Some places are just too far away, even for the RFDS.