

# High flying 'Down-under'

Per P. Bredmose<sup>1</sup>, Matthew R. Hooper<sup>2</sup>

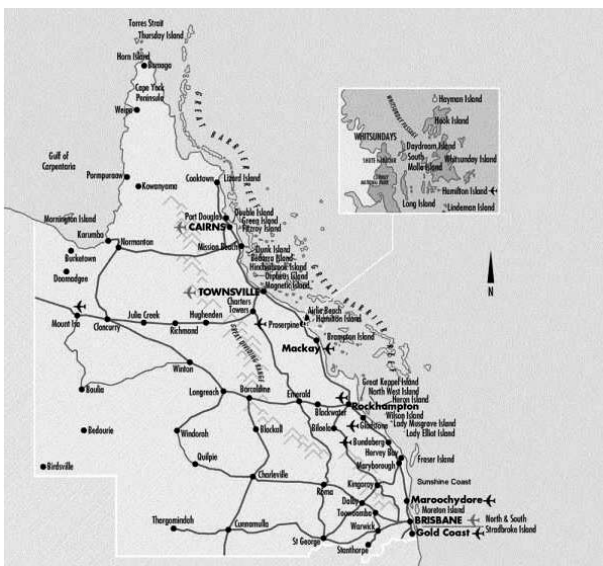
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- 1 Registrar in Aeromedical Retrieval & Prehospital Care, CareFlight Medical Services, North Queensland, Australia
- 2 Consultant in Intensive Care Medicine, The Townsville Hospital  
Consultant in Aeromedical Retrieval & Prehospital Care and  
Director of Medical Training, CareFlight Medical Services, North Queensland, Australia

## Correspondence

Per P. Bredmose

E-mail: bredmose@hotmail.com



## Introduction

With a land area of 7 692 024 square kilometres, Australia is the sixth largest country in the world. The state of Queensland in the North East corner of the country is the second largest and covers just over 22% of Australia's land area (1 730 648 square kilometres) and approximately 20% of it's population (approximately 4 million). From dense tropical rain forest to dry inland deserts and from a bustling developing capital city (Brisbane) to the largest living organism in the world (the Great Barrier Reef), Queensland is a land of enormous geographical contrast. With this, there is inherent complexity in the approach to the delivery of high level medical care to acutely ill and injured people. For many years, the relatively



widespread population of Queensland has relied upon Air Medical retrieval services. Until recently, the majority of medical staff responsible for this role were sourced from the various Departments' of Emergency Medicine. Competency, training and clinical oversight within this model was highly variable. In 2005, the role for medical staffing for the vast majority of these prehospital and interhospital retrieval tasks was awarded to CareFlight Medical Services. Currently, CareFlight Medical Services is responsible for all medical staffing for fixed and rotary wing aeromedical retrieval across five Queensland bases; Gold Coast and Brisbane in the South and Mackay, Townsville and Cairns in the North (see map). Working integrally with the State's Rescue Helicopter service (Queensland Rescue) and the Royal Flying Doctor Service of Australia, CareFlight Medical Services is actively developing one of Australia's largest and busiest aeromedical retrieval services. There is also an increasing demand for CareFlight's expanding international retrieval service with a dedicated Jet available to rapidly respond into the Pacific Islands and Papua New Guinea.

### Training and Experience

With accreditation for training granted by the Australasian College for Emergency Medicine, the Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists and the Australian Joint Faculty of Intensive Care, Doctors working within this service are not only guaranteed of a truly unique clinical experience in one of the world's most naturally beautiful regions, but also of world class teaching, training, research opportunities and clinical governance.



*Winch rescue.*



*Tully Pad.*



*Prehospital road trauma.*

Doctors are primarily physicians training in a Critical Care medical specialty (Emergency Medicine, Anaesthetics or Intensive Care). In 2006, there are visiting training Doctors from South Africa, Italy, the United Kingdom and Denmark and there is likely to be ongoing and indeed improving international links as the service develops further.

This job covers all aspects of prehospital and retrieval medicine including the response to primary trauma and interhospital transport of critically ill children and adults. Rotary wing missions may also involve winch operations and physical rescue from confined and isolated locations. Whilst trauma, severe sepsis and acute cardiac instability are common retrieval concerns, there are a number of clinical problems that are unlikely to be seen outside of this environment. Snake, spider or jelly fish envenomation are not uncommon. And don't forget about the crocodiles and sharks! Add to this high ambient temperatures and humidity during the summer months, and you have a unique, if not challenging, enormously rewarding job.

A dedicated training week including Helicopter Underwater Escape Training provided by CareFlight's Training service (CareFlight Safety Services) and focussed prehospital road trauma extrication training with the Fire Rescue Service is followed by weekly training days and an in-depth clinical audit process. Research is actively encouraged and there are strong links with James Cook University's Medical School

based in the tropical 'capital city', Townsville. Current projects include endotracheal cuff pressures and minimally occlusive volumes in long distance aeromedical transport, thermal stress in the aeromedical environment and an assessment of Key Performance Indicators for prehospital and retrieval medicine.

### **Living in Queensland**

The lifestyle in Queensland is relaxed and informal. Even in the North during the monsoon season (November to May), the weather is surprisingly comfortable. There is access to some of the world's most beautiful beaches and isolated tropical islands, the 'outback' and the lush rainforests of the coastal hinterland. Add to this the opportunity to be involved in such a dynamic and developing aeromedical service and you have, in my mind, the perfect job.

### **Further Information**

CareFlight Medical Services are actively recruiting experienced Critical Care Physicians worldwide who are interested in a period of dedicated retrieval and prehospital work in Queensland, Australia. Positions usually commence in January or July and run for six months. With appropriate medical registration in Queensland, there may be scope to continue the high flying 'down under' experience in other areas of Australia's world class health system.

