

Welcome to the Outback Car Trek

This 'Get Started Kit' is packed with useful information to help you make the most of your Outback Car Trek experience, from your first steps right through to the start line.



Thinking about joining the Outback Car Trek?

- > Have you heard about the Flying Doctor Outback Car Trek and want to learn more?
- > Are you keen to enter but unsure where to start?
- > Ever dreamed of visiting remote parts of Australia that most people never get to see?
- > Want to have more fun than you thought possible – while making a real difference to some of Australia's most vulnerable communities?

If you answered yes to any of the above, you're in the right place. We're here to guide you through everything you need to know to get your car on the start line of the Flying Doctor Outback Car Trek.

About the Outback Car Trek

The Outback Car Trek is not just a road trip – it's an annual fundraising adventure with heart. Since its inception in 1990, this iconic event has raised over \$37 million for the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS), helping deliver life-saving healthcare to some of the most remote and underserved communities across Australia.

Each year, participants take part in a unique journey through the outback, driving older 2WD vehicles across rugged terrain, visiting towns rarely seen by most Australians, and forming lifelong friendships – all while raising vital funds for one of the country's most trusted charities.

The RFDS is a registered charity in every state and territory, and while it receives government support, this funding does not cover capital costs – especially the replacement of aircraft. That's where community-driven initiatives like the Outback Car Trek play a crucial role. Every dollar raised helps keep the Flying Doctor flying, ensuring that Australians in rural and remote areas have access to emergency and primary healthcare, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Whether you're a first-time participant or a seasoned Trekker, this is your chance to make a real impact, see the heart of Australia, and have the time of your life – all in support of a cause that truly matters.



When is it held?

The Trek is traditionally held in June each year, finishing on the NSW Public Holiday, King's Birthday long weekend. This timing allows participants to either fly loved ones into the final destination to celebrate or return home with an extra day to spare before the work week begins.

What kind of event is it?

The Outback Car Trek is not a race or rally. There are no timed sections, and no competitive driving. The only competition is to see who can raise the most money for the Flying Doctor!

It is an event for older 2WD cars, and it brings together people with shared values for a week of fun, adventure, and purpose.

The four tenets of the Trek

1. Have Fun
2. Travel to some of the most remote and beautiful parts of Australia
3. Create a positive social and financial impact on the towns we visit
4. Raise funds for the Royal Flying Doctor Service

Where does the Trek go?

One of the many great things about the Outback Car Trek is that we start and finish in different locations each year. We rarely return to the same towns, ensuring a fresh and exciting experience every time. Our goal is to showcase as many unique and varied towns and landscapes as possible.

Registrations and the traditional Cut-A-Rama haircut night are held on the Saturday evening, with the Trek officially kicking off at breakfast on Sunday morning.

Extended Treks - every five years

Every five years, the Outback Car Trek traditionally runs a longer event (10–12 days), allowing us to reach more remote and spectacular destinations.

- > In 2014, we celebrated our 25th Anniversary by travelling from Alice Springs to Margaret River – via Broome!
- > In 2019, the Trek journeyed from Renmark to Darwin.
- > In 2025, marking our 35th birthday, we travelled from Bathurst (NSW) to Cairns, in FNQ.

Who can participate?

Participation in the Flying Doctor Outback Car Trek is earned by raising a minimum donation of \$7,500 per car for the Royal Flying Doctor Service. This donation is 100% tax deductible.

Anyone aged 18 years or older at the commencement of the event is eligible to participate, subject to a few terms and conditions.

What about the cars?

The cars are a big part of the fun! The Trek is designed for older model 2WD vehicles that have been mechanically strengthened to handle the rigours of outback driving.

We often travel on farm tracks, trails, and remote roads that may be poorly maintained or affected by weather. That unpredictability is part of the adventure.

To ensure safety and suitability, we provide a Supplementary Regulations document outlining:

- > Car eligibility
- > Required mechanical modifications.
- > Safety standards

You can download the Supp Regs from our website, or we can send you a copy directly.

Car eligibility

In general, most 2WD vehicles that are over 30 years old as of 1 January in the year of the event are eligible to enter the Outback Car Trek, subject to written confirmation from the event organiser. Identical model run-ons may also be accepted.

If you are considering building or entering a car for the first time, it is essential to contact the Head of Motoring Events at the Royal Flying Doctor Service to confirm your vehicle's suitability before purchasing or starting any modifications.

Note: In some cases, vehicles that are considered unusual or mechanically complex may be refused entry at the organiser's discretion.

Why simpler cars are preferred

The Outback Car Trek has a proud history of keeping cars running in tough conditions, thanks to our team of mechanically minded volunteers known as the “sweeps.” These support vehicles travel with the Trek and perform roadside repairs to help participants reach the finish line.

However, as vehicles became more complex in the late 1970s and 1980s, with features like fuel injection, turbochargers, superchargers, and onboard engine management systems, the ability to fix certain issues on the road has become more limited.

To avoid breakdowns that cannot be fixed in the field, we strongly recommend speaking with the Trek office before committing to a car build or purchase.

How do I get a car for the Trek?

It is simple: you can either build one or buy one.

- > If you are building a car from scratch, make sure to consult the Head of Motoring Events first. We will guide you on what's required to meet safety and mechanical standards.
- > If you'd prefer to buy a car that's already Trek-prepared, we maintain a list of cars for sale at the Royal Flying Doctor Service. We also publish a “Trek Classifieds” document from time to time, which we can send to you.

Reminder: Always speak with the Head of Motoring Events before buying or building a car. It'll save you time, money, and potential headaches down the track.



What about the money?

To participate in the Flying Doctor Outback Car Trek, each car must meet a minimum fundraising requirement of \$7,500, donated to the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS). This donation is 100% tax deductible and must be received at least 60 days prior to the event start date.

In addition to the donation, there are two other fees:

1. Entry Fee

- > **Amount:** \$1,075 per car
- > **Payable to:** The Royal Flying Doctor Service
- > This fee must accompany your entry form.

2. Disbursements & Meal Money

- > **Amount:** \$1,050 per person
- > **Payable to:** The Royal Flying Doctor Service
- > This covers all meals from Day 1 Breakfast to Final Night Gala Dinner, plus a wide range of event-related costs including:
 - National Parks and camping fees
 - Bus transfers
 - Public liability insurance
 - Event photography
 - Volunteer support costs.
 - And more

Additional Costs to Consider

Participants are also responsible for covering:

- > Fuel and maintenance for your vehicle.
- > Accommodation
- > Beverages, souvenirs, and personal expenses
- > Contributions to local community raffles and fundraisers

Throughout the week, we also run shared fundraising activities, where proceeds are split 50/50 between the RFDS and local community groups, helping support grassroots initiatives in the towns we visit.

Fundraising tips & ideas

Fundraising for the Trek can be creative and fun! Here are some proven methods:

- > Corporate support – Ask your company or industry contacts for donations or sponsorship.
- > Supplier partnerships – Approach businesses you work with for contributions or raffle items.
- > Community events – Host BBQs, golf days, fashion parades, theatre nights, or lamington drives
- > Online fundraising – Use the Trek's official platform on <https://outbackcartrek.raiselysite.com/>. We'll help you set up a personalised page with your own photos and story.

Important: Please do not create your own independent fundraising page. These platforms often charge fees and may not be linked to the Trek's official campaign. Always go through the Royal Flying Doctor Service to set up your page.

Local support opportunities

Don't forget to reach out to:

- > Local councils
- > Rotary, Lions, and other service clubs
- > RSL, bowling, and sporting clubs

Many of these organisations regularly donate to charitable causes and may be happy to support your Trek journey.



What you should know about the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS)

If you're writing to a prospective donor or sponsor, it's important to share key information about the RFDS and the Outback Car Trek. Below are some facts and figures to help you craft a compelling message. As a Trek entrant, you also have access to **colour brochures** each year – just contact the Trek office to request copies.

The Flying Doctor Outback Car Trek

The Flying Doctor Outback Car Trek is more than just a fundraising event – it's a unique experience and a reward for the hard work involved in raising a significant donation for the RFDS.

- > The Trek began in 1990, and by the end of the 2025 event, it had raised over \$37 million for the RFDS.
- > It gives participants the chance to explore parts of Australia that most people never get to see, meet locals in remote communities, and gain insight into the challenges they face – especially during droughts and other hardships.
- > While fun and camaraderie are central to the Trek, it also brings economic benefits to the towns we visit. Participants spend money on meals, accommodation, fuel, vehicle repairs, and local goods – injecting funds into regional economies.
- > Several times during the week, we partner with local groups to run fundraising activities, with proceeds shared between the RFDS and the host community.

About the RFDS - Australia's 'Most Trusted Charity'

The Royal Flying Doctor Service has been ranked as Australia's most trusted charity for the last five consecutive years, according to the annual Reader's Digest Trust Poll. This recognition reflects the RFDS's vital role in delivering emergency and primary healthcare to people living in rural and remote areas across the country.

Key facts about the RFDS

- > Founded by Rev. John Flynn, whose face appears on the \$20 note. Many Australians know him as *Flynn of the Inland*, the title of Ion L. Idriess' biography.
- > Provides free emergency medical consultations and routine healthcare services to people in remote areas.
- > Registered as a charity in every state and territory of Australia.
- > Operates 24/7, 365 days a year, serving anyone who lives, works, or travels in the bush.
- > Costs over \$120 million annually to operate. While government funding helps, it does not cover capital costs, such as aircraft replacement – community donations are essential.

RFDS at a glance

- > Covers over 7.7 million square kilometres – more than 80% of Australia's landmass.
- > Operates 65+ primary health clinics daily.
- > Handles 1,000+ patient contacts per day.
- > Flew over 28 million kilometres last year – equivalent to 35 trips to the moon and back.
- > Delivered 60,000+ COVID-19 vaccinations to rural and remote Australians.
- > Provides services including emergency retrievals, primary health care, dental, mental health, telehealth, and patient transport.

Sample Donation Request Letter

Writing to prospective sponsors is often the first step in your fundraising journey. To make your request as effective as possible, we recommend using the **Outback Car Trek letterhead** and including a **Trek brochure**, which outlines the event and its charitable purpose.

While everyone has their own style, your letter should ideally include:

1. A brief description of the Outback Car Trek
2. Information about the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS)
3. Most importantly – **what's in it for the sponsor**

Sample Letter 1 - Community-Focused Appeal

Dear [Sponsor Name],

Moved by the challenges faced by people in remote areas – and inspired by the incredible work of the Royal Flying Doctor Service – our team is proud to be participating in the Flying Doctor Outback Car Trek.

The enclosed brochure provides key information about the RFDS, which continues to need strong support from city-based donors as rural fundraising declines and unpredictable weather affects regional incomes.

The Outback Car Trek is an annual fundraising adventure that travels through remote parts of Australia, raising money for the RFDS while supporting local communities along the way. Since 1990, Trek participants have donated over \$37 million to the Service.

To support our entry, we are seeking a donation of \$[amount] from your company. Your contribution would be made payable to the Royal Flying Doctor Service of Australia, and you will receive an official receipt for the full amount. Donations are 100% tax deductible.

In return, your company's name will be proudly displayed on our car (describe vehicle and placement), and our crew will wear branded clothing featuring your logo. After the event, we'll present you with a framed photograph of our team and vehicle, showcasing your support. You may also wish to host a sponsor thank-you event or display your involvement publicly.

We would be honoured to have you on board. Your support will make a real difference to the RFDS and the people of the Outback they serve.

Warm regards,

[Your Name]

[Contact Details]

Sample Letter 2 - National Impact Appeal

Dear [Sponsor Name],

There is perhaps no organisation more closely tied to the Australian spirit than the Royal Flying Doctor Service. Recognised both nationally and internationally, the RFDS is a lifeline for those in remote areas – providing emergency and primary healthcare where no other services exist.

What many don't realise is that the RFDS also serves city-based travellers, attending road accidents and emergencies just outside major urban centres. Covering over 7.7 million square kilometres, the RFDS reaches more than 80% of Australia, including areas less than an hour's drive from most capital cities.

Operating this service costs tens of millions of dollars annually. While government funding helps, it does not cover capital costs, such as aircraft replacement. That's why community fundraising is so vital.

In 1990, the Flying Doctor Outback Car Trek was established to support the RFDS. Inspired by Dick Smith's 1985 fundraising rally, the Trek has since raised over \$37 million. This year, the Trek travels from Bathurst to Cairns, visiting remote towns and injecting funds into local economies.

We hope you'll consider supporting our team. Your donation of \$[amount], made payable to the Royal Flying Doctor Service of Australia, will be fully tax deductible and receipted officially.

In return, your company's branding will be featured on our car (describe vehicle and placement) and team apparel. After the event, we'll provide a framed photo of your sponsored vehicle and crew, and you'll be recognised as a valued supporter of one of Australia's most trusted charities.

We'd be proud to have you on our team – and the RFDS and the communities they serve will be deeply grateful.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

[Contact Details]

Additional help

If you need support with your fundraising efforts, marketing, or event planning, additional help is available through the Head of Motoring Events at the Royal Flying Doctor Service.

We can assist with:

- > Access to promotional materials and stationery
- > Guidance on fundraising strategies
- > Arranging guest speakers for your events
- > Providing brochures and branded resources to support your outreach

Contact us

The RFDS Motoring Events team spends much of our time on the road supporting Trek participants and fundraising initiatives.

If we can fit it in, we're happy to travel just about anywhere to assist those who are committed to participating in the Outback Car Trek and raising funds for the RFDS.

We're more than happy to attend and support your fundraising activities, help with promotional efforts, and provide advice to make your campaign a success.

For more information or assistance, please contact:

motoringevents@rfdssse.org.au

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