Aeromedical Response to the Queensland Floods & Cyclone

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The furthest corner. The finest care.

Queensland Government

ASA & FNA 23rd Scientific Meeting , August/September, 2011

State of Queensland

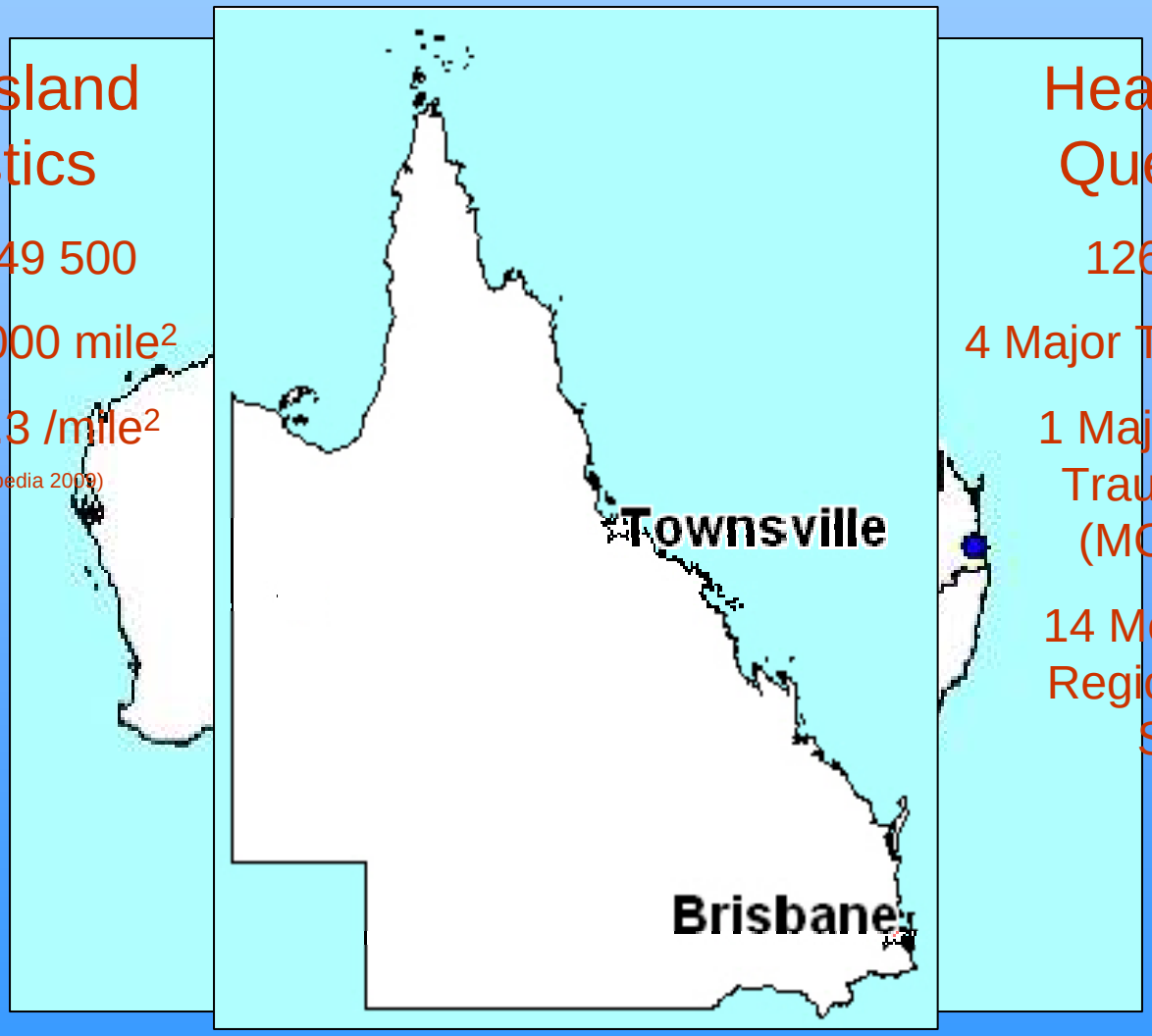
Queensland Statistics

Pop.: 4 349 500

Area: 670 000 mile^2

Density: 6.3 /mile^2

(ABS 2007, Wikipedia 2008)



Healthcare in Queensland

126 Hospitals

4 Major Trauma Services

1 Major Paediatric Trauma Service (MCH & RCH)

14 Metropolitan & Regional Trauma Services

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Clinical Coordination in Qld

- QCC coordinates the safe aeromedical transport and retrieval of all patients in Queensland

- 2009-10: 18,432 referrals, 78% fixed wing
- Provision of specialist clinical advice
- Determines appropriate retrieval teams for patient retrieval and transfer

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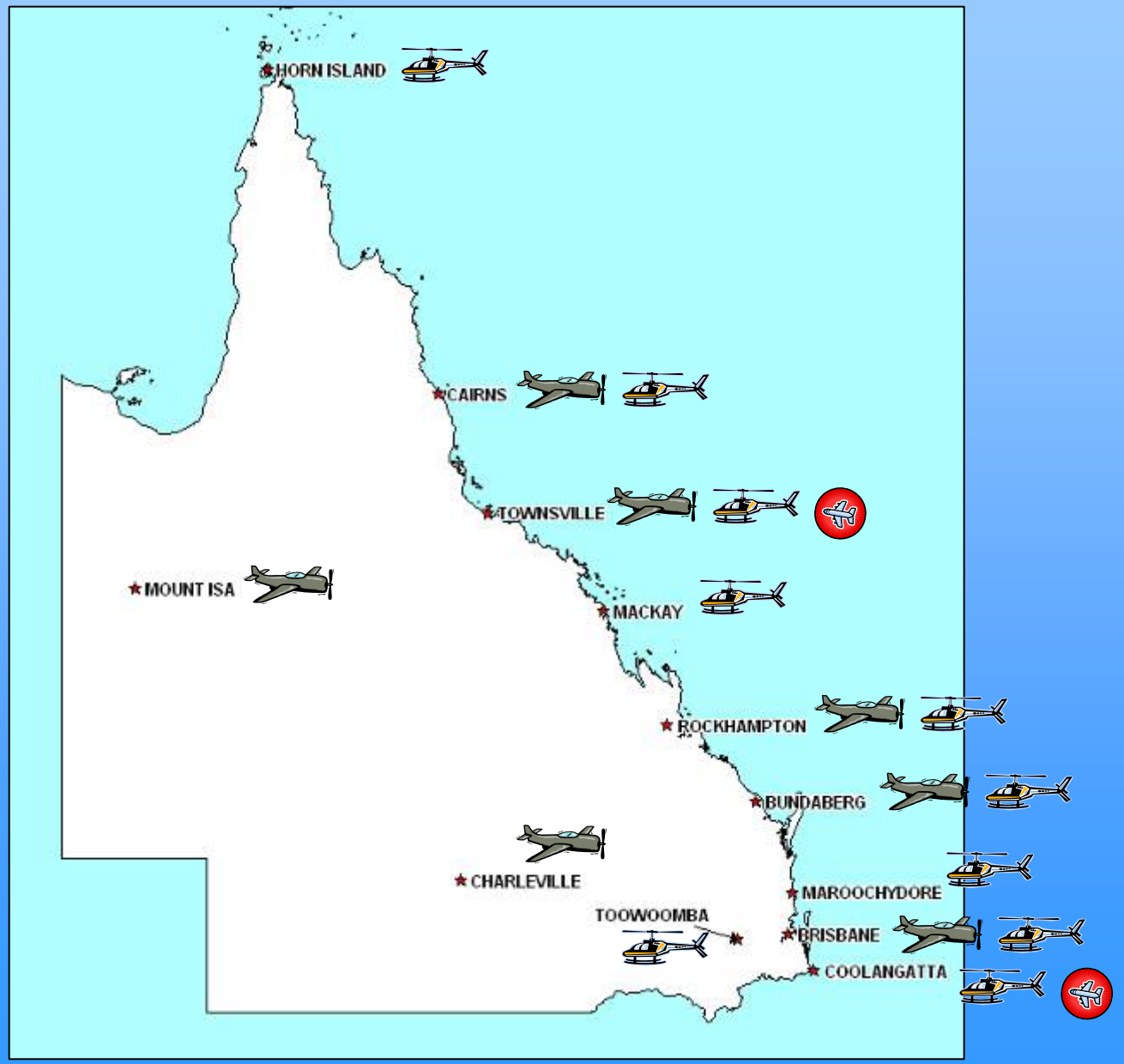
Aeromedical Resources in Queensland

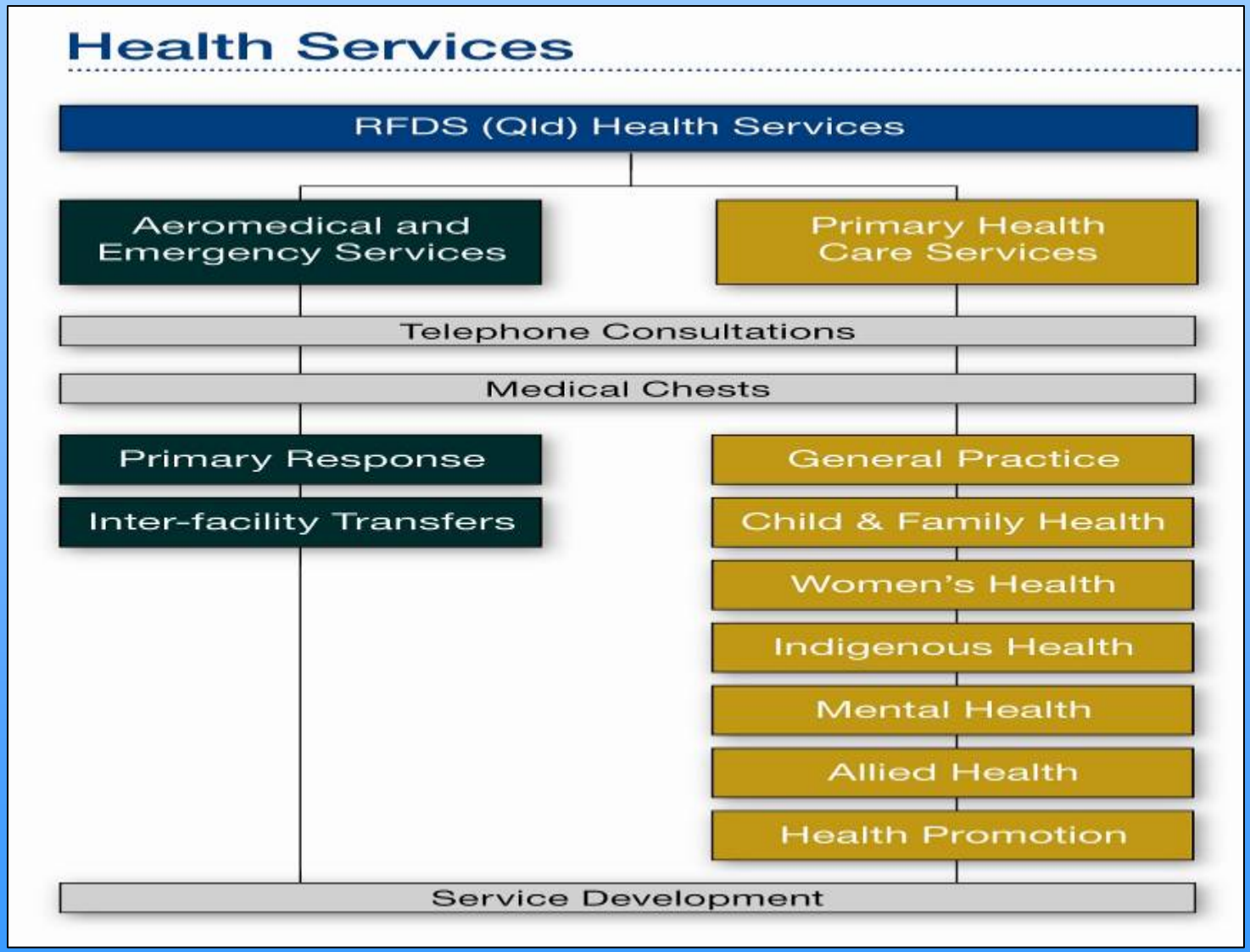
RFDS

Rotary Wing

Careflight Qld Jets



RFDS Health Services



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RFDS -Queensland

BASE LOCATION (8 BASES IN QLD)	*AEROMEDICAL*	*AEROMEDICAL AND PRIMARY HEALTH CARE*	*MENTAL HEALTH*	*NUMBER OF PT. TRANSPORTS 2010-2011*
BRISBANE	X			**2,458**
BUNDABERG	X			**1,843**
ROCKHAMPTON	X			**2,170**
TOWNSVILLE	X	X		**1,991**
CHARLEVILLE	X	X		**306**
MT.ISA	X	X		**976**
CAIRNS	X	X		**1,169**
LONGREACH			X	

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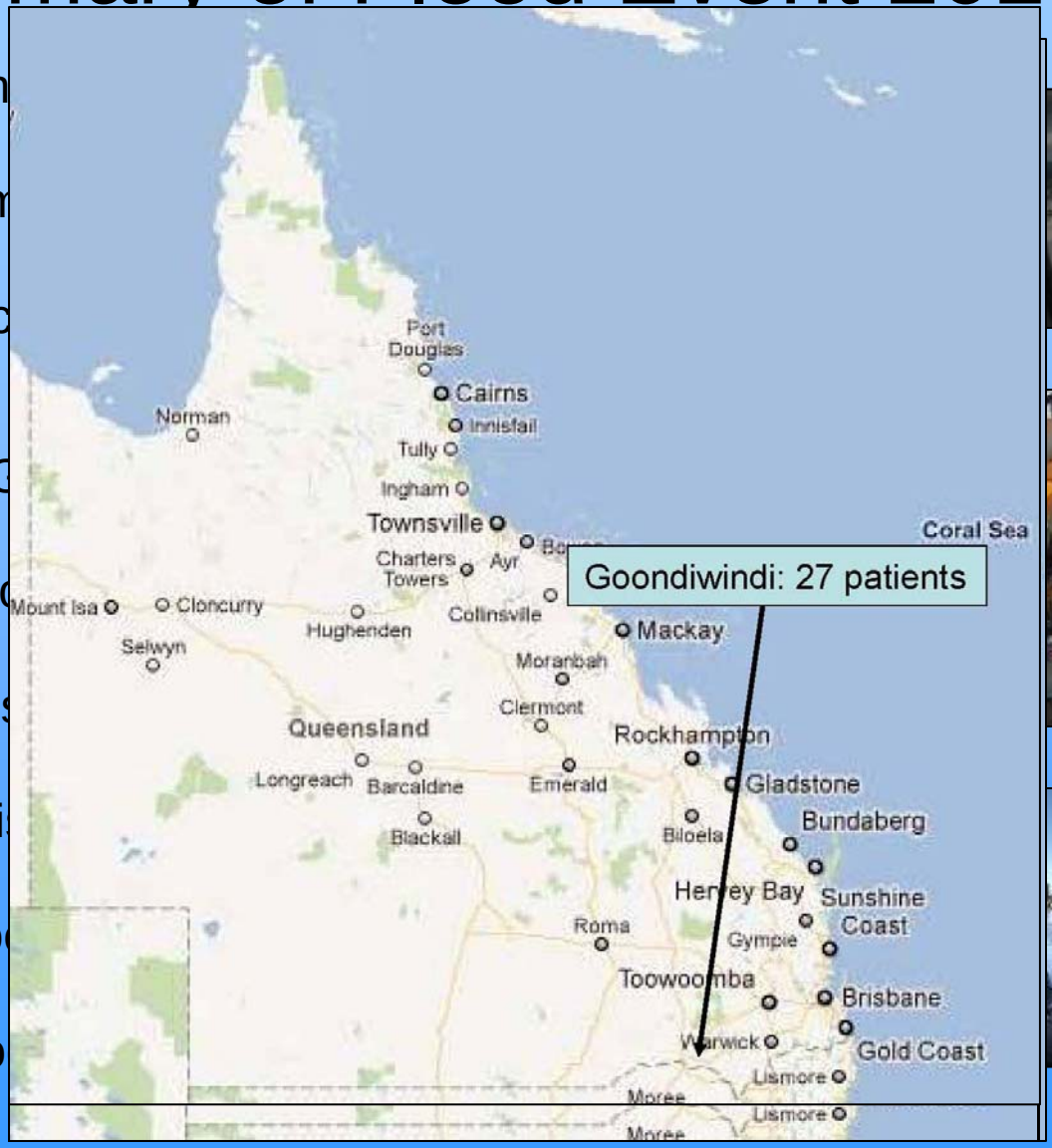
State Response to Flood Crisis

- Local and state disaster planning across multiple districts simultaneously during late December through January
- Disaster agencies SHECC, SDCC, SOC
- Information limited-constantly evolving needs identified as flooding continued
- Senior level planning between QCC, RSQ and service providers to mount responses
- Major considerations: staffing, human resources, aeromedical resources

Summary of Flood Event 2010/11

- Dec 28th Th
- Dec 29th Em
- Jan 1st Roc
  –
- Jan 4th St C
- Jan 10th Toc
- Jan 11th Bris
- Jan 11th Bri
- Jan 11th Co
- Jan 14th Go



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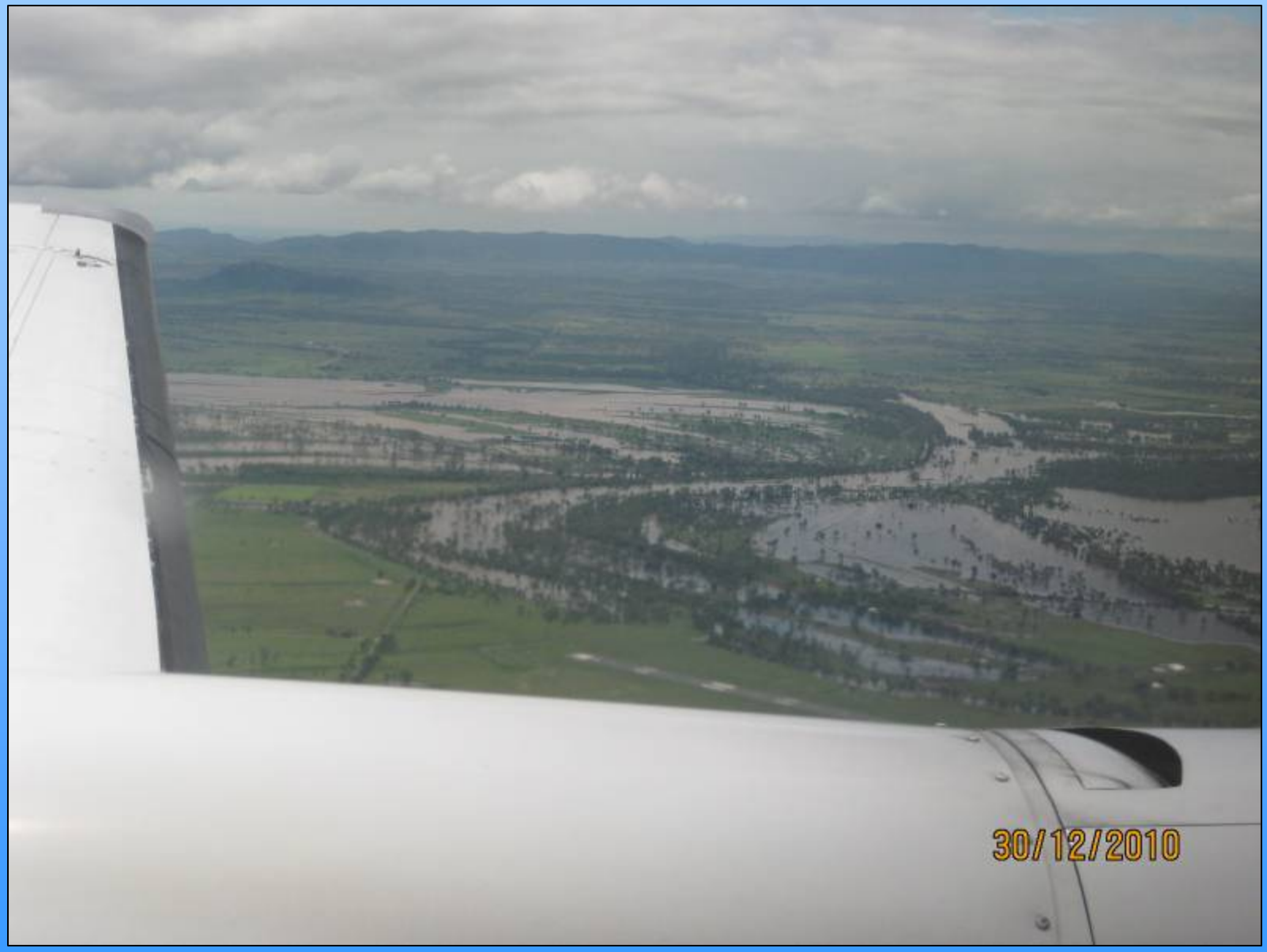

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RFDS Response & Challenges

- Rockhampton RFDS closed
- Transfer of Aircraft/Operational personnel to Brisbane.
- Increase service delivery out of Brisbane
  - D1 shift x 2 (additional aircraft and crew)
  - D2 shift x 2 (additional aircraft and crew)
  - Night shift x2 (additional aircraft x 2)
- Cancellation of leave
- QCC shifts also staffed by BN Flight Nurses
- Blending of different crews
- Bundaberg operational crew relocated to gain access to Base
- Unwelcome guests in Rockhampton!!!

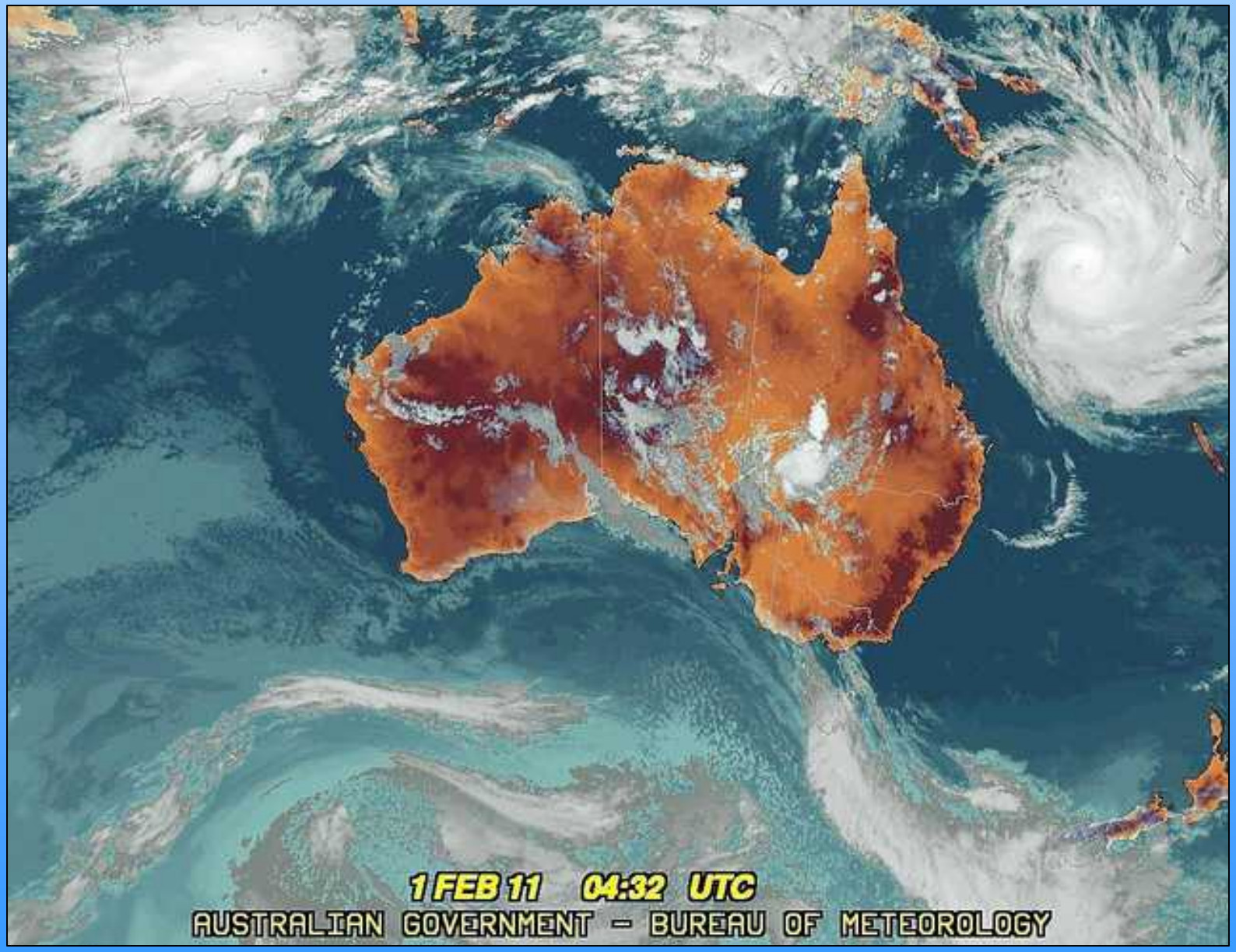
System Challenges

- Crisis management, intersection with multiple NGO and government agencies
- Emergency Helicopter network affected by tasking conflicts
- Moving feast, miscommunication in evacuation of hospitals and nursing homes
- Understanding of aeromedical requirements limited
- Staffing resources-holiday season & flood affected
- Flooding affected ability of QAS to respond to “000”, QCC coordination for general population

What Went Well

- “Can do” attitude prevailed
- Great service provider response across rotary and RFDS
- Beds found for nursing home type patients across Brisbane
- New roles in QCC-flood nurse and medical coordinator
- Innovation from service providers to move assets and staffing

OK, the floods are abating, then...



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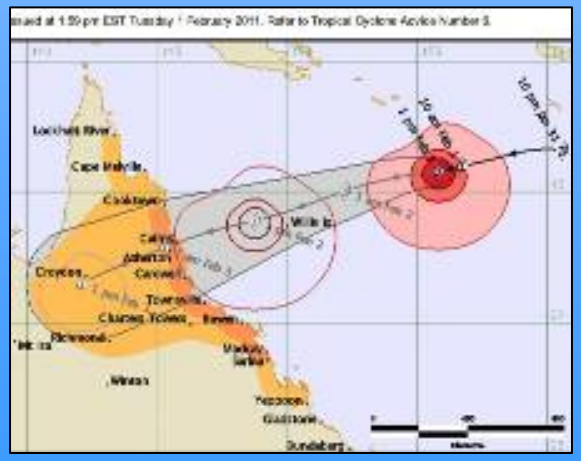
Cyclone Yasi

- Jan 30th: Cyclone Anthony, Cat 2 crosses near Bowen
- Feb 1st:
  - Cyclone Yasi, Cat 3 and strengthening, forecast to make landfall over Cairns, with tidal surge of possibly 2 metres above the highest tide
  - State Government disaster planning
  - Decision to evacuate Cairns Base Hospital made 1100 hrs
  - ICU and NICU patients high priority for moving



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Action plan

- Assessment of aeromedical evacuation requirement in collaboration with Cairns district
- All resources tasked
  - RFDS aircraft
  - CMS jet
  - ADF
  - Government jet
- Additional staffing in QCC
- Leadership group on site for entire evac
- Northern coordination performed from Brisbane to free up medical staff into Townsville ED

Challenges

- Communication!
- Short timeframe-18 hours to complete evacuation. Cairns airport closing at 0800 2nd Feb
- Hospital handover versus tarmac
- Ambulances being garaged overnight
- Best coordination planning fell over, multiple people involved in decision making
- Reception and transport in Brisbane
- Staff welfare including fatigue impact already felt from the floods

Cairns Evacuation by RFDS

DATE	*RF*	*ANSFERRED*
February 1st	BN Aircraft tas	al patients
	RK aircraft tas	ed patient
	TSV aircraft ta	d patients.
	CNS aircraft ta	ed patient ndency patient
	CNS aircraft ta	tal patients
February 2nd	BN Aircraft tas	tal patients

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RFDS Fleet Safety

Cairns Fleet

- Initially relocated to Mt. Isa (aeromedical on-call aircraft remained in Cairns until day before cyclone)
- Relocated to Charleville when Mt. Isa threatened by Yasi
- On-call aircraft domiciled in Brisbane after completion of evacuation

Townsville Fleet

- Relocated to Brisbane with 3 pilots and 2 flight nurses

Rockhampton Fleet

- Relocated to Brisbane with 1 flight nurse

Mt Isa Fleet

- Relocated to Charleville with 2 RFDS MO's, 2 flight Nurses and 3 pilots

Charleville

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RFDS On Ground Response

- Medical Response Team from RFDS also activated post cyclone to the worst hit areas, this being Cardwell and Tully

- Consisted of RFDS Medical Officer, two nurses and the SEWB Team.

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What Went Well

- Staff pulled together
- Agencies worked in the best interests of patients
- No adverse events or outcomes
- RFDS Intranet and SMS Alerts
- Beds available in Brisbane!

Repatriation

- RSQ coordinated the repatriation of 90 patients from 8 Brisbane Hospitals back to Cairns
- Limitations with bed availability in Cairns
- ADF C130 transported 35 patients on 5/2/11
- Dedicated RFDS aircraft and crew transported 21 patients
- Dedicated CMS jet
- 2-4 patients moved per day until 28th Feb

- Over time patient conditions allowed some to return via commercial or private means

Questions?

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