



# BlackBerry Customer Success Story



**Royal Flying Doctor Service**  
WESTERN OPERATIONS

The Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) of Australia is a large aeromedical organization. Using aviation, medical and communications technology, it delivers extensive primary health care and 24-hour emergency service to those who live, work and travel throughout Australia.

**Industry:** Public Sector

**Region:** Asia Pacific

**Company Size:**  
Mid-sized Organization - 282 employees

**Email Platform:**  
Microsoft® Exchange

**Solution:** Email, Internet Access,  
Conference Calls

## BlackBerry Smartphones Help Keep Doctors Flying and in Touch with Experts and Information

### THE CHALLENGE

RFDS covers a large and expansive geographical area, which comprises four separate operational sectors including Western Australia (WA). WA occupies the entire western third of the Australian continent and is the largest state in Australia. Because of the scope of the terrain covered, the RFDS Western Operations team faced a significant challenge in providing the state population with the necessary medical support.

While medical support is provided by approximately 40 doctors and medical officers on the ground, getting them onsite, on time, and with the correct equipment is a much larger undertaking that requires coordinating staff, pilots and flights.

In the past, they relied on a complex network of mobile phones for voice communication and sent additional data and emails using computers. Early mobile phones often had limited functionality and relying on computers to send medical data had many drawbacks - the most obvious was that, in most cases doctors, pilots and support staff are not desk-bound but live and work in the field often thousands of kilometers apart.

In recent years, the organization had deployed a variety of smartphones, but had various problems with each. Many of these devices were difficult to use, had poor battery and signal life, and did not allow conference calling to take place.

“Our previous mobile devices were very cumbersome and they didn’t do multi-party conferencing, which is often key if our doctors want to ask many practitioners for their collective advice,” said Dr. Stephen Langford, Director of Medical Services, RFDS Western Operations.

### THE SOLUTION

RFDS Western Operations decided to distribute BlackBerry® smartphones throughout the organization - to both medical teams and the executive management team of directors and operational line managers.

BlackBerry smartphones allow both the medical and operational staff to call each other and keep in touch so that doctors can be sent to where they are needed. The phones also facilitate conference calls so multiple callers can be added to, or dropped from, any given conversation.

Using BlackBerry smartphones means doctors can easily check and respond to emails while they are on the go. Even when they are disconnected and on a flight, as the emails will cache and be sent out as soon as they are connected to the network.

This is highly useful since sometimes doctors can go up to a week without being near a desktop or laptop computer with internet access.

“The whole set up process for the BlackBerry solution was very easy from start to finish. The BlackBerry solution’s documentation is very thorough and we have found that it more than meets our requirements. The usability and portability of BlackBerry smartphones is also far better than any alternative we looked at.”

Matt Turany  
ICT Manager  
RFDS Western Operations

Other functions of the BlackBerry smartphone also assist doctors with their daily jobs. Doctors are now able to access RFDS intranet, which houses various medical reference papers and documents. They can also access comprehensive diagnosis and treatment guidelines from online databases and save information as PDF files on the device. Access to an online community of experts and medical information helps clinicians provide better care to patients.

Doctors have also found that the camera function on the BlackBerry smartphone can be used to take pictures of medical conditions in the field and then sent from the BlackBerry smartphone using PIN, BBM or Email to an offsite specialist for diagnosis.

## THE BENEFITS

The BlackBerry solution has integrated all of RFDS’s communication needs on one portable and practical device that is easy to set-up and easy to use. The solution helps doctors stay connected when operating across the state, at times in very remote areas. “The whole set up process for the BlackBerry solution was very easy from start to finish,” said Matt Turany, ICT Manager, RFDS Western Operations. “The BlackBerry solution’s documentation is very thorough and it more than meets our requirements. The usability and portability of BlackBerry smartphones is also far better than any alternative we looked at.”

With doctors having access to email when in the field, and even in the air, it means that they don’t need to rely on using personal computers and can spend more time treating patients.

“Previously doctors did not read or respond to emails for days or weeks at a time because they were flying all day. Now they have convenient access to their BlackBerry smartphones while travelling,” said Langford. “The menus on the device are intuitive and it works well and we simply don’t need to be at a computer anymore for most of our communication needs.”

Accessing specialist medical information remotely, either housed on the corporate network or online, means that medical officers can find the latest information on just about any disease or injury through simple term-searching. A search for a specific disease, for example, would yield many documents, research articles and treatment plans, eliminating the need for several other independent databases which RFDS used to maintain and update. As a result, doctors have found that they are able to access information about rare diseases they encounter in the field so they can best diagnose and treat patients with minimal lag time, which can potentially save lives.

“We are delighted with our BlackBerry smartphones,” said Matt Turany, ICT Manager, RFDS Western Operations. “We are definitely going to continue to roll out additional devices within the organization and later we might even develop our own applications and solutions to be used on them.”

## KEY BENEFITS

- Easy to set-up and easy-to-use
- Allows for remote access to experts and medical information
- Contributes to faster treatment times

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