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## About Angel Flight Australia

Angel Flight is a charity that coordinates non-emergency flights to help country people trying to deal with the triple trouble of bad health, poor finances and daunting distance. All flights are free and may involve patients travelling to medical facilities anywhere in Australia. Angel Flight pilots do not carry aeromedical staff or medical equipment so do not act as an alternative to the Royal Flying Doctor Service or Air Ambulance. Angel Flight regularly coordinates up to twenty flights per day.

## Who is transported?

- Patients of all ages needing medical treatment at destinations where other forms of transport are physically and emotionally taxing or unaffordable
- Blood and blood products
- Medical drugs

To meet our guidelines, passengers must be medically stable, ambulatory and physically able to enter and exit a small aircraft (involving large steps, twists, bends) without assistance from the pilot and sit up in the aircraft with a seatbelt on for an extended period of time, and if necessary communicate with the pilot, although carers may be able to assist with these functions. Children must always be accompanied by an adult, who can assist with entry, exit and other needs of the child. Angel Flight encourages a friend or relative to travel with the patient. We have conducted over 46,000 flights transporting approximately 70,000 patients, carers and family members.

## How is the service accessed?

Health Professionals (eg, medical practitioner, nurse, social worker) who have a good knowledge of the patient's medical condition are the only people from whom Angel Flight can receive and accept 'mission requests'. Health Professional registrations are over 4,200.

## Who does the flying?

Flights are conducted by volunteer pilots in their own aircraft. Angel Flight operates Australia-wide with a growing network of pilots and aircraft. Volunteer pilots come from all walks of life and donate their time, their skills and most of their aircraft costs\* for each flight. Our volunteer pilot flight credentials exceed the requirements of the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) for the carriage of passengers, and the aircraft meet specified CASA and insurance minimums. Pilot registrations exceed 3,300.



*John flew home to Emerald following treatment in Rockhampton. Given his complicated medical condition an Angel Flight made things a little easier than a long road trip which had been proving disruptive to his dialysis schedule.*



*After fracturing her pelvis Gemma and her family were able to use Angel Flight for the journey from Eromanga to treatment in Brisbane as opposed to a 14 hour trip by car each way.*

## Our ground volunteers

Angel Flight's ground volunteers provide car transportation between the city airports and medical facilities (or nearby accommodation). Most drives occur in the capital cities or major towns (such as Newcastle or Rockhampton)

It can be a great support to the passenger to have a friendly face waiting to meet them at the airport, saving the passenger the hassle of trying to navigate public transport in a strange city. These wonderful volunteers help as drivers, and also as speakers and fund raisers. Volunteer driver registrations are over 4,600.

## How is Angel Flight Australia funded?

Angel Flight is funded by private donations from individuals, clubs and service clubs, companies large and small and deceased estates. We have a policy to never follow up donors asking for more money. Angel Flight has no budget for fundraising and does not engage commercial fundraising or marketing agencies to fundraise on our behalf.

Donations are used to pay for:

- Fuel used in the conduct of Angel Flight missions
- Discounted commercial flights when poor weather prevents light aircraft from flying
- The Angel Flight Support Centre which runs on a very small infrastructure, with four mission coordinators and two administrators as full time paid staff.

Angel Flight is an exceptional charity in that it does not have a fundraising department and only spends about 15% of revenue on administrative overheads like rent and telephone charges. Approximately 85% of revenue is spent on the actual coordination and delivery of its service.

## Who is behind Angel Flight Australia?

Established in April 2003, Angel Flight Australia is the initiative of Bill Bristow AM, an experienced businessman and pilot, and proud winner of the Australian of the Year Award - Queensland 2005. In 2009, Bill was awarded a Member of the Order of Australia for service to rural and remote communities through the establishment of Angel Flight Australia and as a supporter of charitable organisations.

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## What is Angel Flight Australia?

Established in April 2003 Angel Flight Australia is a charity which coordinates non-emergency flights to assist country people to access specialist medical treatment that would otherwise be unavailable to them because of vast distance and high travel costs. All flights are free and assist passengers travelling to or from medical facilities almost anywhere in Australia.

Angel Flight volunteer pilots are not medically trained and do not carry aero-medical staff or medical equipment so do not act as an alternative to the Royal Flying Doctor Service nor Air Ambulance.

## Who do you help?

Anyone who is medically and financially disadvantaged; families who have been financially devastated by medical bills due to illness, accidents or other chronic conditions, and those who have a need for the service.

Angel Flight can assist passengers on multiple occasions, for example, attending follow-up appointments or undertaking a series of treatments for a condition. Passengers must not require medical care during the flight.

Passengers must be able to enter and exit a light aircraft without assistance and be able to sit upright and communicate with the pilot. A companion is welcome to travel with the passenger for support. Young or disabled passengers must be accompanied by an adult capable of moving the child into and out of the aircraft, and assisting with the child's needs during the flight.

What circumstances are not suitable for an Angel Flight?

- International requests.
- Unaccompanied minors.
- Nursing home relocations.
- Adults who are not able to enter or exit the aircraft, unless accompanied by a person with the capacity to assist with this function unaided by the pilot.
- Passengers requiring a rescue service or an air ambulance service, or who need monitoring by medical staff or medical equipment during the flight.
- Passengers who are not medically stable or whose medical condition is unsuitable for transport in a non-pressurised light aircraft.
- Passengers travelling for critical care (for example, an organ transplant) as flights can be delayed or cancelled at short notice due to unsuitable weather conditions.

## How does it work?

A referral must be sent to Angel Flight with the authority of a registered 'health professional' (for example, a medical practitioner, nurse or social worker) who is familiar with the passenger's medical condition. Depending on the locations involved, the Flight Coordinators generally require 5 – 10 working days' notice for transport assistance.

If your referrer is not registered they can do so quickly and easily online. Our website is simple to use. Once a referral has been received and approved the Flight Coordinators then invite applications from our

volunteer pilots and drivers. The Flight Coordinators will notify the referrer and passenger of all arrangements once finalised.

## What type of planes?

Flights are provided by volunteer pilots using their own aircraft or aircraft they have hired at their own expense. These aircraft are termed 'General Aviation aircraft' and most have 4 – 6 seats, although larger aircraft are available.

The aircraft will either be 'High Wing' where the wing is above the cockpit (not unlike getting into a 4WD) or 'Low Wing' where the cockpit is above the wing which may require passengers to climb up onto the wing and crouch down into the cockpit (a bit like getting into a small sports car).

## What type of pilots?

The flight credentials of our volunteer pilots and aircraft owners exceed the minimum requirements of CASA for private flight in Australia and the aircraft meet specified regulatory and insurance minimums.

Our volunteer pilots come from all walks of life and are required to have more than 250 hours as a 'Pilot in Command'; a current medical clearance and all relevant experience, currency, and endorsements for the type of aircraft they will be flying. Angel Flight volunteer pilots donate their time, their skills and the majority of their aircraft costs for each flight.

## Where do you land?

Most flights will land at 'GA' or 'General Aviation' airports such as Bankstown in Sydney or Archerfield in Brisbane. If there is an appropriate airstrip in your home town, depending on weather conditions, Angel Flight pilots may be able to land there.

## How do I request a flight?

A 'health professional' (medical practitioner, nurse, social worker) is the only person who can authorise a flight request after considering all of the passenger eligibility criteria.

## What happens when the aircraft lands?

When the aircraft lands at the major town or city where the medical facility is located, volunteer drivers provide ground transportation for passengers from the airport to the medical facility and return. Please note that ground transport is not provided in the passenger's home town (for example from the passenger's home to their local airport).

## Can I just request a driver?

Volunteer drivers are only called on for assistance to meet an Angel Flight aircraft. The Flight Coordinators do not call on volunteer drivers for any other reason than to meet the aircraft after landing, and transporting the passengers to/from their appointment (or accommodation if the passengers have travelled the day prior or are returning the day after).