



Recognition and Response to Acute Deterioration at Remote Area Clinics Procedure

1. Guiding Principles

This procedure is to outline the process for escalation to achieve evacuation of the unwell patient from the One Arm Point, Lombadina, Looma, Noonkanbah, Bayulu, Wangkatjungka, Warmun and Kalumburu Clinics.

The aim of this process is to:

- facilitate collaboration of care for the unwell patient in a remote setting
- support the Remote Area Nurses who have limited resources available
- inform the on-call medical officer of unwell patients and agree a management plan
- define the roles and responsibilities of personnel.

2. Procedure

2.1 Remote Area Nurse One Arm Point and Lombadina

Doctors at Broome Hospital cover One Arm Point and Lombadina Clinics

2.1.1 Contact RFDS (1800 625 800) direct for Emergency Triage categories 1 & 2.

2.1.2 Contact the MO on call at Broome Hospital (9194 2625) when escalation and evacuation are required for other Emergency Triage categories.

2.1.3 Once a RFDS evacuation has been confirmed the RAN is to liaise directly with RFDS regarding patient's condition and management plan.

2.1.4 Update RFDS when the patient's condition is deteriorating as defined by the criteria in the WACHS [Clinical Escalation of Acute Physiological Deterioration including Medical Emergency Response Policy](#).

2.1.5 In the event the on call MO and RFDS **cannot be contacted**, escalation and collaboration should be with the Regional Medical Director on 0407 779 200 or the Remote Clinic Coordinator notified (contactable in hours on 9194 1638 or 0429 695 548). **If this occurs afterhours contact the Executive on Call on 1800 669 229.**

2.2 Remote Area Nurse Looma Clinic

Doctors at Derby Hospital cover Looma Clinic

- 2.2.1 Contact RFDS (1800 625 800) direct for Emergency Triage categories 1 & 2.
- 2.2.2 Contact the MO on call at Derby Hospital (9193 3202) when escalation and evacuation required for other Emergency Triage categories.
- 2.2.3 Consider evacuation through half-way or full-way meet with Derby Health Service (DHS) Ambulance Service, or in some circumstances through RFDS. Give consideration when transferring by road of the likelihood of the patient becoming unstable en-route, staying at the clinic with other human and physical resources may be a better option
- 2.2.4 Negotiate evacuation with the on call MO, phone the Derby Triage Nurse on 91 93 3202 to arrange half way or full-way retrieval.

If patient is unstable, request the DHS Ambulance Service to do a full-way retrieval from Looma Clinic

- 2.2.5 Camballin or Liveringa Airstrips - RFDS will only land in a "Mercy Flight" situation. If RFDS does attend, they will inform you of which Airstrip they will utilise. A Mercy Flight in aviation law is defined as:
- 2.2.6 "Involving an irregular aircraft operation which may result in the reduction of normal air safety standards. Before a Mercy Flight can be declared a doctor must be satisfied that it is a matter of 'life and death'. However the final decision on whether a mercy flight should be made rests entirely with RFDS and the pilot, who may be taking a calculated risk to save a life."¹
- 2.2.7 In wet season, Liveringa Station airstrip is usually the preferred landing airstrip by RFDS. RFDS liaise with the Liveringa Station Manager on 0408 443 457.
- 2.2.8 If a RFDS evacuation has been confirmed the RAN is to liaise directly with RFDS regarding the patient's condition and management plan
- 2.2.9 Update DHS or RFDS when the patient's condition is deteriorating as defined by the criteria in the WACHS [Clinical Escalation of Acute Physiological Deterioration including Medical Emergency Response Policy](#).
- 2.2.10 In the event that the on call MO and RFDS **cannot be contacted**, escalation and collaboration should be with the Broome Hospital on call MO (9194 2625); and the Remote Clinic Coordinator notified (contactable on 9194 1638 or 0429 695 548). **If this occurs afterhours contact the Executive on Call on 1800 669 229.**

2.3 Remote Area Nurse Noonkanbah Clinic

Doctors at Derby Hospital cover Noonkanbah Clinic

- 2.3.1 Contact RFDS (1800 625 800) direct for Emergency Triage categories 1 & 2.
- 2.3.2 Contact the MO on call at Derby Hospital (9193 3202) when escalation and evacuation required for other Emergency Triage categories.
- 2.3.3 Road transfer is not the preferred method of evacuation due to poor road conditions and the community is often isolated by flooded rivers during wet season. Give consideration when transferring by road of the likelihood of the patient becoming unstable en-route, staying at the clinic with other human and physical resources may be a better option
- 2.3.4 If an RFDS evacuation has been confirmed, the RAN is to liaise directly with RFDS regarding patient's condition and management plan
- 2.3.5 To update DHS or RFDS when the patient's condition is deteriorating is defined by the criteria in the WACHS [Clinical Escalation of Acute Physiological Deterioration including Medical Emergency Response Policy](#).
- 2.3.6 In the event that the on call MO and RFDS cannot be contacted, escalation and collaboration should be with the Broome Regional Hospital on call MO (9194 2625) or the Remote Clinic Coordinator notified (contactable in hours on 9194 1638 or 0429 695 548). **If this occurs afterhours contact the Executive on Call on 1800 669 229.**

2.4 Remote Area Nurse Bayulu Clinic

Doctors at Fitzroy Crossing Hospital cover Bayulu Clinic. Bayulu Clinic is serviced Monday to Thursday (by Fitzroy Crossing Community Health staff)

- 2.4.1 Contact RFDS (1800 625 800) direct for Emergency Triage categories 1 & 2.
- 2.4.2 Contact the MO on call, or ED NP, at Fitzroy Valley Health Service (FVHS) (9166 1777) when evacuations are required for other Emergency Triage categories.
- 2.4.3 Negotiate evacuation with the on call MO or ED NP, and phone the Fitzroy Nurse Manager on 9166 1709 and ED 9166 1781 to arrange transfer of the patient to the hospital. Give consideration when transferring by road of the likelihood of the patient becoming unstable en-route, staying at the clinic with other human and physical resources may be a better option.

- a. There is no ambulance or emergency vehicle at Wangkatjungka Clinic.**
- b. Request the FVHS Ambulance Service to do a full-way retrieval from the clinic**

- 2.4.4 Due to the 15 km distance from Bayulu clinic to Fitzroy Crossing, there is no halfway meet location.
- 2.4.5 Update FVHS when the patient's condition is deteriorating is defined by the criteria in the WACHS [Clinical Escalation of Acute Physiological Deterioration including Medical Emergency Response Policy](#).
- 2.4.6 In the event that the on call MO and RFDS cannot be contacted, escalation and collaboration should be with the Broome Regional Hospital on call MO (9194 2625) or the Fitzroy Crossing Community Health Nurse Manager (9166 1734 or 0439 269 129). **If this occurs afterhours contact the Executive on Call on 1800 669 229.**

2.5 Remote Area Nurse Wangkatjungka Clinic

Doctors at Fitzroy Crossing Hospital cover Wangkatjungka Clinic.

Wangkatjungka is currently serviced Monday to Thursday 9am – 3pm by Fitzroy Crossing Community Health Staff

- 2.5.1 Contact RFDS (1800 625 800) direct for Emergency Triage categories 1 & 2.
- 2.5.2 Contact the MO on call, or ED NP, at Fitzroy Valley Health Service (FVHS) (9166 1777) when evacuations are required for other Emergency Triage categories.

c. There is no ambulance or emergency vehicle at Wangkatjungka Clinic.

d. Request the FVHS Ambulance Service to do a full-way retrieval from the clinic

- 2.5.3 Negotiate evacuation with the FVHS on call MO, or ED NP and liaise with the Fitzroy Hospital Nurse Manager (9166 1709 and ED 9166 1781) to arrange full-way retrieval from Wangkatjungka for all other Emergency Triage categories. Give consideration when transferring by road of the likelihood of the patient becoming unstable en route, and that staying at the clinic with other human and physical resources may be a better option.
- 2.5.4 For any RFDS evacuations the nearest airstrip is 60km away (Cadjebut) and is not an option. The community of Wangkatjungka may become isolated due to wet season flooding and therefore Helicopter retrieval may be required.
- 2.5.5 Update when the patient's condition is deteriorating is defined by the criteria in the WACHS [Clinical Escalation of Acute Physiological Deterioration including Medical Emergency Response Policy](#).
- 2.5.6 In the event that the on call MO and RFDS cannot be contacted, escalation and collaboration should be with the Broome Regional Hospital on call MO (9194 2625) or the Fitzroy Crossing Community Health Nurse Manager (91661734 or 0439 269 129). **If this occurs afterhours contact the Executive on Call on 1800 669 229.**

2.6 Remote Area Nurse Warmun Clinic

Doctors at Kununurra Hospital cover Warmun Clinic

- 2.6.1 Contact RFDS (1800 625 800) direct for Emergency Triage categories 1 & 2.
- 2.6.2 Contact the MO on call in ED, at the Kununurra Hospital when escalation and evacuation are required for other Emergency Triage categories by: do they not have to send an MR1 as well?
- Complete Telephone Communication Form MRK56
 - Fax MRK56 to Kununurra Hospital Emergency Department on 9166 4227
 - Phone Kununurra Hospital Emergency department on 9166 4223 or 9166 4225 to ensure request is actioned
 - Wait for a call back by Medial Officer. If no response in 15 minutes call back
- 2.6.3 Negotiate evacuation with the Kununurra Hospital on call MO, Consider evacuation through half-way meet with St John Ambulance (SJA) or through RFDS Argyle Diamond Mine.

For half-way meet call SJA on 9334 1234 and arrange to meet at Doon Doon Roadhouse (100km from Warmun towards Kununurra on the Great Northern Highway).

- 2.6.4 Give consideration when transferring by road of the likelihood of the patient becoming unstable en route, staying at the clinic with other human and physical resources may be a better option until RFDS can arrive.
- 2.6.5 If RFDS are retrieving from Argyle Diamond Mine liaise with Argyle Security on 9167 1452 who will provide access to the strip. Alternatively if unable to reach security on this number telephone 9167 8903 or the Airport Reporting Officer on 0404 450 062.
- 2.6.6 RFDS will only land in a “Mercy Flight” situation at Warmun airstrip during daylight hours. A Mercy Flight in aviation law is defined as:
- “Involving an irregular aircraft operation which may result in the reduction of normal air safety standards. Before a Mercy Flight can be declared a doctor must be satisfied that it is a matter of ‘life and death’. However the final decision on whether a mercy flight should be made rests entirely with the pilot, who may be taking a calculated risk to save a life.”
- 2.6.7 Once a RFDS evacuation has been confirmed the RAN is to liaise directly with RFDS regarding patient’s condition and management plan.

2.6.8 To update RFDS when the patient's condition is deteriorating as defined by the criteria in the WACHS [Clinical Escalation of Acute Physiological Deterioration including Medical Emergency Response Policy](#).

2.6.9 In the event that the on call MO and RFDS cannot be contacted, escalation and collaboration is to be with Broome Hospital on call MO contactable on (9194 2625) or the Remote Clinic Coordinator notified (contactable in hours on 9194 1638 or 0429 695 548). **If this occurs afterhours contact the Executive on call on 1800 669 229**

2.7 Remote Area Nurse Kalumburu Clinic

Doctors at Kununurra Hospital cover Kalumburu Clinic

2.7.1 Contact RFDS (1800 625 800) direct for Emergency Triage categories 1 & 2.

2.7.2 Contact the MO on call, at the Kununurra Hospital when escalation and evacuation are required for other Emergency Triage categories by:

- Complete Telephone Communication Form MRK56
- Fax MRK56 to Kununurra Hospital Emergency Department on 9166 4227
- Telephone Kununurra Hospital Emergency Department on 9166 4223 or 9166 4225 to ensure request is actioned
- Wait for a call back by Medical Officer. If no response in 15 minutes call back.

2.7.3 Once a RFDS evacuation has been confirmed the RAN is to liaise directly with RFDS regarding patient's condition and management plan.

2.7.4 To update RFDS when the patient's condition is deteriorating as defined by the criteria in the WACHS [Clinical Escalation of Acute Physiological Deterioration including Medical Emergency Response Policy](#).

2.7.5 In the event that the on call MO and RFDS cannot be contacted, escalation and collaboration should be with the Broome Hospital MO on call (9194 2625); and the Remote Clinic Coordinator notified (contactable on 9194 1638 or 0429 695 548). **If this occurs afterhours contact the Executive on call on 1800 669 229.**

2.8 Royal Flying Doctor Service

2.8.1 Receive initial request from the MO from the on call health service or from the RAN.

2.8.2 Liaise directly with the RAN at the site for patient evacuation.

3. Definitions

DoH	Department of Health
MO	Medical Officer
RAN	Remote Area Nurse
ED NP	Emergency Department Nurse Practitioner
RFDS	Royal Flying Doctor Service
Escalation	The raising and/or requesting clinical response to a WACHS MO and/or RFDS
Management Plan	An agreed plan of care for the unwell patient between the RAN and/or the WACHS MO and/or RFDS
DHS	Derby Health Service
FVHS	Fitzroy Valley Health Service
SJA	St John Ambulance

4. Roles and Responsibilities

All Staff are required to work within their scope of practice, policies and guidelines to make sure that WACHS is a safe, equitable and positive place to be.

Position Role	Responsibility
Remote Area Nurse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess patient Communicate to RFDS or WACHS Medical Officer when medical review is required Arrange evacuation by road or air ensuring clinical escort until received by transporting service or health site
Medical Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide appropriate medical advice as required Determine clinical urgency of the evacuation and most clinically appropriate means of transferring the patient. Communicate effectively with Remote Area Nurse onsite at the Remote Area Clinic
Remote Clinic Coordinator, Fitzroy Crossing Community Health Nurse Manager, Executive on call.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Act as a resource for Remote Area Nurses

5. Compliance

Failure to comply with this procedure may constitute a breach of the WA Health Code of Conduct (Code). The Code is part of the [Integrity Policy Framework](#) issued pursuant to section 26 of the [Health Services Act 2016](#) (WA) and is binding on all WACHS staff which for this purpose includes trainees, students, volunteers, researchers, contractors for service (including all visiting health professionals and agency staff) and persons delivering training or education within WACHS.

WACHS staff are reminded that compliance with all policies is mandatory.

6. Records Management

All WACHS clinical records must be managed in accordance with [Health Record Management Policy](#).

7. Evaluation

This procedure is to be reviewed on a bi-annual basis or sooner if required.

Performance measures may include, but are not limited to:

- CIMS Datix incident data
- Regional Clinical Governance Committee / concerns
- Complaints Management System

8. Standards

[National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards](#)

Recognising and Responding to Acute Deterioration Standard – 8.4, 8.5, 8.6, 8.8, 8.10 and 8.13.

9. References

Persson, S. (2007) [The Royal Flying Doctor Service of Australia](#). Exisle Publishing Limited. Wollombi. PDF version

10. Related Policy Documents

WACHS [Clinical Escalation of Acute Physiological Deterioration including Medical Emergency Response Policy](#)

11. Related WA Health System Policies

MP 0086/18 [Recognising and Responding to Acute Deterioration Policy](#)

MP 0095 [Clinical Handover Policy](#)

MP0122/19 [Clinical Incident Management Policy 2019](#)

OD 0657/16 [WA Health Consent to Treatment Policy](#)

12. Policy Framework

[Clinical Governance, Safety and Quality](#)

13. Appendix

Appendix 1: [Flow Chart for Escalation and Evacuation](#)

**This document can be made available in alternative formats
on request for a person with a disability**

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Appendix 1: Flow Chart for Escalation and Evacuation

NOTE: This flowchart **does not apply** to Wangkatjungka and Bayulu clinics

