

Richard de Crespigny AM

Captain of Qantas Flight 32

Melbourne born and educated Richard de Crespigny got his first taste of a future flying career as a 14-year-old when his father organised a tour of the RAAF Academy at Point Cook in Victoria. He had never seen such extraordinary facilities before. He knew, then, that he needed to get a university degree and become an RAAF Officer and Pilot. The rest is history. In 1975, aged 17, he joined the RAAF. One year later, he started flying. During his 11 years with the RAAF, he was seconded as Aide-de-Camp to two Australian Governors General - Sir Zelman Cowan and Sir Ninian Stephen. Richard remained with the RAAF until 1986 when he joined Qantas, converting to Boeing 747s. He converted to A380 command in 2008 as one of Qantas' most senior captains.



It was at the control of the world's largest and most advanced commercial jetliner when he and his fellow officers were faced with their greatest challenge. The date was November 4 2010. Early into the Singapore/Sydney leg of flight QF32, one of four engines exploded. The damage to the aircraft was extensive. On top of ensuring that 440 passengers remained calm during the ordeal, Richard had a mammoth task on the flight deck to keep the aircraft in the air and then get it back on the ground. For two hours he and his fellow crew (technical and cabin) remained calm as they planned to stabilise the damage, configure the overweight aircraft, then manoeuvre it towards Changi Airport in Singapore. Once on the ground, a recalcitrant engine refused to shut down, fuel was leaking near white hot brakes and a new environment was set for potential disaster. Passengers remained on board for two nervous hours before they safely disembarked. The incident brought into play Richard de Crespigny's considerable skills involving teamwork, problem solving, judgement, knowledge, and experience and putting years of highly skilled training into practice. This pivotal event has changed his life forever.

His autobiography QF32, which tells the story of the incident in gripping detail, is a best-seller. QF32 also won the Best Non Fiction award in the 2013 Australian Book Industry Awards and the Australian Independent Booksellers Best Non Fiction award for books released in Australia in 2012.

In the 2016 Australia Day Honours, Richard de Crespigny was made a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) for his significant service to the aviation industry, both nationally and internationally, particularly to flight safety and to the community.

Richard de Crespigny has developed into one of Australia's most sought-after corporate speakers, his presentations focusing on crisis management, leadership, problem solving and teamwork. He has presented to Fortune 500 companies, the Federal Government and its agencies, including defence, safety and investigation.

Richard talks about

Crisis management, leadership, problem solving and teamwork.

Client testimonials

“ Richard delivered a presentation that was compelling and thought-provoking. His QF32 story brought our Safety Day to life and was a powerful illustration of how ‘Chronic Unease’ can play out in real life. Never before have I seen an audience from Shell Australia so captivated and engaged. Safety is our number one priority and Richard really delivered for us. We look forward to working with him again in the future.

- Shell Australia

“ Richard's presentation was simply awe inspiring and one of the best talks I have heard at any conference anywhere, and I have been to a few! As you saw by the standing ovation Richard received, I was not on my own in thinking this. The real strength of Qantas Airways is its people and Richard only cemented this view for me and our Corporate Members. To be able to hear firsthand the QF32 story from Richard not only sent some incredible messages about Qantas the brand to our important Corporate Members. It highlighted a great story of human triumph and added a real depth to our Symposium theme, Beyond Success.

- Travelscene Corporate

“ Throughout the hour+ that Richard presented you could not hear a pin drop, the clang of cutlery or see people playing with their mobile devices. So to say they were engrossed and intrigued was an understatement. Richard is a brilliant presenter that captured the minds and gravity of the QF32 event but also relayed business meaning. In terms of Leadership, Management skills in crisis and depth under amazing pressure. I have no hesitation in recommending Richard to many and varied audiences, not just business or IT.

- ANZ

“ Captain de Crespigny's presentation is compelling. It will open your mind to new concepts in crisis management such as inverting the logic and challenging conventions. It reinforces the principles of leadership, executive management, accountability & teamwork. I recommend the presentation and the book to anyone who is, or who aspires to be, a leader. Captain de Crespigny and his team not only saved nearly 500 lives but by sharing his experiences Captain

de Crespigny enables others to learn from this extraordinary event.

- Australian Federal Police

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