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THURSDAY, November 27, 2003

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Waugh walks

Steve Waugh to retire
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Sparks fly

Electricity tariffs under fire. Will you be paying more?
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Brave 13-year-old gets precious lift from volunteer group

Wings of an angel

KAYLA Graham will travel in style today on a journey she and her mother had come to dread.

The 13-year-old kidney disease sufferer has had to make a regular six-hour round trip by bus from her home at Oakey to Brisbane for hospital treatment since she was a baby.

But today she will make the journey by air thanks to non-for-profit organisation Angel Flight.

The bus trip to the Mater Children's Hospital had become increasingly hard on Kayla and her mother Amanda, a single parent.

Kayla was diagnosed with kidney disease when she was 17 months old and needs treatment in Brisbane every four to six weeks.

The long journey has been both a physical strain for the young girl and a financial drain for Mrs Graham, who has another daughter aged 12.

Mrs Graham yesterday said the bus journey cost about \$25 each way per person, making a round trip to Brisbane cost at least \$100 — more if Kayla had to be admitted to the hospital overnight.

But today computer software and consulting company

owner Keith Davis will fly Kayla and her mum to Brisbane in around 45 minutes.

They will travel free of charge in Mr Davis's Bonanza single-engine aircraft, landing at Brisbane's Archerfield airport, where "earth angel" volunteers will take the mother and daughter to the Mater Hospital.

Another pilot will fly them home.

The free trips were set to continue for as long as needed for Kayla, whose remaining kidney is expected to be removed in an operation before Christmas.

Kayla said the Angel Flight trip was important for her and her mum.

"It makes us save more money so we don't have to catch the bus," Kayla said.

Amanda Graham donated one of her kidneys to her sick daughter six years ago, but the transplant failed earlier this year and Kayla now has to be hooked up to a dialysis machine at home six nights a week for 13 hours at a time.

Angel Flight has about 440 pilots around Australia and 300 aircraft, which fly patients free of charge to specialised medical care.



■ Mum Amanda and Kayla Graham, 13, are looking forward to cutting precious time off a trip to Brisbane today. Kayla has been battling kidney disease since she was 17 months old.

Picture: SCOTT FLETCHER