MEDIA RELEASE

Flying Doctor scholarships provide a flying start for Tasmanian students

Six Tasmanian students have won prestigious scholarships to work with the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) in Outback Australia. The presentation of their awards will be held at the RFDS Launceston Base, Western Junction on Thursday 24 November at 10.00 am.

RFDS Tasmania offers six annual scholarships to provide medical, nursing and dental assistant students with the experience of living in remote Australia and working there with the RFDS. The scholarships aim to encourage future involvement by students in rural and remote medicine and dentistry, especially here in Tasmania. They are funded by RFDS Tasmanian donors and are another example of RFDS’ contribution to developing our future rural and remote workforce.

New to RFDS scholarship suite this year is the Commercial Travellers Association of Tasmania (CTA) student scholarship. A significant donation was received from the former members of the CTA enabling the RFDS to offer three 4th year medical students with scholarships to support their elective placement in a rural or remote setting of Australia. The CTA provided the funding to the RFDS in recognition of the support they had received from rural and remote GPs and the RFDS.

This year’s recipients of the CTA Scholarship are Beth Trainer, Nicholas Cretan and Rachel Stafford who are all currently on placement in Port Hedland, Broken Hill and Port Augusta respectively.

Melanie Withers from Launceston was nominated as the Fred McKay Medical Student Scholarship recipient in 2016. Emily spent two weeks at the RFDS Broken Hill Base in NSW and two weeks at Launceston with Ambulance Tasmania flight paramedics as an observer, accompanying patients in RFDS aircraft.

Olivia Coyne from Hobart won the Robin Miller RFDS Nursing Scholarship, which comprised two weeks of flying and clinical work at the RFDS Port Augusta Base, SA.

Brianna Leaman was selected as the 2016 John Flynn Dental Assistant Scholarship recipient and received two weeks flying and clinical work experience at the RFDS Dubbo Base as an assistant to the RFDS Dentist, Dr Kah Chong.

While undertaking their placements the students flew to a range of outback locations and worked alongside RFDS doctors, flight nurses, dentists and pilots.

John Kirwan, CEO, RFDS Tasmania said that the scholarships provide an important work and life experience for the students. “The scholarships have given the students the opportunity to gain a greater understanding of medicine in the bush and to appreciate the valuable contribution that the RFDS makes to thousands of Australians each year.”
As a charitable, not-for-profit organisation, Tasmanian donors and fundraisers enable RFDS Tasmania to fund these important annual scholarships. The scholarships are administered in partnership with RFDS South Eastern Section, RFDS Central Operations, RFDS Western Operations, Ambulance Tasmania, TasTAFE and the University of Tasmania.

For further information and interview opportunities please contact:
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