



TakeOff

IN THE AIR, ON THE GROUND

ISSUE 04 WINTER 2017



Royal Flying Doctor Service
TASMANIA



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From the CEO

John Kirwan

The RFDS Tasmania has been able to provide resources to enable us to support services like the start up costs of the dental health program, (the operating costs are funded by the Commonwealth) our education program, patient shelters, and building and maintenance programs from annual donations and bequests.

We have enclosed for your information, an updated version of our bequest brochure, reflecting the new name: RFDS Tasmania Ltd.

We thank those supporters who have registered their bequest wishes; they do not need to change anything.

The brochure provides information for supporters who maybe considering making a bequest to the RFDS. We would like to thank Gillian Woods, Lindsay Millar and Sue Gillon for agreeing to have their photo included.



Royal history

From the Editor - Mandy Burbury

A detour to the Royal Flying Doctor Base in Broken Hill seemed a natural diversion from the intended road trip up the east coast of Australia! Situated in far west NSW, and not far from the SA border, I was keen to visit, what is an important part of the RFDS history.

I was met by the enthusiastic Tourism Business Manager, Sue Williams at the wonderful Bruce Langford Visitor Centre at Broken Hill airport. This RFDS Centre is open seven days a week, and has around 12,000 visitors annually. A visit to the maintenance hanger provided a surprise—the servicing of RFDS Beechcraft VH-LTQ contracted to Ambulance Tasmania. The 'Mantle of Safety Museum' is a fascinating insight into the history of the RFDS, and I was particularly interested to discover how the organisation became 'Royal'.

During a visit to Broken Hill by Queen Elizabeth and the Duke of Edinburgh in March 1954, the pair witnessed the service's work first hand.

The Queen spoke to outback Australia over the radio network of the "security and comfort" the Flying Doctor Service provided and paid tribute to the founder, the Rev. John Flynn.

On the 10th August 1955, Her Majesty recognised the Flying Doctor's outstanding contribution to the outback by adding the prefix 'Royal' to its name. Take a detour as we did next time you're travelling, and put Broken Hill on your bucket list.

Sue Williams explains the vast outback area serviced from Broken Hill



A dental collaboration

Dr Allan Hughes and his wife Annie have been visiting the communities on both Flinders Island and Cape Barron Island for the past 13 years. Working together, since their arrival from Africa, 27 years ago, they have decided that it's time to spend more time with their grand children and for Allan particularly—more time for trout fishing.

Annie, a trained radiographer and Allan, had a private practice in Launceston for a number of years, before deciding they would like a change. Working as a locum with Annie at his side, they visited the remote communities of Central Australia, South Australia and the Middle East. A far cry from their previous practises in both London and Johannesburg.

"Around this time we thought we would like to include Flinders Island" tells Allan. "The early days were very challenging and the equipment extremely old. This was unfair on our patients, and so began the collaboration between ourselves and the Royal Flying Doctor Service".

The partnership was hastened when Mayor Terence Klug was being attended to in the surgery and the chair collapsed. It seems this unfortunate incident led to the beneficial relationship between the RFDS and private enterprise.

"The RFDS contributes towards our airfares and accommodation as well as setting up the surgery. Without this help the eight trips a year we do,



for four or five days at a time, would not be viable".

The Hughes have also treated the 60 or so residents, four times a year, and mostly of aboriginal origin, on Cape Barron Island. We wish them both a long and happy retirement.



Bill's grand-daughters Bronte, 10 and Piper, 6

Creative kids!

Bill McGown, a former carpentry and joinery instructor with the Education Department, and his wife Lyn, are ardent supporters of the RFDS Tasmania. Bill, whose introduction to the RFDS, was via an aeromedical flight from Launceston to Melbourne some years ago, has helped out at various RFDS events, including Agfest. It was at that time last year, that Bill kindly offered to put together an activity and colouring book for children.

"Twelve months, and many hours of work, I have managed to complete the 48-page activity book. My idea was to provide drawings of some of the people who work for the RFDS in Launceston and to acknowledge their contribution", Bill said.

With a passion for restoring railway carriages for the Don River Railway, entering data for the historical records office and volunteering for various organisations, it's a wonder Bill found the time at all. The book is available at the Base for \$5 and would make an ideal stocking filler for this Christmas!

A virtual experience

Grade 2/3 children from the Launceston Preparatory School, recently enjoyed a virtual look at the Royal Flying Doctor Service, through virtual reality headsets.

It was a fascinating morning for children and staff, with the bonus of a visit from the Aviation Fire and Rescue Unit.

Children immersed themselves in a variety of hands-on activities. Wearing headsets provide sound and images that are powerful and immersive, and the wearer can't help but not feel they are right there, on the RFDS aircraft. The four minute film is a re-enactment of an aeromedical retrieval out of Cairns. Along with staff members accompanying the children, was Mrs Harriet Thyne, the Co-Principal. Harriet's late father, John Allan was a former board member of the RFDS Tasmania and his valued input contributed to the building of the hangar.



A voice in Canberra

I recently visited the Royal Flying Doctor Service in Canberra. Known as, The Federation Office, and opened in January 2015. This outpost is vital in its work, building strong relationships with the Australian Government, not only in health but in all relevant portfolios that might affect the well being of rural and remote Australian's.

It was a delight to meet with Melissa Perkins who is originally from rural NSW. Melissa's working day at present is taken up as PR & Event Manager. With the 90th birthday celebrations in 2018 for the RFDS looming, she has a key role.

"It's a great privilege to be working on the Flying Doctors 90th year and coordinating and communicating with my colleagues not only here in Canberra but also those based around the country."

Not surprisingly, I found a former Burnie resident, Cresley Wheeler who recently commenced work as a Research Assistant. "We aim to provide rural and remote communities with evidence based health" tells Cresley.



Tasmanian, Cresley Wheeler and Melissa Perkins, in the Federation Office

The Federation Office has the responsibility for facilitating communication between RFDS Sections and Operations and to also provide a public 'voice' on health matters for rural and remote Australia.

New building for RFDS Tasmania

Thursday 15th June, 2017, was a frosty winters' evening, but not inside the transformed building adjacent to the present Base. Renovated and ready for occupancy, the launch was attended by around 150 guests, including the RFDS Federation Board members and Chairman Amanda Vanstone.



Bottom right, Anne Lewis, the first woman to fly for the Australian aerial medical service, pictured with Amanda Vanstone, the CEO, the President and Nick Duigan MC

With the irrepressible Nick Duigan as MC, guests were interested to learn of the expansion this year into new programs and that the building was now home to the primary health, dental outreach and non-emergency road transport services.

Mr John Kirwan, RFDS Tasmania, CEO said that the new facilities would enable the RFDS to operate at a greater capacity.

"We are extending our reach into rural and remote communities to address the imbalance of health equity. We have employed locally based trained professionals to run the new programs and we are working collaboratively in partnership with local health and community organisations. The hangar provides us with a base to continue to expand our operations throughout Tasmania".

An amusing address by Amanda Vanstone included her congratulations to the Tasmanian President of the RFDS, Malcolm White, on the progress to date and also noted his importance as a Member of the Federation Board.

Guests were entertained by a string quartet from the Launceston Church Grammar School, and all RFDS staff were on hand to help answer questions. The new facility can be viewed at any time. Please feel free to ring and arrange a time and we would be delighted to show supporters this important new facility.

Margaret's sweet last ride

Dear friends,

In early February 2017, after an almost ten-year battle with blood cancer, our much-loved wife, mother, grandmother, and aunt, Margaret Faulkner needed to be transferred from St. Luke's Hospital in Launceston, to St. Mary's Hospital where she would spend her remaining days.

After looking at a few transport options, the lovely staff at St Luke's suggested contacting the Royal Flying Doctor Service Tasmania.

"Oh, no" we replied, "mum likes flying about as much as Dame Joan Sutherland liked electric arc welding".

We were quickly informed that the RFDS now provides road transport.

Well, what a great service. The most caring attendants and the 'Rolls Royce' of ambulances. They even stopped at Mums favorite ice cream shop at The Cow Shed, Avoca!

Mum passed away at 3:45am on Sunday 26 February.

We take great comfort from the fantastic support and care we received from Dr Khalafallah, the lovely staff at St. Luke's and St. Mary's Hospitals and especially the first class service from the Tasmanian division of the Royal Flying Doctor Service.

Please accept our eternal gratitude,

Kindest regards,

Grant Faulkner



Nordic Walkers, Paul Carswell from Glamorgan Spring Bay, Erica Lowry from Break O' Day, Harriet Beattie from Dorset, Patrick Burtscher, Steve Stone from Georgetown and Sam Rossetto from Break O' Day

Nordic Walking to better health

Patrick Burtscher is recognised as an international pioneer and expert in the field of Nordic Walking. His company, the Nordic Academy (the only accredited facility in Australia) teaches people a form of fitness, which involves walking using specially designed poles and a learned technique to produce a low impact, total body workout.

Our five Physical Health workers from Break O' Day, Glamorgan Spring Bay, Georgetown and Dorset Council regions enjoyed a day learning the correct technique.

Why Nordic Walking, you ask? Scientific studies have proved that it provides significant benefits for total health and wellbeing and in addition to providing a highly effective low impact fitness workout; it helps reduce stress and enables

participants to reconnect with both nature and their inner selves.

"We are excited to introduce Nordic Walking into our program to compliment the support service we are already providing. It's a perfect opportunity to get out and about and take advantage of the beautiful beaches and natural environments that we have in Tasmania while exercising with less perceived exertion."

Said Nicole Grose, RFDS Tasmania Manager of Primary Healthcare.



CELEBRATING 90 YEARS

2018 RFDS CALENDAR

\$18+ postage
Contact the Base 6391 0509

Thank you Andrew!

The former Federal member for Bass, Mr Andrew Nikolic AM was recently recognised for his role and work in putting forward to government, and gaining support, for services to meet the health needs of rural Tasmanians.

In presenting a model of the RFDS Kingair aircraft to Mr Nikolic, Malcolm White, President of RFDS Tasmania mentioned that, prior to his election to Parliament, Andrew had also worked as a member of the Riverside Lion's Club to raise money for the RFDS.



Zoe Page with guide Timmi Sanders

Walking the Larapinta

Zoe Page has sent us a wrap up of her fundraising journey for the RFDS Tasmania.

"Walking the five days of the Larapinta trail to raise funds for the RFDS, was an amazing experience."

"What started as a group of strangers with a like-minded goal quickly became firm friends. The days were in the mid-high 20's with minimal shade and quite a lot of uphill, but there was plenty of good cheer, support and the views were well the climb. The highlight of the trip

was the night ascent of Mt Sonder, 1380m. The sunrise was more than spectacular despite the drop in temps to -6."

"In total the group raised in excess of \$64,000 toward the RFDS, with Tasmania being the highest fund raising state. I am so glad of the opportunity, and that I could contribute back to my community. The support and sponsorship from individuals and local companies was amazing and especially the six months of donated training with Ascent Fitness. I felt fit and confident for the walk and it was all the more enjoyable because of that."

The Flying Doctor says Thank You

Australia is a vast land — **hot and dry**. With more than 50% of our bodies made up of water, staying hydrated is a key component to health.

The Royal Flying Doctor Service is very proud of the national partnership with **Neverfail Springwater**, which provides spring water to offices and homes across Australia.

With a campaign called **'It's Cooler to Give'** Neverfail is donating **\$100 to the RFDS** for every new cooler order in the health sector, which helps to keep the Flying Doctor flying.





Students from East Tamar Primary School assisting in Big Ted's medical procedure

Teddy bears go to hospital

Medical Students from the Launceston Clinical School held a teddy bear hospital at the East Tamar Primary School.

It had been identified that there were a number of health issues, including dental problems at the school. During the visit children were ecstatic to be supplied with their own 'dental kits' from the Royal Flying Doctor Service Tasmania.

"The kits contained a toothbrush and toothpaste and dental information, were a huge bonus to today's visit and not something we are normally able to offer schools.

It was truly a delight to see the joy that children exhibited upon finding these goodies in their bags".

Children were exposed to a variety of medical procedures, including surgery, x-rays and the treatment of asthma.

The beautiful teddies, hand knitted by a wonderful supporter of the RFDS, Gloria Jones from Latrobe, were well 'treated' by both medical and primary students!

Life Membership awarded to Dr George Merridew

After many years of distinguished service to RFDS Tasmania, Dr George Merridew advised The Board of his intention to step down from his roles as Director and Vice President at the August Board meeting.

Dr Merridew was elected to the Council of RFDS Tasmania in October 1995 and went on to serve in the roles of Coordinator of the Medical Committee, Vice President and President.

In awarding life membership, the President, Malcolm White, acknowledged the high esteem in which Dr Merridew is held by Board colleagues, staff and all who are associated with the RFDS, including the wider medical community. Mr White said that the RFDS had benefited significantly from Dr Merridew's commitment, expertise and leadership and it was pleasing to be able to recognise this with the award of life membership.



The President, Malcom White with George and Sarah Merridew

Vale Dr Andrew Gibson

The RFDS Tasmania extends their condolences to the family of the late Dr. Andrew Gibson.

Andrew will be remembered fondly, particularly for his unique fundraising idea in 2015. He along with Terrill Riley-Gibson, Terrill's father, Harold Riley, and Anna Hoogeboom, rode four horses from Longreach, Queensland to Tasmania. The 3,000 kilometre ride took three months and raised an incredible \$40,000 which was divided between the RFDS Tasmania and the Leukemia Foundation. Dr Gibson will be sadly missed.

Touch and Go

An aviation manoeuvre requiring a pilot landing on the runway and taking off again without a full stop. Here we provide you with 'quick bites'—a touch and go!



As a surprise for the children from Launceston Preparatory School, the Aviation Rescue Fire Fighting Vehicle put on a display that caused a long round of spontaneous clapping and cheering.

Mary Frost has resigned her position as Marketing and Development Co-ordinator with the RFDS Tasmania. Mary commenced with the organisation in October 2009 as the Executive Officer and will be **very much missed** by both staff and supporters.

Since May 2017, **2130 dental treatments** were provided by the RFDS Tasmania Mobile Dental Care.

Four new casual, Non-emergency Patient Transport Drivers have been appointed. They are David Gatenby, Jennifer Gowen, Tim Jacobs and Ola Omotolani-Lawal.

Sandra Taylor, Dental Therapist commenced work in early September. Sandra has many years experience working with the RFDS, South Eastern.

The RFDS Tasmania has been shortlisted in the categories of **Community Service and Innovation in the Tasmanian Perpetual Trustees 2017 Business Excellence Awards**. Winners to be announced on October 28th, 2017.

Greg Foot, Aircraft Engineer here in Launceston, recently celebrated **20 years with the RFDS in Tasmania**.

The RFDS Tasmania has presented, so far this year, to **540 year 12 students**.

The Hagley Farm School combined art and health with a visit to the Glover Exhibition in Evandale and the RFDS Base. "It was a fantastically informative presentation," said teacher Judy Gardiner.

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AT THE SHOWGROUNDS, 3-6 NOVEMBER 2017**

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www.flyingdoctor.org.au

