



TakeOff

IN THE AIR, ON THE GROUND

ISSUE 06 SUMMER 2017



Royal Flying Doctor Service
TASMANIA



All the Staff at the Royal Flying Doctor Service, Tasmania, thank you for your support this year and wish you a safe and happy festive season

Welcoming Dr Strickland,
new dentist for the RFDS in
Tasmania, more on page 3

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RFDS goes to Hobart



Malcolm White RFDS President, John Lynch CEO RFDS Central Operations, John Kirwan CEO RFDS Tasmania

It is anticipated in the future, that this event will alternate between Launceston and Hobart, giving our supporters both north and south an opportunity to celebrate our achievements each year with us.

Despite having great facilities for our pilots at the Hobart Airport, the Royal Flying Doctor Service in Tasmania has not been widely recognised in the southern part of the State.

In part, historically, this has been because the base in Launceston is home to both the aircraft and the administrative staff.

With a widening of the Flying Doctor services, such as dental and non emergency patient road transport, the organisation is hoping to have a greater profile in the future, 'south of the Blackman River' (an historical half way point in the State!).

This year the Annual General Meeting and Christmas function were held at the Royal Yacht Club in Hobart, where invited guests were able to meet with staff. All those present, enjoyed stories from guest speaker, Central Operations CEO for the RFDS, Mr John Lynch. John was born in Broken Hill and is an excellent raconteur, having had a long history with the RFDS, and with an enormous knowledge of outback Australia.

The President of the RFDS, Malcolm White said, "over the last few years we have looked to increase our presence in the south, through the recruitment of Hobart based directors and building up a Hobart support base. Whilst our services are essentially centred on the bush, we can't do our job effectively without the support of the city".

Remote airstrip upgrade programme

On Thursday 28th September, The RFDS arranged a visit to Flinders Island and Cape Barren Island, with representatives from the Federal Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development who have responsibility for remote airstrips.

After some rescheduling due to delays, we were able to meet with the Flinders Island Council and staff from the Cape Barren Island Aboriginal Association (CBIAA).

Flying Doctor staff were accompanied by RFDS Federation CEO, Martin Laverty and RFDS Tasmanian Chair, Malcom White. With the flight in the RFDS aircraft, we were able to inspect the two remote airstrips and at a meeting with Council and CBIAA staff, options were explained under the current funding round to improve the safety of remote airstrips.

The photo was taken at the airstrip at Cape Barren Island, in the Peter Hay shelter, where Martin Laverty and Malcom White met with Denise Gardner, General Manager CBIAA,



Aaron Maynard, Maintenance Worker and Chairperson of CBIAA and Lionel Longey, Infrastructure Maintenance, to discuss improving the lighting navigation

aids and the safety of flights into Cape Barren Island.

- John Kirwan, RFDS CEO

New dentist for the RFDS in Tasmania

What a delight to meet Dr Lorika Strickland in the beautiful gardens of historic Franklin House.

Lorika had an idyllic rural childhood near Johannesburg, a childhood that she attributes to her love in later life of bushwalking. Following in her elder sister's footsteps, Lorika studied Dentistry at the University of Pretoria and after graduating left for London.

Following two-and-a-half years with the National Health in a busy practice, Lorika joined the Royal Army Dental Corps (RADC). After graduating from the much lauded Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, with the Sandhurst Cup for best RADC dental officer, her military life as a dental surgeon began.

With postings in Germany and Cyprus, where she met her husband Jim, and later Iraq, Lorika says:

"The opportunity to go to Canada after war torn Iraq, provided me with not only a cultural education but the opportunity to play ice hockey, dine with HRH Prince Harry, run the New York Marathon, and drive huskies. My rock during all this time was Jim. He's been my greatest supporter. I could not have done what I did without his immense understanding."

Returning in 2011 to Cambridge she met one of her great mentors—Colonel Blashford-Snell OBE, an explorer and author, who founded the Scientific Exploration Society.

"I've had amazing mentors including Group Captain Elliot Jones, Armenian born Colonel Kassasin, and Dr Timothy Winstanley who played a pivotal role advancing my surgical skills with QLD Health. I wanted to please them as they were such an inspiration".

In 2012 Lorika and Jim, moved to Australia. The army life was left behind and Lorika joined QLD Dental Health in Cairns, visiting outback communities. Jim continues his work with the United Nations, and Lorika, now an Australian citizen, set up a dental clinic in Mogadishu with him.

"There is so much freedom here, and I'm thrilled to be working with the RFDS." The RFDS looks forward to the very delightful Dr Strickland commencing work on the 1st December. Her easy going, self-effacing manner will be a joy for all her patients.

For the full fascinating interview with Dr Strickland go to our website: www.flyingdoctor.org.au and search *Tasmania*

Deloraine Craft Fair

The RFDS Tasmania felt privileged to be this year's major charity recipient at the 37th annual Deloraine Craft Fair.

The event, held annually in Deloraine on the first weekend of November, has grown to be one of the biggest in Tasmania. Attracting more than 15,000 people and showcasing fine art, craft and working craft displays plus entertainment and food stalls. With careful guidance from the Rotary Club of Deloraine, the event has helped to shape the town, to what it is today.

With a team of both RFDS staff and volunteers, we set up our own display at the Showgrounds. With an emphasis on the successful dental program that many in the north east of the state are becoming more familiar with, and the sales of merchandise, volunteers were kept busy.

Craft Fair devotees were interested to learn more about the other expanding programs the RFDS are involved in, with many also signing up to receive our quarterly newsletter *Take Off*. The simulator continues to be a drawcard for many, and volunteer David Annear and staff continued the tradition of explaining its workings to the interested crowd.

Events such as this are the ideal venue for us to hear your recollections of the RFDS.

"It was the one chance I had to make sure I was OK when the RFDS helped me in Birdsville" Meredith, a visitor from Sydney

"My son is a doctor in Kununurra, and very familiar with the RFDS" Jan, an exhibitor from Smiths Gully

"We feel so much safer travelling around Australia when we know the RFDS is a phone call away" Ron, a patron from Burnie

PHOTO: Jade Smithard @mojophotography



John Dare, Chair Tasmanian Community Australian Rotary Health, Mark Shelton MP, Tony Colman District Governor Rotary Health, Malcolm White President RFDS Tasmania and Nicole Grose RFDS Primary Health Manager



VH-REM in the air

From the archives

with Lindsay Millar OAM, RFDS
Tasmanian Emeritus Board Member

The first official flight for the Tasmanian Section RFDS was made on 14th September 1960.

The aircraft was a Cessna 180A chartered from the Aero Club of Southern Tasmania and was to evacuate the doctor from Queenstown with appendicitis. This aircraft was registered as VH-REM (Romeo Echo Mike) and after being sold, was destroyed when it crashed in Victoria in 1965.

In 2014 The Tasmanian Section decided to establish a nursing scholarship. This scholarship, for a nursing student, provides a two-week secondment at the RFDS Port Augusta Base. With the permission from her family, a decision was made to name the scholarship 'The Robin Miller Scholarship' to recognise the work of Western Australian (WA) nurse and pilot Robin E. Miller, the 'Sugar Bird Lady'.

Robin was the daughter of Western Australian author, Mary Durack and aviation pioneer 'Horrie' Miller, co-founder of MacRobertson Miller Airlines. Robin trained as both a nurse and pilot. In 1967 she purchased her own aircraft, a single engine Mooney Mk20E. The WA Commissioner for Health engaged her to supply aboriginal communities with the 'Sabin' anti-polio vaccine.

Robin visited over 80 communities in WA, using her own aircraft, to supply 10,000 doses of the vaccine which was taken by mouth in sugar cubes. To the many aboriginal communities she became known as the 'Sugar Bird Lady'. Her aircraft also carried that name.

Robin later joined RFDS WA and married RFDS identity Dr Harold Dicks. She also acted as co-pilot for Harold on delivery flights of new aircraft from America for the WA Section. Sadly, she died of cancer in 1975. Dr Dicks obtained a similar Mooney airframe from the USA, painted it to represent Robin's aircraft and had it mounted for display at Jandakot Airport, Perth, with a plaque to the memory of the 'Sugar Bird Lady' and her work. Her book, "Flying Nurse", was published in 1971.

While researching Robin's story we realised that as a surprising coincidence, her aircraft carried the registration of her own initials VH-REM (Romeo Echo Mike). This was of course the same registration as carried by the Cessna 180 that flew the first RFDS flight in Tasmania. VH-REM 'The Sugarbird Lady' is currently owned by Craig Aitkenand is still flying at Boonah, Queensland.

New pilot for RFDS Tasmania

Toby Messner is looking forward to his new position as a pilot, here in Launceston.

A Sydney boy, Toby has wanted to fly since he was nine years old and with an aunt in Cairns, formerly a remote area nurse, telling him to "Go for it, you'd be perfect to fly with the RFDS", his dream eventually became a reality.

After leaving school and realising that financially he was unable to immediately follow 'the dream', he followed in his fathers footsteps and became a car mechanic. This helped to provide sufficient funds to have his first flight at 21. Ten years in the automotive industry, and flying when possible, a clever person told Toby: "If you're good with a spanner and you love planes, get into aircraft maintenance".

The move to Heron Airlines Bankstown allowed Toby to not only carry out maintenance on aircraft but to fly the Dubbo freight run twice a week. Known as the 'flying spanner', by 2009 Toby was taking tourist flights to remote areas.

His move to aeromedical work was initially with Wingaway, who carry out non emergency flights. There he was not only responsible for the airworthiness of seven aircraft but also flying. After some years with Wingaway, "My dream to work with the RFDS has now become a reality". We wish him well and hope that his time here in Launceston is a long and happy one.



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.



Arriving in Russia

Refuelling in Alaska

Petropavlovsk,
Russia

Adak Island,
Alaska

Anchorage,
Alaska

Bellingham,
Washington

Great Falls,
Montana

Des Moines,
Iowa

Sendai,
Japan

Saipan,
Northern Mariana
Islands

Biak, Indonesia

Cairns,
Queensland

Bankstown,
New South Wales

Departing Adak Island

Refuelling in Great Falls, USA

Aviation, engineering
and safety team members
inspect the new aircraft at Bankstown

Our new aircraft arrives

A first-of-its-kind addition to our aircraft fleet landed on Australian soil in June. It had been flown more than 14,000 kilometres, in a six-day journey around the Pacific from Des Moines, USA.

The Beechcraft B250 King Air will fly doctors, dentists, nurses, mental health team members and other RFDS health professionals into remote communities so they can run primary healthcare clinics.

"This is the first B250 to join our fleet," said Senior Pilot Brett Croker, who picked up the aircraft and helped fly it to Australia.

Brett said the aircraft is in the process of being made 'RFDS ready', including being finished with RFDS signage, as part of the process to get it ready to officially join the RFDS SE fleet.

"Our engineering, safety and aviation teams are involved in this process" he said.

Flying Home

Day 1 USA

Depart Des Moines – Fuel stop at Great Falls – Arrive Bellingham

Day 2 USA

Depart Bellingham – Fuel stop at Anchorage, Alaska, Arrive Adak Island, Alaska

Day 3 USA – Russia – Japan

Depart Adak Island – Fuel Stop at Petropavlovsk, Russia – Arrive Sendai, Japan

Day 4 Japan – Northern Mariana Islands

Depart Sendai – Arrive Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands

Day 5 – Northern Mariana Islands – Australia

Depart Saipan, Fuel Stop at Biak, Indonesia, Arrive Cairns, Australia

Day 6 – Australia

Depart Cairns - Arrive Bankstown

New snakebite information

Tiger Snake (Notechis scutatus)



The Royal Flying Doctor Service has updated its advice and procedures following the publication of a new snakebite study.

The Australian Snakebite Project is the most comprehensive ever carried out. The project involved more than 1500 patients and collated snakebite data from the past ten years (2005-15).

Whilst only 20-25 cases studied resulted in death, the effects of snakebite can be debilitating and far-reaching. Three-quarters of those bitten experienced venom-induced consumption coagulopathy, which causes blood clotting and life-threatening haemorrhages. Acute kidney injuries, brain and muscle damage, and cardiac arrest are other possible side effects.

It's important that people act quickly after a possible bite. The bite can often be painless and may go unnoticed as tissue damage is mostly light – lacerations, scratches or light bruising along with some bleeding or swelling. Many dangerous myths surround the treatment of snakebites.

The new study has prompted the Royal Flying Doctor Service to reverse previous long-standing advice about the importance of identifying the colour and type of snake. Snakebite can now be treated with a generic polyvalent anti-venom making identification unnecessary.

The most important dos and don'ts include:

⊗ DO NOT

wash the area of the bite or try to suck out the venom. It is extremely important to retain traces of venom for use with venom identification kits.

⊗ DO NOT

incise or cut the bite, or apply a high tourniquet. Cutting or incising the bite won't help. High tourniquets are ineffective and can be fatal if released.

⊗ DO NOT

allow the victim to walk or move their limbs. Use a splint or sling to minimise all limb movement. Put the patient on a stretcher or bring transportation to the patient.

✓ DO

bandage firmly, splint and immobilise to stop the spread of venom. All the major medical associations recommend slowing the spread of venom by placing a folded pad over the bite area and then applying a firm bandage. It should not stop blood flow to the limb or congest the veins. Only remove the bandage in a medical facility, as the release of pressure will cause a rapid flow of venom through the bloodstream.

✓ DO

seek medical help immediately as the venom can cause severe damage to health or even death within a few hours.

Scottsdale Show

The Royal Flying Doctor Service attended the Scottsdale Show on the 17-18 November 2017.

Mobile Dental Care, Primary Health Care and Non-Emergency Patient Transport joined the flight simulator in a comprehensive display of services offered by the RFDS.

The give away goodie bags of toothbrushes and toothpaste were a treat for children.

The visit allowed the RFDS teams the opportunity to connect with locals and discuss health needs relevant to people living in the North East.

Joining in with some of the best cattle in the State and spectacular tractor display, the grand parade was a highlight for the RFDS team and a great way to farewell the North East.



Photo from Peter Gutwein MP for Bass



A mystery donation solved

There is a generous group, known as Australians and New Zealanders in Oman (ANZO).

This group of ex-pats refer to themselves as “friendly creatures that enjoy social activities”. There aren’t Embassies for either country in Oman. The ANZO group was formed to facilitate support, and to provide some social interaction, with a particular emphasis on unique events to both countries, such as ANZAC day, Melbourne Cup, Australia Day and Waitangi Day.

These ex-pats, are encouraged by ANZO to experience local culture and traditions, and engage with the broader Muscat community and organise events such as the annual ANZO Ball and sports challenges for all nationalities. Having received a generous donation each year from Oman to the Launceston base—hand delivered by Rodney Blizzard, we have been able to discover the history and the connection.



Donald Blizzard, Rodney’s grandfather.

Ninety-year-old Mr Donald Blizzard apologised for not visiting the base to meet with me, but his car was being serviced. I had to be quick to catch him, he’s off to Oman for Christmas! This sprightly, delightful gentleman regaled me with stories, having put down his beautifully worked tapestry, of he and his late wife’s many outback adventures.

Donald was born at Mengha a tiny settlement in the far NW of Tasmania, and spent his working life involved in the thermal/diesel power stations. On one of the many outback trips, Bev became unwell whilst in Thargomindah, outback Queensland. She was rushed to the small medical centre there and was told that fortunately, the Flying Doctor was coming the next day.

“The visit by the RFDS”, tells Donald “was a highlight of the small town with a population around 250. The Station people all came to town, bringing their lunch. It was what they call a ‘get together day’. Not only did the doc fix her up, but we felt part of the town, and by the weekend we were all off to Quilpie to the polocrosse, where the horses are pampered and the humans sleep in swags”.

Ever since then, Donald and his family, who are scattered around New Zealand and Oman, have supported the Flying Doctor Service. Donald’s son, 67 year-old Peter has assigned his sons in Oman and Dubai to organise Donald’s 100th birthday, as in his words “I will be too old”! I have no doubt there will be a party to organise.

2018 Young Tasmanian Of The Year

29 year old Jessica Manuela from Blackmans Bay has been announced as the 2019 Tasmanian Young Australian of the year.

Dr Manuela has been acknowledged for her work in improving the oral health in the state’s Aboriginal community. Having established two dental practices since starting her work, she now has more than 4,000 patients.

Beside also instructing at schools in oral hygiene, Dr Manuela has developed a scheme in conjunction with the Royal Flying Doctor Service and the South East Tasmanian Aboriginal Corporation.

“It’s pretty early days, but we’re seeing stabilisation of dental disease”, she said. Dr Manuela also said she was seeing improvements in the patients who had come to her after years of avoiding seeing a dentist.



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!



Evandale School students

Primary Schools such as Evandale enjoyed visits to the Base this Spring. The visits are very hands on, with students enjoying the Virtual Reality (VR) Headsets, or now known as "VR the Champions". Thank you Evan for this and for helping out on the day! The 26 students loved the activities and especially helping Zoe Page with her Teddy Bear Hospital.

St Finn Barr's Vacation Care enjoyed a trip to the base with 26 students, as did the George Town Joey Scouts, who generously raised \$100.00 as part of one of their badges. Thank you Joey Scouts!

Mr Taplin from Wynyard sent some kind words with his donation. Having been brought up in the United Kingdom, he writes, "Australia was synonymous with the RFDS. I thought then and do now, what a magnificent asset the people of Australia have".

Mrs Janet Crane from Granton included the following with her donation: "The term Mantle of Safety appealed to me as I was a timid child and the idea of being so far from everything was a little daunting, and that notion of help was very comforting".

Caitlyn Ross, a 14 year old Tasmanian student, recently submitted an essay called "Women of the Air", for a National History Challenge. Amongst the illustrious company of Nancy Bird Walton and Amy Johnston, included was our very own Anne Lewis. At 91, Anne has had a fascinating flying career with the WRAAF, Australian Aerial Medical Service and Skyways. I'm looking forward to including in the Autumn Take Off, Anne's full story.

CEO, John Kirwan continues his round of speaking occasions at clubs such as Rotary and Probus and looks forward to visiting clubs in the south of the State in the future.

YES! Here is my gift of support

Please accept my donation of:

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☐ \$50 ☐ \$20 ☐ other \$ _____

Please charge my credit card:

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Signature _____

OR ☐ my cheque or money order is attached

OR give online at donatese.flyingdoctor.org.au/donate-tasmania

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Suburb _____ State _____

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☐ I wish my donation to remain anonymous

☐ Please contact me with information about leaving a bequest to the RFDS



Royal Flying Doctor Service
TASMANIA

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