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**Royal Flying Doctor Service**  
TASMANIA

## *Dear Friends and Supporters,*

With 2017 drawing to a close I wanted to write and wish you all a safe and Happy Christmas and New Year.

It's been a big year for RFDS Tasmania, we've seen the roll out of our patient transport, oral health programs and primary health services throughout many regions across this beautiful state. Of course we have only been able to achieve this as an organisation with your support and encouragement, and as such we thank you. You are a part of the RFDS family and story.

This year, in collaboration with the south east section of the RFDS, we continued to hold the contract with Ambulance Tasmania to provide aeromedical retrieval and inter-hospital transfer services within Tasmania and to mainland hospitals. The RFDS provides the aircraft, pilots, engineer and facilities for this service.

We also continued to work with all levels of government to advocate and advise on upgrades for regional airports. Whilst we currently have a pilot rest facility at Hobart airport, we have a larger vision and it is our intention to seek state and Commonwealth Government support for a multi-purpose aeromedical facility at Hobart airport in the near future.

In addition to transporting patients by air, RFDS Tasmania has been successful in gaining state government approval to operate non-emergency road transport, which we rolled out this year. Similar to an ambulance and capable of carrying two patients, these vehicles, when combined with air transport, provide the possibility of a bed to bed service. We are looking forward to growing this aspect of our work by complementing Ambulance Tasmania services in an efficient way.

You will be aware from media reports and commentary of the need to give greater emphasis to preventive health programs – an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Perhaps nothing better illustrates the truth of this saying than dental health. Poor dental hygiene has the capacity to effect health far beyond teeth.

This year, with the support of the Commonwealth Government and our donors, RFDS Tasmania has established a dental outreach program. This service reaches beyond the normal services provided by private and public dentists. We now have two dental teams working in rural Tasmania, currently in the Circular Head region, and also south of Hobart with the support of Dr. Jess Manuela, an indigenous Tasmanian and Tasmania's Young Achiever of the Year for 2017.

Also this year, through the support of Primary Health Tasmania and in partnership with five local governments including George Town, Dorset, Flinders, Break o' Day and Glamorgan/Spring Bay we have had the opportunity to implement a primary health program that works closely with health professionals in these communities.

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This home based care service includes a range of services to assist people, often with multiple health problems, to take supported steps to a healthier life and ultimately prevent hospitalisations where avoidable. Indications are that this program is meeting the needs of individuals and communities and contributing to effectiveness and efficiency of health care.

In sharing the mission and culture of the RFDS this year we continued to provide educational programs to primary school children as part of the Australian Curriculum and, at a more specialised level, we provided 6 scholarships to nursing, dental and medical students in the final stage of their study. As part of the scholarships, the students spend time in outback Australia with the RFDS, including the opportunity to gain clinical experience in aeromedical and bush clinic situations. Half of these scholarships have been generously funded by the Commercial Travelers Association Tasmania.

As you may know, our aeromedical base is located at Launceston airport and while there is hardly a day that goes by without the aeromedical aircraft visiting Hobart, we are more widely known in regions beyond our capital city, especially in the Bass Strait islands, north west coast and east and west coasts of Tasmania. In 2018 we will be expanding our office into Hobart, with the next staff appointment located in a shared office there, through the courtesy of the Australian Medical Association.

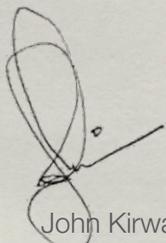
The staffing levels at our Launceston aeromedical base continue to grow, and to that end we have taken over an adjacent building facility to accommodate our employees. We also have many staff in the field, some of who work in the remote regions of Tasmania. We view it as particularly important to provide employment opportunities in country Tasmania. Like John Flynn, our founder, we think it important for those living in rural and regional Australia to receive health outcomes as equal to their city cousins as possible.

*The RFDS Tasmania can continue much of its work with the support of donations and bequests and I would like to take this opportunity to thank most sincerely our donors and our volunteers.*

In 2018 we will celebrate our 90th birthday and we hope that many of you will be able to take part in planned events.

Once again a safe and happy holiday season to you and your nearest and dearest, and many thanks for your continued support throughout 2017. See you in 2018.

Kind regards



John Kirwan  
CEO, RFDS Tasmania

