

The official magazine of the Royal Flying Doctor Service  
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Royal Flying Doctor Service  
*The furthest corner. The finest care.*

# AirDoctor



# From the Chairman & CEO

**SUCH** is the long, proud and pioneering history of the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) that few years pass without a milestone to note.

Last year – on 17 May - we celebrated 85 years since the formation of Reverend John Flynn's 'Flying Doctor', and that inaugural flight between Cloncurry and Julia Creek, in Queensland, in 1928.

In 2014, we mark the 75th anniversary of the establishment of the RFDS Alice Springs Base.

The arrival of the Service in Central Australia in 1939 was an essential element of Flynn's 'Mantle of Safety', given the Presbyterian Church Minister had formulated his vision whilst travelling the interior of South Australia (SA) and the Northern Territory (NT).

As we reflected on the role played by the RFDS in Central Australia over three-quarters of a century, we also demonstrated our commitment to the care of workers, travellers and residents of this vast area long into the future.

Coinciding with the Alice Springs anniversary, RFDS Central Operations opened the Bill & Dawn Prior Village, providing accommodation for new RFDS crew members and staff, in addition to visiting personnel. (See story page four).

This \$6.5 million project is a major investment in Alice Springs, using 100 per cent local tradespeople. The facility was built on time and within budget, and we congratulate Simon Pettit from architects ZoneA, Phil Danby and the team from ProBuild and our own General Manager Northern Territory Michael Toomey.

The RFDS has invested \$13 million in Central Australia in the past four years, including redevelopments of our patient and engineering facility at Alice Springs Airport and our award winning Tourist Facility.

The Board held its annual regional base meeting in Alice Springs ahead of the Village opening, and attended a staff function at the old Base Bush Kitchen. An opportunity to mix socially with our staff is always a pleasure and reminds us of the quality and dedication of our people.

Having previously redeveloped facilities in Alice Springs and Port Augusta, our last major infrastructure project is the development of a new Adelaide Base at the airport, enhancing patient care, whilst accommodating services and staff in one location.

**DAVID HILLS**  
Chairman



**JOHN LYNCH**  
Chief Executive Officer



Planning continues to progress and we are on target to have the project ready for occupancy in early 2016.

The month of May, of course, means budget time for not only the Nation, but also for our own operations. As we consider what challenges lay ahead, we have instigated a review of our Strategic Plan for the next three years.

Our Aircraft fleet is again the focus of special attention with our schedule indicating some are due for replacement in 2016.

None of this is possible without our donors, bequestors, corporate partners, and supporters, whose donations fund the RFDS capital investment program across SA/NT. On behalf of the many people you help us to serve, we thank you sincerely.

We also recognise the many tireless volunteers who make an enormous contribution to our Service. It is fitting that National Volunteer Week (12-18 May) coincides with the RFDS birthday, and provides a timely opportunity to thank you for all that you do.

**DAVID HILLS**

Chairman

**JOHN LYNCH**

Chief Executive Officer

**OUR COVER:** Mahanewo Station co-owner Paul Manning arrives in Adelaide in the care of RFDS Medical Practitioner Dr Alistair Miller.

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# Outback mercy dash >

**A 400-KILOMETRE** round-trip to the nearest hospital is difficult to contemplate – especially when much of that journey is along a track cutting through the paddocks, scrub and salt lakes of South Australia's Far North.

But for Paul Manning and his family on Mahanewo Station, near Lake Gardiner, it is an everyday prospect, and one they never complain about.

It takes a situation out of the ordinary to call upon the RFDS, an organisation the Mannings selflessly try to leave to serve those "further away and more vulnerable than we are".

But in December 2013 there was no choice after Paul suffered shocking injuries in a motorbike accident while mustering with son-in-law Allan McArdle.

"On this particular day I rode into a rock in the grass that I just didn't see and I went straight over the handlebars," recalls Paul.

He careered head-first into another rock, with the impact causing extensive facial wounds.

"The rock peeled back a fair chunk of my face," Paul says. "I knew there was a bit of damage because I could actually hear my face breaking up as I hit the rock."

Allan reacted calmly despite witnessing the crash and its awful consequences.



"Allan took off his shirt to wrap around my face to stop the bleeding and protect the open flesh," Paul remembers.

Using a UHF radio, he contacted Paul's wife Colleen at the homestead and told her to contact the RFDS Port Augusta Base.

"Allan got me on the back of his motorbike and 'donkeyed' me for 20 kilometres around the side of the salt lake, to where it joins the



> Paul and Colleen Manning with Allan and Bridie McArdle and their daughter Indiana.

 The last sentence on the RFDS logo is so very true. It absolutely provides 'The finest care'. 

road and where Colleen and our daughter Bridie were waiting.

"It was pretty hard going, but Allan got me there so they could then drive me to the airstrip where the 'Flying Doctor' plane landed only 15 minutes later."

RFDS Medical Practitioner Dr Alistair Miller was aboard the aircraft with Senior Flight Nurse Barb White, Flight Nurse Angelique Galea and Pilot Neil Tucker.

After stemming the blood flowing from Paul's badly cut face, dressing his wounds and administering pain relief, the crew flew their patient to Royal Adelaide Hospital.

"It was obvious the best thing to do was to get him as quickly as possible to a major hospital," said Dr Miller, who credited the quick-thinking

of Paul's son-in-law for ensuring a speedy response.

Landing in Adelaide just three hours after his crash, Paul underwent testing to clear him of organ damage before undergoing facial surgery.

"I was happy to see Dr Miller and the crew, I can tell you," Paul says.

"If you get hurt, you need help. Everything was done really well and the RFDS response worked perfectly."

Colleen says Paul's evacuation highlights the value of the RFDS, which has undertaken five emergency visits to Mahanewo during the almost 80 years her family has lived there.

"It is extremely difficult to explain to someone else how I felt when I first heard the drone of the plane's engine and then saw the glint of silver in the sky," she said.

"That feeling of utter relief and enormous gratitude is indescribable. The last sentence on the RFDS logo is so very true. It absolutely provides 'The finest care'."



# Home base honours our volunteers >

**A NEW RFDS** staff accommodation facility in Alice Springs has been named in honour of two long-serving volunteers, whose service inspires today's selfless contributors.

The Bill & Dawn Prior Village was opened in April 2014, with the couple's three daughter and two sons surprised as unveiled a plaque featuring their late parents' names.

Dawn Prior OAM – supported and encouraged by husband Bill Prior AM - served the Alice Springs Auxiliary and at times our Board for an extraordinary 56 years and remains the only Northern Territorian to be named a Life Member of Central Operations.

Their involvement with the 'Flying Doctor' started the moment they arrived in Central Australia as newlyweds in 1948 and would continue throughout and beyond a 37-year stretch as managers of Hamilton Downs Station, west of Alice Springs.

In addition to her countless fundraising efforts, Dawn served in almost every Auxiliary committee position and was also a Member of the Board of Central Operations.

Wendy DeSouza – who unveiled the plaque with brothers Gary and David Prior – said it was fitting that their parents' names were on a facility supporting the crews caring for people of Central Australia.

"Mum's commitment was huge because she was just so passionate about the RFDS," Wendy said.

"It was because of the care the organisation and its staff had for people living in remote areas."

RFDS Central Operations CEO John Lynch said the naming of the facility after Bill and Dawn Prior also honoured the many others who volunteer for the Service.



> Pilot Andrew MacPherson, Wendy DeSouza, David Prior, Gary Prior and Senior Flight Nurse Kathy Arthurs at the opening of the Bill & Dawn Prior Village.

"Whilst this village carries Bill's and Dawn's names, I know they, of all people, would see it as a tribute to all those who contribute so much to the RFDS voluntarily to this very day," John said.

Members of the Alice Springs Auxiliary attended the opening ceremony, including many encouraged and inspired by Dawn to join the volunteer group.

"It really is a tribute for all volunteers, because there are at least five members on today's auxiliary who were like Mum and Dad's adopted kids," Wendy said.

The Bill & Dawn Prior Village features 13 units for new employees arriving in and residing in Alice Springs, along with visiting staff providing roster relief, training and other support services.



> Bill and Dawn Prior.

The complex – at the rear of the RFDS Alice Springs Tourist Facility - was opened by Minister for Central Australia Matt Conlan.

"The new staff housing at the RFDS will help ensure the Service can continue to attract highly skilled professionals to work here in Alice Springs and provide vital aeromedical and primary health care services," Mr Conlan said.

# Tears of joy in Nullarbor reunion >

**WHEN** Pat Green and Judith Lepoidevin embarked on a road trip across the Nullarbor on New Year's Day 2010, they couldn't have imagined a journey that would almost take their lives and end with an emotional reunion with the RFDS crew who helped to save them.

The story of the travelling companions' four-wheel-drive rollover, the chance arrival of three holidaying nurses, the patients' evacuation aboard a RFDS aircraft that landed on the Eyre Highway and their amazing recovery, was told in the November 2013 edition of *AirDoctor*.

The following month, they were invited aboard the Indian Pacific Outback Christmas Train, an annual crossing taking Father Christmas and festive joy to isolated communities between Sydney and Perth.

Pat and Judith thought they were aboard to enjoy a long-awaited and trouble-free Nullarbor crossing, but at the railway siding town of Cook they got the surprise of their lives.

As they joined passengers stretching their legs while the train restocked, a glimmer appeared in the clear blue sky accompanied by a humming drone.

It was an approaching RFDS Pilatus PC-12, carrying Pilot Matt Cosier and Flight Nurse Karyn Paterson, both of whom had flown to Pat and Judith's care almost four years earlier.

Only when the crew emerged from the aircraft and introduced themselves did their former patients make the connection.

"You're looking a lot better than when we saw you last," Karyn said to Judith, who had suffered a fractured neck, broken leg and head lacerations in the accident.

The four immediately embraced, with Pat and Judith giving heartfelt thanks for their care.

"Reuniting with the crew was a bolt out of the blue and we both got very teary," said Pat.

Judith was clearly moved by the experience, well aware of the role this 'Flying Doctor' crew



> Pat Green and Judith Lepoidevin reunite with Karyn Paterson and Matt Cosier.

had played in her rescue from such an isolated location.

"It was very emotional, and knowing that Karyn and Matt were pleased to meet us too was really powerful," she said.

A reunion is a rare experience for RFDS crews, who are required by the nature of their work to move quickly from one tasking to the next.

"The reunion was a great buzz and reminds you why you do the job you do," said Matt.

"We quite often see people at their worse when they've suffered a great trauma, so it's good to see them once they've got through that and are back on their feet."

They are sentiments shared by Flight Nurse Karyn who spoke at length with Judith and Pat about how the emergency response unfolded.

"It is very rewarding to see that the service



> Pat and Judith's wrecked four-wheel-drive.

we provided had such a great outcome," Karyn said.

Pat and Judith thanked the crew before re-boarding the Indian Pacific train and finally completing the journey to Perth.

"Judith is lucky to be alive and that's only thanks to the RFDS," Pat says.

"They do such a good job and that's why we give donations every year."



# Benefits flow with support of Senex >

**EXPANDING** oil and gas producer Senex Energy Limited has pledged \$300,000 to RFDS Central Operations over three years, with its company name and logo now flying proudly on the fuselage of 'flying intensive care unit' VH-FDE.

Senex is a petroleum producer and developer in the Cooper and Eromanga basins in the north-east of SA, where its commitment to the RFDS is enhancing worker safety while assisting surrounding outback and pastoral communities.

Launching the 'major' partnership during a ceremony at Innamincka airstrip, RFDS Central Operations CEO John Lynch said both organisations recognised the opportunity to refine and share safety cultures between on-ground oil and gas operations and local residents.

"The partnership incorporates a unique program of workforce emergency medical response training and enhanced health service delivery that will benefit the wider community in the region," Mr Lynch said.

"Senex's contribution supports our capital raising program for the on-going upgrade of our fleet of medically-equipped aircraft that deliver emergency aeromedical and primary health care services throughout South and Central Australia."

Attending the launch with Senex Chairman Dennis Patten, CEO and Managing Director Ian Davies said the company was proud to partner with the RFDS.

"Our partnership with the RFDS is simply the right thing to do," Mr Davies said.

"Senex – and the oil and gas industry as a whole – must ensure the health and safety of everyone who lives and works in the growing



> RFDS Port Augusta Senior Flight Nurse Barb White with Senex Energy Chairman Dennis Patten and Managing Director Ian Davies at the partnership launch in Innamincka.

oil and gas provinces of Australia's outback.

"We believe that working with the RFDS is the best way to do that.

"The joint commitment by Senex and the RFDS to share knowledge will mean far greater opportunity to integrate on-going improvements in the way we look after our people, both in our day-to-day operations, and our emergency protocols."

"Senex is committed to not just its workforce, but all who live and work in remote, rural and regional SA."

The partnership facilitated an immediate review of emergency response procedures at

Senex, prompting a change to communication protocols and putting the company's in-field staff into direct contact with on-call Doctors at RFDS Port Augusta Base, if required.

Innamincka resident and mother-of-three Jayne-Marie Barns commended Senex for helping the RFDS to provide the finest possible care, noting locals are eight hours' drive to the nearest bitumen and highly reliant on the 'Flying Doctor'.

"It shows they don't just care about the mining industry, but it's also the community they care about and want to help," she said.

"If it wasn't for the RFDS getting to us here, who knows what would happen?"

# Special deliveries >

**2 OCTOBER 1986** is a red letter day in the visitors book at Cowarie Station, with a tiny footprint marking the date the newest Oldfield arrived home on the Birdsville Track cattle property.

It was baby Ashlee, whose mum Sharon wrote a welcome beside the imprint of her daughter's foot.

More than a quarter of a century later – on 12 February 2014 – the now Ashlee White made her own mark in the book, noting the date she returned with her and husband Brett's first child, Thomas.

The latest arrival marks the beginning of a fifth Oldfield generation on Cowarie, starting with Thomas's great great grandfather Claude, who made the land home in 1939.

"We are a little bit chuffed and proud because apart from Dulkaninna, Cowarie is the only Birdsville Track property to have a fifth generation at home," Ashlee said.

It is a family connection spanning 75 years, and one the RFDS continues to support.

Like Sharon, Ashlee received 'Flying Doctor' care throughout her pregnancy, with monthly fly-in clinics ensuring she could remain home until she was required to relocate to Adelaide four weeks from her due date.

"The RFDS has been helping our family for such a long time and they really care one-on-one," Ashlee said.

"They land, come to the house, go through everything they need to, see everyone they have to see, and even have a cuppa to make sure that you have got no concerns."

In the event of an emergency, Cowarie is 11 hours by car to Adelaide, but barely two hours with the RFDS – giving Sharon confidence welcoming home her first grandchild.

"The RFDS has been there for us the whole way through, and it is an integral part of what we do," Sharon said.



> **Kirsty Williams nursing George with daughter Lucy and husband Cameron.**

## **CAMERON AND KIRSTY WILLIAMS**

live as far 'outback' as you can in SA.

Their home is Mt Sarah Station, a 2250-square kilometre cattle property sprawling north of the Oodnadatta Track.

It is here where they are raising a fourth generation of the family behind the Williams Cattle Company, with help from the RFDS.

Kirsty and Cameron are bringing up their children amid challenges that make their resilience even more remarkable.

George was born in January 2014 with a breathing condition that also affected older sister Lucy – a form of apnoea that can make a child appear frighteningly lifeless.

"With Lucy, the only way we knew that she was conscious was that we'd blow in her face and she used to blink," said Cameron.

Well managed, the condition presents little threat to life, but it is an added concern for young parents so far from a hospital.

Lucy's condition presented when the family lived in Carrieton, requiring her retrieval by the RFDS from Orroroo. But it was during Kirsty's second pregnancy - after moving to Mt Sarah - when the value of the 'Flying Doctor' became most apparent.

"When I was pregnant with George, I was working two days a week in Oodnadatta, so I would see the RFDS GP health clinic team when they flew in," Kirsty said.

After George was born, he spent a brief stint in the Women's & Children's Hospital before being cleared to go home to Mt Sarah.

"We're not worried about going back at all, and I think it is because we know the care is there with the RFDS," Kirsty said.



> **Ashlee White holding Thomas with husband Brett and mother Sharon Oldfield.**



# Our great outback practice >

**NOTHING** could be called 'routine' about this medical house call.

It's a 'fly-in' health clinic, one of 200 conducted every year from the RFDS Port Augusta Base, serving isolated communities and families across 840,000 square kilometres in SA.

Today's run will see Dr Betsy Williams, Community Health Nurse Cheryl Boles and Pilot Nathan Tasker fly deep into the vast north-west of South Australia.

The RFDS team will travel more than 1000 kilometres, attending to farming families and staff from three sprawling pastoral stations, and a patient driven to a mine site clinic.

**8.35am – Depart RFDS Port Augusta Base**

**9.55am – Arrive at McDouall Peak Station**

Having endured days of 40 degree-plus heat, Petie Moore has treated today's visitors to air-conditioning powered by a diesel generator and normally reserved for bedtime. The children's room is a makeshift consulting room, with the homestead lounge converted into a waiting area.

'Next door' neighbours Lachie Bayley, Rinnah Ward and son Hamish have travelled 30 kilometres from Ingomar Station, together with Letisha McKenzie, daughter Deborah and two-week-old son George.

The newborn is the first seen and given a clean bill of health, before his sister Deborah is called in by Betsy and Cheryl to receive her four-year-old immunisations.

"The RFDS clinic team can actually come every two weeks if we really need it," Letisha said.

"It's very personal because we know the doctors, and the kids get excited to see the plane arrive."

Lachie and Rinnah have themselves required past RFDS care, including evacuations after motorbike crashes, farming accidents and



> Pilot Nathan Tasker, Rinnah Ward, Dr Betsy Williams and Community Health Nurse Cheryl Boles beside the McDouall Peak Station airstrip.

health problems.

As parents of a four-year-old, they place new value on these clinic visits and having emergency RFDS care or advice just a phone call away.

"How else are we going to get adequate medical services without a day like today?" asks Lachie.

"You can wrap kids in cotton wool to an extent, but they will still cause themselves mischief and they're going to wake at two o'clock in the morning with a fever or something like that. We can't just run down to the medical centre and ask 'Is he alright?'"

Rinnah concedes she would find it difficult being a first-time mum in the outback without the RFDS.

"It's good knowing there's a doctor on the end of the telephone or coming out on a clinic flight, to reassure you on a lot of things."

Today's childhood challenge was Hayden's

blocked ear which had returned to trouble the six-year-old following an earlier bout.

For mother Petie and father Ryan Rankine, the 'Flying Doctor' is critical when bringing up young children so far from help.

"Beyond the RFDS coming out on these regular runs, it's just the knowing that if anything happens, you can ring any time of the day or night," Petie said.

**12.50pm – Depart McDouall Peak Station**  
**1.13pm – Arrive Commonwealth Hill Station**

Alan and Gayle Sullivan are living here with daughter Katie Robinson and son-in-law Simon, but Alan has developed a secondary cancer after overcoming an earlier battle.

It was Dr Williams who raised the alarm about Alan's new illness when he made contact with the RFDS by telephone. After undergoing treatment in Adelaide and returning to Commonwealth Hill, he has developed a cold and today meets Dr Williams for the first time.



"I'm out of energy and feeling pretty ordinary, but Betsy has given me something out of the RFDS Medical Chest that we keep here," Alan said.

Today's visit is also an opportunity to check-up on Amy Cooper, 25 weeks pregnant with her and husband Ashley's second child.

"The scariest part about being pregnant out here is you can't just go to hospital if something is wrong or if you get a niggling feeling and just don't know," Amy said.

**3.05pm – Depart Commonwealth Hill Station**  
**3.25pm – Arrive Challenger Gold Mine**

While the RFDS supports workers at many mines, today's visit is to a young man brought in from a nearby station.

The patient has travelled from Scotland, and is gaining farming experience on a 'round-the-world adventure.

Having being diagnosed with a possible tropical illness while in Africa, he has relapsed and become weak.

Betsy and Cheryl supply replenishing fluids and take blood tests which would later clear the young man of serious illness.

**4.45pm – Depart Challenger Gold Mine**  
**5.57pm – Arrive RFDS Port Augusta Base**

Having delivered remote medicine in Canada, South America, Africa and Cambodia, Betsy receives enormous satisfaction working with the RFDS.

"Beyond the variety of work we deal with, I love meeting people who are just unbelievably resilient and incredibly real," Betsy said.

Cheryl has built lasting relationships as the RFDS Community Health Nurse.

"What I really love is the way health care out here is a true partnership between our staff and also the patients who take a lot of responsibility for their own care," Cheryl said.

Pilot Nathan enjoys the variety and flexibility of his unique role.

"By visiting people in their environment, special opportunities are presented to build friendships with people that we will no doubt meet again at a later date," he said.



> Petie Moore holds daughter Hayden during an ear examination by Dr Betsy Williams.



> Letisha McKenzie with son George and daughter Deborah.



> Community Health Nurse Cheryl Boles with Amy and Riley Cooper.



> Dr Betsy Williams, Gayle and Alan Sullivan and Katie Robinson.



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# Dental program flying higher with Adelaide Airport partnership >

**A UNIQUE** oral health care initiative pioneered by the RFDS will deliver much-needed dental services to more isolated South Australians, with Adelaide Airport coming aboard as Program Partner from 2014.

Adelaide Airport's financial commitment will enable the RFDS to extend the life of its successful pilot Remote Oral Health Care Program for another three years, as well as broaden its reach into more remote communities along the Birdsville Track and Gawler Ranges.

The program was developed in a collaboration involving the RFDS and the University of Adelaide School of Dentistry, providing 'fly-in' dental and oral health education services to communities where the nearest dentist can be up to a day's drive away.

The two-year program pilot focussed on Marree, Marla and Oodnadatta, where supervised final-year dental and oral health care students undertook regular two-day clinics and oral hygiene education sessions in schools.

The pilot identified that children living in remote SA are twice as likely to have cavities and missing or filled teeth compared with their city counterparts.

RFDS Central Operations General Manager of Health Services Dr John Setchell said Adelaide Airport's support enabled the program to address serious shortcomings in more communities.

"With the backing of Adelaide Airport, the RFDS will not only maintain services it piloted in Marree, Marla and Oodnadatta, but we will provide care in other remote locations such as Kingoonya and stations on the Birdsville Track where residents have no reliable access to a dentist," Dr Setchell said.

"The pilot program uncovered serious



> Oodnadatta students Keramiah Amos and Deena Warren.

problems and even worse potential health issues created by a lack of regular oral care services, with as many as four in five school-age children and three quarters of adults having at least one cavity.

"Pleasingly, a significant proportion of those who received a dental examination and treatment during their first visit showed significant improvements in oral health at subsequent visits."

Importantly, the Remote Oral Health Care Program demonstrated a willingness by patients to return for follow-up visits, thereby decreasing the risk of on-going problems.

Adelaide Airport Limited Managing Director Mark Young said the organisation was delighted to help the RFDS to extend the life and reach of its Remote Oral Health Care Program.



> The RFDS Remote Oral Health Care Program in action.

"Adelaide Airport is proud to partner with the RFDS and assist its efforts to take the finest health care to the furthest corners," Mr Young said.

"We have an excellent long-standing relationship with the RFDS. They are a vital part of the fabric of Adelaide Airport and make an incredible contribution to the State."

As well as providing much needed oral health care to remote communities, the clinics also provide fifth-year dental students with valuable practical experience and encourage the development of dentists keen to work in remote areas in the future.

Adelaide Airport is a long-time generous supporter of the RFDS, serving as a Major Sponsor of its annual Wings for Life Gala Ball and funding the replacement of medical equipment.

# Reputation award for RFDS >

**THE RFDS** has been named Australia's most reputable not-for-profit organisation for a third year running.

This achievement was revealed by the 2013 Charity Reputation Index, an annual study conducted by research company AMR, in partnership with the Reputation Institute.

AMR's Managing Director Oliver Freedman said the RFDS had built a strong standing among Australians, built on "a broad base" of achievement.

"The research demonstrates that for a charity to have a strong reputation, it is not enough simply to be supporting a good cause," Mr Freedman said.

"These organisations also need to be innovative, strong community leaders, demonstrate appropriate cost management, be transparent in their governance and provide a good workplace for employees.

"The RFDS came up well in all these dimensions, and their overall reputation ranking reflects this community view."

RFDS General Manager Marketing & PR Charlie Paterson thanked Australians for their continued show of support.

"We acknowledge that we could never achieve this degree of public respect without the dedication and professionalism of our people and, equally, our many donors, volunteers and corporate and community partners," Mr Paterson said.

"For this we say thank you, and ask all those who help make a difference to feel proud of their contribution."

# Stars of our outback ball >

**MORE THAN** 600 people gathered in the stunning Flinders Ranges for Wilpena Under the Stars 2014. An official RFDS Event, the annual outback ball was headlined by singer Deni Hines who led a fantastic night of entertainment, presided over by Master of Ceremonies Tim Noonan from Channel 7.

With the support of guests, generous sponsors and many volunteers, the evening raised more than \$85,000 for the RFDS.

The RFDS thanks all who attended, along with volunteers and corporate supporters including Major Sponsors Ahrens, Alinta Energy, Lucas and Heathgate.

Next year marks the 20th anniversary of this iconic event, and we are planning an appropriate celebration. So, hold the date in your diary – Saturday 21 February 2015.



> Bob and Marj Ahrens (front left) from the Ahrens Group, with their guests.



> SA Minister for Health Jack Snelling & RFDS Central Operations Chairman David Hills.



> Jill Connell, Tracey Nunan, Helen Kelly, Louise Kittle and Karin Tudor.



> Heathgate Resources Operations Manager Gary Birch and wife Wendy.



> LucasTotal Contract Solutions Directors David and Vivienne Lucas.



> Orlando Wines Head of Brand Sites & Visitation Greg Stirling and wife Jane.



# Dr Mickan's birthday surprise >

**DR JOHN MICKAN AM** was born in 1929 – less than 12 months after the establishment of the organisation that would become the RFDS.

But no-one could have foreseen the heights to which the 'Flying Doctor' would soar or the impact young John would have on its expansion.

It was fitting that he celebrated his 85th birthday with a tour of the RFDS Adelaide Base and a surprise sighting of the aircraft that bears his name, alongside those of former colleagues Dr John Thompson OAM and Dr Bob Cooter AM.

*Our Inaugural Doctors* were Port Augusta General Practitioners who in 1955 donated their services as the RFDS established its first base in SA.

That voluntary service to those living in the harsh north and west of the State would last an extraordinary 12 years.

"We said we would do everything we could to help and we would do it for nothing until they could support their own Doctor," Dr Mickan recalled during his visit.

"We're very proud of that and very humble that we were able to do it."

The late Dr Thompson and Dr Mickan accompanied the first flights into SA's north, undertaking two-day visits to the frontier communities of Andamooka, Marree and Oodnadatta.

Flying in fabric-covered Auster aircraft, they pioneered the routes and clinic routine still followed today, more than half a century on.

"Some of those were quite hairy trips,"

Dr Mickan said.

"We landed mainly on clay plans because



> RFDS Engineer Tony Mansueto polishes up VH-FVD for Dr John Mickan AM and son Phil.

that was all that was available on many stations and they usually set a tyre on fire down one so we could see where the wind was blowing from."

Their commitment would quickly become a 24-hour one, sharing a round-the-clock roster to take emergency calls and provide remote consultations by radio – all while serving their practice patients and meeting the expanding demands of Port Augusta Hospital.

Dr Mickan and Dr Cooter also uncovered the source of an outbreak of fatal amoebic meningitis among young people in Port Augusta, Port Pirie and Kadina.

It was traced to water from the Morgan-Whyalla pipeline and led to chlorination which prevented further cases.

"We were very thrilled because it had been such a terrible thing until then not to be able to do anything for these people who were dying," Dr Mickan said.

Dr Mickan considers his service to the RFDS a highlight of his medical career.

"To help set up that base and provide those services was a feather in our cap ... and that has been wonderful for me, so I feel very proud and humble that we were able to do it."

The names of *Our Inaugural Doctors* are carried on VH-FVD, a RFDS Central Operations Pilatus PC-12 dedicated to their service.

Known for his humility, not even Dr Mickan could hide his pride when he entered the Adelaide hangar during his recent visit to find the aircraft undergoing scheduled maintenance.

Dr Mickan's son Phil followed his father into healthcare, undertaking nursing at the Royal Adelaide Hospital and going on to specialise in cardio-thoracic and neurological intensive care.

"He's been a remarkable man and a remarkable father over the years," Phil said.

"To come down here and know what he's done, it's just great. I am so proud of being his son."

Dr Mickan was named a Member of the Order of Australia in 2010, for his service to rural medicine.

# Thank you for your support >



## Clocking up the 'Ks' and the support >

The numbers are impressive - 48 people in 29 vehicles spending eight days driving 2060 kilometres from Bute to the north of SA and back to Saddleworth.

But greatest achievement from the 2013 Lions Bash is the \$22,758 the generous entrants raised for the RFDS.

The biennial Bash has run since 1990, with the latest event organised by the Lions Clubs of Victor Harbor/Port Elliot and Renmark. Planning is already underway for the 2015 Bash.

> **Above: Entrants in the 2013 Lions Bash stop at Marree.**

## Our global impact >

The German RFDS Support Group continues to spread word of our organisation far and wide, while raising money to keep the Flying Doctor flying.

President Dr Hans Henschel OAM visited the Adelaide RFDS aeromedical base while touring Australia as a team doctor in the World Solar Challenge.

Dr Henschel brought the Bochum University 'PowerCore Sun Cruiser' crew with him, while donating a further \$10,000 to the RFDS.



> **German RFDS Support Group President Dr Hans Henschel (front right) presents the latest donation, accompanied by the 'PowerCore Sun Cruiser' team.**

## Small school, huge hearts >

When the 31 students of Mount Gambier's Meridian School looked for a charity to support, they discovered nearly every student's family knew of someone who had experienced the services of the RFDS.

After visiting Mount Gambier Airport and touring a RFDS aircraft, they were hooked and 'Operation RFDS' swung into action, raising an incredible \$11,378.

School CEO Andy Gooden said: 'We encourage a spirit of giving, and I applaud the recognition by the students of other community-minded and humanitarian activities. The RFDS epitomises the values of preserving and nurturing life.'



> **The Meridian School makes its presentation to the RFDS at Mount Gambier Airport.**



## RFDS at home at Government House >

The RFDS had the honour of being the nominated charity at the SA Government House Open Day in November 2013.

We were invited by His Excellency Rear Admiral Kevin Scarce Governor of SA, who is Patron of RFDS Central Operations.

More than 3500 people passed through the gates, contributing gold coin donations before

touring the magnificent home and gardens, and enjoying a wide range of displays and catering by RFDS staff and volunteers.

> **Left: His Excellency Rear Admiral Kevin Scarce Governor of SA with members of the RFDS Holdfast Bay Dinner Club and RFDS Adelaide Auxiliary.**



## Wild ride for the Flying Doctor >

More than 100 BAE Systems staff took up a rare opportunity to ride aboard one of their company's most advanced vehicles, whilst raising money for the RFDS.

They paid \$5 each to experience the BvS 10, an amphibious armoured personnel carrier driven by retired Royal Marine Damian Todd.

RFDS Pilot Phil Remilton swapped his aircraft seat for the driver's seat, before thanking the staff for their innovative fundraising. The RFDS is the dedicated charity of BAE Systems across Australia.



> RFDS Pilot Phil Remilton with BAE Systems driver Damian Todd and the BvS 10.

## A new league of support >

National Rugby League club Parramatta kicked off its NT expansion, winning the inaugural RFDS Charity Challenge clash against West Tigers in Alice Springs.

The Eels donated \$10,000 to the RFDS after choosing the organisation as their charity in a four-year partnership with the NT Government.

The RFDS Charity Challenge will be played in Alice Springs as a pre-season game each February.

## Super partnership >



> RFDS General Manager Marketing & PR Charlie Paterson (fourth from left) receives the donation from Woolworths executives at RFDS Adelaide Base.

**CUSTOMERS** and staff of Woolworths have delivered a vital boost to the RFDS donating more than \$100,000 during the first half of a year-long fundraising effort.

The proceeds of the campaign were presented during a visit by Woolworths State Manager Andrew Hall and senior executives to the 'Flying Doctor' aeromedical base at Adelaide Airport.

"Woolworths is very proud of its on-going commitment to the RFDS, and we are honoured to present a cheque for \$104,404.10 to help its vital work for people in all corners of SA and NT," Mr Hall said.

"Our staff and customers told us they wanted to support the RFDS, and their commitment and generosity has demonstrated how highly they value the organisation and how dedicated they are to raising funds needed to keep the 'Flying Doctor' flying."

The contribution came from in 82

Woolworths supermarkets throughout SA/NT, with customers donating money through fundraising activities including:

- Supermarket visits by the RFDS replica aircraft;
- BBQs and cake stalls supplied by Woolworths and served by staff;
- RFDS aircraft and football tokens purchased at check-outs; and
- 'Win a trip on The Ghan' lottery and raffles across all supermarkets.

RFDS General Manager Marketing & PR Charlie Paterson thanked Woolworths and its customers for their teamwork and continued support.

"The RFDS is extremely grateful for the advocacy and opportunity provided to us by Woolworths in SA and NT, and the outstanding generosity of its customers who have embraced the in-store promotions and fundraising opportunities," Mr Paterson said.

featuring  
**KATE  
CEBERANO**

# the bazaar ball

## ROCK THE CASBAH

**ADELAIDE ENTERTAINMENT CENTRE  
SATURDAY 31 MAY 2014**

TICKETS CALL RFDS (08) 8238 3333 OR  
[FLYINGDOCTOR.ORG.AU/BAZARBALL](http://flyingdoctor.org.au/bazaarball)

The 2014 Wings for Life Gala Ball brings the exotic sights, sounds and tastes of a Moroccan market to Adelaide, in a feast for the senses to support the Royal Flying Doctor Service. Tickets \$160 each (\$1600 per table of 10). Includes dinner, drinks, dancing and fabulous entertainment to entice and excite. 6.30pm start. Strictly black tie.

An RFDS Event  
**WINGS  
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