



TakeOff

IN THE AIR, ON THE GROUND

ISSUE 03 AUTUMN 2017



Royal Flying Doctor Service
TASMANIA



Pilot Steve Wood, James Wirsu with the new Mobile Patient Transfer vehicle and Nicole Henty with the Mobile Dental Care vehicle.



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Please note

To fund and promote our new Primary Health Care Services, we will be expanding our fundraising programme through a direct mail campaign addressed "TO THE HOUSEHOLDER".

We apologise to those who are currently on our database who may receive this direct mail piece as well.



From the CEO, John Kirwan

2017 is going to be a year focused on implementation of our new primary health care services.

Following the strategic direction set by the Tasmanian Board we are implementing a range of new RFDS services to address the imbalance in health outcomes between remote, rural and regional areas and those residing in the capital cities.

The Australian health system is recognised as one of the best in the world, based on universal access. However access is not always available to all. The barriers are considerable for some, be it distance, travel costs, poor public transport, poor language and communications skills, or poor health literacy.

This maldistribution (great bureaucrats word), means we have an over supply of health care workers in the Capital cities, and undersupply in remote, rural and regional areas. With your valued support, and the strong financial base due to past donations and bequests we are helping fellow Tasmanians in the following ways.

- In partnership with UTAS, TAFE the CTA, and our mainland sections, we offer 6 scholarships for young Tasmanians to experience working in remote Australia, and encouraging them to work in primary health care in the future.
- The launch of a new Mobile Dental Care in areas that are in need of preventative and restorative dental work.
- By implementing our Mobile Patient Care service, to provide a bed to bed model to complement our aero medical services and to improve access to services.
- In partnership with five Local Government Associations and Diabetes Tas in the north east and east coast, implementing an innovative primary care program to help manage patients with chronic disease.



Martin Lavery

Martin Lavery, CEO of the Royal Flying Doctor Service, a lawyer, with a Masters in Aboriginal constitutional law, addressed the National Press Club in Canberra prior to Christmas. The address outlined the disparity between the seven million people who live in rural and remote Australia and their city counterparts.

Martin spoke of remote Australians who die on average two and a half years earlier than people in the city. Type two diabetes rates that are 3.7 times higher, suicide rates seven times as high, and the likelihood of dying in a motor vehicle accident on a country road is four times more likely than on a city road. *"Pick a statistic. Any statistic. Health outcomes and health access is worse in the bush than the city."*

It's a sobering thought that social factors such as poverty, education and housing are key determinants to these disparities, as is health care access. Those living in regional and remote Australia see doctors at half the rate of people in the city, medical specialist and dentists at a third the rate, and mental health professionals at a fifth the rate.

"Why do we accept these disparities?" Why do country people not complain?" Asked Martin. The National Rural Health Alliance acknowledges there are key reforms to address in the future, including reducing the gap in health and wellbeing outcomes for those living in regional, rural and remote Australia.



"We will go the distance because we care"

says the CEO of the Royal Flying Doctor Service, Victoria, Scott Chapman, "and we are passionate and we are proud of our work".

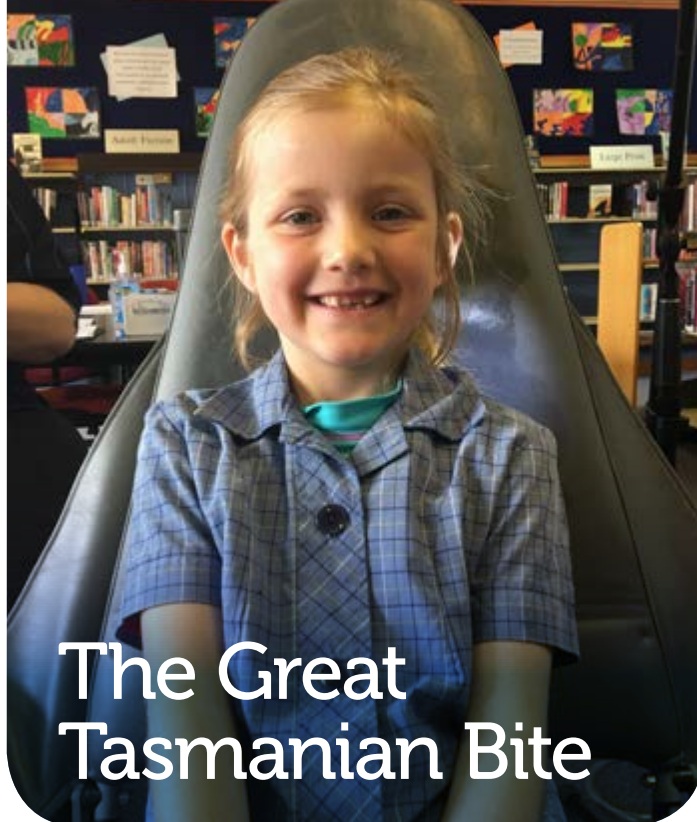
Guests and staff recently heard the fascinating story from Scott, as to how after his six years with the Flying Doctor he has managed to transform the Victorian section.

With 96 vehicles now transferring non emergency patients around the state, the RFDS is the front line for Mobile Patient Care.

52 Mobile Eye Care Clinics saw 591 patients last year throughout Victoria providing free of charge eye clinics. 1,000 dental treatments were provided to rural Victorians, 325 Diabetes Telehealth Consultations took place and 856 patients visited the 77 Rural Women's GP Service.

For your organisation here in Tasmania, we may not reach the magnificent heights of Victoria, due to population restraints, but we hope that our increased presence in dental care, primary health and mobile patient transfer, will give increased access to health care for all Tasmanians.

Scott echoed the words of John Flynn, "we provide a mantle of safety for everyone".



The Great Tasmanian Bite

Swansea Primary School takes advantage of the first Royal Flying Doctor Tasmania Dental Trial.

The RFDS Tasmania is following in the footsteps of its counterparts on the mainland, by introducing dental visits to primary school children. The Principal of the Swansea Primary School on Tasmania's east coast, Mrs Jennie Amos was keen to be part of our debut trial.

Our Manager of Mobile Dental Care, Nicole Henty, Senior Dental Therapist, Sharon Smith and Dental Assistant, Diana Godwin set up a mobile clinic at the school on the 30th November 2016. Children attended for a screening visit, two and three at a time and were returned to their classes with a 'goodie bag' containing toothbrush, toothpaste, puzzles and oral hygiene information.

Each appointment took between 5 and 10 minutes, and each child was sent home with a note advising parents what treatment had been carried out, and whether their child required follow up treatment.

Early check-ups allow dental problems to be found before they can lead to pain, trouble concentrating and other medical issues. Youngsters with healthy teeth chew food easily, learn to speak clearly and smile with confidence.

This is an exciting new activity for your previously 'air based' operation.



RFDS hits the road in Tasmania

Many of you may have seen the two Royal Flying Doctor Service Tasmania, Non Emergency Patient Transport vehicles on the road since mid January. I asked Dean Lahey, Manager, Mobile Patient Care, to answer just ten questions that I'm sure you are all asking:

- 1 What does non emergency patient transfer mean?**
It means the transport of patients that are stable and are not undergoing any active drug therapies.
- 2 Can I use this service?**
Yes we offer a personalised, user pay service.
- 3 Will it cost me anything?**
Each case will be evaluated on the individual requirements of the patient.
- 4 Can my local nursing home/hospital, use this service?**
Yes. Each transfer can be co-ordinated individually.
- 5 What if my condition deteriorates whilst in the vehicle?**
If a patient deteriorates during transport we will call 000 and receive advice and support from Ambulance Tasmania.
- 6 Are the staff trained in first aid?**
Yes, all staff are trained in Advanced First Aid.
- 7 How do I arrange to be picked up?**
Enquiries can be made at 0455 440 551 or bookings@rfdstas.org.au
- 8 How far can your service take me?**
The RFDS provides a national transport service using air and road ambulances.
- 9 Will the RFDS vehicles save Ambulance Tasmania work?**
Using the RFDS will free up Ambulance Tasmania to attend to emergency cases.
- 10 What if my friend from Interstate is staying and needs your vehicle, will they have to pay?**
Yes they will. We don't have reciprocal ambulance or health insurance arrangements with other States.



HIGH FLYERS: RFDS TASMANIA PILOTS

David Swiggs

RFDS Tasmania pilot, David Swiggs comes from a strong aviation background. His father, Kevin Swiggs is well known in aviation circles, both in Tasmania, and in Northern Australia. David, like many of his contemporaries could fly before he could drive.

"I won a scholarship offered by The Examiner, which contributed \$500 towards my fees", tells David. "and after completing my training at the Tasmanian Aero Club, in the mid 1980's, I had a short stint in steamy Darwin, and Kakadu, where cockpit temperatures could reach as high as 53 degrees."

"At least in the Cessna 207, you could start it up and get some relief from the air flow off the prop, but in the poor old Partenavia, (built in Italy) it's just like being in a sauna. You're flying over wetlands."

Returning to Launceston he flew with Airlines of Tasmania, who also had the contract at that time to fly aero medical retrievals for the RFDS Tasmania.

Images from the late 1990's



In 1996 the State Government in Tasmania put the air ambulance service out to tender. The NSW Section, in conjunction with the Tasmanian Section, was awarded the contract to operate in Tasmania. With recruitment made, and training provided, David along with two other local pilots, and a recruit from Broken Hill-Stan Griffiths, made the move to the present hangar on February 15th, 1997.

"In 40 hours over Christmas last year, we had four trips to King Island, once on the Friday, twice on Christmas Eve, and again on Christmas Day."

Here at the RFDS Tasmania, we saluted our pilots on February 15th, 2017, for their 20 years of dedicated service to your organisation.



Royal Flying Doctor Service
TASMANIA

RIGHT AS RAIN



Wings & Things

Through the generous support of Bell Bay Aluminium and TasWater, the RFDS Right as Rain team touched down at the annual Wings & Things, held at George Town, on Sunday 19th February.

Two local pharmacists also provided practical advice on the appropriate treatment of head lice, and parents took home a free treatment pack supplied by the Flying Doctor. The pack also included information about chronic health conditions and immunisations.

During the event, students from the University of Tasmania Medical School engaged with community members by conducting a survey about the health of their community and Healthy Tasmania delivered fun fitness activities.

Mary Frost from the RFDS Tasmania said

"The aeromedical training simulator with a medical mannequin on board, as well as the landing of the RFDS aircraft provided much delight for both adults and children".

CHILDREN'S UNIVERSITY

Passport to learning

During the January school holidays, the RFDS Tasmania base became a *Learning Destination* for children involved in a relatively new educational initiative. The Children's University Tasmania under the auspices of the Children's University Australia (CUA), is administered through the Peter Underwood Centre for Educational attainment at the University of Tasmania (UTAS).

Marcel Kerrison, the Project Co-ordinator said,

"The CUA Tasmania aims to raise aspirations about the value of learning and further education with students aged 7 – 14 years, by encouraging and celebrating learning outside regular school hours."

School clubs, community organisations, businesses and events become *Learning Destinations* and Children's University participants gain stamps in their *Passport to Learning* through participating in learning of all types. Achievements are celebrated at annual Children's University graduation ceremonies. For those aged between 15-18 they are issued with a *Passport to Volunteering*, encouraging volunteer work and becoming role models to younger students.

Ann Donnelly, the CUA co-ordinator from the East Tamar Primary School who accompanied the group of children, said

"the children's university originally started in the United Kingdom before firstly coming to Adelaide. Here in Tasmania the program has started with the more disadvantaged schools. The idea is to get children off the couch, and show them the career possibilities of the future."



As a Learning Destination the RFDS Tasmania is considered to provide a good quality learning activity for those children involved.



Marcel congratulated Jocelyn McLean, Education Officer with the RFDS Tasmania, for all her work in making our Learning Destination such a worthwhile visit for students.



"It's great fun, I love it."

said Sophie Colgrave from the East Tamar Primary School, who has completed 210 hours of activities



Charity rewarded

"For the sixth year in a row top honours went to the Royal Flying Doctor Service with an impressive score of 96.9 out of possible 100 points, showing how providing a lifesaving service that addresses the needs of vulnerable outback communities resonates strongly with Australians."

Research consultants AMR, who produce the annual Charity Reputation Index, released this exciting news just prior to Christmas 2016. Their information is collated directly from consumers and doesn't rely on any information provided by the organisations being studied.

AMR's Managing Director Oliver Freedman said "The RFDS has now ranked first for the sixth year running. The consistent level of trust, admiration and respect highlights the ongoing emotional attachment felt by Australians and the fact the Service was ranked first across all reputation categories speaks volumes for the organisation's solid foundation.

The Port Sorell Lions share

CEO, John Kirwan recently had the pleasure of visiting Port Sorell to receive a cheque from their Lions Club. The Club has recently been granted the rights to conduct weekly raffles at the Shearwater Resort. The funds from their quarterly raffle at the end of 2016 were gratefully accepted by the Royal Flying Doctor Service, Tasmania. The Club have earmarked various charities in the future to receive funds from their quarterly raffles.



George Town Rotary recognises outstanding contribution



Lindsay Millar OAM is a familiar name to anyone who has followed the progress of aviation in Tasmania over the past 50 or more years. As a retired orchardist from Hillwood, Lindsay is also well known in the horticultural world.

With an outstanding memory and the love of a good story, a short chat with Lindsay is out of the question. His knowledge of aviation in this State is encyclopaedic!

The RFDS Tasmania has previously honoured Mr Millar with Life Membership and the title, Board Member Emeritus, following his retirement from the Board after 50 years.

As a Life Member of the Tasmanian Aero Club, having served as a committee member and President at various times since obtaining his private pilot license in 1956, Lindsay's knowledge is often called upon as Club Historian!

The Rotary Club of George Town where Lindsay, over time, has served as Treasurer, Vocational Director and International Director recently awarded him The Paul Harris Fellow. This award recognised his outstanding contribution to society over the past 50 plus years.

All of us at the RFDS Tasmania send our congratulations and acknowledge how worthy he is to receive this award.

Zoe's Outback Adventure

"Doing the Outback Adventure ticks a lot of boxes for me" tells the effervescent Zoe Page. A Community Engagement Officer with the Launceston Clinical School at the University of Tasmania, Zoe has signed up to represent the Royal Flying Doctor Service Tasmania in the exciting Larapinta Trail Expedition.

"I love what the RFDS contributes to Australians and the exciting new direction that they are taking for their future here in Tasmania. Doing the Larapinta Trail in June has also given me a 5-month fitness goal and surprisingly by bushwalking, I am now also seeing much more of Tasmania".





FROM THE ARCHIVES

with Lindsay Miller OAM,
RFDS Tasmanian Emeritus Board Member

Edgar Percival EP-9 "Prospector"

The Edgar Percival EP-9 was certainly one of the most unusual aircraft used by the Royal Flying Doctor Service in Australia.

The prototype, built in the United Kingdom by the famous Australian designer, Edgar Percival, first flew on the 21st December 1955, with a demonstration tour in Australia. Designed as a single engine multi role aircraft, the EP-9 could be configured in various ways, either with six seats, as a crop duster or for freight.

The Tasmanian Aero Club in Launceston purchased an EP-9, registration VH-TCA in 1958. The aircraft provided aeromedical and charter services, particularly to the Bass Strait Islands. Because of its unusual shape, with its large flat floored cabin, rear clamshell door, and it's height, the EP-9 made an ideal aircraft to load a stretcher and house medical equipment.

The short take off and landing ability enabled it to operate safely from the many short runways and beaches in remote parts of Tasmania. Eventually the EP-9 was reconfigured as a crop-duster and sold in 1961.



Wreckage on "Juna Downs",
picture by John Boden

THE END OF THE STORY!

EP-9 ended its life in the Pilbara, WA. Pilot, Keith Wilkin persuaded the new owner of the plane, which now had the registration VH-DAX, to lend him the plane for mustering. With a previous prosecution and with his licence suspended, Keith ultimately stalled the aircraft on approach to 'Juna Downs' Station near Wittenoom.

The heavy landing collapsed the undercarriage and the aircraft overturned with minor injuries to pilot and passenger. Beyond repair, the aircraft was stripped of any useful equipment and the sad end of an unusual aircraft is obvious in the photograph.

Having never visited Central Australia she is excited to see an area steeped in history and colour. Her aim now that she is working with 4th and 5th year medical students, is to increase their awareness of rural health issues, and to highlight the opportunities in health careers for young people, particularly in rural and regional communities.

We will be supporting Zoe in her quest to raise funds for the RFDS here in Tasmania. If you would like to support this fine young Australian, who is giving up her time to help others you can donate to:

rfdsoutbackadventure-2017.everydayhero.com.au/zoe-page-rfds-adventure

And for more information on the Larapinta Outback Adventure:

flyingdoctor.org.au/tas/events/rfdsoutbackadventure-2017-tas/



A healthy donation for Zoe

A huge thank you to John Ralph from Ascent Fitness. John has offered to provide training for Zoe, free of charge over a 10 week period, plus 100km of training on the Launceston Urban Fringe Trail. If anyone out there would like to join Zoe in her pursuit for fitness, and to perhaps improve your own health, contact Lucy Byrne, Healthy Tasmania. Phone: 0409 937 421



GROUND CREW: STAFF PROFILES

Nicole Grose

PRIMARY HEALTH CARE
COORDINATOR

"Moving from the thriving metropolis of Melbourne to Miena was a culture shock, but an amazing experience" says Nicole, who moved here with her husband 14 years ago to set up a private fishing lodge and fly fishing guiding business.

With a background in community health services, especially in the mental health sector, Nicole is now the Primary Health Care Coordinator for the Royal Flying Doctor Service Tasmania.

"After working and living in Rural Tasmania for many years, I have a thorough understanding of the social and economic challenges for people living and working in rural areas. I am passionate about making a real difference to the health and well being of people living in rural and remote Tasmania."

When her spare time allows, Nicole can think of nothing better than fly fishing, or tying flies in anticipation! With her husband and eight year old daughter, and Maggie the dog, a one eyed chook called Sunday Roast, and Frankie the sheep, Nicole has added humour as well as a wealth of knowledge on Primary Health to the RFDS Tasmania.



Nicole Grose & Jocelyn McLean

Jocelyn McLean

EDUCATION OFFICER

Jocelyn can be short on detail about herself, but when it comes to education, she is truly passionate. As the Education Officer for the Royal Flying Doctor Tasmania, Jocelyn has pushed the boundaries. Besides visiting schools she has been responsible for implementing and developing educational programs for schools in Tasmania, and a 'Kids Club'.

"It's important to learn about the history of the RFDS as it tells us so much about the history of our country, the struggle to make it what it is, and our cultural identity as Australians. The history of the RFDS shares the common themes of mate-ship, a fair go for all and innovation."

After completing her Bachelor of Education at the James Cook University in Townsville she taught in both Emerald and Mackay. Her involvement in Curriculum and as a Pedagogy Coach (coaching teachers on their teaching practice) her experience, has proved invaluable to the RFDS Tasmania.

She laughs when I ask about her spare time! It seems her husband, their two year old daughter and two sons leave little time at present for that!

YES! Here is my gift of support

I wish my donation to remain anonymous ☐

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Royal Flying Doctor Service

TASMANIA

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