

Welcome to the second edition of Touch Base with RFDS Tasmania through which we will keep you up to date with our latest news and events in Tasmania. Please be sure to read the enclosed letter from our member, **Judith Longhurst** who talks about her experiences with the RFDS turning full circle.



Scholarship recipients take to the skies

RFDS Tasmania offers two annual scholarships to better acquaint medical students and dental assistants with the attractions and difficulties of working and living in rural and remote communities.

Tom Roberts (pictured top) was nominated as the Fred McKay Medical Student Scholarship recipient for 2012 and has spent two weeks working from the RFDS Broken Hill Base in NSW and a further two weeks at Launceston as an observer with Ambulance Tasmania flight paramedics and retrieval doctors accompanying patients in RFDS aircraft.



Bronte Hegyi (above) was selected as the 2012 John Flynn Dental Assistant Scholarship recipient and has enjoyed two weeks of flying and clinical work experience at the RFDS Broken Hill Base as an assistant to the RFDS Dentist.

Be sure to read about their experiences in future editions of the Flyer.

Educational program takes flight in Tasmania

The RFDS Look! Up in the Sky educational resource has taken flight in Tasmanian schools with over 90 primary school classes registering for the program. Developed by RFDS Victoria, the resource is aimed at grades 3 to 6 and based on the RFDS core values of respect, teamwork, leadership, fairness and compassion.

During October RFDS Victoria Program Manager of Education, **Tom Ryan**, toured registered schools with the interactive aeromedical simulator to bring the educational program to life through a fun engagement session.

The simulator is a life sized replica of the fuselage of a flying doctor aircraft. It is fully equipped with stretchers, communications, oxygen, suction and the equipment used by the everyday heroes: the doctors, nurses and pilots of the RFDS. Students climbed on board and strapped themselves in to enjoy this unique experience where they “rescued” a patient and “landed” an RFDS aircraft in the outback.

We thank RFDS Victoria for their continuing support to help lift the profile of the Service in Tasmanian primary schools and their school communities.



Lindsay Millar OAM addresses guests at the 2011 Morning Tea

Hobart Morning Tea – Wednesday 28th November

RFDS Tasmania is hosting a Morning Tea at The Royal Yacht Club of Tasmania, Sandy Bay on Wednesday 28th November from 10.00 am to 11.30 am. Supporters are very welcome to attend. Please RSVP by Wednesday 21 November to **Mary Frost** on 03 6391 0504, **Nicole Hatcliff** on 03 6391 0512 or at enquiriestas@rfdssse.org.au

We look forward to seeing you at the Morning Tea.

Patient transfer shelters for regional airports

RFDS Tasmania has developed a new patient transfer shelter design for installation at regional airports around Tasmania. The purpose built garages will be used to improve the comfort of patients and assist medical staff during transfer from road ambulance to air ambulance.

Under the arrangement, the purchase of the shelter, together with a contribution towards the cost of installation, will be met by RFDS Tasmania. Local Councils will install and maintain the shelters on airport land.

The design of the garages has been endorsed by Ambulance Tasmania and RFDS South Eastern Section.



Students enjoying the aeromedical simulator

Safety initiative for West Coast Airports

Simon Froude, RFDS SE Tasmanian Manager presented the State Emergency Service (SES) with two ground-to-air hand held radios at a presentation at Strahan Airport.

RFDS aircraft land at the Queenstown and Strahan Airports over 60 times per year, and it was identified that there was inadequate ground-to-air communication between RFDS Pilots and State Emergency Services volunteers to ensure that kangaroos have been cleared from the airfield for the safe arrival of the aircraft.

As a result, RFDS Tasmania has purchased two hand held radios to enable clear communication between approaching or departing aircraft and SES volunteers to confirm that the 'roo runs' on the airfield have been completed.

RFDS Tasmania President, **Dr George Merridew**, said that here in Tasmania the Service uses funds from its donors to promote top-grade healthcare, in many ways. "The purchase of the radios is another example of the RFDS' contribution to the Tasmanian community." Dr Merridew said.



Anthony Dick, Simon Froude, Leigh Horder, Wanifa Bradshaw and Wayne Richards at the presentation

Facts at a glance >

Royal Flying Doctor Service
Tasmanian Operations 2011 – 2012
Aircraft Type: Beechcraft Kingair B200C

2213 Landings

437,807 Kilometres Flown

1016 Inter-Hospital Transfers

116 Rural Women's GP Clinics

7 Medical Chests

RFDS opens its doors



RFDS volunteers, Yasmin Lee & Penny Laing oversee the children's activities

The RFDS held an Open Day at the RFDS Base, Western Junction to celebrate 84 years of delivering the finest care to the furthest corners of Australia.

The Open Day gave Tasmanians a behind-the-scenes look at the vital work performed by the Flying Doctor and how it has developed in our state.

ABC radio personality, **Chris Wisbey**, conducted an outside broadcast from the Base and **Kerry Finch MLC** interviewed pilots, Board members and supporters of the Service.

The RFDS would like to thank all volunteers and service organisations who worked to ensure that the day was a wonderful success.

Profile on Dr George Merridew

Dr George Merridew (pictured) graduated from the University of Tasmania in 1972 and worked as an RAAF Medical Officer from 1975 to 1978, primarily in Darwin. He trained in Anaesthesia from 1979 to 1983 in Adelaide and then worked in the UK, Hong Kong and USA for the following three years. He returned to Tasmania and was appointed to the Launceston General Hospital in 1986 as a consultant anaesthetist. In addition to surgical anaesthesia, his clinical interests have included intensive care medicine, pain medicine, remote area anaesthesia and inter-hospital transfers of the critically ill.

Dr Merridew has been a member of the Board of RFDS Tasmania since 1995 and President from October 2009 to October 2012. He remains in the RAAF Specialist Reserve, in which he has had multiple overseas medical deployments.



Annual Report & RFDS Calendars

The RFDS website was relaunched earlier this year. Be sure to take a look at our 2011/12 Annual Report now available at <http://www.flyingdoctor.org.au/About-Us/Annual-Reports>

RFDS 2013 Calendars are available from the Doc Shop <http://supportus.flyingdoctor.org.au/shop>. The calendar features a photo from Tasmanian **Dr Matt Brain** of a sunset from Mount Ossa, Cradle Mountain Lake St Claire National Park.

RFDS Sausage Sizzle at Bunnings Launceston

Volunteers came out in force to support the RFDS at a fundraising BBQ at Bunnings Launceston. Over 700 sausages were sold to hungry customers of Bunnings Warehouse. Thanks to the volunteers who worked tirelessly throughout the day and to the organisations that supported the fundraiser.

Thanks for your support

Your ongoing generosity and support helps keep the Flying Doctor in the air. Thank you for helping us to take the finest care to the furthest corners of Australia.

From all at RFDS Tasmania we wish you and your loved ones a happy, healthy and safe festive season.