



ROYAL FLYING DOCTOR SERVICE
OF AUSTRALIA
Central Operations Incorporated



AirDoctor

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From the Chairman & CEO

DAVID HILLS
Chairman



JOHN LYNCH
Chief Executive Officer



AS WE REACH another Anniversary on May 15, we reflect on our past and build on our future. Our founder, the Reverend John Flynn, would marvel at how his vision for a 'mantle of safety' has grown to what it is today.

The journey has seen us become the leading provider of emergency aeromedical services throughout Australia, and we have consolidated and expanded our delivery of primary healthcare services to rural and remote communities.

Our aircraft fleet has significantly grown since our inception. In Central Operations alone, we now have 11 standardised Pilatus PC-12 aircraft used at our three bases across SA and NT, which brings our national fleet total to 51.

Over the past three years, we have invested resources upgrading our bases in Adelaide and Port Augusta. This has enabled RFDS activities to be centralised in Port Augusta – health, aviation, engineering and communications – all now housed under the one roof.

This development has brought about a greater coordination and team approach to all our services, and we are now looking forward to the planned redevelopment of both the RFDS Alice Springs Base and Visitor Centre.

For a very long time, the RFDS Visitor Centre in Alice Springs has engaged and interacted with more than 65,000 domestic and international tourists each year, and we believe the time is right to reinvigorate the experience for all so that we can maintain the Visitor Centre as a premier tourist attraction and see our work remain uppermost in the minds of the public.

At the airport base in Alice Springs we are looking to revitalise our patient and staff facilities and we will be using the new state-of-the-art Port Augusta facility as a model for this.

Last year in a previous edition of *AirDoctor* we announced the introduction of an additional (fourth) aircraft in Alice Springs. Due to the expansion of our fleet, we have recently purchased the hangar adjacent to our existing facility in Alice Springs, which will provide a larger area to maintain and house all aircraft.

We now look forward to drawing up plans for the redevelopment and following Board approval we hope to have the projects underway in 2009/10.

Nationally we continue to work under the Commonwealth Funding Agreement, and late this calendar year we will commence renegotiation of the basis of service delivery and the associated costs and contributions.

I must admit I get really excited when I reflect on what we have accomplished together in the past five years and now confront, with your support and encouragement, the challenges of the next five.

Of course 2009 would not be complete if we did not mention the arrival of new replacement Pilatus PC-12 aircraft due to be introduced into service in 2010. We will of course keep you posted on their arrival as the year progresses.

Whatever your challenges are this year good luck and again we thank you for your company in the past and look forward to it for the next chapter of our journey.

David Hills & John Lynch

OUR COVER: Last year, RFDS crews (like flight nurse Brendan Devlin, pictured) transported more than 1300 children in South Australia and the Northern Territory for emergency medical treatment, including newborn babies flown interstate for life-saving heart surgery.

AirDoctor is the official magazine of the Royal Flying Doctor Service of Australia, Central Operations Incorporated.

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RFDS to adopt e-medical records for bush patients



Paper-based medical records will soon be phased out by the RFDS as used here on a recent remote health clinic by Dr Stephen Ballard, RFDS Port Augusta, Sister Joan Wilson, Oodnadatta Hospital, and RFDS GP Registrar, Dr Alex van Rooijen.

JUST AS ALF TRAEGER revolutionised the way Australians communicated with the ‘Flying Doctor’ in emergencies with his invention of the pedal-powered two-way radio, the Service of today continues to lead the way in using technology to provide better medical care for people living in the bush.

Scheduled for a phased roll-out across the country starting later this year, the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) will implement an Electronic Medical Record (EMR) system driven by the latest computer and information technology.

This advancement in technology will allow RFDS health professionals to use the latest IT system to support its role in delivering quality primary healthcare to even the most isolated of communities in Australia.

“The EMR system will revolutionise clinical practice by providing RFDS doctors and nurses with access to up-to-the-minute patient medical records,” says Dr John Setchell, General Manager of Health Services for RFDS Central Operations.

“EMRs will enable us to provide our rural and remote patients with the same benefits and quality of service received by those who live in the city when they visit their local GP,” Dr Setchell says.

Believed to be among the first in Australia to link remote locations, the EMRs will change the way the RFDS uses and stores patient information for its remote primary health clinics and telehealth consultations by switching from a paper-based system to an electronic record system.

“Currently, RFDS clinical services use predominantly paper records and, at times, electronic records to access and retain patient information, however this method can lead to potential duplications of patient records,” Dr Setchell says.

“

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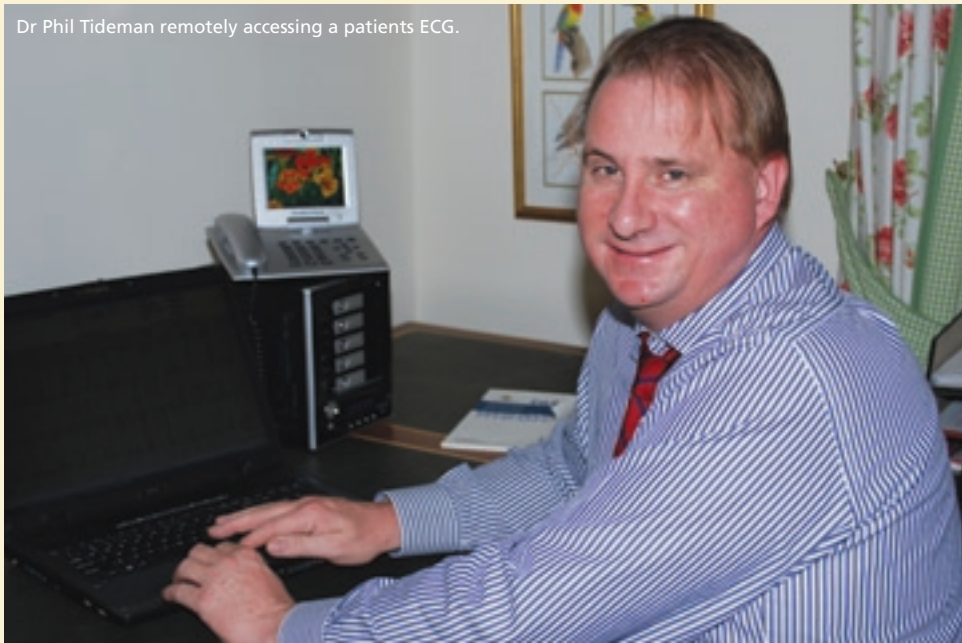
“Under the current system, delays in receiving timely hard-copy results such as blood tests and x-ray reports are possible, and potentially these results can be unavailable at the patient’s follow-up appointment.

“But with the EMR system, results and reports will be able to be downloaded on the spot, as well as historical patient information such as allergies, immunisation records and current medications.”

RFDS health personnel will be able to gain access to the EMR from RFDS bases, country hospitals, on primary healthcare clinics or remote properties and, eventually, through wireless broadband technology in the aircraft when it is used as the “clinic consulting room”.

The EMR solution is being created by the RFDS in close consultation with medical practitioners, nurses and allied health providers and with specialist health information technology company iSOFT.

Dr Phil Tideman remotely accessing a patients ECG.



More hearts beating in rural Australia

THE ROYAL FLYING Doctor Service (RFDS) is playing a vital role in a new statewide health initiative aimed at improving the treatment of patients who present with chest pain and heart attacks in a bid to reduce the death rate from heart disease in rural Australia.

Using the latest in medical and information technology, the Integrated Cardiovascular Network Clinical Network (iCCnet SA) is providing health professionals in rural and remote areas with access to the same cutting-edge medical analysis and specialist treatment as that offered by hospitals in Adelaide and other capital cities.

Early trends in the South East of the State show that iCCnet SA has halved the number of hospital deaths of country people with

heart attacks from 9.5% to 4%, to be on par with the rate seen in metropolitan Adelaide.

This benefit for country patients – and the health system – has been two fold. Not only has it prevented the number of heart attacks suffered due to early detection and appropriate treatment, but it has also reduced the incidence of re-occurring conditions and re-admissions to hospital for treatment.

“iCCnet was created in response to concerning levels of cardiac deaths in rural areas,” says Dr Phil Tideman, the network’s Clinical Director and Senior Consultant Cardiologist at Flinders Medical Centre.

“Increasing the knowledge base in rural hospitals, providing the necessary clinical tools and giving doctors and nurses

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”

immediate access to cardiologists in Adelaide was the obvious solution,” Dr Tideman says.

Dr Tideman says the success of iCCnet SA is based on comprehensive collaboration and integration of services between rural and metropolitan health workers, the RFDS, Country Health SA and other service providers across all sectors involved in cardiovascular health.

The initiative works by providing health professionals in rural and remote Australia with access to the latest point-of-care diagnostic technology for blood Troponin levels and electrocardiogram (ECG) interpretation by a cardiologist whenever needed, 24 hours, seven days per week. (Detected in blood, Troponin is an extremely sensitive indicator of damage to heart muscle such as occurs with heart attack.)

Using modern IT and communication systems, such as electronic medical records and video conferencing, rural doctors are then able to communicate with consultant cardiologists in Adelaide and share their results, with both parties able to view the clinical / diagnostic data at the same time.

Using evidence based clinical pathways, together they can decide upon a safe and comprehensive plan for managing the patient’s heart condition. This may include medication or further investigation and treatment in the country hospital network, or an emergency evacuation by the RFDS to Adelaide for urgent invasive investigation and treatment if required.

Stars shine at 'magical' Wilpena



A BEAUTIFUL BALMY EVENING and a clear sky at night provided the perfect stage for this year's Wilpena Under the Stars which attracted a record 630 guests from all parts of the country for a truly magical evening.

The uniquely Australian and signature RFDS event is held each February in one of the great natural amphitheatres of the world, deep in the heart of the Flinders Ranges, at Wilpena Pound.

Dressed in black tie and dazzling frocks, RFDS supporters and new friends alike enjoyed pre-dinner drinks while listening to the charm of a string quartet and marvelling at the magical sun set behind the stunning ranges of Wilpena Pound.

Guest MC, Channel Nine's weatherman Brenton Ragless, did a superb job of navigating excited and enthusiastic guests through the evening's proceedings, including a 'Welcome to our Country' by Terry Coulthard representing the Adnyamathanha people, traditional owners of the land.

After enjoying a splendid three-course meal, the ever-popular band Acoustic Juice took to the stage and guests immediately filled the dance floor. Guests were treated to a memorable experience when the lights were dimmed and the band sang the David Bowie classic *Space Oddity (Ground Control to Major Tom)* showcasing the thousands of stars sparkling above.

The evening was a credit to all who devoted their time and efforts to making this the most successful Wilpena Under the Stars yet. We thank our dedicated volunteers, sponsors and guests who dug deep and helped to set a new fundraising record for the event.

Tickets for next year's event will go on sale in early November.

WILPENA VERSE

*When you walk through the Pound,
open your eyes and look around,
the beauty of the land is something to behold,
and provides inspiration for stories to be told.*

*Friends and supporters come from near and far to enjoy the night,
as well as contribute to our cause as we take up the fight,
to provide health services to one and all,
with a timely response when we get the call.*

*There is no doubt of the role you all play,
friends and supporters helping night and day,
you do it together and always a smile,
many of you walking that extra mile.*

*To allow us the chance to be what we are,
to the people in need – a shining star!*

John Lynch, CEO, RFDS Central Operations

MAJOR SPONSORS





1. Aerial view of the guests enjoying pre-dinner drinks.

2. Barb Woolford, Julieanne and Tony Smith, Jill Michael, Julie and Bruce Nutt.

3. Anna Brebner, Alice Fargher, Kathy Fargher, Catherine Lindh and Bec Schell.

4. Jill Collins and Phil Siefert.

5. Lucy Bosworth, Andrew Dodman and Miriam Leenders.

6. Ray and Chris Parkyn.

7. Buyer of the RFDS propeller blade Peter Kittle with guest auctioneer, Chris Howie.



New National Chairman

FORMER GOVERNOR-GENERAL and Governor of Western Australia, Major General Michael Jeffery AC CVO MC, has been appointed National Chairman of the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS).

Major General Jeffery succeeds former Deputy Prime Minister, Mr Tim Fischer AC, who left the post to take up the position of Australia's Permanent Representative to the Holy See. Nigel Milan, National Chief Executive Officer of the RFDS, said the Service was delighted to be headed by someone of Major General Jeffery's calibre.

"Major General Jeffery has an exemplary track record of national service and leadership, both as a soldier and as a civilian," Mr Milan said.

"He has also been actively involved in assisting the RFDS to raise charitable funds for many years, as well as raise awareness, particularly among urban Australians, of the vast range of medical services we provide," he added.



Veronica South, Westport Primary School, volunteered to help Rosemary Moyle, RFDS Senior Flight Nurse, demonstrate the aircraft stretcher-loader during her class visit to the RFDS Adelaide Base.

Westport wins visit to 'the Doctor'

STUDENTS AT WESTPORT Primary School giggled excitedly as they made their way down the corridor of the RFDS Adelaide Base, eager to see and step inside a 'Flying Doctor' aircraft.

Their very special and personal tour of the RFDS base and aircraft by crew members was the school's worthy reward for winning the Metropolitan category of the 2008 Flying Doctor Day Primary Schools Program.

Westport Primary conducted fundraising activities last year to raise \$3000 for RFDS Central Operations.

"The children were fantastic, they listened intently and were very interested in what the RFDS does and how we help the Australian community," said Rosemary Moyle, Senior Flight Nurse at the RFDS Adelaide Base.

"One student even shared her experience of flying with the RFDS when she was little. In fact, even though the students were from a school in the city, many of them knew someone who had been helped by the RFDS," she said.


Schools have embraced the Flying Doctor

Day Primary Schools Program which combines education, fun and fundraising to teach young Australians about the history, services and importance of one of Australia's most unique community service organisations.

"We provide teachers with a free RFDS education pack full of information, activities, puzzles and exercises for students of all primary school ages and they incorporate it into class activities," says Ross Curtis, Community Marketing Coordinator with RFDS Central Operations.

After learning about the value and history of the RFDS, the students are invited to host their own fundraising activities on 'Flying Doctor Day' held in May (or another date nominated by the school), to raise vital funds for the charity and go in the running to get up close and personal with the RFDS crew.

Your primary school can still be involved in the 2009 program! For registration information contact Ross Curtis on (08) 8238 3333.



Scholarship makes nursing dream become reality

2007 RFDS Post-Registration Scholarship recipient Jackie Jones.

THE ROYAL FLYING Doctor Service (RFDS) is investing in its future by offering scholarships to Registered Nurses who have a desire and passion to work for the Service but do not have one of its mandatory qualifications, most commonly midwifery.

In the past, Registered Nurses would progress on to study midwifery as part of their hospital placements and would be qualified in both general nursing and in midwifery. Today, midwifery training is a separate course and attracts additional fees in the vicinity of \$12,000.

The RFDS Post-Registration Scholarship covers the financial cost of undertaking the desired course and guarantees the recipient a position as a flight nurse with the RFDS upon completion. Up to eight scholarships are awarded across the country every year.

For 2007 scholarship recipient, Jackie Jones, the scholarship removed the 'financial hurdle' of gaining the additional qualifications required by the RFDS.

"I was working as a nurse on an island in Queensland when I was bitten by a snake and had to be airlifted to hospital. The retrieval team that assisted me was amazing – I thought they were heroes, and it was there and then that I decided I was going to work for the RFDS," Jackie says.

"I went back to University to obtain my post-grad in critical care. After completing the course I still needed to obtain midwifery but

was not in a financial position to pay for my next course," she says.

Jackie often scanned the RFDS website looking at flight nurse positions and one day saw information about a post-registration scholarship and applied immediately.

"It was a dream of mine to work for the RFDS and when I received the phone call advising I had been successful and would receive the scholarship, I was so excited."

On completion of the course Jackie began working as a flight nurse with the RFDS. Part of the scholarship requirements are that the RFDS will nominate which base the recipient will work at. At the time there was a need for additional staff in Alice Springs and Jackie started her new life in the bush early last year.

One 2008 scholarship recipient, Craig Samels, from Adelaide, started with the RFDS in March this year as a Flight Nurse at the RFDS Port Augusta Base.

"My friends moved from working in hospitals to becoming flight nurses with the RFDS, and they constantly told me how much they loved their job.

"Now that I am in the job, I can say it is not what I thought it would be, it is much more! It is different, challenging and I get to work autonomously and as part of a team. I use all my various skills and in no other job can you get such diversity, every day is different and I love it," he says.

Auxiliaries & Support Groups



RFDS PORT LINCOLN AUXILIARY

Last year the auxiliary acquired and restored a merry-go-round, and the brightly coloured horses have brought joy to hundreds of children throughout the West Coast at country shows and other local events. The RFDS Port Lincoln Auxiliary has also held fetes, raffles, sausage sizzles and other fundraising activities to raise a total of \$30,000 since September. A phenomenal effort from the dedicated members.

RFDS MILLICENT SUPPORT GROUP

The Millicent Support Group has also been busy on the green! Over 80 bowling enthusiasts gathered for a friendly bowling competition (or 'roll' in technical terms) to raise funds for the RFDS. In perfect weather conditions, 22 teams battled it out for the winning title and bragging rights. The competition was tight but at the end of the day the Millicent Rotary Club were the clear winners. The day's fundraising activities, including a raffle, raised a commendable \$1500. A great result for the Millicent Support Group.

NEW SUPPORT GROUP

Members of the Adelaide Hills Community have gathered together to form the RFDS Adelaide Hills Support Group. If you are interested in joining this new group, or the auxiliary and support group in your local area, contact Jan Ward, RFDS Volunteer Coordinator, on (08) 8238 3333.

NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK

National Volunteer Week will be held on May 11–17. RFDS Central Operations would like to thank all of its dedicated volunteers for their loyal and outstanding contribution. Their support is greatly appreciated and acknowledged.



Ian Hay, President of the All British Day Committee, and Charlie Paterson, General Manager of Marketing & Public Relations for RFDS Central Operations.

\$10,000 gift from All British Day

ORGANISERS OF THE South Australian 'All British Day' have donated \$10,000 to the 'Flying Doctor' to purchase vital medical equipment for one of its aircraft.

The All British Day Committee nominated a new iStat Biochemical Analyser as its preferred item of equipment needed for replacement by the RFDS for one of its aircraft. The hand-held device is a mini-biochemistry laboratory that enables medical staff to conduct blood tests on patients on the ground or during flight.

In two minutes an iStat Biochemical Analyser conducts essential biochemical, hematological and blood gas assays on seriously ill patients to identify appropriate treatment required by RFDS doctors and nurses.

Held on the second Sunday of February each year, the 'All British Day' is held at Uraidla in the picturesque Adelaide Hills. The event provides the opportunity for car club members to gather and for motoring enthusiasts to see a wonderful collection of more than 750 British vehicles – from the very old to the modern, the sedate to the sporty and the inexpensive to the most opulent.



Ben Satterley and Lisa Rogers training for the Sunday Mail City-Bay Fun Run on Sunday September 20.

Fun run for RFDS

HELP RAISE AWARENESS of the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) by creating a 'team' of red at the starting line of this year's Sunday Mail City-Bay Fun Run.

Building on the success of last year, the RFDS is looking to make an even bigger mark in the crowd with more competitors wearing RFDS supporter t-shirts and singlets on Sunday 20 September.

You can choose to run or walk three, six or 12 kilometres. The choice is yours, so round up your friends, family and colleagues and sign up today to keep our medical crews in the sky!

Contact: Crystel Casey on 08 8238 3333 or email crystel.casey@flyingdoctor.net

Upcoming Events

PLEASE SUPPORT THE following fundraising events hosted by Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) Auxiliaries, Support Groups, Community Events and Volunteers.

ADELAIDE – RFDS Wings for Life Ball

Saturday 30 May – Adelaide Entertainment Centre

Organise your table of 10 today. Tickets: \$150 per person.

Contact: Crystel Casey (08) 8238 3333 or crystel.casey@flyingdoctor.net

GAWLER – Fashion Parade & Trading Table

Saturday 16 May – Uniting Church Hall

Contact: Margaret Edwards (08) 8522 1162.

HAWTHORN – Card & Games Day

Wednesday 3 June – Mitcham 50 Plus Club

Contact: Rosemary Turner (08) 8369 1951.

JAMESTOWN – Dinner Dance

20 June – Jamestown Town Hall

Tickets: \$80 per person.

Contact Gill Redden (08) 8664 0664.

MARREE – Marree Picnic Races

6–7 June – Marree Racecourse

Contact: David Bell (08) 8675 8203.

MILDURA – Breakfast Cruise

Wednesday 9 September – 7:30am–8:30am

Jump aboard the PS Mundoo Paddle Steamer for a breakfast cruise.

Contact: Graham Gugger (03) 5023 5338.

OODNADATTA – Oodnadatta Races & Gymkhana

Saturday 16 May 2009 – Oodnadatta Race Club

Contact: Eddie Nunn (08) 8670 7801.

OODNADATTA – Oodnadatta Bronco Branding

Saturday 11 July – Oodnadatta Race Club

Contact: Tony Williams (08) 8670 7961.

RENMARK – Peter Horan Live in Concert

Wednesday 3 June – Renmark Hotel Function Room

Includes light lunch and lucky door prize. Tickets: \$25 per person

Contact: Joy Ruston (08) 8586 6127.



ROYAL FLYING DOCTOR SERVICE
OF AUSTRALIA

HURRY
TICKETS
SELLING FAST!



Wings *for* Life Ball

FEATURING JON STEVENS

Join the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) and help celebrate what it means to be Australian by dancing the night away to a great Aussie vocalist in Jon Stevens, following a delicious three-course meal and great Australian wines and quenching ales.

Call the RFDS to purchase your tickets on (08) 8238 3333

Saturday 30 May 2009
6.30pm for 7pm start
Adelaide Entertainment Centre
Lounge Suit
\$150 per person (pre-sold only)

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Supporting Sponsors



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