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MEDIA RELEASE

THE GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA VISITS THE FLYING DOCTOR

His Excellency The Honourable Peter Underwood AC, Governor of Tasmania will visit the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) on Thursday 29th July from 10 am, to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the RFDS in Tasmania.

The Governor as Patron of the Tasmanian Section will address staff, supporters and Council members at a morning tea at the RFDS Launceston Base.

Tasmanian Section President Dr George Merridew said that the Service was established on the 31st of July 1960 after mainland RFDS officials assessed outlying Tasmanian communities as being isolated as if in the outback and thus required access by air to medical care”.

“The Flying Doctor’s role in Tasmania over the past 50 years has gradually grown. Today, contracted to Ambulance Tasmania, the RFDS fills a vital role in the delivery of emergency and essential health care services to the people of our state,” Dr Merridew said.

The RFDS in Tasmania has grown from humble beginnings, from 1960 when it transported 50 patients for treatment in its first year of operation. Now, 50 years later, the RFDS carries about 1000 patients a year.

“Last year, the Flying Doctor King Air B200 aircraft flew almost half a million kilometres including interstate transfers and transfers from Flinders Island, King Island, Wynyard, Hobart, St Helens, Launceston, Queenstown and Strahan. About 10% of patients are flown to Melbourne and the rest are moved within Tasmania,” Dr Merridew said.

“The Tasmanian Council is delighted that His Excellency, the Governor of Tasmania will join supporters and guests to celebrate the proud history of service to the Tasmanian public,” Dr Merridew said.

For further information please contact:

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> **PATRON: His Excellency The Honourable Peter Underwood AC**

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