



Media Release

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“Get on Board” with the Flying Doctor at the Easter Show

Through 86 years of service, providing vital emergency retrieval and clinical services, the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) has become part of the fabric of rural and remote Australia. This year visitors to Sydney’s Royal Easter Show will be able to experience what it’s like to be on board a Flying Doctor aircraft and learn more about this Australian icon by visiting the RFDS aeromedical simulator.

At 9.1m long, 2.4m wide and 3m high, it is a full-sized replica of the cockpit and fuselage of a RFDS King Air B200 aircraft, complete with flight deck and full aeromedical fit-out. For many this will be as close as they ever get to a real RFDS aircraft.

“The Simulator is primarily a health promotion and educational tool,” said Greg Sam, Chief Executive Officer of the RFDS South Eastern Section.

“It helps the us to promote the vital work we do and also highlights the fact that we need to raise additional funds each year, on top of Commonwealth and state government allocations we receive, to enable us to deliver and grow our range of healthcare services and emergency retrieval work.”

Visitors will be able to experience what it’s like to be a pilot, flight nurse, or flying doctor when they get on board the aeromedical simulator. RFDS pilots or staff will be on hand to explain the aircraft’s capabilities, what the medical equipment in these ‘flying intensive care units’ does and share some real-life rescue stories.

The guided tour through the simulator is open to the public for a suggested gold coin donation.

“While the show is a fun day out we will also be highlighting the realities of life in rural and remote areas where many struggle to get access to the health services taken for granted in the cities,” said Mr Sam.

“The RFDS is trying to redress the health access imbalance between rural and metropolitan areas. Demand for RFDS services is higher than ever. There has been a recorded 26% growth in national activity since 2006.”

“In the past year the total number of Health Clinics facilitated by the RFDS South Eastern Section was up 13% to 4,728 in 2012/13. Additionally we saw an increase in Other Clinics (mental health, dental, women and children’s nurse, breast care nurse etc.) up 47% to 2,445.”

Visitors who register their details at the simulator will automatically go into the draw to win a family visit to the Flying Doctor Base at Broken Hill, NSW valued up to \$10,000.

The prize consists of return domestic economy airfares for a family of four (two adults/ two children) from the nearest Australian capital city, to Broken Hill, two nights accommodation in Broken Hill and car hire for three days commencing from Broken Hill.

The lucky winners will get the chance to; tour the Bruce Langford Visitor Centre (ranked Broken Hill's No.1 attraction in Broken Hill on TripAdvisor), visit the *Mantle of Safety* Museum (which showcases over 80 years of remarkable outback history), get on board a real operational King Air aircraft in the RFDS hangar and meet some of the RFDS Pilots, Doctors and Flight Nurses.

The public will also get the chance to meet Nick Phipps, NSW Waratahs and Wallabies scrum-half and long-time RFDS supporter, on the afternoon of Wednesday, April 16. The RFDS recently became one of the Waratahs' charity partners.

The RFDS Simulator and stall is situated on the Animal Walk between the sheep and the alpaca enclosures.

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ABOUT THE ROYAL FLYING DOCTOR SERVICE

The not-for-profit Royal Flying Doctor Service has been taking the finest care to the furthest corners of Australia since 1928. The service provides 24 hour emergency cover to 90% of the Australian continent, via a modern fleet of specially equipped aircraft. No patient is more than two hours away from the Flying Doctor's help. In the past year, the South Eastern Section flew the equivalent of 6.5 round trips to the moon as it conducted over 4,700 clinics, took over 5,000 telehealth calls, had over 54,000 patient contacts and transported almost 8,600 patients.