



Media Release

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## **Flying Doctor visitor centre named as finalist in Tourism Awards**

The Royal Flying Doctor Service's (RFDS) Bruce Langford Visitor Centre, currently ranked as the number one tourist attraction in Broken Hill by the Trip Advisor website, has been named as a finalist in the Inland NSW Tourism Awards in the category of "Tourist Attraction".

Its number one Trip Advisor ranking is based on 198 reviews, 192 of which rated it "Excellent" or "Very Good," giving it 4 stars out of 5 overall. A recent review, entitled, "Credit where it is due" said, "It is great to get so close to such a wonderful organisation. The display is terrific and the guide is very helpful. It would be un-Australian not to call in."

Latest statistics bear that out, showing that the Bruce Langford Visitor Centre received over 11,600 visitors during the past year, mostly from New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia. It also attracts international visitors mostly from Germany, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

"This is another well-deserved reward for our dedicated staff and builds on their 2013 award for "Best Digital Presence", said Brendon Smyth, GM Marketing and Fundraising, RFDS South Eastern Section (RFDS SE).

"It's good to see the tourism awards in Broken Hill, following its recent heritage listing, and the town well-represented by six different nominees, underlining the importance of tourism alongside the more traditional industries."

The RFDS Visitor Centre houses a number of attractions, including The Mantle of Safety Museum. It tells the story of the formation of the RFDS, which was founded by the Reverend John Flynn in 1928. It also traces the development of its communications, medical services and aviation through the decades.

"Our collection, which we have been assembling since the RFDS SE first engaged in tourism in the 1950's, incorporates many historical artefacts, exhibits and photographs as well as modern audio-visual and interactive displays to ensure we appeal to all age groups," said Susan Williams, RFDS SE Business Manager (Tourism) for The Bruce Langford Visitors' Centre.

"Amongst the favourites are; the desk where John Flynn developed the idea of the RFDS during his years at the Australian Inland Mission in Sydney and the first pedal radio developed by Alfred Traeger in the 1920's. Interactive displays featuring a 1950's RFDS radio operator taking an emergency call and a map of Australia that shows the location of our bases and gives facts about the huge distances we travel to deliver vital emergency and clinical care also rate very highly."

“The centre, which is open 7 days a week, has a 44-seat cinema showing films about the RFDS and a well-stocked gift shop. A guided tour takes visitors behind the scenes to see the communications room and onto a viewing platform inside the aircraft hangar to see operational Kingair aircraft being worked on by engineers.”

Broken Hill is an operational Base, the hub of the RFDS South Eastern Section’s operations and part of one of the largest and most comprehensive aeromedical organisations in the world. Using the latest in aviation, medical and communications technology, the Flying Doctor delivers extensive primary healthcare and 24-hour emergency services to those who live, work and travel throughout Australia.

Nationally, these services are delivered by a fleet of 63 aircraft operating from 22 bases across Australia, providing medical assistance to over 280,000 people every year, or one every two minutes.

“It’s interesting and educational - an ideal day out for the family. It is the only RFDS Base in Australia where you can go behind the scenes and perhaps meet some of the pilots, doctors and nurses who do the vital, life-saving work,” added Susan.

“While we welcome many thousands of tourists each year, we’d love to see more locals visit the Centre too. The Flying Doctor was and still is part of the fabric of Broken Hill and the Outback.”

“The Flying Doctor is a not-for-profit organisation, only partly funded by government. All funds raised through our tourism and merchandising operations help us to continue our vital life-saving work and medical operations in some of the most remote and vulnerable communities in Australia.”

The winners in all 20 categories of the Inland NSW Tourism Awards will be announced at a special gala award dinner at the Broken Hill Civic Centre.

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For more information or photographs, contact:

Nick Bleszynski, Media Consultant, RFDS (South Eastern Section) on 0403 931 291 or [nbleszynski@rfdse.org.au](mailto:nbleszynski@rfdse.org.au)

## **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. In the past year, the South Eastern Section flew the equivalent of 6.25 round trips to the moon as it conducted over 5,000 clinics, took over 6,000 telehealth calls, had over 53,000 patient contacts and transported almost 8,400 patients.