



Media Release

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RFDS Nurse Manager named Remote Health Professional of the Year

Nurse Manager Judy Whitehead from the South Eastern Section of the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) has been named winner of the 2014 Aurora Award at the 32nd CRANAp^lus Annual Conference dinner, held in Melbourne.

CRANAp^lus is a member-based national health organisation with a mission to promote the development and delivery of safe, high-quality healthcare to remote areas of Australia by educating, supporting and representing the views of multi-disciplinary health professionals working in the sector.

The Aurora Award is the highest accolade within the remote and isolated health profession. Nominated by her peers, Judy was one of five finalists. The official announcement noted, *“...Judy’s announcement was met with great endorsement.... she has fulfilled a number of diverse roles: clinical care, education and management. Her commitment to quality and safety never waivers and has resulted in her being a leader in her field.”*

“I was extremely surprised as I had no idea that I had even been nominated,” said Judy.

“It was like an episode of *This is Your Life*. I was sitting there completely unaware, listening to them describing the career and achievements of the winner when I suddenly realised they were talking about me.”

“I must admit I was lost for words when they read out my name, which is a rare thing indeed. I was both honoured and humbled to receive The Aurora Award and a Fellowship for CRANAp^lus.”

Judy is the Nurse Manager at the RFDS South Eastern Section. She joined the RFDS 23 years ago and worked as a Flight Nurse for both South Eastern and Central Sections before taking on her current role ten years ago. Judy is the current President of Flight Nurses Australia.

She is responsible for health quality and compliance with all recognised standards, health audits and the update and maintenance of all Health Policy and Clinical Guidelines Manuals. Her role also involves managing the Flight Nursing Services across five states of Australia (NSW, Victoria (RFDS Non-Emergency Patient Transport Service in Essendon), Cooper Basin Oil and Gas Fields (SA, QLD and NT) as well as community health nurses in Broken Hill including the McGrath RFDS Breast Care Nurse).

“I would like to congratulate Judy on her award. It is a richly deserved recognition of her contribution to remote health in Australia,” said Greg Sam, Chief Executive Officer of RFDS South Eastern Section.

“She is a great source of pride and inspiration for the South Eastern Section and testament to the quality healthcare the RFDS has provided to those in rural and remote Australia during the past 86 years. I am delighted that such a key member of the RFDS team has been recognised as a leader in their field - something the RFDS as a whole constantly strives to be.”

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For more information or photographs, contact:

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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. 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.