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Country students take off with Give Them Wings health scholarships

Four students from country Victoria are the winners of this year's Give Them Wings scholarships, provided by the Royal Flying Doctor Service Victoria in partnership with Rural Health Workforce Australia.

The scholarships, worth \$2,500 each, are designed to encourage the next generation of nursing and allied health professionals from rural communities.

The 2016 Give Them Wings scholars are:

- Charlotte Lakey, from Kyneton, a nursing student at Australian Catholic University
- Sammy-Jo Sly, from Cullulleraine, a nursing student at La Trobe University – Mildura
- Claire Hammond, from Woodglenn, a dentistry student at La Trobe University - Bendigo
- Elizabeth Kemper, from Boorool, an audiology student at La Trobe University - Bundoora

The scholarship winners will each receive a Royal Flying Doctor experience as well as cash payments to help them cover the costs of first year university.

RFDS Victoria CEO, Scott Chapman, congratulated the Give Them Wings winners, describing them as role models for other country students interested in health careers. "We're delighted to give these students a flying start at university in that crucial first year of study," he said. "They represent the future of rural health."

Rural Health Workforce Australia CEO, Greg Mundy, said the scholarships recognised the importance of country students in helping to reduce Australia's rural health workforce shortages. "We need more nurses and allied health professionals in the bush," he said. "They have a critical role to play in caring for country people."

The Give Them Wings scholarship program is generously supported by the volunteer fundraising activities of the Bayside Auxiliary of the Royal Flying Doctor Service Victoria. The auxiliary has raised more than \$250,000 for the RFDS.

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Note to editors:

About the Royal Flying Doctor Service – Victoria

The not-for-profit Royal Flying Doctor Service has been taking the finest care to the furthest corners of Australia since 1928. Voted Australia's Most Reputable Charity for five years in a row, within Victoria the RFDS delivers air and road patient transport and primary healthcare programs, including mobile dental, eye and diabetes telehealth services.

About Rural Health Workforce Australia

Rural Health Workforce Australia is a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to making healthcare more accessible in rural and remote Australia. It is the national peak body for the state and territory Rural Workforce Agencies which attract, recruit and support health professionals in rural and remote communities. RHWA also supports the National Rural Health Student Network, which represents Australia's 28 university Rural Health Clubs.