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MEDIA RELEASE

Historic Sugar Bird Lady monument restored at Jandakot Airport

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The historic Sugar Bird Lady, a Mooney Mark 21 aircraft from the 1960's, flown for the RFDS by former nurse and aviator Robin Miller, has been restored and returned to her monument on Eagle Drive in Jandakot this week.

The Sugar Bird Lady is a well known landmark at Jandakot. Although not the actual aircraft flown by Robin Miller, the engineering prototype donated by Mooney Aircraft to the RFDS serves as a memorial to the late Robin Miller. Unveiled on 20 May 1978, it is painted to represent the real VH-REM Mooney which is still registered and privately owned in Queensland, that was formerly used by Robin E. Miller (hence the registration REM).

The aircraft was damaged and blown to the ground in a storm in 2013, but with the assistance of the restoration team at the Aviation Heritage Museum Bull Creek it has been restored, repainted and reinstated to its plinth at Jandakot Airport.

"The Sugar Bird Lady is an important part of the history of our organisation, our community and our vast state," said Nick Harvey, Executive GM Corporate Affairs at the RFDS WA.

"For these reasons, we are thrilled to unveil the restored memorial."

"Robin Miller was an influential individual. She introduced an immunisation program in remote communities and piloted herself on her missions. Today the RFDS has separate pilots and medical staff.

"We're fortunate to have this monument in her memory," he said.

There are other landmarks around Perth that commemorate the hard work of the Miller family, including 'Horrie Miller Drive' at Perth Airport, named after her father Horace (Horrie) Clive Miller who was an aeronautical engineer from Victoria, and recently the introduction of 'Sugar Bird Lady Drive', a new road off Horrie Miller Drive.

"We encourage the public and aviation enthusiasts alike to come down to Jandakot Airport and take a look at the restored Sugar Bird Lady," said Mr Harvey.

"This being our 80th year of operations in Western Australia, we're celebrating the rich history of our organisation and recognising the foundations that allowed us to grow to where we are today."

The Sugar Bird Lady is available for the public to view, opposite the Royal Flying Doctor Service base at 3 Eagle Drive, Jandakot.

In the past year the RFDS flew over 9,000 sick and injured patients by air across WA for treatment, and received over 41,000 calls for medical assistance and advice. Pilots flew over eight million kilometres and made almost 19,000 landings – at times on dirt airstrips or closed highways. This year, the RFDS in WA is celebrating 80 years of service.

To donate to the RFDS call 1300 669 569 or check out www.flyingdoctor.org.au

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