

For 2 November, 2017

Media Release

Flying Doctor launches new mental health service in Far East Gippsland

The Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) Victoria has launched the Flying Doctor Psychological Service, linking remote and regional patients with mental health care.

Marking the launch at Ensay Bush Nursing Centre, 5063 Great Alpine Rd from 9.00am to 10.00am on Thursday 2 November, local health service representatives and community members met to mark the occasion with a ribbon cutting ceremony.

With rural Australians 30% more likely to suicide than those in urban areas, providing access to mental health services in rural communities is essential.

“1 in 5 Australians 16-85 years will experience a mental disorder, and accessible mental health care is essential to improve mental, and physical health, and reduce suicide rates for people in the bush,” says Scott Chapman, RFDS Victoria Chief Executive.

12.3% of adults in Gippsland are experiencing psychological distress, higher than the Victorian and Australian averages.

Many rural communities are challenged by poor access to primary and acute health care. They have limited numbers of mental health services and mental health professionals, and many are reluctant to seek help, with concerns about stigma, distance and cost.

“Factors such as poor access to support and stigma have a detrimental impact on the mental health of remote and rural Australians, sometimes resulting in emergency hospital treatment for a mental disorder, or suicide in the most extreme circumstances,” says Scott Chapman, RFDS Victoria Chief Executive.

The Flying Doctor Psychological Service offers:

- Access to mental health professionals, locally
- Face-to-face consultations
- Connection to psychologists and psychiatrists

<ENDS>

Media contact: Meagan Patroni M: 0447 546 764 E: meagan.patroni@rfdsvic.com.au