MEDIA RELEASE
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RFDS ‘lands’ new tourism facility for Darwin

The Royal Flying Doctor Service will expand its presence in the Top End with the $3 million investment in a new high-tech tourism facility in Darwin featuring the story of the RFDS and the World War II Bombing of Darwin.

The museum will feature the latest in virtual reality storytelling and use holographic technology to tell the story of the 1942 bombing.

RFDS Central Operations General Manager Northern Territory, Michael Toomey, said the museum and tourist facility will bring together two iconic elements of the Territory: the RFDS, which began operations in the NT in 1939, and the bombing of Darwin in 1942.

“Both of these historic events helped forge the resolve and resilience of the people who live in Australia’s Northern Territory,” Mr Toomey says.

“The RFDS is both proud and delighted to be granted the opportunity to excite, inspire and educate the people of the Northern Territory and visitors about the RFDS and the Bombing of Darwin Experience.”

The Bombing of Darwin Experience will complement other military tourism experiences already available in Darwin. The display will include a full-size replica of a Japanese Mitsubishi Zero war plane used during WW II.

It will also feature:
- A replica bomb cut away to show the inner workings;
- A video floor under the Zero aircraft showing an aerial view of Darwin Harbour;
- A glass wall facing the ocean with projections showing the harbour as it was in 1942;
- Mini holograms showing wartime Australian Prime Minister John Curtin, an indigenous person, RFDS founder the Reverend John Flynn and an RFDS nurse;
- An RFDS Pilatus PC-12 aircraft with a medically-equipped interior;
- Touchscreen portals giving an insight into the operations of the RFDS.

“It is a privilege for RFDS Central Operations to build on our partnership with the Northern Territory Government in the development of this new and innovative tourism and educational facility.”

RFDS Central Operations runs the award-winning RFDS Alice Springs Tourist Facility which is a key attraction for tourists to the Red Centre and features a hologram of Flying Doctor founder the Reverend John Flynn telling the RFDS story.
“We see this as an important investment by the RFDS in Darwin and one which will generate tourism activity and contribute new jobs to the local economy,” Mr Toomey says.

“The new RFDS facility in Darwin continues our commitment to the Northern Territory and comes on top of $15 million of resource and infrastructure upgrades to our Alice Springs operations.”

The RFDS is the world’s largest and most comprehensive aeromedical organisation which provides emergency aeromedical, primary health care and on the ground medical programs for people living, working and travelling in rural and remote Australia.

Founded in 1928 by John Flynn, the RFDS assists more than 292,000 people every year – that is one person every two minutes.

“This project aligns with our strategic objective to expand the RFDS presence in the NT where our emergency aeromedical crews and primary health care teams assist 17 Northern Territorians every day,” Mr Toomey says.

Construction of the new facility will commence in March and is due to be completed and ready for public use in mid-July 2016.

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