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## MEDIA RELEASE

### GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA LAUNCHES RFDS AND FOODBANK PARTNERSHIP

The Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) Tasmania has entered into a partnership with Foodbank of Tasmania via their School Breakfast Program to provide oral health toothbrushes, toothpaste and oral hygiene education to approximately 4000 students throughout Tasmania.

The partnership will be launched by our joint Patron, Her Excellency Professor the Honourable Kate Warner, AM, Governor of Tasmania on Wednesday 14 September at 10:30 am at the RFDS Base, Western Junction.

Dignitaries attending the launch include Mayor David Downie, Northern Midlands Council and Mayor Albert van Zetten from the Launceston City Council.

Foodbank is Tasmania's largest food emergency relief organisation sourcing food and groceries to provide in excess of two million meals a year to charities across the state. In addition, Foodbank in Tasmania is the largest supporter of school breakfast programs providing food to schools both directly and via programs run by other organisations. Considered to be the most important meal of the day, breakfast has been linked in numerous studies to improved literacy and numeracy skills in schoolchildren.

The RFDS has identified the provision of oral health services as a priority and nationally has developed a range of innovative programs and strategies to deliver oral health care to patients who live in remote and rural Australia. This is based on the conclusive RFDS report issued in 2015, *Filling the Gap: Disparities in oral health access*. <http://bit.ly/2cv2ox3>

Mr John Kirwan, CEO, RFDS Tasmania said that the RFDS has been supporting dental services here in Tasmania since the 1960s. "As part of the nationwide strategy, RFDS Tasmania has welcomed the opportunity of partnering with Foodbank of Tasmania to provide dental health promotion messages for students through their School Breakfast Program."

"The RFDS has agreed to fund a three-year program contributing 12,000 toothbrushes and toothpaste per annum. This health promotion initiative has been made possible through the support of our generous donors," Mr Kirwan said.

As joint Patron of the RFDS and Foodbank in Tasmania, Her Excellency Professor the Honourable Kate Warner, AM, Governor of Tasmania has kindly agreed to launch the initiative due to her personal interest in children's oral health.

For further information and interview opportunities please contact:

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