



**MEDIA RELEASE**

**6 April 2017**

### **World Health Day reminder on talking about depression in the Outback**

Whether they've experienced a depressive episode themselves or know someone close to them experiencing the condition, everyone in the Australian Outback has been touched by depression. That's the view of Royal Flying Doctor Service South Eastern (RFDS SE) Section Mental Health Nurse Vanessa Latham, who is urging Outback communities to get behind the theme of World Health Day (WHD) on 7 April.

"Depression is the theme of WHD 2017 and the goal this year is to get more people with depression to seek and access help," Vanessa said.

"This is something we're passionate about because we know people in remote, rural and regional communities can suffer for such a long time before they reach out or are able to get support.

"Our Mental Health Team wants to let people in isolated Outback communities know that they can call us and talk completely confidentially. The therapeutic act of talk in a safe and supported environment can greatly alleviate the physical and mental stress associated with issues going around and around in your mind."

"People in the Outback, or anywhere, might need gentle support to vocalise what they're experiencing on the inside. Talking about depression openly could be the first step in tackling symptoms head on or showing your fellow community members that it's okay for them to share how they're really feeling."

There are many different symptoms of depression and factors that may cause people to develop the condition, Vanessa said.

"Often it's someone close who may notice a change in behaviour. When we respond to calls from friends or relatives who are concerned about a loved one's mental health, we support them to listen, find out what their loved ones needs and connect them to different treatment options."

Vanessa said the RFDS SE Section offers a range of mental health services for people in the Outback, including one-on-one appointments, workshops and special initiatives like health-check 'pit stops' at open days and shows.

"When people come to us we help them to feel comfortable about the treatments available. These might range from counselling sessions, to medications, or a combination of therapies. Once people are well informed of their depression and treatment options, recovery from depression is much more attainable and we're here to ensure people achieve that."

The RFDS SE Section Mental Health Team can be contacted by calling 08 8080 3777. Community members who access RFDS SE Section clinic services can visit [www.flyingdoctor.org.au/se/clinics](http://www.flyingdoctor.org.au/se/clinics), find their local clinic details and book via them. Telephone or Skype appointments are also available.

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For more information please contact Digital Marketing Communications Coordinator Ryan Young by emailing [ryan.young@rfdse.org.au](mailto:ryan.young@rfdse.org.au) or by calling 0427 392 475.

#### **ABOUT THE ROYAL FLYING DOCTOR SERVICE**

The not-for-profit Royal Flying Doctor Service has been taking the finest care to the furthest corners of Australia since 1928. The service provides 24 hour emergency cover to 90% of the Australian continent, via a modern fleet of specially equipped aircraft. In the past year, the South Eastern Section facilitated almost 4,500 clinics, took over 5,500 telehealth calls, had over 49,100 patient contacts and transported almost 8,200 patients.



#### **ABOUT WORLD HEALTH DAY**

World Health Day is celebrated on 7 April every year to mark the anniversary of the founding of the World Health Organization. It is a unique opportunity to mobilize action around a specific health topic of concern to people all over the world.