



Media Alert

5 December 2014

Over 60 years of service honoured

This morning 63 unbroken years of support for the Royal Flying Doctor Service South Eastern (RFDS SE) Section was honoured at the annual Volunteer of the Year Awards held at the Kirribilli Club in Sydney.

The Broken Hill Women's Auxiliary were presented with the 2014 NSW Volunteer Team of the Year Award by The Hon. Victor Dominello MP, Minister for Citizenship and Communities.

This award recognises the contribution of a number of volunteers who have worked together on a common project or program for a not-for-profit organisation, community group, or other entity that engages volunteers.

"We were delighted to hear of their richly deserved award. On behalf of the RFDS SE Section I would like to extend my congratulations and thanks for all those years of dedicated service," said Greg Sam, Chief Executive Officer of the RFDS SE Section.

"The members of the Broken Hill Women's Auxiliary have been stalwart supporters for almost as long as the RFDS has been in Broken Hill."

For 86 years the RFDS, one of the world's oldest aeromedical organisations, has saved lives and delivered vital primary healthcare to people in rural and remote Australia. For over 60 of those years the RFDS SE Section has been ably supported by the Broken Hill Women's Auxiliary which has raised over \$1.5m to support its life-saving operations.

Formed in 1951 by a group of local wives and mothers to support the RFDS SE Section, the Broken Hill Women's Auxiliary are extremely active, organising an annual ball attended by around 1,000 people this year, holding raffles, street stalls and selling hampers. They raised over \$85,000 in the past year alone.

Some \$25,000 of that came from the sale of their famous Christmas puddings that have become a Broken Hill tradition. A much sought after item they always sell out quickly.

For two weeks every October since 1956 the Auxiliary women have taken up residence in a small room in a variety of locations, mixing, kneading and steaming a run of 2,000 handmade puddings.

"The Broken Hill Women's Auxiliary exemplify the Australian volunteering spirit, without which life in this wide brown land of ours would be infinitely harder and more perilous", said Mr Sam.

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For more information or photographs, contact:

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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 flew the equivalent of 6.25 round trips to the moon as it conducted over 5,000 clinics, took over 6,000 telehealth calls, had over 53,000 patient contacts and transported almost 8,400 patients.