

## Media Backgrounder

**RFDS MISSION:** To provide excellence in aeromedical and primary health care across Australia

### WHAT WE DO:

Medical Evacuations – 24-hour aeromedical emergency services

GP & Nurse Clinics – Regular fly-in fly-out GP, nursing and allied health clinics

Telehealth – Over the phone medical assistance or advice from an RFDS doctor

Dental Care – Oral health services on a fly-in fly-out or mobile basis

Mental Health – Provision of mental health services in Qld, NSW and Central Australia

Health Education – Programs which help get exercise and nutritional programs adopted

Patient Transfers - Inter-hospital transfers by both air and road

Research – Provision of rural health service information and statistics

**HISTORY:** Created out of need 90 years ago, the Royal Flying Doctor Service is still very much needed in country Australia today. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century Reverend John Flynn witnessed the struggle of pioneers living in remote areas and recognised the need for medical services in the outback. He launched the first aero-medical service in 1928 in Queensland, which flew 20,000 miles in its first year of operation.

Since then the RFDS has grown into the largest aeromedical organisation in the world with a fleet of 70 aircraft, 24 aero-bases, 115 road patient vehicles, and a waiting room spanning 7.69 million square kilometres.

Although the Flying Doctor is best known for emergency retrieval work, the delivery of vital primary healthcare services has become a key focus for the RFDS in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Using the latest in aviation, medical and communications technology, the Flying Doctor delivers primary healthcare and 24-hour emergency services to those who live, work and travel in rural and remote Australia, with over 290,000 patient contacts in the last year.

### ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

The Royal Flying Doctor Service is comprised of seven organisations, called Sections or Operations, working around Australia and under a federated structure. These are the Queensland Section, South Eastern Section, Victorian Section, Tasmanian Section, Central Operations and Western Operations.

The Royal Flying Doctor Service of Australia is located in Canberra and works closely with government and industry, while also conducting research into national rural health issues.

The RFDS is a charity, registered with and regulated by the Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission.

### Royal Flying Doctor Service

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