



Media Release

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NSW Minister delivers more good news to Dubbo

It's been a big year in the Central West for the South Eastern Section of the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS SE). The past twelve months has seen the launch of a new patient transfer road service, an upgrade to the Base medical centre and an announcement that a new flight/ aeromedical training facility and Visitor Centre will open at the base next year. An airborne blood transfusion service began late last year and more new and expanded clinic services are in the pipeline.

These new services and facilities are part of a strategy to reduce the well-documented gap in health and wellness between those living in remote, rural and regional areas and those in cities.

Today, NSW Minister for Regional Development, Senator the Hon Fiona Nash, and the Rt. Hon Mark Coulton MP, the Federal Member for Parkes and Deputy Speaker in the House of Representatives, flew into Dubbo to announce that \$6.685m would be spent on an upgrade of the city's Regional Airport in Round 3 of the National Stronger Regions Funding program.

Amongst the beneficiaries were the RFDS SE who supported the bid by Dubbo City Council to build an Enhanced Aeromedical Precinct. The Senator's funding announcement paves the way for the construction of four new aircraft shelters and additional flight crew facilities at the Dubbo Base at a cost of \$1m.

"We would like to thank the Minister and Mr Coulton for coming to Dubbo to announce the good news," said Greg Sam, Chief Executive Officer of the RFDS SE.

"She was able to see first-hand how the new facilities will enhance the emergency evacuation and patient transfer experience of the some 8,000 people the RFDS SE transports each year."

"The new Aeromedical Terminal will reduce dispatch times for emergency retrieval aircraft and ensure that all aircraft to road vehicle transfers take place under-cover in Dubbo where temperatures can reach 38C during summer."

This announcement enables the RFDS SE to complete the patient transfer "chain" it has been working hard to establish in Dubbo.

The road vehicle service, which operates in Bourke, Cobar, Dubbo, Lightning Ridge, Orange and Sydney (Bankstown airport), is an extension of the traditional aeromedical service the Flying Doctor offers to those living in remote, rural and regional areas. Closer, more cost effective specialised

patient transfer, greater continuity of care for patients between hospital and home, more timely repatriation to families and communities, which frees up additional local and metropolitan hospital beds, are amongst its many advantages. Dedicated road vehicles also offer for a more comfortable patient transfer experience, as people can be moved between different modes of transport without changing litters.

“The new facility will now enable patients to be transported comfortably and safely from the ambulance to the aircraft as well as achieving a safe and efficient working environment for the ambulance and medical staff,” said Mr Sam.

“This is another good news story for the Central West and will be followed by further announcements on new and enhanced services in the coming months.”

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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 facilitated almost 4,500 clinics, took over 5,500 telehealth calls, had over 49,100 patient contacts and transported almost 8,200 patients.

