



Media Release

15 May 2014

Prevention is the Best Cure - Flying Doctor to Focus on Men's Health at Gilgandra Show

With a health team consisting of an alcohol and drugs clinician, chronic care nurse, male and female GPs and mental health professionals, the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) is planning a significant presence at the forthcoming Gilgandra Show.

"Although we will be catering for both sexes at the Show, men's health is a key focus because they are often less proactive on the issue of health," said Greg Sam, Chief Executive Officer of the RFDS South Eastern Section.

"They will book their car in for a regular service, but are reluctant to see a doctor, so the RFDS is inviting male visitors at the Fair to make a 'pit stop' for a full health 'rego' check."

"We have streamlined this car-themed health check model over the past few years, which has proved very effective for doing health screenings at community events."

"As many people in rural areas are doing it tough during the latest drought and the number of people we are assisting has risen significantly, members of our mental health team will also be attending."

The whole 'rego' process has seven stages:

After a first 'pit stop' for registration, oil and duco (blood pressure and skin) get checked, followed by chassis and exhaust (weight and heart smoking/ lung), fuel additives (AusD-diabetes screen, diet and alcohol check) and shock absorbers (mental health screen).

The final two 'pit stops' are with a GP who tests spark plugs (testes) and assesses whether the participant is 'roadworthy' enough to get their 'rego' papers at stage six, or needs to go on to stage seven for further tuning and maintenance.

"We hope the men attending the Show will make the time to see us. Regular health checks increase the chances of health problems being detected early and a positive outcome through changes to lifestyle, diet or medical treatment," said Mr Sam.

"The entire process takes less than 45 minutes and may turn out to be the best use of time you have ever spent."

Rabobank, a RFDS corporate partner, initiated the RFDS visit to the Show.

Rabobank Regional Manager for Central NSW Peter Anderson said that throughout Australia, Rabobank has 11 Client Councils which discuss the most pressing matters facing the agricultural industry and rural communities.

“The current themes being discussed are industry capacity, youth engagement, the urban/rural divide and rural health,” Mr Anderson said.

“Following discussion, we then work to develop initiatives with our clients to address these issues, which has been very rewarding.”

Mr Anderson said Rabobank’s commitment to helping to address the concerns of its clients stemmed from the bank’s cooperative background.

“Rabobank aspires to play a role which goes beyond simply providing financial services and we aim to be involved in the community. You can only do that by partnering with your clients.”

Mr Anderson said the Rabobank Dubbo-based Client Council expressed that it was keen to do something to address the issue of mental health in rural areas. This pit stop health check has been made possible by working together with our social partner the RFDS.

“The concept of the pit stop at field days is not new and has proven successful at other field days. However, we are looking forward to enabling the RFDS professionals to offer this to the community and it connects with the goals of our Client Council, aiming to raise awareness and deal with mental health as an issue that affects rural communities.”

Visitors will also be able to experience what it’s like on board a Flying Doctor aircraft and learn more about this Australian icon by visiting the RFDS aeromedical simulator, a big success at the recent Sydney Royal Easter Show.

At 9.1m long, 2.4m wide and 3m high, it is a full-sized replica of the cockpit and fuselage of a RFDS King Air B200 aircraft, complete with flight deck and full aeromedical fit-out. For many this will be as close as they ever get to a real RFDS aircraft.

“The Simulator is primarily a health promotion and educational tool,” said Mr Sam.

“It helps us promote the vital work we do and that we need to raise additional funds each year, on top of any Commonwealth and state government allocations, to deliver and grow our range of healthcare services and emergency retrieval work.”

Visitors will be able to experience what it’s like to be a pilot, flight nurse, or flying doctor when they get on board the aeromedical simulator. RFDS staff will be on hand to explain the aircraft’s capabilities, what the medical equipment in these ‘flying intensive care units’ does and share some real-life rescue stories.

The guided tour through the simulator is open to the public for a suggested gold coin donation.

RFDS staff, on-site to talk about their work in the Outback, will also be running a competition to win a holiday in Broken Hill. Visitors who register their details at the simulator will automatically go into the draw to win a family visit to the Flying Doctor Base at Broken Hill, NSW valued up to \$10,000.

The prize consists of return domestic economy airfares for a family of four (two adults/ two children) from the nearest Australian capital city, to Broken Hill, two nights accommodation in Broken Hill and car hire for three days commencing from Broken Hill.

The lucky winners will get the chance to; tour the Bruce Langford Visitor Centre (ranked Broken Hill's No.1 attraction in Broken Hill on TripAdvisor), visit the *Mantle of Safety* Museum (which showcases over 80 years of remarkable outback history), get on board an operational King Air aircraft in the RFDS hangar and meet some of the RFDS Pilots, Doctors and Flight Nurses.

What: RFDS Health Check "Pit Stop"

Who: RFDS Health Team

When: Tuesday 20 & Wednesday 21 May 2014, 9.30am- 4.30pm.

Where: Gilgandra Showground, Warren Road.

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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. No patient is more than two hours away from the Flying Doctor's help. In the past year, the South Eastern Section flew the equivalent of 6.5 round trips to the moon as it conducted over 4,700 clinics, took over 5,000 telehealth calls, had over 54,000 patient contacts and transported almost 8,600 patients.