



Outback Trek Clocks Up a Quarter Century

Media Release

June 2 2014

After clocking up almost 100,000 kilometres across some of Australia's most rugged and picturesque landscape and raising over \$21.5m for the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS), the Outback Trek celebrates its 25th anniversary with a specially extended trip.

Last year it raised in excess of \$1.5 million, an amount it hopes to match or even better when the Trek leaves Alice Springs on June 2 and travels over 6,000 kms to Margaret River in Western Australia via Broome. The Outback Trek 2014 will take 12 days in total, the cars travelling an average of 500km per day.

"Being our 25th anniversary makes this a very special Trek," said event organiser, Bill Patrick.

"We know rural and remote communities struggle to get access to healthcare services and that the Flying Doctor is an essential lifeline. We're only in the Outback for twelve days, but the RFDS is out there 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The communities we'll be visiting rely on those medical services and that's why the Trek is so important."

This extended trip will be a real test of endurance for the participants and their much-loved pre-1978 vehicles, which will be travelling across some of the most rugged and remote terrain in Australia. Cars are specially prepared to withstand the rigours of outback travel and, according to Bill Patrick, must be, "...gluttons for punishment."

The colourful cavalcade of Trek characters includes the "Cockroaches" and the "Shrek mobile," popular at the many schools the trekkers visit as part of the community engagement they do along the way.

This year's Trek includes "first-timer" dentist Dr David Hancock and his dental assistant wife, Jenny. Travelling through the Outback in a 1974 Peugeot 304, kindly sponsored by Investec Bank, the pair will be handing out free toothbrushes and toothpaste, as well as doing some dental education work along the way.

This year also sees the return of the Tribal Warrior Car, having completed a number of Treks over recent years.

The Tribal Warrior Association assists and supports disadvantaged Aboriginal youth. It also promotes social and cultural exchange between Aboriginal tribes and non-indigenous people and participates actively in the reconciliation process.

Brendon Smyth, General Manager, Fundraising, Marketing & Communications at RFDS South Eastern Section, paid tribute to all the trekkers who had contributed during the past 25

years. “This year’s Trek promises to be something special and they go with our thanks and best wishes.”

“The Outback Trek has established itself as the major fundraiser for the Flying Doctor, and I am delighted to see it going from strength to strength.”

“Fundraisers such as the Outback Trek help the RFDS raise additional funds each year, on top of the Commonwealth and state government allocations we receive, to enable us to deliver and grow our range of healthcare services and emergency retrieval work.” Mr Smyth added.

To keep up to date with the Trek or to make a donation, visit outbackcartrek.com.au or flyingdoctor.org.au

- ENDS -

For more information or photographs, contact Brendon Smyth, RFDS (South Eastern Section) General Manager, Fundraising, Marketing & Communications, 02 9941 8852/ 0438 687 933 or brendon.smyth@rfdssse.org.au

Nick Bleszynski, Media Consultant, RFDS (South Eastern Section) on 0403 931 291 or nbleszynski@rfdssse.org.au

ABOUT THE ROYAL FLYING DOCTOR SERVICE

The Royal Flying Doctor Service is one of the world’s most comprehensive aeromedical organisation, taking emergency and essential primary healthcare services to the people of rural and remote Australia. Last year, the RFDS assisted over 295,000 people through emergency rescues clinic services, inter-hospital patient transfers or telehealth services.