



Media Release

3 September 2014

Flying Doctor Brings “Pit Stop and Pearls” Health Check to Forbes Show

With a health team consisting of an alcohol and drugs counselor, chronic care nurse, male and female GPs, mental health professionals, a dentist and dental therapist, the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) is bringing a health screening program, dubbed ‘pit stop and pearls,’ to the forthcoming Forbes Show.

The RFDS has developed this streamlined, car-themed health check model over the past year, which has proved very effective in attracting people to health screenings at community events. At the recent Gilgandra Show the RFDS health team screened 104 people, or 6.7% of the population, in just two days.

“As “pit stop and pearls” suggests we will be catering for both sexes at the Show, but the focus is on men who are 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 Show to make a ‘pit stop’ for a full health ‘rego’ check’.”

The whole ‘rego’ process has nine 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), shock absorbers (mental health screen), bodywork (dental check) and maintenance check (dental treatment).

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 around 30 minutes and health-wise may turn out to be the most important investment you ever made.”

Rabobank, a RFDS corporate partner, initiated the RFDS visit to the Forbes Show through its Client Councils, which meet to discuss the most pressing matters facing the agricultural industry and rural communities. Currently, Rabobank has eleven Client Councils throughout Australia.

“Rabobank aspires to play a role which goes beyond simply providing financial services and become more involved in the community. You can only do that by partnering with your clients,” said Peter Anderson, Rabobank Regional Manager for Central NSW.

“Our Dubbo-based Client Council 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, RFDS.”

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 educational simulator, which has proved a big success with show crowds all across New South Wales.

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 board the 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.

What: RFDS Health Check “Pit Stop and Pearls.”

Who: RFDS Health Team.

When: Friday 5 & Saturday 6 September, 2014.

Where: Forbes Showground, Show Street, Forbes, NSW 2871

- ENDS -

For more information or photographs, contact:

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

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.