



Media Release

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Innovation still key for the Flying Doctor

They say “....*necessity is the mother of invention*” and ever since its inception in 1928 innovation and improvisation have always been close to the heart of the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS). The first pedal radio that connected the new Flying Doctor Service with remote stations and communities was created by inventor Alfred Traeger at the behest of founder, Reverend John Flynn.

Nine decades on, the RFDS has evolved into a comprehensive 24/ 7 aeromedical service capable of performing emergency evacuations and facilitating vital primary healthcare services to regional, rural and remote communities, but the spirit of Tredegar lives on. Dr Andy Caldin from the South Eastern Section’s (RFDS SE) Dubbo Base has assembled his own Suction Assisted Laryngoscopy Airway Decontamination Device (SALAD).

“In short, a SALAD is an airway training mannequin that vomits,” explained Andy.

“Keeping lungs and airways clear is a critical skill when dealing with unconscious patients as any blockage could be fatal.”

“American physician, Dr James DuCanto, invented this cutting-edge training tool and then generously posted some DIY instructions on-line. I thought it was something we could use here, so I decided to give it a go.”

Utilising his skills as a former carpenter, Andy built a wooden frame and retro-fitted an old airway head with parts sourced from local hardware stores. The “stomach” is a shower pump connected to a 50 litre reservoir. It pumps up to four litres of “vomit” per minute, which is water mixed with green food colouring.

“Our medical skills have to be constantly refreshed and updated and we are using our DIY SALAD simulator to do this work with RFDS SE medical staff at all levels,” revealed Andy.

“We have taken it to Broken Hill to do some demonstrations for the RFDS SE and local ambulance, Emergency Department, anaesthetic and intensive care staff.”

In the past year, the RFDS SE flew almost 5 million kms, facilitated almost 4,500 clinics, took over 5,500 telehealth calls, had over 49,100 patient contacts and transported almost 8,200 patients.

[See Dr Caldin’s home made SALAD in action on the Flying Doctor YouTube page.](#)

For more information or photographs, contact:

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

Ryan Young, Digital Marketing Communication Coordinator, RFDS (South Eastern Section) on 0427 392 475 or ryan.young@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.

