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Media Release

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Governor of New South Wales to visit Flying Doctor Base

His Excellency General The Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Ret'd), Governor of New South Wales and Mrs Linda Hurley are to visit The Royal Flying Doctor South Eastern (RFDS SE) Section's Dubbo base today (Friday, 19 February).

During the visit they will tour the base, meet Dr Kah Chong, dentist from the highly successful The Outback Oral Treatment and Health (TOOTH) program, inspect one of six recently launched Patient Transfer road vehicles and meet with staff and local volunteers including the Dubbo Support Group (DSG) and its President, Terry Clark.

"We are honoured to welcome His Excellency and Mrs Hurley to our Dubbo base and to have him as our Patron," says Greg Sam, Chief Executive Officer of the RFDS SE.

"The Governor is visiting us in a very auspicious year. In this, our 80th year, the RFDS SE has embarked on an ambitious 2015-19 strategic plan whose principal aim is to reduce the well-documented gap in health and wellness between those living in remote, rural and regional areas and those in cities."

"The RFDS SE is expanding its service profile and footprint by providing an increasing range of services, which are reaching more people and more communities. Having consolidated retrieval and emergency services capacity, the South Eastern Section has invested in and expanded additional primary care services from their Broken Hill, Dubbo and Moomba bases. We are working with local health services and other organisations to bridge gaps in clinical and patient transport services to improve access to care in remote, rural and regional locations."

"His Excellency and Mrs Hurley will be invited to see some of those innovations first hand and receive a briefing on the new and expanded services we will be announcing in the next few months."

They will inspect one of the recently launched Patient Transfer road vehicles, which will support the movement of non-emergency patients between medical facilities.

The first Patient Transfer road vehicles, equipped just like the RFDS aircraft, are based in: Bourke, Cobar, Dubbo, Lightning Ridge, Orange and Sydney (Bankstown airport), which will serve as a metropolitan hub. The vehicles carry a wide variety of patient types and have compatible patient handling systems with RFDS fixed wing aircraft.

"The launch of a road vehicle service adds to our traditional aeromedical operations as an extension to the services the Flying Doctor already offers to those living in remote, rural and regional areas," says Mr Sam.

The trip to regional NSW was announced to further the couple's "keen interest in engaging with communities right across the state." To that end, the Governor has requested a meeting with the DSG volunteers and its President, Terry Clark, who have made such a significant contribution to the establishment and incremental development of the RFDS' Dubbo base, its services and facilities since its opening in 1999.

As well as working to raise the profile of the RFDS SE and fundraising in the Central West community, DSG volunteers staff the Base's Education Centre, ranked a top local tourist attraction by the TripAdvisor website.

"The long and mutually beneficial relationship we have enjoyed with the people of the Central West is due in no small part to the efforts of the DSG, who will have raised over \$2 million for the RFDS SE by the end of the 2015/16 financial year," says Mr Sam.

"This includes a recent \$250,000 donation towards the purchase and medical fit-out of the Patient Transfer road vehicle based in Dubbo, as well as contributing to others in Lightning Ridge and Bourke."

"It's a shining example of what can be achieved when a community gets behind a willing service provider. We look forwards to continuing our long and fruitful relationship."

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For more information or photographs, contact:

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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 conducted almost 5,000 clinics, took over 6,400 telehealth calls, had over 53,500 patient contacts and transported almost 8,500 patients.