



Media Release

19 October 2016

“Fly-Around” partnership aims to raise cancer awareness

Despite great advances in medicine, cancer is still one of the most prevalent health conditions in Australia. Some one in three Australian men and one in four Australian women will be diagnosed with cancer before the age of 75¹. However, the survival rate for many types of cancer has increased by more than 20 per cent in the past three decades due to treatment improvements and new interventions brought about by scientific research² with lifestyle changes and early detection also important factors.

These are some of the key messages from the Cancer Awareness “Fly-Around” event that will see the South Eastern Section of the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS SE) partnering with Cancer Council NSW for the first time.

Once or twice a year a team of RFDS SE and other health professionals fly in and out of remote locations, providing education about major health issues to some of the State’s most isolated communities. These so-called “Fly-Arounds” complement the Section’s established clinic program, which took almost 4,500 clinics to over 20 communities during the past year.

“These awareness sessions are about informing those living in remote communities about the risk factors, early detection and screening for the top four cancers in NSW (skin, breast, lung and bowel),” said Jo Beven, RFDS SE McGrath breast care nurse.

“I will be travelling with a doctor, a Drug and Alcohol worker from the RFDS SE and a Far Western Local Health District Cancer Care Co-ordinator. Together we will be providing up-to-date information and education to those attending our sessions.”

“This will include discussions about major risk factors, physical signs and symptoms of the most common cancers. Hopefully, this will encourage people to make any necessary lifestyle changes, monitor their own health and alert their GP if they think something might be wrong. An early diagnosis can significantly improve the chances of survival.”

Fiona Markwick from Cancer Council NSW will also be on hand to speak about the resources, legal assistance and counselling services available to those undergoing treatment.

¹ Australian Cancer Research Fact Sheet <https://acrf.com.au/on-cancer/cancer-statistics-australia/>

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“It’s important to raise awareness because it is predicted that 45,245 people across NSW will be diagnosed with cancer in 2016. That includes 212 people in the Far West NSW region, with 82 deaths expected,” said Fiona

“However, one in three cases are preventable and that’s what we’re focusing on during this week.”

Promoting the positive message that cancer can be beaten will be Country Music singer and cancer awareness advocate, Catherine Britt. As a breast cancer survivor herself, Catherine will be attending the sessions to share her story. “I was just 30 and my six month course of chemotherapy and one month of radiation was a confronting experience, but I survived and am living a full and meaningful life,” said Catherine.

“Stay on top of your health and don’t ignore anything that feels wrong or looks suspicious. Your health is your responsibility and it’s up to you to self-check and get regular check-ups from your GP. You can never be too proactive about your health at any age.”

After the Fly-Arounds, Catherine, who has recorded eight albums and enjoyed success in Australia and America, will be performing at “Rocks, Rust, Stars & Dust,” the Rural Women’s Gathering in Broken Hill. It takes place on 28- 30 October.

Between Monday 24 and Friday 28 October the Cancer Awareness Fly-Around will visit seven remote Far Western communities:

DATE	TOWN	LOCATION	START TIME
24/10/2016	Yunta	Yunta District Hall	9.30am ACST
24/10/2016	Packsaddle	Packsaddle Roadhouse	4.30pm AEST
25/10/2016	Wilcannia	Wilcannia Community Hall	9.30am AEST
25/10/2016	White Cliffs	White Cliffs Sporting Club	4.00pm AEST
26/10/2016	Tilpa	Community Centre (RFDS Clinic)	9.30pm AEST
26/10/2016	Ivanhoe	Ivanhoe RSL	4.00pm AEST
27/10/2016	Tibooburra	Tibooburra Two Storey Hotel	4.00pm ACST

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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 facilitated almost 4,500 clinics, took over 5,500 telehealth calls, had over 49,100 patient contacts and transported almost 8,200 patients.

