



Media Release

21 December 2016

Flying Doctor at the ready over Christmas

Traditionally, Christmas is a time of relaxing, overindulging and catching up with friends and family, but if you work for one of the emergency services it can be a very different few days. This Christmas the pilots, doctors and flight nurses of the South Eastern Section of the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS SE) will continue to deliver the finest aeromedical healthcare to the furthest corners of Australia, as they have done every day since the Service started in 1928.

The Flying Doctor crew will be on standby at their Dubbo and Broken Hill bases during the Christmas and New Year holiday period.

“We all take a turn and it’s just part of the job,” says Jackie Hanniver, a Flight Nurse with the RFDS SE who will spend this Christmas on call at the Broken Hill base.

“You hope that no one is going to have their Christmas spoiled by an accident or illness, but it does happen. Some years it’s all quiet and others you never sit down.”

During Christmas’ past RFDS SE crews have attended a variety of emergencies ranging from heart attacks, spinal and chest injuries to lacerations, broken bones, snake bites and even pneumonia.

Last year, after starting Christmas week with three emergency evacuations in a single day, there were no more over the Christmas and New Year period. Patient transfers to clinics and specialists in cities and major regional centres continued right through the festive period from both Dubbo and Broken Hill. Last year, flight crews transferred 108 patients between December 21 and New Years Day.

However, Jackie encourages patients to seek help, no matter what day it is.

“I attended an emergency on Boxing Day a few years ago and found an elderly gentleman with uncontrolled bleeding from an injury he’d sustained the day before. However, he waited because he didn’t want to trouble us on Christmas Day,” she recalled.

“We’d much rather he’d called us immediately because he ended up losing a lot of blood, was in pain and in need of a transfusion. RFDS flight crews work shifts all year round and we really do treat it as just another working day.”

“The RFDS SE wishes everyone a safe and happy Christmas and please remember to put on that helmet and safety gear before jumping on that new horse, motorbike or quad bike.”

RFDS South Eastern Section bases operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week and will remain open throughout the festive period. Not only does the RFDS facilitate emergency rescue and inter-hospital transfers via state-of-the-art medically equipped aircraft, they also provide extensive health clinics that include mental health, dental, indigenous and preventative health programs.

In an emergency call 000.

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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. 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.

