



Media Release

5 August 2015

Donna happy to go that extra mile for the Flying Doctor

The annual City2Surf race, which starts in Sydney's CBD and finishes at the iconic Bondi Beach, is now in its 44th year. It attracts over 60,000 runners from Olympians and World record holders to those doing personal challenges or fun runs to raise money for their favourite charity. The anticipated \$5 million raised will benefit more than 800 charities in New South Wales.

On Sunday 9 August, Donna Burton from Coonabarabran in central western NSW will be competing for the third straight year.

"I first did it because the 14 kilometre course was further than I had ever run before and it was a great way to keep myself motivated during my exercise and weight loss program," said Donna.

"My original goal was just to finish, now my big aim is to finish in less than two hours. I train all year round and weigh 30kg less than when I first ran in 2013."

A self-proclaimed "drover's brat," Donna grew up on stations all across NSW, Queensland and South Australia and saw first-hand the invaluable work done by her charity of choice, the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS).

"Memories of the Flying Doctor are scattered all through my childhood. A stockman got badly hurt and we kids helped by clearing the landing strip of kangaroos and putting out the kerosene lamps so they could land," recalls Donna.

"I remember a pregnant woman getting advice over the radio and people using the body chart to describe their problems and being told what to take from the medicine chest. Also, the RFDS would fly in with a nurse who did clinics for the mission and station folk."

"When I was a kid in the bush I wanted to be a Flying Doctor pilot because they were the bravest and most heroic blokes around, real unsung heroes in those rural and remote areas."

Like many charities the RFDS needs to raise additional funding, on top of any Commonwealth and state government allocations, so it can continue to deliver and grow its range of services.

"Community fundraisers like Donna play a very important role in helping to keep the Flying Doctor flying," said Brendon Smyth, General Manager Fundraising, Marketing and Communications at RFDS' South Eastern Section.

“The RFDS is supported by a wide variety of events of all shapes and sizes, from the Outback Car Trek, which has raised over \$22m for the RFDS over 26 years, through community groups like the Broken Hill Women’s Auxiliary and the Dubbo Support Group to individuals undertaking personal challenges or doing a charity walk.”

For Donna, who grew up dreaming of being the first female Flying Doctor pilot, it’s the continuation of a great passion.

“I did learn how to fly a plane and still live in the country, but became an astronomer instead. However, I can still do my bit to support the RFDS and help bridge the access to healthcare gap in this wide brown land of ours.”

You can support Donna and the RFDS at <https://city2surf2015.everydayhero.com/au/donna-burton>

- 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.