



Media Release

28 November 2017

Filling the Gap – Good oral health means better overall health

The latest quarterly oral health statistics from the Royal Flying Doctor Service, South Eastern Section (RFDS SE) further demonstrates the importance of oral health treatment in regional, rural and remote areas.

In the Central West the RFDS SE dental team provided comprehensive care to 790 patients at 51 clinics. A quarter to a third of them were new patients presenting with oral health issues, many seeking pain relief.

“Teeth are not optional extras, they are essential tools that enable us to get the nutrition we need and need to be well maintained,” said Dr Jenny Pham, Dentist at the RFDS SE.

“Many people are not aware that poor dental health can also adversely affect your general health and lead to conditions such as, cardiovascular disease, stroke, low birth-weight, pneumonia and diabetes.”

“Almost one-third of the patients we saw last quarter had a concomitant chronic disease, which can also be effected by poor oral health.”

The RFDS SE dental team will be spending a lot of time in Bourke during November and December and is encouraging locals to drop in to discuss their oral health needs.

“A quarter of the patients we saw last quarter in Bourke are new and we’re encouraging them to return for follow-up treatment. Our aim is to prevent unnecessary discomfort and further damage to teeth,” said Jenny.

“Walk-in appointments are available most mornings at the four adult clinics we hold each week in Bourke.”

From Monday, 13 November Rachel Herbert, a new Oral Health Therapist, will resume the weekly child clinic at Bourke. As well as dealing with immediate dental problems it promotes good dental habits such as regular brushing, flossing, check-ups and the benefits of a well-balanced diet.

The RFDS SE has recently expanded its Dubbo dental team and launched a dental van. This has allowed an extension of oral healthcare services to communities who didn’t already have clinics or airstrips. It’s part of an ongoing strategy to reduce the gap in health and wellness between those living in remote, rural and regional areas and those in the cities.

“To raise awareness of our service and encourage good dental health, the RFDS SE dental van will be visiting Bourke’s St Ignatius Primary School during 21- 23 November, Koionia Christian Academy on 28- 30 November and the High Schools during the first two weeks of December,” said Jenny.

All RFDS SE dental clinics are held at the Bourke Aboriginal Health Service (BAHS) at 61 Oxley Street, Bourke. Everyone is welcome to attend and schedules are available from BAHS on (02) 6872 3088.

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For more information or photographs, contact:

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ABOUT THE ROYAL FLYING DOCTOR SERVICE

The Royal Flying Doctor Service has been taking the finest care to the furthest corners of Australia since 1928. The not-for-profit service provides 24 hour emergency cover to 90% of the Australian continent, via a modern fleet of specially equipped aircraft and road vehicles. In the past year, the South Eastern Section facilitated almost 4,600 clinics, took over 5,500 telehealth calls, had around 51,000 patient contacts and transported over 8,300 patients.