



Media Release

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### **National Dental Week - healthy teeth are smiles better**

“Five minutes of brushing and flossing each day is all it takes to have healthy teeth.” That will be the message from Dr Lyn Mayne, Senior Dentist at the South Eastern Section of the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS SE), and her dental team during National Dental Week 2017, which starts today.

“Teeth are not optional extras, they are essential tools that must be well maintained,” said Dr Mayne.

“Not only do they enable us to get the nutrition we need, they affect our overall health.”

“Poor dental health is linked to conditions such as, cardiovascular disease, stroke, low birth-weight, pneumonia and diabetes.”

Dr Mayne’s Top Tips are;

- Brush your teeth for two minutes twice a day with fluoride toothpaste.
- Floss between your teeth once a day.
- Don’t smoke or chew tobacco.
- Moderate your intake of sugary food and drinks.

“Avoid discomfort, the loss of teeth and large dental bills by making a regular appointment with your dentist as important as booking in your car in for a service,” added Dr Mayne.

With the recent launch of a new dental van and an expansion of its dental teams in both Broken Hill and Dubbo, the RFDS SE is working hard to improve oral health in NSW. In some of the communities we service the rate of dental decay in children has halved and we’ve established a consistently declining pattern of decay in adults. 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 cities.

The new dental truck is, in effect, a mobile dental clinic complete with chair, x-ray and all the technology you’d find in a normal dentistry. It visits schools and community centres providing oral health education and treatment to communities not currently served by the RFDS SE, as well as those who don’t have airstrips.

“It’s enabled us to visit new locations like Enngonia, Angledool, Yunta and the Coombah Roadhouse,” said Lyn.

“The mobile or fly-in model enables us to align better with community needs, as we can take the dentist where they’re needed and vary the frequency of our visits as demand rises and falls.”

In its *Oral Health 2020* strategy paper NSW Health recognises the need to improve access to oral health services, particularly in rural and remote areas.<sup>1</sup> Greg Sam, Chief Executive Officer of the RFDS SE believes the Flying Doctor has the infrastructure and expertise to provide those additional services through a range of mobile and fly-in oral health clinics

“In NSW the RFDS SE has operated a full-time dental service out of Broken Hill since 1998 and from our Dubbo Base since 2012. Dentists also travel on our week-long “fly-in fly-out” clinics, which visit remote towns not normally serviced by the RFDS SE,” said Mr Sam.

“In our opinion, an expanded network of mobile and fly-in fly-out clinics supported by stable, long-term investment is the most cost-effective way to turn the dental statistics around and provide access to oral healthcare, regardless of where you live.”

Search “Dental Health Week Australia 2017” for fact sheets and more information on how to look after your teeth.

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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 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.



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<sup>1</sup> *Oral Health 2020: A Strategic Framework for Dental Health in NSW* NSW Health 2014.  
[http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/oralhealth/Pages/oral\\_health\\_2020.aspx](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/oralhealth/Pages/oral_health_2020.aspx)