



Media Release

30 April 2015

Flying Doctor to do health 'pit stop' at Pooncarie Field Day

A Royal Flying Doctor Service South Eastern Section (RFDS SE) health team consisting of a doctor and a nurse will be attending the Pooncarie Field Day this weekend. Although it has a population of just 84, the Field Day is one of two large annual events held in the small Far Western NSW town situated some 130km north-west of Mildura and 280kms south of Broken Hill.

"We are delighted to be invited to Pooncarie which we view as part of our traditional network," said Linda Cutler, General Manager, Health Services at the RFDS SE.

"We cover many additional rural and remote sites as well as many of our regular clinics sites with 'Fly Around Clinics' and community events because we recognise the value of regular health checks in increasing the chances of early detection and a positive outcome through changes to lifestyle, diet or medical treatment."

"Our medical team will be running a mini-health check at Pooncarie. Although we cater for both sexes, the RFDS is hoping to convince male visitors, who will book their car in for a regular service, but are reluctant to see a doctor, to make a 'pit stop' for a health 'rego' check. "

The mini-health check will have three to four stages:

After a first 'pit stop' for registration, oil (blood pressure) gets checked, followed by chassis and exhaust (waist measurement and heart smoking/ lung) and time permitting a fuel additives (AusD-diabetes screen and alcohol check) check. The doctor then assesses whether the participant is 'roadworthy' enough to get their 'rego' papers, or needs further tuning and maintenance.

"The entire process takes around 15-20 minutes and health-wise may turn out to be the most important investment you ever made," said Ms Cutler.

Patrons will also be encouraged to get on board the RFDS aeromedical simulator, fresh from its success at the Sydney Royal Easter Show where the RFDS stand received over 17,000 visits and a Silver Exhibitor award.

The full-sized replica of the flight deck and fuselage of a RFDS King Air B200 aircraft measures 9.1m long, 2.4m wide and 3m high and comes complete with flight deck and full aeromedical fit-out.

On boarding the aeromedical simulator visitors experience what it's like to be a RFDS pilot, flight nurse, or flying doctor. RFDS SE Education Office, Sarah Little, will be on hand to explain the aircraft's capabilities, what the medical equipment in these 'flying intensive care units' does and recount some real-life rescue stories.

"The Simulator is primarily a health promotion and educational tool," said Ms Cutler.

“It helps us promote the vital emergency and primary healthcare clinics the RFDS brought to over 280,000 Australians last year. It also helps us explain that we need to raise additional funding each year, on top of any Commonwealth and state government allocations, so we can continue to deliver and grow our range of services.”

The guided tour through the simulator is open to the public for a suggested gold coin donation.

“The Field Day is one of the two big days out in Pooncarie, the other being a race meeting. It supports the local Agriculture industry by showcasing innovations in agriculture and alternative industries and attracts up to 1,000 visitors to the town,” said Angus Whyte, President of the Pooncarie Field Day Committee.

“We run a number of rural competitions throughout the day to keep patrons entertained including whip cracking, shearing dog jumping, yard and goat dog trials and butchering demonstrations.”

The Field Day will conclude with a community health auction at 5.30pm. All funds raised are to be donated to the Pooncarie Volunteer Ambulance, the Wentworth Ambulance and the RFDS.

What: RFDS mini- health check at Pooncarie Field Day.

Who: RFDS SE staff including some of the health team.

When: Saturday and Sunday, 2 and 3 May 2015.

Where: Pooncarie Race Course, Pooncarie- Menindee Road, near airport.

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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 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.