



Media Release

26 April 2017

Putting extra miles on their dials helps kids keep their bright smiles

The Bright Smiles Charity Ride takes to the road for a second year on Thursday, 27 April in a bid to raise vital funds for the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS). Starting at Wiseman's Ferry, just north of Sydney, the 18 riders will travel more than 1,200 kms along the back roads, enjoying overnight stays at Coolah, Dubbo, (where they will visit the RFDS Base), and then Canowindra.

Last year, the Bright Smiles Charity Ride raised in excess of \$40,000 to support the RFDS South Eastern Section's (RFDS SE) oral health service.

Bright Smiles is the motorcycling offshoot of The Outback Car Trek (OBT), a week-long annual bush pilgrimage featuring over 100 pre-1978 vintage cars. The OBT has raised over \$25 million for the RFDS since its inception in 1990 and will embark on its 28th Trek from Griffith to Port Macquarie in June.

"Bright Smiles and the OBT are supporting dental health because we know through our long association with the RFDS SE that it is such an important pillar of healthcare," said OBT and Bright Smiles organiser Bill Patrick.

"We were delighted to contribute towards the recent expansion of the dental health teams in Dubbo and Broken Hill and the purchase of a new dental van. This will allow the RFDS SE to offer dental health and education to more rural and remote communities in Western and Far Western NSW."

"Over the next few years we are hoping to grow the event so we can continue to support the great work the RFDS SE dental teams do."

The Bright Smiles riders will visit the RFDS SE Base at Dubbo on Saturday, 29 April to look over an aircraft, inspect the new dental van and meet the team who have helped to restore dental health to some of NSW's most vulnerable and remote communities.

The dental van has just completed its maiden trip around Western NSW providing clinics and oral health education to communities without an airstrip or who are not on our current clinic roster. On this trip it visited; Enngonia, Yunta, Angledool, Goodooga and Lightning Ridge. On its way back to Broken Hill it will visit Yunta and the Coombah roadhouse (Wentworth).

"We're very keen to get that message out into the community, as I don't think most people realise how poor oral health can impact them," said RFDS SE Senior Dentist, Dr Lyn Mayne.

"Oral disease, particularly when left untreated, is associated with certain cardiovascular diseases, respiratory illnesses, and other chronic diseases. Other common conditions such as endocarditis (inflammation of the lining of the heart), stroke, aspiration pneumonia, diabetes, kidney disease, and some adverse pregnancy outcomes, are also associated with poor oral health."

Since its launch in 2012, the Dubbo dental team have provided over 1,100 clinics and treated almost 7,000 patients in the communities of Bourke, Collarenebri, Goodooga and Lightning Ridge, where access to dental care was either non-existent or extremely challenging.

“Our primary goal is to reduce the well-documented gap in health and wellness between those living in remote, rural and regional areas and those in cities, but we can’t do it alone,” said Greg Sam, Chief Executive Officer of the RFDS SE.

“To that end, the great fundraising work that the Bright Smiles and Outback Car Trek participants do on our behalf will put bright smiles on many more faces over the coming years.”

To support the Bright Smiles fundraiser go to:

<https://everydayhero.com.au/event/brightsmilescharityride2017>

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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 facilitated almost 4,500 clinics, took over 5,500 telehealth calls, had over 49,100 patient contacts and transported almost 8,200 patients.

