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MEDIA RELEASE

RFDS LAUNCHES NEW PATIENT TRANSFER FACILITY AT BURNIE AIRPORT

Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) Tasmania will launch the new and improved patient transfer facility at a presentation and afternoon tea at the Burnie Airport Terminal, Wynyard on Tuesday 17 May 2016 at 2.30 pm.

RFDS Tasmania President, Malcolm White will address the North West Coast supporters and guests to thank them for their continuing support of the service. Burnie City Council, Mayor Anita Dow and Wynyard-Waratah Council, Acting Mayor Mary Duniam will jointly launch the facility during the proceedings.

Dignitaries attending the launch include Tasmanian Senator Anne Urquhart, Mr Brett Whitely MP, Federal Member for Braddon, The Hon Ruth Forrest MLC, Member for Murchison, The Hon Mike Gaffney MLC, Member for Mersey, Mr Roger Jaensch MP, Tasmanian Member for Braddon, Deputy Mayor Cr Jan Bishop, Circular Head Council, Mayor Jan Bonde, Central Coast Council and Mayor Steve Martin from the Devonport City Council.

The new facility will meet requirements for increased usage and better protection from the prevailing westerly winds for patients, paramedics and pilots when being transferred to and from road ambulances in inclement weather.

Interesting facts about the new patient transfer facility:

- > The new shelter has a full height wall on the western side to provide additional protection from windblown rain during prevailing westerly winds.
- > The shelter enables aircraft to taxi completely beneath the shelter and provides much-improved protection from the elements to both patients and ambulance staff.
- > The new shelter was designed and constructed by local North West Coast firms.

Mr White said that through the generous support of individuals and community service organisations, the RFDS has funded the new Burnie Airport patient transfer facility together with smaller scale transfer facilities at St Helens, Flinders Island and King Island airports.

“During 2014/15, the RFDS aircraft touched down 337 times at Burnie Airport; the third most utilised airport for the RFDS in Tasmania.”

RFDS special guest Anne Lewis is attending the launch. Recently enjoying her 90th Birthday Anne has clocked up almost 8000 hours of flying time. Throughout her career, she has worked as an aircraft electrician with the Women’s Royal Australian Air Force (WRAAF), attained her Private Pilot and Commercial licences and won many flying competitions. While flying for Goldfields Airways

in the late 40's she worked on call for the Australian Aerial Medical Service, later named the Royal Flying Doctor Service.

Anne moved to England in 1950 and joined the Women's Royal Air Force (WRAF). Her achievements extend to the rank of Pilot Officer, the highest aircrew rank available to women at the time and she was selected represent the WRAF to be presented to the Queen and Duke of Edinburgh in 1953 after the Coronation. In 2007, Anne moved to Burnie where she now resides.

An RFDS aircraft and aeromedical training simulator will be on site at the Burnie Airport during the launch.

Mr Malcolm White and Anne Lewis are available for interview.

For further information and interview opportunities please contact:

Mary Frost

Royal Flying Doctor Service Tasmania

Mobile: 0438 100 076

Email: Mary.Frost@rfdstas.org.au