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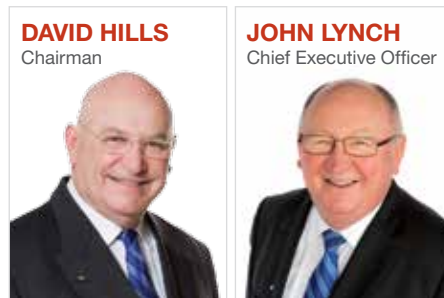


Royal Flying Doctor Service
The furthest corner. The finest care.

AirDoctor



From the Chairman & CEO



WELCOME TO THE first edition of *AirDoctor* for 2015. We have had many exciting developments already this year which will go towards shaping the future of RFDS Central Operations, as well as greatly enhancing our service delivery.

We announced the construction of a \$13 million new Adelaide Base for the RFDS which will form the basis of a new aeromedical precinct at the Harbour Town end of Adelaide Airport, adjacent to the main runway and the current rotary wing providers.

In April, after some remediation work on the site including land clearing and levelling, Adelaide Airport Limited (AAL) officially handed the site over to Sarah Constructions. They are leading the development of our state-of-the-art facility which will house our operational crews and administration and support staff in the one location at the airport off Tapleys Hill Road – phase one of what will become our Aeromedical Centre of Excellence (see story opposite).

In other exciting news, we also announced that we will be entering the jet age with a decision to exercise our 'launch customer' option and order a \$10 million PC-24 aeromedical jet from Swiss manufacturer Pilatus for delivery in 2017/18. We have also taken a further option to purchase a second PC-24 for delivery in 2018/19.

The PC-24 will complement our existing fleet of Pilatus turbo-prop PC-12s almost halving the flying time for long-haul patient evacuations. It will also be able to carry three stretchered patients, one more than the PC-12.

We have also purchased an additional new Pilatus PC-12 at a cost of \$6 million which is due to be delivered in August 2015, taking our PC-12 fleet to 15 throughout South and Central Australia. The PC-12 remains the most versatile aircraft for remote airstrip landings. You can read more about our RFDS PC-24 aeromedical jet on page 5.

These initiatives will enable RFDS Central Operations to meet the challenges of the future in continuing to provide the 'mantle of safety' for people living, working and travelling in rural and remote SA and NT, along with our services for patient transfer both intrastate and interstate.

We are pleased to say that both the new Adelaide Base development and the purchase of the PC-24 and PC-12 are funded entirely by fundraising and donations to the RFDS – this is truly an outstanding outcome, and we are sincerely thankful for the support we receive from the community. Our first major fundraising event for the year was in February when we

held the 20th Wilpena Under the Stars at Wilpena Pound in the magnificent Flinders Ranges. It was an outstanding celebration to mark the 20th anniversary of our signature bush event which attracted 650 guests (SOLD OUT) and generated proceeds in excess of \$100,000.

We are also proud to announce that the RFDS has been named Australia's most reputable not-for-profit organisation for the fourth year in a row in the annual study by research group AMR in partnership with the Reputation Institute.

Finally, in some very sad news, RFDS Central Operations lost a loyal servant and Medical Practitioner of 25 years' standing, Dr Alistair Miller, in February. Dr Miller's passing left us with an opportunity to reflect on his great contribution to the organisation at our Port Augusta Base including his dedication to the care of people living in remote Australia. You can read about Dr Miller's contribution on page 4.

We were also deeply saddened by the tragic deaths in March of Alice Springs Base apprentice aircraft engineer Tim McNaughton, and his father Greg McNaughton, an RFDS pilot based at Rockhampton who had been with RFDS Central Operations at Port Augusta Base from 2005 until 2008. Both will be sadly missed by the RFDS family.

DAVID HILLS

Chairman

JOHN LYNCH

Chief Executive Officer

OUR COVER: Port Augusta Base Flight Nurse Liz Marrack prepares for a remote primary health clinic flight. Photo courtesy of *The Advertiser*.

AirDoctor is the official magazine of the Royal Flying Doctor Service of Australia Central Operations.

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New Adelaide Base under way >

THE RFDS WILL deliver its South Australian inter-hospital transfer and emergency retrieval services from a new state-of-the-art aeromedical base at Adelaide Airport from the middle of 2016.

Construction is under way on the purpose-built aeromedical facility which will consolidate operational aeromedical crews including pilots, flight nurses and engineers, with our Mile End corporate staff in the one location adjacent to the main runway of the airport.

The \$13 million facility will help the RFDS deliver enhanced care for its patients, provide a modern and safe workplace for staff, as well as increased flexibility and operational capacity to address future needs. It is being funded entirely by donations to the RFDS and fundraising.

RFDS Central Operations CEO John Lynch said the RFDS base is the first in an expected wave of investment in a new world-class aeromedical precinct at the airport located behind Harbour Town off Tapleys Hill Road.

“With the RFDS as the foundation tenant, the precinct will eventually co-locate all members of the State Retrieval Service partners in RFDS, MedSTAR and SA Ambulance Service, next to current helicopter service providers,” Mr Lynch said.

Lead architect for the multi-functional facility has been Walter Brooke & Associates, while Sarah Constructions Pty Ltd was awarded the competitive tender for head contractor for its construction.

Sarah Constructions, along with builder CATCON, formally took charge of the site in April after Adelaide Airport Limited (AAL) completed site preparation works including utility services installation and site levelling.

“The new Adelaide Base is an exciting development in the history of RFDS Central Operations and represents a major investment into the well-being of all South Australians – city and country alike,” David Hills, Chairman of RFDS Central Operations, said.

“The new facility will enable the RFDS to deliver the best possible 24/7 emergency aeromedical service to the people of South Australia for decades to come,” Mr Hills said.

Last year, the RFDS transferred almost 4,500 patients through its existing Adelaide base, a 12% increase on a decade ago. It evacuated and transferred a further 1,800 patients from its Port Augusta Base.

The new Adelaide base follows the signing in 2013 of a nine-year contract agreement with the State Government as fixed-wing provider

of inter-hospital transfer and aeromedical retrieval services in SA.

“The design will enable us to streamline patient transfers and give us room to better accommodate operational staff working around the clock while improving internal efficiency by co-locating all staff in the one modern premises,” Mr Lynch said.

The new base will also provide a modern engineering maintenance store and workshop with the capacity to house up to six RFDS aircraft in the hangar, as well as parking for up to nine aircraft on the tarmac apron.

Features of the medical and patient transfer facility include time-critical design factors including private patient management bays with resuscitation capability, multiple undercover ambulance parking bays and two-way tarmac access for RFDS and ambulance crews.

“In SA alone, from our Adelaide and Port Augusta bases, the RFDS conducts an average of 15 aeromedical flights every day – many of these are the inter-hospital transfer of patients from rural and regional hospitals to Adelaide for emergency or specialist treatment,” Mr Lynch said.

Dedicated doctor sadly missed >

Obituary > Dr Alistair Robert Miller

3 March 1961 – 18 February 2015

THE PORT AUGUSTA community and many families and communities in outback South Australia have been deeply saddened by the death of Dr Alistair Miller in February.

His passing has not only deeply affected his family, but the colleagues he leaves behind at the RFDS – the Port Augusta Base especially.

Alistair, or 'Al' as he was known to his colleagues, always had the well-being of the patient as his highest priority. In many ways, even though of a younger generation, he was the quintessential old style family GP, perhaps in the mould of Dr Findlay of the *Casebook* TV series of a dour and kindly Scottish doctor.

Alistair had a hankering to be a doctor since his teenage years when he was hospitalised for a serious illness in his native Scotland. He remarked in a magazine profile published more than a decade ago: "The care I received from the medical and nursing staff inspired me to try and follow that caring profession."

He was compassionate and non-judgemental with all he came across in life, not just medicine.

Following high school in the Shetland Islands in 1979 he began studying medicine at the University of Edinburgh Medical School, graduating in 1985.

He was proud of his training and heritage in Scotland and would often recount that he had received the best training in the world. His role upon graduating was to provide that best training into best practice to all he encountered.

Dr Miller came to RFDS Central Operations in December 1989 from Auburn District Hospital in western Sydney where he was an Accident and Emergency Registrar. At the time of his application to the RFDS he was



> Dr Alistair Miller caring for Paul Manning, Mahanewo Station, following a motorbike accident.

He was compassionate and non-judgemental with all he came across in life, not just medicine.

about to complete his Diploma in Obstetrics for the RACOG/RACGP (Royal Australian College of Obstetrics & Gynaecology/Royal Australian College of General Practice).

In addition to his medical work, Dr Miller proudly represented the RFDS in many ways including guest speaking spots and he was well known within the Port Augusta Base community for his sense of humour, his musical talents and ability to party.

Throughout his 25 years of service with the RFDS, Dr Miller was not only family GP to the bush families and communities but he became something of a friend and counsellor

– many of whom he delivered as babies and continued to care for as they grew up.

He would greet each patient with, "I'm Dr Alistair Miller, but you can call me Al."

As a medical practitioner, Dr Miller was a strong advocate for General Practice and primary care as the cornerstone of good medicine and healthy communities.

Dr Miller is also remembered for talking fondly of his children, boasting of their achievements whether it was school, sport or hobbies, he would proudly recount stories of their exploits.

Dr Miller was once asked what he wanted from his work in the future, he replied: "To continue to be an important part of the community in a compassionate way, and to continue the legacy of the founder of the RFDS the Reverend John Flynn in ensuring that everyone had equal access to quality health services no matter where they live, work or play."

RFDS to enter the jet age >

THE COMMUNITIES OF South and Central Australia will soon be cared for 24/7 by the region's first permanently configured aeromedical jet following the purchase of a state-of-the-art Pilatus PC-24 aircraft by the RFDS.

The RFDS aeromedical jet will almost halve the flying time of long-haul patient evacuations, as well as provide the capacity to transfer three stretchered patients and clinical staff to any capital city in the country without refuelling.

"The RFDS PC-24 will enable the RFDS to reach patients in need in all corners of South Australia from Adelaide in less than 90 minutes, including major regional cities like Mt Gambier in just 30 minutes and Moomba in the Cooper Basin in 60 minutes," said David Hills, Chairman of RFDS Central Operations.

"At least every other day the RFDS will conduct the emergency evacuation of a critically-ill patient from Alice Springs Hospital to Adelaide or Darwin for specialist care – the RFDS PC-24 will reduce this flight to less than two hours."

To be manufactured in Switzerland, the \$10 million medically-equipped jet is scheduled for delivery in 2017/18. RFDS Central Operations has exercised its 'launch customer' option to secure one Pilatus PC-24 jet aircraft, and has retained the option to secure a second due for delivery in 2018/19.

The first RFDS PC-24 jet will service both SA and the NT from our Adelaide Base and once the second PC-24 arrives it will be based at Alice Springs, providing



Artist's impression of exterior and interior (inset).

> The RFDS PC-24 jet will be able to operate on remote dirt airstrips.

greater coverage in the north-south corridor of Australia.

The RFDS conducts an average of 24 aeromedical flights through South and Central Australia every day – this daily activity swells to over 100 throughout Australia.

RFDS Central Operations has used the Pilatus PC-12 turboprop aircraft exclusively for its operations in South Australia and the Northern Territory since 1995 – it will continue to operate its four medically-equipped PC-12 aircraft in Adelaide, three in Port Augusta and four in Alice Springs.

Mr Hills said the release of the state-of-art PC-24 jet will prove to be a 'game changer' for the Flying Doctor.

"The new PC-24 has the versatility and practicality of the PC-12 with the cabin

capacity and high performance of a jet.

It is certified for our single-pilot operation, and is designed to take-off and land on the harsh dirt airstrips we use daily in the outback," Mr Hills said.

"The RFDS PC-24 will be the only permanently configured aeromedical jet in South Australia with the capacity to carry three stretcher patients and up to three clinical staff at once.

"We will have an even greater capacity to respond quickly and effectively to mass casualty incidents or natural disasters."

The purchase of the RFDS PC-24 jet will be funded by fundraising and donations as part of the RFDS' ongoing capital-raising program for the replacement of aircraft, medical equipment and upgrades to operational facilities.

Governor visits Adelaide Base >

HIS EXCELLENCY, the Governor of South Australia, Hieu Van Le AO, accompanied by his wife Mrs Lan Le, paid a visit to the Adelaide Hangar in March in his role as the new Patron of RFDS Central Operations.

The Governor, who was sworn in late in 2014, toured the hangar, met operational staff and inspected an aeromedically-equipped Pilatus PC-12 aircraft.

RFDS Central Operations Chairman, David Hills, welcomed the Governor as our new patron before joining staff for morning tea. Mr Le succeeded Rear Admiral (ret) Kevin Scarce who retired as State Governor in September 2014.

His Excellency spoke briefly and remarked that the RFDS and the spirit with which it goes about its important work is one of the reasons he is proud to be Australian.

Mr Le, who with his wife both came to Australia as refugees from Vietnam in the 1970s, wished the RFDS well and said that he hoped this would be the first of many visits.



> Governor of South Australia Hieu Van Le AO and Mrs Lan Le.

New report 'm

DEATH RATES IN very remote areas are 35% higher than in cities, according to a Centre for International Economics report on health care access in country Australia.

Released by the RFDS at Parliament House in late March, the independent report finds diabetes and cardiovascular disease are more prevalent in rural areas than in cities, with those living in the country seeing doctors half as often, and dying on average two years earlier than city residents.

The report analyses both government and RFDS health service data and finds:

- remote and rural communities cannot exist without access to primary health care
- remote residents see medical specialists at only 38% the rate of city residents
- mental health services are accessed by very remote areas at only 20% the rate of those in the city
- life expectancy of Indigenous children is ten years lower than for non-Indigenous children
- Indigenous Australians are 3.3 times more likely to have diabetes than non-Indigenous Australians, and are five times more likely to die from endocrine conditions.

"These statistics are confronting, but the report points to the solution. Expanding primary health service access in remote and rural areas would help address city-country health disparities," says Dr John Setchell, General Manager Health Services, RFDS Central Operations.

The report outlines the role of the RFDS in providing access to primary health services in country Australia, and states without the primary healthcare services

provided by the RFDS, Australia risks losing vibrant remote communities that are part of valuable regional economies.

Nationally, the RFDS conducted more than 280,000 emergency and primary health patient contacts last year, including:

- 65,000 face-to-face consults by fly-in, fly-out or drive-in, drive-out rural health clinics delivered by RFDS medical officers, nurses, dentists, and allied health professionals;
- 82,000 GP consultations over the phone; and
- distribution of pharmaceuticals to remote residents at 1,794 different locations.


Copies of the CIE report *Flexible and responsive primary healthcare for rural and remote Australia* can be downloaded at www.flyingdoctor.org.au.



measures' health divide >



> Lunchtime at the RFDS Women's Healthy Living Clinic.

Women living in rural and remote areas don't have the same access to primary health care services as their urban counterparts. 

Alison Day 

Women's health focus at Oodnadatta >

FOR WOMEN LIKE Edna Stewart and Kay Finn, the chance to attend the RFDS Women's Healthy Living Clinic in Oodnadatta, means much more than a routine visit to the doctor.

The two locals were joined by over 20 other women who had gathered at the Oodnadatta Health Service to hear talks about healthy eating, fitness and to take part in a 'pampering' session.

They were later joined by young teen and pre-teen girls who had height and weight checks and a talk about reproductive health with an Aboriginal Health Worker.

RFDS Central Operations Health Services Program Manager, Alison Day, said the turnout exceeded expectations with many women expressing interest in learning more about healthy eating and fitness.

"These clinics are special because the setting of a women-only clinic staffed by women allows them to turn up, stay and feel comfortable discussing any health or lifestyle concerns," Ms Day said.

Both Edna and Kay said they had been looking forward to the women's health clinic which combined with the RFDS Healthy Living Program (HLP).

"It's good for the women to get together and have a health check all at the same time," Kay says. "It's not often we get something like this here, so it's a great thing."

The women were able to update their PAP smears and discuss issues specific to women's health with RFDS Port Augusta medical team, Dr Betsy Williams and Community Health Nurse Cheryl Boles, who flew in to Oodnadatta for the day in late March.

Ms Day said it was important to provide an environment where local women and women from surrounding stations were able to spend time and discuss their health with staff.

"Primary health care is of great importance, particularly to women living in rural and remote areas who often don't have the same access to services as their urban counterparts," Ms Day says.

"Often women without access to a female GP will skip updating their PAP smear, or simply go without asking crucial questions about breast or reproductive health, or their general wellbeing."

"The RFDS Women's Healthy Living Clinic gives women a chance to meet for the day, learn about women's health issues and to learn some healthy lifestyle tips."

HLP Lifestyle Adviser, Denise O'Connell, instructed the women on fitness using the theraband, Swiss ball and fitness ball and demonstrated healthy eating with easy meal preparation, ending with a 'pampering' session where they learned to make facial scrubs and body lotion using olive oil and coconut.

Teamwork in a heartbeat saves Darryl >

AN ACUTE SENSE of self-awareness, rapid response by work mates and a 700 kilometre flight from the South Australian outback combined to save the life of Darryl “Fuzz” Hucks.

Less than 12 hours after suffering a terrifying heart attack on the Oodnadatta Track, Fuzz was recovering in Royal Adelaide Hospital after emergency heart surgery to have a stent inserted to maintain crucial blood flow.

Fuzz has worked on road gangs in and around outback South Australia for 30 years.



For Fuzz and his work mates, teamwork is part of everyday life when they are on the road, living in mobile work camps often for weeks at a time repairing outback roads for the SA Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure (DPTI).

It was teamwork during a few critical hours after dawn one morning last December that saved 51-year-old Fuzz’s life as he lay on the ground seriously ill in the middle of nowhere.

The nearest settlement was tiny William Creek, about 25 kilometres to the south-east via a dirt road with Adelaide ten hours away by road.

Walking back to his room after a 5:00am breakfast to prepare for work, Fuzz was feeling strange. Having worked as a volunteer for his the local Yunta ambulance he knew he was having a heart attack.

“I just felt like someone was trying to push a crowbar through my shoulder blade,” Fuzz recalls.

“I told the guys and they put the AED (Automatic External Defibrillator) on me and I lay down on the ground.”

An urgent call was made to the RFDS on-call Doctor and Fuzz was given aspirin to help combat blood clotting, and the road gang was advised to move him to William Creek to meet the RFDS aircraft and crew coming from the RFDS Port Augusta Base.



> Darryl “Fuzz” Hucks in recovery at Yunta.

Fuzz, with the AED strapped to his chest, was carefully loaded onto a mattress on the back of a truck. Work mate “Postie” (Gary Kelly) kept vigil with Fuzz in the back while Ronnie Ledgard drove slowly to William Creek.

“I actually died on the way to William Creek, I was unconscious and they zapped me with the AED,” Fuzz says.

“One of the guys, ‘Postie’ – he was only a little guy – he had to pump my chest 30 or 40 times.”

Postie’s work, which included one breath of mouth to mouth, revived Fuzz who lay gravely ill in the back of the truck – but alive – for the rest of the journey to William Creek.

When Fuzz came to he was in the shed at William Creek airstrip where, still in the back of the truck, he was attended to by RFDS staff Dr Stephen Ballard and flight Nurse Jo Edwards.

Within hours of what had been a major heart attack, Dr Ballard had given Fuzz a lifesaving clot-busting drug which stabilised him for the flight to Adelaide.



If it hadn't been for the team effort by his work mates in deploying the AED, then using it and backing it up physically, we would not have had a patient to work on.

Dr Stephen Ballard

"We saw Mr Hucks at William Creek lying on a mattress on the back of their truck in the hangar and though conscious, he was very ill," Dr Ballard said.

"Our bit was easy," Dr Ballard says, "If it hadn't been for the team effort by his work mates in deploying the AED, then using it and backing it up physically, we would not have had a patient to work on."

Fuzz remained conscious during the 100-minute RFDS flight to Adelaide and was given morphine for the pain. He was in the Royal Adelaide Hospital before midday and by 4pm he was in recovery

after an RAH cardiologist inserted the stent to keep the artery open.

Grateful to his work mates for his life, Fuzz expects to return to work once he gets the all clear. In the meantime, he's been keeping himself busy with some goat and sheep mustering at a mate's property and helping with odd jobs around town.

Just before Christmas he drove down to Port Augusta and delivered six cartons of beer to his work mates at the DPTI Outback Roads depot as a thank you.

"Every day above ground is a good one for me from now on," says Fuzz.



Postie delivers CPR >

GARY "POSTIE" KELLY of Port Augusta, and Ronnie Ledgard of Whyalla, made the painstaking journey to William Creek at 15 kilometres an hour to get Darryl "Fuzz" Hucks to urgent medical care.

After the call to the RFDS, Fuzz was conscious and lying still with a defibrillator strapped to his chest, and it was decided to start the 25km journey to William Creek along the dirt Oodnadatta Track at 6.15am.

"After about five kilometres, Fuzz rolled back and looked like he'd gone, he looked like he was having a fit," Postie says. "I yelled out to Ronnie to stop the truck."

The Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) signalled that Fuzz needed a shock so Postie administered the shock.

"I started CPR and did that for about 30 or so seconds but he was still unconscious so then I did one breath of mouth-to-mouth and Fuzz let out a big, deep breath and relaxed," Postie says.

They resumed the drive with Fuzz semi-conscious and well over an hour later reached William Creek where they were met by the RFDS crew.

By a stroke of luck, Postie and his workmates had only a few months before renewed their First Aid training. Postie said the AED had just been serviced too although they nearly forgot to pack it for this trip.

For Postie, a former postman, it was his first experience of medical emergency.

"You just get on with it and all that training clicks into place, and you know what to do," he said.



PILATUS

From remote outback stations to inner city airports the PC-12 operates day and night to keep the Royal Flying Doctor Service in the air. With over thirty aeromedical PC-12's in operation throughout Australia the Royal Flying Doctor Service is an indispensable member of the Pilatus family. We invite you to call and find out more information about the PC-12 aircraft.



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Snakebite sends Alishia on night flight >

IT DIDN'T TAKE long for 12-year-old Whyalla schoolgirl Alishia Thomas to get back in the saddle after suffering a terrifying snake bite while competing at a rodeo.

What started out as a family trip to compete in the Peterborough Rodeo ended with her spending the night in Adelaide's Women's and Children's Hospital (WCH) after a late night flight with the RFDS.

The family had set out for the 200 kilometre road trip from Whyalla with mother and father Melissa and Andrew, Alishia and her older sister, Courtney, and their four horses for a weekend of competition.

Alishia had competed and went well on the Saturday in her favourite events, the junior barrel racing and pole bending, but ended the day fighting for her life after being bitten on the leg by a snake.

It was nearly 10pm following the day's competition and dinner, and Alishia was playing with friends at the rodeo campsite when she suddenly felt a stinging sensation on her left leg.

The children told their parents it was a highly venomous brown snake that had bitten Alishia so there was no time to lose in getting her urgent treatment.

A quick-thinking friend, Sandy, strapped Alishia's leg straight away while a nearby doctor was called for.

The doctor treated her at the site but not about to take any risks, Alishia, by then in considerable pain, was taken to Peterborough Hospital.

There she was put on a drip but it was clear that further blood tests would be necessary to determine the spread of the venom in her bloodstream and whether she needed to be given anti-venom.

That meant Alishia had to be moved to a higher level of care at the WCH in Adelaide as soon as possible.

With Adelaide more than three hours away by road, the RFDS landed at Peterborough

airstrip shortly after 11pm to meet Alishia and Melissa with hospital staff in the ambulance.

The RFDS crew from Port Augusta Base, Flight Nurse Angelique Galea and Pilot Neil Tucker, safely strapped Alishia onto an aircraft stretcher ready for her flight to Adelaide.

During the 55 minute flight, Angelique recalled, Alishia was distressed and in a lot of pain with her leg bandaged up to her hip in a cardboard splint.

"I gave her more pain relief and tried to distract her," Angelique recalled. "She told me that she was riding horses – I love riding horses too – so we had a little conversation about horses.

"She was very worried about dying from the snake bite and I reassured her that she would be fine."

Melissa accompanied her daughter on the flight, holding Alishia's hand offering comfort from her seat behind the stretcher.

After a night in the WCH and further blood tests it was determined that Alishia did not require anti-venom, and she was given a clean bill of health.

"She's a bit wary now but she has recovered fully and is back into her competitions," Melissa said.

Not to be deterred, Alishia, who has been riding horses since the age of five, was back in the saddle a little over six weeks later on her mother's paint horse Ell, competing in the Northern Barrel Racing League Competition in Quorn in late March.

"Alishia did quite well and won a first, a second and a third on the Saturday and another second on the Sunday in the barrel races and pole bending," Melissa said.

The family, who all compete in local rodeos and gymkhanas, were planning a big day of racing at the Yunta Picnic Races and Gymkhana on Anzac Day.



> Alishia Thomas and Ell at home in Whyalla.

She was very worried about dying from the snake bite and I reassured her that she would be fine.

Angelique Galea,
RFDS Flight Nurse

THANK YOU TO OUR MAJOR SPONSORS...



Wilpena Under the Stars 20th anniversary >

THE 20TH ANNUAL Wilpena Under the Stars was a roaring success with 650 people gathering on a warm night on Saturday, 21 February 2015, for a beautiful sunset in the shadow of Wilpena Pound in the magnificent Flinders Ranges.

Thanks to the support of our fantastic event sponsors, community partners, volunteers, prize donors and guests, proceeds in excess of \$100,000 were raised from the black-tie event.

This was further bolstered by the \$20,000 cash donation (for 20 years!) from MGA Whittles Group of Companies, which capped off a remarkable night of fundraising.

The proceeds will directly benefit the RFDS capital-raising program which funds the replacement of aircraft and medical equipment to help keep our medical crews in the air.



> **Carol Collins, Jane Hammond, Debra Petrys and Moira Hill.**



> **Carrie Rainsford, Emily Holden, Claire Wiseman and Darren Strawbridge.**



> **Spence Denny, Lynette & Keith Rasheed and Ian Doyle.**



> **Michael & Chantelle Schiller, Belinda & James Rowe, Mathew & Keryn Booth.**



> **Jack & Lucia Snelling.**



> **Jenny Fay, Jane Doyle and Jo Parker.**



> **Wilpena Under the Stars committee: Monica & Justin Henderson, Paula Wurst, Grant Napier, Scott Nayda, David Clarke, Rohan & Deb Wundke, Wayne Johnson, Ray Jackson and Justin & Beck Wundke.**

Giving a way of life for Helen >

Obituary > Helen Taylor

10 December 1932 – 6 January 2015

HELEN TAYLOR HAS been fondly remembered by the Port Augusta community for her great generosity and tireless work on behalf of the community and many charities, in particular, the RFDS.

Both Helen and her husband Colin established their presence over more than 60 years in Port Augusta where they raised a family, made lifelong friendships and ran thriving businesses as hoteliers and in transport.

Dorothy Helen Liston, the fourth and youngest child of Doris and Dave Liston, grew up in Forestville, Adelaide, with her brother John and two older sisters, Jean and Nancy.

Helen married Colin Taylor on 5 April 1952 and the young couple took a brave step and bought the Augusta Hotel, moving to Port Augusta with the intention of staying for two years which turned into 64.

The couple built the Augusta Motel in 1965 and later bought the Pastoral Hotel. Over the years they owned the Bayview Hotel in Whyalla, the Royal Hotel in Crystal Brook and the West Thebarton Hotel in Adelaide.

At her funeral in Port Augusta on Monday 12 January, John Lynch, CEO of RFDS Central Operations, said Helen would be greatly missed, describing her as a tireless worker for her family and for the community, who took pride in all that she tried and achieved.

By 2003, Helen had been elected President of the Port Augusta RFDS Auxiliary and became a Constitutional Member of the RFDS at the same time.

“Her catchcry the night she accepted the Presidency was that her sole ambition was to put the fun back into fundraising,” Mr Lynch said.



Helen was a wonderful person to be around.

She was always bright, positive and so caring

Always interested in what you were doing and how your family was.

Proud to be a part of what we did and how we did it.

Keen to learn more about how and why we do what we do.

Proud to identify herself with the RFDS and Port Augusta.

She was always bright, positive and so caring, and always interested in what you were doing

Someone who gave far more than she got.

Gave unconditionally.

Loved life the same way.

Cared for others in a similar way that allowed you to think you were all part of her family.

Someone we are proud to call friend.

In 2014, Helen presented the RFDS with a cheque for an astonishing \$100,000 as a result of the Port Augusta RFDS Auxiliary's fundraising activities for the year. During her 12 year tenure as President, the Auxiliary raised funds totalling \$755,000.

In 2013, Helen received the highest accolade available to an RFDS volunteer, the RFDS Meritorious Service Award.

“She brought together a group of people who appreciated and enjoyed her direction and vision, her energy and enthusiasm, her loyalty and drive, and at times, her insistence that we were doing it so others would benefit,” Mr Lynch said.

Since its establishment in 1956, a year after the RFDS Port Augusta Base opened, the Port August RFDS Auxiliary has raised, according to RFDS electronic records

which only go back 28 years, an astonishing \$1.2 million.

Helen was renowned for her network of contacts and maintained an outback populated with RFDS collection tins. Helen knew the location of every single one of those tins from remote petrol stations, supermarkets, hotels, motels and railway sidings.

Mr Lynch said Helen's dedication placed her alongside fellow late RFDS greats including Nan Young, Dawn Prior, and Dr John Thompson.

Colin predeceased his wife in 1996. Helen is survived by their children Julie, Lynne, Trevor and Peter, and their partners, and grandchildren Paul, Jane, John, Stephen, Kate, Craig, Sally and Lucy, as well as 23 great-grandchildren.

Riders set for greatest desert challenge >



> Simpson Desert Bike Challenge members Alan Hancox, Lorraine Hancox, Andrew Griffiths, Kate Reynolds and Mark Polley.

JUST WHEN THEY thought it couldn't get any tougher, riders in this year's Simpson Desert annual Bike Challenge will attempt a route none of the competitors were able to finish in the inaugural race back in 1987.

Around 20 riders will gather this September at Purni Bore in remote northern South Australia, on the western edge of the Simpson Desert where they'll set off along the 'French Line' which cuts a virtually straight east-west line through the desert to Birdsville.

Over the past few years, competitors in the race have raised money for the RFDS, donating a remarkable \$52,000 last year alone.

Race Director, Alan Keenleside who has raced the Simpson Desert every year since 2009, says the French Line is the most direct route from Purni Bore to Birdsville.

But unlike the route they've taken since 1988 it has almost double the number of sand dunes (1200) including Little Red which is 50m high.

Most of the dunes on this route are between five and 15m high and soft sand, making the five day ride over 590 kilometres even more

of an extreme challenge.

Alan says that while the French Line, which has the world's largest parallel sand dunes, defeated every single competitor in 1987 it was time to give it another go.

"It was just too tough back then but the bikes have changed," Alan says.

"Virtually everyone uses 'fat bikes' with the big fat tyres now, which makes the soft sand and dunes more negotiable."

The riders will set off early each morning with 40 support vehicles in tow including three medical crews, three timekeepers and three water stop vehicles traversing not only sand dunes but salt lakes, gibber plains and cattle stations.

"Depending on the weather, the day usually involves 80km in the morning and 50km in the afternoon," Alan says.

"Whoever wins this year's race will be the first person to cycle from west to east across the Simpson Desert."

The race will be held from 29 September ending in Birdsville on 3 October 2015.

Duncan garden 'grows' support >

WALTER AND KAY Duncan have been staunch supporters of the RFDS, raising thousands of dollars every year since 1978 from the proceeds of their annual Open Garden weekend.

About 1000 people flock to the Duncan's renowned Heritage Garden at Sevenhill in the Clare Valley on the first weekend of every November.

Walter, 75, a keen gardener since his teens, says preparations are well under way for this year's event on 1 November, with violas, delphiniums, foxgloves and lupins already potted and ready for planting in spring.

Holding the Open Garden is clearly a labour

of love for Walter and Kay although the public's enjoyment is their greatest reward.

"Giving people a top-notch garden they can really enjoy, especially for those who are like-minded about gardens, is what we love the most," Walter says.

The Duncans donate the proceeds from the gate to the RFDS while the Women's and Children's Hospital hosts an afternoon tea.

"Our first year was 1977 and it was the following year that we began donating funds raised to the Flying Doctor and to the Women's and Children's," Walter says.

"We raise anywhere between \$5,000 and \$6,000 each year for the Flying Doctor alone."



> Walter Duncan with one of his roses.



> John Chalmers, Millicent & District RFDS Support Group (centre), with Fisherman's Ball committee members Stacey Bellinger, Linda Fabris, Steph and Charlotte Roach, and Sam Uotila.

Fisherman's Ball 'nets' award >

A GROUP OF enterprising women banded together and established the inaugural Beachport Coast to Coast Fisherman's Ball, raising \$27,323 for the 'Flying Doctor'.

Hundreds of people from Beachport and surrounding areas attended the ball last September. It was so popular that all 240 tickets sold out within days, prompting organisers to add an extra 50 seats.

The ball was such a hit it earned organisers Linda Fabris, Steph Roach, Stacey Bellinger, Bec Thorn, Lara Clark and Sam Uotila an Australia Day Community Event of the Year Award.

Within weeks of the ball, the organising committee proudly presented John Chalmers, President of the RFDS Millicent & District Support Group, with the cheque from the event proceeds.

"This has been a tremendous effort by the committee and the Beachport community, and on behalf of the Flying Doctor I would like to congratulate the organisers for their hard work," Mr Chalmers said.

"It's a real sign of community spirit that people can get behind an event like this for such a vital cause."

Ms Uotila said people really dug deep in finding donations to give during the ball.

"People were really willing to give to the Flying Doctor – it's because a lot of people here need it," Ms Uotila said.

The RFDS landed at locations in SA's South East region including Mount Gambier, Kingston, Millicent and Naracoorte a total of 782 times in the past year – equivalent to twice a day.



> Popcorn girls Olivia Cole and Felicity Evans.

Girls' popcorn fundraiser a hit >

WHO WOULD HAVE thought popcorn could be so lucrative?

Riverland girls Olivia Cole, and Felicity Evans, both 12, raised an extraordinary \$1140 for the RFDS running a popcorn stand.

The pair originally sold popcorn over a long weekend over the New Year and then again in February from a stand they set up in the Renmark Mitre 10 store which is managed by Olivia's dad, Jody.

Both girls have well and truly caught the fundraising bug and set their sights on a sodastream stand to raise more funds for the RFDS over Easter, a traditionally lucrative long weekend for hardware stores all over the Australia.

The girls had cut their teeth raising funds late last year wrapping Christmas presents over three weekends for the Riverland Christmas Appeal where they raised \$1000.

Jody says Olivia pestered him to build a popcorn stand, which the girls helped to decorate with tinsel and flashing lights, where they made the popcorn on the spot for customers.

"To say I'm a proud dad is an understatement. They worked eight hours a day over three days, only taking the odd 15 minute break. They just love playing shop and raising money," Jody says.

"Their confidence has grown enormously as a result."

Jody says Olivia chose the RFDS as the fundraising beneficiary because the organisation has always been a part of their lives.

"We've always talked about the Flying Doctor in our house, we always see the planes with the red belly flying around Renmark and Olivia has grown up hearing about the RFDS," Jody says.



A NIGHT ON THE RIVIERA

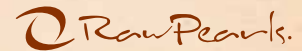
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THE SEDUCTIVE SIGHTS, SOUNDS AND TASTES OF THE FRENCH RIVIERA. UNE SOIRÉE GLAMOUR INCLUDING DINNER, DRINKS, DANCING AND ENTERTAINMENT. ALL PROCEEDS SUPPORT THE ROYAL FLYING DOCTOR SERVICE WINGS FOR LIFE GALA BALL 2015. TICKETS \$170 EACH. CALL RFDS ON (08) 8238 3333 OR PURCHASE ONLINE AT FLYINGDOCTOR.ORG.AU/RIVIERABALL THE ADELAIDE ENTERTAINMENT CENTRE 6.30PM START. STRICTLY BLACK TIE

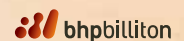
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