



Royal Flying Doctor Service

Going the Distance

VICTORIA >



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From the Chief Executive



Are you celebrating your 90th next year? We at RFDS are! It was in May, 1928 that the first experimental flight occurred from Cloncurry to Julia Creek in Queensland. In 2018 we commemorate 90 years of supporting and delivering John Flynn's vision of a 'mantle of safety to all Australians, regardless of distance'.

We have an incredible legacy that I look forward to celebrating with all of our supporters. And if you, or another wonderful supporter of the Flying Doctor, is 90 or older I encourage you to get in contact with us on (03) 8412 0400 and help us enjoy the celebrations.

One of the many reasons I love my job is seeing the amazing efforts people make to support the essential services of the Flying Doctor.

Earlier this year we surveyed 450 country people from across Australia to gain better understanding of their needs and priorities. Respondents said addressing mental health, drug and alcohol problems were top priorities and we are proud to share news of the commencement of our new Flying Doctor Psychological Services which launched in July in Far East Gippsland. We have profiled our new Mental Health Clinician Birgit in this edition of Going the Distance.

Multiple studies have shown that suicide in rural communities occurs at greater rate than for those living in metropolitan cities. And while the number of suicides is decreasing in metropolitan areas, for the past few years it has increased in remote areas. This is why it's more important than ever that the RFDS provides access to professional mental health workers.

Our Mobile Dental and Eye Care programs continue to provide important services across Victoria, as does our patient transport services in the air and on the road. Last month we added to our road transport network by commencing operations in Tamworth NSW.

I am also very proud of our staff who contributed \$25,733 to the Flying Doctor through workplace giving in the past financial year. This really highlights that working for us is more than 'just a job'; our people are highly passionate the work we do.

It is the generosity of our community of donors and supporters that allows us to provide these diverse and vital RFDS services for people who would otherwise have to travel for hours, or not have access to health care at all.

I hope you enjoy the articles in this newsletter.

Scott Chapman

Chief Executive
RFDS Victoria

Going the Distance is the official fundraising newsletter of the Royal Flying Doctor Service Victoria.

This newsletter is produced three times a year to provide information and give acknowledgement to our supporters across the state.

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Cover: Marianne Testi, Flight Nurse and Going the Distance Dinner keynote speaker, exits aircraft in Derby.

Overcoming barriers – People in the bush ask for more doctors, mental health and drug and alcohol services

Earlier this year the RFDS conducted a national health survey to help better understand the needs and priorities of rural and remote residents.

The survey found that overcoming barriers in access to medical services is the most important consideration of people in country Australia.

The survey of 450 country people, drawn from every state and territory, saw one-third of respondents name access to doctors and medical specialists as their key priority. Addressing mental health and drug and alcohol problems were second and third priorities.

When asked where additional health expenditure should be targeted:

- 32.2% of respondents said more funding was needed to expand access to medical services in country areas
- 14.6% called for more funding of mental health programs, and
- 8.6% identified health prevention and promotion as the third priority for more funding.

Positively, more than two-thirds of respondents (68.7%) said they travelled less than an hour to see a doctor for a non-emergency, with the remaining respondents travelling anywhere from one to five hours. Four percent of respondents travelled for more than five hours to see a doctor.

More than half (58.3%) of respondents saw a doctor within four hours for urgent medical care, with the remaining seeing a doctor anywhere from the same day to six or more days later.

The survey findings endorse decisions of successive governments who've invested in rural health, but the survey demands more be done. A rural health strategy for better access to doctors and medical specialists, supported by more health prevention, is needed.

The Royal Flying Doctor Service is committed to delivering services like Flying Doctor Telehealth, Rural Women's GP, Dental Truck, Mobile Eye Care and new Flying Doctor Psychological Services to overcome the disparity in access.



The RFDS survey was conducted in partnership with the National Farmers Federation, and with the support of the Country Women's Association.

The research paper "Health Care Access, Mental Health, and Preventative Health; Health Priority Survey Findings for People in the Bush" can be accessed at www.flyingdoctor.org.au/research.

Christmas is coming!

Celebrate the spirit of Christmas while supporting the Flying Doctor. Available for purchase are old favourites, like our Christmas cards and calendar, as well as new designs on our tea towels. There are also all new items – playing cards, aprons and hats.

To commemorate our 90th year we have a pen and a new look diary, available in three sizes.

You can purchase our festive merchandise at www.rfdsvc.myshopify.com or call us on 1300 669 569 to place an order or receive a catalogue in the post.

Mixed Christmas cards



Flying Doctor playing cards

A quality set of 52 cards encased in an eye-catching Flying Doctor branded box.



RFDS 2017 Calendar

This stunning calendar is back and is one of our most popular Christmas gifts.



When a day of celebration turns to a day of fear

It's not uncommon for players to play their heart out in a footy grand final. Nick Morton on the other hand, may have taken the adage a little too seriously.

After four weeks on the sidelines with a hamstring injury, 30 year old Nick was given the all clear to hit the paddock as his team, the Mackay City Hawks, looked to complete the season on a high by taking out the grand final.

And that they did, with Nick leading from the front as the Mackay City Hawks top goal scorer, kicked five goals.

But the memory of his sporting achievements was short lived. As the celebrations were winding down in the locker room, the symptoms began to take hold.

We were just sitting around gathering our thoughts after the initial celebrations when I told one of the guys I was just feeling terrible.

"He said it was probably just the adrenaline, but I knew something wasn't quite right. I was short of breath and just didn't feel right at all.

"I thought I probably just needed to get home and have a feed and a hot shower."

When Nick, his wife Victoria and their daughter Isabelle arrived home, his concern escalated along with his symptoms, so he asked Victoria to call an ambulance.

"While I was waiting for the paramedics to arrive, I was alternating hot and cold showers to try and regulate my body temperature."



What Nick originally thought could be exhaustion after a big game in 34 degree heat, was actually his body going into cardiac arrest.

When the paramedics arrived, Nick walked out to greet them, but collapsed before he could make it across the room.

Launching immediately into action, the paramedics began CPR and were required to use the defibrillator eight times, according to Nick.

After a gruelling 25 minutes of trying to stabilise Nick, the paramedics transported him for treatment to the Mackay Hospital where he remained overnight.

However it was apparent to attending doctors that the Royal Flying Doctor Service would need to be called in to transport him to the Townsville Base Hospital for more specialised care.

RFDS Flight Nurse, Sarah Freeman said although Nick was stable when they arrived, the process of transporting him was not entirely straight forward.

"Nick was stable throughout the retrieval, but it did take the attending doctor and I at least two hours on the ground in Mackay to load him onto our aircraft stretcher", flight nurse Sarah said.

We had to use specialised cardiac monitoring, medication infusions and invasive ventilation – essentially assisting him to breathe.



Nick's day of celebration took a dramatic turn for the worst, landing him in hospital. Below: Nick, his wife Victoria and baby Isabelle, shortly after his grand final win.

"Often as a flight nurse you spend a lot of time and considerable care preparing a patient for travel on our aircraft, and the time actually flying to the next destination, without ever knowing the outcome for that patient."

The care Nick experienced throughout his ordeal resulted in a really positive outcome, which I feel so happy to have contributed to.

Nick said he could not be more grateful to the paramedics and the Flying Doctor crew.

"It's one of those things, I never really understood what the Royal Flying Doctor Service was for."

"I do now, and holy **** I'm glad they are there when you need them," Nick said, not mincing his words.

It's clear the incident left Nick shaken, however he remains in high spirits as he begins his road to recovery.

"I've started cardiac rehab and obviously have to take it pretty easy for the time being. Unfortunately my playing days are over," he said.

"Although, there are worse games you could have as your last."

It's one of those things, I never really understood what the Royal Flying Doctor Service was for. I do now and I'm glad they are there when you need them.



Going the Distance Dinner 2017

It was another fantastic evening at our annual 'Going the Distance' Dinner on Thursday 17 August. Over 430 guests, including politicians, corporate partners, suppliers, donors and health partners, came together for a night of shared stories and celebrations.

Through a silent and live auction, raffle, and lucky draw we raised more than \$70,000, an impressive result which helps keep the Flying Doctor flying.

A highlight of the evening were the insights and stories shared by keynote speaker and RFDS Flight Nurse Marianne Testi, whose passion for healthcare is as strong as it was when she joined the RFDS 27 years ago.

Bush poet Murray Hartin helped bring the country to the city, performing moving poems 'Rain From Nowhere' and 'Colours' before closing out the evening with riotous laughter in response to 'Rindercella'.

Thank you to all of our supporters who attended the 2017 Going the Distance Dinner and helped make it the memorable evening it was.

Below: Attendees were all smiles at the 2017 Going the Distance Dinner.



Women's Health Week event – Covering all the bits



Over 130 women from the rural towns of Charlton, Hopetoun, Robinvale and Corryong celebrated Women's Health Week (4-8 September) by taking part in an interactive webinar with Jean Hailes Medical Director and gynaecologist Dr Elizabeth Farrell AO.

Each town came together locally and tuned in using the Flying Doctor Telehealth platform, participating in an interactive presentation. Questions were submitted in real-time by participants in Corryong, Hopetoun, Robinvale and Charlton which were responded to by Dr Farrell who was situated in Melbourne.

To promote conversations about women's health, guests decorated underpants with a design that answered the question "What does 'women's health' mean to you" – and wow were there some wonderful creations!

"Events like 'Covering all the bits' are a good way of getting information out and dispelling myths, while creating awareness of the Rural Women's

GP and Telehealth services which are available for members of these communities" said Dr Mary-Anne Lancaster, Rural Women's GP for Corryong.

Thank you to Jean Hailes, Dr Elizabeth Farrell, our Rural Women's GPs and all of the local health organisations who made this unique event possible.

Left: Some of our wonderfully creative 'Covering all the bits' attendees.

The Flying Doctor says Thank You

Australia is a vast land — **hot and dry**. With more than 50% of our bodies made up of water, staying hydrated is a key component to health.

The Royal Flying Doctor Service is very proud of the national partnership with **Neverfail Springwater**, which provides spring water to offices and homes across Australia.

With a campaign called '**It's Cooler to Give**' Neverfail is donating **\$100 to the RFDS** for every new cooler order in the health sector, which helps to keep the Flying Doctor flying.



A day in the life of an RFDS Ambulance Transport Attendant



Chris Jensen
Area Leader, Alphington

It's Chris's job to transport patients to appointments across Melbourne and Victoria. Many are heading into town from regional areas for specialist treatment like chemotherapy or dialysis appointments, or rehabilitation sessions after serious accidents and need a comfortable way of being transported with medical care on hand.

Chris's job is similar to an ambulance paramedic, except the patients he transfers aren't usually in life threatening emergency situations. And unlike a paramedic who may only see a patient once during their emergency, Chris loves that his job means that he can get to know patients during several trips.

"We get to feel as though we are part of their recovery, and I love learning more about their lives too."

Chris says as well as having medical knowledge, one of the most important skills you can bring to the job is putting people at ease by talking to them, especially when they are feeling stressed.

"Travelling Australia and doing different jobs before working at RFDS has helped me understand people and help put them at ease."



During his five years with the Flying Doctor, Chris has also helped to design a new ambulance, and provide ambulance support at big equestrian events.

Thanks Chris!

Flying kids

Education Program Manager Tom Ryan has had quite a year on the road with the flight simulator.

Visiting schools across Victoria and Tasmania, 'Captain Tom' has been busy sharing the story of the Flying Doctor with school kids.

It's been a great year! From Mildura to Tasmania, the team and I have covered great distances and visited some exceptional places.

Visiting Murrayville, Victoria's second most rural school was certainly a highlight for me. The kids out in those distant regions are usually familiar with the Flying Doctor as it's more likely they, or a member of their family, has been helped by the RFDS. Although I must say it's very rare that we come across a school which doesn't have someone who has a story of rescue by the Flying Doctor to share!

We have a team of eight amazing volunteers who are involved with the education program and have contributed over 1,000 hours visiting schools and assisting at events.

Judy Sinclair, a retired teacher and one of our wonderful volunteers, recently shared with me what she enjoys about being a part of the education program:

"It's watching the kids' faces when they suddenly realise they've learnt something in a hands on environment, which they absolutely love. They will say "We can't have been here an hour, we just arrived!". The kids really respond so well and even the most reluctant or shy child at the start is really enthusiastic at the end."

An important part of the program is providing resources for teachers – our story fits in so well with the subjects many children are learning about like history, geography, maths and science.

A visit from the 'Ray Conway' simulator is not just an incursion or show and tell session; it's part of their school curriculum. We are so glad the Flying Doctor 4 Education teacher's resource is being well received.



Top: Rose and Ray Conway.
Above: Judy Sinclair.

Don't miss this special Flying Doctor event >



Royal Flying Doctor Service

Join us for the RFDS Victoria AGM Forum: Year of Achievement and John Flynn Luncheon

Our **AGM Forum: Year of Achievement** is free to attend and we welcome all supporters to join us as a variety of speakers share insights into RFDS initiatives and achievements over the past year.

The **John Flynn Luncheon** will follow the Year of Achievement, featuring keynote speaker Everald Compton, author of 'The Man on the Twenty Dollar Notes'.



Right: Everald Compton, keynote speaker and author of 'The Man on the Twenty Dollar Notes'.

DATE

Wednesday 29 November, 2017

TIME

AGM Forum: Year of Achievement

10.00am-11.45am

Free to attend

John Flynn Luncheon

12.00pm-2.30pm

\$100 per person

VENUE

RACV City Club
501 Bourke Street, Melbourne

RSVP

Monday 20 November, 2017

The Board of the RFDS Victoria warmly invite all Royal Flying Doctor Service supporters to join us to mark the anniversary of the birth of our founder, the Reverend John Flynn, on **29 November at our AGM Forum: Year of Achievement and John Flynn Luncheon.**

We invite you to enjoy a day with fellow RFDS supporters, staff, volunteers and Board members, while sharing the latest news about the Flying Doctor.

Keynote speaker Everald Compton, author of 'The Man on the Twenty Dollar Notes' has been a passionate follower of John Flynn since his childhood in the bush and will be sharing stories of John Flynn.

All guests must RSVP for the AGM Forum: Year of Achievement or John Flynn Luncheon by Monday 20 November, 2017. Book online at www.flyingdoctor.org.au/vic/events, email events@rfdsvic.com.au or phone 03 8412 0400.

Name:

Phone no.

Address:

YES! I'd like to attend the RFDS Victoria AGM Forum: Year of Achievement

YES! I'd like to attend the RFDS Victoria John Flynn Luncheon

..... ticket/s at \$100 per ticket \$

OR

I/We are unable to attend but wish to make a tax deductible donation of: \$

I/We would like a copy of the Annual Report sent to me

Enclosed is my cheque payable to RFDS Victoria

Or Visa MasterCard AMEX

Name on card:

Card Number:

Expiry: / Signature:

Guest name: **Dietary requirements (if any):**

1.

2.

Please return with your payment to:

Royal Flying Doctor Service Victoria

PO Box 7027, Richmond VIC 3121

T 03 8412 0400 E events@rfdsvic.com.au

> www.flyingdoctor.org.au

Practitioner profile



Birgit Schaedler
Mental Health Clinician,
Far East Gippsland



Above: One of Birgit's favourite scenic roads that leads over McKillops Bridge to where Reverend John Flynn spent time when in East Gippsland.

Below: Birgit Schaedler on the road in Far East Gippsland.

We are pleased to announce the commencement of the Flying Doctor Psychological Service in Far East Gippsland, a brand new service for the Royal Flying Doctor Service Victoria.

Birgit Schaedler has joined RFDS Victoria as a mental health clinician and is holding appointments and engaging with local communities in Far East Gippsland to raise awareness regarding mental health.

We spoke to Birgit after a recent visit to Cann River to get to know her, and what attracted her to the Flying Doctor Psychological Services, a little better.

"I really love this position because it combines everything I've enjoyed about prior roles; being a community mental health nurse and providing support to bush nurses who do outreach for remote communities. I have huge admiration for the remote communities I visit and how they cope, and for the amazing job they do.

"The threat from natural disasters like bushfires and floods can have a big impact on mental health in remote communities. I've worked in areas which were severely affected by the 2014 bushfires which is tough but rewarding. You get to know people who have gone through a lot but it really highlights the innate resilience those communities have."

Birgit has been based out of Orbost for the past three years and loves living in the East Gippsland area.

"Nature is just so intact out here – that's actually what I use to keep my own mental health strong; hanging out with animals and spending time in nature. There's so many amazing 'still spaces' in Far East Gippsland where you can sit in the forest and not come across a single person."

Birgit says there are some key steps we can all use to take care for our mental health.

"I'm a big advocate for really looking after your diet and eating well – it's so important for good mental health. Diet and sleep hygiene are usually the first two things that go when you are under significant stress.

Birgit acknowledges the stigma associated with mental health can cause reluctance for people to reach out, but doing so early rather than late can make a big difference.

"Talking to family, friends or neighbours is a good place to start. If you have good neighbours and friends they may be able to give you some outside insight or say 'Hey, I think you might need to take that further' – which is where I, and programs like the Flying Doctor Psychological Services, can come in and provide that additional support."

Six quick tips for better mental health

- > **Exercise and stay healthy** – Maintain a good diet
- > **Build relationships** – Keep in touch with family and friends
- > **Set realistic goals** – Identify and use your strengths
- > **Quiet your mind** – Try meditation or guided thinking
- > **Take your eye off the clock** – Lose yourself in an activity you enjoy
- > **Seek help** – Seeking help is a sign of strength, not weakness

The Kimberley Foundation – a legacy of generosity

For the past 17 years The Kimberley Foundation, a private Charitable Trust, has been generously supporting the Royal Flying Doctor Service Victoria.

Named after The Kimberley region in Western Australia, which founder the late Mr Peter F. Williams AO and his wife Prue Williams loved, The Kimberley Foundation has been run by his daughter Mitty Williams since 2011.

Mitty Williams shares her experiences with RFDS and why The Kimberley Foundation supports the Flying Doctor.

My father was an orthopaedic surgeon, and medical issues were the main focus for his funding. I'm an ex-teacher so The Kimberley Foundation also has a big focus on education programs. But I wanted to keep a certain focus on health programs as a legacy to my father and therefore looked for programs, which I think he would have been interested in.

Contributing to programs like the Royal Flying Doctor Psychological Services, which focuses on mental health, is really attractive to me as I am aware that this is a huge issue in every community in Victoria, but particularly in regional and rural Victoria.

I really admire the way RFDS focuses on real need – they have worked out where the need is and gone and done something about it. The Mobile Dental Truck was a classic case of that – as rural and regional areas can be isolated and don't always have access to dental services.

As a past supporter of the Mobile Dental Clinic I was fortunate to have been able to accompany the volunteer dentists and RFDS staff as they visited schools and local businesses in Northern Victoria. I was just blown away with how huge the need was – kids in schools who had never owned a toothbrush, let alone seen a dentist – and the impact the Mobile Dental team are having.



Mitty Williams, Foundation Manager and Trustee of The Kimberley Foundation.

'Site visits' like this are really important to me. I don't think you fully understand a program until you get out there and meet the people who are involved. Seeing the issues first hand, talking to the patients, volunteer dentists and RFDS staff gives you a much better picture of the project.

It's a highlight of my work with The Kimberley Foundation, to go out and be involved, even if it's just briefly. You get to ask questions and see the challenges and witness the impact first hand.

I really admire the 'go get them' attitude and forward thinking of the RFDS. The team are professional and really proactive – going out to where the need in communities is and addressing it.

Community fundraising

St Hilda's College Communitas Gala raises \$14,000 for the Flying Doctor

Each year St Hilda's, a college of The University of Melbourne, holds a 'Communitas Gala Dinner' to raise funds for a charity. This year, St Hilda's chose to raise funds for the Flying Doctor, contributing an incredible \$14,000!

We spoke to one of the Communitas Convenors and second year Accounting & Finance student, Ali Rana on why St Hilda's chose to raise funds for the Royal Flying Doctor Service.

"'Communitas' is the motto of our college which translates into 'community and support of one another', which is very much the spirit of St Hilda's College.

"To decide who we will donate to each year we shortlist charities and try to find one that our students connect to, which is how we narrowed it down to the Flying Doctor. We have interstate and international students at our college but most are from rural Victoria and so we could really connect with the amazing work of the Flying Doctor."



Communitas Convenors Demitra McCarthy and Ali Rana.

Ali says organising the Communitas Gala and being able to contribute to the RFDS was a very satisfying experience.

"We actually had someone in the audience who was saved by the RFDS only six weeks before. We found that out during the dinner and the gentleman gave an impromptu speech on the night. The fact that an audience member had felt the direct impact of our chosen charity made the night so special and so rewarding. And that Cassie Moore, RFDS Health Promotions Manager could come to the Gala was also really touching."

Thank you St Hilda's!



An RFDS model plane up for auction at the Communitas Gala Dinner.

Join the Ground Crew

We want you to join our crew!
The Flying Doctor Ground Crew is a community of people who take on fitness challenges and fundraising to help keep the Flying Doctor flying. Whether you're walking 3km or running a full marathon, you can help save lives with every step.

Join the Ground Crew!
Visit www.groundcrew.org.au



Flying Doctor Ground Crew Run Melbourne



Sunday 30 July saw thirty of our Flying Doctor Ground Crew team members come together to take on Run Melbourne! Braving what could have been extremely wintry weather the team were instead rewarded with some of the first mild weather of the season – peak running conditions!

The Ground Crew raised over \$9,000 – a strong start to the running festival season! Well done, and thank you, to all our supporters who turned out for a great day to run or just stop by and say 'hi'.

Join an Inspired Adventure to Cradle Mountain

Are you looking for your next challenge? Why not experience the diversity of Cradle Mountain, an incredible World Heritage area in Tasmania, as you trek through its rugged and striking landscapes?

Along the way, there are opportunities to visit cascading waterfalls, climb rugged mountains and relax in beautiful sub alpine forest.

With every step you take you will be supporting The Royal Flying Doctor Service.



Drive 4x4 The Doc

Have you been thinking about a four-wheel drive adventure and a way to give back? Well, here it is!

Drive 4x4 the Doc is the perfect opportunity to jump in your car and get out of town to discover Victoria's High Country while supporting the Flying Doctor.

You will immerse yourself in some of Australia's most beautiful landscapes on this gentle 4 x 4 drive. You only require a standard four-wheel drive or all-wheel drive, as you'll be cruising comfortably on dirt road – nothing too rough for the vehicle or the passengers!

Visit www.flyingdoctor.org.au/vic/events

Wednesday 15 November > Meet and greet evening, Marysville

Thursday 16 November > Beechworth

Friday 17 November > Corryong

Saturday 18 November > Rutherglen

Sunday 19 November > Echuca, finish with lunch at Henry's Bridge Hotel

Calendar of events 2017

We love spending time with our supporters. Please join us at:

October 14

RFDS Simulator and ambulance at Shepparton Agricultural show

October 9 – 22

RFDS Annual Outback Tour, Western Australia

October 15

Ground Crew event – Melbourne Marathon

October 28

RFDS Simulator on display at Moorabbin Open Cockpit Day

October 29

RFDS Simulator on display at Sandringham Festival

November 12

Ground Crew event – City2Sea

November 15 – 19

Drive 4 x 4 The Doc

November 29

RFDS AGM Forum: Year of Achievement and John Flynn Luncheon

December 1

Bayside Auxiliary Christmas Street Stall, Bentleigh

March 2018

Cradle Mountain trek

For more information about any of our events please call us on (03) 8412 0400.

Please cut here

I would like to support the essential work of the Flying Doctor in 2017

I authorise the Royal Flying Doctor Service to debit \$ per month from my credit card below.

Or, please find enclosed my one-off donation of \$

I would like to pay by: Cheque Money order Credit Card

Credit Card payment details:

Visa MasterCard AMEX

Cardholder's name:

Card number:

Expiry: / Signature:

Please send me information about including the RFDS in my Will

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My details:

Title: Name:

Address:

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Email:

Donations \$2 and over are tax deductible and a receipt will be issued.

Please return with your payment to:

Royal Flying Doctor Service Victoria

PO Box 7027, Richmond VIC 3121

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