



# TakeOff

IN THE AIR, ON THE GROUND

ISSUE 01 OCTOBER 2016



Royal Flying Doctor Service  
TASMANIA



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West Tamar Rotary Club volunteers



## Presidents Report Malcolm White

As a young commercial pilot in the 1980's I was sometimes tasked to conduct aeromedical flights for the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) Tasmania. This was before the introduction of the modern and sophisticated Beechcraft King Air aircraft that are in use today.

The flights were in small single or twin-engine aircraft that we converted from their normal use as passenger aircraft to accommodate a stretcher.

It was a privilege to do these flights and to be part of the team that helped people when they needed help most. Looking back, a flight that stands out strongly and often comes to mind was a trip into Cape Barren Island to bring a child across to the Launceston General Hospital. He was very ill and naturally his parents were anxious about our ability to evacuate the little fellow on a day when the winds of Bass Strait were doing their worst. However we were soon on our way and the ambulance was waiting at Launceston airport. I met that little boy as a very healthy adult 20 years later.

We have come a long way since that trip and now have people, aircraft and equipment that bring the finest care to the furthest corner of our State. In the next few years we will reach out with further healthcare services for Tasmanians living in rural and regional areas. We will do this with your continuing and generous support.

As the newly appointed Fundraising Manager at RFDS it gives me great pleasure to welcome you to our new look quarterly Tasmanian newsletter. We aim to keep you up to date with the latest news on our exciting new range of services, and share real life Tasmanian stories.

Our aim is to focus the newsletter on you and with this in mind we welcome your feedback and suggestions for future issues.

We are delighted that your generous support enables the organisation to continue its valuable work in aeromedical retrievals, but also to grow and expand its health care services 'on the ground'.

I hope you enjoy this edition. We want to everyone to get on board so please share it with family and friends.

**Amanda Crooks Fundraising Manager**



## CEO Report John Kirwan

I was born in Kalgoorlie and have worked or visited many parts of remote and rural Australia, as most Australians have, so I was always aware and valued the "mantle of safety" the RFDS provides.

Through programs such as Look! Up In the Sky (LUITS), our attendance at various rural shows, and the presentations Board members, staff and I give, we continue to strengthen the story.

In late 2014 the Board of the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) Tasmania was addressed by the RFDS Victorian President Murray Rogers, and CEO, Scott Chapman, both long standing friends of the Tasmanian Section. They outlined the journey they had taken to establish a highly valued primary care provider, and employer in remote and rural Victoria. In doing so the growth they achieved in fundraising has allowed them to financially support other Sections, such as Tasmania. As part of this journey they have achieved several awards for their innovative approach, and close partnerships with their supporters and donors.

In late 2015 Scott and his senior Fundraising staff addressed the Tasmanian Board once again, and presented the evidence from a national and international perspective. The message was clear, those organisations that stand still, that do not embrace new opportunities, are in decline.

**"We have accepted this challenge and this newsletter is but one initiative on how we will be working with you, our most important partner."**

## 2017 RFDS Calendar for sale

\$18 + postage  
Contact the  
Base 6391 0509







Mayor Albert Van Zetten with students from Invermay Primary School

## RFDS partner with Foodbank

The RFDS has entered into a partnership with Foodbank of Tasmania, via their School Breakfast Program. The aim of the RFDS is to provide around 12,000 toothbrushes and toothpaste packs per annum plus oral hygiene education to approximately 4,000 students throughout Tasmania.

The partnership was launched at the Base on Wednesday 14 September by our joint Patron, Her Excellency Professor the Honourable Kate Warner, AM, Governor of Tasmania. The Governor has a personal interest in children's oral health. She spoke of the importance of both programs and how each complemented the other.

Foodbank is Tasmania's largest food emergency relief organisation. Sourcing food and groceries from across the State they provide in excess of two million meals a year to charities. Foodbank is the largest supporter of the school breakfast programs, providing food to schools both directly and via programs run by other organisations. Numerous studies indicate an improvement in literacy and numeracy skills when children have consumed the most important meal of the day, breakfast.

CEO, Mr John Kirwan, said "The RFDS has been supporting dental services here in Tasmania since the 1960's. As part of the nationwide strategy, the RFDS has welcomed the opportunity of partnering with Foodbank of Tasmania to provide dental health promotion messages for students through their School Breakfast Program.

**"This health promotion initiative has been made possible through the support of our generous donors."**



## And from afar...

With the future of the RFDS spending more time transporting non-emergency patients by road, Victorian CEO, Scott Chapman, told a heart breaking story at a recent RFDS dinner in Melbourne highlighting the compassion of our RFDS staff.

"Recently, a terminally ill patient, Mrs Roberts, was being transported on a short trip from a metropolitan hospital to palliative care when she asked our Patient transport crew if she could visit her garden - one last time. Now this meant a 2 hour detour for the crew, extending their shift and travelling extra kilometres. With respect, care and compassion, our crew obliged, taking Mrs Roberts to her home - for one last time. She sat in her garden, joined by our staff, sharing her memories and her lifetime of pleasures for one last time - and she knew she was not alone in that moment."

## From London

Prince Charles, Patron of the 'Friends of the Royal Flying Doctors', praised the work of the RFDS at a recent afternoon tea held in London for members.

"I am hugely grateful to you today for taking interest in the Royal Flying Doctor's Service which I think is one of the great things about Australia" Prince Charles said.

Dr Brian Wilkinson, UK intensive care specialist, who spent some time working with the RFDS said "Its an amazing charity, and a real eye-opener to what the life is like in outback Australia. You never know what the call is going to be. It could be someone with a broken leg, a heart attack or a snake bite".

Here at the Launceston Base, we have been invited, by the Friends of the Royal Flying Doctors to give the event a "Tasmanian" flavour in the future by sourcing local wine and gourmet produce.

# 325

dental patients were treated on Flinders Island 2015/16

# Look! Up in the Sky



Since its inception in 2011, the RFDS Education Program known as LUIITS (Look! Up In The Sky) has reached over 15,000 students across Victoria, Tasmania and NSW.

This initiative introduces the RFDS to the next generation. In conjunction with an on-line educational program that ties in with the national curriculum, teachers are able to continue the RFDS story, long after the simulator has left the school. The units will be linked into the Humanities and Social Sciences Curriculum and are available free of charge for registered schools.

Jocelyn McLean has taken on the role of Education Officer with the RFDS in Tasmania and she encourages schools to register for next years simulator tour by visiting [www.flyingdoctor4education.org.au](http://www.flyingdoctor4education.org.au) or by contacting her at [Jocelyn.McLean@rfdstas.org.au](mailto:Jocelyn.McLean@rfdstas.org.au) or by phoning 0418 151 756.

**Good interaction and informative. Relevant to students interest. Fun as well as educational.**

Shannon Hawke, Spreyton Primary School



## Tom's Story

Tom Ryan shares his life as a trombonist with Shrewd Brass, and the RFDS LUIITS program!

This program brings the fuselage and cockpit of an RFDS plane into the school yard.

"I average around 5 schools a week in mostly regional areas, throughout Tasmania and Victoria. It's such an important story to tell, the way the RFDS connects to the community through its history. I feel privileged to be able to tell the story."

Whilst spending a month in Tasmania, Tom visited 17 Primary Schools presenting to 68 classes

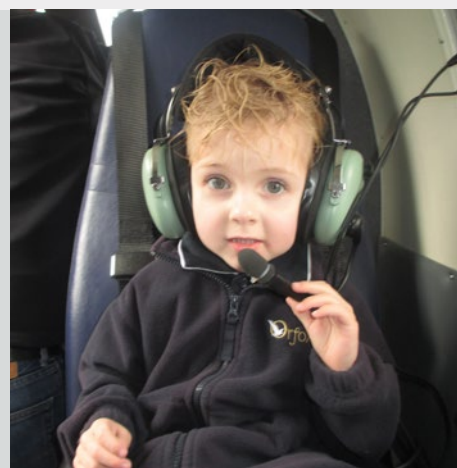
from Kindergarten to Grade 6 (approximately 1,700 children).

Tom's witty, informative and educational presentation culminates in a highlight for all children, being the opportunity to experience the inside of the simulator.

"It was so awesome" said an excited 7 year old. "I got to sit in the pilots seat and pretend to fly, and my friend lay on the bed and they listened to his heart."

Students are assigned roles to help explain the necessity of working together to safely load patients on an aircraft. Tom talks them through the history and the evolution of the RFDS, the isolation and the distances in rural and remote areas and the necessity and importance of the medical chests and the School of the Air.

His experience as a qualified teacher is an obvious advantage.



**Great, enjoyable and very informative.**

Leanne, Geneva Christian College





## TasTAFE student visit

The Base hosted students from the TasTAFE Adult English program on Friday 9th September. They were able to experience the life-size replica of the fuselage of the flying doctor aircraft, complete with stretchers, communications, oxygen, suction and the equipment used by the doctors, nurses and pilots of the RFDS.

These students mainly from Afghanistan and Bhutan, occasionally required the assistance of an interpreter, but Tom's ability to communicate the story was an unmistakable success.

"I was excited by their ability to comprehend and to see their obvious enthusiasm. The presentation gave the migrant students some hands-on knowledge about the services and work currently being performed by the Flying Doctor throughout Australia."

Activities and excursions such as these increase the students level of social interaction in the local community, and for many assists them settling into their new neighbourhood. As many of the students were health workers or teachers in their previous countries, they took a keen interest in finding out more about the Australian health services.



Jocelyn McLean with children from East Launceston Primary School

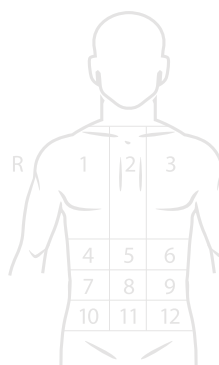


Lindsay Millar with TasTAFE students and the medical chest

**Fantastic! Tom was excellent and the students loved the talk and the simulator. Students had fun and learnt a lot.**

Sharon Woodberry, Zeehan Primary School

In 1951, Lucy Garlick, an enterprising nursing sister in Broome, Western Australia, made a neat compartmentalised drawing of the human body. She then penciled numbers on the various areas, so that a Flying Doctor on the radio would be able to get a quick and accurate response to the question: "Where does it hurt?" The RFDS Body Chart, as it came to be known, was a simple but inspired idea. The chart is still included in all medical chests and remains a useful time-saving tool in assisting with remote diagnosis.







## Young Tasmanian's benefit from RFDS Tasmanian Scholarships

RFDS, Marketing Manager, Mary Frost, coordinates the six scholarships said "Our hope is that through these scholarships young medical, nursing and dental students will see a pathway into a career in Regional Tasmania."

The Scholarships are offered to four medical students during their final year at the University of Tasmania, and to a dental and a nursing student. The students are given placements operating from Launceston, Broken Hill and Dubbo bases for a short period as observers. It is hoped that following their placements, students have a better idea of remote area medicine.

## Olivia Coyne Scholarship recipient

"I'm having the most wonderful time", says Olivia Coyne recipient of the RFDS Robin Miller Nursing Scholarship, "the entire team are so welcoming and accommodating. The flight nurses and the whole team are very professional and truly inspiring. They are the best at their job and the RFDS should be so proud of all they do"

Olivia, who is living and working with the RFDS between Oodnadatta, Port Augusta, Whyalla and Adelaide, tells us of the majestic landscapes and the communities and patients who are so friendly and at the same time calmed by the sight of the flying doctor wings.

Well done Olivia! We are thrilled to hear your time has been so inspiring.



## From the archives

with Lindsay Millar OAM, RFDS Tasmanian Emeritus Board Member

This photo depicts one of the early aircraft used by the RFDS.

With its 180 HP engine, the 'Safir' had a retractable undercarriage, lights, radio and limited night flying instrumentation, and a cruising speed of 125 knots it was far superior to the Auster J5 previously used for RFDS evacuations.

As depicted, the entire passenger side canopy could be opened, with the front passenger seat replaced with a special mount, the stretcher and patient could be carried in, over the wing. The stretcher was secured, and the patient's head was alongside the attendant. The ease of loading and the increase in speed, made the SAAB an ideal light aircraft for Aeromedical evacuations.

**"The Safir is still my favourite light aircraft to fly. Being a military trainer it handled well, was fully aerobatic, fast, and had a roomy cabin. A real pilots aircraft."**



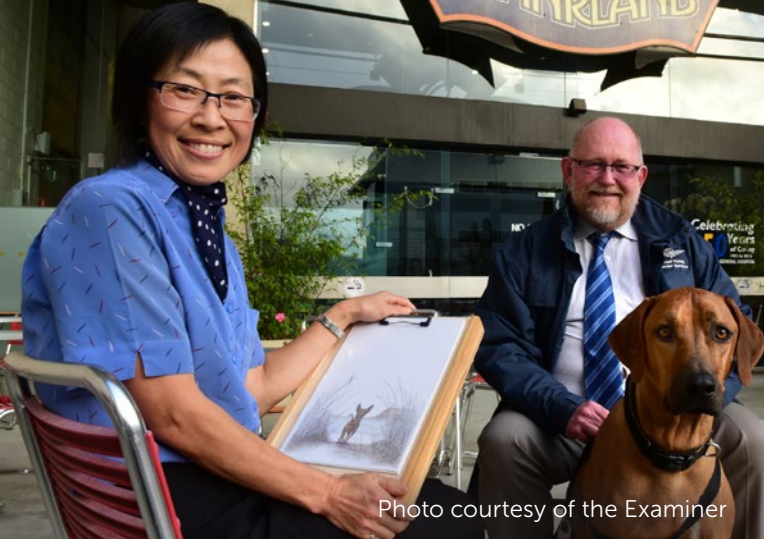


Photo courtesy of the Examiner

## Raising funds for the RFDS

It was a delight to meet with Stellar, the wife of our CEO, John Kirwan. The bubbly and vivacious Stellar, met with me to discuss her delightful pencil drawings of animals. Arriving from Korea some 30 years ago and a qualified Barista, she managed a coffee shop in Mossman, NSW for some years before moving to Tasmania.

"I started working at the Kiosk at the LGH around 8 years ago as a barista", said Stellar. "I absolutely love my job at the hospital, and now consider the staff to be my family. I only have 'my-John' here in Australia as all my family is still in Korea. I met John at the hospital, when he was the CEO, and after a while, I asked him out" laughed Stellar.

An exhibition of her drawings was held during June at the ARTrium Gallery, an innovative concept by the LGH (Art in Health) to showcase local artists, ceramicist and sculptors.

"One evening at home, I did a pencil drawing of our dog Louie, a Rhodesian Ridgeback. I wouldn't call them cartoons, more a caricature", she said, "I drew a cup of coffee in front of his drooling lips, and pinned it up at work."

This one drawing received so much attention in the Kiosk that Stellar 'hatched a plan'. She accepted photographs from the pet loving staff and some 40 personalized caricatures were ready for exhibition. Each drawing has around 20 layers of pencil colours, and each conveys some kind of 'quirkiness' within.

Opening night at the Gallery, saw around 30 drawings sold and a total of nearly \$5,000 raised. Stellar generously donated the full amount to the Royal Flying Doctor Service here in Launceston. "I thought it would have been wonderful if we raised \$500" she laughed.

Stellar's drawings make you smile. They are a beautiful reminder to the pet owner of 'mans best friend' in a delightful parody.

## RFDS visits Rosny College

Jodi Staverley, the Health, Physical and Outdoor Education teacher at Rosny High School contacted John Kirwan to do a presentation to students on Primary Health.

John, and Amanda Crooks, our Fundraising Manager also took the opportunity to visit one of our long time supporters, former ballerina, Mrs Judith Ker-Stout. At 88 Judith is still teaching ballet, and was also interested to attend the presentation.

Judith attended Ascham Girls School in Sydney, where she first heard about the Royal Flying Doctor Service. After visits from the RFDS, the girls would then fundraise and make donations. Judith continues to contribute.

Jodi informed the students of Judith's support for the RFDS

**"I encourage you all to listen to the presentation today and this maybe the moment when you choose to support the RFDS in Tasmania."**

The presentation was well received by the staff and students. A student later came forward and informed us of her interest in pursuing a medical career with the RFDS. We were able to inform her of the Scholarships available and put her in touch with one of our former recipients, Emily Ingram.



## In memoriam

Many wonderful people support the RFDS either giving freely of their time or making donations. Our RFDS Ambassador, Nick Duigan is one of those people. We learned recently of the passing of Nick's Mum, Helen, who with her husband John were farmers and great contributors to the Flinders Island community. The Board and staff pass on our condolences to Nick and family.

# 2016

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### Thursday 27 October

RFDS Tasmania AGM & Board  
Meeting in Launceston

### Wednesday 9 November

CEO presentation for West Tamar  
Rotary Club at Launceston Base

### Thursday 10 November

CEO presentation for  
Devonport Lions Club

### Saturday 12 November

RFDS Right as Rain at  
Huonville Show

### Tuesday 15 & Wednesday 16 November

RFDS Federation CEO  
visiting Tasmania



Nicole Henty & Dean Lahey with Stan Griffiths, Senior Base Pilot

## Nicole Henty

A Sydney girl, Nicole and her Tasmanian born husband moved to Launceston in 2010. By the end of that year she was employed in Administration at the RFDS base at Western Junction.

"I've loved working here at the base. Meeting the pilots and paramedics, and I could never tire of the view from my office window of the hangar and the runway."

We are thrilled to announce that Nicole, who has had a former career in dental, as both a dental assistant and in Dental Management, has now been promoted to managing the RFDS Tasmania Dental Outreach program. This program aims at partnering with Oral Health Services Tasmania, to develop a much needed dental screening/treatment model.

## Dean Lahey

Dean, who has a background as an Intensive Care Flight Paramedic with Ambulance Tasmania has taken on the role of managing a new division within the RFDS, to be known as Mobile Patient Care.

The ambulance license application was approved on the 10th August, 2016, and we are now in the process of procuring two new vehicles to carry out the job of non-emergency transfers of patients.

"Staff recruitment is on track and we will begin our in house training program in early December. We will hit the road at the end of January next year."

With Dean's experience, we are excited at the future prospects of this new and innovative venture for the Royal Flying Doctor Service in Tasmania.

## YES! Here is my gift of support

Please accept my donation of:

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**Royal Flying Doctor Service**  
TASMANIA

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

### Please return with your payment to:

Amanda Crooks, Fundraising Manager  
Royal Flying Doctors Service Tasmania

90/305 Evandale Rd, Western Junction TAS 7212

T: 03 6391 0509 F: 03 6391 8992 E: [Amanda.Crooks@rfdstas.org.au](mailto:Amanda.Crooks@rfdstas.org.au)

[www.flyingdoctor.org.au](http://www.flyingdoctor.org.au)

