Media Release

**National partnership between RFDS & TAL Insurance: Working to make a real difference for all Australians**

The Royal Flying Doctor Service is delighted to announce that we are commencing what we hope will be a long and mutual beneficial partnership between the Royal Flying Doctor Service and TAL Insurance.

TAL is Australia's life insurance specialist and for over 140 years they have been protecting people, not things. Today, they insure more than 3.7 million Australians, working to protect lives and give them choices when they need them the most. With

1600 team members across six offices around Australia, they are uniting with the Flying Doctor in a national partnership to make a real difference in health service outcomes for those that live in rural and remote Australia.

Not surprisingly people that live in country Australia tend to be more unhealthy than those that live in the city - in part due to lack of health service access that those in our cities take for granted. Country Australians see a doctor at about half the rate, a medical specialist at one third the rate and a mental health professional at one fifth the rate of those that live in the city. As a consequence, country people are expected to die 2 ½ years earlier and expected to have up to 3X the amount of avoidable chronic illness.

As a direct result of this new national partnership with TAL, the Flying Doctor will be able to provide better health service access to those that are needing it.

“We want to thank TAL Managing Director Brett Clarke and Fiona McGregor TAL Chief Customer and Innovation Officer for this opportunity to work as two organisations to achieve better outcomes for those in the bush”, says Martin Laverty, CEO of the Royal Flying Doctor Service of Australia.

“The Flying Doctor heavily relies on the support of corporate partners, communities and individual donors to provide better access to health services in the bush, and are excited to have the support and assistance of TAL staff, customers and supporters to provide better health access for those that live in rural and remote Australia, in a national partnership which makes a real difference.”

Martin Laverty, CEO Royal Flying Doctor Service of Australia is available for interview.

**Media Backgrounder**

**RFDS MISSION:** Excellence in aeromedical and primary health care across Australia

**WHAT WE DO:**

Medical Evacuations – 24-hour aeromedical emergency services

GP & Nurse Clinics – Regular fly-in fly-out GP, nursing and allied health clinics

Telehealth – Over the phone medical assistance or advice from an RFDS doctor

Dental Care – Oral health services on a fly-in fly-out or mobile basis

Mental Health – Provision of mental health services in Qld, NSW and Central Australia

Health Education – Programs which help get exercise and better nutrition adopted

Patient Transfers - Inter-hospital transfers by both air and road

Research – Provision of rural health service information and statistics

**HISTORY:** More than 100 years ago Reverend John Flynn witnessed the struggle of pioneers living in remote areas and recognised the need for medical services in the outback. He launched the first aero-medical service in May of 1928 in Queensland, which flew 20,000 miles in its first year of operation.

Since then the RFDS has grown into the largest aeromedical organisation in the world with a fleet of 66 aircraft, 23 aero-bases, 48 road patient vehicles, and a country doctor’s waiting room spanning 71.6 million square kilometres.

Although the Flying Doctor is best known for emergency retrieval work, the delivery of vital primary healthcare services has become a key focus for the RFDS in the 21st century.

Using the latest in aviation, medical and communications technology, the Flying Doctor delivers primary healthcare and 24-hour emergency services to those who live, work and travel in rural and remote Australia, with over 290,000 patient contacts in the last year.

**ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE**

The RFDS comprises seven organisations, called Sections or Operations, working around Australia and under a federated joint venture structure. These are the Queensland Section, South Eastern Section, Victorian Section, Tasmanian Section, Central Operations and Western Operations.

The Royal Flying Doctor Service of Australia is located in Canberra and works closely with government and industry, while also conducting research into national rural health issues. The RFDS is a charity, registered with and regulated by the Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission. It has been named Australia’s most reputable charity by the AMR Charity Reputation index for the last five years in a row.

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