



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

29 April 2019

# **RFDS enters jet age with game-changer in aeromedical care**

The communities of South Australia and the Northern Territory will soon be cared for 24/7 by one of the world's first purpose-built aeromedical jets, the *RFDS Medi-Jet 24*.

The ultimate 'flying intensive care unit', the *RFDS Medi-Jet 24* packages the RFDS' signature ICU aeromedical interior and seamless patient loading system with the unparalleled performance and versatility of the new Pilatus PC-24 Super Versatile Jet.

"Funded by bequests, our corporate sponsors and donations from the community, the \$13 million *RFDS Medi-Jet 24* will enhance patient care and help save more lives," Tony Vaughan ASM, CEO of RFDS Central Operations (serving SA/NT), said at the jet's official unveiling today.

"The *RFDS Medi-Jet 24* will slash the flying time of long-haul critical patient evacuations, as well as provide the capacity to transfer three stretchered ICU patients and four clinicians on the one mission," Mr Vaughan said.

"Another unique feature of the *RFDS Medi-Jet 24* is our custom rear patient loading door with built-in stretcher loader which will further reduce total mission times by the safer and quicker loading of patients and specialist medical equipment," he said.

Four years in the design and construction, the *RFDS Medi-Jet 24* is one of only three purpose-built aeromedical jets in the world – one to serve communities through the central corridor of the country from the RFDS Adelaide Base to the RFDS Darwin Base, and the other two with RFDS Western Operations located in Perth and Broome.

Speaking at the unveiling, the SA Minister for Health and Wellbeing, Hon Stephen Wade MLC, said over the past 90-plus years, the RFDS had become a vital part of life for outback communities and is well-respected by all South Australians.

"The addition of the *RFDS Medi-Jet 24* further cements the RFDS' well-earned and hard-won reputation, and will further enhance South Australia's aeromedical response capability," Minister Wade said.

"While the people of this state hope that they will never need the services provided by the RFDS, they are both immensely proud and extremely grateful that the RFDS continues to provide all South Australians with the very best of health care, every hour of the day and every day of the year."

Following the completion of flight training and crew orientation, the *RFDS Medi-Jet 24* is scheduled to commence operational service in June 2019.



“An additional asset to the RFDS’ fleet of medically-equipped Pilatus PC-12 aircraft in South and Central Australia, the *RFDS Medi-Jet 24* will boost operational capacity and critical response times for long-haul and interstate evacuations,” Mr Vaughan added.

“The *RFDS Medi-Jet 24* is there for the interstate transfer of a critically-ill Adelaide resident in the middle of the night for an emergency organ transplant, or the retrieval of a critically-ill patient from Alice Springs to specialist care in Adelaide in Darwin hospitals,” he said.

Mr Vaughan said the speed of the jet in the air was one thing, but what put the *RFDS Medi-Jet 24* in a class of its own was its bespoke operational features designed and required specifically for aeromedical services, including:

- custom rear patient loading door – safer, quicker loading of patients and specialist medical equipment;
- built-in patient stretcher loader – optimum patient safety and reduced risk of injury to clinicians;
- ICU capability for three stretchered patients – enhanced response to mass casualty incidents or natural disasters;
- advanced bariatric solution – enhanced stretcher and stretcher-loader weight lifting capabilities;
- right-engine *Quiet Power Mode* – provide constant electrical supply and cabin conditioning whilst standing on tarmac;
- superior short-field take-off/landing – greater operational flexibility and access to regional aerodromes;
- unpaved airfield capability – unmatched airfield access and mobility in remote parts of the country;
- certified for single-pilot operation – unrivalled operational efficiency and payload carrying capability.

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#### **EDITOR’S NOTE:**

- *High resolution JPG images of RFDS Medi-Jet 24 are available upon request*
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## ABOUT THE RFDS

Established in 1928 by the Reverend John Flynn (Australian \$20 note), the RFDS is the largest and most comprehensive aeromedical organisation in the world.

In addition to the aeromedical retrieval of the critically-ill or injured, the RFDS also delivers a broad range of essential primary and preventative health care services, including tele-health, mental health, oral health and chronic disease management.

Today, the RFDS provides the finest care to more than 330,000 Australians each year – equivalent to one person every two minutes.

In addition to assisting those living, working and travelling in rural and remote Australia, the RFDS also delivers critical support to those who live in urban centres. This includes the regular transfer of patients to interstate hospitals for life-saving surgery such as organ transplant and heart surgery on newborn babies.

The RFDS is a not-for-profit organisation. While supported by Commonwealth, State and Territory governments, the RFDS relies on bequests, sponsorships and donations to bridge the gap in its operational funding and to purchase its 'flying intensive care units' at a cost of more than \$7 million each.

RFDS Central Operations is responsible for delivering 24/7 emergency aeromedical and essential primary health care services throughout South Australia and the southern half of the Northern Territory.

It operates four aeromedical bases located in Adelaide, Port Augusta, Alice Springs and Darwin, as well as three primary health care facilities in Marree, Andamooka and Marla in outback South Australia.