

## Media Release

27 November 2019

### Midwifery scholarship in memory of Savanna Addis

Western Australian nurse Alise Tilbury has been announced as the inaugural recipient of the 2019 Savanna Addis Scholarship which was established in joint partnership between the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) and Rural Health West.

Alise, a registered nurse who has served in emergency departments at regional hospitals across Western Australia for nearly nine years, was presented the scholarship by Savanna's mum and dad, Ralph and Helen Addis, at the RFDS Jandakot base on Wednesday, November 27.

The Savanna Addis Scholarship, funded by Rural Health West amounting to \$10,000 a year, and supported by the RFDS for an initial ten-year period, will be made available to nurses with critical care experience who do not have the necessary midwifery qualifications required to work for the RFDS.

Successful applicants, like Alise, will be required to complete a post graduate midwifery course and work a minimum of one year at any of the five RFDS bases across the state.

Savanna, an inspirational Western Australian known for her compassion, emotional resilience and commitment to improving the life of others, passed away in August 2018 after losing the fight to Alagille Syndrome, a genetic disorder affecting the liver and heart.

Savanna first came into contact with the RFDS in February 2011 after falling off a chair and hitting her head at her parents' mango farm in Kununurra, sparking a 17-hour rescue operation involving three mid-air brain operations while enroute to Perth for specialist care.

After recovering from the ordeal, Savanna dedicated her time and effort to raising funds for the RFDS to support its mission to ensure all who live, work and travel across the vast regions of WA have access to emergency and primary health care.

RFDS Western Operations Head of Nursing Paul Ingram said Alise has since been accepted into the post-graduate midwifery course at Edith Cowan University next year, supported by the Savanna Addis Scholarship.

"All RFDS flight nurses are registered general nurses with critical care experience and are required to be qualified in midwifery. As you can appreciate, we respond to a wide range of medical emergencies across the vast regions of our state and having this capability at hand is essential," Mr Ingram said.

"The RFDS in partnership with Rural Health West, is proud to award Alise, an outstanding and compassionate nurse who is dedicated to improving the life of others - qualities Savanna was known for and championed - the valuable opportunity to specialise in midwifery to support women living in rural and remote communities across the state."

Mr Ingram said 10-14 per cent of all retrievals conducted by RFDS Western Operations are obstetric in nature and require transfer to Perth where the only obstetric tertiary level services are available in the state.

Rural Health West Chief Executive Officer Tim Shackleton said it was an honour to commemorate Savanna's life by enabling the development of future RFDS clinicians.

"With the vast geography of the state and the sparsity of emergency medical services in remote locations, the Royal Flying Doctor Service is an essential part of the rural health landscape," Mr Shackleton said.

"The clinical care and expertise of the Flying Doctor team are second-to-none and we are delighted to support exceptional health professionals, like Alise, as she contributes to ensuring the health and well-being of rural and remote communities across Western Australia."

## Ends

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### Photo Caption:



**Photo:** Registered nurse Alise Tilbury (pictured centre) was presented the Savanna Addis Scholarship at the RFDS Jandakot base by Ralph and Helen Addis.



**Photo:** Rural Health West CEO Tim Shackleton, Savanna Addis Scholarship recipient Alise Tilbury and RFDS Western Operations Head of Nursing Paul Ingram.

### Media Enquiries

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#### Editor's Notes

- **Bases:** Jandakot, Kalgoorlie, Meekatharra, Port Hedland and Broome;
- **Fleet:** 16 PC-12 turboprop aircraft and two Rio Tinto LifeFlight PC-24 jet aircraft;
- **Services:** 24-hour emergency aero medical retrievals, rural and remote GP clinics and dental services, telehealth and medical chests;
- **Statistics:** During FY18-19, the Flying Doctor reached and provided in-flight medical care to 8,682 patients across Western Australia. That's approximately 24 men, women and children flown to safety each day.
- During FY18-19, RFDS Western Operations flew nearly 8 million kilometres to reach its patients across the state. That's approximately 200 times around the world!
- Each Flying Doctor aircraft is equipped with state-of-the-art aero medical equipment to support in-flight medical emergencies and serve as Intensive Care Units in the sky;
- All RFDS flight nurses are qualified midwives; and
- Western Australia spans more than 2.5 million square kilometres and is the most remote health jurisdiction in the world; and
- In 2019, the Flying Doctor of Western Australia was announced as the winner of the Dr Mal Bryce Tech Company of the Year at the INCITE Awards, based on the fit-out and performance of the Rio Tinto LifeFlight PC-24 jets.