MEDIA STATEMENT

Wheatbelt volunteers help keep the Flying Doctor flying

May 3, 2016

Volunteers from the Wheatbelt region of Western Australia are continuing to help keep the Royal Flying Doctor Service in the air.

This week, being National Volunteer Week (May 9-15), reminds us just how valuable our many volunteers are for the Flying Doctor, RFDS Chairman Neville Bassett AM said.

"We are so grateful to all of our volunteers for the hard work they do, from fundraising in their local communities to organising local activities to raise both money and awareness," Mr Bassett said.

"The contribution of our volunteers helps us to minimise our fundraising costs and ensure that more of the fundraising dollar goes directly towards our primary mission of providing aero medical care to Western Australians wherever and whenever they need us."

Mr Bassett said in the last year, the RFDS had provided medical assistance to nearly 70,000 people through aero medical retrievals, telehealth consults and primary health care clinics across Western Australia - providing lifesaving intensive care in flight to 25 patients per day on average.

"That's more than one person every hour of the day," Mr Bassett said.

"The demand for our services is constantly growing and changing, and during the past 12 months the RFDS transferred the RFDS transferred 951 patients from the Wheatbelt region, averaging 18 patients per week.

"Ten patients were transferred from the region on the busiest day.

"Of those transferred, many were children aged under 15 (22 of these were babies aged under one month old)."

The RFDS responds to a range of medical conditions, the most common in the Wheatbelt being as a result of injury and poisoning, while there were also a large number of heart attack patients.

Mr Bassett said the Flying Doctors, during the past 12 months alone, flew over 9,000 sick and injured patients to hospitals across the state for treatment, and received over 41,000 telephone calls for medical assistance and advice.

"It is only due to the support of volunteers that we are able to continue to provide urgent assistance to people in need across our vast state wherever and whenever we're required, 365 days a year," Mr Bassett said.

To donate to the RFDS call 1300 669 569 or check out www.flyingdoctor.org.au

Please contact us if you would like to arrange an interview or photo opportunity with local RFDS volunteers.

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