



MEDIA RELEASE

3 April 2019

Embargo to 3:00pm Wednesday 3 April

Flying Doctor launches new aircraft and Major Sponsor

The Royal Flying Doctor Service Central Operations (serving SA/NT) today unveiled a brand new 'flying intensive care unit' which will join the fleet, and announced a new major sponsor in South Australian-based oil and gas producer Beach Energy Limited.

In recognition of the three-year bespoke sponsorship, the new medically-equipped Pilatus PC12 NG aircraft will be badged with the Beach Energy logo for the next three years.

The \$7 million aircraft, VH-JDN (Juliet-Delta-November), is one of 71 RFDS aircraft located across the country, many of which serving the outback and rural communities where Beach Energy staff, contractors and community stakeholders live, work and play.

Funded by donations from the community and corporate partners, with support from the Commonwealth Government, VH-JDN will commence aeromedical service in SA this week; it will replace an ageing aircraft which has served the SA/NT community by airlifting two patients a day for the past 15 years.

"As a company that operates in some of the most unforgiving and remote territory in the nation, it is reassuring to know that, if we ever need them, the RFDS is there for us," said Beach Energy Managing Director, Matt Kay, at the RFDS' aeromedical base at Adelaide Airport today.

"That is why today, we are there for the RFDS, growing our partnership by sponsoring this impressive new aircraft that will provide vital health services for remote communities in South Australia," he says.

"This is a partnership that our people at Beach are very proud to support – with our staff personally raising funds for the RFDS in addition to the company contribution we are making today."

RFDS Central Operations CEO, Tony Vaughan, says the significance of Beach Energy's financial support is that it will reach far and wide – and deliver lasting community benefit.

"The RFDS conducts over 100 aeromedical flights across Australia every day – airlifts 25 patients throughout South and Central Australia every day – but we rely



on the continued support from the community to keep our crews in the sky,” Mr Vaughan says.

“Beach Energy’s tangible support extends for more than a decade; the company has been a long-standing sponsor of our ‘Wings for Life’ Gala Ball and many of its staff have been raising funds for the Flying Doctor at community events in the city and the bush,” Mr Vaughan says.

“Beach Energy’s major sponsorship will directly support our capital-raising program for on-going upgrade of our fleet of ‘flying intensive care units’ that deliver 24/7 emergency aeromedical services throughout South and Central Australia,” he says.

“The continued support from the entire community – our ‘ground crew’ of donors, community fundraisers, corporate sponsors and volunteers – will be critical to us meeting our financial challenges, and we’re very delighted to have the Beach Energy team on board with us on this very important and critical journey.”

The latest aircraft to join the RFDS Central Operations fleet located across Adelaide, Port Augusta, Alice Springs and Darwin, VH-JDN was manufactured in Switzerland and flown to Australia in February. It has spent the past six weeks at RFDS Adelaide Base where its cabin and interior has been converted into a flying intensive care unit by the RFDS engineering team.

With the capacity to transfer two stretchered and critically-ill patients at any point in time, VH-JDN will assist members of the community for the next decade delivering aeromedical services ranging from the:

- emergency evacuation of the injured or critically-ill from outback communities;
- aeromedical transfer of patients interstate for life-saving surgery such as organ transplant and heart surgery on newborn babies;
- delivery of essential primary health care such as GP consultations and immunisation of children during ‘fly-in’ health clinics to remote communities; and
- transfer of patients from regional and bush hospitals to major hospitals in Adelaide, Port Augusta, Alice Springs and Darwin for higher levels of care.

(ENDS)

Editor’s Note: Images of the new aircraft and the event are available upon request

MEDIA CONTACT

Charlie Paterson

Executive General Manager, Marketing & Public/Stakeholder Relations

RFDS Central Operations

Mob: 0422 233 133



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 300,000 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.

(Ends)