



ROYAL FLYING DOCTOR SERVICE  
OF AUSTRALIA  
*South Eastern Section*

**MEDIA RELEASE**

**Monday 16<sup>th</sup> April 2007**

**Prime Minister heralds increased funding for Royal Flying Doctor Service**

“We applaud the Commonwealth Government’s recognition of the RFDS vital role in providing emergency aero-medical evacuations and primary health clinics to Australians who are beyond the reach of normal medical infrastructure” said Executive Director of the RFDS (South Eastern Section), Captain Clyde Thomson GM.

Captain Thomson’s comments are a response to today’s announcement that the Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) nationally has been granted \$250 million in Commonwealth funding over the next four years for traditional services in rural and remote Australia such as primary evacuations and General Practitioner clinics which are delivered in partnership with the Maari Ma Health Aboriginal Corporation and NSW Health.

“We have also formed strong links with the University of Sydney’s Dubbo and Broken Hill Campus’s to provide training for medical and allied health students to encourage students to take up future GP and allied health positions in remote and rural areas” said Captain Thomson.

Over the past seven years the distance flown by the RFDS South Eastern Section has increased by almost five million kilometres. In the six month period from July 2006 to December 2006 there has been an 18% increase in the number of clients being seen at rural health clinics in NSW alone.

Captain Thomson says “With both the increase in demand for RFDS services and increase in cost of those services the Commonwealth funding has given the Flying Doctor a more sustainable footing for the delivery of its primary health services.”

The call by the Prime Minister for the States to increase their level of funding to the RFDS in order to service the increasing number of patient transfers from regional to metropolitan hospitals, so that patients may to receive appropriate medical care, is supported by the RFDS (South Eastern Section) Between 2003 and 2006 the RFDS South Eastern Section alone has seen an increase of 2,500 transfers per year mostly due to the decline of available specialist medical care and facilities in remote and regional Australia.

The RFDS also relies enormously on bequests from their supporters to replace aging aircraft. Captain Thomson said “Our reliance on both our donors, who contribute \$6 million annually, and the State Governments has not been diminished under the new funding arrangements,” he said.

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