



Royal Flying Doctor Service TASMANIA

Memorandum of Understanding

The Tasmanian Government and the Royal Flying Doctor Service have had a long standing relationship, with agreements in place generally for a 3 to 5 year period for the important services that RFDS provides to the Tasmanian community. The current agreement expires in June 2022.

In recognition of the valuable services provided, the Royal Flying Doctor Service (Tasmania) and the Liberal Party of Tasmania have agreed to enter into this Memorandum of Understanding to commence good faith negotiations within 30 days of a Gutwein Liberal Government being re-elected for a Strategic Partnership of up to 10 years to deliver aero-medical flight services, and continue to support the RFDS in its delivery of primary health care in rural and regional areas, with a particular focus on dental and mental health.

It is agreed the negotiations will include the following:

1. Developing a Strategic Partnership between the RFDS and the Tasmanian Government to provide aero-medical services that continue to support the RFDS in its provision of dental, and mental health care to rural and regional Tasmania.
2. This partnership will be in the form of a long term contract of up to 10 years to take effect from July 2022, to cover aero-medical support services, including the provision of aircraft, pilots, and facilities.
3. Notes that such an arrangement will provide the long-term certainty for both the State of Tasmania and the Royal Flying Doctor Service (Tasmania) and will support RFDS to undertake aircraft and infrastructure upgrades to better provide services to Tasmania.
4. Notes that both parties will use their best endeavours to reach agreement to deliver the outcomes above in points 1-3 within 120 days of negotiations commencing.
5. Notes that in addition, a re-elected Gutwein Liberal Government will also provide \$300 000 in 2021-22 to the Royal Flying Doctor Service (Tasmania), to support their activities in the provision of Oral Health services in regional Tasmania, including an initial focus on the West Coast, Huon Valley and Central Tasmania.

SIGNED:

SIGNED

Liberal Party of Tasmania

DATE: 8.4.21

Royal Flying Doctor Service (Tasmania),

DATE: 8/4/21

General Enquiries: 03 6391 0509

Po Box 140, Evandale, Tasmania 7212

Email: enquiries@rfdstas.org.au Website: www.flyingdoctor.org.au

Royal Flying Doctor Service Tasmania ABN 93 785 910 050 ACN 617 680 896

Patron: Her Excellency Professor the Honourable Kate Warner AC, Governor of Tasmania



Hutton, Bridget

From: The Deputy Premier
Sent: Tuesday, 14 September 2021 3:17 PM
To: s.36 @rfdstas.org.au'
Subject: LETTER - Mr John Kirwan from Minister for Health regarding Royal Flying Doctors Service
Attachments: LETTER - Mr John Kirwan from Minister for Health regarding Royal Flying Doctors Service.pdf

Dear John

Please see attached correspondence sent on behalf of the Minister for Health, the Hon Jeremy Rockliff MP.

Regards

Bronwyn Watkins

Executive Officer - Correspondence
Office of the Deputy Premier, the Hon Jeremy Rockliff MP

Minister for Health
Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing
Minister for Community Services and Development
Minister for Advanced Manufacturing and Defence Industries
Level 10, 15 Murray Street HOBART TAS 7000

www.premier.tas.gov.au



**Deputy Premier
Minister for Health
Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing
Minister for Community Services and Development
Minister for Advanced Manufacturing and Defence Industries**



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Ph: +61 3 6165 7754
Email: jeremy.Rockliff@dpac.tas.gov.au

14 September 2021

Mr John Kirwan
Chief Executive Officer
Royal Flying Doctor Service Tasmania
E-mail: **s.36** @rfdstas.org.au

Dear Mr Kirwan

I am writing in relation to the Government's election commitment to negotiate a long-term strategic partnership between the Tasmanian Government and the Royal Flying Doctor Service Tasmania (RFDS).

The Strategic Partnership is to ensure the important services that RFDS provides to rural and regional communities across the State can continue, including aero-medical flight services, as well as primary health care in rural and regional areas, with a particular focus on dental and mental health.

I understand that discussions have occurred between RFDS and the Department of Health and as a result I am able to put forward a ten year proposal consisting of two five-year periods.

Over the lifetime of the partnership, an annual Operational Direction meeting would occur in January each year, with the RFDS and Department of Health. The purpose of these meetings would be to define and provide recommendations to the Minister for Health on the funded outcomes for the coming financial year, including any budget submissions that may be required.

In addition, there would be a bi-annual Strategic Direction meeting between RFDS and the Department. The second five-year strategic period will be agreed at the 2025 Strategic Directions meeting.

Within the first five-year period, it is proposed:

- 1 A minimum allocation of \$300 000 per annum for at least five years, with this to be reviewed in the fourth year to ensure that the commitment continues to match ongoing need and service growth.
- 2 The State Government continues to advocate for TAZREACH, the federally funded program that funds a range of RFDS services.
- 3 An allocation of \$300 000 for an oral health rural support program would be spent by the end of the calendar year 2022. This program would be run as a pilot program and considered for ongoing funding based on a review to take place in the second half of 2022.
- 4 Provision of a minimum of \$200 000 per annum over five years for population health program to be jointly developed and funded via the current five-year Healthy Tasmania Program. These programs are to assist in:
 - a. Reducing smoking levels for youth in rural and remote Tasmania; and

- b. Expansion of the RFDS Rural Health Program to include mental wellness support for Grade 10 to 12 students and young rural workers.
- 5 Allocation of \$50 000 to fund a project to explore the expansion of the RFDS Integrated Primary Care Consortium to additional Local Government Areas, including the Derwent Valley and Southern Midlands.

Following this exploration project, if an agreement is reached to expand the RFDS Integrated Primary Care Consortium, then funding to support the expansion will be agreed through the 2022 Operational Directions meeting.

- 6 Allocation of \$50 000 to identify rural and regional service gaps and explore service options to address these gaps.
- 7 Continue existing RFDS South-East aero-medical contract during a strategic review of Tasmania's aero-medical needs.

Additionally, RFDS will be actively consulted and invited to provide a submission to the strategic review, with a further opportunity to expand upon that submission if desired. The outcomes of the strategic review will be considered as part of the first Strategic Directions Meeting in 2023.

The Government has been a strong supporter of the RFDS for many years, and this proposal recognises that relationship and will lock in the service for the long term, providing certainty for those Tasmanians in rural and regional areas that need it most.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely



Jeremy Rockliff MP
Deputy Premier
Minister for Health

Hutton, Bridget

From: Rockliff, Jeremy
Sent: Monday, 27 September 2021 4:41 PM
To: Rockliff, Minister
Subject: HEALTH - FURTHER CORRESPONDENCE - John Kirwan regarding Government Election Commitment to negotiate long term strategic partnership with Royal Flying Doctor Service (in reply to Minister's letter)
Attachments: Letter to Deputy Premier 24th September 2021.pdf

Min21/29104

Bronwyn Watkins

Executive Officer - Correspondence
 Office of the Deputy Premier, the Hon Jeremy Rockliff MP

Minister for Health
 Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing
 Minister for Community Services and Development
 Minister for Advanced Manufacturing and Defence Industries
 Level 10, 15 Murray Street HOBART TAS 7000
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www.premier.tas.gov.au



From: John Kirwan <s.36@rfdstas.org.au>
Sent: Friday, 24 September 2021 9:15 AM
To: Rockliff, Jeremy <Jeremy.Rockliff@dpac.tas.gov.au>
Cc: Jaye Lee <s.36@rfdstas.org.au>
Subject: HEALTH - FURTHER CORRESPONDENCE - John Kirwan regarding Government Election Commitment to negotiate long term strategic partnership with Royal Flying Doctor Service (in reply to Minister's letter)

Dear Deputy Premier

Please find attached our response to your letter we received dated 14th of September 2021.

Regards

John Kirwan
 CEO
 John Kirwan
 Chief Executive Officer

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 W www.flyingdoctor.org.au/tas



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> Please support the RFDS by donating at www.flyingdoctor.org.au/tas or call (03) 6391 0509

The RFDS respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Owners and the Elders past and present of the land from which this email was sent and the land on which it is

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Royal Flying Doctor Service TASMANIA

The Hon Jeremy Rockliff MP

Deputy Premier
Minister for Health

Jeremv.rockliff@dpac.tas.gov.au

24th September 2021

RE: Government Election Commitment to negotiate a long term strategic partnership with RFDS

Dear Deputy Premier,

I am writing in response to your letter of the 14th September and the careful consideration your Department, yourself and the Premier have clearly given to the situation.

I would like to advise that we agree to your proposal for a 10 year Strategic Partnership consisting of two five year periods, subject to the following in response to each of the specific points in your Proposal:

1. AGREED - on the basis that this funding is provided as untied operational funding to the organisation and is in addition to any funds already or otherwise provided;
2. AGREED - noting that note that Ambulance Tasmania is the primary beneficiary of the \$1,050,000 for the provision of services to the Bass Strait Islands that RFDS is allocated from the Commonwealth under schedule 5 of the existing Commonwealth and RFDS funding agreement;
3. AGREED – given the important of the need to address dental needs, we suggest a start date as soon as practicable, preferably 1st October 2021. Based on outcomes to date, we are confident that the current pilot program on the West Coast will be a success, and would appreciate the ability to discuss extensions of the program prior to the second half of 2021 to ensure continuation of services
4. AGREED;
5. AGREED;
6. AGREED;
7. AGREED – subject to your commitment that consistent with the existing MOU election commitment, and without presuming the outcome of the review, RFDS will be the provider and provided THE opportunity to negotiate a long-term aero-medical retrieval service with the Government.

General Enquiries: 03 6391 0509

PO Box 140, Evandale, Tasmania 7212

Email: enquiries@rfdstas.org.au Website: www.flyingdoctor.org.au

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Patron: Her Excellency the Honourable Barbara Baker AC, Governor of Tasmania





Royal Flying Doctor Service TASMANIA

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In addition, there are also a number of practical issues that will need to be worked through.

RFDS South Eastern Section will need to have notification of the extension (or new short term contract as current contract has no provision for further extensions) of the existing contract (by end of December) and the suitability and cost of continuing LTQ (the existing aircraft) beyond June next year needs to be discussed and agreed.

RFDS South Eastern remain committed to working with the DoH and Ambulance Tas to ensure the service is maintained while the strategic review is undertaken. However, notwithstanding the outcomes of the Review, in our assessment the Government will need a two to three year option for post June 2022, and we believe just continuing the current contract for two or three years using LTQ will not be viable.

Deputy Premier, as you would appreciate, operation of the aero-medical retrieval service is our primary role and we are immensely disappointed and frustrated that yet another review is to be undertaken into Tasmania's aero-medical needs.

While rotary services have their place and indeed RFDS currently partners with rotary providers and has recently commenced our own helicopter services on the mainland, every review undertaken shows that fixed-wing aero-medical retrieval is an essential part of Tasmania's health needs. Fixed wing provides fully-pressurised retrieval meaning better management of patients with medical conditions such as closed head injuries, eye injuries, the bends, collapsed lungs, very premature babies, and spinal injuries because of the ability to fly above weather to lessen turbulence.

Fixed-wing is also twice as fast as a helicopter, and can fly and land in conditions unsuitable for rotary. Rotary is also prohibitive for air retrieval on the Bass Strait Islands where there is no option of road retrieval.

For these and other reasons, we are very confident that the Review will find the need for a continued fixed-wing aero-medical retrieval service for Tasmania. and we look forward to the opportunity to negotiate a new long-term contract at the Review's completion.

Having said all of that, I acknowledge your pragmatism and efforts to deliver on your election commitment, and subject to your agreement to my comments on 1, 2, 3, and 7, I am excited by the prospect of the commencement of the new Strategic Partnership.

I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Kirwan', with a stylized flourish at the end.

JOHN KIRWAN
CEO

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Hutton, Bridget

From: The Deputy Premier
Sent: Wednesday, 20 October 2021 3:38 PM
To: s.36 @rfdstas.org.au'
Subject: DIRECT REPLY - Mr John Kirwan from Minister for Health regarding Royal Flying Doctors Service.pdf
Attachments: DIRECT REPLY - Mr John Kirwan from Minister for Health regarding Royal Flying Doctors Service.pdf

Dear John

Please see attached correspondence sent on behalf of the Minister for Health, the Hon Jeremy Rockliff MP.

Regards

Bronwyn Watkins

Executive Officer - Correspondence
Office of the Deputy Premier, the Hon Jeremy Rockliff MP

Minister for Health
Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing
Minister for Community Services and Development
Minister for Advanced Manufacturing and Defence Industries
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20 October 2021

Mr John Kirwan
Chief Executive Officer
Royal Flying Doctor Service Tasmania
E-mail: s.36@rfdstas.org.au

Dear Mr Kirwan

Thank you for your recent feedback on the possible content of a memorandum of understanding with the Tasmanian Government. I apologise for the delay in a response as we have had a need to consult internally, and key personnel are the same personnel dealing with the recent COVID 19 cases.

I reiterate that the purpose of a Strategic Partnership is to ensure the important services that Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) provides to rural and regional communities across the State can continue, including aero-medical flight services, as well as primary health care in rural and regional areas, with a particular focus on dental and mental health.

In addition, the Government has an obligation to the Tasmanian people to ensure all health services are both fit for purpose and represent good value. We must also follow the Financial Management Act, Treasurers Instructions and related Government policies in relation to procurement.

In relation to your response to recent developments in the Aero-Medical Retrieval Service, the letter to your South East Division is consistent with my letter and the discussion you have had with Mr Webster, that is, an extension of the current contract occur while we conduct a review of aeromedical services to better understand current and future community need.

The Government's expectation is that the RFDS continue to have a long term role in the delivery of aero-medical services, this is consistent with earlier good faith discussions, however the review will help inform exactly what this looks like.

It would be inappropriate for us to commit to the service as defined by your Division of the RFDS, without a proper process and prior to this review occurring.

Below I have repeated the offer in my previous letter, but annotated it to respond to your letter of 24 September 2021.

Within the first five-year period, it is proposed:

- 1 A minimum allocation of \$300 000 per annum for at least five years, with this to be reviewed in the fourth year to ensure that the commitment continues to match ongoing need and service growth.
This amount is for service delivery gaps and includes the commitment for Oral Health in the first year and any amount arising from other points in this proposal.
- 2 The State Government continues to advocate for TAZREACH, the federally funded program that funds a range of RFDS services. - *Agreed*
- 3 An allocation of \$300 000 for an oral health rural support program would be spent by the end of the calendar year 2022. This program would be run as a pilot program and considered for ongoing funding based on a review to take place in the second half of 2022.
Underway, but must include the co-payment arrangements applying to all other Tasmanian Government adult oral health treatment services.
- 4 Provision of a minimum of \$200 000 per annum over five years for population health program to be jointly developed and funded via the current five-year Healthy Tasmania Program. These programs are to assist in:
 - a. Reducing smoking levels for youth in rural and remote Tasmania; and
 - b. Expansion of the RFDS Rural Health Program to include mental wellness support for Grade 10 to 12 students and young rural workers.

Agreed
- 5 Allocation of \$50 000 to fund a project to explore the expansion of the RFDS Integrated Primary Care Consortium to additional Local Government Areas, including the Derwent Valley and Southern Midlands.
Following this exploration project, if an agreement is reached to expand the RFDS Integrated Primary Care Consortium, then funding to support the expansion will be agreed through the 2022 Operational Directions meeting.
- *Agreed*
- 6 Allocation of \$50 000 to identify rural and regional service gaps and explore service options to address these gaps.
- *Agreed*
- 7 Continue existing RFDS South-East aero-medical contract during a strategic review of Tasmania's aero-medical needs.

Additionally, RFDS will be actively consulted and invited to provide a submission to the strategic review, with a further opportunity to expand upon that submission if desired. The outcomes of the strategic review will be considered as part of the first Strategic Directions Meeting in 2023.

- *See comment above and letter for CE Ambulance Tasmania on process.*

As we have demonstrated with the COVID 19 Vaccination program we are committed to partnering with your division of the RFDS to benefit the primary health of Tasmanians.

The Government looks forward to continuing the long standing relationship we have had with the RFDS and finalising the MOU as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jeremy Rockliff'.

Jeremy Rockliff MP
Deputy Premier
Minister for Health

Hutton, Bridget

From: Rockliff, Jeremy
Sent: Wednesday, 10 November 2021 5:11 PM
To: Rockliff, Minister
Subject: URGENT - HEALTH - COPY OF FURTHER CORRESPONDENCE - John Kirwan (Royal Flying Doctors Services) to Premier regarding Memorandum of Understanding with Royal Flying Doctor Service Tasmania
Attachments: Letter to the Hon Peter Gutwein MP 10 Nov 21.pdf
Importance: High

Min21/29104

Bronwyn Watkins

Executive Officer - Correspondence
 Office of the Deputy Premier, the Hon Jeremy Rockliff MP

Minister for Health
 Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing
 Minister for Community Services and Development
 Minister for Advanced Manufacturing and Defence Industries
 Level 10, 15 Murray Street HOBART TAS 7000
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From: John Kirwan <s.36@rfdstas.org.au>
Sent: Wednesday, 10 November 2021 8:50 AM
To: Gutwein, Peter <Peter.Gutwein@dpac.tas.gov.au>
Cc: Rockliff, Jeremy <Jeremy.Rockliff@dpac.tas.gov.au>; Finch, Andrew <s.36@dpac.tas.gov.au>
Subject: URGENT - HEALTH - COPY OF CORRESPONDENCE - John Kirwan (Royal Flying Doctors Services) to Premier regarding Memorandum of Understanding with Royal Flying Doctor Service Tasmania
Importance: High

Dear Premier,

Please find attached a letter and request for a meeting from our Chair

John Kirwan
 Chief Executive Officer

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The RFDS respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Owners and the Elders past and present of the land from which this email was sent and the land on which it is

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Royal Flying Doctor Service TASMANIA

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10th November 2021

The Hon Peter Gutwein MP
Premier of Tasmania
Level 9, 15 Murray Street
HOBART, TAS 7000

Cc: Jeremy.rockliff@dpac.tas.gov.au

Dear Premier,

Memorandum of Understanding with Royal Flying Doctor Service Tasmania

As you know we were very pleased to have the opportunity to enter into an MoU with the Liberal Party of Tasmania earlier this year and we value the intent of the MoU.

More recently, we were also pleased that the Government took up our proposal to partner with us and run RFDS COVID-19 "vax buses" into regional Tasmania; we believe that this has been a very important and successful initiative which will save lives in the 26 towns the buses will visit.

Unfortunately, I write now to express our disappointment with progress on reaching agreement on some of the detail in the MoU and particularly the two key tenets of aeromedical and dental.

Firstly, the MoU envisaged a period of good-faith negotiations which had commenced but were subsequently truncated when Ambulance Tasmania advised the RFDS of their intention to call tenders for the Aeromedical service. This occurred prior to the conclusion of good-faith negotiations.

We have always understood that an outcome of the negotiations envisaged in the MoU may be a decision by Government to call tenders. We did not expect that this would occur prior to the conclusion of negotiations. We were not able to put our case, except in the broadest terms, about the mutual benefits of reaching a long-term partnership agreement.

We respectfully request that arrangements currently underway to prepare for the tender process as advised by Ambulance Tasmania be halted and that we return to the intention of the MoU to hold and conclude good-faith negotiations. In the event that the Government decides to go to tender at the conclusion of good faith negotiations we will participate in the tender process because we believe that we are best able to provide the service that the Government and Tasmanian community is requiring. However, as I am sure you appreciate, such a process will be very costly and time consuming for both organizations, and will deliver significant uncertainty which will inhibit investments in new infrastructure and fleet over the next two years.

General Enquiries: 03 6391 0509

PO Box 140, Evandale, Tasmania 7212

Email: enquiries@rfdstas.org.au Website: www.flyingdoctor.org.au

Royal Flying Doctor Service Tasmania ABN 93 785 910 050 ACN 617 680 896

Patron: Her Excellency the Honourable Barbara Baker AC, Governor of Tasmania





Royal Flying Doctor Service
TASMANIA

9

The second item in the MoU on which we have not been able to reach agreement is the \$300,000 for dental services. While the work has commenced (we have treated 60 patients and have over 55 booked in November in anticipation of State funding) a funding agreement has yet to be agreed, in part due to our discomfort with the requirement to charge our patients a co-payment.

Our dental services are conducted under a model that is structured to meet the needs of the most economically disadvantaged Tasmanians. We feel strongly that charging a co-payment will exclude the people who are most in need of our oral health services. None of our patients, since we commenced the service, have been asked to make a payment.

Following our initial conversations, we envisaged your very welcome funding would be funding for our oral health services model, a model that seeks to overcome multiple dental problems when a patient is seen and is free.

While we make no criticism of the Government's public dental service, indeed we enjoy a very good relationship and seek to work in partnership, we do have a different model and one that I think complements the Government's service. Indeed, our service saves the Government significant expenditure through hospital avoidance, and saves the community, employers, and schools the disruption of having to travel to Burnie.

Premier, I urgently seek a meeting with you so that we may get the important initiatives mentioned in the MoU and hopefully a partnership agreement, back on track.

Yours sincerely,

Malcolm White

Malcolm White
Chair

Hutton, Bridget

From: Gordon, Nicole
Sent: Wednesday, 17 November 2021 9:52 AM
To: Invitations, Deputy Premier
Subject: ADVICE FROM CoS - Meeting with Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) Tasmania Re Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) - 17 November 2021

TRIM Ref: MIN21/29104.

Nicole Gordon
 Office Manager

Office of the Deputy Premier, the Hon Jeremy Rockliff MP
 Minister for Health
 Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing
 Minister for Community Services and Development
 Minister for Advanced Manufacturing and Defence Industries
 Level 10, 15 Murray Street, HOBART TAS 7000
 Phone: (03) s.36 | e-mail: s.36 @dpac.tas.gov.au

www.premier.tas.gov.au



From: Field, Vanessa <s.36 @dpac.tas.gov.au>
Sent: Tuesday, 16 November 2021 6:05 PM
To: Rockliff, Jeremy <Jeremy.Rockliff@dpac.tas.gov.au>
Cc: Johnson, Andrew <s.36 @dpac.tas.gov.au>; Field, Vanessa <s.36 @dpac.tas.gov.au>
Subject: Re: RFDS tomorrow

Hi,

I have discussed the below with Dale. No briefing note, just outline below. Can discuss in morning. s.27

Meeting at 11.30am tomorrow – RFDS

Purpose: to progress MOU by dealing with sticking points raised in letter to Premier (who was asked to intervene).

ISSUES

Dental

Equity important, state-wide approach which has involved co-payment. Has not been our experience to date that the co-payment is a barrier to people using the service.

s.27

Aeromedical

Fixed wing is an important part of service delivery. Happy to include in MOU that the Government will continue to work with RFDS on the delivery of aeromedical services, noting the specifics are to be defined post the conclusion of state-wide review of aeromedical service needs.

s.27

s.27

Time frames – MOU can be ready by end of November

s.27

Next steps – prepare draft MOU for signing.

Vanessa Field
Chief of Staff

Office of the Deputy Premier,
The Hon Jeremy Rockliff MP
Minister for Health
Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing
Minister for Community Services and Development
Minister for Advanced Manufacturing and Defence
Industries

Level 10, 15 Murray Street HOBART TAS 7000

s.36 @dpac.tas.gov.au

Hutton, Bridget

From: Webster, Dale E (Health)
Sent: Friday, 3 December 2021 9:04 AM
To: O'Brien, Megan
Cc: Field, Vanessa; Office of the Deputy Secretary - Community Mental Health and Wellbeing (Health)

Hi Megan,
 Sorry for the delay – a lot on yesterday.

This is the headline of what we offered RFDS and they agreed to:

- I. An allocation of \$300,000 for an oral health rural support program to be spent by the end of calendar year 2022. This program will be run as a pilot program and considered for ongoing funding based on a review to take place in second half of 2022.

So here is the detail:

- Majority of funding is to be used to reduce adult waiting list as existing services already adequately cover children (eg Queenstown has an OHST clinic and a private clinic for children)
- Services are for same clients as would be seen by HST (that is Health Care Card holders)
- Initially Services are at Queenstown, but will also include Huon Valley and Tasman during the pilot
- We accept that during the pilot OHST will waive the co-payment for all clients seen by RFDS
- RFDS will ensure clients know they are delivering services on behalf of OHST and that patient records will be passed on to OHST

Here is the rest of the points we have agreed to go into MOU

- I A minimum allocation of \$300 000 per annum for at least five years, with this to be reviewed in the fourth year to ensure that the commitment continues to match ongoing need and service growth.

s.27

- 2 The State Government continues to advocate for TAZREACH, the federally funded program that funds a range of RFDS services.
- 3 An allocation of \$300 000 for an oral health rural support program would be spent by the end of the calendar year 2022. This program would be run as a pilot program and considered for ongoing funding based on a review to take place in the second half of 2022.
- 4 Provision of a minimum of \$200 000 per annum over five years for population health program to be jointly developed and funded via the current five-year Healthy Tasmania Program. These programs are to assist in:
 - a. Reducing smoking levels for youth in rural and remote Tasmania; and
 - b. Expansion of the RFDS Rural Health Program to include mental wellness support for Grade 10 to 12 students and young rural workers.
- 5 Allocation of \$50 000 to fund a project to explore the expansion of the RFDS Integrated Primary Care Consortium to additional Local Government Areas, including the Derwent Valley and Southern Midlands.
 Following this exploration project, if an agreement is reached to expand the RFDS Integrated Primary Care Consortium, then funding to support the expansion will be agreed through the 2022 Operational Directions meeting.
- 6 Allocation of \$50 000 to identify rural and regional service gaps and explore service options to address these gaps.

Regards



Dale WEBSTER

Deputy Secretary

Commander, Tasmanian COVID 19 Vaccine Operations

(he/him/his)

Department of Health

22 Elizabeth Street, Hobart TAS 7000

03 **s.36**

cmhw@health.tas.gov.au



I acknowledge and respect Tasmanian Aboriginal people as the traditional owners and ongoing custodians of the land on which I work and live, and pay respect to Elders past and present.

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Hutton, Bridget

From: Events, Premier
Sent: Friday, 3 December 2021 10:13 AM
To: Gordon, Nicole
Subject: RE: RFDS meeting Monday JR/PG additional info
Attachments: Cover sheet - Discuss RFDS Procurement Arrangements.DOCX; Attachment - DIRECT REPLY - Mr~g Royal Flying Doctors Service.PDF; Attachment - Letter to the Hon Peter Gutwein MP 10 Nov 21.PDF; Attachment - RFDS_MOU.PDF

Thanks. Papers attached.

From: Gordon, Nicole <s.36@dpac.tas.gov.au>
Sent: Friday, 3 December 2021 10:04 AM
To: Events, Premier <Premier.Events@dpac.tas.gov.au>
Subject: FW: RFDS meeting Monday JR/PG additional info
Importance: High

Dear Narissa

Copy as per advice below from Megan.

Also, checking please if there is any other paperwork for Monday's meeting?

Thanks very much.

Nicole Gordon
 Office Manager

Office of the Deputy Premier, the Hon Jeremy Rockliff MP
 Minister for Health
 Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing
 Minister for Community Services and Development
 Minister for Advanced Manufacturing and Defence Industries
 Level 10, 15 Murray Street, HOBART TAS 7000
 Phone: (03) s.36 | e-mail: s.36@dpac.tas.gov.au

www.premier.tas.gov.au



From: O'Brien, Megan <s.36@dpac.tas.gov.au>
Sent: Friday, 3 December 2021 9:56 AM
To: Gordon, Nicole <s.36@dpac.tas.gov.au>
Cc: Field, Vanessa <s.36@dpac.tas.gov.au>; Johnson, Andrew <s.36@dpac.tas.gov.au>
Subject: RFDS meeting Monday JR/PG additional info

Hi Nic,

Can you please add the attached email to the Minister's pack for Monday morning's meeting with RFDS, and can you please also send to the relevant person in the Premier's office for inclusion in the Premier's pack?

12

MIN21/38492 is the Premier's trim file but I don't think we have access to it.

Many thanks,
Megan

Megan O'Brien

Adviser – Mental Health

Office of the Deputy Premier, the Hon Jeremy Rockliff MP

Minister for Health

Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing

Minister for Community Services and Development

Minister for Advanced Manufacturing and Defence Industries

Level 10, 15 Murray Street HOBART TAS 7000

Phone: (03) s.36 Mobile: s.36

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www.premier.tas.gov.au



Meeting Brief for the Premier

Meeting with John Kirwan & Malcolm White, Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) with Becher Townshend

Monday, 6 December 2021, 9.30am to 10.00am

Level 2 Board Room, 53 St John Street, Launceston and Webex video conference for southern attendees

Order of proceedings: 9.30am to 10.00am - 30 minute meeting

In attendance: John Kirwan, CEO, Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS)
Malcolm White, Chair, Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS)
Becher Townshend, Front PR
Jeremy Rockliff MP, Minister for Health
Andrew Finch, Chief of Staff, Premier's Office
Vanessa Field, Chief of Staff, Minister's Office

On-site contact: Vanessa Field – s.36

Adviser: Andrew Finch – s.36

GUIDANCE NOTES FOR THE PREMIER

- Follow up meeting to discuss the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) procurement arrangements.
- See attached documents for further details.

Hutton, Bridget

From: Wilkes, Robyn
Sent: Monday, 29 November 2021 10:32 AM
To: s.36 @rfdstas.org.au
Cc: Delaney, Narissa
Subject: CONFIRMED | Meeting with Royal Flying Doctor Service Tasmania, Monday 6 December 2021, Ref#MIN21/38492

Good morning John

Thank you for your email. Confirming your meeting with the Premier and Deputy Premier on Monday 6 December 2021, 9.30-10.00am. The meeting will take place in the Premier's Launceston Office, 53 St John Street (entry off the corner of Paterson Street).

Kind regards
 Robyn

Robyn Wilkes

Executive Assistant to the Hon Peter Gutwein MP
 Premier of Tasmania
 Treasurer

Phone: (03) 6165 7650
 Level 11, 15 Murray Street HOBART TAS 7000
 e-mail: s.36 @dpac.tas.gov.au

www.premier.tas.gov.au

From: John Kirwan <s.36 @rfdstas.org.au>
Sent: Monday, 29 November 2021 9:38 AM
To: Invitations, Premier <Premier.Invitations@dpac.tas.gov.au>; Finch, Andrew <s.36 @dpac.tas.gov.au>;
 Field, Vanessa <s.36 @dpac.tas.gov.au>
Subject: RE: Memorandum of Understanding with Royal Flying Doctor Service Tasmania

Robyn

Thanks for the call, I have spoken to Malcolm, we can meet on Monday morning at the Premiers Launceston office

JK

John Kirwan

Chief Executive Officer

T 03 s.36
 F 03 6391 8992
 M s.36
 E s.36 @rfdstas.org.au
 W www.flyingdoctor.org.au/tas

Building 75, Launceston Airport Services Compound
 Evandale Road, Western Junction
 PO Box 140, Evandale TAS 7212





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From: John Kirwan

Sent: Thursday, 18 November 2021 11:13 AM

To: Invitations, Premier <Premier.Invitations@dpac.tas.gov.au>; s.36 @dpac.tas.gov.au

Subject: RE: Memorandum of Understanding with Royal Flying Doctor Service Tasmania

Robyn

As mentioned on Monday, we had a disappointing meeting with the Deputy Premier and advisors yesterday, the concerns raised in the letter were addressed but not resolved

RFDS would now like to meet with the Premier, as he is the signatory to the MOU

Attending the meeting will be our Chair Malcolm White, Deputy Chair Carline Wells, advisor, Becher Townshend, and myself

Noting Parliament is sitting next week, we would suggest either the 29th or 30th November in Hobart

John Kirwan

Chief Executive Officer

T 03 s.36

F 03 6391 8992

M s.36

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From: Invitations, Premier <Premier.Invitations@dpac.tas.gov.au>

Sent: Thursday, 11 November 2021 11:48 AM

To: Invitations, Premier <Premier.Invitations@dpac.tas.gov.au>; John Kirwan <s.36@rfdstas.org.au>

Subject: Ack: Memorandum of Understanding with Royal Flying Doctor Service Tasmania

Dear John

Thank you for your invitation to the Premier, the Hon Peter Gutwein MP, to meet with you.

Your request has been passed on to the Premier for his consideration and we will be in touch as soon as we are able to.

Kind regards

Robyn Noyman
Executive Officer

Office of the Hon Peter Gutwein MP
Premier of Tasmania
Treasurer

Phone: (03) 6165 7650
Level 11, 15 Murray Street HOBART TAS 7000
e-mail: s.36@dpac.tas.gov.au

www.premier.tas.gov.au



From: John Kirwan <s.36@rfdstas.org.au>

Sent: Wednesday, 10 November 2021 8:50 AM

To: Gutwein, Peter <Peter.Gutwein@dpac.tas.gov.au>

Cc: Rockliff, Jeremy <Jeremy.Rockliff@dpac.tas.gov.au>; Finch, Andrew <s.36@dpac.tas.gov.au>

Subject: Memorandum of Understanding with Royal Flying Doctor Service Tasmania
Importance: High

Dear Premier,

Please find attached a letter and request for a meeting from our Chair

John Kirwan
Chief Executive Officer

T 03 s.36
F 03 6391 8992
M s.36
E s.36 @rfdstas.org.au
W www.flyingdoctor.org.au/tas

Building 75, Launceston Airport Services Compound
 Evandale Road, Western Junction
 PO Box 140, Evandale TAS 7212



> Please support the RFDS by donating at www.flyingdoctor.org.au/tas or call (03) 6391 0509

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Royal Flying Doctor Service – Oral Health Commitment

Background

- At the recent State Election, the Liberal Government committed to commencing good faith negotiations with the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) on a long-term strategic partnership to support health services in Tasmania.
- As part of this commitment, \$300 000 was allocated to RFDS for the provision of oral health care in regional Tasmania, with an initial focus on the West Coast, Huon Valley and Central Tasmania.
- RFDS also deliver dental services in Tasmania which are funded by the Commonwealth Government.
- Oral Health Services Tasmania (OHST) provide a public dental service for both adults and children. Adults who receive treatment through OHST are required to pay a co-payment for each course of treatment (approximately \$45).

Current Situation

- The Department of Health and RFDS have been negotiating the details of the Oral Health election commitment and how this will be delivered on the ground.
- As part of the agreement, RFDS were advised there would need to be a co-payment charged in line with the protocols of OHST
- RFDS advised there is no co-payment charged for the services provided under Commonwealth funding.
- The Department of Health had offered to administer the co-payment to patients based on information provided by RFDS.
- The RFDS expressed concerns about the need for a co-payment and advised it was their belief this would act as a barrier for people on the West Coast accessing services.

Position to be put to RFDS

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s.27

Impacts of Position

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Hutton, Bridget

From: Wilkes, Robyn
Sent: Thursday, 24 March 2022 4:23 PM
To: Becher Townshend
Subject: RE: from Becher on behalf of the Royal Flying Doctors Service

Thank you Becher.

I will provide this request to meet to the Premier for consideration and be back in contact.

Kind regards
Robyn

From: Becher Townshend s.36 @fontpr.com.au>
Sent: Thursday, 24 March 2022 4:18 PM
To: Wilkes, Robyn s.36 @dpac.tas.gov.au>
Subject: from Becher on behalf of the Royal Flying Doctors Service

Dear Robyn,

As you may be aware the Royal Flying Doctors Service have been assisting the Government with the roll out of dental services on the West Coast. This initiative has come directly from a catch-up with the Premier held with John Kirwan and Malcolm White just prior to the pandemic.

Needless to say we would be keen to have a catch-up with the Premier to discuss the success of the program and point to other things we are doing when he might have some time available.

Also of note, John has announced he will be finishing with the RFDS at the end of June.

Anyhow, happy to discuss if you require any further information.

Kind regards,

Becher

BECHER TOWNSHEND BA FPRIA
MANAGING DIRECTOR

P 03 6223 3333
M s.36
Level 11, 188 Collins Street,
GPO Box 1048, Hobart Tas 7000

font
public relations

File No: MIN22/780

	APPROVED / NOT APPROVED Minister's Signature
Date:	

Minute to the Minister

Jeremy Rockliff MP
Minister for Health

Critical Date:

Subject: Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Tasmanian Government and the Royal Flying Doctor Service Tasmania (RFDS TAS)

Recommendations

That you:

- **Sign the attached MoU between the Tasmanian Government and RFDS TAS for the ongoing delivery of aero-medical and primary health care services to rural and regional Tasmanians**

Background

- During the 2021 election campaign, the State Government committed to develop a long-term strategic partnership with RFDS TAS to support health services in Tasmania.
- The commitment comprised two key elements:
 - A Strategic Partnership to “continue to support the RFDS in its provision of dental and mental health care to rural and regional Tasmania”, to be in the form of a long-term contract of up to 10 years to cover aero-medical support services; and

- The provision of \$300 000 in 2021-22 to RFDS TAS to support its activities in the provision of oral health services in regional Tasmanian, including an initial focus on the West Coast, Huon Valley and Central Tasmania.
- The MoU at Attachment 1 commits RFDS TAS and the State Government to a ten-year strategic partnership consisting of two five-year periods, with commitments for the second five-year period to be agreed and incorporated into the MoU in 2026.

Key Issues

- Following the 2021 election, representatives from the Department of Health and RFDS TAS held discussions to progress the commitment, with a subsequent exchange of letters between yourself, and the CEO of the RFDS, John Kirwan. These letters are provided as Attachments 2 to 5 of this Minute.
- This exchange outlined a package of initiatives to form the basis of the Strategic Partnership, formalised in the MoU. The package includes:
 - Funding of \$300 000 for an oral health rural support program to be spent by the end of the calendar year 2022. This program is being run as a pilot program and considered for ongoing funding based on a review to take place in the second half of 2022.
 - The allocation of minimum of \$200 000 per annum over five years for population health programs to be jointly developed and funded via the current five-year Healthy Tasmania Program. These programs are to assist in:
 - a. Reducing smoking levels for youth in rural and remote Tasmania; and
 - b. Expansion of the RFDS Rural Health Program to include mental wellness support for Grade 10 to 12 students and young rural workers.
 - The allocation of \$50 000 to fund a project to explore the expansion of the RFDS Integrated Primary Care Consortium to additional Local Government Areas, including the Derwent Valley and Southern Midlands. Following this exploration project, if an agreement is reached to expand the RFDS Integrated Primary Care Consortium, then funding to support the expansion will be agreed through the 2022 Operational Directions meeting.
 - The allocation of \$50 000 to identify rural and regional service gaps and explore service options to address these gaps.
 - The State Government continues to advocate for TAZREACH, the federally funded program that funds a range of RFDS services, including the Bass Strait Island Agreement.
 - Continue existing RFDS SES aero-medical contract during a strategic review of Tasmania's aero-medical needs. Additionally, RFDS will be actively consulted and invited to provide a submission to the strategic review.

- The Department's proposal includes a minimum allocation of \$300 000 per annum to RFDS TAS for at least five years. This is inclusive of the elements outlined above, and any other funding that arises as part of this proposal.
- In addition, the MoU commits the Tasmanian Government to seeking approval in accordance with the Treasurers Instructions to providing an opportunity for the RFDS TAS, in partnership with RFDS SES to be a sole tenderer for the aero-medical retrieval service contract for Tasmania beyond 2023.
- If approval is provided, this will occur following completion of the Aeromedical Services Review, with RFDS TAS to be given 28 days from when the tender specification is made available to them to provide a response.
- This allows for the Department to move to open tender, should RFDS TAS' tender response not meet the tender criteria, including the value for money assessment.

Financial Consideration

- Table I outlines the potential direct costs from the proposed elements of the MoU.

Table I: Memorandum of Understanding – Costs

	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Oral Health Rural Support	300	....	....	....	....
Integrated Primary Care Consortium	50	....	....	....	....
Rural and Regional Service Gaps	50	....	....	....	....
Population Health Program	...	200	200	200	200
	400	200	200	200	200
<i>Unallocated¹</i>	....	100	100	100	100

1. This is the additional funding required to meet a minimum allocation of \$300 000 per annum.

- The 2021-22 Budget includes a one-off allocation of \$300 000 for the oral health support program, as well as an allocation of \$1 million per annum to extend the Healthy Tasmania strategy.
- Other costs in Table I are as prescribed in the attached MoU.

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Risk Implications

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Communication Consideration

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Attachments

- 1 Memorandum of Understanding between the Tasmanian Government and RFDS TAS
- 2 Letter from Minister to RFDS - Strategic Partnership - 14 September 2021
- 3 Letter from RFDS to Minister - Strategic Partnership - 24 September 2021
- 4 Letter from Minister to RFDS - Oral Health - 6 October 2021
- 5 Letter from Minister to RFDS - MoU Election Commitment - 20 October 2021

Prepared by	Sarah Jacobs	Principal Officer, Community, Mental Health and Wellbeing	s.36	31 March 2022
Through	Dale Webster	Deputy Secretary, Community, Mental Health and Wellbeing	s.36	5 April 2022
Cleared by	Kathrine Morgan- Wicks	Secretary		5 April 2022

Hutton, Bridget

From: Wittison, Sandy
Sent: Wednesday, 22 June 2022 12:30 PM
To: Brown, Mandy; Field, Vanessa
Subject: RFDS MOU signing good for 8th July

Hi Mandy, even though it is John Kirwan's last day on the 7th July, he'll be happy to come back the next day for the signing on the Friday, 8th July.

s.36

While the signing will be officially with Malcolm White, are you able to email John (via s.36 @rfdstas.org.au) and let them know when this date and a time is confirmed, and when that happens I'll let Jenna, Jess and Simon know – and organise an event brief.

The signing will be at the RDDS complex (see details below and John's contact details).

s.27

Thanks Mandy

SW

John Kirwan
Chief Executive Officer

T 03 s.36
F 03 6391 8992
M s.36
E s.36 @rfdstas.org.au
W www.flyingdoctor.org.au/tas

Building 75, Launceston Airport Services Compound
 Evandale Road, Western Junction
 PO Box 140, Evandale TAS 7212



Hutton, Bridget

From: Brown, Mandy
Sent: Wednesday, 22 June 2022 1:59 PM
To: s.36 @rfdstas.org.au
Cc: Wittison, Sandy
Subject: CONFIRMED | MOU Signing with RFDS, Friday 8 July 2022, Ref#MIN22/17899

Good afternoon Jaye

I have been asked to contact you to confirm the Premier's attendance at the MOU Signing on Friday 8 July 2022, 10.30am to 11.00am. The MOU signing will take place at the RFDS complex, Building 75, Launceston Airport Services Compound, Evandale Road, Western Junction.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can assist you further.

Many thanks.

Kind regards
Mandy

Mandy Brown
Executive Officer

Office of the Hon Jeremy Rockliff MP
Premier of Tasmania
Minister for Health
Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing
Minister for Tourism
Minister for Trade

Level 11, 15 Murray Street, Hobart 7000
Phone: (03) 6165 7650
E-mail: s.36 @dpac.tas.gov.au

www.premier.tas.gov.au

Hutton, Bridget

From: Brown, Mandy
Sent: Thursday, 23 June 2022 10:25 AM
To: Jaye Lee
Subject: CONFIRMED | MOU Signing with RFDS, Friday 8 July 2022, Ref#MIN22/17899

Hello Jaye

Yes, the MOU signing will be held at the RFDS site, Building 85, 305 Evandale Road, Western Junction.

I am unable to send external parties invitations from the Premier's diary – we ask that external parties put the events in their own diaries.

Kind regards
Mandy

From: Jaye Lee <s.36@rfdstas.org.au>
Sent: Thursday, 23 June 2022 9:29 AM
To: Brown, Mandy <s.36@dpac.tas.gov.au>
Subject: RE: CONFIRMED | MOU Signing with RFDS, Friday 8 July 2022, Ref#MIN22/17899

Good morning Mandy

Thankyou, can I please advise the signing will be done at Building 85, 305 Evandale Road Western Junction- which is the RFDS Branded building where the previous signing took place.

Can I please confirm if a calendar invite will be sent and if so can I please be included.

Regards
Jaye

Jaye Lee
Executive Assistant to the CEO, John Kirwan

T 03 s.36
F 03 6391 8992
E s.36@rfdstas.org.au
W www.flyingdoctor.org.au/tas
Building 75, Launceston Airport Services Compound
Evandale Road, Western Junction
PO Box 140, Evandale TAS 7212





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**Royal Flying Doctor Service
TASMANIA**

MOU Signing Event

Friday, 8th July 2022

10.30am to 11.00am

RFDS Base, Building 85, 305 Evandale Rd, Western Junction

Run Sheet

10.00am -10.30am	Team do final checks all is working and ready to go.
10.30am	Staff greet guests on arrival - escort to area Morning tea available
10.35am	Nicole Henty, A/CEO to MC – Opening address and introductions
	<i>Emergency Evacuation, Covid requirements, phones turn off= \$5 donation to RFDS</i>
	<u>Tasmanian Acknowledgment of Country Address</u> > I acknowledge and pay respect to the Tasmanian Aboriginal Community as the traditional and original owners, and continuing custodians of this land on which we gather today and acknowledge Elders – past and present. > Welcome RFDS Chairman Malcolm White and Board member? Life members?
	Introduce the Hon Jeremy Rockliff, Premier, Minister for Health, Mental Health and Wellbeing, Tourism and Trade.
11.00 am	Nicole to then Introduce Malcom White RFDS Tasmania Board Chair, to respond on behalf of RFDS
	MOU to be signed
	Media opportunity
	Premier leaves

File No.: MIN22/1515/6

Memo

To: Hon Michael Ferguson MP, Treasurer
From: Hon Jeremy Rockliff MP, Minister for Health
Date: 1 November 2022

Subject: **Alternative procurement process with the Royal Flying Doctor Service for the provision fixed and rotary-wing aero-medical retrieval services**

Recommendations

That you:

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Background

- Emergency rotary-wing (helicopter) services support essential aeromedical, search and rescue (SAR), and aerial law enforcement (ALE) functions for both the Department of Health (DoH) and the Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management (DPFEM).
- In addition, fixed-wing aircraft provide an essential emergency air ambulance service to DoH.
- DoH presently have a contract with a local aviation company, Rotor-Lift Pty Ltd for the provision of rotary-wing services (2 x Kawasaki BK117 helicopters and 1 x Bell 412EP helicopter) which expires on 14 January 2024; and a separate fixed-wing contract with the Royal Flying Doctor Service (South Eastern Section) for a fixed-wing air ambulance service which also expires on 14 January 2024 (see Table 1).

Table 1: Current contracts held by the Crown

Platform	Contractor	Service	Aircraft	Expiry date
Rotary-wing	Rotor-Lift Pty Ltd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aeromedical • Search and Rescue • Aerial Law Enforcement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 x Kawasaki BK 117 (24/7 operations) • 1 x Bell 412EP (daytime operations) 	14 January 2024
Fixed-wing	Royal Flying Doctor Service – South Eastern Section	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aeromedical 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 x Beachcraft King Air B200 (24/7 operations) 	14 January 2024

s.27

Key Issues

- During the 2021 Tasmanian state election, the government made an election commitment to the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) (Tasmania) to continue delivering aeromedical services for an additional ten-year period.
- Following the 2021 election, representatives from the Department of Health and RFDS (Tasmania) held discussions to progress the commitment, with a subsequent exchange of letters between myself as then Deputy Premier, and the then Chief Executive Officer of the RFDS (Tasmania), Mr John Kirwan. These letters are provided as Attachments 1 to 4 of this Memo.
- This exchange outlined a package of initiatives to form the basis of the Strategic Partnership, formalised in a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) (see Attachment 5).
- Under this proposal, RFDS (Tasmania) would commit to a partnership with the RFDS (South Eastern Section) to provide a comprehensive tender response for the provision of 'Aero-Medical Retrieval Services', including fixed and rotary-wing services for the provision of aeromedical, SAR and ALE tasks.
- On 8 July 2022, as Premier, I signed the MoU with RFDS (Tasmania) which committed to seeking an exemption from the Treasurer's Instructions (TIs) to provide RFDS (Tasmania) with the first opportunity under an alternative procurement process to submit an aviation services proposal to the State of Tasmania which meets the needs of both Ambulance Tasmania and Tasmania Police.

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- In addition to the MoU, during the 2022 Federal Government Election, the Australian Labor Party committed \$15 000 000 to “build a new Tasmanian home for the Royal Flying Doctor Service at Launceston Airport”.
- RFDS (Tasmania) has subsequently confirmed that with this \$15 000 000 uncontested grant from the Australian Government, in addition to a \$10 000 000 contribution from their own fundraising activities, this will enable RFDS (Tasmania) to develop both a new northern air base at Launceston Airport and they will also be able to develop a southern air base at Hobart International Airport Pty Ltd.
- These two airbases will support both fixed and rotary-wing aircraft, further enabling DoH to provide improved patient care whether it be for aeromedical primary (direct scene response to patients with a critical injury or illness) or secondary (interfacility transfer) taskings.

- s.27

- It has been agreed by DoH and DPFEM that DoH will be the lead agency undertaking the procurement process for a new long-term fixed and rotary-wing services for both Ambulance Tasmania and Tasmania Police.
- A joint agency Steering Committee comprising representatives from both the DoH and the DPFEM was established in August 2021.
- Under the direction of the Steering Committee, Specialist Aviation Consultants have been engaged to elicit and document the requirements for Tasmania's long-term Emergency Air Services and produce high quality, fit for purpose, aviation Request for Tender (RFT) specification/s for the respective Emergency Air Services, including airbase requirements.

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Options

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- s.27

Financial Consideration

- Should RFDS (Tasmania)'s tender response not be received within 28 days or does not meet the tender criteria, including the value for money assessment, the Department will move to open tender.
- DoH will utilise the services of specialist aviation consultants engaged by the project and recommended financial analysts, both of whom have considerable experience with fixed and rotary-wing contracts in other jurisdictions to review the tender response and ensure that the State receives a Value for Money proposition from RFDS (Tasmania).
- The procurement will be overseen by the Probity Advisor, O'Connor Marsden & Associates to ensure that due process is followed.
- Baseline funding is currently provided to DoH and DPFEM for the provision of existing fixed and rotary-wing emergency air services. s.27

s.27

Risk Implications

s.27

Attachment 1 – Letter from Minister to RFDS - Strategic Partnership - 14 September 2021

Attachment 2 – Letter from RFDS to Minister - Strategic Partnership - 24 September 2021

Attachment 3 – Letter from Minister to RFDS - Oral Health - 6 October 2021

Attachment 4 – Letter from Minister to RFDS - MoU Election Commitment - 20 October 2021

Attachment 5 – Memorandum of Understanding between the Tasmanian Government and RFDS TAS



Memorandum of Understanding

Dated 8th of July 2022

The Tasmanian Government

and

**The Royal Flying Doctor Service Tasmania
Limited**

To improve health outcomes for rural and regional Tasmanians through the ongoing delivery of aero-medical and primary health care services

Memorandum of Understanding

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Details

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Parties

Client	Name	The Minister for Health
	Address	GPO Box 125, HOBART TAS 7001
	Telephone	
	Fax	
	Attention:	

Provider	Name	Royal Flying Doctor Service Tasmania Limited
	Address	PO BOX 140 EVANDALE TAS 7212
	Telephone	03 639 10509
	Fax	
	Attention	John Kirwan CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| Recitals | <p>A This Memorandum records a non-binding strategic partnership between the Department of Health and the Royal Flying Doctor Service Tasmania Limited for the ongoing delivery of services to rural and regional Tasmanian communities including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• aero-medical flight services• primary health care <p>B This Memorandum demonstrates a long-term commitment from both parties to work together to improve health outcomes for Tasmanians living in remote and rural areas.</p> <p>C This Memorandum does not override the requirements of relevant laws, regulations or current funding or service agreements.</p> |
|-----------------|--|
-

Date of Memorandum	See Signing page
---------------------------	-------------------------

1 Definitions and interpretation

1.1 Definitions

In this Memorandum, unless the contrary intention is expressed:

"Royal Flying Doctor Service Commitments" means the commitments of the Royal Flying Doctor Service Tasmania Limited (RFDS Tas) in Schedule 1

"Tasmanian Government Commitments" means the commitments of the Tasmanian Government in Schedule 2

"Term" means the term of this Memorandum as fixed or extended under clause 4 (*Term of Memorandum*);

2 Royal Flying Doctor Service Tasmania Limited Commitments

RFDS Tas will do all those things comprised in the Royal Flying Doctor Service Tasmania Commitments.

3 The Tasmanian Government will undertake the Tasmanian Government Commitments

The Tasmanian Government will do all those things comprised in the Tasmanian Government Commitments.

4 Term of Memorandum

4.1 Term

This Memorandum commits both parties to a ten year strategic partnership consisting of two five year periods.

This Memorandum details the commitments of both parties for the first five year period of the partnership with commitments for second-five-year period to be agreed and incorporated into the MoU in 2026.

Liaison

In addition to any of the Joint Commitments, the parties will liaise and co-operate as necessary.

5 Notices

A notice or other communication to be given or made under this Memorandum should be in writing and addressed, as the case may be, to the receiving party at their address in the Details.

Executed as a non-binding Memorandum.

Signing page

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Dated:

8 July 2022

Signed for and on behalf of Tasmanian
Government by

)
)
)
)
)



Signature

Hon Jeremy Rockliff MP

Premier and Minister for Health

Signed for and on behalf of Royal Flying
Doctor Service Tasmania Limited by

)
)
)
)
)



Signature

Malcolm White

Chair

Schedule 1 – Royal Flying Doctor Service (Tasmania) Commitments

1. Royal Flying Doctor Service (Tasmania) commits to working with the Tasmanian Government to identify and respond to primary health service delivery gaps in rural and regional Tasmania including:
 - the delivery of oral health services to rural Tasmanians, in accordance with the MOU between Oral Health Services Tasmania and Royal Flying Doctor Service Tasmania executed on 6 September 2021
 - the delivery of public health initiatives to
 - Reduce smoking levels for young people in rural and remote Tasmania
 - Provide mental wellness support to young rural workers and students in grades 10 -12
 - a review of the RFDS Integrated Primary Care Consortium to explore its potential for expansion to additional local government areas including Derwent Valley and Southern Midlands
 - Identifying rural and regional service gaps and exploring service options to address them
2. Royal Flying Doctor Service (Tasmania) commits to attending annual operational direction meetings in January and bi-annual strategic direction meetings for the term of the Memorandum.
3. If provided the opportunity to be a sole tenderer, the Royal Flying Doctor Service (Tasmania) commits to a partnership with the Royal Flying Doctor Service (South Eastern Section) to provide a comprehensive tender response for the provision of all or part of the Aero-Medical Retrieval Services within 28 days of the tender specification being made available to them and accepts that the response will be assessed against the tender specification, including value for money criteria, in accordance with the relevant Treasurer's Instructions issued by the Treasurer under the *Financial Management Act 2016*.
4. The Royal Flying Doctor Service (Tasmania) accepts that if the joint tender response is not received within 28 days or does not meet the tender criteria, including the value for money assessment, the Tasmanian Government will proceed to open tender.
5. Nothing in this schedule prevents the Royal Flying Doctor Service (Tasmania) responding to all or part of an open tender.

Schedule 2 – Tasmanian Government Commitments

1. The Tasmanian Government commits to making minimum funds of \$300, 000 per annum available to the Royal Flying Doctor Service Tasmania to support the commitment in clause 1, schedule 1, subject to suitable funding arrangements being identified and on terms satisfactory to the Tasmanian Government. Proposed funds are outlined in Table 1.
2. The Tasmanian Government commits to actively consulting the Royal Flying Doctor Service Tasmania in the strategic review into Tasmania's aero-medical needs including inviting the Royal Flying Doctor Service to provide a submission and sharing the outcomes of the review.

The Tasmanian Government commits to provide advocacy to the Australian Government for the continued funding for the enhanced primary health care services to the Bass Strait Islands. RFDS Tas will advocate for the funding to be included in the next Agreement between the Commonwealth and the RFDS of Australia. RFDS Tas and the Department of Health will work with the local communities and stakeholders to conduct regular health needs assessments and planning to the Bass Strait Islands to optimise outcomes

The objectives of the funding are to:

- enhance primary health services to the Bass Strait Islands,
 - broaden the range and choice of health services available to the Bass Strait Islands,
 - support the provision of emergency critical care advice to clinicians during aeromedical evacuations from the Bass Strait Islands; and
 - provide a range of support services for upskilling, credentialing, and training to health professionals working on the Bass Strait Islands.
3. The Tasmanian Government commits to attending annual operational direction meetings in January and bi-annual strategic direction meetings for the term of the Memorandum.
 4. The Tasmanian Government commits the Department of Health to seeking approval in accordance with Treasurer's Instructions issued by the Treasurer under the *Financial Management Act 2016* to providing opportunity for the Royal Flying Doctor Service (Tasmania) in partnership with the Royal Flying Doctor Service (South East) to be a sole tenderer in relation to the provision of all or part of the Aero-Medical Retrieval Service for Tasmania beyond 2023.
 5. If the joint tender response is not received within 28 days or if in the assessment of the Tender Assessment Panel the Royal Flying Doctor Service (Tasmania) tender response does not meet the tender criteria, including the value for money assessment, the Tasmanian Government will proceed to open tender.
 6. Nothing in this schedule prevents the Royal Flying Doctor Service partnering and addressing all or part of an open tender.

Hutton, Bridget

From: MinistersCorrespondence <ministers.correspondence@treasury.tas.gov.au>
Sent: Thursday, 10 November 2022 1:59 PM
To: Ferguson, Minister
Cc: MinistersCorrespondence
Subject: RE: URGENT - MIN22/34108 : Letter from Premier regarding Royal Flying Doctor Service

Hi Leanne,

s.27

We will mark this NFA unless we hear otherwise - can you please confirm this is ok?

Thanks
 Andy

From: Ferguson, Minister <Minister.Ferguson@dpac.tas.gov.au>
Sent: Tuesday, 8 November 2022 1:06 PM
To: MinistersCorrespondence <ministers.correspondence@treasury.tas.gov.au>
Subject: URGENT - MIN22/34108 : Letter from Premier regarding Royal Flying Doctor Service
Importance: High

Good afternoon

Forwarded for urgent advice and draft response please.

s.27

please feel free to discuss with our Adviser, Simon Behrakis, on s.36

s.30 if needed.

Due: asap

Thanks

Leanne Madden

Administration Officer

Office of the Hon Michael Ferguson MP

Phone: (03) s.36

E-mail: minister.ferguson@dpac.tas.gov.au

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Hutton, Bridget

From: Invitations, Premier
Sent: Wednesday, 9 November 2022 11:08 AM
To: Jacquie Ray
Subject: Request for an urgent meeting with the Premier for Rotorlift Aviation

Good morning Jacquie

Thank you for your email and I am well.

Thank you for your request on behalf of Rotorlift Aviation for an urgent meeting with the Premier, Hon Jeremy Rockliff MP, to discuss the future of aeromedical services in Tasmania.

Your request has been passed on to the Premier for his consideration and his office will be in touch in due course.

Kind regards
Mandy

Mandy Brown
Executive Officer

Office of the Hon Jeremy Rockliff MP
Premier of Tasmania
Minister for Health
Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing
Minister for Tourism
Minister for Trade

Level 11, 15 Murray Street, Hobart 7000
Phone: (03) 6165 7650
E-mail: s.36@dpac.tas.gov.au

www.premier.tas.gov.au

From: Jacquie Ray <s.36@timminsray.com.au>
Sent: Tuesday, 8 November 2022 10:15 AM
To: Brown, Mandy <s.36@dpac.tas.gov.au>
Cc: McGregor, Barbara <s.36@dpac.tas.gov.au>
Subject: Saved to CM: Request for an urgent meeting with the Premier for Rotorlift Aviation
Importance: High

Hi Mandy,

I hope you're well and having a good week.

I'm hoping to arrange an urgent meeting with the Premier for Susan Stanley, CEO of Rotorlift Aviation, regarding the future of aeromedical services in the state.

If you could possibly let me know if/when the Premier might have availability that would be wonderful. Susan will make herself available as needed.

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Kind regards
Jacquie

Jacquie Ray | Managing Director
FPRIA

TimminsRay

70 Hampden Road, Battery Point TAS 7004

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14 November 2022

The Honorable Jeremy Rockliff MP
Premier, Minister for Health, Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing,
Minister for Tourism and Minister for Trade
Member for Braddon
11th Floor, Executive Building
15 Murray Street
Hobart, Tas 7000

Via email: jeremy.rockliff@parliament.tas.gov.au

Dear Premier,

I write seeking an urgent meeting with you to discuss the future of aeromedical services in Tasmania.

As you know, Rotor-Lift has proudly been providing rotary wing aeromedical services supporting Tasmania Police and Ambulance Tasmania for 22 years. We pride ourselves on our commitment to providing this service and supporting the State Government's emergency service providers.

It is fair to say that throughout that period the services provided by Rotor-Lift have consistently been assessed as outstanding by all key stakeholders.

On November 11, your office provided a representative of Rotor-Lift with a copy of a Memorandum of Understanding between the State Government and the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS). This was signed by yourself on July 8, approximately a month after you toured Rotor-Lift's facilities at the Hobart International Airport.

We are extremely concerned and feel let down by the Government.

Again, as you know, the MoU contains a clause which "commits" the Government to seek approval for the RFDS Tas "to be sole tenderer in relation to the provision of all or part of the Aero- Medical Retrieval Service for Tasmania beyond 2023". The MoU is now being used by the RFDS within the aviation industry as a guarantee that the RFDS has a contract for aeromedical services. It is being used as a basis for RFDS to approach competitors of Rotor-Lift, inviting them to provide under sub-contract the very services which Rotor-Lift currently provides.

This appears to be a significant departure from the previously flagged open tender process, which was to proceed in preparation for the conclusion of the current contract. Rotor-Lift was verbally advised by Ambulance Tasmania that its 18-month extension would now need to be further extended to allow the process outlined in the MOU with RFDS to progress.

This advice is completely at odds with the reassurances given by the former Premier's Office as recently as April 6 this year. Those reassurances were supported by the suggestion of a visit to Rotor-Lift, which was then taken up by you as the new Premier on June 10.

At the time of the June 10 visit, the concerns held by Rotor-Lift regarding talk of a deal with RFDS were raised.



On the basis that at no point prior to July 8, or since, has the State Government consulted or discussed with Rotor-Lift any plan to change the process underpinning the provision of aeromedical services, and given the previous assurances, Rotor-Lift is extremely concerned as to the impact the MoU may have on the ability of it, and other potential providers, to be able to participate in an open, competitive tender process for aeromedical services with the State Government.

Therefore, I seek clarification as to why the State Government has chosen not to embark on an open and competitive tender process for the 'sole-tenderer' role it has outlined to the RFDS in the MoU.

The MoU also refers to a review of aeromedical services and commits to "actively consulting RFDS" and inviting submissions by RFDS. The State Government has not advised Rotor-Lift of any plan to conduct a review of these services, much less committed to having Rotor-Lift play a role in any such review. This is despite Rotor-Lift having provided a significant portion of the services presumably being reviewed for the past two decades.

As I'm sure you'll appreciate, Rotor-Lift is extremely keen to continue in its capacity as a provider of aeromedical services to the State Government. Accordingly, I seek to meet with you as a matter of urgency to gain a better understanding of the current situation.

Kind regards

Susan Stanley

CEO, Rotor-Lift

susan@rotorlift.com.au

Mobile: s.36



Adviser: Andrew Johnson

Department: Health

Ministerial RM Ref:

Meeting Brief for the Premier

Meeting with Susan Stanley, Chief Executive Officer, RotorLift

12.30pm to 1.00pm, Wednesday 23 November 2022

Premier's Office, Parliament House

Order of proceedings: 12.30pm attendees arrive
1.00pm attendees depart
(30 minutes)

In attendance: Susan Stanley, Chief Executive Officer, RotorLift
Sandy Wittison, Principal Adviser
Andrew Johnson, Adviser
Dale Webster, Deputy Secretary, DOH

Adviser: Andrew Johnson, Adviser, s.36

GUIDANCE NOTES FOR THE PREMIER

- Susan Stanley wrote to you on 14 November 2022 (attachment 1) seeking an urgent meeting regarding the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS).
- RotorLift are seeking guidance from Government about what this means for their interests as one of the current providers of aero-medical retrieval services in Tasmania.
- RotorLift would like to see their relationship with Government to continue rather than potentially have to work with a different head contractor.

s.27

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KEY POINTS

RFDS MoU

- During the 2021 State Election campaign, the former Premier, Peter Gutwein entered into a MoU which committed the Government to enter into good faith negotiations with the RFDS on a long-term strategic partnership to support health services in Tasmania. (attachment 2).
- Following these negotiations, you as Premier and Minister for Health entered into a non-binding MoU with the RFDS on a 10-year strategic partnership for the ongoing delivery of services to rural and regional Tasmanian communities, including the provision of aero-medical flight services (attachment 3).
- Among other items, the MoU commits the Tasmanian Government to seeking approval from the Treasurer to provide opportunity to RFDS to be a sole tenderer in relation to the provision of all or part of the aero-medical retrieval service for Tasmania beyond 2023.

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RotorLift

- RotorLift is a local company based in Cambridge who have been providing rotary wing services to the Tasmanian Government for a number of years.

- Currently, RotorLift provides the helicopters and flight crew as part of the state's aero-medical retrieval service.
- In correspondence to you RotorLift have highlighted their concerns about the MoU with RFDS and the potential commercial implications this has for their business.
- The Department have previously advised RotorLift of the intention of the Government to undertake a review of aero-medical retrieval services across the State to determine the appropriate model and level of service required. The outcomes of this would then form the basis of an open tender process.
- The MoU with RFDS means RFDS will now be provided first opportunity to respond to all or part of the tender specifications once issued through a sole tenderer process.
- RFDS have reached out to RotorLift to arrange a meeting to discuss the MoU and aero-medical retrieval service. RotorLift postponed this meeting until they had the opportunity to meet with you.

s.27

s.27

Hutton, Bridget

From: Shadbolt, Stephanie
Sent: Tuesday, 6 June 2023 8:19 AM
To: The Premier
Subject: FW: RFDS Tasmania - MoU Commitments Update - June 2023
Attachments: RFDS Tasmania Re MOU Commitments Update June 2023 Final 050623.pdf; 2 MoU - Health and RFDS version Signed Friday 8 July 2022.pdf; 4a RFDS Tas Smoking Cessation Project & Timeline May 2023 230523.pdf; 4aa RFDS Tas Smoking Cessation project plan update May 2023 230523.pdf; 5 RFDS Tas IPCC Expansion Research paper & proposal May 2023 230523.pdf; 6 RFDS Tas Identify Rural & Regional Service gaps & options to address May 2023 230523.pdf

From: Nicole Henty <s.36@rfdstas.org.au>
Sent: Monday, 5 June 2023 5:43 PM
To: s.36@health.tas.gov.au
Cc: Rockliff, Jeremy <Jeremy.Rockliff@dpac.tas.gov.au>
Subject: RFDS Tasmania - MoU Commitments Update - June 2023

You don't often get email from s.36@rfdstas.org.au. [Learn why this is important](#)
 Dear Secretary,

Please find attached correspondence addressing activities and research as managing our commitment towards the signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) Tasmania and the Tasmanian Government, signed on 8 July 2022.

I look forward to hearing from you when convenient.

Yours sincerely,
 Nicole

Nicole Henty
 Chief Executive Officer

M s.36
 E s.36@rfdstas.org.au
 W www.flyingdoctor.org.au/tas
 Level 1, 18 Paterson St, Launceston 7250
 PO Box 1407, Launceston TAS 7250





Royal Flying Doctor Service TASMANIA

36

Monday 5 June 2023

Kathrine Morgan-Wicks
Secretary

Department of Health

s.36

[@health.tas.gov.au](mailto:health.tas.gov.au)

Cc: jeremy.rockliff@dpac.tas.gov.au

Dear Secretary,

I am writing in relation to the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Royal Flying Doctor Service (Tasmania) and the Tasmanian Government, signed on 8 July 2022 (*attached*).

As you would be aware, the MoU sets out a long-term strategic partnership between the two parties to improve the health and wellbeing of primarily rural and regional Tasmanians through a range of agreed actions.

In correspondence dated 14 September 2021 and 24 September 2021 between Health Minister (and now Premier) Jeremy Rockliff and then RFDS Tasmania CEO, Mr John Kirwan underpinning the formulation of the MoU, a number of points were agreed separate to the aero-medical contract (*copies also attached*).

These included:

- > A minimum \$300,000 per annum for at least five years, to be reviewed in year four
- > State Government to continue to fund TAZREACH
- > \$300,000 for oral health to be spent by end of FY 2022. To be extended subject to a review in second half of 2022
- > \$200,000 per annum for five years for population health program including reducing smoking for youth in rural and remote Tasmania and expansion of the RFDS Rural Health Program to include mental health wellness support for Grade 10-12 students and young rural workers
- > \$50,000 to fund a project to explore expanding RFDS Integrated Primary Care Consortium to areas including Derwent Valley and Southern Midlands
- > \$50,000 to identify rural and regional service gaps and explore service options to address these gaps

General Enquiries: 03 6391 0509

Level One 18-20 Paterson St Launceston 7250

PO BOX 1407 Launceston 7250

Email: enquiries@rfdstas.org.au Website: www.flyingdoctor.org.au

Royal Flying Doctor Service Tasmania ABN 93 785 910 050 ACN 617 680 896

Patron: Her Excellency the Honourable Barbara Baker AC, Governor of Tasmania





Royal Flying Doctor Service
TASMANIA

36

Funding for these various commitments is reflected in the signed MoU, as per below

	2021- 22	2022- 23	2023- 24	2024- 25	2025-26
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Oral Health Rural Support	300	....	....	....	....
Integrated Primary Care Consortium	50	....	....	....	....
Rural and Regional Service Gaps	50	....	....	....	....
Population Health Program	....	200	200	200	200
	400	200	200	200	200
<i>Unallocated²</i>	....	100	100	100	100
RFDS Tas Contributions					
BSIA ³	1,050	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC

I now seek your agreement to access funds outlined in the letters and MoU, including funds set aside for the 2021-22 and 2022-23 financial year for which funding was set aside but not yet received by RFDS (with the exception of oral health). The attached documents represent works completed to date to activate the agreed funding.

The status of the various agreed work-streams from the RFDS perspective is outlined below.

- > \$300,000 for oral health to be spent by end of CY 2022. To be extended subject to a review in second half of 2022.

Progress: Oral Health service delivery commenced on the 31 August 2021 from Queenstown, providing much needed dental services to the West Coast region.

The Dental contract linked with this state funding allocation is in the final stages of contract updates for accuracy, followed by sign off. It is noted that State funding for the dental program has been extended through till 2026. Discussions with the A/Deputy Secretary have included expansion of areas for service delivery outside of the West Coast region and would include the use of Oral health



Royal Flying Doctor Service TASMANIA

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Services dental clinics in Campbell Town, Triabunna and Nubeena once approved which would assist to manage current public waitlist patients that hold a concession card.

To date, dental activity has been completed to the value invoiced at \$176,727.87 for dental services to the west coast community.

- > Allocation of \$50 000 to fund a project to explore the expansion of the RFDS Integrated Primary Care Consortium to additional Local Government Areas, including the Derwent Valley and Southern Midlands.**

Following this exploration project, if an agreement is reached to expand the RFDS Integrated Primary Care Consortium (IPCC), then funding to support the expansion will be agreed through the 2022 Operational Directions meeting.

Progress: Confirmation and acceptance are sought under the guidelines of the MoU with the allocation of \$50,000 to flow to RFDS Tasmania to commence the exploration of this project based on next steps as reported in attached documentation. On completion of expansion modelling, a further update will be provided with a request to access the below option as highlighted in the response dated 14 September 2021:

Following this exploration project, if an agreement is reached to further expand the RFDS Integrated Primary Care Consortium, then funding to support the expansion will be agreed through the 2022 Operational Directions meeting. – Noting the MoU was signed on the 8 July 2022 with research commencing post this date, the 2022 Operational Directions meeting has since past, RFDS seeks approval for the funding to be activated immediately to commence Activity One to meet timeline stated to determine future needs and direction.

(see attachment 5 for research on expansion and next steps).

I note that \$100,000 per annum in “unallocated” funds nominally available for this purpose.

- > Allocation of \$50 000 to identify rural and regional service gaps and explore service options to address these gaps.**

Progress: Primary care services include general practice, other medical, nursing, pharmaceutical, diagnostic, allied health, mental health, dental services, and home and community support services. Equitable access to primary healthcare services helps reduce the number of avoidable hospital visits, improves population health, and improves health outcomes. It is important for the prevention and treatment of risk factors and chronic conditions as well as improving mental health outcomes. Primary health care is typically the first contact an individual with a health concern has with the health system.

To achieve reasonable or equitable access to primary healthcare, the RFDS recommends people should have, at a minimum, GP, nursing, oral health and mental health services accessible within 60 minutes, via a permanent service, a visiting clinic, and/or timely access to telehealth services.



Royal Flying Doctor Service TASMANIA

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As part of the MOU between the Tasmanian Government and the Royal Flying Doctor Service Tasmania, allocation of funding was committed to identify rural and regional service gaps and to explore service options.

The funding for this proposal will aim to;

- > Provide a background into RFDS service in Tasmania and identified service gaps*
- > Develop a business case for utilization of the committed funding*
- > Identify key project plan steps*

Confirmation and acceptance are sought under the guidelines of the MoU to progress research, with the allocation of \$50,000 to flow to RFDS Tasmania to commence the exploration of this project).

(see attachment 6 for research on expansion and next steps).

- > (FY22/25-25/26) \$200,000 per annum for five years for population health program including reducing smoking for youth in rural and remote Tasmania and expansion of the RFDS Rural Health Program to include mental health wellness support for Grade 10-12 students and young rural workers*

Progress: The five-year state funding for the smoking cessation project will enable RFDS to contribute to reducing smoking in rural and remote communities and create supportive environments that encourage young people to be smoke free.

Smoking cessation initiatives will be implemented, targeting both young people (12-24 years) and communities in rural and remote Tasmania.

A collaborative reference group was formed, adopting a multifaceted approach to engage relevant stakeholders in Tasmania in proactively approaching smoking cessation. The reference group included representatives from Public Health Services (PHS), Quit Tasmania, Royal Flying Doctor Service and THS Statewide Smoking Cessation Program, and highlighted the need for local responses including: exploring smoking perspectives of youth and communities in rural areas, prioritising smoking support for people with the greatest needs; trialling a smoking cessation initiative in a selected rural community; and the active engagement of young people in the project.

Payments have been received for commencement of program with RFDS to receive:

1/01/2023 \$62,000 (Consultation with Public Health Services identified that with the growing concern of smoking rates (including the use of e-cigarettes), the allocated funding should be focused on developing RFDS Smoking Cessation funding. For the first two years of the program, \$138,000 (GST exclusive) has been allocated to the Tasmanian Health Service Alcohol and Drug Services to employ 1.0FTE Clinical Nurse Consultant to assist with supporting smoking-related initiatives with the RFDS).

1/01/2024 \$62,000

1/01/2025 \$200,000

(See attached details on project activities and timelines attachments 4a & 4aa).

Additionally, the MoU sets out both an:

- > An Annual Operational Direction meeting in January each year between RDFS and DoH, for the purposes of *"defining and providing recommendations to the Minister for Health on the funded outcomes for the coming financial year, including any budget submissions that may be required."*

And

- > A bi-annual Strategic Direction meeting between RDFS and DoH to agree the second five-year strategic period.

To date, no such meetings have occurred.

To that end, I also seek your support to operationalise these meetings, which are an important part of the MoU and ongoing work under its auspices.

Finally, I would note that at this point RDFS is satisfied with the status of discussions with the Department regarding the aero-medical contract, pending the release of the tender documents which we understand to be imminent.

I am acutely aware that there has been the passage of quite a considerable period of time between the initial agreements as finalised in the MoU in July last year, and this correspondence, for which I apologise.

I can only put it down to the change of RDFS CEO from John Kirwan to myself and enhancing my understanding of current and new agreements, as well as the ongoing travails of COVID which we all know has put significant and previously unprecedented pressure and responsibilities onto the health sector, including us (for example, our involvement in the vaccine roll-out).

I would be very happy to meet directly with yourself or any of your nominees to further discuss the matters outlined in this correspondence, including the ongoing operationalisation of the MoU.

I look forward to hearing from you, when convenient.

Yours sincerely,



Nicole Henty

RDFS Tasmania CEO



Royal Flying Doctor Service TASMANIA

The proposed project activities and timeline are outlined below:

A. PLANNING

With support and guidance from Tasmania Department of Health;

Activity	Timeline	Expected outcome	Data source and evaluation methodology	Person/Area responsible	Comments
Establish and co-ordinate a Reference Group inclusive of representatives from Public Health Services (PHS), Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS), Quit Tasmania, THS Statewide Smoking Cessation Program, Primary Health Tasmania and others as determined by the group	Dec 2022	> Local organisations, young people and target communities are engaged in taking local action to enhance smoke free communities	> Tasmania Tobacco Action Plan > Quit Tasmania data > THS data	RFDS	> Explore smoking perspectives of youth and communities in rural areas > Prioritise Action 3 areas of the Tasmania Tobacco Action Plan > Pilot a smoking cessation initiative in a selected rural community > Actively engage young people in the project
Develop a Memorandum of Understanding with the THS Statewide Smoking Cessation Program to employ 1.0 FTE Clinical Nurse Consultant over a minimum of two years to support smoking-related RFDS initiatives.	Jan 2023	> MoU developed with THS > 1.0 FTE Clinical Nurse Consultant recruited and employed		RFDS, THS	

General Enquiries: 03 6391 0509

Level One 18-20 Paterson St Launceston 7250

PO BOX 1407 Launceston 7250

Email: enquiries@rfdstas.org.au Website: www.flyingdoctor.org.au

Royal Flying Doctor Service Tasmania ABN 93 785 910 050 ACN 617 680 896

Patron: Her Excellency the Honourable Barbara Baker AC, Governor of Tasmania





Royal Flying Doctor Service TASMANIA

B. IMPLEMENTATION

With the support of the THS Statewide Smoking Cessation Program Clinical Nurse Consultant:

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Expected outcome</i>	<i>Data source and evaluation methodology</i>	<i>Person/Area responsible</i>	<i>Comments</i>
In partnership with relevant members from the Reference Group, implement research initiatives that build the evidence base around smoking and quitting in rural and remote communities	Jan 2024	> Knowledge of practices to encourage young people and communities in rural areas to stay smoke free	Literature review of smoking cessation enablers in rural communities	UTAS, RFDS	
Identify and implement strategies to strengthen the capacity of RFDS services to address smoking among clients and the communities they work in	Dec 2023	> Systems to record the smoking status of all clients/patients > Smoke free policies at all RFDS workplaces	RFDS, THS		
Identify and implement strategies to strengthen the capacity of RFDS staff to address smoking among clients and the communities they work in	Dec 2023	> RFDS staff trained in smoking prevention knowledge and practices	RFDS, THS		
Identify and implement strategies to support people to quit smoking and vaping (individual and group initiatives)	Dec 2025	> Increased uptake of smoking cessation programs by RFDS clients to support people who smoke and/or vape to quit	RFDS, Quit Tasmania		



Royal Flying Doctor Service TASMANIA

Identify and implement strategies to support people to remain smoke free (individual and group initiatives)	Dec 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none">> Increased uptake of smoking campaigns to support people to remain smoke free> Increased uptake of smoking campaigns to support communities to remain smoke free	RFDS, Quit Tasmania	RFDS, Quit Tasmania
Trial and evaluate innovative community-based projects to reduce smoking and vaping levels in rural and remote communities - with a particular focus on priority populations as identified by the Tobacco Action Plan 2022-2026	Dec 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none">> Knowledge of practices to encourage rural communities to stay smoke	Literature review of smoking cessation enablers in rural communities	UTAS, RFDS, Tas DoH, THS, Quit Tasmania, selected LGAs
Support, participate and promote Healthy Tasmania Smoke Free Communities Initiatives, including the Smoke Free Young People Working Group	April 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none">> Collaborative state wide campaign developed to support Smoke Free Communities		Quit Tasmania, RFDS, Tas DoH, THS



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C. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Expected outcome</i>	<i>Data source and evaluation methodology</i>	<i>Person/Area responsible</i>	<i>Comments</i>
Monitor and review the activities, including ongoing data gathering, consultation and feedback from participants and key stakeholders.	June & Dec 2023 June & Dec 2024 June& Dec 2025 June& Dec 2026 June 2027	> Provide six monthly reports to PHS > Provide an evaluation report to PHS at the end of the contract period. > Case studies highlighting successful quit attempts from: a young person, an adult, RFDS staff and local community	Project activities Generated project data for individual outcomes, community outcomes and geographical regions	RFDS	



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State Government Funding Proposal- Expansion of the Integrated Primary Care Consortium (IPCC)

Background

The Integrated Primary Care Consortium (IPCC) is a statewide collaborative initiative jointly led by the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) Tasmania in partnership with Tasmania local government areas.

Established in 2017, the Consortium is an evolution of the initial partnership between RFDS and five local government areas and a response to feedback from state and local stakeholders of the need to advance and strengthen alignment in primary care transformation efforts across the public and private sectors of the state healthcare system.

Initial stakeholders include the local government areas of Break O'Day, Dorset, Flinders Island, George Town and Glamorgan Spring Bay.

About

The **purpose** of the IPCC is to define service provision gaps hindering the primary care sector and to provide suggestions on methods to overcome these gaps in order to increase clinician effectiveness and improve patient care outcomes.

Its **mission** is to advance accessible, continuous, and coordinated person-centered care for all.

Its **vision** is to strengthen and sustain a strong primary care system as a foundation for high functioning health system in Tasmania.

The IPCC achieves its purpose by:

- Improving access to services through coordination and cooperation and by responding to community needs
- delivering services to improve health outcomes through an individual whole-of-person approach
- delivering one-on-one sessions and small group programs, involvement with community events, providing community educations programs and health promotion activities.

This proposal will work toward community health improvements at the local level using meaningful and specific data, ongoing communication and seeking out opportunities that the community may benefit from along the lines of better health.

Research has shown the important role primary care has in improving health outcomes, lowering costs, and reducing health disparities. The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed systemic gaps, existing vulnerabilities of the primary care system, and worsening health disparities which pose serious concerns about long-term impact and sustainability. This pandemic has also offered an opportunity to rethink, reimagine, and rebuild a better, more cost-effective system of care for all Tasmanians. However, any effort must acknowledge the complexities in the system as it currently stands and the multitude of stakeholders that must be engaged to produce meaningful reform. Health system leaders, policymakers, and stakeholders, including clinicians and patients, should seize the

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opportunity to implement smart public policies and investment strategies, guided by practical application of both clinical and practice models designed to not only create efficiencies and cost-savings, but also produce the desired patient outcomes that are essential to a more effective and equitable health system.

Developed by Primary Health Tasmania using existing national and state data sources, each community health check profile presents local government area and corresponding state data for over 10+ measures across the four domains of demographics, social and economic conditions, healthy living, healthcare, and health outcomes. While not conclusive and exhaustive, these profiles are intended to guide and advance primary care and health transformation efforts across Tasmania.

Derwent Valley Community Health Check 2021

Southern Midlands Community Health Check 2021

2021 Derwent Valley, Census All persons QuickStats

2021 Southern Midlands, Census All persons QuickStats

Activity 1: To explore the expansion of the RFDS Integrated Primary Care Consortium to additional Local Government Areas, including the Derwent Valley and Southern Midlands.

Allocated budget: \$50,000

- Internal project officer costs \$18,000 (approx. 0.2FTE over 2023 – 24 FY)
- Pilot program (3-months) \$25,000
- Equipment/consumables: \$3,000
- Community engagement and travel costs: \$4,000

Purpose

To enable RFDS to expand the Integrated Primary Care Consortium (IPCC) at the local level using meaningful and specific data, ongoing communication and seeking out opportunities that the Derwent Valley and Southern Midlands communities may benefit from along the lines of better health.

Project Outcomes

- Local community members are engaged in identifying their healthcare needs and using the findings to inform future planning for health services in their areas
- Contribute to facilitating active conversations about how services are funded into the future to support better coordination of care, and consistency of service delivery
- Knowledge of how better access, both in-hours and after-hours, to services contributes to better health outcomes
- Increased access to health-related information by consumers and health professionals
- A coordinated system working towards having an integrated, connected, and supported workforce that is able to work to the full scope of its practice.



Activities

- establish and co-ordinate a consortium inclusive of representatives from GP practices, the Tasmania Health Department, Derwent Valley Council, Southern Midlands Council, Health Consumers Tasmania and others as determined by the RFDS
- run a desktop data review of Derwent Valley and Southern Midlands population health data, the different services, visiting or operating in the region, and any environmental factors that influence the health and wellbeing of residents
- conduct 'kitchen tables' discussions, led by Health Consumers Tasmania, with Derwent Valley and Southern Midlands community members about their health needs
- run health service gaps consultation sessions with local primary health providers
- brief the Derwent Valley and Southern Midlands Council on the purpose of these consultations and an overview about the project and its next steps

Next steps

- The Southern Midlands and Derwent Valley councils will nominate place managers to pilot the implementation of IPCC with the RFDS.

The **Place Manager** is a representative from the local council and their role is to:

- > strengthen the IPCC partnership between RFDS and the local government authorities within each LGA
- > work with RFDS to identify the best service delivery model appropriate to the needs of the community
- > work in partnership with RFDS on the day to day service delivery within each local government area
- > participate in governance forums
- > identify local needs and at-risk populations for targeting and liaising with RFDS
- > identify opportunities for further integrating the services within each local government area
- The Clinical Advisory Group (led by RFDS Tasmania) and the Community Health and Wellbeing Advisory Committee (led by Health Consumers Tasmania) will oversee the implementation of IPCC initiatives and activities over the coming years in line with the lessons learned since 2017

Timeline

- July-August 2023: Community engagement activities
- September-November 2023: pilot program delivery
- December-January 2023: program and community evaluation to determine future needs



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RFDS Smoking Cessation Project Action Plan

This action plan assumes a start date of 01 May 2023 and prioritises key tasks for FY 2023-24 which will take 52 weeks to complete. The key tasks, deliverables and timeframes will be confirmed at the project implementation meeting.

Project Purpose

Reducing smoking* in rural and remote Tasmania communities

*Reducing smoking will include reducing both the use of tobacco products and e-cigarettes

Action 1: Develop a Memorandum of Understanding with the THS Statewide Smoking Cessation Program to employ 1.0 FTE Clinical Nurse Consultant (CNC) over a minimum of two years to support RFDS smoking cessation related initiatives.

Next steps: May 2023 - May 2024

Key deliverable: Employ 1.0 FTE CNC

- > RFDS and THS to discuss the location where the appointed CNC will be based, including the capacity for RFDS to provide office space for the appointed CNC
- > THS will initially identify strategies that strengthen the capacity of RFDS systems towards being a smoke free organisation and delivery of successful programs
- > Appointed CNC will support RFDS to implement the identified strategies, including trialling their effectiveness with RFDS staff
- > Appointed CNC will identify and implement strategies to strengthen the capacity of RFDS staff to address smoking among clients and the communities they work in.

Action 2: Develop a Memorandum of Understanding with UTAS to build the evidence base around smoking and quitting in rural and remote communities

Next steps: May 2023 - May 2024

Key deliverable: Implementation work plan based on evidence based-research

- > The evidence-based research from UTAS will inform the implementation work plan of practices to encourage people and communities in rural and remote areas of Tasmania to reduce smoking.

In particular, this research will identify

- i. strategies to support young people in rural and remote areas to quit smoking and vaping (individual and group initiatives)
- ii. strategies to support people in rural and remote areas to remain smoke free (individual and group initiatives)

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- iii. innovative community-based projects to reduce smoking and vaping levels in rural and remote communities - with a particular focus on priority populations.

Action 3: Identify and implement strategies to support people to quit smoking and vaping and stay smoke free (individual and group)

Next steps: June 2024 – June 2025

Key deliverable: Group and individual strategies to support people in rural and remote areas to quit smoking and vaping and remain smoke free

Following recommendations from the UTAS evidence-based research, and in consultation with THS Statewide Smoking Cessation Project, the CNC will;

- > implement strategies to support young people in rural and remote areas to quit smoking and vaping (individual and group initiatives)
- > implement strategies to support people in rural and remote areas to remain smoke free (individual and group initiatives)

Action 4: Trial and evaluate innovative community-based projects to reduce smoking and vaping levels in rural and remote communities - with a particular focus on priority populations as identified by the Tobacco Action Plan 2022-2026

Next steps: Jan – Dec 2025

Key deliverable: Campaign launch to reduce smoking

Following recommendations from the UTAS evidence-based research, and in consultation with THS Statewide Smoking Cessation Project

- > launch and trial campaign to support people to quit smoking and vaping (individual and group initiatives)
- > launch and trial campaign to support people to remain smoke free (individual and group initiatives)

Action 5: Support, participate and promote Healthy Tasmania Smoke Free Communities initiatives, including the Smoke Free Young People Working Group

Next steps: Jan – Dec 2025

- > Launch a collaborative state wide campaign with THS, Quit Tasmania to support Smoke Free Communities



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State Government Funding Proposal- Identify rural and regional service gaps and explore service options to address these gaps.

Overview

The Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) has supported the health care needs of rural and remote communities located right across Australia for almost 100 years. Our history as an aeromedical organisation providing emergency services across the outback was based on the need to reduce the barrier of distance, and make quality health care accessible to 28% of the Australian population who live in rural and remote areas, beyond the reach of normal medical infrastructure. While we will always be known for our aeromedical services, we have evolved into a multi-faceted health provider, offering primary health care services and mental health programs for rural and remote communities. Primary health care now makes up two-thirds of our daily operations.

Primary care services include general practice, other medical, nursing, pharmaceutical, diagnostic, allied health, mental health, dental services, and home and community support services. Equitable access to primary healthcare services helps reduce the number of avoidable hospital visits, improves population health, and improves health outcomes. It is important for the prevention and treatment of risk factors and chronic conditions as well as improving mental health outcomes^{1,2} Primary health care is typically the first contact an individual with a health concern has with the health system. In 2020–21, there were around 256 million Medicare-subsidised primary care services in Australia, including, but not limited to, GP attendances (171 million), allied health attendances (27 million) and services provided by nurses, midwives and Aboriginal health workers (4.3 million)³. 90% of Australians received at least one Medicare subsidised general practitioner service in 2021–22⁴. According to the Tasmanian Primary Health Information Network (PHIN) dataset, Tasmanians saw their GP 7 times a year on average in 2019^{5, 6}.

This proposal recognises that people who live in rural and remote areas face unique challenges due to their geographic location and often have poorer health outcomes, have higher rates of hospitalisations, deaths, injury and also have poorer access to, and use of, primary health care services than people living in metropolitan areas. To achieve reasonable or equitable access to primary healthcare, the RFDS recommends people should have, at a minimum, GP, nursing, oral

¹ Swerissen H, Duckett S. Mapping primary care in Australia. Carlton: Grattan Institute; 2018 [cited 2020 Sep 25]. Available from: <https://grattan.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/906-Mapping-primary-care.pdf>.

² AIHW (2021b). Medicare-subsidised GP, allied health and specialist health care across local areas: 2019–20 to 2020–21. AIHW website, accessed 2 February 2022.

⁴ Medicare-subsidised GP, allied health and specialist health care across local areas: 2021–22. About - Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (aihw.gov.au)

⁵ Tasmanian Government: Public hospital dataset: Health Central data warehouse. Tasmania. Analysed by Primary Health Tasmania, April 2021.

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health and mental health services accessible within 60 minutes, via a permanent service, a visiting clinic, and/or timely access to telehealth services⁷.

As part of the MOU between the Tasmanian Government and the Royal Flying Doctor Service Tasmania, allocation of funding was committed to identify rural and regional service gaps and to explore service options.

The funding for this proposal will aim to;

- > Provide a background into RFDS service in Tasmania and identified service gaps
- > Develop a business case for utilization of the committed funding
- > Identify key project plan steps

Background

In 2011–12, the per capita ratio of GPs to population in major cities (227.8 per 100 000) was twice that of regional areas (113.0 per 100 000), and considerably higher than the ratio of GPs in remote areas (16.0 per 100 000). These findings are consistent with 2017–18 data, which indicated that there were 243 GPs per 100 000 population in major cities, 28 per 100 000 in regional areas, and 31 per 100 000 in remote areas. It is projected that these figures will increase in 2027–28 to 255 per 100 000, 140 per 100 000, and 43 per 100 000 in major cities, regional areas and remote areas, respectively. By comparison, the number of employed medical specialists per 100 000 population in inner regional, outer regional and remote/very remote areas in 2015 were 82.7, 61.5 and 34.2 respectively. These findings and projections indicate a significant gap in service provision in rural and remote areas as compared to major cities, with rural and remote areas being significantly below workforce service benchmark recommendations.

Being a largely rural state, Tasmania continues its historical struggle to adequately resource the healthcare sector, with a reliance on attracting skilled professionals from interstate and overseas. The availability of the medical workforce is lowest in the North West of the state, and is also reflected in recent GP shortages in Ouse, Dover, Campbelltown and Battery Point^{8,9,10,11}. The difficulty of recruiting and retaining a health workforce is not unique to Tasmania, but rather a significant one experienced across other Australian jurisdictions. For example, there are significant GP service provision differences in geographical areas within Australia, including the Esperance region (WA), Pilbara region (WA), Cape York region (QLD), Central Highland (TAS), Dalrymple region (QLD) and Arnhem Land (NT).

Results from an RFDS report on access to primary healthcare show that although most people had access to a primary healthcare service, many people living in inner regional, outer regional, remote and very remote Australia had limited access to GPs (n=65,050; 14.7%), nurse-led clinics (n=440,387; 99.4%), dentists (n=142,269; 32.1%), mental health services (n=106,848; 24.1%), and Aboriginal health services (n= 41,758; 9.4%). This finding is consistent with research demonstrating that many rural and remote areas have poor provision of GPs, nurses, dentists, and mental health workers.

⁷ Gardiner, Fergus & Bishop, Lara & de Graaff, Barbara & Campbell, Julie & Gale, Lauren & Quinlan, Frank. (2020). *EQUITABLE PATIENT ACCESS TO PRIMARY HEALTHCARE IN AUSTRALIA*.

⁸ [Tasmanians waiting weeks for doctors as regional GP shortage puts pressure on EDs - ABC News](#)

⁹ [Tasmanian government health services under strain after Ouse GP clinic announces closure - ABC News](#)

¹⁰ [Regional towns are struggling with GP shortage — this one just lost three - ABC News](#)

¹¹ [In New Norfolk in Tasmania's Derwent Valley, you can't see a doctor on the weekend - ABC News](#)



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Specifically, 65,050 Australians had no access to a GP within a 60-minute drive time. The majority of people without access to a GP were located in Western Australia (n=27,043; 41.6%). Of all Australians without access to a nurse-led clinic, the majority were located in Tasmania (n=124,012; 28.2%). There were 41,758 Indigenous Australians without access to Aboriginal health services within a 60-minute drive time. Of all Indigenous Australians without access to Aboriginal health services, the majority were located in Tasmania (n= 13,439; 32.2%). The geographical regions with the highest populations of people without access to Aboriginal health services within a 60-minute drive time included Braddon (Tas) (n=7,391; 17.7%), Far North (n=5,247; 12.6%), Bass (Tas) (n=3,356; 8.0%), Kimberly (NT) (n=2,988; 7.2%), and Alice Springs (n=2,864; 6.9%)¹².

For Australian health users, cost and waiting times are often a reason for delaying or not using a GP service. In addition, the out-of-pocket costs incurred whilst seeking these services, such as travel and productivity losses, may be a further factor in lower utilisation rates. A total of 2.4% of people who needed to see a GP delayed or did not see a GP due to cost. 16.6% of people felt they waited longer than acceptable for a GP appointment. 3.1% of people with a long-term health condition who needed to see a GP delayed or did not see a GP due to cost. This was higher than for those without a long-term health condition (1.3%)¹³.

There are a range of barriers that Tasmanians may experience in accessing primary care, including: low bulk-billing rates, out-of-pocket costs, sometimes lengthy wait times to see a GP, health literacy problems that are not addressed in current service delivery models, difficulty accessing transport, and ongoing workforce recruitment and retention challenges, particularly for GPs and allied health professionals. Notable forces putting pressure on the GP recruitment and retention in Tasmania, include but are not limited to; fewer medical graduates choosing to specialise as GPs, limited education and training opportunities through Tasmanian universities, underfunding of GP bulk billing services through Medicare, an ageing population characterized by an increasing demand for GP services by people living with chronic conditions and an undersupply of GPs who are ageing and retiring early.

Although residents of sparsely settled communities are prepared to travel further to access non-emergency care than people in more densely settled areas¹⁴, striving for equity of access to medical treatment should remain a government priority. Unless innovative approaches to GP access are identified, it is likely that remote and rural communities in Tasmania will continue to experience poor access to medical care for both emergencies and non-emergencies. The shortage of GPs and specialists in rural and remote areas is a problem that poses serious challenges to equitable healthcare delivery. The majority of Tasmania's specialists work in the south of the state, and as such access in other areas need to be promoted via extended outreach, which can be facilitated by organisations such as the RFDS.

Business case

As previously highlighted, there are multiple factors that adversely impact on the recruitment and retention of doctors in Tasmania. The Tasmania government recognises the importance of having a

¹² Gardiner, Fergus & Bishop, Lara & de Graaff, Barbara & Campbell, Julie & Gale, Lauren & Quinlan, Frank. (2020). *EQUITABLE PATIENT ACCESS TO PRIMARY HEALTHCARE IN AUSTRALIA*.

¹³ ABS (Australian Bureau of Statistics) (2021) *Patient experiences in Australia: summary of findings, 2020–21-external site opens in new window*. ABS website, accessed 2 February 2022.

¹⁴ McGrail, M.R., Humphreys, J.S. & Ward, B. Accessing doctors at times of need—measuring the distance tolerance of rural residents for health-related travel. *BMC Health Serv Res* 15, 212 (2015). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12913-015-0880-6>



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health workforce strategy that supports the delivery of sustainable, high quality health services for all Tasmanians into the future, provided by a highly skilled, competent and flexible workforce of the right size and shape providing access to services across Tasmania. This has led Tasmania to local solutions that seek to address rural workforce shortage concerns. These local solutions complement those already in place nationally, for example the Practice to Practice pilot program that seek to address rural workforce shortage concerns.

In addition to workforce challenges, low profitability continues to present challenges for GP clinics, reducing the availability to deliver bulk-billed services for individuals. A study by the University of Tasmania reported almost half (43%) of general practices in Tasmania are operating at a loss¹⁵.

To address market failure and lack of needed service delivery in rural and remote Tasmania, a business case should consider the following factors into RFDS Tasmania medical service delivery:

- > Operating model in line with modern general practice and in line with RFDS Tasmania's vision for primary health care
- > Workforce including non-GP (nurse practitioners, allied health)
- > Finances to improve operating model (better MBS billing & minimal out of pocket services)
- > Innovation including alternative sources of funding

Project Plan

Identify rural and regional service gaps and explore service options to address these gaps.
Allocated budget: \$50,000
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• External consultant (Larter Consultants- recommended by RFDS Victoria following work on purchase of GP Clinic) \$28,000• Internal project officer costs \$18,000 (approx. 0.2FTE over 2023-24FY)• Community engagement and travel costs \$4,000
Purpose
To provide a background into RFDS service in Tasmania and identify rural and regional service gaps and to explore GP-led service options
Project Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• develop a feasibility study for RFDS medical services in Tasmania, including a market scan• develop a business case for delivery of GP-led services
Activities



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- engage with an external consultant to develop a feasibility study for RFDS medical services in Tasmania, including a market scan and business case for delivery of services.
- work with RFDS South Eastern & Victoria Sections, to understand processes and learnings on recent ventures in GP clinic operations.

Timeline

- July-September 2023: feasibility study & business case (external consultant)
- September-October 2023: future community engagement and consultation with RFDS sections as required
- By December 2023: Recommendation of future service delivery submitted to Tasmanian Government