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**MEDIA RELEASE: Thursday 28 September**

**Walk, run or ride in October to keep the Flying Doctor flying**

***National fitness fundraiser kicks off this Sunday (1/10) to support vital medical services for Aussies in remote and rural areas***

After travelling 420,000kms in 2022, the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) put the call out to Australia to go further during its second annual Oceans to Outback fitness challenge – and the country answered.

This year, almost 14,000 participants have already signed up from across the country, that’s more than double the number of participants in 2022. But there is still time to get involved and help reach their target to fundraise $2.9 million.

The month-long Oceans to Outback fundraiser involves cycling, running or walking a set distance throughout October to help the RFDS continue delivering life-saving healthcare to rural and remote areas across the nation.

“With such a strong response to our first national fitness fundraiser, we’re hopeful the upcoming Oceans to Outback challenge will go to another level,” RFDS Federation Executive Director Frank Quinlan said.

“I urge everyone who can take part to do so – not only will you reap the benefits of improving your fitness, but you’ll be helping to keep the Flying Doctor flying everywhere from the oceans to the outback.

“Everyone deserves access to essential primary health care, no matter where they live. The RFDS has been focused on providing exactly that to all Australians for 95 years and counting.”

While participants can nominate their own distance for Oceans to Outback, the RFDS has suggested targets to walk, run or ride towards based on key RFDS statistics:

* 42km – 1km for every 1000 Australians who can’t access basic healthcare.
* 78km – 1km for every Flying Doctor aircraft saving lives across Australia.
* 95km – 1km for every year the RFDS has providing life-saving healthcare.
* 247km – The RFDS provides vital 24/7 aeromedical emergency retrieval and patient transfers across rural and remote Australia.
* 609km – 1km for each patient flown by the RFDS every 48 hours.
* 1,060km – 1km for every patient helped by the RFDS each day.

“We recommend choosing a distance that can be knocked out in daily, weekly or fortnightly bursts throughout October. Push yourself and know you’ll be making a real difference,” Mr Quinlan added.

**Oceans to Outback begins on Sunday 1 October. There is still time to register, visit** [**oceanstooutback.org.au**](https://www.oceanstooutback.org.au/) **to join the challenge.**

**About the Royal Flying Doctor Service**

Using the latest in aviation, medical and communications technology, the RFDS delivers emergency medical and primary health care services to anyone who lives, works or travels rurally or remotely.

Established in 1929 by Reverend John Flynn, whose face now resides on the $20 note, the RFDS provides 24-hour aeromedical services that can reach anywhere within hours. It also offers telehealth consultations, fly-in fly-out GP and nurse clinics, mobile dental services, patient transfers and more.

**ENDS**

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