

Speech by Mrs Gina Rinehart
Executive Chairman of the Hancock Prospecting Group
and S. Kidman & Co
The Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) Aircraft Launch
Thursday 14 December 2017, Adelaide

Good evening Governor Van Le, Mr Gui, Senator Cory Bernardi, and other distinguished guests, the Royal Flying Doctor Service, Hancock, Kidman and Shanghai CRED staff members, and friends.

I am so delighted and honoured to be here with you in Adelaide today. The Royal Flying Doctor Service, an essential service in our outback, holds a special place in the hearts of many people around our country.

For us at Kidman, it means that those hard-working station managers, and staff, who give up the city conveniences to work and live on our stations, are able to get the medical attention and critical emergency service they need and deserve. We at Kidman share your values including those of dedication, integrity and innovation.

For me personally, it continues my family's long association with your wonderful organisation. My mother, Hope Hancock, over decades used to raise funds for The Royal Flying Doctor Service in West Australia, holding many functions at her home, and contributing to others who did so too. Our garden every year looked lovely with all the colourful umbrellas the ladies attending kindly brought to help the day.

And I well recall, as many of you present would be well familiar with, the making of hundreds of sandwiches just prior to each of these events! And so many tea cups to collect, rinse and pack afterwards! I'm not sure if I should share this with you, we didn't have to wash the cups pre returning them, and we soon found that using a garden hose really sped up the cup rinsing process! Well, even if I can't say the sandwich making and the tea cups were highlights for me, I did like so much the ladies who came to these happy functions, lovely people usually from the country, or had spent part of their lives working in the country.

The work you do is incredible, so too are the stories of the people you help.

And, although we know of the essential work the Royal Flying Doctor Service does to help people in the country, I would also like it better known, that their services are important too to those living in cities. For instance, a friend of mine, Richard, embarked on a road trip with his daughters from Adelaide to Darwin. He has kindly permitted me to share his story with you this evening. On the way, he and his daughters ventured off-road to see Oodnadatta and were involved in a terrible accident where his vehicle went over an eight-foot embankment, flipping his car on its side.

Luckily, he was able to free himself and his daughters from the accident and climb back up to the road.

For past seven hours on the way to Oodnadatta, he had not seen a single vehicle other than his so they decided they must start walking, in their injured and bloody state, to find help before sundown. They then spotted a vehicle that was miraculously driving towards them and he and his daughters waved at the car to stop.

The miner driving the car kindly drove them over four hours to the nearest hospital at Cooper Pedy, my friend was assessed, and in much pain due to his several broken ribs and bones. Thankfully, his daughters only had minor injuries.

The Hospital contacted The Royal Flying Doctor Service and he was flown to the Royal Adelaide Hospital for further assessment and treatment.

To quote my friend, he said: *“The Royal Flying Doctor Service is absolutely critical to our country – I don’t know what my health would be like today without them. I was in severe pain with multiple injuries and broken bones that needed to be assessed and treated by specialists and experts in a major metropolitan hospital. The Royal Flying Doctor Service made sure I got the medical attention I needed. They made me feel safe and well cared for. Their professionalism and level of care for those stranded and injured in the outback is unmatched.”*

There are many people like Richard who might have painful accidents in the country and who would not get the medical help and assistance they needed to make a full recovery if it was not for The Royal Flying Doctor Service. And please I repeat, let's not forget, not only those who live in the country, may need our crucial Royal Flying Doctor Service.

With that story in mind, I am very delighted to ask Ms Lorretta Reynolds, Chairman RFDS Central Operations and CEO Mr John Lynch and Mr Richard Collins and Joanna Collins to join me please, as Richard has a wonderful donation to present to the Lorretta.

Please join me in applause.

To try to put your great efforts in perspective, The Royal Flying Doctor Service flew nearly 27 million kilometres last year, the equivalent of more than 600 flights around the Earth! The Royal Flying Doctor Service also helps someone every 2 minutes and had contact with over 330,000 patients last year.

Everyone at the Royal Flying Doctor Service should be very proud of your history and what you continue to accomplish.

We are delighted to be supporting you, one of the world’s largest aeromedical organisations and one with a truly proud history, dating back about 90 years.

We hope that our sponsorship of your organisation and the Pilatus PC 12 single engine aircraft, and the new Pilatus PC 24 twin jet engine aircraft being introduced to your fleet late next year, will assist you in helping Australians in their time of need.

God bless the Royal Flying Doctor Service, their doctors and nurses and all support staff, their planes, and all who fly in them, and the many volunteers and supporters who assist this iconic and essential Australian organisation.

Thank you.