



Committee Secretary
Standing Committee on Health
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

By email: health.reps@aph.gov.au

28 July 2015

**House Standing Committee Inquiry into Chronic Disease Prevention
and Management in Primary Health Care**

Dear Committee Members,

I write to you on behalf of the Royal Flying Doctors Service (RFDS) to provide input to the House Standing Committee's Inquiry into Chronic Disease Prevention and Management in Primary Health Care.

The RFDS is a vital part of remote and rural communities, providing critical health services to areas of great need, particularly in places where low population numbers make it unviable to support local health services such as hospitals, emergency departments, pharmacies, General Practitioners (GPs) and other primary health care services.

In addition to our most well-known services – emergency aeromedical evacuations – the RFDS also provides critical primary health care services to some of the remote parts of Australia. This includes regular fly-in fly-out GP and Nursing clinics in remote and rural areas; a 24/7 telehealth service; oral health programs; mental health and wellbeing programs; and, health promotion activities. In many instances, these are the only health services received by people living in remote Australia and are crucial to ensuring health and wellbeing in these communities, including the management of chronic disease where access to services is limited. These services are funded through Commonwealth and State and Territory Governments as well as a very generous donor public.

In 2015, the RFDS commissioned a report by the Centre for International Economics to explore primary health care in remote and rural Australia and the role of the RFDS in delivering these services. This comprehensive report is enclosed as our submission to this Inquiry.

We would be very happy to appear before the Committee to further discuss the report and other matters associated with the provision of primary health care in remote and rural Australia.

Yours sincerely

Martin Laverty
Federation Chief Executive Officer