

TRAINING

For many years Registered Nurse Jessica McInnes harboured an ambition to broaden her skills so that she could join the Royal Flying Doctor Service as a Flight Nurse.

After working in Haematology/Oncology/ Bone Marrow Transplant, Jessica successfully applied for the RFDS Midwifery Scholarship and came top of her class at the University of Western Sydney.

“I always admired RFDS Flight Nurses and secretly dreamed of being one,” says Jessica, who began her own Flight Nurse career at RFDS Alice Springs Base in February 2015.

“Alice Springs evoked images of flying over never-ending red dirt and landing on isolated dusty boiling hot airstrips – I must say I was not far off – except in winter it is freezing cold and at night the stars are spectacular,” Jessica says.

“The sheer variety of clinical needs our patients have is challenging but also rewarding, albeit a steep learning curve in new skills and knowledge,” she says.

Jessica is one of four RFDS Midwifery Scholarship recipients currently working for RFDS Central Operations.

As a leader in the provision of primary health and aeromedical emergency services to rural and remote Australia, the RFDS has always supported the training and education of health professionals who will serve isolated Australians for years to come.

For undergraduate medical, nursing and allied health students the RFDS offers:

- > The RFDS *Ride-along Program* where students can spend a weekend ‘on-shift’ with aeromedical crews at Adelaide and Port Augusta bases;
- > Electives for medical and nursing students to take part in regular GP clinic visits or aeromedical evacuations from Port Augusta Base;
- > Final-year dental students a chance to take part in a two-day *Remote Oral Health Care Program* clinic in a remote community.

For junior clinical staff, training opportunities include RFDS Midwifery

Scholarships and a GP Registrar position with the RFDS Port Augusta Primary Care team as a six- or 12-month placement offered by the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners.

There is also the *Rural Emergency Skills Program* for rural and remote area GPs to maintain their clinical skills needed to manage acutely sick or critically injured patients in country hospitals.

In the Northern Territory, in collaboration with the Alice Springs Hospital, the RFDS provides the Central Australian Retrieval Training (CART) Course where staff deliver retrieval training specific to the requirements of remote locations where rapid access to tertiary hospital facilities is not possible.

For residents of remote locations, the RFDS also provides First Aid training to assist them as early responders to emergencies.

> Alice Springs Base Flight Nurse Jessica McInnes.