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Senator Glenn Lazarus
Chair, Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee
c/- Committee Secretary
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
By email: legcon.sen@aph.gov.au

29 January 2016

Dear Senator Lazarus,

The Royal Flying Doctors Service (RFDS) welcomes the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee inquiry into the national registration of paramedics and the opportunity to make a submission.

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, pharmacies and General Practitioners (GPs). Our most well-known services include primary evacuations - flying to remote destinations to retrieve critically injured or unwell patients to transport them to emergency departments; and, inter-hospital transfers - transporting less critical patients by air or by road across large distances to, or between hospitals, or back to their homes. The RFDS also provides regular fly-in fly-out GP and Nursing clinics in remote and rural areas and a 24/7 telehealth service.

The RFDS currently employs paramedics in a range of roles across our organisation. This includes, for example as Ambulance Transport Attendants for our road vehicles in Victoria. Paramedics also often have a role in our aeromedical work, particularly where primary response, extrication and on scene work are required prior to the RFDS arriving to transport a patient in an emergency.

However, the RFDS regularly faces challenges in seeking to employ paramedics, as it can be difficult to ascertain their experience, currency and scope of practice owing to the variable requirements in different States and Territories. The RFDS therefore strongly supports national registration for paramedics and is of the view that national registration, including the recognised minimum standards of practice that will necessarily be implemented, will only serve to advance the profession and benefit the health sector in Australia more broadly.

The RFDS would welcome the opportunity to appear before the Committee to discuss this submission in further detail.

Yours sincerely

Martin Laverty
Federation Chief Executive Officer

Federation Patron: His Excellency General the Honourable Sir Peter Cosgrove AK MC (Retd)
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