



## Media release

Thursday, 10<sup>th</sup> of August 2017

### **On-the-road bush specialist health service welcomes Canberra support**

The founder of Australia's pioneering program that delivers - by truck - regular specialist medical services to rural and remote communities, says a Federal Coalition Government grant of \$1 million announced today (August 11) will boost confidence for plans to add more services.

Brisbane-based cardiologist, Dr Rolf Gomes, who launched his Heart of Australia project in Toowoomba in October 2014, says the million-dollar grant "gives me more confidence to push ahead towards service expansion which, in turn, means increasing at-home access for country Australians to critical specialist medicine".

"In today's modern society it's a sad truth that Australians living in rural communities are 44 percent more likely to die of heart disease - mostly because of the problem of actually getting to see specialists locally."

"The inequity in medical access for rural patients is exactly what our Heart of Australia program is targeting and this new gesture of recognition from the Federal Government means that our team can have confidence to consider expanding both our geographical reach across the bush and adding extra services for the people out there" Dr. Gomes said.

"On the road so far, we have seen more than 3,300 patients in 850 town visits; we have saved more than 120 Queenslanders suffering previously-undiagnosed critical cardiac conditions; and we have referred at least 30 patients for open heart surgery."

Dr. Gomes said he hoped to "soon unveil good news for the bush" following the Federal Government's announcement.

Dr. Gomes also thanked Dr David Gillespie MP, Senator Barry O'Sullivan and Mr David Littleproud MP for their strong advocacy and hard-working efforts in support of the Heart of Australia program.

Further information about Heart of Australia is available at [www.heartofaustralia.com](http://www.heartofaustralia.com)



HEART *of*  
AUSTRALIA

in partnership with



### **Fast Facts**

- 17% of patients seen by Heart of Australia are Indigenous Australians.
- Heart of Australia is a transportable health solution – In addition to bringing specialists to remote communities Heart of Australia also brings diagnostic infrastructure which allows patients to undergo diagnostic cardiac testing on-site.
- This allows the loop from symptom-to-diagnosis-to-treatment to be closed potentially within the one visit. It minimises displacement for patients from their communities and support networks and reflects the reality of the modern-day practice of medicine.
- The program flagship is a 25m-long, state-of-the-art semi-trailer rig now travelling around 8,000km per month to deliver cardiac, endocrine and respiratory disease specialists to locals who would otherwise face lengthy delays and significant travel to see specialists.
- The clinic, towed by a Kenworth prime mover, has two consulting rooms, ultrasound and cardiac stress testing equipment.
- Heart of Australia's is supported by foundation partner Arrow Energy, Bayer Australia, St Andrew's War Memorial Hospital, iOR Petroleum, Kenworth, RACQ, Telstra, Brown & Hurley, QML Pathology, Servier Laboratories, Mater Group, Frasers Livestock Transport, GT Insurance, Regional Express Airlines and Bridgestone Australia.
- Patients need a GP referral before undergoing a Heart of Australia consultation and specialist testing if required.

### **Media Contact**

Dina Cavallucci - Heart of Australia

Ph: 0417 722 903 Email: [dina@heartofaustralia.com](mailto:dina@heartofaustralia.com)