



# Media Release

## Senator Alan Eggleston

### Liberal Senator for Western Australia

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18 October 2007

## State Government neglecting regional WA over RFDS funding

Supporting the call by WALGA President Bill Mitchell for increased funding for the RFDS, WA Senator Alan Eggleston accused the WA State Government of neglecting country residents and fly-in fly-out miners by failing to increase funding to the Royal Flying Doctor Service.

Senator Eggleston said he was disappointed to learn the RFDS have had to suffer in silence while being forced to pick up the excessive workloads caused by the chronic doctor shortage in rural WA.

“Earlier this year the Howard Government recognised the strain the RFDS was facing and in April announced a significant boost in Federal funding to the RFDS as a result,” he said.

“At the same time, Prime Minister John Howard called on the State Governments to recognise that they too needed to increase funding to the RFDS in order to protect the sustainability of our flying doctors.

“Still, it remains that the Carpenter Government has ignored this call despite this year’s ridiculously large State budget surplus.

“For State Labor to continue to only grant the RFDS funding increases based on CPI-indexed levels shows a total disregard for the needs of rural and regional West Australians.

“I worked as a doctor in Port Hedland for 22 years and I know how hard it is to retain doctors and nurses in country areas and the importance the RFDS plays in plugging the gap in services.”

“Having also been involved with the RFDS doing fly-in fly-out clinics 3 times a week to Goldworthy and Shay Gap in the North West and emergency evacuation flights to Perth, I know the pressure these doctors face and that they deserve more consideration from their State Government.”

“Western Australia does not consist solely of Perth and it’s time the Carpenter Government recognised the medical needs of those living outside the city.”