



MEDIA RELEASE  
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## ULTRA IMPORTANT DONATION TO RFDS

The Royal Flying Doctor Service has been presented with two new, portable, Sonosite ultrasound machines by Wellard Rural Exports to help enhance the health care services offered by the RFDS to people living, working or travelling in rural and regional WA.

The two machines were purchased for \$60,000 to take the total complement of Sonosites to six so that RFDS medical teams throughout the State have access to one when needed. .

The machines will be used for general obstetrics as well as emergency medicine. Trauma cases in which they will be used range from assisting flying doctors to pinpoint internal bleeding into the abdomen or chest, to establishing 'lines' through which to administer medication.

"We don't have access to x-ray machines on-board the aircraft so these advanced ultrasound machines can play an important role in assisting both diagnosis and treatment," said RFDS Medical Director Dr Stephen Langford.

Wellard Rural Exports Managing Director Steve Meerwald said the funds to purchase the ultrasound machines were generated from donors and bidders at the Wellard 2007 Christmas Party Charity Auction, and then matched dollar for dollar by Wellard.

Wellard has now donated \$150,000 to the RFDS over the past three years, which is additional to the \$150,000 donated to the Children's Leukaemia and Cancer Research Foundation.

"The Royal Flying Doctor Service provides an invaluable service in rural and regional Western Australia, and its recent call for more Government funding highlights the tough financial constraints, which have been placed on this vital organisation," Mr Meerwald said.

"We place significant value on its continued operations so are proud to be able to assist in helping the RFDS enhance its service delivery."

Dr Langford said the ultrasound machines would be placed in aircraft in Derby, Port Hedland, Kalgoorlie, Meekatharra and Perth.

"We really appreciate this generous donation and welcome the immediate benefits it will deliver to our doctors and, importantly, our patients," he said.

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In 2006/07, RFDS aircraft flew more than five million kilometres, or seven times to the Moon and back, and transferred more than 6,000 patients, while attending to some 50,000 others. The 16,674 hours flown is 30 per cent higher than the hours flown in 2004.

*Photo Attached*

*Photo caption: Wellard Rural Exports Managing Director Steve Meerwald watches RFDS medical director Dr Stephen Langford demonstrate the use of the new ultrasound machine to RFDS doctors ahead of their deployment to RFDS bases around WA.*

**For further information please contact:**

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**Background – Wellard Rural Exports**

Wellard Rural Exports has supplied quality Australian dairy and beef cattle and sheep and goats to the world for more than 29 years. Based in Fremantle, the company's operations cover every aspect of the export chain, including feed and high fibre milling, road transport, feedlot facilities and modern shipping.

Wellard has priority access to the most modern fleet of livestock carriers on the ocean through its association with Siba Ships. The company's flagship carrier, the MV Becrux, is a purpose-built livestock carrier capable of carrying 75,000 sheep or 18,000 cattle from Australia to major markets around the globe. She was commissioned in 2002.

For more information visit: [www.wellardgroup.com.au](http://www.wellardgroup.com.au)