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Karara Teams Up with RFDS to Launch Innovative Mobile Dental and Primary Healthcare Clinic for Midwest Region

\$1.75M commitment over 5 years for mobile clinic to provide dental and general healthcare

Karara Mining Limited (KML), the developer and operator of the Midwest region's largest new resource project, has unveiled a major new long-term community health initiative for the Midwest region after establishing an innovative partnership with the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) to launch a new Mobile Dental and Primary Healthcare Clinic.

The state-of-the-art mobile clinic – which will be purchased and equipped by KML and operated by the RFDS – will operate in a number of Midwest Shires which have been closely involved with, and supportive, of the development of the Karara Project.

A key focus of the mobile clinic will be the provision of mobile dental healthcare services to these Shires, which will be covered based on a yearly schedule centred on a certain number of weeks across the year.

“Access to oral healthcare is a key issue in the Midwest region and other parts of regional Western Australia, as poor dental health can often lead to other diseases and poor general health,” said RFDS General Manager Nursing and Primary Health Care, Gabrielle West.

“In these small, remote locations access to health care is limited and dental services have often not been available,” Ms West said.

KML's Chief Executive, Stephen Murdoch, said that KML had committed to underwrite the purchase of the Mobile Primary Healthcare Clinic, at an estimated acquisition cost of approximately \$450,000, as well as to underwrite the ongoing operating costs of the clinic, which are estimated at \$260,000 per annum.

This amounts to a total commitment of approximately \$1.75 million over five years, subject to completing detailed planning and receipt of tenders for the mobile unit and finalising estimated operating costs with the RFDS, which will be responsible for operating the service.

KML and the RFDS will work together to secure additional funding to contribute towards the operating costs of the unit, including the potential to access Royalties for Regions funding through the Midwest Development Commission. KML will also continue to engage with local shires and other Midwest companies to secure contributions towards the recurrent funding requirements of this service.

The mobile clinic will be mounted on an approximate 8-tonne truck and will comprise a fully-equipped dental clinic and mobile primary health care clinic. It will be stored at the Karara Village when not on the road. In addition, KML has agreed to make its regular KML fly-in, fly-out charter service to site available to RFDS personnel. If required, RFDS personnel can also be accommodated at Karara Village.

Mr Murdoch said the provision of improved dental healthcare services across the Midwest region had the potential to make a significant and very positive impact on the health of communities across the region, with good dental healthcare an important preventative healthcare measure.

“This is a tremendous initiative for KML to become involved in which builds on our recently launched Community Health Fund,” Mr Murdoch said. “We are serious about contributing to the ongoing health of the community in the region and this is a very practical and direct way for us to make a difference, in partnership with the RFDS.”

Ms West, said that for many years, the RFDS has been conscious of the need for more fly-in, fly-out dental services in remote communities where poor dental hygiene and lack of treatment can lead to a range of serious medical conditions, such as infection and heart disease.

“A focus of the program will be on education and encouraging people, including children, to adopt good oral hygiene practices to help prevent more serious conditions arising in future,” she said.

The recently launched Community Health Fund is underpinned by an initial \$300,000 investment, which will be available to provide a co-funding source for the surrounding communities to secure Government funding for local health related infrastructure projects.

Mr Murdoch said the Community Health Fund had also received a strong boost from fund raising initiatives undertaken by KML employees and key contractors, demonstrating the enthusiasm of people working within the project to make a difference in the local community.

“As we move towards production ramp-up at Karara later this year, we are very pleased to continue to broaden our involvement in a number of targeted community activities in programs across the Midwest region, with a specific focus on long-term education, training and community health,” Mr Murdoch added.

“I am very pleased that we have been able to team up with the RFDS – which provides a very important service to remote and regional communities and many mining companies operating across Western Australia – to develop and launch this innovative venture to deliver much-needed dental and healthcare services to communities that really need it in the Midwest.”

Further information will be provided on the new mobile clinic program as it becomes available.

For further information on KML’s community activities and programs, visit <http://www.gindalbie.com.au/>

For further information on the RFDS, visit www.flyingdoctor.org.au

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