



media release

embargoed 10am, February 11, 2009

High profile champions improve health of country kids

A group of high profile Australians has committed to promote Royal Far West's new brand and improve the health and wellbeing of country children by becoming Champions for Country Kids.

2008 Australian of the Year Lee Kernaghan, entrepreneur Gerry Harvey, Paralympian Kurt Fearnley, story teller Murray Hartin, Olympian Jacqui Lawrence, Manly Sea Eagles player Glenn Stewart, Seven News' Sara Groen and Australian Wallaby Phil Waugh have taken on the champion roles as the 85-year-old charity launches a new brand and aims to help more country kids.

"Country children do not enjoy the same opportunities for good health as city children because they do not have the same access to health services," Royal Far West CEO Jann Kingston said.

"Royal Far West reduces this inequity by providing a range of specialist health services to country children.

"The champions come from a variety of backgrounds but each personifies the connection between hard work, perseverance and success. They are all great role models for our children.

"A number of our champions were raised in country NSW and are able to identify with the challenges associated with living in rural, regional and remote NSW."

Royal Far West relies heavily on donations to fund its services which include developmental assessments, mental health and oral health services for country children.

Lee Kernaghan said: "Every child has a right to health care no matter where they live. Royal Far West reaches out to country kids and helps them realise their full potential in life.

"We need to dig deep and give whatever we can so Royal Far West can help more country kids."

The team of Champions for Country Kids and Royal Far West's new brand were launched at the historic Mint, Macquarie St, Sydney, before an excited group of

young Royal Far West patients, dignitaries and a living representation of the logo – the Veech family of Carinda.

Chris and Donna Veech live on a vast sheep and cattle property in remote NSW, and know first hand the difficulties in accessing specialist health services while living in an isolated area.

Their children Charlie, 6, and Lily, 5, both had health issues that significantly affected their ability to communicate.

“Charlie was born tongue tied and we’d been looking for help for him since he was born,” Donna said.

“For a long time we didn’t know where to turn but now, thanks to Royal Far West, Charlie’s speech has gone on in leaps and bounds.

“This improvement in his speech has also benefited his self confidence and his school work. All of a sudden, we can talk and communicate with our son; he’s not in trouble so much and he’s making new friends,” she said.

Donations to Royal Far West can be made by phoning 1800 500 061 or download the form at www.royalfarwest.org.au

The Champions for Country Kids

Visit www.royalfarwest.org.au for biography information from 1pm Feb 11, 2009

Lee Kernaghan OAM - 2008 Australian of the Year, raised Riverina NSW

Gerry Harvey – entrepreneur, educated Bathurst

Kurt Fearnley OAM – Paralympian, raised Carcoar

Mark Ferguson – news presenter, raised Tamworth

Murray Hartin – story teller, raised Moree

Jacqui Lawrence – Olympian, raised Old Bonalbo

Glenn Stewart – Manly Sea Eagles player

Sara Groen – Seven News

Phil Waugh – Australian Wallaby

-ends-

Media contact: Sharon Hogan
0421 619 097