

# Magnificent Men in their Flying Machines help RFDS

The call of adventure has inspired five WA men mostly in their 50s and 60s to fly microlight aircraft around Australia to raise money for the Royal Flying Doctor Service.

The men were in a team of eight pilots from Australia and Britain who would leave Perth on the microlight challenge — a six-week, 12,000km trip up the coast of WA, across to Darwin and finishing in Brisbane, pilot and Nowergup farmer Angus Horwood, 68, said.

All the West Australians would then take another month to fly back to Perth, he said. The other WA pilots were Roger Bunny, 50, from Bunbury, Rob Donaldson, 39, from West Perth, Howard Watts, 52, and Warren Watts, 50, both from Morley.

Most of the pilots had no more than six years flying experience, he said.

Six ground crew would travel by road to each overnight stopover. Mr Horwood said the adventure would give the pilots something to tell their grandkids. “There've been a few people that have done it, but they're

usually young,” he said. “This is the first lot of wrinklies that have done this sort of thing to my knowledge.”

The RFDS was chosen as beneficiary because it was its 80th anniversary. The microlights were a hanglider driven by a four-stroke engine and the pilot steered in flight by shifting weight. Each two-seater machine could fly at 120kmh for up to six hours.

The challenge was the brainchild of British pilot Ian Nuttall and was partly inspired by the BBC documentary Long Way Round on a 31,000km motorcycle journey from London to New York, he said.

Ground crew member John Sharman, 63, from Brisbane, said the idea had caught people's imagination because of the age of those involved.

People who donate at least \$80 to the RFDS will be able to join one of the pilots as a passenger for a leg of the journey.

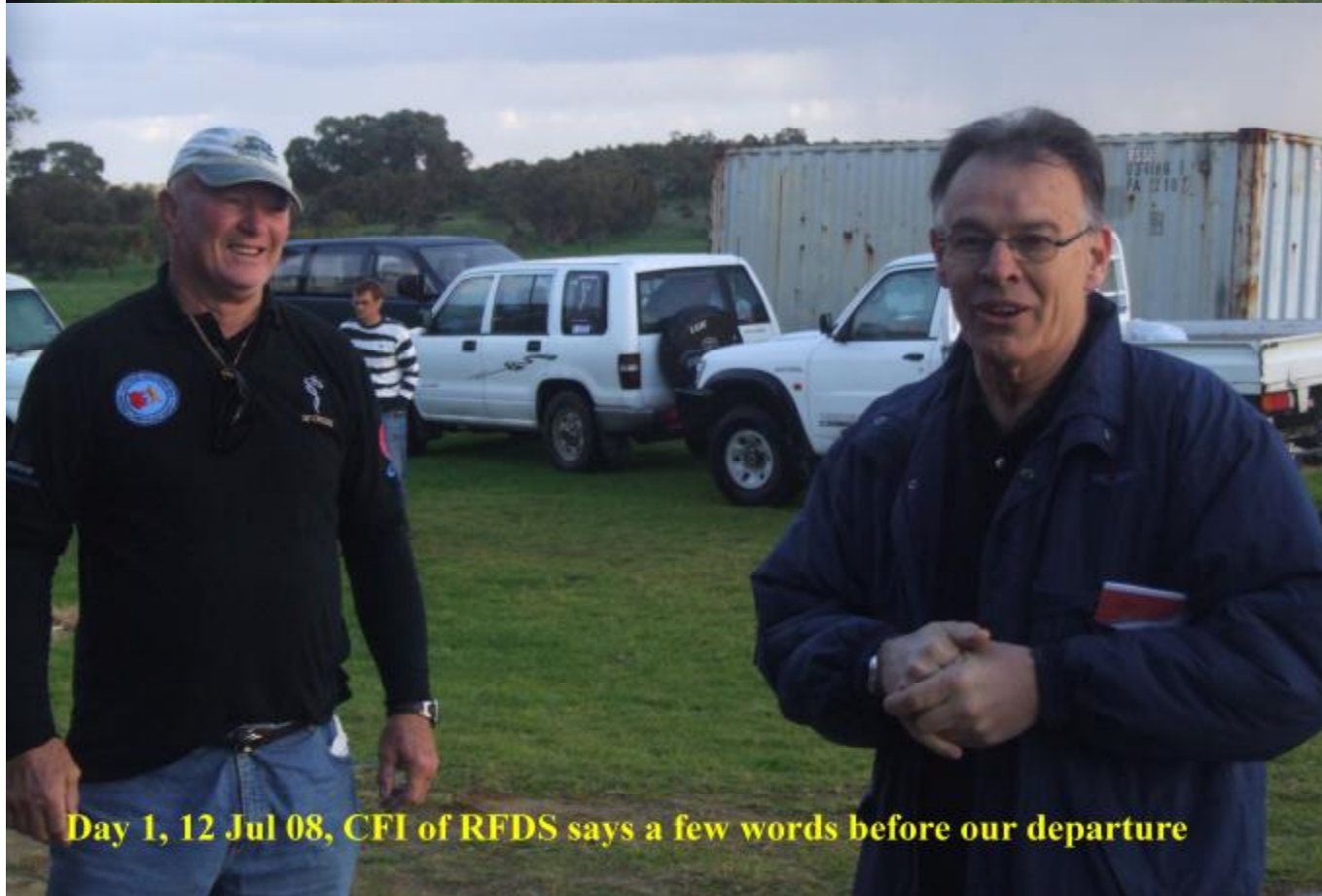
Sponsorship and donations totaling more than \$40,000 were collected by the West Australian contingent.



**Microlight epic: Pilot Derek Chamberlain in his machine, pilot Angus Norwood, left, and ground crew Len Nuttall, John Sharman and Diana Nuttall. (Picture: Rod Taylor)**



**Day 1, 12 Jul 08, Friends and Family join us for the start of the trip**



**Day 1, 12 Jul 08, CFI of RFDS says a few words before our departure**



**Day 1, 12 Jul 08, Cervantes Airstrip. A quick stop to avoid rain clouds.**



**Day 1, 12 Jul 08, Rob flying towards Jurien Bay**

Thanks to Rob Donaldson for these great photos and captions.  
There are plenty more photos and stories from this epic trip yet to come.



Day 1, 12 Jul 08, Landing in the wheat field at Riverside Sanctuary  
(Note the very soft soil of the airstrip)



Day 2, 13 July 08, Flightline at Denham Airport