

CareFlight news

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Doctors issue window warning



Concerned with a spiralling number of preventable injuries and deaths of young children falling from unit and house windows, in the lead-up to summer CareFlight doctors have issued a timely warning to parents.

Reality is that a child falls from a window or balcony every week in Australia.

These deaths, injuries and permanent disfigurements are entirely preventable. Half of the cases involve furniture near windows. Many of the rest involve flyscreens.

Our doctors say: "Some simple precautions - such as ensuring windows are never open more than 10cm, moving furniture that can be used to climb, and not relying on

flyscreens - can save a life.

"This Christmas and beyond, make sure you and your family are safe. Let's prevent lives being lost and a child's future being damaged forever. Check your windows for safety. Be aware; take care."

The current CareFlight direct mail appeal to donors features one of the many window fall injury children our trauma teams have treated recently. Elizabeth's son Cameron was playing in his room when he tried to wave to a friend next door. The flyscreen gave way and he fell three metres onto concrete.

Cameron (photo left) suffered multiple fractures and has been left with impaired vision and behavioural issues, but he's alive. One child a month in Australia isn't so lucky.

This summer, please heed the warning of CareFlight doctors to prevent children falling from windows. ✕

Record year marks our 25th anniversary

Almost 5,000 child and adult patients were treated and transported by CareFlight clinical teams as our nationally-operating aeromedical charity geared up to mark its 25th anniversary.

The just published CareFlight annual report shows how the single largest and most transformational growth spurt in the history of our organisation occurred during the past year, driven by our success in winning an interim and then full Top End aeromedical contract.

Initially for a period of six months, the contract was extended for a further six-month period ending 30 June just after the NT Government announced CareFlight as the provider of the long-term contract.

The long-term contract covers provision of a totally integrated service to the people of the Top End - doctors, nurses, pilots, aircrew, fixed wing aircraft, helicopters, engineering and logistics coordination. It will be the only completely integrated medical transport service in Australia covering all platforms.

"In terms of growth, the impact of the interim contract is apparent as CareFlight's fixed wing turboprop operation in the Top End has gone from start-up operation



Looking back to 1989, at the opening of the Westmead hangar, stage 1: CareFlight pioneers Dr Ken Wishaw, Ian Badham, John Hoad, Dr Blair Munford, Dr Luis Gallur, Rick Mailey, Dr Fran Smith and Peter MacCormick.

to become the dominant component of CareFlight's aviation operations," CEO Derek Colenbrander said.

"Our total annual aircraft hours jumped from 1,379 to 4,969 while our patient caseload increased over the 12 month period from just below 2,000 to almost 5,000."

The report highlights how CareFlight has added a significant nurse component to our historically doctor based clinical workforce, and has developed a significant new logistics coordination capability.

"As we look back over the past 25 years, we acknowledge all those whose commitment

to and support of CareFlight have made it possible for us to carry out our mission - to save lives, speed recovery and serve the community," Mr Colenbrander said.

"To the community, who for 25 years has stood behind us and beside us - our wonderful sponsors, donors and volunteers - we thank you for your loyalty and unwavering support. Your generosity and faith in us have allowed us to grow, in just 25 years, from a single helicopter one doctor operation to a national aeromedical service that brings help and hope to thousands of sick and injured people each year." ✕

The recently published CareFlight annual report is available online (www.careflight.org) while a printed copy can be requested by phoning (02) 9843 5100.

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MediSim courses prove popular

CareFlight has received overwhelming support for our MediSim courses, and in particular the rollout of Volunteer Trauma Care workshops designed to enhance the skill of experienced emergency service volunteers who often are first on the scene of major trauma incidents.

Courses this year have been held in Kempsey, Lismore, Lithgow, Forbes and Parkes with the formal launch of the program set for Orange in November.

Health and rescue resources in regional and rural areas are stretched so this CareFlight initiative recognises that often the first to arrive at the scene of a trauma incident are the local rescue volunteers.

The program is a mix of theoretical and simulation based trauma training delivered over two evenings and covers the triage of

patients, assessment and resuscitation to support medical teams in preparing patients.

CareFlight provides the training modules which allows the volunteers to work together with their colleagues to practice tasks and processes in lifelike clinical and critical scenarios to learn about trauma care skills and communication from doctors and clinicians who have had years of experience in these stressful situations.

The program includes using CareFlight's MediSim, a self-contained mobile simulation-based trauma education classroom, and SimMan, a highly developed mannequin that can respond to treatment and simulates a real trauma patient.

The community benefits from having volunteers with enhanced trauma care skilling while the professional emergency services



CareFlight instructor Dr Ken Harrison in the MediSim.

which respond from key centres benefit from having the patients initially treated by volunteers more effectively able to sustain life and communicate the patient's injuries, symptoms and treatment.

Over the next two years CareFlight's MediSim will bring the training to some 20 regional, rural and remote communities across NSW. ✕

Vintage Franklin's great circle

In a test of both man and machine, two dedicated enthusiasts are well on their way to achieve their dream of circumnavigating the Australian continent in their 84-year-old car.

Supporters farewelled the pair from seaside Mona Vale in Sydney in August, as did an army of supporters when they departed from Darwin in October.

Their car is a restored 1927 series 11B Franklin sedan – capable of reaching a top speed of 85 km/h -- and the owners believe it will be the first time the make has completed a main roads lap around the country.

Owners David Rundle and Geoff Morris achieved their target of driving to Darwin in an ambitious 34 days, with their run undertaken in the spirit of Edwin Cannonball Baker.

David was inspired to raise funds after learning more about the charity's support for injured patients of all ages from a CareFlight speaker at the Pittwater Motor Enthusiasts Club.

To support the run, you can donate online at FranklinRACR.gofundraise.com.au and you can follow David and Geoff at the website www.franklinaustrek.org ✕



Accepting the latest donation from Inghams at the Narellan Rotary Ball, from left, Les Arnold (Ball committee chairman, Narellan Rotary) and John Hexton (Inghams) with Ian Badham.

Inghams continue support

It's the biggest annual event of its kind in Australia, and CareFlight is fortunate to have benefited from the support of Narellan Rotary Club over the 15 years of the service club's Night to Remember charity ball.

The Narellan Rotarians conduct just one charity event annually – the ball in August – where the amazingly well connected Ball Committee headed by Les Arnold with encouragement from Tony Perich handed over donations well in excess of one million dollars to 15 worthy causes.

CareFlight's support came from Inghams, a cheque for \$75,000, earmarked for our mobile teaching and display system through upgrade of the HeliSim and a trailer which will enable Don Kemble's events team to take both the MediSim and HeliSim, in a package, to training and display engagements across Australia. One of the first stops for the new system, when upgraded, will be to Inghams, in conjunction with Narellan Rotary, to show John Hexton and his team how their support is helping train others to save more lives. ✕

Join our Elevens Venture

Join us for the 'All the Elevens Venture' as the next CareFlight 4WD event.

The Venture is the collective name for a number of outdoor activities aimed at bringing friends and families together in a fun-filled environment while supporting CareFlight.

The 4WD event is not a race or rally and we leave log hopping and boulder climbing to those with a lesser sense of self and car preservation.

For guaranteed great driving for both serious 4WD drivers and not-so-adventurous AWD drivers, register online at www.careflight.org or download an entry form. ✕

Margaret's bear photo challenge

Do you have a photo to match this one sent in from one of our avid collectors of the family of CareFlight bears?

Margaret from Freeman's Reach recently sent us this photo after she had a builder measure the CareFlight bears and build a shelf especially for them.

"For years I bought CareFlight bears thinking I'd have to stop one day. Then my son Joe had a quad bike accident. The CareFlight helicopter landed on our turf farm and the trauma team took Joe to Nepean Hospital." ✕



For full details of upcoming events, check our website at www.careflight.org



Complex mission flies critical woman to Perth

A complex mission has allowed CareFlight International Air Ambulance to transfer a very ill woman from India to Perth.

The woman was travelling in Asia when she developed Guillain Barre Syndrome, a fairly uncommon condition that can follow an otherwise unremarkable viral infection.

All the nerves that control the muscles are affected, leaving the patient paralysed.

The patient was taken to hospital in India where she was placed on a ventilator as she was no longer able to breathe for herself.

CareFlight planned the journey so that the return leg would include a fuel stop in Phuket where a second medical team and pilot crew would be pre-positioned to take over so the patient could be flown continuously without having to stop for crew rest breaks.

The plan was underway and teams in place when the first attempt had to be cancelled due

to weather conditions.

Much of India was affected by severe fog and smog and, because the patient was ventilated and would require oxygen for the flight home, CareFlight could not risk the extensive delays that would almost certainly mean running out of oxygen while on the ground at the airport in India.

When the weather began to improve, the plan was set up again. Dr Jen Upton and RN Andrea Delprado flew to India to take the ill woman on the first leg of her transfer, while Dr Ian Maddox, RN Danni Phillips and a second flight crew were sent ahead to Phuket to take her on the second leg.

The retrieval went smoothly and the patient was brought home to Perth where she was admitted to hospital for ongoing treatment. Fortunately her condition is reversible, although recovery generally takes months. ✕



Top: The medijet refuels while oxygen reserves are refilled in Jakarta and, above, CareFlight nurse Danni Phillips cares for her patient.



Ambulance and CareFlight teams combine to treat the injured driver. The critically injured patient is unloaded from the CareFlight helicopter on arrival at hospital.

Roadside surgery for driver

A CareFlight trauma team performed emergency roadside surgery on an elderly motorist who suffered critical injuries in a Central Coast hinterland crash in July.

When ambulance paramedics called the rapid response team to Mangrove Mountain the helicopter landed adjacent to the crash to allow the duty doctor to work with paramedics who had arrived to find the driver semi-conscious and bleeding.

The CareFlight doctor said the 81-year-old local man suffered critical head and chest injuries when his car hit a tree following a collision with a 4WD.

The doctor performed roadside surgery and placed the man in an induced coma, on a ventilator to control his breathing, and administered a blood transfusion.

After stabilisation the man was placed on a CareFlight mobile intensive care module and flown to hospital.

Interstate burns flights

Multiple emergency services were activated after four runners suffered serious burns when they were trapped in a narrow gorge by a bushfire which flared up while contesting an ultramarathon in Western Australia's Kimberley region in early September.

Police, rescue and community resources were mobilised to reach the runners who had been taking part in the 100km outback race between Kunnunurra and El Questro Wilderness Park as part of the international Racing the Planet series.

They were initially taken by helicopter to the nearest town of Kurrurru from where the Royal Flying Doctor Service flew two men to Perth for treatment to serious burns.

Two women, aged 36 and 24, suffered critical burns and were initially flown by RFDS to Darwin for immediate stabilisation.

Two CareFlight medijets were activated to separately fly the women, under full intensive care monitoring, to specialist burns units in Sydney and Melbourne.

The race, which had attracted 100 runners from 30 countries, was then cancelled.

Night escarpment NVG search

CareFlight's crew used their Night Vision Goggle technology to safely conduct a very low level search in the dark along the northern Illawarra escarpment in July.

The flight came from a police request received shortly after 5 pm when a resident from the village of Wombarra reported what they thought was a tandem paraglider going down into trees in the steep escarpment slope above houses.

The rooftop height search ended only when two other residents told police they had seen two people walk from where the glider had landed in a clearing just before dusk.

Stranded fishos rescued from remote beach

Two fishermen were rescued by CareFlight in September after their fishing boat ran aground (photo below) in a shark infested area north of Bathurst Island, 120 km from Darwin.

The men were fishing near Cape Van Diemen when their 4.5 metre tinny was caught in the surf break, swamped and dumped onto the eastern shore beach. Both men escaped the vessel but were then stranded on the very remote beach.

They managed to retrieve their equipment, including their emergency distress beacon, from the stricken boat and alerted the Australian Maritime Safety Authority which promptly called CareFlight.

The CareFlight rescue crew, which included a CareFlight flight nurse, found the boat and landed in nearby sand dunes to access the men. They were unharmed by the incident and were flown to nearby Snake Bay airfield so local police could help retrieve their vessel.

CareFlight pilot Tony Birmingham said the incident highlights the need for vessel owners to ensure they carry an emergency distress beacon when fishing in outside waters.

"The men were in a very remote location and it was undoubtedly their distress beacon which saved them on this occasion," Tony said.



Luke's busy team engineer our flight safety

This year has seen a growing engineering team as CareFlight has assumed the responsibility of maintaining both our rotary wing and now fixed wing fleet of aircraft.

CareFlight's Chief Engineer, Luke Bradshaw, is supervising the introduction of fixed wing engineering services, a momentous undertaking for our nationally-operating charity.

Maintaining a diverse fleet of aircraft across several states and varied operations is a huge task.

The CareFlight fleet for which our engineers have maintenance responsibility now includes the:

- B200 Super KingAir turboprop (fixed wing) aeroplanes which our clinical teams use to transport patients across often huge distances in the NT;
- two BK-117 B2 helicopters which are based in Darwin;
- A109E Agusta Power helicopter at our Westmead Hospital base to provide our rapid response delivery of trauma teams.

The four dedicated medi-jets used by CareFlight International Air Ambulance (CFIAA) for interstate and international patient flights are provided by charter companies which undertake the maintenance on these aircraft based out of Perth, Darwin, Cairns and Sydney.

It is due to the hard work and skill of our engineers that we have achieved almost 5,000 flying hours across our rotary and fixed wing fleets for our first year of combined operations.

This is a fourfold increase on any previous year's activity.

On the flying side, CareFlight pilots have achieved a benchmark success in enhancing the standard of our check and training regime.

For some time CareFlight has been in the regulatory pipeline for assessment by the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) for certification under Civil Aviation Regulation 217 – a higher standard of training and checking activity.

In the build-up to a successful CASA assessment, the past three months have seen some intense training activity for the Fixed Wing training team of Chief Pilot Jeff Konemann, Fixed Wing Fleet Manager Richard Sandford and two Training and Checking Captains designate, David Ward and Theo Eleftheriadis. Congratulations! ✕



Engineers John McMaster, Luke Bradshaw, Matt Middleton, Geoff Kubler, Steve Jones and Adrian Legassic. Centre, Engineering Administration Assistant Viva Thomson.

DONATIONS

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NOW – Online Donations

Without the generous support of community minded people, CareFlight would not be able to take off – literally. Now you can donate using our website. Go to www.careflight.org and on the home page click on the DONATE NOW button.

On the next page simply click on one of the buttons which will give you the option of making a single donation or donating on a monthly basis.



Other ways to help:

To register interest in any of the following please tick the appropriate box and return to CareFlight:

- Making a gift to CareFlight through your Will
- Organising a fundraising event
- Arranging a base dinner or an interest visit
- Making donations to CareFlight through your payroll
- Making donations to CareFlight through regular monthly giving

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