

# CareFlight news

Issue 55 | Spring 2011

## Top End service success

In an historic announcement the NT Health Minister, Kon Vatskalis, in June announced that CareFlight has been awarded the long term Top End aeromedical services contract.

The 10-year agreement covers provision of the total integrated service: coordination, doctors, nurses, aeroplanes, helicopters and engineering. It will be the only completely integrated medical transport service in Australia covering all platforms.

CareFlight CEO, Derek Colenbrander, said the news anchors CareFlight's future in the Top End.

aeroplanes and helicopters.

"With the awarding of the long-term contract, CareFlight will transition the interim service into an expanded operation that includes four dedicated near-new aeromedical aeroplanes, a low-acuity transport aeroplane and a helicopter – with bases at Darwin, Katherine and Gove."

Drawing on its 25 years of experience in the provision of aeromedical services, CareFlight will work in close partnership with the Northern Territory Government and the community to ensure this new service model delivers exceptional support to patients at



"Strategically, we are now well placed to expand our services and to respond as new opportunities arise," Mr Colenbrander said.

"The win is the outcome of teamwork at its very best and reflects the incredible hard work and skill of every person involved. We are extremely fortunate to have such talented people on our team whose efforts bring us all to the threshold of a new and exciting era."

The Chairman of CareFlight, Dr Andrew Refshauge, welcomed the announcement by Mr Vatskalis.

"Our clinical, aviation and support teams welcome the opportunity to continue their service to the community under this contract," Dr Refshauge said.

"Under the current interim contract CareFlight has treated and transported hundreds of patients using our existing

rural, regional and remote locations.

In addition to aircraft, aircrew, and engineering support, CareFlight will provide clinical and logistics coordination, appropriately skilled medical and clinical staff, medical equipment and a robust clinical governance, training and accreditation model.

It will provide a fully integrated aeromedical fixed and rotary wing service for the first time in the Top End, bringing quality care to patients.

The contract will create additional local employment opportunities as CareFlight transitions the operation to its full size.

As a nationally operating charity, CareFlight will use its proven fundraising experience to garner additional support from the business and corporate sector, and individuals, to further enhance our care to Top End patients and their families. ✕

## 25th year gala... You are invited to our Anniversary Ball

A remarkable expansion of the CareFlight dream will be celebrated at a memorable gala event in Sydney in November.

Everyone who has contributed to, or been touched by, the work of CareFlight is invited to book a ticket and come along.

Our 25th Anniversary Ball will be held at the Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre ballroom at Darling Harbour on Thursday 10 November.

It will be an event not to be missed and, with community support being vital to our charity's past, present and future ability to treat trauma, we hope many of our donors and patients will come along.

Tickets are on sale now at \$200 each (or \$1800 for a table of 10).

To be part of the celebration simply go to the CareFlight website [www.careflight.org](http://www.careflight.org) and click events, or phone our Sydney office on 02 9843 5100.

It's a long journey since CareFlight's first mission back in July 1986 to fly an injured young boy and girl to hospital from Lithgow on just our third day of entering service.

From a humble start, flying a handful of patients each month, CareFlight has grown to a truly national aeromedical rescue service, taking patients to all parts of Australia and having doctors operate from eight bases.

Such is the impact of our new Top End operation that while CareFlight teams have transported some 25,000 patients during our first 25 years, on current demand it will take just another four years until the threshold of 50,000 patients is reached.

Just in time, CareFlight's 25th year Anniversary bear (photo above) has arrived to be sold at events and via telemarketing to help meet the cost of our medical services, research and education. There's a boy and a girl bear, so please welcome them into your home.

To order an anniversary bear phone 1800 631 678. ✕



### What's inside...

p3 Medi-jet flights to Melbourne, Perth

p4 Cattleman praises long-range rescue



Find us on  
**Facebook**  
CareFlight

FOLLOW US ON  
**twitter**  
MyCareFlight



Emergency service volunteers undertake practical trauma training in the CareFlight MediSim.

## Rural trauma training rollout

CareFlight's rollout of trauma training to regional, rural and remote communities is gathering momentum following successful work-up programs delivered to Kempsey, Lithgow and Lismore.

The MediSim rural education program is designed to provide greater levels of support to rural and remote clinicians and to enhance the skill of experienced emergency service volunteers who often are first on the scene of major trauma incidents.

At Lismore, the program was delivered with two day courses for clinicians and two evening sessions for emergency services volunteers, with the clinicians invited by the Institute of Trauma and Injury Management.

At Lithgow, CareFlight's MediSim was hosted at Lithgow Workies Club to deliver a traumacare workshop to volunteers from the State Emergency Service, Rural Fire Service and Volunteer Rescue Association.

The program for volunteers 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.

The cost of the Lithgow course was met from donations to CareFlight by businesses and caring individuals and supported by Lithgow Workies Club.

Already this year CareFlight has staged MediSim training courses at Kempsey and Lismore and over the next two years will bring the training to regional, rural and remote communities including Parkes, Forbes, Albury, Berrigan Shire, Scone, Muswellbrook, Goulburn and Young.

CareFlight is seeking additional support from individuals, businesses, registered clubs, community-based organisations and foundations to help offer MediSim to rural, regional and remote communities.

To find out more or to support this CareFlight initiative, please go to our website [www.careflight.org](http://www.careflight.org) or email [medisim@careflight.org](mailto:medisim@careflight.org) ✕

## Franklin circumnavigation bid

A small group of air cooled Franklin car enthusiasts will attempt to drive a restored 1927 series 11B Franklin sedan around the periphery of the Australian mainland. The Owners of the car, David Rundle and Geoff Morris, will be raising money for CareFlight. The trek will also include the beautiful island state of Tasmania. So the trip, in the spirit of "Edwin Cannonball Baker", will be something that has never been done before. The "Run" will leave Sydney on August 6 with the first sector ending in Darwin hopefully 34 days later. To support the run, you can make online donations at <http://FranklinRACR.gofundraise.com.au>. Follow David and Geoff at the website [www.franklinaustrek.org](http://www.franklinaustrek.org) ✕



## Beanies a beaut present to crew

Members of the Karabi Seniors Knitting Group at Wentworthville made beanies and scarves for the crew to keep our rapid response trauma team warm in winter. They made them as a small token of appreciation for all the lives CareFlight has saved. Some of the members of the group are over 90. The helicopter often flies over them at their fortnightly meetings. ✕

## Mick wins his first W2G

Thanks to all who rode or ran the Oaks Fire Trail through the beautiful Blue Mountains National Park, from the town of Woodford down to the Euroka Clearing near Glenbrook for the 2011 staging of the Woodford to Glenbrook Classic. Leura runner Mick Donges was first to finish the 25km run while all runners and mountain bikers enjoyed a great day, perfect weather and a fantastic track. Our thanks to the hard working Rural Fire Service Volunteers and the NPWS staff for their continued support. ✕

## Day puts blokes of all ages on show

The Hawkesbury showground became a hive of activity in June with lots of men setting up displays for 'Blokes Day'. CareFlight Rescue Sim attended, ably staffed by 'Bloke' volunteer Neil Skeen who was assisted by Val Skeen and Vicki Brownless. As usual it was a great hit with the crowd - blokes of all ages and a number of females as well! ✕

## MAYday now on the map

MAYday for CareFlight is now firmly on the map following the inaugural event on Friday 27 May. Volunteers collected at coffee shops with great enthusiasm. Below, volunteer collector Ann Keating at one of a number of shops which supported her. ✕



For full details of upcoming events, check our website at [www.careflight.org](http://www.careflight.org)



## Medi-jet flights to Melbourne, Perth

The pace has continued for CareFlight's medi-jet teams, which almost on a daily frequency, are kept busy flying adult and paediatric patients to locations across Australia from our bases at Perth, Darwin, Cairns and Sydney.

In May a CareFlight doctor and nurse flew to Christchurch in New Zealand to assist a family from country Victoria whose teenage son had suffered a serious medical complication and was being treated in hospital in the earthquake-ravaged city.

After three weeks in the hospital the boy's condition had stabilised to the point where a highly experienced medical retrieval team could transfer him to ongoing treatment in Melbourne.

CareFlight was contacted to undertake the transfer under full intensive care management.

The doctor and nurse took over responsibility for the boy's treatment and transported him to the airport for the 3 ½ hour flight to Melbourne from where they again used a road ambulance for the final journey to the Royal Children's Hospital.

Thanks to the care from our medi-jet team, and CareFlight's many years of

experience in long-distance international patient transfer missions, the teenage boy's transport was medically uneventful and he has continued to make progress.

On the other side of Australia, in late March, another overseas medical emergency was presented to the CareFlight International team operating from Perth.

The request came from the family of a man who suffered critical injuries as a result of a motor bike accident in Bali. The patient sustained significant head injuries and had been admitted to an intensive care unit.

The patient's family in Perth requested he be returned there for neurosurgery and rehabilitation.

CareFlight, in consultation with Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), the family, the treating doctors and the accepting hospital in Perth were able to organise our medi-jet retrieval which required a full intensive care medical team to fly the critically ill man from Bali to Perth.

On his return the man underwent Neurosurgery and is still having rehabilitation. ✕

### Newcastle support flights

A motor bike crash on the Eastern Creek circuit in Sydney's west landed a 32-year-old Newcastle man in hospital in July when the front wheel of his 450cc bike clipped another competitor.

The man told the CareFlight doctor the bike in front suddenly slowed, causing the wheels to clip, then he high sided, leaving him briefly unconscious and with neck injuries.

In June, a night air search was conducted trying to locate a teenage girl missing from a fishing boat which capsized on Lake Macquarie in bad weather.

Water police initiated a search on the lake, supported by CareFlight using Night Vision Goggles despite the strong winds, driving rain and cloud.

### Orange man's airlift from Lithgow

A man from Orange was airlifted to hospital by CareFlight after he was trapped in the wreckage of his car near Lithgow in May.

Using the crew's night vision goggle technology, a CareFlight trauma team flew to Lithgow to support ambulance officers treating the 35-year-old man as rescue teams worked to release him 5 km west of Lithgow.

The man suffered head injuries and multiple leg fractures and was flown under intensive care management to Westmead Hospital.

### Teenager trapped in car



A teenage passenger of a small sedan was trapped for almost an hour after the car driven by his father collided with a truck at Guildford.

The helicopter landed in a nearby park and was met by police who drove the CareFlight doctor and duty ambulance paramedic to treat the youth.

The CareFlight doctor said the 17-year-old youth, from Auburn, was left briefly unconscious suffering a head injury while his father and the truck driver escaped with minor injuries.

### Tackle stops football

A boy suffering neck pain after a rugby league tackle was flown by CareFlight to hospital from the Southern Highlands in July.

The helicopter landed on the field where officials immediately abandoned play and implemented their spinal precaution policy as soon as the boy was injured.

The CareFlight doctor said the 11-year-old Robertson boy was playing with the local Under 12 Spuddies rugby league team when he was tackled and felt pain in his neck when he hit the ground.

His mother accompanied her son on the helicopter flight.



# Cattleman impressed with long-range response

The owner of a very remote Gulf of Carpentaria cattle station is impressed with the response time and the determination of CareFlight following a freak accident at his Northern Territory property.

Rhett Walker was grading a dirt road by dragging a large tyre when the chain snagged then recoiled, hitting him on the head causing extensive injuries.

On receiving notice of the injured man's plight, CareFlight's co-ordination centre in Darwin activated both one of our charity's turbo-prop air ambulance aircraft and Darwin's CareFlight helicopter in what proved to be a 1,500 km round trip for the aircraft – equivalent to flying from Melbourne to Port Macquarie or from London across Europe to beyond Belgrade.

The Super KingAir aircraft arrived overhead at the property only to find the million-acre property's airstrip was too small for an aeromedical aircraft to land because of its length and tall trees at either end.

The crew flew to nearby Nathan River station and were met by a parks ranger who drove the duty NTG doctor and CareFlight nurse for more than an hour to reach the injured man and initiate stabilisation.

When the helicopter reached the property

the medical team used it to fly the injured man across rough terrain to a regular airstrip at the town of Boroloola for transfer to the faster air ambulance aircraft.

CareFlight flew Mr Walker to Royal Darwin Hospital where he underwent extensive surgery and is recovering.

Mr Walker praised the crews for their determination to reach him and start treatment to ensure his recovery, despite difficult circumstances.

"The way I look at it, Lorella Springs is one of the most remote places on Earth and I think that is a very good time to get there, really," he later told ABC Radio.

"CareFlight dispatched both a helicopter and an aeroplane at the same time."

CareFlight will work with property owners to help them achieve airstrips that can cater for medical planes that are bigger than the light aircraft normally used at stations.

In another recent Top End rescue a young woman tourist was trapped by the arm under a tourist van on Gunlom Road in Kakadu National Park in July. She was treated by passing nurses, a team from Pine Creek medical clinic before she was flown by CareFlight to Royal Darwin Hospital in a 400km response flight. ✕



The woman is treated at the Kakadu National Park accident site.

## DONATIONS

YES! I would like to make a donation.  MONTHLY DONATION  SINGLE DONATION

TITLE FIRST NAME SURNAME

ADDRESS

STATE POSTCODE

SUBURB/TOWN

PHONE

DONATION AMOUNT \$

EMAIL

### PAYMENT DETAILS

MASTERCARD  VISA  AMEX  DINERS  CHEQUE/MONEY ORDER

CREDIT CARD NUMBER

CARDHOLDER'S NAME EXPIRY DATE

CARDHOLDER'S SIGNATURE DATE

Once completed, please return this coupon to:  
CareFlight National Office, Reply Paid 84642, Wentworthville NSW 2145  
Donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible.

11APA

## 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](http://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

### CONTACT

02 9843 5100 or [info@careflight.org](mailto:info@careflight.org)

Donations Toll Free 1800 655 876