

At 5.10pm, bus driver Allan came upon Laurel's horrifying crash...



It was early in my shift. I was just driving out of the station when over the rise I saw smoke. It was coming from two cars badly smashed and skewed dangerously across the

road. I stopped and jumped out to see what I could do to help.

I went to Laurel's car and saw immediately that she was completely trapped. The impact had pushed the dashboard right up against her legs. She was screaming in agony. I sat on the passenger side with her and tried to comfort her, saying the emergency services were on their way.

They were incredibly fast – after about 10 minutes the CareFlight helicopter landed right behind my bus.

The CareFlight team were in complete control from the moment they arrived. Everyone seemed to know exactly what the others were going to do.

I don't know whether Laurel was really aware of what was going on at the time, but if she was, I know she would have felt safe in their hands.



At 5.30pm, CareFlight's Dr Peter and crew flew to Laurel's rescue...



The call came at 5.19pm and we were in the air within a few minutes. All we knew was that it was a head-on vehicle collision and the patient was trapped.

When we found Laurel, she was conscious but highly distressed. I couldn't see the extent of her injuries, but the dashboard was compressing her chest and legs so I was concerned about possible spinal injury. Getting her out was going to take time. I inserted an IV drip so I could manage her pain while the emergency services worked on getting her out of the car.

Vehicle rescues can be dangerous for all sorts of reasons. Airbags can release unexpectedly, causing head and neck injuries. Vehicles can suddenly roll or topple. There's also a lot of broken glass and sharp, torn metal to work around, so it can be dangerous for us as we work to free the patient.

It took about 45 minutes to release Laurel from her car. We placed her on a scoop stretcher to minimise any risk of spinal damage. I applied a collar and a tight pelvic binder to stop her moving and aggravating her injuries. In transit to the hospital, I continued to treat Laurel, keeping her as stable as possible for the major trauma team waiting to receive her.



The next life we save could be yours.

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AN ORDINARY DAY UNRAVELS

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At 4.50pm Laurel waved goodbye to her daughter and left to visit a friend...

It was just a normal Saturday afternoon. I was heading to my girlfriend's house. My daughter was meant to travel with me that day, but because she was taking too long to get ready, I decided to go without her.



I waved goodbye as I headed off. My friend doesn't live far away and I put some music on to enjoy the drive.

That's the last thing I remember.

When I didn't arrive, my friend became worried. She rang me, but there was no answer. She contacted my partner and between them, they sent people off in both directions, driving the route they assumed I'd taken.

Unfortunately, nobody knew that about two weeks before, I'd changed my route. It was as though I'd vanished into thin air.

The next thing I recall was being woken by nurses at 2.00am the following day in the intensive care unit. They told me I'd just come out of surgery. I told them they were lying.

Meanwhile, my frantic family received the call everyone dreads. It was the police, ringing to say I'd been badly injured in a serious car accident.



I thank CareFlight every day for saving my life...

I'm 100 per cent certain that CareFlight is the reason I'm still here. It would have been a different story if help hadn't arrived as quickly as it did.



I spent the first 10 days in the neuroscience ward in the intensive care unit, because both my lungs had collapsed. I'd fractured my pelvis, knees, femur, collarbone, ribs and shoulder, and had some internal bleeding.

Thanks to the amazing care I received from the CareFlight team at the scene, I was discharged from hospital a month earlier than expected. As a mum with a young daughter, it meant so much to me to be at home with her again as soon as possible.

Shortly afterwards, I visited the CareFlight base and it was fantastic to be able to put faces to the names of the people who saved my life. I was in tears most of the time – and they were pretty amazed to see me walk in on crutches considering the damage to both my legs.

I certainly appreciate the little things in life now and I'm forever grateful to the people who rescued me.

If your loved one is hurt, you just want the best care for them. CareFlight delivers. No matter what you can afford, your gift will do wonders for this incredible service. Please donate today.

