

CareFlight news

Issue 57 | Autumn 12

Flood of child drownings alert

The bitter experience from attending a flood of child drownings, and some fortunate escapes even as Year 2012 opened, has prompted CareFlight doctors to issue a water safety alert as hot weather continues across Australia.

A total of 86 patients over just five years. That's the alarming number of immersion patients that CareFlight trauma teams have treated. The true horror is that most of these patients were children. Fortunately, quick action by family, paramedics and CareFlight, allowed these toddlers to recover after being found recently in pools at Galston, Camden, Dural, North Rocks and Glenhaven.

Not surprisingly, drowning is the leading cause of death for children under the age of five.

It's why in our latest mail appeal to those whose support for our charity is the strongest – our donors – CareFlight is focussing on the danger which water poses for children of all ages and in particular the youngest children.

As senior CareFlight doctor Shane Trevithick says: Be aware; take care.

The first few minutes in an emergency are vital. Immediate action can make the difference between life and death. Performing effective CPR can save a life.

Almost half of drowning cases occur in children aged between one and two years. For those aged under 12 months most drownings occurred in baths or buckets.

Because irreversible brain damage may occur after just three to five minutes, it's the immediate application of CPR – before expert help arrives – which is so vital.

Our autumn fundraising appeal tells the story of little Ashley and the instinctive reaction of her mum (photo above) in starting CPR when she found her daughter floating face-down in the bath. It could happen to any toddler in any home.

Fortunately the time interval was short, mum's CPR was quick and effective and the "000" call to the Ambulance Service brought expert help including our own Dr Trevithick in CareFlight's rapid-response trauma helicopter.

Teaming with the ambulance paramedics, Dr Trevithick applied intensive care treatment en route to hospital and baby Ashley escaped to completely recover without suffering permanent damage. ✕



Minister opens operations centre

It's brand new and very functional but the new CareFlight operations centre building at Darwin International Airport is strictly interim.

For the first time since our national aeromedical organisation took on the challenge of providing the Top End Medical Retrieval Service, all our operational Darwin team are now housed under the one roof. This is bringing greater efficiency as it allows direct communication between the essential components – our co-ordinators, the nurses, doctors, pilots, ground support officers and managers.

The benefit of the new operations centre is that it helps our teams deliver their key objective – which is timely treatment to patients across a large area.

Territory Health Minister, Kon Vatskalis MLA, was on hand to formally open the building in early December. Also attending the ceremony were DoH chief executive Jeff Moffet, systems performance director Robyn Cahill, senior rural medical practitioner Dr Hugh Heggie, the Army's Lt Col Richard Wiltshire and St John Ambulance CEO Ross Coburn, together

with representatives of businesses which are supporting CareFlight.

The building is located on land made available by Darwin International Airport and it is adjacent to the hangar which our engineering teams use to conduct maintenance on our fixed and rotary wing fleet.

In the meantime, DoH is finalising plans for the permanent aeromedical hangar which will be constructed next year at Darwin Airport. ✕

Marking the official opening of CareFlight's new Operations Centre at Darwin International Airport, from left, Health Minister Kon Vatskalis with CareFlight's David Mann (general manager, northern operations) and Derek Colenbrander (CEO).



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

Find us on **Facebook**
CareFlight

FOLLOW US ON **twitter**
MyCareFlight

Gala puts 25th year focus on patients

The 580 people who attended the highly successful gala dinner to mark CareFlight's 25th anniversary applauded the focus on our patients which highlighted the event at the Sydney Convention Centre.

It was highly emotional as MC Samantha Armytage, with a backdrop of video never previously seen, brought together past patients and the teams who looked after them:

- Rachael Bowers (Castle Hill High School stairs fall – where Ken Harrison was our doctor)
- Colin Sieders (Blue Mountains car crash – where Rob Bartolacci was our doctor and Steve Martz the paramedic)
- Sydney to Hobart race crew survivors from Tasmania yacht Niaid (Peter Keats, Tony Guy, Steve Walker, Shayne Hanson, Rob Matthews – with pilot Dan Tyler and paramedic Murray Traynor)

As the photos show, after opening with a spectacular CareFlight takeoff from Darling Harbour, it was a night of reunion and

remembering for past and present CareFlight team members, supporters and volunteers who share the passion. Making such an impact was the spectacular audio visual – our very special thanks to Ben Alcott and his team from Damn Good Productions who did all work pro-bono.

Extracts from two messages of thanks summed up the night. The first, from John Hexton of strong supporter Inghams: "I felt very proud to be there, both personally and on behalf of Bob Ingham. To be able to take some of my family there and for them to see the fantastic commitment some special people make to our society is something that can only have an enormous impact on them and at the same time help show them the sort of person you want them to be." Then from Donna Bartlett from our lawyers Holding Redlich: "The entire agenda and flow of the evening was terrific in capturing and conveying the history of CareFlight and dedication of its team. The audio-visual compilation was just brilliant and the humility and honesty of the patient interviews could not have been a more accurate expression of the CareFlight culture." ✕



Top: landing in Darling Harbour. Bottom: Sydney to Hobart Niaid crew Peter Keats, Tony Guy, Steve Walker, Shayne Hanson, Rob Matthews with pilots Dan Tyler and paramedic Murray Traynor.

Orange mayor launches MediSim

Rural nurses, doctors and emergency service volunteers have praised the CareFlight MediSim initiative which was officially launched by the mayor of Orange, Cr John Davis, in the Central West in November.

Recognising the financial contribution to the project under a CareFlight agreement with the council, the ceremony was held in the grounds of Orange Base Hospital during a week-long training session in the region.

Mayor Davis praised the project, and CareFlight, at the launch covered by regional television, radio and papers.

The clinical training is an initiative of the NSW Institute of Trauma and Injury Management (ITIM), in collaboration with the Sydney Clinical Skills and Simulation Centre, to deliver the Trauma Assessment Resuscitation Transport (TART) and Trauma Team Training (TTT) programs which use the CareFlight MediSim unit to train the local rural doctors and nurses. ✕



CareFlight's Derek Colenbrander (left) and Dr Ken Harrison undertake media interviews at the launch of MediSim.



Mounties president Kevin Ingram (centre) with CareFlight CEO Derek Colenbrander (left) and director Garry Dinnie.

Mounties gift boosts training

Through boosting training capability, the \$300,000 sponsorship of CareFlight announced in December by the Mounties Group will help save lives.

The three-year funding pledge will help develop CareFlight's training of medical and aviation staff through the provision of a flight simulator.

Once in operation at the newly refurbished Westmead operations base, the flight simulator will provide top quality training to our pilots as well as aviation training to our medical teams.

Mounties Club president Kevin Ingram praised CareFlight's provision of national aeromedical services.

"At Mounties we believe in supporting the people who need us most. We're proud that our involvement with CareFlight can help ensure children and adults who are critically ill or injured can receive the best possible care." ✕

Three top golf days

Huge thanks to the many who worked hard to arrange, plus all who played in, three recent successful golf days raising funds to support CareFlight.

At Wisemans Ferry, the traditional November event started with a bacon & egg roll breakfast and ended with a spit roast lunch and between, conditions at The Retreat were just right for nine holes of variable golf. The traditional huge charity auction at the Bowling Club capped off a great day – for which we pay tribute to this hugely supportive small community and all who've made the day possible over many years.

Despite the rain and mist, Lithgow's Max Goddard was there again collecting from players at the fifth hole in the annual Wenty Falls golf day in November. Big thanks to the Rotary Club of Katoomba and the Wentworth Falls Country Club for organising and hosting the event, and to all the sponsors.

For the prestigious Avlaw golf day in December, rain cleared to sunshine at the Kogarah Golf Course. The testing 18 holes were followed by a lunch and a most interesting address by David Evans, one of the pilots on the flight deck of the Qantas A380 that suffered an engine explosion in 2010 after takeoff from Singapore. Our thanks to Avlaw for organising the day. ✕

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





Main: A CareFlight doctor teams with ambulance paramedics to treat the man's serious head injury. Inset top to bottom: Emergency services combine to treat the man trapped in his truck; CareFlight's doctor and duty ambulance paramedic treat the bike crash couple; and the revived toddler is carried to CareFlight to be flown from Kakadu National Park to hospital for observation.

Car seat saves kiddie

A properly installed car seat helped protect a young boy from serious injury when two vehicles collided at Long Jetty, south of Newcastle on the Central Coast, in October.

The CareFlight doctor said despite another vehicle hitting the side of the station wagon immediately behind where the boy was seated the four-year-old escaped with relatively minor head and shoulder injuries. The doctor said the seat saved the boy from likely serious injury.

Roadside surgery

A CareFlight doctor performed emergency surgery on a man as Fire & Rescue officers worked to free him from the wreckage of the truck he was driving at Wallacia in December.

The CareFlight doctor said the elderly man was trapped for 40 minutes after the collision between his small truck, a car and a larger truck towing a trailer, requiring the rescue officers to cut away then winch off the cabin of the truck as the doctor teamed with ambulance paramedics to stabilise the critically injured man.

The doctor performed roadside surgery on the man, placed him in an induced coma and gave him a blood transfusion before continuing treatment as the man was taken, in a road ambulance, to Liverpool Hospital.

Spill injures Newcastle bikers

A Newcastle couple were treated in a Sydney hospital after crashing from their motor bike on the Old Pacific Highway at Mt White in November.

After stabilisation the woman was flown by CareFlight to Royal North Shore Hospital as

ambulance paramedics drove her husband to the same hospital.

Tree cuts down mowing man

A man suffered serious head injuries when a tree fell on him as he was mowing his lawn at Oakville, in December.

Police, ambulance and CareFlight rushed to the Hanckel Road property shortly before 5pm.

The CareFlight doctor said the man, aged in his 40s, was left semi-conscious when the 15 metre high tree fell over and hit him on the head.

Uncle's prompt CPR saves niece

Dubbed a hero, the NT News featured the quick action of an uncle who rescued his three-year-old niece from drowning in a resort pool by performing lifesaving CPR.

The toddler was unconscious when her uncle pulled her from the pool at Cooida, in the NT's famed Kakadu National Park in December.

The uncle dived in to the girl, pulled her out and immediately started CPR, as local nurses rushed to assist.

CareFlight landed beside the resort to allow the flight nurse and duty DoH doctor to check the girl before flying her straight to Royal Darwin Hospital.

Lucky double strike

A CareFlight nurse flew from Darwin to a remote community to assess the condition of two men who were struck by lightning as Top End wet season storms started in December. The incident happened as the men were driving the 80km from Daly River to Woodycupaldiya, southwest of Darwin. ✕

Victorian teen's amazing survival

It was, as his mother Patsy puts it, on a CareFlight that stricken teenager Liam must have realised he was coming home to Victoria.

The role of CareFlight was part of an amazing chain of survival which Liam Shay's family told to the Border Mail newspaper in their home town of Wodonga in October.

Just six months before the interview the then 15-year-old collapsed and almost died, alone in a dense and dark New Zealand forest on a family holiday.

Just north of Christchurch the fit teenager set out on a quick walk but didn't return. Only later his distraught parents learned how, barely alive, Liam had been found by chance by a young English backpacker who'd made a wrong turn... and brought not only a mobile phone, but the experience of having done a CPR course and the determination to keep expertly pumping away and breathing for 25 minutes until a helicopter arrived to find Liam had only the faintest of pulses.

In quake rattled Christchurch treatment continued but without much hope of any longer-term survival. Just in case, and to allow intensive care treatment to continue on a flight home, staff arranged for CareFlight International Air Ambulance to transfer Liam to the Royal Children's Hospital in Melbourne.

While the rest of the family took a commercial flight home, Patsy was by Liam's side – as she told the newspaper – “on a CareFlight with two pilots, a doctor and a nurse.”

Patsy says: “He was on a stretcher, paralysed and drugged to the hilt. But then we saw this movement... he stretched.

“The CareFlight doctor on the flight said it was definitely an independent movement as opposed to a seizure or something like that.

“It was as if we got him into Australian airspace and Liam decided it was time to come back to us.”

In Melbourne Liam defied hospital predictions and continued his flight back to life, regained his speech and faced up to the prospect of learning to walk again and rebuilding strength. ✕

Excellence credited

CareFlight International Air Ambulance (CFIAA) has been awarded the prestigious European Aeromedical Institute (EURAMI) Accreditation, and is now Australia's only provider to receive accreditation.

It includes endorsement of CFIAA's “special care” capabilities and gives the highest level of EURAMI approval available. It is the conclusion of robust external audit which determined substantial compliance with all EURAMI standards (which are based on legal standards of the European Union, such as EN 13718-2) and proven capabilities in the air transport of special “high risk” patients.



A CareFlight International Air Ambulance team prepare to fly Liam back to Melbourne.

Bridge crash shows trauma response capability

The rapid-response trauma capability which CareFlight has pioneered came under the national spotlight when a spectacular crash blocked the main deck of Sydney Harbour Bridge in November. Virtually every significant media outlet across Australia reported our trauma team's timely arrival and trauma support on their web sites, bulletins or reports.

Ambulance paramedics immediately called CareFlight's rapid-response trauma team which reached the scene within minutes to treat a woman who suffered critical head injuries when her car and a petrol tanker collided on the bridge, sending the inner city road system into chaos for hours.

At that early stage it was unknown what fluid was gushing from below the truck, so instead of landing on the bridge pilot John Hoard landed at Observatory Hill, adjacent to the southern end of the bridge just after 1.30 pm, to allow the CareFlight doctor and duty ambulance paramedic to team with emergency services arriving at the crash.

It later transpired the fluid was water from a ruptured water main beside the rail track and was not coming from the tanker.

The south-bound truck and three other vehicles were mainly involved in the crash



The scene confronting emergency services on the main deck of the Sydney Harbour Bridge.

on the main deck of the bridge, between the southern pylons and the old toll plaza area.

The CareFlight doctor said a 48-year-old woman, from North Ryde, suffered injuries which left her unconscious and initially trapped in the car she was driving.

Three other people were injured, two seriously, and were taken to hospital by ambulance paramedics.

Teaming with paramedics, the CareFlight doctor quickly placed the critically injured woman in an induced coma as he initiated intensive care stabilisation.

Shortly before 2 pm the woman was taken, under continuing treatment by the CareFlight doctor, in a road ambulance to Royal North Shore Hospital where she remained in a critical condition on arrival. ✕

DONATIONS

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

TITLE FIRST NAME SURNAME

ADDRESS STATE POSTCODE

SUBURB/TOWN

PHONE

EMAIL

DONATION AMOUNT
\$

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, GPO Box 9829 In Your Capital City

Donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible.

12APF

Donations Toll Free 1800 655 876

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

CONTACT

02 9843 5100 or info@careflight.org