

# CareFlight news

Issue 68 | Summer 2014

## Pioneering trauma training reaches milestone

A pioneering CareFlight training program already credited with saving lives, celebrated a milestone recently, with the 100th MediSim workshop held in Ballarat in regional Victoria. The program is the innovation of our own doctors and paramedics, who have first-hand experience in trauma rescue.

In a little over three years since the first workshop in Kempsey, NSW, MediSim's latest tour through regional Victoria and Southern NSW brought to 1,496 the number of emergency service personnel trained in life-saving techniques.

Often these volunteers are first to arrive at the scene of a serious injury, particularly in rural areas. What they do in those first few precious minutes can make the difference between a full recovery, long term disability or literally life and death.

It is in these situations that emergency service personnel need to know how to sustain a life until professional emergency medical help arrives.

Thanks to our supporters from the community, CareFlight is able to provide this training at no cost to emergency service crews or the

organisations who give so much time and effort to help the community.

Our sponsors also play a key role. Origin Energy recently came on board as a national sponsor of the program, and the Johnson & Johnson Foundation funded a special program for remote areas in the Northern Territory earlier this year.

The list of volunteer and service organisations which have embraced the program is also growing. While the NSW State Emergency service was the first to come on board, organisations ranging from the Country Fire Authority in Victoria – which hosted the 100th workshop in Ballarat – to the National Parks and Wildlife Service in Tasmania have begun to include MediSim as part of their ongoing training programs.

Feedback from participants also suggests that a side benefit from the program is the opportunity for volunteers from different organisations to train together and learn more about each other outside actual emergency situations.

**To donate call 1800 655 876 or visit [www.careflight.org](http://www.careflight.org)**

SES emergency workers in simulator training at Gundagai.



"Alicia - her first road crash job - was first on scene and to say she was a bit overwhelmed would be an understatement. I spoke to Alicia after our debrief and she told me she just kept running over in her head, the lessons she learnt from CareFlight training the previous two nights, in particular crush injury, scene safety, and working with other agencies.

"Even though I am fairly experienced, I too learnt things from the course and have been telling both my SES and Ambulance colleagues about these."

**Kieran Drew, paramedic and SES volunteer, on major truck accident one day after a recent MediSim course in Goulburn via email**

"The best training that we have ever undertaken...Already this training has helped at several jobs that we have had. Well done to all."

**Wayne Hartwich Dimboola Vic Country Fire Authority via Facebook**

"Once again, thank you for the training that CareFlight provided. I have been to an MVA, okay, a car crash, since the training and I felt a little more free of worry as we approached the incident. It was as if I knew it would be okay and I would be able to give what assistance I could, knowing a little more of what the ambos would need and how we could work together."

**Tanya Munro, primary school teacher and rural fire volunteer, Tasmania via email**

We don't get to do much training like this, and it was just so interesting and spot on to our needs and knowledge. It really will help when it comes to turning out to our next MVA or trauma patient incident. Also as a member of St John Ambulance Australia, I have the experience and background to some of the things that were taught throughout the course, but it was great to learn some of the different techniques and views that the course offers.

**Sam Martin McColl Wendouree Vic Country Fire Authority via Facebook**

## Research explores new ground in remote community psychiatric care

CareFlight's medical research honour roll continues to grow with a prestigious award to Darwin-based flight nurse Jodie Mills at last week's national aeromedical industry conference in Brisbane.

Jodie, pictured below on a mission, was recognised for the Best Research and Audit Report for her paper on retrieval of acute psychiatric patients. The paper, based on data from 617 cases over two years, provided a number of insights ranging from crew composition

to pre-flight and in-flight sedation.

The conference, jointly organised by the Aeromedical Society of Australasia, Flight Nurses Australia and the Australasian Society of Aerospace Medicine, is the industry's major event of the year.

Jodie, originally from Casterton in western Victoria, came to CareFlight four years ago from Royal Darwin Hospital where she worked in maternity and intensive care.

"I always wanted to fly and I always

wanted to fly in the outback," she said.

Her research was motivated by a desire to help improve understanding of one of the more challenging aspects of CareFlight's rapidly expanding role in medical retrieval in the Top End.

"I happened to find something that I find interesting and that can help make changes to social policy," Jodie said.

Jodie's paper highlighted the lack of research worldwide into the challenges of aeromedical retrieval for agitated and/or incapacitated psychiatric patients.

The issues are compounded by the special needs of the Top End remote communities where 90 per cent of patients in the study were indigenous and where youth suicide is a major issue.

Almost one in four of the patients were "frequent flyers" who had required removal to hospital in Darwin more than once, including 17 who made the journey five or more times. Just under one-third were as a result of some form of self-harm or overdose.

The paper will form the basis of further discussions with NT health agencies and other stakeholders about how psychiatric services can be better tailored to the needs of these communities.

Jodie Mills heads out on another retrieval mission.



### I-Care innovation recognised

Another CareFlight innovation has been recognised with a highly commended award at the Australian Petroleum Production and Exploration Association annual health and safety awards in Perth.

The I-CARE stretcher, developed as part of CareFlight's work with the Ichthyus gas project off north-west Australia, solves a major problem in transferring seriously ill and injured patients between transport modes in complex pre-hospital situations such as off-shore rigs.

The stretcher can move seamlessly between helicopters, fixed wing aircraft and road ambulances so patients and their critical life support and monitoring devices do not need to be repackaged for each stage of the journey to hospital. This saves considerable time and improves the chances of recovery.



# Amazing Race winners on CareFlight's team



Daniel and Ryan in CareFlight's NETS hangar.

The 2014 winners of Channel Seven's popular Amazing Race program dropped in on CareFlight recently while counting down to the announcement of their remarkable globetrotting achievement.

Daniel and Ryan made it clear they have no plans to give up their nursing careers despite their newfound fame. The show was filmed months earlier and they were already back at work, sitting tight on their big secret, when they visited two days before the big prime-time television announcement.

The pair teamed up on the job in the Intensive Care Department at Sydney's Westmead Hospital, where the vital Newborn and paediatric Emergency Transport Service (NETS) is based.

NETS, supported by CareFlight on behalf of NSW Health, is Australia's only dedicated aeromedical service specifically for babies and children.

The lifesaving service, supported by two full-time CareFlight helicopters each with \$300,000 in highly specialised equipment aboard, operates 24 hours a day 365 days a year, to transport seriously ill and injured youngsters direct to one of Sydney's specialist children's hospitals.

They fly the length and breadth of NSW, taking a specialist neonatal and paediatric retrieval medical team to local hospitals and supporting their young patients on the return journey.

About 300 patients are transported each year. Just over half are newborn babies and very young infants with serious medical problems that require intensive care treatment in one of the

## 2014

### Top 10 retrieval locations:

1. Wollongong Hospital
2. Shoalhaven Hospital
3. John Hunter (Newcastle) Hospital
4. Canberra Hospital
5. Dubbo Hospital
6. Orange Hospital
7. Wagga Hospital
8. Port Macquarie Hospital
9. Gosford Hospital
10. Nowra Hospital

### Top five destinations:

1. Sydney Children's Hospital, Randwick
2. The Children's Hospital, Westmead
3. John Hunter Hospital, Newcastle
4. Canberra Hospital
5. Nepean Hospital, Penrith

major children's hospitals.

The remainder are children up to the age of 16 with serious conditions that are considered beyond the capabilities of local services.

## Rescue helicopter services have come a long way

Every September 23rd, Australia's helicopter emergency medical and search and rescue services celebrate their birthday and are reminded just how far they have come.

On that date in 1973 one of CareFlight's Founding Directors, Ian Badham, ran the first training day for Australia's first non-military helicopter rescue service – Sydney's Wales Bank Surf Rescue Helicopter Service – at North Narrabeen Beach.

This amazing photo recently resurfaced from those very early days.

Thirteen (13) years later CareFlight came into being out of that original rescue service as the first service specifically designed to take hospital-level treatment to the patient.

It has been a remarkable journey, made possible by all those who have served CareFlight and the generous contributions of CareFlight's supporters.



## The importance of work safety

Many of CareFlight's missions are in response to industrial accidents. In September alone our rapid response trauma team attended three workplace accidents.

- Moorebank – landing at a local park, the CareFlight crew attended to a man whose hand was caught in a

rolling machine. NSW Fire Brigade were also called to the scene and worked to dismantle the machinery to free the man's hand. CareFlight's medical team initiated a pre-hospital start to treat the man's injury and he was taken to Liverpool Hospital in a stable condition.



- CareFlight responded to a call in Oakville where a 75-year-old man lost his right arm below the elbow in a factory incident. Together with Ambulance paramedics we worked to stabilise the injured man and he was airlifted to Westmead Hospital in a serious but stable condition.
- A 19-year-old man suffered abdominal injuries after being crushed between falling machinery and a utility on a rural property in Sydney's Hawkesbury region. NSW Police cleared an adjacent paddock of cattle to allow the helicopter to land. The injured man had been moving an excavator when it toppled towards him, trapping him against the vehicle. CareFlight's doctor conducted initial scans and gave pain relief before the man was airlifted directly to Westmead Hospital for further scans and tests.

CareFlight's medical crew rush to treat the crush injury victim on the rural property.

## Every cent helps to keep CareFlight in the air

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- I would like more information on including a Bequest to CareFlight in my Will.
- Arrange a visit to the CareFlight base or for a speaker to visit your group.

**Donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible.**

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Please tick here if you do NOT want to receive future communications from CareFlight.

Occasionally we allow like-minded organisations to contact you with information that may be of interest to you, including some organisations located outside Australia. Those organisations allow us to do the same and this way we can reach more people with vital information.

Please tick here if you do NOT want to receive communications from organisations we trust.

Here is my single gift of:

\$25     \$35     \$55    Other \$

Yes, I would like to become a CareFlight Support Crew Member by giving:

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