

MEDIA RELEASE

World-first RFDS jet arrives in Perth

The health outcomes of Western Australians will be revolutionised by the arrival of the Royal Flying Doctor Services' world first aero medical PC-24 jet.

The ground-breaking Rio Tinto LifeFlight PC-24 jet will become an emergency ward in the sky and transform the way the RFDS transports and treats patients across WA.

The aircraft will boost the response capacity of the RFDS fleet and will almost halve the time for long-haul critical patient transfers.

The specially designed Pilatus jet, which was fitted out in Switzerland, stopped in Singapore and Broome before arriving in Perth today.

The jet is one of two acquired by the RFDS, with the second jet to be based in Broome.

The \$26 million investment has been partly funded by a \$10 million contribution from Rio Tinto and \$4.5 million from the Commonwealth Government.

With its state-of-the-art aero medical fit out, the aircraft can carry up to three stretchered patients and two medical teams at once. The current PC-12s carry two stretchered patients.

RFDS WA Chief Executive Officer Rebecca Tomkinson said the jets can fly at a top speed of 740kms an hour and have the capability for short landings and take-offs on unsealed airstrips.

"The Rio Tinto LifeFlight jets are a necessary investment in our state's health system that will put time on our side for saving lives," Ms Tomkinson said.

"The innovative aero medical interior is the first of its kind in the world, a game changer for patient outcomes and improving health care to regional and remote Australians.

"The Royal Flying Doctor Service belongs to all Western Australians and we are all extremely proud of achieving a world-first for aero medical service in our state."

Rio Tinto Pilbara Mines Managing Director Stefan Buys said the organisation was proud to support the work of the RFDS.

"The health and safety of our people and support for the communities where we operate in Western Australia is critical to Rio Tinto," he said.

"Technology plays a big part in our business, so we're especially proud to have supported the delivery of these new state-of-the-art PC-24 jet aircrafts, which will help the RFDS continue with its important efforts serving regional and remote communities across the state," Mr Buys said.

In preparation for the arrival of the jets, RFDS pilots and engineers have undertaken advanced training in the United States and Switzerland, with doctors and nurses set to take part in aero medical in-flight training in WA over the coming weeks.



The first jet touched down at Jandakot airport today, and will commence service in early 2019. The second will arrive in WA next month.

<Ends>

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

RFDS BASES

- Jandakot, Kalgoorlie, Meekatharra, Broome, Port Hedland
- The PC-24 jets will be based at Jandakot and Broome

FACTS and STATS

- Each year in Western Australia, the RFDS will fly the equivalent of 188 times around the world.
- RFDS assists approx 70,000 people a year through emergency medical retrieval, rural and remote GP and dental clinics and tele-health services.
- RFDS responds to approx 25 patients a day in locations as close to Perth as Rottneest and as far north as Kununurra.

CURRENT FLEET

- 16 x PC-12 Turbo Prop Aircraft and 1 x Rio Hawker jet.
- Each aircraft with world class aero medical fit out to support in-flight emergency medical treatment.