



Royal Flying Doctor Service

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MEDIA RELEASE AND PICTURE OPPORTUNITY for

THURSDAY FEBRUARY 12

Rottnest swimmer takes to the water again after RFDS rescue

2 February, 2015

John Muir is taking to the water again this year for the annual Rottnest Swim after participating last year but crossing the finish line only to suffer a heart attack and being rescued by the Royal Flying Doctor Service.

John said he's in training and looking forward to taking to the water again on Saturday February 21. At 48, the keen swimmer said he never thought he'd need the services of the RFDS.

"We live in the city and I'm generally pretty healthy so I never dreamed I'd be reliant on the Flying Doctors," John said.

"Growing up in WA, learning to swim and surf in WA waters, including at Rottnest, while also being a triathlon competitor, local swim squad member and state master's representative – John is a seasoned swimmer.

"I've done the Rottnest swim in a team about eight times and this was the seventh time I'd competed solo, so I knew what to expect and had trained for it as usual, I just love the event."

But about 12 kilometres into the 19.7km open water swim event from Cottesloe Beach to Rottnest Island, John knew he was extremely cold and in a fair bit of pain but he didn't realise he had become hypothermic.

"I knew I was cold, a lot colder than in previous years and I felt my heart kind of spasm, but I just kept going and made it to the finish line – really unaware of what had happened.

"I staggered up the beach and started foaming at the mouth. That was when a nurse came over to me and guided me to the medical tent, then shortly after a doctor from Rottnest Hospital just said 'we're going to fly you out of here.'"

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The Royal Flying Doctors picked John up at Rottnest and flew him to their Jandakot base, where St John Ambulance took him to Fremantle Hospital.

Test results confirmed John had suffered a heart attack and because of the cold waters, and his level of fitness, he was fortunate not to have suffered further permanent damage.

“I know I’m a lucky man, particularly because I kept going for another couple of hours after it happened, there was real danger in that.

“I also know my wellbeing is due to the early intervention and medical help I received while in the air with the flying doctors. I hate to think what might have happened if I had to get out of there by boat. Fortunately I’ve now made a full recovery.

“They are an amazing organisation that truly looks after all West Australians, and as I now know, not just in remote areas.

“I travelled through North America for about two years at one time and I wonder what happens to people out there if they get into trouble or become really sick – I don’t think such a service exists elsewhere – the RFDS is a true Australian icon.”

This year the RFDS is supported by the naming right sponsors of the Rottnest Swim, Karma Resorts, and their teams have already raised a significant sum for the RFDS.

RFDS Chief Executive Officer Grahame Marshall said support from the public is critical in terms of the costs involved in replacing, maintaining, and fitting out the organisation’s aircraft - and in purchasing the essential medical equipment required to save lives.

“That is why every single person who makes a donation to the Flying Doctor Service is so important to us and our patients - because without your help we couldn't achieve the successful outcomes for our patients that we do.

“The RFDS is as relevant and essential to all Western Australians today as we have ever been. This year the organisation will celebrate 80 years of service in WA and demand for our services are today at record levels, with us managing 35,000 patient contacts around WA last year alone, and we want to ensure that we're still here responding to the needs of the people of WA for another 80 years at least. To achieve that we need your help.”

To donate to the RFDS call 1300 669 569 or check out www.flyingdoctor.org.au

PICTURE/VISION OPPORTUNITY

Date: Thursday February 12

Time: 7am

Location: Suggest Cottesloe Beach, in front of Indiana Tea House

Who: John Muir and RFDS CEO Grahame Marshall, there are some still images of John during his RFDS rescue

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