



Royal Flying Doctor Service

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MEDIA STATEMENT

Young crash survivor warning leading up to Easter

March 23, 2016

24 year-old Parkwood woman Michelle Eales believes she's lucky to be alive.

Just before Easter last year Michelle was with her boyfriend Michael, driving to visit her sister in Kalgoorlie, when the car they were travelling in slid on a section of uneven road, rolled several times and crashed into bushland.

"I could remember feeling the car roll quite a few times and realizing that I was upside down," Michelle said.

"It happened so fast but in some ways I felt like we were in slow motion."

Incredibly, Michelle's partner Michael escaped without any injury, while she sustained some lacerations to her head and at the time suspected damage to her neck.

"My head and neck was sore and I wasn't sure if I had suffered serious injury or not, so we were taken by ambulance to Southern Cross Hospital then the staff there called the Royal Flying Doctor Service," Michelle said.

"I have a bit of a fear of flying so wasn't that keen to get on the plane, plus I was concerned about the cost of all this medical treatment, especially when my car had just been destroyed.

"Once on the plane, the doctor and flight nurse were amazing. They put me in a neck brace and reassured me that they while I didn't think I had serious injuries, they wanted to be sure so stabilized me and then ensured I would be seen by specialists who would also rule out any internal injuries.

"And I couldn't believe it when they told me that there would be no cost for the RFDS service!

"Once on board the plane, I began to relax. It was so windy outside but inside everything seemed to be so calm. The nurse talked to me all the way to Perth and it didn't feel like the trip even took that long. They gave me medication to calm me down and after I while I wasn't scared anymore."

Michelle's car was totally destroyed in the accident, with the roof almost peeled right off to the front windscreen. She believes it is amazing that her partner and she survived the

accident and she's relieved to have received emergency medical care so quickly, despite not sustaining life threatening injuries.

The Royal Flying Doctor Service urges all West Australians to take care as they prepare to enjoy the Easter holiday season.

Royal Flying Doctor Service Chief Executive Officer Grahame Marshall made the call following the release of statistics which show a steadily increasing demand for emergency aeromedical services.

"While the RFDS team is on hand 365 days a year, 24 hours a day, it would obviously be preferable that we weren't needed at all over the Easter period – traditionally a very busy time, particularly on our roads.

Mr Marshall said during the past 12 months, the RFDS retrieved around 550 patients from around the state as a result of motor vehicle accidents.

Holiday periods unfortunately see more West Australians killed and injured on our roads than almost any other time of the year.

"Many of the people assisted by our team at the RFDS were air lifted from rural or remote areas while it seems a large number of them actually live in the Perth metropolitan area and may not be accustomed to travelling long distances on country roads.

"What we're asking people to do is be mindful of the road conditions, and the additional care needed when driving long distances."

Mr Marshall said the flying doctors, during the past 12 months alone, transported over 9000 sick and injured patients to hospitals across the state for treatment, and received over 41,000 telephone calls for medical assistance and advice.

"The RFDS is there to deliver life-saving services to West Australians day and night, wherever and whenever they needs us, but at this time of the year I'd urge the community to do their best to see if they can do us out of a job! We urge everyone to take extra care this holiday season."

The RFDS provides emergency care, lifesaving outcomes, and health treatment and advice to almost 70,000 people in Western Australia every year and has done now in WA for more than 80 years. To donate to the RFDS call 1300 669 569 or check out www.flyingdoctor.org.au

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