



Royal Flying Doctor Service

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

## Warren's Story

10 December 2019

### Heart attack victim rescued from remote mine site

Collie man Warren Jones counts himself lucky to be alive after experiencing a heart attack while working at a remote mine site in the East Pilbara region of Western Australia.

A fly-in fly-out mobile plant operator at the Woodie Woodie Manganese Mine, 57-year-old Warren woke up on a scorching hot November afternoon, after night shift, to severe chest pain, shoulder pain and shortness of breath.

The mine site's medic team was quickly alerted and emergency medical assessment and treatment was initiated under the supervision of a Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) medical officer over the phone.

An electrocardiogram showed evidence of a large heart attack with a significant blockage in one of Warren's coronary arteries supplying the heart.

Time was of the essence as the blockage was preventing blood supply to his heart and Warren desperately needed specialist medical care and emergency transfer to a coronary care unit in Perth.

Located south-east of Marble Bar, the Woodie Woodie Manganese Mine is approximately 1600 kilometres away from Perth where specialist cardiac care would only be available, a journey that would take 20 hours by road transport.

This was time Warren didn't have to spare given his grave condition and the RFDS was tasked to aero medically retrieve Warren from the mine site to Perth.

In the last financial year, the RFDS has retrieved 215 patients directly from mine sites across Western Australia.

RFDS Head of Medical Dr Andrew Hooper was on the Rio Tinto LifeFlight PC-24 jet, which was about to depart from Broome, on its way to Meekatharra, when it was diverted to respond to Warren's medical emergency.

"We had a time-critical patient scenario where minutes mattered," Dr Hooper said.

A game-changer for aero medical service in Western Australia, the Rio Tinto LifeFlight PC-24 jet aircraft can travel at speeds of more than 700km/hr, are equipped with state-of-the-art aero medical equipment and are literally Intensive Care Units in the sky.

"We were able to respond rapidly and in-flight, we were able to continue Warren's emergency treatment, monitor his vital signs and ensure plans were in order to get him to Royal Perth Hospital for the procedure he needed."

Less than a week after being discharged from hospital, Warren made a surprise drop-in to the RFDS Jandakot base, with cake for crew in tow, and was delighted to reunite with Dr Hooper.

"Warren had a life threatening condition and to see him walking through our doors five days later doing well is just amazing," Dr Hooper said.



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Warren said it was great to catch up with Dr Hooper under very different circumstances and to share with him how well his recovery was going and to pass on his gratitude.

“Without the Royal Flying Doctor Service, I probably wouldn’t be alive and standing here today. I literally was in the middle of nowhere,” Warren said.

“This whole experience has given me a massive wakeup call that I need to stop my bad habits.

“I need to do all that I can to keep my body strong and healthy from here on out.

“Thanks to the RFDS, I can continue to do all the things I love like the speedway and enjoy life with friends and family.”

The RFDS is a not-for-profit charitable organisation that relies on a combination of government, corporate and community support to ensure the sustainability of its operations.

Warren said following the incident, the mine site held three quiz nights to fundraise for the RFDS.

To donate in support of the RFDS, visit: [www.rfdswa.com.au](http://www.rfdswa.com.au)

### Ends

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#### **Photo Caption:**

RFDS medical officer Dr Andrew Hooper with Collie man Warren Jones at the RFDS Jandakot base less than a week after experiencing a heart attack.

#### **Media Enquiries**

Ivy James, RFDS Media and Communications Manager | M: 0438 941 058 | E: [Ivy.James@RFDSWA.com.au](mailto:Ivy.James@RFDSWA.com.au)