

Media Release

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Flying Doctor to showcase unique aero medical skills at Mining Emergency Response Competition

The unique aero medical skills and expertise of the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) when retrieving patients with life threatening injuries will be showcased at the 2019 Mining Emergency Response Competition (MERC) held at Langley Park on November 22-24.

Participating in the competition for the first time, the RFDS will present a mock scenario where a remotely located patient has suffered severe burns as a result of a workplace incident, requiring specialist care only available in Perth.

The team will then share with their counterparts in the state's health and emergency services network the systematic process and considerations that are made when preparing the patient for aero medical transport.

This includes having a team with the necessary skills to assess the patient, determining and implementing requirements in a timely manner and the implications of location, geography, local resources and physiological considerations of transport.

On average, RFDS retrieval teams respond to 24 patients a day from across more than 2.5 million square kilometres of Western Australia – from country hospitals, mine sites, remote nursing posts and locations far from medical facilities or specialist care.

RFDS Western Operations Head of Nursing Paul Ingram said simulation scenarios presented at MERC offered a valuable opportunity for the state's health and emergency services network to come together to learn and share best practices with one another.

"On any given day, our highly trained doctors, nurses and pilots are reacting and responding to a wide range of emergencies in sometimes challenging and unpredictable conditions," Mr Ingram said.

"In a state as vast and remote as ours, we often work in collaboration with emergency services in the regions when retrieving patients so it's crucial to have a mutual understanding of each other's work environment and processes.

"We play a vital role in the state's emergency and health services network and look forward to strengthening ties with our peers to ensure the best health outcomes for all who live, work and travel across our great state."

The Flying Doctor's 24-hour emergency aero medical retrieval service and primary health care services have for many decades provided a 'mantle of safety' for mine site workers and their families in the regions.

Last year, the Flying Doctor retrieved 215 patients directly from mine sites across Western Australia.

Ends

Media Enquiries

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Editor's Notes

- **Bases:** Jandakot, Kalgoorlie, Meekatharra, Port Hedland and Broome;
- **Fleet:** 16 PC-12 turboprop aircraft and two Rio Tinto LifeFlight PC-24 jet aircraft;
- **Services:** 24-hour emergency aero medical retrievals, rural and remote GP clinics and dental services, telehealth and medical chests;
- **Statistics:** During FY18-19, the Flying Doctor reached and provided in-flight medical care to 8,682 patients across Western Australia. That's approximately 24 men, women and children flown to safety each day.
- During FY18-19, RFDS Western Operations flew nearly 8 million kilometres to reach its patients across the state. That's approximately 200 times around the world!
- Each Flying Doctor aircraft is equipped with state-of-the-art aero medical equipment to support in-flight medical emergencies and serve as Intensive Care Units in the sky;
- All RFDS flight nurses are qualified midwives; and
- Western Australia spans more than 2.5 million square kilometres and is the most remote health jurisdiction in the world; and
- In 2019, the Flying Doctor of Western Australia was announced as the winner of the Dr Mal Bryce Tech Company of the Year at the INCITE Awards, based on the fit-out and performance of the Rio Tinto LifeFlight PC-24 jets.