



Royal Flying Doctor Service  
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

## Media Release

2 December 2021

### Flying Doctor to bring EC145 helicopter to Wongan Hills

In an exciting expansion of our service, the Royal Flying Doctor Service in WA will integrate two EC145 helicopters into our fleet in early 2022.

Ideal for door-to-door transfers from regional hospitals to specialist care at Perth's major tertiary hospitals, the Fortescue Heli-Med Service will provide RFDS' frontline crews with greater capacity to respond to the needs of patients and the WA health system.

Crewed by RFDS' experienced and trusted team of pilots, doctors and flight nurses, the helicopters will work alongside the existing fleet of 20 fixed-wing aircraft to ensure the RFDS can continue to provide the best possible care for patients living, working and travelling in rural and remote communities.

In November and December, the RFDS will undertake a Rotary Operational Readiness Program and visit several regional centres prior to integrating the two helicopters into its fleet.

The visits will ensure our pilots are familiar with regional helicopter landing sites and patient handling and logistical procedures are developed for each regional site to ensure effective coordination between health care professionals on the ground and RFDS crews.

It will also provide our clinicians the opportunity to undertake in-flight training scenarios in readiness to care for patients being transported in a helicopter.

During the visits, the RFDS will also acknowledge and thank the community for their generous support of this new service that will directly benefit them.

#### **WONGAN HILLS LANDING DETAILS**

**Time:** 12.00noon

**Date:** Friday 3 December 2021

**Location:** Wongan Hills Sports Facility

RFDS WA Medical Officer John Iliff said "The helicopters can be deployed to towns within 250 kilometres of our Jandakot base and will enable many patients to get a faster journey to hospital.

"For critically unwell patients the RFDS will be able to bring patients direct to tertiary hospitals, landing on their helipads and providing us with another aircraft option to ensure we can provide the most appropriate and timely interhospital transfers in each individual patient's case.

"The visits to regional centres will provide our clinicians with the opportunity to meet with local health staff and introduce them to our new service.

"The helicopters will significantly increase the RFDS' capacity to meet the critical health needs of regional Western Australians," Dr Iliff said.

**Ends**

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## Media enquiries

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## Opportunities for photographs and interviews

RFDS clinicians and pilots will be available for photo and interview opportunities during the visit.

## Editor's notes

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### Fortescue Heli-Med Service

- The RFDS in Western Australia is the first State to integrate helicopters into its service to enable us to continue to meet the evolving health needs of regional Western Australians.
- The two EC145 helicopters will be integrated into our fleet in early 2022 and since arriving at our Jandakot Base in June 2021, have undergone a rigorous process to become certified for operational use.
- With an operational range of 500 kilometres and cruising speed of 220 kilometres per hour, a typical mission for our EC145 helicopters will be to undertake hospital-to-hospital transfers.
- The RFDS has recruited rotary pilots and engineers to work on the helicopters, and our teams of specialist clinical staff are undergoing comprehensive training in readiness to care for patients being transferred by helicopter.
- The Fortescue Heli-Med Service will initially operate between 8.00am to 6.00pm Monday to Friday, with the intention to expand to 24/7 in the future.
- The RFDS acknowledges and thanks our partner Fortescue Metals Group for their support, without which this new service wouldn't be possible.

### RFDS Western Operations

- Over FY20-21, the RFDS retrieved and provided in-flight medical care to 10,097 patients across Western Australia. That's approximately 27 men, women and children flown to safety each day. Click [here](#) for region specific stats.
- **Services:** 24-hour aeromedical retrieval service, primary health care clinics, dental clinics, telehealth consultations and medical chests.
- **Bases:** Jandakot, Kalgoorlie, Meekatharra, Port Hedland and Broome.
- **Fleet:** 17 PC-12 turboprop aircraft, two Rio Tinto LifeFlight PC-24 jets with a third to arrive in 2022, and two EC145 helicopters.
- **Our People:** The RFDS in Western Australia is staffed by flight nurses, doctors, pilots, engineers, logisticians, administrative and corporate staff.
- The RFDS is an aeromedical charity providing a 24/7 service to anyone in regional WA.
- Donate to the RFDS in WA by visiting [www.rfdswa.com.au](http://www.rfdswa.com.au)
- The RFDS works closely with key health and emergency service partners including WA Country Health Service, St John's Ambulance, WA Police, DFES and the RAC Rescue Helicopter.
- In 2020-21, the RFDS travelled 9 million km across WA and spent 22,000 hours in the air.
- Individual patient information cannot be provided by the RFDS without patient consent.