

Media Release

The Hon Martin Foley MP
Minister for Health
Minister for Ambulance Services
Minister for Equality



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VICTORIA'S AIR AMBULANCES SOAR TO NEW HEIGHTS

Four new ultra-modern aircraft fitted with high-tech patient care systems will join Victoria's fixed-wing air ambulance service, making the fleet the most innovative in the country and ensuring patients across the state have the best care available.

Minister for Ambulance Services Martin Foley today announced Ambulance Victoria's current fixed-wing fleet would be replaced with four new Beechcraft King Air aircraft worth more than \$300 million, taking off in 2024.

Ambulance Victoria has signed a contract with Pel-Air Aviation to continue providing fixed wing air ambulance services in Victoria for another 12 years.

As part of the contract, Pel-Air will supply four new fixed-wing aircraft, as well as pilots and engineering support.

Fixed-wing aircraft provide a vital link between rural communities and metropolitan health services. In 2020/21 the fleet transported 5,065 patients – with most of those trips from regional Victoria to Melbourne.

The state-of-the-art aircraft will feature the latest technology and provide additional comfort, safety and care for patients and flight paramedics.

Each plane will be fitted with the high-tech Stryker stretcher loading system, which will mean a faster and smoother ride for patients and less risk of injury for paramedics and flight crews.

Last year, Ambulance Victoria's air ambulance helicopters were fitted with this innovative loading system, which has already reduced the time taken to transfer patients into the aircraft by up to 20 minutes.

Ambulance Victoria will also work with Pel-Air to develop an Australian-first pilot fatigue monitoring system, to ensure a continuous focus on safety development for staff.

The fleet, consisting of two Beechcraft 260s and two Beechcraft 360s, is expected to become operational in 2024.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Ambulance Services Martin Foley

"These planes feature the latest aviation technology and medical equipment that's equivalent to any prestigious hospital intensive care unit – making sure Victorians have access to the very best care, no matter where they live."

"Our dedicated paramedics have worked tirelessly through the pandemic. We are backing them with the modern technology they need to provide world class emergency care."

Quotes attributable to Ambulance Victoria CEO Professor Tony Walker

"Our patients will benefit from a reduction in transfer time between road ambulances and the aircraft, which in turn helps get our crews back on the road faster."

"We're proud to be leading the way when it comes to using innovative technology to provide an exceptional experience for our patients, right across Victoria."

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