NEW AIR AMBULANCE HELICOPTER ON SHOW

Minister for Ambulance Services Jill Hennessy today unveiled the first of Victoria’s five new state-of-the-art ambulance helicopters which will help patients get the life-saving care they need, sooner.

The new AgustaWestland AW-139 twin engine helicopters will begin transporting critically ill patients across Victoria from 1 January 2016.

Air ambulance helicopters respond to major trauma incidents, search and rescue operations, life-threatening medical emergencies and transfer critically ill patients from rural to major Melbourne hospitals.

In 2014-15, air ambulance helicopters responded to more than 1,800 emergencies across Victoria.

The new bigger and faster helicopters that can travel further without having to refuel will replace each of the existing air ambulance helicopter fleet, which are located at Essendon, Bendigo, Warrnambool and the Latrobe Valley.

The existing fleet is made up of a Dauphin twin engine helicopter and four Bell 412 helicopters.

Over the next few months, the new helicopters will be fitted-out with specialist medical and rescue equipment and flight crews and paramedics will undergo training.

The Andrews Labor Government wants to ensure Victoria has the strongest ambulance service possible, so that patients can get the life-saving care they need, when they need it.

In the 2015-16 Budget, the Government has invested an extra $2.1 billion in the health system, including an additional $99 million for ambulance services.

This extra funding includes $20 million to upgrade and modernise ambulance stations across the state, $20 million to upgrade vehicles and equipment, and increased support services for Victoria’s hardworking paramedics.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Ambulance Services Jill Hennessy

“Every second counts when there’s a life-threatening emergency, and these new helicopters will help save Victorian lives.”

“We are working hard to improve our ambulance service so that Victorians can get the life-saving care they need when they need it.”

Quotes attributable to Member for Essendon Danny Pearson

“Air ambulance helicopters provide a vital service, and I’m pleased that these new bigger, faster and quieter helicopters will be commissioned into service next year.”

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