

FROM THE CHAIR

As we begin another year committed to saving lives we can look back on 2008 and reflect what a busy year it was for Life Flight's air ambulance services and Westpac Rescue Helicopter. This coming year will be testing as we face the changes that are happening fast throughout the world and locally. Events will impact on everybody over coming months including charities. Thankfully Life Flight has very strong public support, as well as a strong board and management, and is well positioned to maintain the valuable services that we operate.

We are very grateful for the continuous support of our sponsors, grant bodies and in particular all our donors. Since Peter Button started Wellington's rescue helicopter, community support has made a huge difference to over 14,000 lives. Everyday we hear incredible stories about the people we fly, but we are not always able to pass those on to you who helped make them possible. This is our chance to tell you about some of the special missions that are achieved with your help. I hope the three stories in this edition show you the real difference your contribution is making for families and to New Zealand.

There have been many new initiatives at the Trust over the past year. We recently announced a new joint venture with Wellington Free Ambulance. One of their officers and a dedicated ambulance are now based at our air rescue centre, Wellington. This means there will be additional resources available to quickly and safely transfer patients between our air rescue centre at the airport and Wellington Hospital before or after their life-saving air ambulance flights.

Life Flight has received its registration from the Charities Commission, which is part of our commitment to integrity and transparency.

But perhaps more importantly, over 1,300 patients were flown to the care they urgently required in 2008.

It is with regret that I advise you our General Manager for the past seven years, Kevin Allan, has resigned to take up another career appointment. Kevin has provided the Trust with outstanding commitment and service and when he leaves the Trust in March he does so in the knowledge that he leaves the Trust in a very sound position. Trustees and staff would like to express their gratitude for the strong leadership Kevin has provided and wish him well in his new chosen field. We hope to announce Kevin's replacement shortly.

Life Flight Trustees are committed to maintaining Peter Button's dream - without your help we couldn't do it.

Thank you again for your support.

Bill Day JP –Chair ■

WELLINGTON INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT: MAKING YOUR DONATIONS GO FURTHER

We achieve around 1,500 flights for emergency call outs per year and are fortunate to be assisted by the Wellington International Airport which gives us direct financial support including a discount on landing fees.

These lower costs mean your donations can help us achieve more missions in our community.

The team at Wellington Airport also help us in other areas such as facilitating our annual open day which gives families an opportunity to see our services close up.

Thank you Wellington Airport! ■



FROM THE CREW ROOM

We've upgraded our Emergency Locator Beacons, have you?

After 1 February 2009 the old 121.5 MHz and 243 MHz distress beacons won't generate an alert to rescue authorities. The satellite system that supports these old beacons will cease to operate from 1 February 2009, which means that if you turn it on, because you need help, your emergency signal will not be picked up by rescue authorities.

All of our aircraft beacons and the personal locator beacons carried by our pilots and crew have been upgraded to the new 406 beacons, which are much more accurate than the old beacons. Our GPS-equipped 406 beacons are located by satellites quickly and identify who we are, and where we are - accurate to within a few metres.

"The 406 beacons help eliminate a lot of the 'search' in 'search and rescue'," says Life Flight Operations Manager Dave Greenberg. "They improve our chance of survival greatly should we ever need help, and help us locate others who need help much more quickly."

If you have an Emergency Locator Beacon (ELB) [also known as a Personal Locator Beacon (PLB) or an Emergency Locator Transmitter (ELT)] on your aircraft, or boat, or which you take tramping, then you must upgrade to a 406 beacon before 1 February, 2009.

And please be careful when disposing of your old beacons. Many beacon searches carried out in New Zealand are for accidental activations, and the number of these is increasing as people throw out their old beacons without disconnecting the battery.

More information on disposing of your old beacons and purchasing new ones is available at www.beacons.org.nz. ■



The Westpac Rescue Helicopter takes part in a search and rescue mission.

LIFEFLIGHTER BRIEFS

A RAY OF HOPE

When Mrs Andrews started having contractions 15 weeks early she was scared, but her midwife gave her a ray of hope.

"She told me that, even though he would be small, babies this size can survive. That thought just kept me going the whole time – that my baby could survive," says Mrs Andrews.

She was rushed to Hutt Hospital, where she received several scans and was given medication to slow the birth. "This was a real worry because you know things are serious but you just don't know what lies ahead," says Mrs Andrews. "They gave me injections to slow the contractions and steroids to help mature my baby's lungs. One of the main concerns was that his lungs would be too undeveloped to be able to breathe on his own after birth."

The medical team decided she urgently needed the type of specialist care only available in major centres. Wellington Hospital informed them there was one bed available in their Intensive Care Unit (ICU) so Mrs Andrews was transferred there by road. On arrival another patient had given birth to twins, which meant the Wellington ICU was now totally full and there was no space for Mrs Andrews.

Mrs Andrews was running out of time and there was no appropriate local care available. The medical team searched for other options and discovered that Waikato Hospital would be able to care for her and her baby. Getting there by air was the only hope for her unborn baby to survive, so the Life Flight air ambulance was prepared for immediate flight. "The next thing I knew the great team had flown me to Waikato Hospital," she says.

At 9.25 the next morning Adam was born weighing only 825 grams (most babies weigh around 3.5 kilograms at birth). He was so small he would have fitted in the palm of your hand.

Mrs Andrews says, "After the birth it was a bit of a blur as they had to rush Adam off for treatment. He had a lung collapse within 24 hours so the nurses and doctors were working very hard to save him."

After six weeks in Waikato hospital it was once again time for the Life Flight Trust to touch the lives of the Andrews family. Adam was flown back to Wellington in a specialist incubator designed for small babies, which measures vital signs and helps keep them safe during their flight.

After another nine weeks in hospital his mum was allowed to take him home for the first time.

"Adam is a tough little boy and he got through it all. He is now doing wonderfully," says Mrs Andrews. "By getting me to Waikato Hospital quickly and safely the Life Flight Trust saved his life. What they did for our family is immeasurable. It's priceless and we feel very lucky." ■



Adam two days old in Waikato neonatal unit.



Adam two years and ten months old bouncing happily.

Thank you to Mrs Andrews for sharing her story. If you have a story about Life Flight we would be thrilled to hear from you. Please phone (04) 387 9812 or email stories@lifeflight.org.nz.

<p>HOW TO HELP Any help you can provide is very much appreciated. Please fill in the details below and return in the self-addressed envelope provided.</p>	<p>MR <input type="checkbox"/> MRS <input type="checkbox"/> MS <input type="checkbox"/> MISS <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER <input type="checkbox"/> (PLEASE TICK ONE)</p> <p>FIRST NAME _____ LAST NAME _____</p> <p>UNIT/FLAT/APARTMENT _____ FLOOR/BUILDING NAME _____ STREET NUMBER _____ STREET NAME _____ SUBURB _____ TOWN/CITY _____ POSTCODE _____ PHONE HOME _____ PHONE WORK _____ EMAIL _____</p>	<p>YES! I WANT TO HELP I would like to donate (please tick): \$100 <input type="checkbox"/> \$75 <input type="checkbox"/> \$55 <input type="checkbox"/> \$45 <input type="checkbox"/> \$25 <input type="checkbox"/> other: \$ _____</p> <p>I enclose a CHEQUE (please make payable to The Life Flight Trust) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Please charge my CREDIT CARD <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>VISA <input type="checkbox"/> MASTERCARD <input type="checkbox"/> AMEX <input type="checkbox"/> DINERS <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>CARD NUMBER _____ EXPIRY DATE _____ NAME ON CARD _____ SIGNATURE _____</p> <p>To donate by CREDIT CARD ON OUR WEBSITE, visit www.lifeflight.org.nz to make a secure, instant donation. Please provide an email address to receive a receipt.</p> <p>To donate by DIRECT CREDIT: The Life Flight Trust's bank account number is 03 0578 0048481 08. Please include your name and address in the reference fields so that we can attribute your donation to you.</p> <p>REMEMBER The Life Flight Trust is a registered charitable trust. Donations may be tax deductible.</p>	<p>PLEASE SEND ME INFORMATION ON:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Donating regularly from my bank account or credit card</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> How to include Life Flight in my Will</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Donating my time towards supporting fundraising events</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Organising a school/club/group visit to Life Flight's Air-Rescue Centre</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Life Flight's range of supporters' products</p>
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AN OPPORTUNITY TO TELL YOU ABOUT THE REAL DIFFERENCE YOU ARE MAKING



SAVING LIVES ABOVE ALL ELSE

AIR RESCUE AND AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

WESTPAC RESCUE HELICOPTER & LIFE FLIGHT NZ AIR AMBULANCE

ISSUE 36 LIFEFLIGHTER

JANUARY 2009

A SUDDEN CHANGE OF HEART

A story as told by one of the families you have helped.

The day before his 55th birthday my husband Neil's heart forgot to keep beating and he collapsed.

He had suffered a cardiac arrest while at a Masterton gym. A gym-goer, a member of staff and I rushed to help. We attempted to get a response by yelling and tapping his face then started CPR until the road ambulance arrived. Neil was externally defibrillated (given an electric shock) three times on the floor in an attempt to restore his normal heart rhythms. All the gym staff were marvellous, ringing 111 and helping in many ways.

Neil has a form of cardiomyopathy (a heart muscle condition) and was fitted with a pacemaker; he now urgently required the expertise and equipment that was not available in Wairarapa. The doctors quickly decided the only option to save Neil's life was to transfer him to Wellington Hospital as soon as possible. Because of the long, windy road over the Rimutaka Range an air transfer was critical.

Life Flight's air ambulance flew a Wellington Hospital ICU flight team to Masterton to transfer Neil. The staff at Masterton Hospital did a brilliant job of stabilising him in the Intensive Care Unit. We left the Wairarapa after midnight on the Life Flight aeroplane. Neil was tended to all the way by the wonderful and caring medical staff. It was very comforting for me to be able to accompany him on the flight.

The whole ordeal was very scary. Neil was unconscious from Tuesday afternoon until mid morning on Thursday. During this time we did not know when or if he might regain consciousness or if his brain had been damaged.

When he regained consciousness he was initially only able to blink and gently squeeze our hands. However, he rapidly improved and after a few days in hospital a new pacemaker/defibrillator was inserted. At the time, we were told it would be very rare for this heart failure to occur a second time... but it did. Approximately seven months later Neil collapsed in a Wellington café. His heart had stopped beating, but once again he received successful CPR and was this time transferred by Wellington Free road ambulance to hospital. Remarkably Neil survived this second emergency too!

We are very lucky that Neil has not suffered any neurological damage through these ordeals. This I see as an extraordinary commendation for the people who helped him. Rapidly transferring Neil to specialist care both times was crucial to his survival and recovery. It was very fortunate that during each of these horrors there were wonderful people around us who were prepared to help. In each case it was very humbling both at the time of the collapse and in the days and weeks following.

The day of his first collapse Neil had just written out a cheque for our annual donation to Life Flight... amazing that he should go on to have his life saved by the service later that very day.

Thanks to all the wonderful people and organisations that have helped save Neil, he intends to live a long and full life and has great plans for the future.

By Bev Wadham ■



Neil on the road to recovery in Wellington Hospital.



A happy ending: Neil and Bev with their children.

PRINCIPAL SPONSOR RESCUE HELICOPTER
Westpac



PRINCIPAL FUNDER AIR AMBULANCE
NZCT
NEW ZEALAND COMMUNITY TRUST

EDITORIAL ENQUIRIES
TO: SEBASTIAN GRODD
THE LIFE FLIGHT TRUST

T (04) 387 9812
F (04) 387 9619
E sebastian@lifeflight.org.nz
W www.lifeflight.org.nz

THANK YOU!

We are very grateful for the fundraising event ideas you create and the effort you put into helping people who need Life Flight. The money raised at your events is crucial and makes a real difference for families every day. If you are considering organising an event we would love to hear from you. Please download our new Events Pack at www.lifelight.org.nz or phone (04) 387 9812.

The Big Pedal: Your support enabled a rescue of John Masters after he suffered a life-threatening illness at sea. He writes: "Along with the amazing medical skills of the yacht's doctor and seamanship of the skipper and crew, they saved my life... I am circumnavigating the South Island from Cape Farewell in the north to Slope Point in the south by cycle, to celebrate my rescue, the bravery of the helicopter crew in such extreme conditions and the team work of everybody involved." To support John on his fundraising adventure visit www.fundraiseonline.co.nz/JohnMasters/.



John (middle) awaiting rescue.

Masteron Mitre 10 Golf Day: \$9,280 was raised which takes the total contribution from this special business to a whopping \$64,500. Co-owner Rex Slight says, "You never know when you'll need to use Life Flight."



Photo courtesy of Wairarapa Times-Age.

Happy Circle Knitting Group: This group get together annually and use their knitting talents to create items for sale to benefit charities. Life Flight was thrilled to receive \$500.



Carepark Guy

Fawkes: Carepark opened up the top storey of their Reading Car Park to provide the best seats in the house to watch the fireworks display and raise funds to save lives.

Westpac Paraparaumu Variety Show and Auction: Kapiti Westpac branches pulled out all the stops to raise \$8,635 and host a glittering night of local entertainment including drummers, hip hop dancers, line dancers and exotic belly dancers.

Ladies Night for Life: The Greytown Lionesses hosted this fabulous craft evening for the third year running and raised \$1,600.

IAG Golf Day: Thanks to Brian Landymore and his team over \$5,000 was raised.

Orange Order Centenary: The Grand Orange Lodge made its largest single donation in history. \$26,000 was gifted for a new ProPaq Monitor. This essential life-saving equipment is used to assess patients' vital signs. ■

AUCKLAND UPDATE

NEW AUCKLAND BASE

Thanks to your support Life Flight's air ambulance base in Auckland has a new home. In the humble beginnings the Auckland team was based in a single room in an engineering hangar! The new base ensures patients receive undercover transfers from air to road ambulances, provides a warm, safe place for patients and families and further improves efficiency.

Since 2005, Life Flight has been the air ambulance service for Auckland District Health Board and Starship Children's Health. This service ensures that patients from all over New Zealand can access the specialist care available in Auckland.

Life Flight's costs are minimised as all equipment is interchangeable between the Auckland and the Wellington air ambulances and the two aeroplanes can back each other up. In the year to October 2008 your support meant the Auckland air ambulance was able to fly 373 missions to help families throughout the country. ■



Some of the Auckland team at the new base. UK medical student Leslie Long (pictured second from left) is visiting New Zealand to do elective studies with Life Flight.

Auckland Operations Manager Ian Lauder

FIRST CHRISTMAS OFF WORK IN 35 YEARS

Crewperson Bruce Blanche just had his first Christmas off work in 35 years. Auckland operations manager Ian Lauder says, "It's easy to get caught up in this job when you are making such a difference for the community." ■

THE BEST WAY TO SAVE LIVES

Making a regular and reliable monthly donation from your credit card or via direct debit is the single most important thing you can do to help save lives.

Regular donors, who we call our mission partners, allow us to react swiftly to emergencies as soon as they occur and give us the ability to get medical aid to those who need it most. They allow us to plan for the future better, ensuring updated aero-medical equipment, staff and skills are acquired as soon as needed.

Regular monthly donations are the best way for you to help ensure we can be there for anyone who finds that suddenly they need us. This year that was 1,300 people. To become a Life Flight mission partner today please call Maree on (04) 920 2241 or email info@lifelight.org.nz. ■

STORMY SEAS

Bob Lendrum has been boating all his life. Last summer the 70-year-old set off with a mate to go fishing in a 5.5 metre pontoon tinny at Te Awaiti, south of Martinborough, but once out in the bay the weather deteriorated and the situation changed sharply for the worse.

"The waves started building really rapidly. We saw a large set rolling towards us and made it over one, two, three big waves. Then the fourth one knocked us sideways and the fifth one picked us up and flipped the boat upside down," says Bob.

Thanks to his life jacket Bob resurfaced quickly, but found himself underneath the boat. He treaded water under the hull, planning his next move. "The sea had gotten pretty rough and I was getting battered on the head by the boat with every wave. I thought to myself 'this trip isn't going too well'," Bob says dryly.

"Luckily I had a Stormy Seas life jacket on. I'm really thankful for this piece of gear. I had it inflated to the recommended two puffs and that meant I would be able to swim out from underneath the boat without removing the jacket."

Bob took three deep breaths then dived down to swim under the boat. He felt a sharp tug on his leg and realised he was tangled in the fuel line, but kicked and thrashed until he broke free. After bursting to the surface he found his friend hanging on to the propeller. "Where the heck have you been?!" he shouted at Bob.

"I was keeping out of the sun to make sure I didn't get burnt," Bob replied with a smirk.

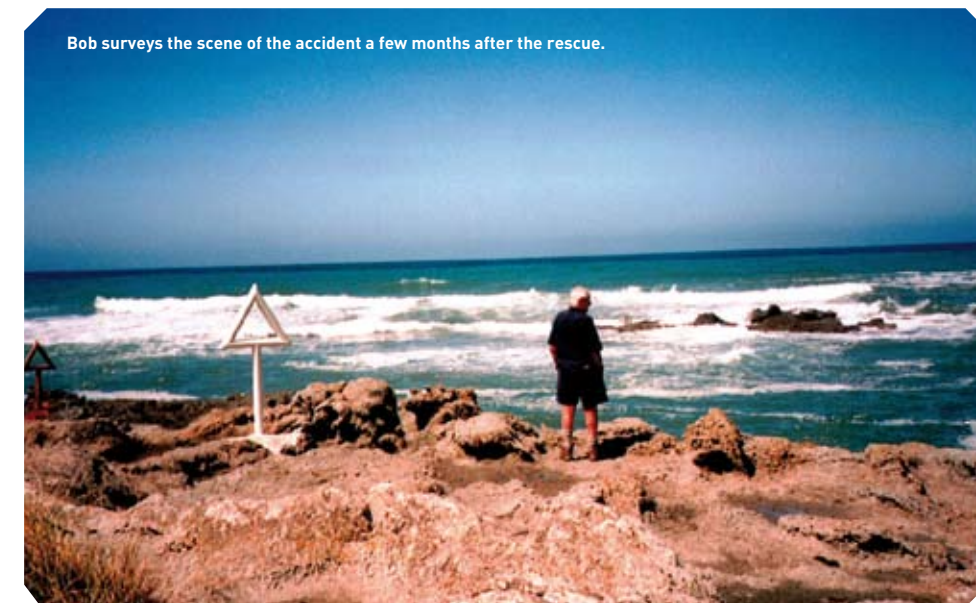
They weren't able to head to shore because the waves were smashing heavily onto the rocky coastline so their only option was to swim further out to sea and hope for a rescue. Luckily a large commercial fishing vessel was launched from the beach and managed to pluck them from the ocean by hand, with two men lifting and pulling.

Because of the remote location and the dangers of hypothermia the Westpac Rescue Helicopter had been radioed and the team flew in at speed, picking Bob and his friend up from the shore.

Crewman Keith Frewen says, "It's important that we get people out of their wet gear and into something warm and dry as soon as possible after a water rescue – otherwise hypothermia will continue. It was great to see everything has worked out well for Bob."

The two men were carefully warmed up and then Bob was flown to Wellington Hospital for observation. Bob has had a full recovery and is fit and healthy. He's since been back out in the same boat to continue pursuing his passion for the sea. He says, "I was very lucky that day and greatly appreciated the rescue and the care."

Thank you to Bob for sharing his story. If you have a story about Life Flight we would love to hear it. Please phone (04) 387 9812 or email stories@lifelight.org.nz. ■



Bob surveys the scene of the accident a few months after the rescue.

LIFE FLIGHT AND WESTPAC: A SPECIAL PARTNERSHIP

Life Flight rescues on average one person every single day in the Westpac Rescue Helicopter – 24 hours a day, seven days a week patients can be flown under the watchful eye of an expert medical care team.

The service requires specialist skills and equipment, all of which are crucial and expensive. The Life Flight Trust needs to raise funds from the community every year to keep this service flying.

For over 26 years Westpac's genuine commitment to rescue helicopters has helped ensure we can be there for New Zealanders when they need us. Thank you Westpac. ■

BUDDING ARTIST FLIES HIGH:

Westpac recently organised a drawing competition to raise awareness about rescue helicopters in schools. The first prize was a ride to school in the Westpac Rescue Helicopter – wow!

Below: Wellington winner Melissa Chu-Fong (centre) and family enjoy their prize and get a first-hand understanding of what our missions can be like. ■



Below: Melissa's winning entry.



FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER

In September the Trust became the first ambulance service to be certified as meeting New Zealand's new national ambulance standards. It is a tribute to our crews' commitment to excellent quality systems and to provide the best care to people needing our services.



We couldn't provide our services without a skilled, professional team typified by Ian Lauder, the manager of our Auckland service. Ian reached a personal milestone recently - 40 years of service in the ambulance sector. He has a huge commitment to the patients and families we look after and is greatly respected for his knowledge and experience throughout the ambulance sector. Congratulations Ian.

Both milestones are on the history page of our new, improved website. The design was supported by Origin and the hosting is provided for free by Unisys. Please visit us at www.lifelight.org.nz.

This is my last column as General Manager as I will be moving to a new position in March. While I am looking forward to fresh challenges I will certainly miss Life Flight. We have a committed and skilled team in our Board and staff, and tremendous community support. I have been fortunate, over the past seven years, to have had the opportunity to contribute to the Trust's life-saving work. I wish our team well for the future and thank you for your support of the Trust's work.

Kevin Allan ■ *Kevin Allan*

OUR FAMILY OF SPONSORS

PRINCIPAL SPONSOR – RESCUE HELICOPTER 		PRINCIPAL FUNDER – AIR AMBULANCE 			

THANK YOU FOR MAKING A DIFFERENCE



PUB CHARITY

The Pub Charity has provided Life Flight with the funds needed to purchase a life-saving piece of equipment called an Oxylog 3000. An Oxylog 3000 is required for any patient who is not able to breathe by themselves and requires ventilator support. In addition the Pub Charity has provided further significant funds to enable several missions for both children and adults.

PELORUS TRUST

Night Vision Goggles (NVGs) allow our helicopter pilots to fly more safely at night by helping "turn night into day". In order to do this the cockpit had to be modified to eliminate all "white light", such as bulbs from cockpit instruments. Pelorus Trust provided the funding necessary for us to purchase the two final NVG - compatible instruments that allow us to gain CAA certification and begin flying with NVG's.



EASTERN AND CENTRAL COMMUNITY TRUST

Life Flight had to upgrade the 10 Personal Locator Beacons (PLBs) our crew carry individually. These individual PLBs ensure we can be found again after being lowered into the bush or sea to rescue people. Eastern and Central Community Trust provided the funding necessary to ensure we could immediately purchase the PLBs necessary for our rescue teams.

SOUTHERN TRUST

The Southern Trust has funded a number of critical missions for children and adults. These missions require specialist teams and equipment, all of which are expensive and crucial to saving lives. Thanks to the Southern Trust a number of life-saving missions were carried out during 2008. ■

