

**ANNUAL
REPORT**
— 2021



Life Flight

Saves time · Saves lives

**1,216
LIVES
SAVED
THIS
YEAR**

THANK YOU FOR HELPING SAVE LIVES

Kia ora



Welcome friends, whānau,
and supporters of Life Flight

As I sit here, I can't help but reflect on this past year. As a nation, we continue to navigate this uncharted territory together. Alongside many charities, Life Flight is continuously facing new challenges, the COVID-19 outbreak, changes in alert levels, and cancelled fundraising events.

COVID-19 continues to transform the way we operate. As an emergency service, we understand that cooperation and adaptability are fundamental to our success. During the nationwide lockdown in 2020, it was a surreal time for aviation – at times we were the only aircraft in the New Zealand sky. Our flight teams have shown real agility with new ways of working, adapting quickly to continue providing services to the communities we are here to serve - safely and efficiently.

Due to the first wave of COVID-19, many of our major fundraising activities were cancelled. Despite this financial setback, our fundraising team also adapted quickly – focusing more on digital communication, creating our best appeal of all time, and helping our wonderful supporters adopt new ways of donating following the nationwide phase out of cheques.

Of course, our ability to do so is very much dependent on the incredible support from our partners and sponsors. With so many businesses struggling, for them to still see the importance of our work and to continue our relationship was deeply heartening.



“One thing has remained constant: the

**unparalleled
support**

from our community.”

Throughout a year of uncertainty, one thing has remained constant: the unparalleled support from our community. It makes me so proud to see how many people we have been able to help, thanks to the generosity of our amazing supporters. Despite what we have all been through, our supporters have been alongside us - funding new equipment, writing letters of thanks and staying connected with us. I want to take the time to say thank you. Thank you for keeping our teams flying so that we can save time and save lives.

Best wishes,

Richard Stone
LIFE FLIGHT CHAIR

Life Flight is a charity that provides the Wellington-based Westpac Rescue Helicopter and two nationwide Air Ambulance Planes.

A word from Mark



The past year has been quite unlike any other in living memory for most of us. We started our financial year on the 1st of April 2020 in a national state of emergency as we entered our second week at alert level 4 during our first COVID-19 lockdown.

Thankfully since then, New Zealand's COVID response has been world-leading, minimising case numbers locally and largely protecting the most vulnerable members of our community from infection. Life, for the most part, returned to near normal in early June 2020, with brief stints for some of us at alert level 2 in August and September, and again in February and March as small pockets of community transmission were detected.

Here at the Life Flight Base, our teams put our pandemic plan into action to keep our flight crews flying across all alert level conditions. Crews were rostered in bubbles for three months from April to June, and we added additional resources to potential COVID missions to lower any potential risks as much as possible. We flew a total of seven COVID-related missions in 2020, with all patients subsequently testing negative.

Our fundraising has continued to be impacted by the pandemic. Almost all of our event-based activity has been postponed or cancelled during the past 12 months, including the 2020 Life Flight Gala and our 2021 Open Day here at the Base. We were, however, lucky to be able to attend the 23rd Annual Champions Luncheon back in November, which was once again a resounding success thanks to the tireless efforts of our good friend Ian Klinac.

This report is for the financial period April 1 2020 to March 31 2021.



"An incredibly special

thank you

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steadfast support."

I want to say an incredibly special thank you to our key partners for their steadfast support. Our flight doctors and nurses from Wellington Hospital, along with our flight paramedics from Wellington Free Ambulance have, as always, been integral to our aeromedical response, together with our air operators at Air Freight New Zealand and Search & Rescue Services who provide our Air Ambulance and Westpac Rescue Helicopter pilots.

And we wouldn't be able to do what we do, 24/7, 365-days-a-year, without the incredible ongoing support that we receive throughout the year from our donors and sponsors. Your generosity, quite literally, saves time and saves lives every single day of the year.

So, on behalf of the entire team, I want to say a huge thank you to everyone who's contributed to Life Flight for your continuing support, particularly during such a challenging year for everyone.

Mark Johnston
LIFE FLIGHT CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Life Flight

Saves time · Saves lives



Our vision

To provide exceptional care in the air

Our purpose

We help to save lives by providing outstanding aeromedical care and transport to people in need

Our culture

Our **teamwork** saves lives

Safety underpins everything we do

We **support** each other to help those in need

We find **new ways** to be “best in class”

Our strategy in action

CARE: Fit-for-purpose medical equipment

Life Flight further developed our approach to the safety of our Base and patient loading systems. These machines help lift patients into the Air Ambulance Plane when on a stretcher. This is to ensure the safety of our patients as they are loaded and unloaded into our Air Ambulance Planes.

All lifters are checked routinely and must pass rigorous safety checks, including certification biannually by independent inspectors.

AIRCRAFT: Navigation upgrade for Air Ambulances

Throughout the year we have had many upgrades, notably our aircraft surveillance system: Automatic Dependent Surveillance-Broadcast (ADS-B) upgrade. Aircraft receive accurate and precise location data from a satellite constellation and then broadcast this information through a transponder. This data can then be used by air traffic management services to maintain aircraft separation.

This upgrade was for both ZK-LFT and ZK-LFW. It is in accordance with the Government mandate with all aircraft operating in controlled airspace requiring ADS-B after 31 December 2022.

SUPPORT: People, processes and technology

Our air base went through a refurbishment. We added new showers, more bedrooms with noise-insulating windows, and upgraded the kitchen. This aligned with the fatigue regulations set out by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) to make sure our crews are ready to respond 24/7.

In preparation for the first lockdown in March 2020, all support staff were given new laptops as part of the business continuity planning, along with any ergonomic equipment they needed when working from home. As part of this planning, all firewall and privacy issues were audited to keep information safe when off-site.



Why we fly — Lincoln's fight for life



Eleven-year-old Lincoln faced the fight of his life when he was swept into the sea by a rogue wave. For thirty minutes, he struggled to keep his head above water. As time ticked on, he drifted in and out of consciousness, his body temperature plummeted, and he grew weaker by the second.

Lincoln and his friends were jumping over waves when he stumbled into a dip in the seabed. While trying to get his footing, Lincoln was swept out to sea by a rogue wave and pulled into a strong rip.

Thankfully, a man on the beach, John, saw what had happened and bravely jumped into the sea to help. After ten minutes, the pair grabbed hold of a rock 150 metres from the shore. With huge waves pounding them against the rock it was increasingly difficult to hold on. After a particularly strong wave, John couldn't hold onto Lincoln anymore. Distressingly, Lincoln was swept further out to sea.

After a brief time, John lost sight of Lincoln "I thought I'd lost him and started to think about what I would say to his Mum."

At the same time, Pilot Bernie, Crewman Mike and Wellington Free Ambulance Flight Paramedic Hannah took to the sky. Conditions were difficult with high winds and large swells, but thankfully, Lincoln was wearing bright red shoes which were spotted by Mike.

Hannah was winched down to Lincoln, who, by this time, was severely hypothermic, exhausted, and about to drift below the surface. Lincoln's body temperature was just 26 degrees Celsius, dangerously lower than the normal 36 degrees Celsius. Lincoln was flown to Wellington Hospital where he was treated in the emergency room. Hannah estimates that another 30 seconds in the water would have meant Lincoln's outcome was very different.



Bernie, Hannah and Mike with Lincoln.

PHOTO SOURCE: Stuff

Crewman Mike recalls:

"This was the most time-critical rescue I have done in my entire Search and Rescue career. Every minute counts in this job and we were down to the last minute for Lincoln. We are incredibly thankful we could bring Lincoln back to his family."

Lincoln's mum, Andrea, had a lovely message for the Life Flight team –

**"We can't thank
the amazing crew
enough."**

If Life Flight hadn't been there, then Lincoln wouldn't be here today."



Hannah, Mike and Bernie with the Hon Michael Wood at the SAR Awards.

Rescue mission honoured highest award

On Tuesday, 18 May 2021, the Hon Michael Wood, Minister for Transport presented the 2020 New Zealand Search and Rescue Awards.

These awards are presented annually in recognition of outstanding achievements within New Zealand's search and rescue region, which covers 30 million square kilometres. Bernie, Mike and Hannah (Life Flight) were awarded the Gold Award for Operational Activity for the rescue of Lincoln and John. This is awarded for an incredibly significant contribution to search and rescue in the New Zealand Search and Rescue Region during 2020.



Logan cleaning the equipment post mission.

Lockdown flights

Life Flight flew 62 patients during the 2020 lockdown, including 25 babies and children. While the rest of New Zealand stayed inside in their bubbles, our flight teams continued to fly sick patients around the country to receive the care they urgently needed.

(Data taken from March 25 to April 27, 2020.)

COVID-19 Manual

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Life Flight had a broad set of procedures for dealing with infectious diseases. These procedures had been sufficient for anything we had encountered previously; the pandemic changed the playing field, and it became clear that work would need to be done to enable the safe continuation of operations throughout the pandemic. Life Flight, along with our partners Capital and Coast District Health Board (CCDHB) and Wellington Free Ambulance (WFA) had to collaborate, design and implement methods of safely carrying out aeromedical work in the COVID-19 environment whilst keeping our teams, our partner's teams, and our patients safe.

Working closely with CCDHB, we developed the criteria for assessing COVID-19 risk for each mission so that the appropriate levels of Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) and special procedures could be applied. Every aspect of a mission was planned in detail from the initial assessments of the risk, all the various stages of transport, using ambulance services, loading and unloading patients, delivering the patient to the destination hospital and decontamination.

We produced a manual that covered all types of missions that we carry out. One of the big challenges was that the manual had to satisfy the COVID-19 requirements of our various operational partners i.e., CCDHB, WFA, Search and Rescue Services Limited (SRS) and Air Freight New Zealand (AFNZ). This collaboration made the document very robust.

The manual continues to be updated as we further develop protocols around operating in the pandemic, but the basic concepts within the manual have served us well. This has allowed us to continue to help people in need throughout an ever-changing time. In the long term, we will be able to apply the principles of what we have learned to any other infectious outbreak.

Making sure our patients and crew are safe

As part of the COVID-19 Manual, heightened cleaning procedures were put in place to ensure our equipment, aircraft and crew were safe to care for patients.

After each mission, aircraft were sanitized with a 'Fogger'. The fog, a hydrogen peroxide-based solution, kills all viruses it encounters. Crews put on full protective suits and respirator masks before filling the aircraft with the fine mist to cover all surfaces. Doors were closed for 30 minutes before being fully aired out.

After every mission, all equipment used by patients and the medical teams were cleaned with approved cleaning products outlined in the COVID-19 Manual.

Life Flight also purchased a washing machine during lockdown so that our crew could wash their uniforms before safely returning home to their whānau.



Krishneil preparing for a flight.

COVID-19 Emergency Fundraising Appeal

In February 2020, plans were well underway for our April Fundraising Appeal.

Then we had our first case of COVID-19 in New Zealand. Three weeks later, the entire country was in lockdown, and the Life Flight support team was working from home.

With our planned Appeal on hold, the team decided to let our wonderful supporters know we were still operating in these extraordinary times and that we needed their help more than ever. With only a week to create a new appeal, the fundraising team set to work.

There was a massive focus on digital whilst post was not available during level 4, with tailored emails paired with informative social media.

The response was outstanding – the team were blown away by the monumental support we received, and the Appeal became our best ever performer with a return on investment of 715%.



LEFT: The fog kills all viruses it encounters.

Why we fly

— Precious cargo handled with care



It was supposed to be a routine ultrasound for mum-to-be Rebekah; however, it was soon discovered that twins Charlotte and Eleanor were wanting to be born at just 24 weeks; 16 weeks early. Rebekah drove to Palmerston North hospital, where everything started to happen very quickly.

“The nurses told me a plane was on its way to take me to Wellington Hospital.” To add to the tension, Rebekah’s husband was not able to be with her as this was in the tail-end of the 2020 Covid-19 lockdown. It would be a nerve-racking time for any Mum, but Rebekah said, “the Life Flight crew were just really kind and caring and supportive in a very stressful situation.”

Admitted to Wellington Hospital, doctors delayed the labour for almost four weeks, with the twins being born at 27 ½ weeks. Charlotte and Eleanor had some hurdles to go through being born so early, but “they were in the very best place for them.”

Three weeks after their birth, Rebekah was able to bring her twins back to Palmerston North via Life Flight’s Air Ambulance plane, where they spent another nine weeks in hospital. The flight home was more relaxed for Rebekah, her precious cargo was handled with absolute care and precision.

Now bubbly, 8 ½ month-old babies, Charlotte and Eleanor have experienced their first Christmas with family.



“Thank you. Your donations go to something so valuable.

If people weren’t so generous and kind, then stories like ours could have a very different outcome.”

— Rebekah

Flights at a glance

Every day, our crews fly across the country to help someone in need. Our Westpac Rescue Helicopter services the upper South Island and lower North Island when urgent medical attention is needed, or if patients are in a place inaccessible by plane and ambulance.

Our Air Ambulance Planes fly patients from every corner of Aotearoa when they need specialist care that is only available at certain hospitals.

of patients and whānau

1,216
PATIENTS HELPED

459
FAMILY ON BOARD

242
BABY/CHILD PATIENT



1,170

TOTAL MISSIONS FLOWN

994

URGENT MEDICAL TRANSFERS

146

ACCIDENTS

30

RESCUES

Scott, Nigel and Dylan preparing for water-winch training.

Ready for anything — Training

Both the fixed-wing and helicopter teams have highly structured training systems. Pilots and crew have regular checks with qualified trainers – designed to ensure that the standard of skills and knowledge of procedures are maintained to a high level.

A development on the training front is the simulator-based (SIM) training modules. One of the primary areas of risk in helicopter operations is the possibility of flying into cloud or other metrological conditions where the pilot is no longer able to visually tell what is up or down. If the pilot “loses the horizon” it can be an extremely dangerous situation. SIM training enables us to train for those conditions and develop the skills and techniques necessary to safely recover the helicopter to a situation where the pilot regains visual reference. All the pilots have cycled through the SIM training.

Training missions at a glance

117

Total number of training missions

89






Number of Westpac Rescue Helicopter training missions

28

Number of Air Ambulance Plane training missions

New equipment

Thanks to the support of our Grant Funders and community of supporters, Life Flight was able to purchase new equipment and upgrade existing technologies for our crew.

-  Upgraded nose landing gear in our Air Ambulance Planes
-  Our Westpac Rescue Helicopter now has new Snowshoes for the skids
-  New pilots have been fitted with Helmets and Poseidon Life Vests
-  Purchased our own Patient Transfer Vehicle
-  Updated and recertified our voyager incubator (specialised incubator for aeromedical transportation)



Base visits

We welcomed Dr Ashley Bloomfield, who spoke to the crew about COVID-19 and had a tour of the base and aircraft. It was a pleasure for our medical and operational crews to be able to talk with the Director-General of Health about the work they do.



We also hosted Governor-General and Life Flight Patron, Her Excellency Dame Patsy Reddy and Sir David Gascoigne. They follow a tradition of Life Flight Patronage that dates back to Sir Paul Reeves. We thank Dame Patsy Reddy for her support during her time as Governor-General.

Why we fly

— Pip's second chance at life

It was just like any other Friday for Pip and Wayne, who were going about their usual morning routine in their Feilding home. Wayne was making some breakfast downstairs, whilst Pip was in the shower. She suddenly felt a massive pain in her head, placed a towel down and lay on the floor. Thinking it was a migraine, Pip took some Panadeine, however, after a while they called the doctor who was worried about her condition.

“Without even seeing her our doctor said, **‘get her to a hospital, now’.**”

Once at Palmerston North Hospital, Pip was triaged straightaway. Wayne soon discovered that Pip would need to be transferred to Wellington Hospital; she was suffering an aneurysm. An aneurysm is a bleed in the brain, and with a survival rate of just 60%, time is crucial to recovery.

The flight team met Pip and Wayne at the hospital and took them to the plane, where she was loaded onboard on a stretcher with a pair of earmuffs to quieten the noise.

“From the minute Life Flight arrived, their whole demeanour was calm; they reassured us and talked us through the process. I know they have done this a million times, but it felt like we were the first ones; the only ones that mattered right then.”

Once admitted to the Neurology Ward at Wellington Hospital, the doctors were able to avoid full cranial surgery and stop the aneurysm with a stent.

After spending nine days in hospital Pip was able to return home.

Since Pip has arrived home, they have found out they are going to be grandparents for the first time.



James Collinson Photography

“We’ve been given a second opportunity at life, and this news just tops it off.

Throughout the whole process, we can’t speak highly enough of the team for getting our Pip home again.”

— Wayne



Westpac

Chopper Street Appeal

Hosted in May every year, the annual Westpac Chopper Street Appeal is a fantastic chance to engage with our community. Volunteers, supporters, and members of the public come together to learn about the work we do, share stories of loved ones, and raise vital funds to keep our crew flying. During the changing levels in May 2020, we had to change tack with the Street Appeal, and move virtually thanks to the team at Westpac.

The support from the community was outstanding. While we were not able to shake buckets on the streets, people still supported us whilst they were staying safe inside.

On top of this, Westpac NZ donated an extra \$1 million to share between the 15 Rescue helicopter trusts, along with the generous sponsorship and fundraising campaigns.



Champions at Champions

We were delighted to be the Charity Partner for Ian Klinac and the Champion's family's wildly successful 23rd Champions Luncheon in November. The event raised over \$145,000 for Life Flight, and with so many of our fundraising events cancelled, it was a special event to be a part of.

A big thank you to Mark Cole and his team from the Hick Group for their fantastic support of the Ride for Champions which took place immediately before this year's event. The Hick Team travelled down to Wellington from Auckland with a fleet of Harleys and Ferraris, with some famous faces riding and driving these very special machines. How cool!

Sponsors

The Trust gratefully acknowledges the contributions and support received from the following companies and organisations.

Major Sponsor



Vehicle Sponsor

FaganMotors Ltd



FUJIFILM



NZCT
LOCAL GAMING – LOCAL FUNDING

PAK'nSAVE

Vital

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Interislander
A Great Journey of New Zealand

Absolutely Positively
Wellington City Council
Me Heke Ki Pōneke



COMMUNITY SPONSORS

- › Cossie Club
- › Property Brokers – Wairarapa
- › Sellar and Sellar

AMBASSADORS

- › Clive Button
- › Bill Day
- › Juliet Best

Grant Funders

1 April 2020 – 31 March 2021

Life Flight would like to thank these wonderful Trusts and Foundations for their ongoing support. These grants help Life Flight to provide a 24/7 emergency air service and are hugely appreciated.



Beverley Newton

Bowen Trust

Dorothy L Newman Charitable Trust

EM Pharazyn Trust

F H Muter Trust

Gaynor Charitable Trust

Hutt City Council

Jack Jeffs Charitable Trust

J & A Mauger Charitable Trust

Jessie, Elma and Adam Coxon Endowment Trust

Johnsonville Rotary Club

Kāpiti Coast District Council

Leonard Monk Charitable Trust

Longford Trust

McSyth Charitable Foundation

Marlborough District Council

Masterton District Council

Ministry of Social Development – COVID Fund

New Zealand Community Trust

Paraparaumu RSA Poppy Fund Trust

Pelorus Area Health Trust

Porirua City Council

Pub Charity

Rannoch Charitable Trust

Ray Watts Charitable Trust

Rotary Club of Johnsonville

Roy and Jan Mace Charitable Trust

SJ Shayle-George Charitable Trust

TG Macarthy Trust

The Nick Lingard Foundation

The Phillip Verry Charitable Foundation

Trust House

Upper Hutt City Council

Wellington City Council

Wellington Community Trust

W N Pharazyn Trust

Fees that we are able to charge government agencies for services make up approximately 50% of the funds required to keep our service operational. This means there is a significant annual funding shortfall, which our wonderful supporters donate toward. Life Flight also keeps at least three months' worth of operating costs in reserves.

Date 1 April 2020 – 31 March 2021

Operating Revenue	\$5,825,134
Less Operating and Administrative Expenses	\$12,499,427
Operational Deficit	\$6,674,293
Fundraising Revenue	\$7,516,232
Operating Surplus for the Year	\$841,939

We are a registered charity (#CC24283) and abide by the codes and standards of the Fundraising Institute of New Zealand.





Life Flight

Saves time · Saves lives

Your support through COVID-19, lockdowns and other events have meant that our crews can continue to fly to those who need us.

You have helped friends, whānau, neighbours and communities with your generosity - we couldn't have done it without you!

THANK YOU
FOR YOUR SUPPORT

The Life Flight Trust
PO Box 14448, Kilbirnie,
Wellington 6241
(04) 920 2242
info@lifeflight.org.nz
www.lifeflight.org.nz



Photography donated by Lindsay Keats