

Chopperchat



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ARHT launches Rescue Rewards membership scheme

Aucklanders who make a donation to the Auckland Rescue Helicopter Trust to help keep the Westpac rescue helicopter operating now have an option of joining a membership scheme, offering benefits to its members.

The scheme, called Rescue Rewards, currently offers its members transportation back to the Auckland region for recovery if they, or their nominated family members, are ever hospitalised outside of the Auckland region.

The CEO of ARHT, Rea Wikaira, also says it is anticipated that further rewards will be added down the track.

"Essentially, Rescue Rewards is the way of the future for donations to the Auckland rescue helicopter service," Mr Wikaira said. "But as well as making a donation, which equates to one minute's flying time for the helicopter, our members are able to call on us if they are ever hospitalised out of Auckland and wanting to come back for recovery," he said.

The standard practice for a patient hospitalised outside of their region is for them to stay in the local hospital unless they qualify for an ACC transfer.

Rescue helicopter operators in the Waikato, as well as internationally, run similar membership programmes. The Waikato transfers approximately 30 members who have been hospitalised each year.

The Auckland Westpac Rescue Helicopter is the greater Auckland region's only 24/7 onsite aero-medical and search and rescue helicopter, and around 80 per cent of its funding comes from corporate and community donations.

Mr Wikaira said that traditional means of community fundraising, such as telefundraising, were getting tougher with many charities competing for donations, and people increasingly opting out of having a land line.

"If we are to survive, we need a change in direction for fundraising in the community, and we feel that offering a membership is the solution," he said.

For more information on Rescue Rewards and becoming a member, see the brochure enclosed with this edition of Chopper Chat, visit www.4rescue.org.nz, or phone 0800 4 RESCUE.



Message from CEO

2007 has been a busy year for the Trust, achieving the major milestones such as:

- Obtaining its Air Operators Certificate for five years after an extensive entry audit by the Civil Aviation Authority.
- Bringing into service the first owned helicopter BK 117B2 ZK HLN.
- Introduction of night vision goggles into the service.
- Recruiting our own highly trained and experienced pilots who have taken up the role with a high level professionalisim with our Advanced Paramedics and flight crew.

To top all that off, we are flying more missions than ever, exceeding 550 hours for the year. With this increase in missions and the Auckland region's population constantly increasing, it is clear the region will need a back up helicopter so that we can continue to offer our 24/7, 6 - 10 minutes in the air response time.

I have been with this organisation for over four years now and no matter what we have been through, or what obstacles we have faced, it has always been the work that we do – the business of saving lives and rescuing people – that has carried me through the hard times, and been an incredibly humbling experience.

But it's not just the work that our paramedics, pilots and crew carry out on a daily basis, with a professionalism and modesty that I find myself in awe of, at a time like this when I take a moment to reflect, I am once again humbled by the support and generosity of the community we serve.

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A big thanks to this year's newest \$10,000 sponsors:

Deane Apparel Ltd

Boart Longyear Drillwell Exploration

Stevenson

New World Eastridge

Pak 'N Save (Manukau)

Auckland Radiology Group

New Zealand Steel Ltd

Multiplex Constructions (NZ) Ltd

Sovereign Yachts (NZ) Ltd

The Kumerich Family Trust

Architectural Glass

Hometune

Learnkey Computer Training

Craggy Range adds festive touch to sponsor's function

We would like to make a special mention of Craggy Range winery, which generously supported our recent sponsors' function.

Craggy Range is one of the country's top wineries with a reputation for excellence, leadership in its field, and putting its people first, qualities the team at ARHT are proud to be aligned with.

Craggy Range Account Manager, Jeannine McCallum, said ARHT does fantastic work for the people of the wider Auckland region. "This was our way of saying thank you to sponsors for giving such valuable support to the Trust."



Rescues hit a personal note for sponsors

Two of the helicopter's sponsors and one of its top tier supporters personally experienced how important it is for the region to have its own aero-medical and search and rescue helicopter recently.

The most high-profile of these missions was for a Hirepool employee who survived a 150m plunge off a cliff when the truck he was driving went off a gravel road. This rescue mission was made particularly difficult for all rescue services involved because of the remote location of the crash – at the bottom of the cliff 10km south of Port Waikato.

The national divisional manager of Hirepool Port-a-loo, Peter Elliot, said his employee was slowly making a recovery from his accident and will be back at work soon to undertake light duties on a part time basis. Hirepool is a tier one sponsor of ARHT.

Major sponsor Mansons also had a first-hand experience of the service they are helping to fund when one of their project manager's sons received neck and head injuries at Piha beach. Mac Manson said the significance of the sponsorship really sunk in for the staff member when the chopper flew in to pick up his son and he saw the Manson's logo on the side of the machine.

Supporter Stevenson's Group also had a firsthand experience of a rescue via the CEO of Stevenson Engineering Peter Dudson on an overnight fishing trip.

Peter said that back in October he was with a group moored at North Harbour off Waiheke when one in the group slipped while stepping between the two boats, and hit his head on a duck board.

"We pulled him from the water unconscious and bleeding from one ear," Mr Dudson said. "While we administered basic first aid the Coastguard was contacted, and about 30 mins later the Coastguard IRB arrived with paramedics who called in the Auckland Westpac Helicopter."

Peter said the man was then evacuated from the closest beach in what was a "very impressive landing and take off on a dark night".

"It was a pretty scary event to happen on the water at night time and it makes you realise how a simple incident can quickly turn into a bad situation in that environment," Mr Dudson said. "It could easily have had a far worse outcome without the amazingly professional and quick support from both the Coastguard and the Westpac Rescue Helicopter."



Sponsor Mansons had a staff member whose son was taken to hospital from Piha by the rescue helicopter.

Congratulations to student Jarrod Smythe and his team from Onehunga High School, who won funding from BP to paint this mural outside the Westpac Bank Onehunga for ARHT.

ARHT crew carry out a winch training exercise.



ARHT crew specialised training and checks are as follows:

Flight crew competency check:

Annual test of handling and technical knowledge on the BK117 helicopter.

Route check:

Annual check on local knowledge and competency regarding landing sites.

Instrument rating renewal:

Annual check of "blind flying" skills required to fly in bad weather (such as in cloud) and at night.

180 day instrument proficiency check:

As per annual check, including knowledge of Trusts Operations manual and CAA rules.

Biennial flight review:

Check of general rules and regulations, and competency required by CAA every other year. Combined with flight crew competency check.

Winch competency check:

Skills check for winching off boats, out of the water, or overland including at night.

Specialised role equipment:

Training on all of the emergency medical and search and rescue a pilot has to be able to operate including: long range fuel tanks, underslung load hook, direction finding equipment, oxygen systems, nightsun, and defueling.

Helicopter Underwater Evacuation Training (HUET):

To enable pilots to evacuate the helicopter, in the event of ditching.

Fitness test:

As well as the six monthly CAA medical, crew undertake a physical fitness test, including a swim, pack walk and stretcher carry.

Bomb robot:

Familiarisation training involved in transporting equipment designed for use in event of a bomb threat.

Fast rope training:

Flying skills and general skills necessary to enable the rapid deployment of special tactical group police down a rope.

Crew resource management:

Training in the human factors that are necessary to ensure safe multi-crew operations.

Dangerous goods training:

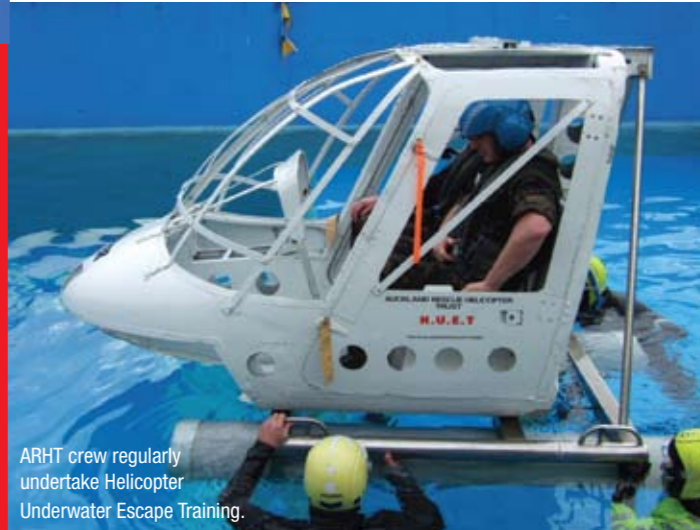
How to recognise and safely transport hazardous materials.

Training keeps crew fit and ready for action

This year has been a big year for training at ARHT, especially now that we have our own helicopter pilots as part of the team.

Chief pilot for ARHT Dave Walley says it's crucial that the crew undertake ongoing training in order to ensure that they are always mentally and physically fit and up-to-speed to cope with any search and rescue or aero-medical scenario they could be called upon to deal with.

"We have a very complex aircraft, with state of the art equipment that can fly in all weather, all terrain conditions, so we must constantly prepare to be called out to deal with those situations," Mr Walley said. "This means ongoing training in preparation for every likely scenario we could encounter."



ARHT crew regularly undertake Helicopter Underwater Escape Training.

Community events deliver a good time and funds for chopper

Some fantastic fundraising events for the helicopter have taken place this year with huge support from the community, and there are more already planned for the new year.

The dedication, generosity and goodwill that goes into these fundraising events is a source of inspiration and a very humbling experience for staff at the Auckland Rescue Helicopter Trust.



Sunderland School pupils raised over \$7500 for the Trust with their sponsored fitness test challenge.

