



ROYAL FLYING DOCTOR SERVICE

OF AUSTRALIA

Western Operations

Rio Tinto

Media Release

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Rio Tinto Life Flight arrives in remote Western Australia

The Royal Flying Doctor Service will embark on its inaugural flight through the Kimberley and Pilbara with the new Rio Tinto Life Flight jet.

The Rio Tinto Life Flight will provide a free-of-charge emergency jet service to patients in need of evacuation when time and distance are critical.

Rio Tinto has contributed \$5 million to establish the jet service and its operation will be underwritten by the Western Australian Government.

The Rio Tinto Life Flight will fly to Kununurra where it will be available for viewing on Saturday, 17 October. It will stop at the RFDS bases in Derby, Port Hedland and Meekatharra and land in Karratha on Sunday 18 October for another public event.

RFDS Western Operations chief executive Tim Shackleton said the arrival of the jet was the realisation of a long-held dream by the service.

“The Rio Tinto Life Flight is one of the most significant improvements in services to sick and injured people in remote areas since the RFDS took off in a small bi-plane in Queensland in 1928,” Mr Shackleton said.

The jet will be able to fly from Kununurra to Perth in three hours, halving the time it takes the RFDS to make this journey in its existing turbo-prop aircraft.

The Rio Tinto Life Flight jet will meet RFDS standards, becoming an airborne intensive care unit staffed by highly-trained doctors and nurses on a round the clock roster. It will be able to carry three stretcher patients and three clinical staff at once.

Rio Tinto chief executive of Iron Ore Sam Walsh said the ground breaking partnership with the RFDS reflected a strong commitment to the regional and remote communities in which most of the company’s employees lived and worked.

“We are proud to support Australia’s first and only RFDS-operated jet which will help deliver faster and more effective services to critically ill people living in regional and remote Western Australia,” he said.

“We believe that it will provide a life-saving service and demonstrates our genuine commitment to the wellbeing of the communities in and around our operations.”

Mr Walsh said the partnership complemented Rio Tinto’s broad range of health investments in the state and nationally, such as the Aboriginal health partnership with

the Telethon Institute for Child Health Research and the Chamber of Minerals and Energy's Pilbara health partnership

The Rio Tinto Life Flight jet service is expected to transport about 500 patients in its first 12 months.

Background:

- The Rio Tinto Life Flight will fly to Perth Airport instead of Jandakot
- Maroomba Airlines will provide the jet pilots
- The jet is a Hawker 800XP2 with a normal cruise speed of 440 knots
- It will be able to maintain a sea level cabin at 21,000 feet and land on a gravel airstrip if required
- Over the past five years demand for the RFDS has grown by 35 per cent in the Kimberley and Pilbara, 25 per cent in the South West and Great Southern, and 15 per cent in the Mid West
- There are about 1,000 patient transfers from the Kimberley each year
- It can take a turboprop six hours to fly from the Kimberley to Perth

For further information and photos of the jet, please contact:

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