Nurses from Bali’s Sanglah Hospital joined NT Health Minister Kon Vatskalis this morning to witness a realistic display of how the aeromedical service CareFlight, St John Ambulance and Royal Darwin Hospital (RDH) work together to care for seriously injured patients.

The nurses were part of a 17-member team from the Sanglah Hospital in Denpasar, which has close links with Royal Darwin Hospital.

During their four-weeks training at RDH the nurses will move through various parts of the hospital, including the Emergency Department, ICU, maternity, and Alan Walker Cancer Care Centre. The collaboration between the two hospitals began after the first Bali terrorist bombings in late 2002.

The rescue service demonstration was held around the RDH helipad field and was based on a road accident scenario.

A female cyclist had been clipped by a car and lay by the side of a country road, unable to move. St John Ambulance paramedics attended the accident scene, providing initial medical management and stabilising of the woman, while the CareFlight helicopter was on its way from the Darwin base.

After being assessed by the CareFlight doctor, the woman was prepared for transfer, and then flown to RDH, where she was taken straight to the Emergency Department for further stabilisation and ongoing care.

“This scenario is a typical emergency event that relies for its effectiveness on excellent medical care from all three parties as well as clockwork coordination,” Mr Vatskalis said.

“By contracting CareFlight and St John Ambulance we can assure that Territorians have access to the most skilled and experienced rescue services in Australia, along with the medical expertise available at Royal Darwin Hospital.

“No one ever wants an accident or a health crisis to occur, but unfortunately these things do happen, and it is reassuring to know that the best care can be summoned in a hurry.”

The demonstration marked a milestone in CareFlight’s management of the Top End Medical Retrieval Service: the service has now flown a total of 5,000 patients since gaining the NT Government’s operational from 1 July 2011.

CareFlight is in its 25th year of operation nationally, with the integrated Top End service having its own specialised doctors and nurses, as well as flight crews.
“For the first time an Australian government has contracted its entire aeromedical operation – the nurses, doctors, helicopters, aeroplanes, co-ordination and clinical governance – and made a single expert service responsible for servicing regional and remote communities,” Mr Vatskalis said.

“Having one organisation responsible for the separate components is recognised internationally as offering a safer, more accountable and efficient service. The NT leadership is expected to lead the way for integrated aeromedical services to follow elsewhere in Australia.”

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