Aerial Medical Service Celebrates 60 years of service

The Northern Territory Aerial Medical Service is celebrating its 60th birthday today.

The Health Minister Peter Toyne said the anniversary is an ideal opportunity to recognise a service that has saved and assisted the lives of thousands of Territorians.

“I’d personally like to thank and congratulate all staff who have been involved with the Aerial Medical Service over the past six decades. There are many Territory families out there that thank you for your work.”

The Northern Territory Aerial Medical Service’s first aircrafts were two refurbished wartime DeHavilland Dragons and the inaugural flight was a medical retrieval from Millingimbi to Darwin on September 9 of the same year.

Dr Toyne said the Territory Government entered into a 10-year contract in 2004 with Pearl Aviation to provide medically equipped Aerial Medical aircraft across the Top End. Its current fleet comprises four pressurised and medically-dedicated B200 Kingairs at Darwin, Katherine and Gove. The Department of Health and Community Services provide the nursing and medical staff for this important service.

The Manager of the NT Aerial Medical Service Robyn Winter said the organisation provides medical advice, assistance and a retrieval service to rural and remote areas of the Top End, border regions of Western Australia and on occasion oil and gas companies in the Timor Sea – an area of 512,300 square miles.

Ms Winter said in 2005, the Aerial Medical Service:

- performed 2380 flights
- transported 3345 patients
- flew 4276 hours
- covered 893,667 nautical miles, the equivalent of flying 41 times around the world.

“Our staff perform a professional service that is of the highest standard anywhere in the world,” she said.

“Every day they deal with highly challenging conditions in some of the most remote and isolated parts of the planet.

“I wish to congratulate everyone that’s involved in the Aerial Medical Service – from the people on the ground who assist in the service’s operations, to the pilots that fly our staff to where they are needed, and to the health professionals that take care of our patients – you all do a wonderful job.”

Contact: Andrea Adlam 0401 119467