



Media release

The Hon David Davis MP

Minister for Health
Minister for Ageing

Friday 10 June 2011

Take off for Victoria's new air ambulance planes

Victoria's fleet of fixed wing air ambulances have been upgraded with the arrival of four new planes to respond to medical emergencies and patient transport across the state.

Minister for Health David Davis today officially launched the new King Air B-200 planes at the Ambulance Victoria and Victoria Police Aviation Facility at Essendon Airport.

"The four new King Air B-200s replace the existing fleet of 16-year-old aircraft and will provide transport for urgent and non-urgent patients," Mr Davis said.

"The new planes will commence from July 1 and are custom designed with a modern fit out to maximise patient safety and care.

"This will assist paramedics and doctors in the treatment of patients in flights across Victoria, Tasmania and southern New South Wales."

Air Ambulance Victoria fixed wing aircraft transported 4,383 patients in 2009/10, with most trips from regional Victoria to Melbourne.

Mr Davis said the new layout on the planes meant the aircraft can now transport two neonatal emergency cots used for the sickest babies.

"The planes have an upgraded stretcher system, which allows them to carry patients weighing up to 240 kilograms, 50 per cent more than the previous set up," Mr Davis said.

"They will also incorporate an improved stretcher-loading system which will mean that the same stretchers will be able to be used on the planes as in a road ambulance for critically ill patients.

"This will significantly, improve patient safety. The aircraft also have improved communications and avionics equipment."

Pel-Air, a subsidiary of Regional Express Holdings will provide the new aircraft along with pilots and aircraft maintenance.

"I also acknowledge the long-standing relationship with the Royal Flying Doctor Service, who had provided support for Air Ambulance Victoria since 2000," Mr Davis said.

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Ambulance Victoria Chief Executive Officer, Greg Sassella, said that the new planes represent an important link in the statewide health plan.

“For our flight paramedics, these planes are their offices. The fact that we can custom fit the aircraft means it suits the way our paramedics work and for what our patients need,” Mr Sassella said.

“These planes ensure that we have a comprehensive service to reach all parts of the state and can bring people to specialized care in Melbourne. It’s the first time we have ever brand new planes so that is very exciting.”

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