

# Mid West Emergency Rescue Helicopter

If The Nationals WA form government in 2021 we will commit \$30 million from *Royalties for Regions* to establish a new emergency rescue helicopter in the Mid West, based in Geraldton.

## Discussion

The Nationals WA propose expanding the State's emergency helicopter network to the Mid West by establishing a new service based out of Geraldton.

The use of rescue helicopters in regional WA is key to decreasing response time to traumatic injury. Responding to incidents within the "golden hour" can improve patient outcomes and reduce mortality rates in regional WA.

From 2008 to 2017, around 1,000 people were killed or injured on Mid West roads. A rescue helicopter service can provide improved emergency response capacity for road traffic accidents throughout the Mid West.

Mid West tourism is also increasing, following the creation of Houtman Abrolhos Islands National Park and recent upgrades to Kalbarri National Park. Visitors to these areas will be safer and have faster access to emergency services with a locally based rescue helicopter in the region.

As part of our commitment, we will also fund any necessary infrastructure upgrades to Geraldton Airport to ensure seamless patient transfer between the Mid West Emergency Rescue Helicopter, other aircraft, such as the Royal Flying Doctor Service, and ambulance services to Geraldton Hospital. A landing pad at the Geraldton Hospital will also be established to provide direct transfer for patients to the hospital's new emergency department.

The helicopter will better support existing emergency service organisations in the Mid West, enhancing the region's search and rescue capacity and providing increased training opportunities for local emergency service volunteers.

With almost 90 per cent of rescue helicopter missions taking place in regional WA, we will also support feasibility studies into extending the rescue helicopter to other regions.

Delivering improved health outcomes in regional WA is a key priority for The Nationals WA. When in Government from 2008-2017 we oversaw *Royalties for Regions* funding to establish the South West Emergency Rescue Helicopter and a new jet for the Royal Flying Doctor Service.

## Recommendations:

If the Nationals WA form government in 2021 we will introduce the following measures as a priority:

- Establish a new Mid West Emergency Rescue Helicopter based in Geraldton.
- Construct a landing pad at Geraldton Hospital to provide direct patient transfer to the new emergency department.
- Develop necessary infrastructure at Geraldton Airport to ensure seamless patient transfer between aircraft and other health services.
- Fund a feasibility study into extending the rescue helicopter network into other regions.

The estimated combined cost of these initiatives is \$30 million, to be funded by *Royalties for Regions*.

The Nationals WA invite feedback on this policy discussion paper.

