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New era for the State Emergency Rescue Helicopter Service

After more than two decades of service, DFES' Emergency Rescue Helicopter Service has taken another vital step forward with the first of three new AW139 rescue helicopters coming online.

Funded by the State Government, these state-of-the-art helicopters are replacing the existing Bell 412EP aircraft fleet and feature some of the most advanced search-and-rescue technology and aeromedical equipment.

The AW139s were built and transported from Milan in Italy and then customised to meet DFES mission requirements here in WA. [You can watch a time-lapse of the first build here.](#)

The helicopters were awarded and delivered through a public tender procurement process, with CHC Helicopter Australia awarded a new 12-year contract.

The new rescue helicopters will fly further and faster, with a top speed of 309 km/h. This will take RAC Rescue to more corners of our vast State, reaching as far as Albany or Dongara and back without a fuel stop.

The cabin also has greater capacity to transport more patients and can be quickly reconfigured to suit the needs of the mission, including carrying up to 10 seated people.

In addition to new helicopters, we welcome the continuation of RAC's long-standing naming rights sponsorship of the helicopters following an open tender process launched last year.

RAC started sponsoring the helicopters back in December 2003, only a few months after the service first began.

After more than 21 years, the RAC Rescue helicopters have:

- completed more than 10,000 missions,
- travelled more than 2.1 million kilometres across WA; and
- transported over 6,800 patients.

**DARREN KLEMM AFSM
COMMISSIONER**