



OPERATIONAL CIRCULAR 27/2025

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June 2025

New Emergency Rescue Helicopter Service AW139 Fleet

Key Message

The new fleet of Leonardo AW139 All-Hazards Rescue Helicopters commenced operations with the Emergency Rescue Helicopter Service (ERHS) from 3 May 2025.

What happened?

The three AW139 aircraft replaced the Bell 412EP helicopters which had been in service for over 20 years. The new ERHS helicopters have been customised and configured for operational requirements. Operating from Bases at Jandakot and Bunbury Airports, the new All-Hazards Rescue Helicopters can be airborne in under 15 minutes. The third Rescue Helicopter is a spare aircraft to cover maintenance periods, however, can be mobilised to support other incidents across the State.

What does it mean for me?

The new Rescue Helicopter fleet provides significantly enhanced, all-hazards rescue capability. The AW139 aircraft are approximately 40% faster than the previous helicopters, resulting in reduced incident response times and have an increased operational range of up to 700 kilometers. The increased range means these aircraft now provide coverage for more than 91% of the State's population.

The new AW139 Helicopters provide additional and enhanced capabilities, including:

- Night vision imaging systems and night vision goggles;
- Aerial intelligence with live aircraft video streaming from a FLIR/HD optical camera;
- Augmented reality mapping system with incident charting (flood, fire, oil spill, etc.);
- Increased cabin area with modular floor for rapid reconfiguration – transport of up to 10 passengers and associated equipment;
- Improved support to recovery operations – aerial transport of resupply, relief, and humanitarian aid;
- A loud hailer/speaker system installed on the helicopter;
- Weather, maritime and ground search radar – all weather (IFR) rated Pilots; and
- Multi-agency and Silvus MESH radio systems, with 4G and satellite communications.

Target Audience: DFES Operational Personnel				
A	B	C	D	Vol
O.I.C. is to communicate content to all relevant personnel under their command, discuss implications, and sign appropriate box above. Once completed Circulars shall be filed on station and forwarded to Information Resources at the end of each financial year.				
OC-27-25	Issue Date:	Contact:	Aviation Services	
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Want to know more?

Please see attached reference sheet for more information on the new ERHS AW139 All-Hazards Rescue Helicopters. Further details are available from DFES Aviation Services, or by contacting Manager ERHS, Steven Sartain.

CRAIG WATERS AFSM
DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OPERATIONS

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All Hazards Rescue

24 Hours a Day, 365 Days a Year



Department of Fire and Emergency Services Leonardo AW139



Callsign: Rescue 651, 652, 653



Twin, jet turbine engines



Range: 300-350km radius
(Airborne Taskable - can be diverted to another higher priority mission)



Speed: 167knots / 309km/h
(Airborne capable in 15 minutes)



Rapidly reconfigurable cabin,
Maximum 10 passengers, resupply
and equipment transport



Two-person, 272kg rescue hoist



Dual stretcher capability



Loud hailer / external PA system



ATPL Pilot, Aircrew Officer, Rescue
Crew Officer / Clinician, Aircrew
Clinician (+ mission crew as required)



Night Vision Imaging System / NVGs



HD Optical with Forward Looking
InfraRed (FLIR) Camera



Weather, ground, and maritime
search radar



Augmented reality / incident
mapping (fire, flood, other hazards)
Live mission video streaming



Live mission video streaming with
aircraft wifi



Multi-agency & Silvus MESH radio
systems, 4G, and Satellite comms



Instrument Flight Rules (IFR) /
all weather aircraft

Examples of ERHS Missions

- Major Trauma Incidents
- Hoist and Cliff Rescue
- Hypobaric / Diving Incidents
- Neonatal Transport
- Bushfire Medical Evacuation
- Motor Vehicle Accidents
- Emergency beacon/EPIRB search
- Time Urgent Hospital Transfer
- Farming / Industrial Accidents
- Flood, Cyclone, Earthquake Rescue
- Land and Water SAR
- Aircraft Accidents
- Paediatric Emergencies
- Major Burn Incidents
- Night Aerial Intelligence
- Hazard / Fire Incident Mapping
- Helicopter Hoisting to Vessels
- Emergency Services Personnel and Equipment Transport