

## CONFIDENTIAL

### Southern region announcement: Key messages

15 October 2018

- Two existing air ambulance helicopter providers in the South Island have formed a joint venture to continue serving their local communities throughout the Southern region.
- The providers are Helicopters Otago Limited and GCH Aviation Limited (Christchurch).
- The new provider - Helicopter Emergency Medical Services New Zealand Limited (HEMS) - has entered into an agreement with the National Ambulance Sector Office (NASO) and will begin operating in the region from 1 November.
- HEMS is supported by the following existing trusts: Otago Rescue Helicopter Trust, Canterbury West Coast Air Rescue Trust, Lakes District Air Rescue Trust and Nelson Marlborough Rescue Helicopter Trust. Funds raised by each trust will continue to support services in their respective areas.
- HEMS will work to modernise operations, increase efficiencies and continue to improve patient outcomes. The contract will cover helicopter pre-hospital retrieval and inter-hospital helicopter transfers for medical and injury services across the Southern region.
- The Southern region covers all of the South Island and Stewart Island, the Chatham Islands and Auckland Islands when required.
- All existing bases will remain. The bases are located in Nelson, Greymouth, Christchurch, Te Anau, Queenstown and Dunedin. All bases will continue to service local search and rescue needs.
- A 24/7 service, with dedicated clinical crew available, will be run from the Christchurch and Dunedin bases. The remaining bases, with the exception of Te Anau, will provide dedicated services from the base for 12 hours each day, with on-call services overnight.
- Te Anau will retain its base with on-call services similar to what are currently offered but will also be well-covered by enhanced services in Queenstown, or from Dunedin if a large hospital is required for treatment.
- In Queenstown there will be permanent dedicated cover available for the first time and Queenstown's and Greymouth's single-engine helicopters will be replaced by twin-engine helicopters from November 1. These helicopters will better meet local requirements and provide more room for treatment during flight.
- The providers will purchase two new twin-engine helicopters in the second half of 2019. These will be the most modern helicopters available in the South Island and will give clinical staff more room to provide comprehensive care on board, ensuring patients needing urgent clinical attention can get that care while being transported to the most appropriate hospital for their needs. They will be based in Dunedin and Christchurch, where the most call-outs occur.
- New GPS routes will also be introduced. This will enable aircraft to operate safely in more challenging weather conditions, particularly around the region's mountainous terrain.
- The existing providers and their trusts have a long history of working with their communities and this new arrangement will enable them to build on their existing strengths and relationships.

- While the improved air ambulance helicopter service will receive increased government investment to meet aeronautical requirements and ensure clinical outcomes, community donations and sponsorship will play an important role in ensuring local air ambulance services are sustainable and equitable. This will provide greater benefits for the people in their regions who require air ambulance services.
- As a result of the procurement New Zealand now has three preferred air ambulance service providers for all of Zealand (one each for the Northern, Central and Southern regions). There were previously 10 providers across the country. Consolidation of providers will facilitate service improvements to ensure patients requiring air ambulance services get the right clinical care at the right time.
- Nationally the procurement has achieved a move to twin-engine helicopters, five bases with 24/7 staffing (Auckland, Hamilton, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin) and permanent daytime staffing with call-out options at other bases. These improvements will be phased in over 18 months as assets and staff are fully deployed.
- This is an important step in a 10-year modernisation programme for New Zealand's air ambulance helicopter services. The intention is for every community in New Zealand to have access to an air ambulance helicopter service that is linked to other emergency services, is available 24/7, is safer and is consistently clinically resourced.