



**Minister for Emergency Services; Innovation and the Digital Economy; Science;
Medical Research; Minister Assisting the Minister for State and Industry
Development, Jobs and Trade
Deputy Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council**

Our Ref: 62-36819

Ms Samantha Appleton
Executive Officer
WALGA Murchison Country Zone
39 Mitchell Street
GERALDTON WA 6530

Dear Ms Appleton

Thank you for your letter dated 27 April 2024 regarding the provision of a Geraldton - based Emergency Rescue Helicopter Service (ERHS).

The ERHS network is the State's only dedicated 24-hour Search and Rescue service which provides all hazards rescue aeromedical response directly to an incident and if required, transports the patient to a definitive care hospital. I am extremely proud of the daily lifesaving work the ERHS undertakes, and its vital importance to the Western Australian (WA) community.

The Cook Government continues to invest in the service, recently committed \$26.7 million for three replacement, next-generation rescue helicopters and a new Aviation Airbase at Jandakot Airport to support all-hazards rescue aeromedical and aerial firefighting aircraft operations. The ERHS capabilities and range will be enhanced to ensure our State has a world class rescue aeromedical service, which will be able to further support and respond to all hazard's emergency incidents for the next 10 years. The first of these new rescue helicopters will be operational and ready to assist regional communities in WA from mid-2024 with an increased operational range of 75 per cent and increased airspeed of 39 per cent.

Once these aircraft are in service, DFES will be able to deliver this state-of-the-art rescue aeromedical service within a 300-350 kilometre radius of their respective bases at Bunbury and Jandakot Airports. These new ERHS aircraft can fly a straight-line distance of up to 700 kilometres, which provides a significantly increased area of operations to support regional WA. The new contract for these services further includes options for additional service delivery and capability for the State Government to consider for the long-term planning of State funded emergency services.

While I appreciate that there is a genuine desire to increase the number ERHS aircraft and Rescue Helicopter bases in WA, I note that resource allocation with State-funded emergency services must be considered in the context of delivering the best possible long-term emergency service delivery to the whole state in conjunction with other available services supporting the community.

I would like to thank you again for taking the time to write to me regarding the support for the ERHS and its importance to saving lives in regional areas of Western Australia.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Stephen Dawson', with a large, stylized initial 'S'.

09 MAY 2024

Hon Stephen Dawson MLC
MINISTER FOR EMERGENCY SERVICES