

Primary entry #12: St Paul's Primary School, Gateshead



PAUL'S PAPER



Westpac Rescue Helicopter pilots training at Broadmeadow.

New rescue helicopters to save Hunter

By ABBEY FENTON, ISABELLE HUGHES, ISABELLA ARCHER and TAYLAH GARRARD

THE Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service is in need of four new helicopters in order to continue the service they currently offer.

Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service was initially just a beach patrol in the summer months, and has now grown to two bases, soon to be three, and runs 24 hours a day.

There is a need for new helicopters, with Glen Ramplin from the service saying, "The new 10-year contract, which begins in 2017, has stipulated that new state-of-the-art, bigger and more capable aircraft are required."

The new Agusta Westland helicopter the service is hoping to purchase will cost around \$US13 million.

The service is funded by donations from the community and the state government through NSW Health and Ambulance services.

Glen said they "do more than 1000 missions each year - that's about three missions per day, 21 per week."

One of the reasons new helicopters are needed is because one is 29-years-old, the other is 16 and both were purchased secondhand.

The new helicopters will be leased from a company called Lease Corporation International.

Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service has been saving lives since 1975.

By TARA O'CONNOR, KALISTA STOJCEVSKI and SAVANNAH FRASER

HUNTER Valley coal miners are at risk of serious injury or death while working underground every day.

So far this year, 12 miners have died in Australia while at work.

"The environment is uneven and dark, people have to be constantly vigilant to maintain health and safety by following accepted procedures," said an industry spokesperson.

Some of the risks that miners face every day are poisonous gas, lack of oxygen, explosions and one of the most common dangers is walls and roofs collapsing.

Flammable gas explosions can trigger much more dangerous coal dust explosions, which can engulf an entire pit.

Many miners around the world die from mining accidents each year, especially in the process of coal mining and hard rock mining.

"There is always a pre-shift talk or 'tool box' from the shift deputy on safety and any hazards identified the previous day - it is the number one priority at mine sites. Miners know what 'panel' or area they are heading and are well trained in their job," the spokesperson said.

Coal mining is one of the most regulated industries in NSW.



Students from St Paul's, Gateshead, showing some of the safety equipment worn by miners.

Miners need to wear protective gear such as safety boots, hard hats, long pants, long shirt, glasses and hearing protection and more and more processes are becoming automated, separating miners from some dangers.

"To be a miner it requires strong safety values, leadership and responsibility," the spokesperson

said. It is one of the highest employers in many communities and provides services like hospitals and roads through taxes paid, while having a positive benefit for those communities and the region.

Most coal seams are too deep underground for open cut mining and require underground mining, a method that currently accounts for

about 60 per cent of world coal production.

Coal mining has been a very dangerous activity and the list of historical coal mining disasters is a long one.

"The most important thing is that people come to work, do their daily work and return home safely to their family," the spokesperson said.



Redhead Nippers Aarkey Kneen, Ella Hadden, Tara O'Connor and Bianca Payne.

Big summer for Redhead SLSC

By BIANCA PAYNE, HANNAH BRENNAN and AILISH SPENCER

REDHEAD Surf Lifesaving Club (SLSC) is one of the 311 SLSC's around Australia who contributed to the 1.4 million hours of service, 11,533 rescues and 64,645 first aid administrations during the summer.

Redhead SLSC have 800 members, including 350 Nippers, and 450 volunteers.

Members duties include training and educating the community, being water safety officers, lifeguards and age managers for the Nippers, as well as saving lives while on patrol.

"Four to five out of the 15 weeks this summer, sharks have caused problems for Redhead Nippers, and SLSC NSW would not permit anyone to go in the water at this

time," said Redhead Nippers club president, Peter Watts.

To fund equipment, Mr Watts said the Club relies on council and government grants, plus fees from hall hire for weddings and other functions. The club also relies on the community through fundraisers and sponsors.

Mr Watts said his hopes for the future of the club were to "develop young lifesavers for the future".



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