

Beach Energy, RFDS off to a flying start on partnership

VALERINA CHANGARATHIL



PARTNERSHIP: RFDS Central Operations chief executive Tony Vaughan and Beach Energy managing director Matt Kay.

A NEW three-year sponsorship deal between SA oil and gas company Beach Energy and the Royal Flying Doctor Service will support critical aeromedical emergency services across the state and in the Northern Territory.

The RFDS Central Operations launched its new "intensive care" aircraft yesterday badged with the logo of major sponsor in Beach Energy. The new aircraft, Pilatus PC12 NG joins the 71-strong fleet operated by RFDS nationally. Made in Switzerland, it arrived in Adelaide in February, and has been modified by the RFDS engineering team in Adelaide.

It will be ready for service tomorrow when it begins flying two missions a day for the next 12-13 years. Funded by donations from the community and corporate partners and supported by the Federal Government, the aircraft replaces an ageing one. With the capacity to transfer two stretchered and critically-ill patients at any point in time, it will be used for emergency evacuations, patient transfers and delivery of essential primary health care across SA and NT remote communities.

RFDS Central Operations chief executive Tony Vaughan said Beach Energy's financial support would reach far and wide – and deliver lasting community benefit. Beach Energy's sponsorship will directly support RFDS' capital-raising program for ongoing upgrade of its fleet.

Beach Energy managing director Matt Kay said vital health services were important for regional communities.

"As a company that operates in some of the most unforgiving and remote territory in the nation, it is reassuring to know that, if we ever need them, the RFDS is there for us," Mr Kay said. "That is why today, we are there for the RFDS, growing our partnership by sponsoring this impressive new aircraft ..."

The RFDS conducts over 100 aeromedical flights across Australia every day.