



Canterbury West Coast  
**AIR RESCUE**

# Q1/Q2 Impact Report **2025**



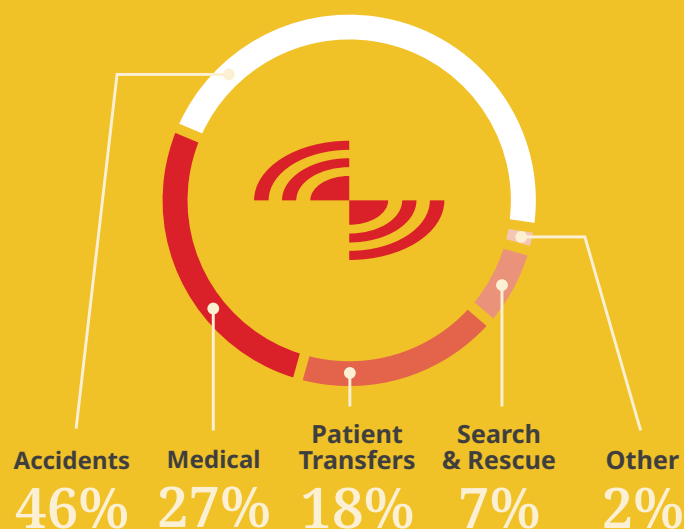
**Saving lives, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.**

# Canterbury Mission Summary



Total Missions

345



Missions Requiring Winching  
of Crew and/or Patients

15%



Missions Needing  
Night Vision Goggles

20%



Missions Undertaken  
at Night\*

23%

\*Between the hours of 5.30 pm and 8 am

# A welcome from our CEO

**Our rescue helicopter service is in the midst of the biggest transformation the service has ever seen – and it is exciting.**

I am delighted to share that the Canterbury West Coast Air Rescue Trust has recently confirmed the purchase of four H145 rescue helicopters. This purchase is only possible thanks to you – our community – along with our principal sponsor Westpac, Health New Zealand, and our service operator GCH Aviation.

We have been working closely with the service operator, Ambulance NZ, clinicians and aviation experts to determine what we want our helicopter rescue service to look like in 2035. Our vision

is for a service that can fly more safely, more often. It's a vision that includes investment in new technologies and equipment to enable more interventions for patients, and specialist training to increase the capability of the crew.

We call this vision MISSION 2026 and the purchase of these H145 helicopters is integral to achieving it. The bold step to secure these helicopters is only possible thanks to the generosity of individuals, businesses and organisations who have donated to our MISSION 2026 campaign.

The first H145 helicopter arrived in late August, with the others due to arrive in the months following. This is the beginning of an exciting

journey and we have faith our community will continue to support MISSION 2026 so we can realise our vision for the service.

It is our community that is behind each and every mission. With the Westpac Rescue Helicopter named New Zealand's most trusted charity brand for the second year in 2025, we know our community is strong. Thank you for putting your trust in our service.

This is the impact your support has made.



**Christine Prince**  
Chief Executive Officer

## **BUILDING PUBLIC TRUST:**

# **NZ's Most Trusted Charity - again!**

The Westpac Rescue Helicopter has been voted 2025 Reader's Digest Most Trusted Charity Brand for the second year running. This award is a powerful acknowledgement of the life-saving work the crews do every day. It's also a reflection of the incredible trust and support we receive from the public. We simply couldn't do it without you.



# MISSION 2026 in action

We set an ambitious goal – to transform the rescue helicopter service so we could save more lives. It's exciting to see that the transformation has begun.

## Equipment upgrades

Thanks to the support of Air Rescue and Community Services and our community, we have continued to invest in equipment to ensure the H145 rescue helicopters will be truly world-class. Recent purchases include:

- **4 EMMA CAPNOGRAPH KITS** to support reliable ETCO2 (end-tidal carbon dioxide) monitoring for intubated patients.
- **ARES ANTI-SPIN DEVICE AND LEG EXTENSION BOARD** to reduce or slow spin on winch missions and stabilise leg injuries.
- **SPECIALIST WATER RESCUE GEAR FOR THE CREW** to meet new Water Rescue Standard requirements.
- **SYRINGE DRIVER** a battery-operated device that provides continuous administration of medications.

## Pilot Conversion Training

New helicopters mean a significant investment is required to ensure our BK117 trained pilots are fully trained in the operation of the H145.



IFR training in action.

To prepare for the H145s arrival, pilot conversion training is underway across Canterbury and the West Coast.

Thanks to generous support from the J.I. Urquhart Family Trust, Instrument Flight Rules (IFR) training is also underway, which will enable pilots to fly in more adverse weather conditions.

Support from the local community and Air Rescue and Community Services has been integral to the development of a further four IFR routes for the region, with routes now in place to Cheviot, Hanmer Springs, Geraldine and Methven, adding to the existing network of Kaikōura, Ashburton, Timaru and Twizel.

*Once each H145 helicopter arrives at our rescue base, it will cost approximately \$1.5 million to get it ready to fly.*

*We still need your support.*

Donations of any size are welcome.

 [airrescue.co.nz/mission2026](https://airrescue.co.nz/mission2026)



## Helipad expansion

When lives hang in the balance, every second counts – and a safe, purpose-built place to land can make all the difference.

The Canterbury West Coast Air Rescue Trust is supporting the expansion of the emergency helipad network through expert advice and funding of specialist elements, such as pilot activated lighting. We are currently working with the communities of Fairlie, Geraldine, Methven and Hanmer Springs to enable this vital upgrade to their emergency infrastructure.



The Westpac Rescue Helicopter arrives at the new IFR capable Cheviot helipad.

### COMMUNITY LEADS THE WAY:

## Chopper Appeal Success

When it comes to backing life-saving missions, our community doesn't just show up – they lead the way!

During this year's Westpac Chopper Appeal, the West Coast and Canterbury communities raised a phenomenal \$337,434 for the Canterbury West Coast Air Rescue Trust. That's not only the highest total in the appeal's history, it's also \$61,000 more than the combined efforts of Auckland and Coromandel.

To our West Coast and Canterbury communities – thank you. You have proven when lives are on the line, our region's heart beats strong.



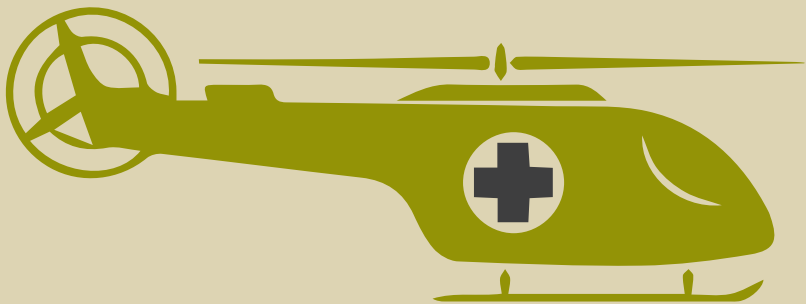
## Teeing off for the rescue helicopters

This year we hosted the inaugural Westpac Rescue Helicopter Invitational Golf Tournament at Russley Golf Course, raising an incredible \$26,500 for the Canterbury West Coast Air Rescue Trust.

An enormous thanks to Westpac Rescue Helicopter Ambassadors Brett Anderson from Christchurch Casino, Mark Mills from Miles Toyota, Wayne Pickering from Express Cargo, Brent Millar, and the volunteers of Westpac for making this event such a success.

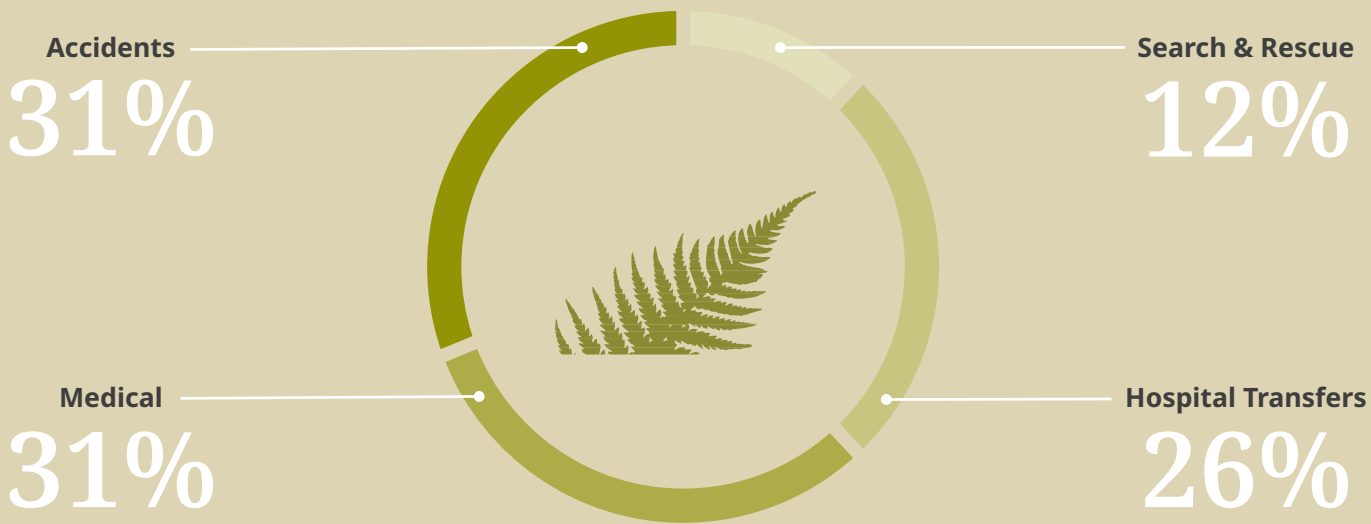


# West Coast Mission Summary



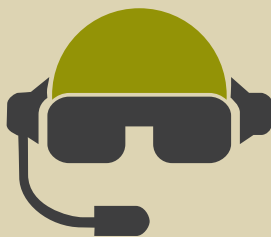
Total Missions

191



Missions Requiring Winching of Crew and/or Patients

28%



Missions Needing Night Vision Goggles

13%



Missions Undertaken at Night\*

18%

\*Between the hours of 5.30 pm and 8 am

## WEST COAST:

# An H145 is on the way

The Canterbury West Coast Air Rescue Trust was delighted to travel to the West Coast to announce that an H145 helicopter will be coming to the region.

It wasn't that many years ago that the West Coast rescue service was run with a single engine Squirrel helicopter. The introduction of the BK117 and now the H145 demonstrates our continual investment in the West Coast. The rescue helicopter is a lifeline for Coast communities and we are dedicated to ensuring their rescue helicopter service is world class.

The H145 will be a game-changer. With advanced avionics, the H145 has more power, can carry more weight and is IFR capable – which means rescue crews will be able to save more lives, more often.



Grey District Mayor Tania Gibson, Buller District Mayor Jamie Cleine, and Westland Mayor Helen Lash

## TRAPPED AND HYPOTHERMIC:

# Rescuing Roz

Roz Koning says she's only here because of two things – a personal locator beacon and the rescue helicopter.

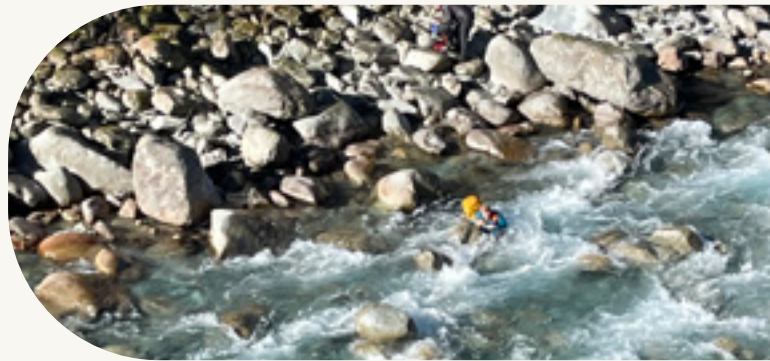
In July 2024, while on a walk with her husband, Roz became trapped in the Taipo River on the West Coast.

"We were completing a river crossing when we were both swept downstream. My husband gained his footing, but my foot was trapped in the rocks."

"Now sitting in chest deep water, I tried in vain to get my foot out ... it didn't work."

Roz activated a personal locator beacon. With her arms and legs nearly numb, hypothermia was setting in. When the rescue helicopter arrived, she was becoming unconscious.

The rescue helicopter crew of Critical Care Paramedic Hernan Holliday and Paramedic Zack Armstrong worked together to free Roz's foot and save her life.



## A daring rescue recognised

Hernan Holliday and Zack Armstrong were awarded a Certificate of Achievement for Operational Activity by NZ Search and Rescue for Roz's rescue. The Award citation recognised the coordinated and intense physical effort required to free Roz, including Zack submerging himself in the very cold, swift waters of the Taipo River.

*"I will be eternally grateful to the crew who put themselves on the line to save my life."*

**Roz Koning**

# The transformational impact of legacy giving

By leaving a gift in your will you have the power to transform our rescue helicopter service and provide a lasting legacy for individuals and families.

Currently, only 6% of New Zealand wills include a charity, with bequests accounting for just 1.3% of all charitable income. If, as a country, we could lift that to 3% the charitable sector would receive about \$2.5 billion each year.\*

Every day, we are talking to supporters about how we can ensure their legacy saves lives beyond their own lifetime.

We welcome any opportunity to talk to you about your legacy. Contact our Fundraising and Development Director Kathryn Marshall on [kathryn@airrescue.co.nz](mailto:kathryn@airrescue.co.nz) or call 03 358 8244 for a confidential chat.

\*The Bequest Report 2025, JBWere

## The legacy of Digby and Jan

Digby is enjoying his retirement just how he planned it – almost.

“The only thing is that Jan isn’t travelling the world with me,” Digby says.

Digby Gemmell was married to Jan for 53 years. She died 3 years ago.

For years Digby and Jan donated to the Canterbury West Coast Air Rescue Trust.

After Jan’s passing, Digby updated his will, leaving bequests to three charities that meant something to him and Jan. The Canterbury West Coast Air Rescue Trust is one of them.

Digby says the process of putting a bequest into his will was simple. And while it’s Digby’s wishes that will be honoured, it’s not just his legacy. It’s the legacy belonging to him and Jan.

*“It’s no use to you when you’re gone. If you can, give it to an organisation like the Canterbury West Coast Air Rescue Trust that can use it for good.”*



Thank you for your ongoing support. Please, keep in touch.

**p** 03 358 8244

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