

Probus Club of Chermside

LIFELIGHT TOUR 2019

Chermside Probus Club members visited Maroochydore Airport in June 2019 to see the Lifelight Helicopter in its hangar and to hear a most informative talk by a crew member. As well as being the hangar for the chopper, there are rooms in the building where the pilot, the Doctor and the general hand who, when rostered for duty, reside in the available rooms so they can respond quickly when required at an accident or incident. The speaker who addressed us was very informative and loves his job. He had the unenviable task of being the man who can be lowered on a cable for up to 60 metres to pick up a person who has to be picked up at sea or from an accident in a street. Where the chopper can safely land to collect a patient it will but circumstances vary and sometimes the chopper can only hover above the scene of an accident or incident. It would be a nerve racking job but he knows it is a service that must be provided in a life or death situation. The chopper is limited by the size of its fuel tank as to the distance it can travel or prevailing weather conditions. In a quieter period it may carry out shark patrols around some of the Sunshine Coast beaches but generally Surf Clubs use light aircraft for their patrol work.

Sometimes patients have to be moved to hospitals where greater facilities are available but this particular craft can only fly on a 5 or 6 hours basis depending on wind and weather conditions. Day and night the chopper crew are available to meet any emergency but, it is clear, job satisfaction is high amongst those who provide the service.



The chopper is owned by the Queensland Government and RACQ provide great assistance but public donations are necessary to ensure the continuation of the service. Among the worthy causes where you can give your dollars, the Lifelight Helicopter must rate highly.

Chermside Club members made a contribution to the operating costs on the day the Club visited but it is a never ending task the company must face every day.

After the most interesting talk, members were able to inspect the chopper at first hand and see the amazing amount of equipment it carries and needs to meet the circumstances it encounters in its 24 hours a day service.

Lunch was at the Waterfront Hotel in Diddillbah. As its name implies, we not only had a wholesome meal at the Hotel but members had a lovely view of the river during lunch. On the way home, Michael, our coach captain, drove down the coast to Caloundra only to encounter heavy traffic as a result of schools being out and trades staff at the end of their working day. Traffic works at the junction of the Bruce Highway and the Caloundra road made life difficult for everyone but attitudes changed as Michael diverted off the Highway to call into Strawberry Fields where freshly picked strawberries were on sale or a Strawberry ice-cream was enjoyed.