MEDIA RELEASE

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SIMULATOR HELPS FLIGHT NURSES DELIVER BETTER PATIENT CARE

Health Minister Jillian Skinner has inspected the nation's first nurse-led flight simulator lab at NSW Ambulance's aeromedical services fixed-wing base at Mascot.

Mrs Skinner was accompanied by Parliamentary Secretary for Rural and Regional Health and Western NSW Sarah Mitchell as she inspected the lab, which simulates patient scenarios such as cardiac arrest, child birth, seizures and paediatric trauma. It also simulates flight emergencies such as rapid cabin decompression or fire.

"This simulator helps our flight nurses bridge the gap between theory and practice, not in the relative comfort of a training room but the space-restricted, stressful environment they will encounter mid-air," Mrs Skinner said.

Mrs Mitchell said people living outside major cities would benefit from the enhanced skills being acquired by flight nurses.

"Rural and regional people who require aeromedical retrieval for illness or injury can feel confident the flight nurse who accompanies them is ready for any mid-air challenge that may arise," Mrs Mitchell said.

The NSW Ambulance fixed-wing fleet operates out of Mascot, Dubbo and Broken Hill and covers a 1400km stretch of NSW coastline and up to 900km inland. The five aircraft based at Mascot transported over 5,000 patients in 2014.

NSW Ambulance Commissioner David Dutton said the 38 flight nurses - all trained midwives - have received simulator training and will undergo refresher training.

"The ability to learn through this sophisticated simulated experience puts our flight nurses at the forefront of training and technology compared with their interstate counterparts," he said.

Senior Flight Nurse Margaret Tabone, who has been with NSW Ambulance for 17 years, said: "This simulator is invaluable because dealing with a scenario in a space-restricted cabin, by yourself, with only two hands and no immediate help available is very different to what happens on the ground."