



Angel Flight New Zealand takes off

ANGEL FLIGHT is a charitable organisation with the aim of "Improving lives one flight at a time" by flying qualifying patients to faraway hospitals for non-emergency appointments free of charge. The charity has existed in Australia since 2003 and is being set up in New Zealand by retired businessman Lance Weller who flew for Angel Flight in Australia and is now living in Whangarei.

Lance says he was initially disappointed to find that the charity wasn't operating here as he had seen first-hand "how wonderful it was to help people in strife". "The last mission I did was a two year old boy with a brain tumour and his father. They lived about five hours drive from Brisbane but because of the boy's condition it took days to drive there. I just think about the difference that flight made to that family."

Angel Flight NZ will initially operate in Northland with Lance's own aircraft (a Cirrus SR20 G3 that he flew here from Brisbane).

Angel Flight is not an air ambulance or emergency service and doesn't have any medical capability on board so all patients must be fit to fly and have been recommended by a health professional. They must also be in financial need. Lance says the aim is to complement existing emergency air medical services.

The Angel Flight system is well proven in Australia where 2400 pilots have flown more than 12000 missions since 2001. Pilot time and aircraft operating costs are donated by the pilots and owners involved. It is common for airport operators to waive fees for Angel Flights and Lance is negotiating this in New Zealand at present. Whangarei, North Shore, Ardmore, Kaitaia and Kerikeri have already waived landing fees.

Because there are no charges involved, PPL holding pilots can volunteer their time and aircraft to the service, providing they meet the minimum Angel Flight experience criteria of 250 hours PIC time. They must of course also meet all normal CAA regulations to act as Pilot in Command of the aircraft with passengers on board.

Typical volunteers might fly 2 or 3 Angel Flights each year

and whilst there can be no reimbursement of any kind for these flights (other than the warm feeling you get from doing something good for other people), Angel Flight are negotiating free access to MetFlight weather, will provide charts and Vol 1/4 amendments free of charge as funds become available, and plan to offer polo shirts and caps branded with the Angel Flight logo.



Pilots Wanted

Angel Flight NZ needs 'Angels in Cockpits'

Angel Flight NZ starts in March 2012 in Northland, flying missions to and from Kaitaia, Kerikeri and Whangarei to North Shore Airfield. Landing fees are waived at NZAR, NZKK, NZKT, NZNE and NZWR for Angel Flights. Missions will also expand into other parts of NZ as Volunteer pilots and eligible passengers become available.

Pilots need to have 250 hours PIC, have current BFR and Medical and be willing to donate 5 - 10 hours of their time and their aircraft per year.



Contact Lance Weller
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Email: lance@angelflightnz.co.nz

How it works

As well as Angel Flight Pilots, the organisation maintains a database of Registered Earth Angels, volunteer drivers who meet the aircraft when it lands and take the passengers to their hospital appointment. There are already 14 Earth Angels signed up at North Shore and 5 in Whangarei.

Patients are recommended to the Angel Flight Coordinator's Office by medical and social workers and sometimes the clergy. Once a mission has been qualified, it is posted on the Angel Flight website for viewing and potential acceptance by an Angel Flight Registered Volunteer

Pilot. The Mission Coordinator (MC) then sends an email to all Registered Pilots and Registered Earth Angels who then 'bid' for a Mission. The MC selects a 'bid' and allocates that mission to a Pilot and Earth Angel.

Because of the assistance that has been received from Angel Flight in Australia, the NZ organisation already has a comprehensive suite of manuals for all aspects of the operation.

For more information

The organisation is already well underway in NZ with the first Angel Flight currently scheduled to arrive at Ardmore on 5th April.

Lance says that "Flying an Angel Flight mission and helping someone while you fly may be among the most satisfying flying you will do". For more information on becoming an Angel Flight pilot, an Earth Angel, or to donate or support the organisation in any other way, contact Lance Weller on 09 434 3271 or 027 893 4587, email: lance@angelflightnz.co.nz or visit www.angelflight.co.nz



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