



Media Statement

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AWESoME attendee says Margaret River region is AWESoME

Twenty-six medical and nursing professionals from across Australia took part in a unique medical upskilling opportunity last weekend at iconic sites including Brides Cave, Wilyabrup Sea Cliffs, the Cape to Cape Track and the Blackwood River as part of the AWESoME medical wilderness conference.

The group abseiled, caved, canoed and hiked their way around the region, attending to various simulated medical emergencies such as hypothermia, a punctured lung, broken limbs and snake bites along the way.

Barry, a general practitioner from Melbourne, said the location was incredible.

“I’ve wanted to visit the South West region for quite some time, so when I heard about this medical conference it gave me the opportunity to travel across,” Barry said.

“You’ve got the incredible caves, kangaroos, surfing and there is such inherent beauty.

“From a medical perspective, training of this type really gets you thinking about how to handle emergencies in isolated locations; how you handle the uncertainty of treating a patient in a bush environment.

“I will definitely recommend the conference to colleagues as it really gets your out of your comfort zone and appreciate the challenges faced by rural medical practitioners.”

Margaret River nurse Jillian said the conference was a great refresher if you haven’t been involved in an emergency scenario for some time.

“The scenarios were definitely an extended level, especially from a nursing perspective. They were definitely relevant for those working in small country hospitals where you don’t have many staff and are often one of the first responders in emergency situations,” said Jillian.

Rural Health West CEO, Tim Shackleton said AWESoME is a unique way of upskilling doctors and health professionals for situations they may encounter in rural and remote locations.

“People are really familiar with the work of the Royal Flying Doctor Service, but in many remote emergencies it’s the local general practitioner, nurse or paramedic is the first responder who needs to provide critical first aid and stabilize very ill patients before they can be transferred to hospital.

“During AWESoME, the doctors, nurses and paramedics encountered ten different medical scenarios over three days, giving them up-to-date knowledge and greater confidence should they encounter a similar, real-life situation with a critically ill or injured patient.

Rural Health West is the only organisation in Western Australia that offers wilderness medical training in unique locations such as Rottnest Island and Karijini National Park.

AWESoME is sponsored by the Shire of Augusta Margaret River and engages a range of local services and businesses to provide transport, food and accommodation for participants.

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Rural Health West is a not-for-profit organisation responsible for recruiting and retaining a highly skilled sustainable health workforce that meets the healthcare needs of rural and remote communities in Western Australia. We are primarily funded through the WA Country Health Service and the Australian Government Department of Health.