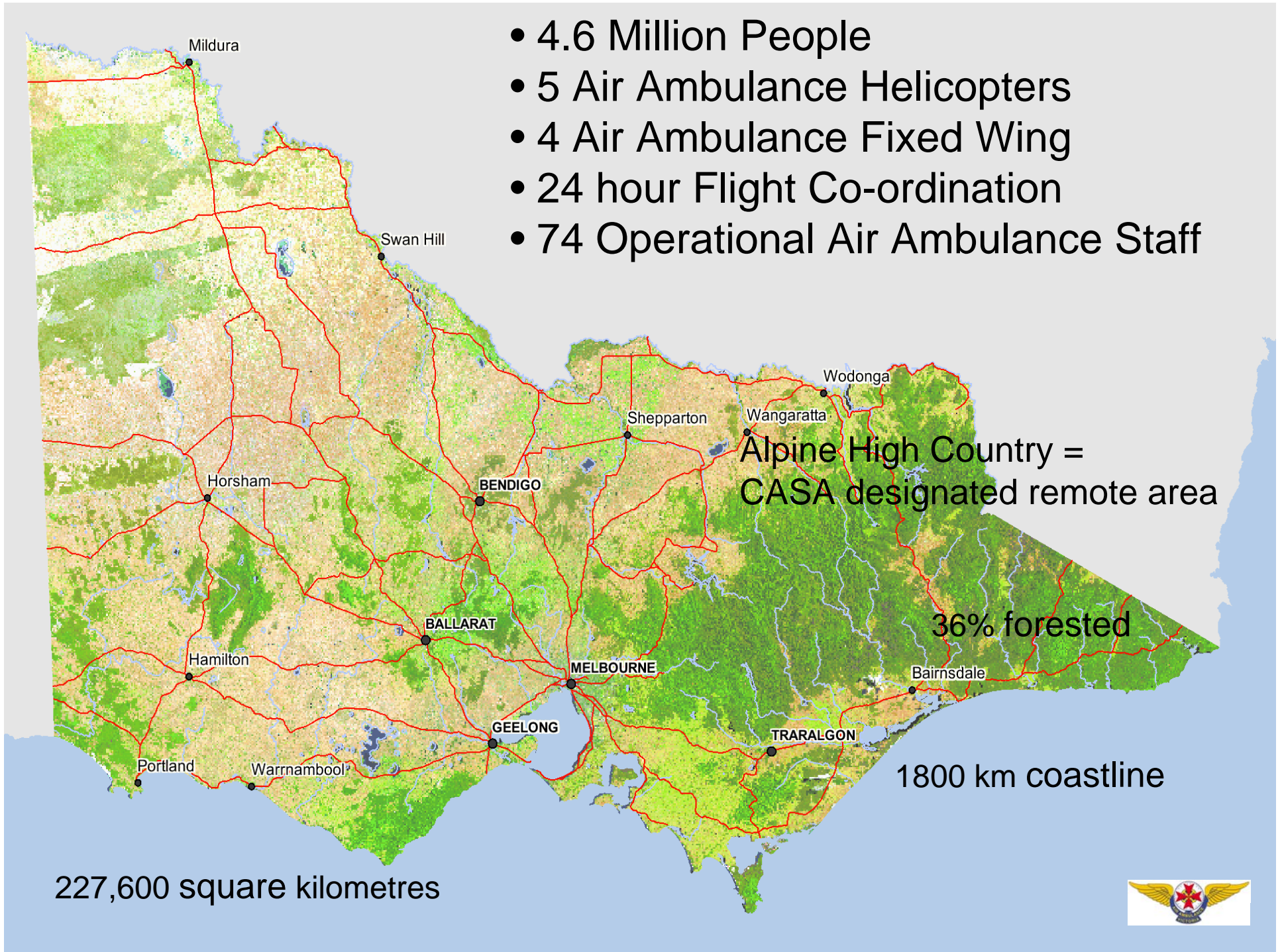


An Innovative Approach to Safety Training in Remote and Hostile Environments for Aero-medical Personnel

Anthony de Wit
M.I.C.A Flight Team Manager
HEMS 4
Air Ambulance Victoria Australia



- 4.6 Million People
- 5 Air Ambulance Helicopters
- 4 Air Ambulance Fixed Wing
- 24 hour Flight Co-ordination
- 74 Operational Air Ambulance Staff



Does Victoria have hostile environments to worry about?



Mt Everest, Tibet



Coronet Peak, NZ



Yes, we do!



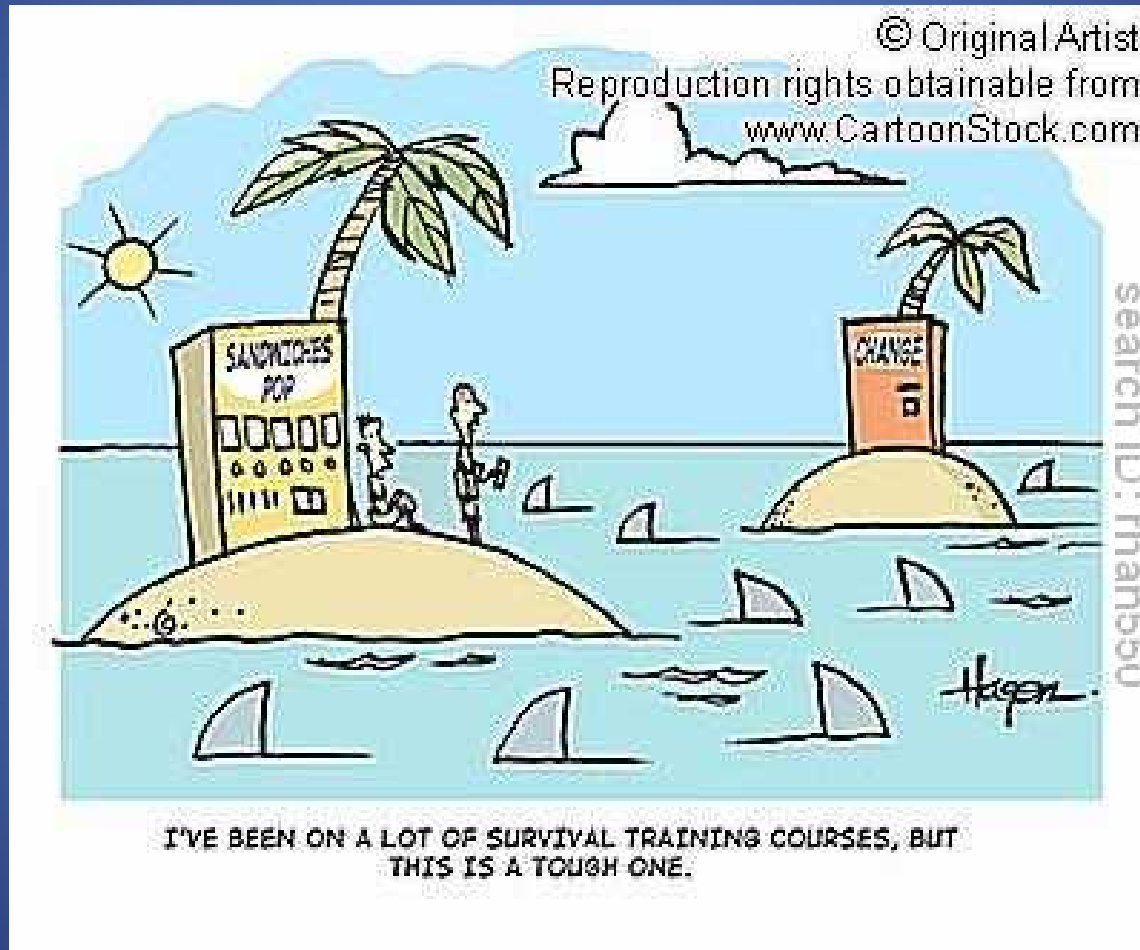
Mt Feathertop



Crosscut Saw

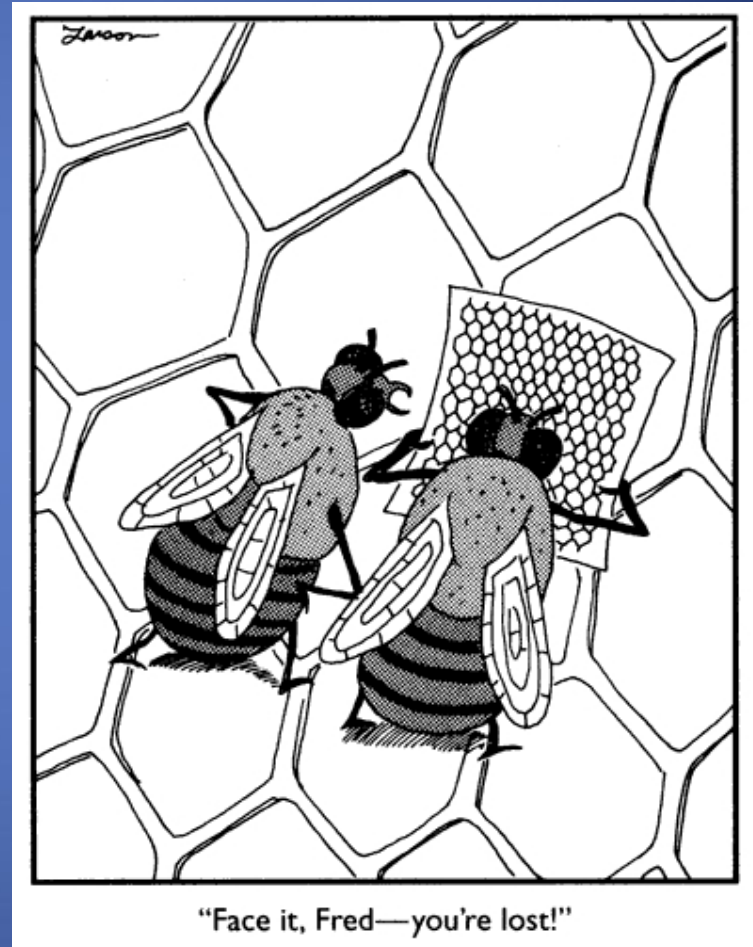


Survival Training?



Do we need environmental safety training?

- **Background**
 - A move to University Education = cessation of rope work
 - Assumptions of knowledge
 - Helicopter crew
 - MICA Flight Paramedic
 - Snow incident/s
 - Hazard Review & Assessment to minimise risk
 - Course development
 - Use of internal resources



Course Development



- **Two Courses with similar focus but different environments**
 - **Personal Preservation & Group Safety Training**
 - New Aero-medical Personnel
 - Practically based and real time
 - Use of current equipment
 - **Snow Awareness Training**
 - In field & practically focused
 - Use of current and alternative equipment
 - Assistance from Mt Buller Ski Patrol



Personal Preservation & Group Safety Training

- **2 Day Course Syllabus**
 - Preparation, Equipment, Food & Hydration
 - Leadership Role & Group Dynamics
 - Abseiling/Rope work
 - Navigation & Terrain
 - Weather, Shelter, Clothing
 - Clinically oriented as required
 - Communications, Planning & Logistics



Personal Preservation & Group Safety Training



Personal Preservation & Group Safety Training



Natural Habitat!



Snow Awareness Training

- **2 Day Course Syllabus**

- Preparation, Equipment, Clothing
- Walking, Traversing, Ascending, Descending
- Self Arresting (unaided/aided)
- Weather, Snow & Ice
- Shelter options
- Winching into the snow environment
 - Risk Assessment
 - Options for winching
 - Site preparation
 - Securing yourself



Snow Awareness Training



Snow Awareness Training



We need the helicopter to attend?



Course Ethos

- **Use your equipment and be realistic**
 - It's no good having it sit on the shelf
 - Sometimes equipment gets damaged in training
 - Relate the training to real life
 - What you put in is what you get out of it
 - Request a real life focus
 - Create the environment



Win Win

- Organisational Benefits

- Risk Minimisation
- Meets unique ongoing training needs of AAV staff
- Equipment appreciation
- Improved patient management & safety
- Cost Effective

- Aero-Medical Staff Benefits

- Experience the environment in a controlled way
- Improves personal safety
- Increases knowledge
- Equipment knowledge
- Morale benefit/Team building
- Creates thought processes before day one on the helicopter



Participant Feedback

- “Made me think about my toe nails.....”
- “Next day I was despatched to the snow and my whole mindset was different”
- “I didn’t know this jacket was so good”
- “I’ve been coming to the snow for years and never realised how lucky I’ve been that things haven’t gone wrong”
- “I’ve skied a lot but never taken much notice how hard it is to walk around”



Future Challenges

- Extra training days
- Commitment to be ongoing
- Inclusion of Swift Water Rescue Module
- Inclusion of existing staff into the Personal Preservation & Group Safety Program
- Purchasing additional equipment
- Interdisciplinary collaboration
- Evaluation & Cost Benefit Analysis



Learning Points



- Preparation starts before departure
- Stay ahead of the game
- Know how to use your equipment
- Know your environment and the potential risk
- Implement an environmental safety training course
- Continue to develop training based on need
- Run the training internally using the skills of your staff if you can





The End: Questions?

Acknowledgements: ISAS Conference Committee, Ambulance Victoria, Air Ambulance Victoria, in particular Mr. Paul Holman & Mr. Phil Hogan

