



Koppers workplace giving helps keep Westpac chopper in the air

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By giving a few dollars a week out of their pay packets, staff at Koppers Newcastle plant are doing their bit to keep the vital Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service in the air.

Koppers Plant Manager Nick Moretti and Plant Operator Joshua Merlo visited the service at Broadmeadow to mark five years since the workplace giving partnership started. Over the five years, Koppers staff have donated \$25,000.

Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service CEO, Richard Jones OAM, said with most face to face fundraising and major event activity on hold as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, workplace giving donations are extremely important in helping the helicopter service to save local lives across Northern NSW.

“We know that donation support may be difficult for many in our community at this time, so we are really grateful to Koppers staff for their continued support,” Mr Jones said.

“Koppers is a great example of a workplace that has set up a charity workplace giving program enabling staff to make a salary sacrifice of as little as one or two dollars each pay,” he said.

“Right across our service region, it makes an incredible difference to our life saving work.”

Mr Moretti said the visit was a great opportunity for him and Joshua to see how Koppers staff donations make a difference to helping the helicopter service to save lives.

“You get to see all the work that goes on behind the scenes in terms of planning, equipment, maintenance and training – that all has to be funded,” Mr Moretti said.

Koppers support for the service extends beyond workplace giving. In 2018, staff at its Grafton plant donated the \$4,000 they received for winning Koppers’ global safety prize to the service.

“Giving back to the community has long been a Koppers tradition,” he said.

“As well as contributing to local jobs and economies, we try to be a responsible neighbour and support the causes that are most important to local community needs.”

“This year Koppers and its staff, with support from our US colleagues, also donated \$40,000 to bushfire relief.”

Koppers has supported other charities, community organisations and local schools.

Nick said he and his staff are fortunate in that whilst the pandemic has impacted Koppers, it has been able to keep everyone employed, with no reduction in hours.

For 28 year old Joshua Merlo there was no hesitation in signing up for workplace giving when he joined Koppers a year ago.

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“I am lucky to have a great job with good pay; so if I can give a little bit of money for the chopper service to support my community, then I am all for it,” Mr Merlo said.

“You never know when you, a mate, or a family member may need this service,” he said.

Every year on average the Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service flies more than 1500 missions, including responding to emergency Triple 0 calls, inter hospital transfers and search and rescue. This year, the service is celebrating 45 years of operation in Newcastle and 20 years of operation in Tamworth. The Lismore base this year celebrated its 10,000th mission since operations started there in 1982.

To donate visit www.rescuehelicopter.com.au/donate

Koppers Newcastle plant beneficially reuses coal tar from Australian steelworks to produce coal tar pitch – an essential raw material for Australian aluminium smelters. It manufactures other products for wood preservation, rubber products manufacturing and concrete additives for construction. With 60 local staff, Koppers is an important contributor to the local economy and to the Australian manufacturing sector. Koppers wood business has a plant in Grafton and plants in other Australian states.

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