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NSW Ambulance Special Casualty Access trainee paramedics drop in on Scenic World

NSW Ambulance trainees' abseil from the Southern Hemisphere's steepest and largest aerial cable car

Scenic World's Cableway was the platform for NSW Ambulance Special Casualty Access Team training this morning, Thursday, 29 October, with SCAT paramedic trainees rappelling almost 100 metres into the Jamison Valley.

Dropping through the hatch in the Scenic Cableway's floor, the intensive care paramedics carried 25 kilogram packs – the same as those they would carry if they were dropping into a remote canyon to rescue someone injured.

On rope, each of them controls approximately 120 to 130 kilograms which includes the team member's bodyweight, pack, safety harness and gear.

NSW Ambulance Superintendent Aeromedical Training Manager, Paul Kernick, said using the Scenic Cableway for training allowed the trainees to practice the abseiling skills and techniques needed to safely perform life-saving rescues in a real life response.

"This contextualises their training," Paul said. "This is like descending from a chopper where you have nothing to put your feet on and no rock face to gauge your speed [going down the rope]."

NSW Ambulance Paramedic Educator, Martin Pearce, said until today's exercise, the height of abseils undertaken by the trainees on the course had been under 50 metres.

"This is closer to 100 metres and they'll need to use all of the skills they've learnt to-date," he said. "The Scenic Cableway gives them a real feel for what abseiling mid-air is like."

Three weeks into a five week course, the intensive care paramedics who qualify through the course will join a select few in the NSW Ambulance Special Casualty Access Team (SCAT).

Scenic World's Joint Managing Director, Anthea Hammon, said the Cableway had been used several times by NSW Ambulance and Police Rescue for training.

"Our Scenic Cableway is the steepest and largest aerial cable car in the Southern Hemisphere so it provides a unique platform for the Emergency Services to do their training in the Blue Mountains – a big area where they often find themselves undertaking real rescues," Anthea said.

"Abseiling through the small Cableway hatch with all of their gear to the Valley below is a spectacular sight and a really unique and memorable thing to do," she said.

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