

## Timely Rescue For Bass Straight Chopper Pilot

Just 5 days after registering his RFD AquaFix Personal Locator Beacon (PLB), a helicopter pilot has had to activate his marine safety device following an emergency landing in the sea on Victoria's South Gippsland coastline.

After experiencing communication equipment failure, the Bell 407 helicopter made a forced landing in shallow water off Snake Island while enroute from Flinders Island to the Latrobe Valley.



The AMSA Rescue Coordination Centre in Canberra received a 406 MHz PLB activation and GPS signal just minutes after the helicopter's next radio call was to be scheduled at 12:45pm. The AMSA HeliMed helicopter was quickly despatched from Latrobe, along with the Melbourne-based Dornier rescue aircraft from Essendon and a re-routed Cessna aircraft, which located the pilot and single passenger walking around together on the nearby Snake Island.

According to AMSA sources, the helicopter pilot had only registered his RFD AquaFix 406Mhz PLB device 5 days before the incident occurred. The accuracy and speed of detection were proven when the AMSA Helimed pinpointed the pair only 50 metres from where the helicopter had landed.

While the reasons for the helicopter's forced landing are still under investigation, the advantages of the 406 MHz rescue technology and the accuracy of RFD's AquaFix 406 PLB are clear.

"This successful rescue is a great advertisement for the new 406MHz technology," said Managing Director for RFD, Mark Barker.

"When we develop our PLB and EPIRB units, we actively promote the fast detection and accuracy benefits of the new 406 MHz COSPAS SARSAT satellite system. The helicopter pilot would be pleased with the outcome of what could have been a more serious rescue situation."

Spokesperson for AMSA, Tracy Jiggins, explains that, following the activation of the PLB, the helicopter pilot quickly called AMSA to say that no injuries had occurred during the forced landing.

The RFD AquaFix PLB is a specialised marine safety device designed to signal rescue authorities in the event of an accident. Compact, lightweight and fully waterproof, the AquaFix 406 GPS I/O PLB features an onboard GPS engine with proprietary FastACQ technology that acquires latitude and longitude when the unit is activated. Upon activation, AquaFix can operate in excess of 24 hours in temperatures between -20 and 55 °C.

RFD is a world leading supplier of marine safety products and inflatable watercraft marketed under a range of brand names. Some of these brands include Aquapro inflatable boats, Plastimo boating equipment, ACR electronics and Aquaglide water sport products.

Beginning in 1920, RFD is primarily involved in the supply and service of marine, fire, life support and gas control equipment.

For all information concerning supply and pricing of individual products within the broad range, please contact your regional RFD branch office.

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