

Angel Flight

Tom Courtney, volunteer with Angel Flight, was welcomed as guest speaker at the East Gippsland Red Cross Conference.

Red Cross members were very interested to hear the similarities between Angel Flight and the Red Cross Patient Transport Service.

Since Angel Flight was launched in Australia in 2003 over 8500 missions have been accomplished helping over 1899 patients and their carers. The pilots are volunteers like Tom Courtney who provide their time and the bulk of their aircraft costs - only recently have subsidies been available for fuel from public donations to the service.

Angel Flight does not receive any government funding, and has around 300 volunteers on the ground known as 'Earth Angels'.

"In my opinion they are the heroes," Tom said.

Angel Flight co-ordinates flights for financially and medically needy people. All flights are completely free for the passengers, who must be able to walk, and have medical referrals. Examples of those helped have been patients with cancer, kidney and liver failure, aortic stenosis, cystic fibrosis and leukaemia.

Tom concluded by saying both organisations complemented each other and in his own case "you just try to lend a hand when you can".

Proceeds from the lunchtime Rice Bowl at the conference were presented to Tom for Angel Flight by Bruthen Red Cross Unit chairman Helen Pollard.



Bill Young (Cann River) receiving his certificate of appreciation from Helen Hayes. (PS)



Margaret Greenwood (Bruthen), Tom Courtney (Angel Flight) and Gwen Stobridge (East Bairnsdale / Lucknow). Tom was the guest speaker and explained the Angel Flight service. (PS)