Chopper rescue hitch

Damien McCartney

A HELICOPTER searching for a drowning victim in the swollen Todd River suffered technical problems and a “heavy landing” and is now unable to be flown out.

The chopper, owned by Alice Springs Helicopters, was being flown by one of the company’s senior pilots with a police officer on board and looking for drowning victim Rowley Hill on Friday morning.

A spokeswoman for the company, who declined to give her name, said the Robinson R44 suffered a technical issue. “It was a precautionary landing and it was a hard hit,” she said.

“It’s still parked there and has minor damage” She said the chopper did not topple over but cannot be flown out. It has landed in an area accessible only by air. The spokeswoman said the pilot reported suffering a loss of power “possibly because of the humidity and some other issues”. Neither the pilot or passenger were injured in the crash.

Police said due to its location and weather, nobody had been able to get near the crash site.

The spokeswoman said the company was now waiting for parts for the chopper and is yet to work out how to remove it from its location. “They can’t fly it out of there,” she said. The two men were flown from the scene in one of the company’s other choppers.

Friends took to social media to farewell Mr Hill, a popular Alice Springs skateboarder and musician, whose body was found on Friday morning. The 24-year-old’s body was located by police and NT emergency services crew near Wigley’s Gorge, where he and a friend had gone swimming about 7pm Thursday.

It is believed the men came across fast-flowing waters near where they entered the water. Alice Springs Helicopters owns nine choppers, including Robinson R22s and R44s, and Bell 206 JetRangers.

They are used for muster; scenic flights and remote staff transfers.

The funeral for skateboarder Rowley Hill is being held today.

Spate of tributes for drowned ‘crazy kid’

A FUNERAL service for local musician and skateboarder Rowley Hill will be held at Alice Springs Cemetery today.

Friends and family will gather to farewell the 23-year-old, who died while riding a tyre tube down the Todd River at Wigley’s Gorge last week.

He is being remembered as a kind-hearted “crazy kid” who touched the hearts of many with his humour and talent.

Many with fond memories of the young man have taken to social media to share their love, affection and heartache.

His Facebook page is inundated with heartfelt messages, while a tribute page has also been set up.

“Rowley Hill was always making things more exciting no matter what it was. RIP Lil Kid,” wrote Josh Lander.

He was also known for his impressive skateboarding skills after being named the Alice Springs Skateboard Titles champion in April for his thrilling set of airborne manoeuvres, followed by winning the Alice Skate Classic in August.

Rowley was the drummer for local band Uncreation, which is one of three bands that make up local record label The Black Wreath.

Huge in the town’s metal scene, Rowley was the drummer for local band Uncreation, which is one of three bands that make up local record label The Black Wreath.

Some people uploaded photos of their most memorable moments with Rowley, including his mother, Melissa Golding sent her sincere condolences to Rowley’s family and girlfriend.

“Rowley, I truly hope you realise how much you meant to us all. You were the Crazy Kid everyone knew, and the boy who loved to skate. You will never be forgotten and you’ll live on in so many of us.”

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The funeral for skateboarder Rowley Hill is being held today. INSET: The fast-flowing waters near Wigleys Gorge, which claimed his life.

Cash gap widens at the bowser

The gap between city and country petrol prices has opened up by a further $6 a tank in just six months, the consumer watchdog has found.

And it intends to find out why, using “compulsory information gathering powers” for the first time, seeking evidence of anti-competitive behaviour.

Research published by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission proves drivers outside the mainland state capitals are being denied much of the 35c a litre plunge in the wholesale cost of fuel since July last year.

At Alice Springs, it’s jumped from 26.1c a litre to 44.2c a litre.

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Health services gear-up for rain

HEALTH services were alert and ready to respond to increased admissions following last weekend’s wet weather.

“All key personnel at the hospital, clinics, remote clinics and primary health care teams were ready to escalate plans if required,” Central Australia Health Service acting executive director of Medical and Clinical Services, Samuel Goodwin said.

Medical teams rehearse and test their emergency plans which allowed them to respond in the event of a crisis.

Despite their readiness, the hospital recorded no increase in patient activity due to the heavy rainfall.

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