

AMBULANCE SERVICE OF NEW SOUTH WALES

Annual Report 2003/04 Summary

2003/04 HIGHLIGHTS

- The Service provided more than 928,000 responses, an increase of 8.1 per cent over the past two years.
- 2004 National Patient Satisfaction Survey indicate 98% of patients were "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with the service received.
- 289 trainee ambulance officers and six patient transport officers recruited.
- 22 additional ambulance officers and 10 clinical training officers/technical educators appointed to rural and regional locations.
- Rapid response program in Sydney effective in reducing response times to patients requiring advanced clinical intervention.
- Introduction of clinical performance indicators.
- Implementation of variations to clinical practice and clinical risk reporting including 24 hour Clinical Risk Advice Line.
- Results of statewide audit into aspirin administration to cardiac patients were extremely positive.
- Renewed focus to engage the community and allied health care providers in the development and improvement of services.
- Workforce Planning Unit established to strategically plan and implement staffing and recruitment programs.
- New ambulance station built at Yamba. Stations relocated to new facilities at Barraba, Collarenebri, Finley, Hay, Lightning Ridge, Brewarrina and Queanbeyan.
- Public Benevolent Institution status granted to the Service.
- 24 hours a day, seven days a week complaints hotline established. Phone: 1 800 269 133

FUTURE INITIATIVES

- Increase clinical skills for operational staff.
- Continued roll out of rural staffing enhancements.
- Completion of Rotary Wing Review and revision of contract arrangement.
- Continue in-field clinical audit and devise clinical practice improvement projects to improve performance in specific areas of clinical practice.
- Expand clinical performance monitoring to include three additional clinical indicators.
- Final planning to be completed for replacement stations at Campbelltown, Paddington, Port Macquarie and Ryde.
- Conclude the mobile data radio network implementation for Sydney and the Central Coast.
- Examine options for the expansion of the Ambulance Wide Area Network, to provide each station with access to the Service Intranet.

"The Ambulance Service of New South Wales has again achieved significant improvements in organisational capability"
Mr Barrie Unsworth, Board Chairman

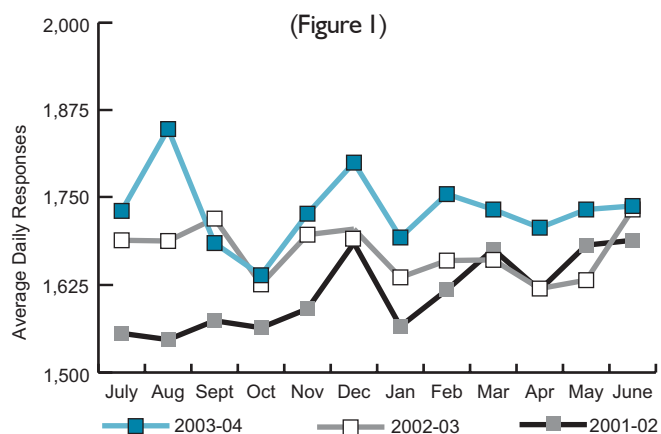
OPERATIONAL PERFORMANCE

Total Responses

Increased by 3.6 per cent from 2002/03 to over 928,000.

Emergency Activity

Emergency activity is defined as emergency calls received via the 000 network. During 2003/04, emergency responses by the Service increased by 3.9 per cent from 2002/03 to over 634,000 responses, recorded in Figure 1 (below).



Note: Activity data is recorded per month and presented as a daily average to remove the influence of longer and shorter months.

Non-Emergency Activity

Non-emergency activity is defined as those calls which are not received via the 000 network, and predominantly include scheduled patient transfer services and out-patient appointments. During 2003/04, the Service provided over 294,000 non-emergency responses across the State.

Response Times

Response times measure the time elapsed between a call for ambulance assistance being received and ambulance resources arriving at the scene of an incident.

During 2003/04, 51.7 per cent of emergency calls were responded to within 10 minutes. This compares to 53.1 per cent for 2002/03 and 53.0 per cent for 2001/02. Across the State, the average response time was 11.67 minutes.

The Service has responded to the steady increase in demand pressures through the introduction of a number of initiatives including fluid deployment practices, the introduction of rapid responders and enhancement of the Patient Transport Service to free up emergency resources from non-emergency transport demands.

Aeromedical Services

The Air Ambulance Service has four pressurised Beechcraft Super King Air B200C twin engine, turbine prop fixed wing aircraft. The NSW aeromedical helicopter network comprises nine helicopters operated by six non-government charitable organisations (NGOs), which provide services under contract to the Service.

During 2003/04, 5720 patients were transported by fixed wing aircraft and 2747 patients were transported by helicopter.

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OPERATIONAL REPORT

- 22 additional ambulance officers and 10 clinical training officers/technical educators were appointed to rural locations to improve service delivery to local communities.
- A new rapid response program in Sydney has reduced response times for patients requiring advanced clinical intervention.
- Upgrades of the VisiCAD dispatch system and the continued roll out of medical priority dispatch tools (MPDS) within operations centres.
- Completed the planning phase for the introduction of the Patient Transport Service to the Illawarra, Hunter and Central Coast areas.
- Contribution to the development of Public Access Defibrillation (PAD) technology.
- Commissioned four new Beechcraft SuperKing Air B200C aircraft into fixed wing aeromedical operations .
- Flight nurse competencies developed.
- Acquisition and distribution of specialist retrieval equipment to regional retrieval services.



CLINICAL REPORT

- The Ambulance Education Centre commenced the Diploma in Paramedical Science Program for 251 trainee ambulance officers and 348 existing officers, trained 89 paramedics, certified 25 paramedics and trained 118 Level 3C officers.



- Progressive review of all protocols and pharmacologies in accordance with the commissioning of the Clinical Action Plan.
- Commissioned a comprehensive infection control policy.
- Appointment of Trauma Liaison Officers to improve out of hospital trauma care in Sydney and the Hunter.
- Revised the Service's Policy for the management of Honorary Ambulance Services and developed standardised recruitment and training packages for honorary ambulance officers.
- Undertook a major review of ambulance officer certification including enhancements to continuing professional development opportunities and reviewed clinical mentoring programs.
- An Advancing Skills Working Group was established to review current clinical capacity-
- Clinical risk advice telephone line established to provide immediate and confidential information about ambulance officer procedural management of an incident.
- Undertaken statewide audit of clinical practice as a measurement of performance against three clinical indicators.
- New training units commenced operations at Lismore, Bathurst, Bomaderry and Wagga Wagga.
- Clinical training officers commenced duties at Bateau Bay, Singleton, Tamworth and Albury.

TECHNICAL REPORT

- New station constructed at Yamba. Queanbeyan and Finley Stations relocated to new premises. New station at Sussex Inlet near completion.
- Stations at Hay, Barraba, Brewarrina, Collarenebri, and Lightning Ridge co-located under the NSW Health Rural Hospital and Health Services Program.
- New radio sites installed at Suffolk Park (south of Byron Bay), Timbillica (south of Eden) and Moonimbah (Evans Head).
- Ten year fleet replacement program entered its fourth year and included the replacement of the remaining Ford F series vehicles.
- Upgraded Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) application in all operations centres .
- Dedicated mobile data radio network for the Sydney metropolitan and Central Coast areas.
- Programming work completed to add Patient Master Index capability to the Patient Health Care Record System.
- 41 ambulance stations received a new PC and laser printer from the Computer Equipment Capital Program.
- New Local Area Network servers installed at Dubbo, Goulburn and Hamilton to accommodate future upgrades to the network operating system .
- Appointment of Equipment Support Officer.



MANAGEMENT REPORT

- Statewide improvement in workers' compensation costs .
- Management and administration training courses continued to expand with a focus on core business areas and computer skills.
- Managed the implementation of ICAC's Corruption Resistance Review.
- Developed new Complaints Policy and managed the statewide data complaints collection.
- Developed Corporate Plan.
- Moved from episode centric to patient centric billing system in preparation for future trends in patient records management.
- Salary packaging implemented.
- Implemented Consumer and Public Participation Guidelines .
- Major incident media policy developed.
- Workforce Planning Unit established.
- 49 additional peer support officers selected and trained .
- Public Benevolent Institution status granted to the Service.
- Completed negotiation towards and implementation of the new *Administrative and Clerical Award*.
- Developed an enterprise-wide integrated risk management framework.



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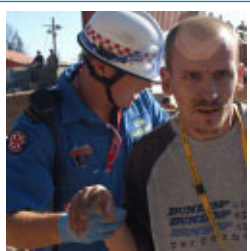
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NSW HEALTH COUNTER DISASTER UNIT

- Comprehensive review of NSW HEALTHPLAN was undertaken.
- Critical Infrastructure Risk Assessment Tool applied to critical infrastructure assets for Ambulance and Health, deficiencies identified and action plan developed.
- Critical Operations Standing Operating Procedures updated.
- Developed Personal Protective Equipment (CBR) Disbursement and Allocation Plan for Health and Ambulance.
- Provision of mass decontamination facilities at five new hospital sites.
- Implemented auto-injector replacement program.
- Developed whole of state Influenza Pandemic Contingency Plans, including SARS and Avian Flu.
- Completed review and upgrade of Health Incident Response Information System (HIRIS).

Exercises

Two multi-agency exercises (Exercise Shield 2003 and Exercise Explorer 2004) were conducted to test the readiness and ability of the NSW Counter Disaster Unit to respond to a terrorist attack.



Innovations

Laerdal Bag (Carbon) CBR Filters - designed as an in-line filter for intermittent positive air pressure manual ventilation of a patient trapped in a CBR atmosphere to filter the ventilated atmosphere when resuscitating.

Hot Zone Response Packs and First Responder Personal Protection Kits - A field kit to carry auto-injectors and sharps disposal containers as auto-injector sets are difficult to carry when wearing fully encapsulated Level A PPE suits required in the early phase of response to an unidentified (agent) CBR incident.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

The Service ended the 2003/04 financial year with an over budget result of \$3.6m. This was more than the previous year. Creditors over 45 days remained at zero. The year included significant increases in employee related payments due to increases in staff numbers and Award increases.

	2004 \$000	2003 \$000	Movement \$000	%
Expenses				
Employee Related	256,479	237,513	18,966	8%
Goods and Services	78,807	65,326	13,481	21%
Maintenance	16,009	14,249	1,760	12%
Depreciation	14,838	13,471	1,367	10%
Grants and Subsidies	433	434	(1)	0%
Borrowing Costs	227	271	(44)	(16)%
Total Expenses	366,793	331,264	35,529	11%
Revenues				
Sale of Goods and Services	72,506	72,019	487	1%
Investment Income	1,051	963	88	9%
Grants and Contributions	2,247	870	1,377	158%
Other	3,495	1,275	2,220	174%
Total Revenues	79,299	75,127	4,172	6%
Gain on Disposal of Non-Current Assets	740	132	608	461%
Net Cost of Services	286,754	256,005	30,749	12%

PATIENT SATISFACTION SURVEY

In 2004, the Convention of Ambulance Authorities (CAA) coordinated the second national patient satisfaction survey. The key purpose of the survey was to benchmark perceived service quality and customer satisfaction across State and Territory ambulance services in Australia.

In NSW, as in other States, 1,300 emergency patients who had been transported by ambulance two months prior to the survey were randomly selected to receive a survey. The overall satisfaction of key areas in the table (below) indicates that 98 per cent of NSW residents surveyed are satisfied or very satisfied with all aspects of service delivery, up from 97 per cent in 2003.

Satisfaction Ratings

Key Area	Dissatisfied or very dissatisfied 2004	Neither satisfied, nor dissatisfied 2004	Very satisfied or satisfied	
	%	%	2004 %	2003 %
Call response time satisfaction rating	1	1	98	61
Satisfaction with communications staff	1	1	98	97
Ambulance response time	3	2	96	56
Ambulance officer care rating	1	1	98	98
Treatment satisfaction	1	1	98	99
Ambulance officer satisfaction rating	1	2	97	94
Trip/ride satisfaction	3	4	93	94
Overall satisfaction	1	1	98	97

VOLUNTEER & COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

Donations

The Service wishes to formally thank Mr Walter and Mrs Edith Sheldon for their donation to purchase a Mercedes Sprinter ambulance.

Mr and Mrs Sheldon have provided a potential life saving gift to the community of northern Sydney.

"On several occasions recently, we required the services of an ambulance and we have always found the ambulance officers efficient, helpful and courteous and this gave us the idea of purchasing an ambulance for the community". Mr and Mrs Sheldon



Honorary Ambulance Officers

A workforce of over 80 honorary ambulance officers provide first aid to the sick and injured and first response to incidents in remote areas of NSW where back up is not always readily available.

Training and supporting community members to work together with the Service provides more equitable access in emergency pre-hospital care and improved health outcomes for people in isolated rural communities.

A full copy of the Service's 2003/04 Annual Report is available on-line at www.ambulance.nsw.gov.au.