



**Ambulance Service  
of New South Wales**

*Caring*

*Respect*

*Accountability*

*Satisfaction*

*Excellence*

*Equity*

**2004/05  
ANNUAL  
REPORT  
SUMMARY**

# Ambulance Service of New South Wales 2004/05 Annual Report Summary

## Highlights

- During 2004/05, total responses (both emergency and non-emergency) increased by 2.1 per cent from 2003/04 to over 947,000. This represents an average of 2,595 responses per day, a response to a call for assistance every 33 seconds.
- Introduction of a patient allocation matrix that identifies in-patient medical services provided at each metropolitan hospital allowing ambulance officers to transport the patient to the right hospital the first time.
- Staffing enhancements have seen an additional 28 patient transport officers and 48 ambulance officers introduced in rural areas. These enhancements have improved roster coverage as well as providing relief commitments in some areas.
- An additional 20 ambulance officers recruited in metropolitan Sydney - the first stage of a four year plan that will see 250 additional Ambulance personnel recruited.
- The NSW Health Counter Disaster Unit was tasked by the Commonwealth Government to coordinate a National effort on 28 December 2004 to provide a substantial response to the tsunami affected regions in South East Asia.
- Commenced upgrade of the baseline core skill set for qualified ambulance officers to include enhanced techniques for airway and pain management.
- Following extensive consultation and input from the community, launched a new look community focused website, including an interactive children's section and multilingual resources.

## Future Initiatives

- Continue to progress initiatives to better manage ambulance demand.
- Continue roll-out of staffing enhancements to rural areas.
- Determine clinical profiles for the Ambulance staff establishment to enable a wider distribution of intensive care paramedics across NSW.

## Most Trusted Profession

Results of the 2005 Readers Digest annual survey for Most Trusted Profession was awarded to ambulance officers across the nation for the third year running!

To celebrate the honour, a free lunchtime sausage sizzle was held for the public at Darling Harbour on Tuesday 17 May 2005.



Ambulance Officer Norm Spalding entertains young Kestra Straw at the BBQ.

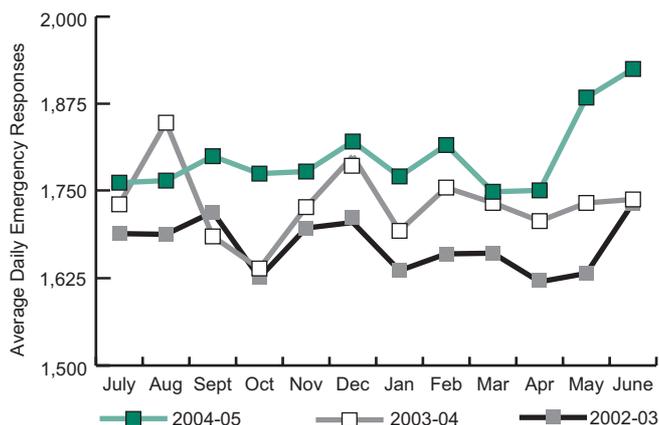
## Operational Performance

### Total responses

Increased by 2.1 per cent from 2003/04 to over 947,000. This represents an increase of more than 19,000 responses. During 2004/05, Ambulance provided an average of 2,595 responses per day, responding to a call for assistance every 33 seconds.

### Emergency responses

During 2004/05 total emergency responses increased by 3.6 per cent from 2003/04 to over 656,000. Ambulance provided an average of 1,799 emergency responses per day, up from 1,732 per day during 2003/04 which is reflected in the table below.



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

### Explanatory Note

From May 2005 emergency activity is reported for "000" cases determined as "emergency" (immediate response under lights and sirens) or "urgent" (undelayed response without warning devices) under the Medical Prioritised Dispatch System (MPDS); bringing NSW in line with all other Australian ambulance services. Prior to May 2005, emergency activity was reported for all "000" calls. For this reason response times in May and June 2005 are not comparable with previous data. Further information on MPDS is provided on page 20 of Ambulance Annual Report.

### Non-Emergency Activity

During 2004/05, Ambulance provided over 290,000 non-emergency responses across the State, a decrease of 4,000 responses compared with 2003/04 (294,000 responses) and 5,000 additional responses compared to 2002/03 (285,000). Ambulance provided an average of 796 non-emergency responses per day during 2004/05, down slightly from 803 per day during 2003/04.

### Aeromedical Services

The Aeromedical and Retrieval Services Division consists of the Aeromedical Operations Centre (AOC) and the Aeromedical Retrieval Unit (AMRU). During 2004/05, 5590 patients were transported by fixed wing aircraft and 2,705 patients were transported by rotary wing aircraft.



Aeromedical Operations Centre.

## Operational Report

- Qualified ambulance officer skill upgrades have commenced to improve the baseline core skill set, including enhanced techniques for airway and pain management. Training has commenced in rural and remote locations on the basis of community needs.
- Commenced Head Injury Retrieval Trial (HIRT) in association with Careflight. The project is a randomised, controlled trial conducted in the Sydney Basin area to determine the effectiveness of physician led 'pre-hospital' care and intervention outcomes for severe blunt head injury patients.
- The new Queanbeyan Ambulance Station was officially opened on 28 April 2005.
- Progression of multi purpose services at Dunedoo, Nyngan, Walcha, Bingara and Warialda.
- Implementation of first responder programs in remote towns with limited resources.
- Honorary ambulance programs in rural areas, particularly the Western Division, have been successful in providing measurable outcomes, support, better access and improved service delivery to people in these outback communities.

### Medical Priority Dispatch Systems (MPDS)

Pre-hospital care provided by Ambulance spans from receipt of a call through the 000 network, to dispatch of ambulance officers, treatment administered to the patient, and transport of the patient to hospital.

The emergency Medical Priority Dispatch System (MPDS) is a process by which 000 calls are triaged for urgency and severity. In April 2005, Ambulance achieved a major milestone in its history with the commissioning of the final phase of MPDS. Under the new system all incidents are responded to immediately, however, for non-life threatening emergencies and illnesses an ambulance responds under normal driving conditions, not lights and sirens. The full utilisation of MPDS represents a major change in dispatching resources for ambulance officers, operations centre staff and the community.

## Clinical Report

- Any incident, adverse event, near miss or complaint involving patient care can be reported through the Incident Information Management System (IIMS). Data is monitored for trends that may indicate areas of clinical risk and analysis informs on outcomes from improvement strategies.
- The Clinical Governance Committee met on four occasions and provided a focus for monitoring the Clinical Action Plan, Patient Safety, Clinical Performance, Clinical Professional Development and Clinical Education.
- Began a comprehensive review of current practices in relation to the provision of services to mental health patients.
- Significant achievements of the Clinical Action Plan have been:
  - The use of data to identify key intervention points for clinical risk and clinical performance.
  - Effective infection control systems and procedures in a difficult operational environment.
  - A system to manage variations to clinical practice.
  - Development of a cardiac care strategy.
  - The involvement of consumers in clinical committees.



Ambulance Officers Steve Young (right) and Malcolm Lau test out SimMan

## Technical Report

- New Ambulance Stations constructed and occupied at Sussex Inlet and at Forbes. Construction of a new replacement station in the grounds of Gunnedah Hospital is in the planning phase with construction proposed to commence late 2005.



Ambulance staff during the Opening of Sussex Inlet Ambulance Station.

- Ten year fleet replacement program entered its fifth year with significant achievements including the replacement program of all GMC vehicles on schedule for the end of 2005.
- Supply and installation of PCs and printers for 57 ambulance stations under the capital funding program.
- Continue to replace older PCs in stations, subject to capital funding being available.

### Managed Wide Area Data Network

Ambulance signed a contract with Telstra to provide broadband data access to all Ambulance facilities. This will add 216 sites to our data network, and a further 21 existing links to sector and administrative offices will be upgraded.

The outcome for staff will be access to online facilities such as email, the Ambulance Intranet, and clinical education resources.

## Management Report

- Recruited and selected 163 trainee ambulance officers and 40 patient transport officers to meet the rollout of 230 rural enhancement positions as well as Sydney Division staffing requirements. Also recruited 51 paramedics and 28 rescue officers.
- A range of community factsheets covering topics such as how and when to call an ambulance were translated into Chinese, Vietnamese, Arabic (including Lebanese), Italian and Greek.
- Continued targeted recruitment programs for the employment of indigenous Australians in frontline service delivery positions.
- On Tuesday 26 April 2005, following extensive consultation and input from the public, Ambulance launched its new look community focused website.



Graduating officers from Course 171A are joined by the official party.

## NSW Health Counter Disaster Unit

- Complete re-write of the NSW Healthplan.
- Twelve mass decontamination facilities have now been established throughout Greater Sydney, including Newcastle, Gosford and Wollongong.
- Chemical, Biological and Radiological (CBR) Response pods have now been established. They will provide a rapid response capability of CBR equipment throughout the State.
- Three special purpose ambulances able to transport contaminated casualties in a safe environment are now operational.

The NSW Health Counter Disaster Unit (CDU) was tasked on 28 December 2004 by Emergency Management Australia on behalf of the Commonwealth Government, to provide a substantial response to the tragedy in South East Asia, following an earthquake and subsequent tsunami in the Indian Ocean on 26 December 2004.

The CDU coordinated an initial national response consisting of four medical teams, two deployed to Banda Aceh, one to Sri Lanka and one to the Maldives.



*Ambulance Officer Adrian Humphreys cares for an infant in Banda Aceh.*

## National Patient Satisfaction Survey

In 2005, the Convention of Ambulance Authorities (CAA) coordinated the third 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 97 per cent of NSW residents surveyed are satisfied or very satisfied with all aspects of service delivery, down one per cent from 2004.

### NSW Results

Key Area	Dissatisfied or very dissatisfied 2005 %	Neither satisfied, nor dissatisfied 2005 %	Very satisfied or satisfied	
			2005 %	2004 %
Call response time satisfaction rating	1	3	96	98
Satisfaction with communications staff	2	2	96	98
Ambulance response time	1	4	95	96
Ambulance officer care rating	1	1	98	98
Treatment satisfaction	1	1	98	98
Ambulance officer satisfaction rating	1	2	97	97
Trip/ride satisfaction	3	5	92	93
Overall satisfaction	2	1	97	98

## Financial Summary

Ambulance ended the 2004/05 financial year with an under budget result of \$0.3m (previous year was over budget by \$3.6m). 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.

	2005 \$000	2004 \$000	Movement	
			\$000	%
Total Expenses	386,483	366,793	19,690	5%
Total Revenues	84,850	79,299	5,551	7%
<b>Net Cost of Services</b>	<b>301,494</b>	<b>286,754</b>	<b>14,740</b>	<b>5%</b>

## Volunteer and Community Activities

### Peer Support Officers

Ambulance has 78 peer support officers who are uniformed staff that provide an early intervention to colleagues who experience stress as a result of exposure to traumatic workplace incidents. Peer support officers spent around 1,000 hours providing support during the year.



### Chaplaincy

Fifteen Ambulance chaplains provide volunteer counselling, pastoral care and spiritual support to employees who have been exposed to traumatic workplace incidents or who experience wide reaching personal issues. Additionally, Ambulance chaplains provide support and undertake memorial and civil services for staff, their families and Ambulance patients.



### Honorary Ambulance Officers

A workforce of approximately 90 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.



To improve resources, training and support in emergency pre-hospital care where geographical isolation, harsh climates, vast distances and extended time delays impinge on the health outcomes of people in remote outback communities a number of programs have been developed. These include Community First Responders, hospital based Honorary Ambulance Officer Programs and honorary officers working alongside professional ambulance officers.

### Donations

During 2004/05, there were two donations to Ambulance of \$10,000 or more. Thank you to the Southern Cross Charity Evening at Queanbeyan who donated \$10,000 towards equipment, and the Bondi Junction Rotary Club who donated \$15,000 to Eastern Suburbs ambulance stations for the purchase of medical equipment.