



28 June 2007

11 hour rescue mission through waist-deep snow.

Ambulance officers battled waist-deep snow and blizzard conditions for more than 11 hours last night to reach a 24yo woman who was suffering respiratory problems.

A triple-zero call was received from a property on Calabash Road at Michelago shortly after 6pm last night where a woman was reportedly short of breath. To compound matters, the woman had also lost power to her property in the blizzard.

With snow known to be falling in the Cooma-Monaro area, Ambulance Operations Centre staff made the decision to respond ambulances from Queanbeyan and Cooma to attempt to reach the patient.

Ambulance crews were faced with waist deep snow in the Michelago area and, despite their 4WD ambulance, were unable to make any progress due to large numbers of trees fallen in the strong winds.

An Air Ambulance Emergency Helicopter was unable to attend due to the horrendous weather conditions.

In an extensive inter-agency operation, Ambulance officers worked with Police and Rural Fire Service volunteers to clear the road.

RFS volunteer chainsaw crews worked to cut away the fallen trees whilst the RFS worked to source a large excavator to help clear the road.

Ambulance Operations Centre staff maintained phone contact with the woman, who remained stable but short of breath, throughout the rescue operation

Meanwhile, crews from the Perisher Valley ambulance station loaded up their snow-mobiles onto trailers and began the drive north to Michelago.



Ambulance Service of New South Wales

media release

Shortly before 1am, and with the road blocked by a large fallen tree, Ambulance officers set off by snow-mobile for the final 8km of the journey.

Efforts to clear the road continued, and a 4WD ambulance was finally able to reach the patient at 1:30am and began the slow trip back along treacherous roads.

The mammoth rescue operation finally concluded at 5:15am this morning when the woman reached Canberra Hospital in a serious, but stable condition.

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For further information or local media opportunities please contact Ambulance Media on (02) 9320 7796.