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Ambulance attrition - the facts

The Ambulance Service has a very low attrition rate of 6.6 percent. This rate compares favourably with other emergency services and is significantly lower than attrition rates in the wider health system and industry generally.

A career in ambulance offers challenges and rewards and is supported by dedicated colleagues and significant respect from the community. Many men and women join Ambulance as a life long career with some having up to 40 years service.

Ambulance workload is increasing with an 11.5 percent increase in demand for ambulance services since 2002.

The Ambulance Service is also growing. Over the last three years there has been a net increase of 327 Ambulance Service staff, an increase of 87 ambulance vehicles (ambulances, rapid response and non-emergency patient transport) with 55 of these being in the Sydney metropolitan area.

At times of maximum demand, there are an additional 28 ambulance crews on the road in the greater metropolitan Sydney (138 crews at peak times).

\$316 million has been allocated to Ambulance in 2007-08 ... an increase of 7 percent over last year. These increased resources and staff along with improved efficiency is leading to gradual improvements in the Ambulance performance.

This was confirmed in the Auditor General's recent follow-up review. The Auditor General found Ambulance has significantly improved a number of aspects of its performance since 2001.

These results are also reflected in regular surveys of Ambulance staff over the last 7 years which show significant improvements in staff perceptions of communications, the work environment and organisational direction. The most recent survey continued this trend, although the response rates were low, just over 230 out of a possible 1000 staff responding.

Ambulance has strong systems for quality and safety with a variety of clinical, peer and management review systems in place. Every staff member who has a concern about safety or the care provided to patients has an obligation to report these concerns so that a proper review with factual analysis can be undertaken and any corrective action initiated.

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