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## **MINISTER ANNOUNCES REVIEW INTO AMBULANCE SERVICE**

Minister for Health, Reba Meagher, today announced a review of the Ambulance Service of NSW.

The Review, to be conducted by Graeme Head, former Sydney Catchment Authority chief executive and director of the newly established Performance Review Unit in the Department of Premier and Cabinet, comes at a time of increasing challenges facing the Ambulance Service.

“There is a call made to the Ambulance Service every 31 seconds in NSW. In the past 12 months alone, demand for ambulance services has increased by 5.5 per cent. The service provided more than 1.05 million responses in 2006-7,” Ms Meagher said.

“The performance of the Ambulance Service has been commendable given the pressures it is under, a fact which was recently confirmed by the Auditor General.

“The Lemna Government has long recognised the pressures facing the Service, which is why we have allocated a record \$316 million budget to the Ambulance Service and funded an additional 688 operational positions since 2001.

“However, as our population ages and people live longer, the demand for ambulance services is only going to increase. That’s why we need a comprehensive review, so we can properly plan the allocation of resources to meet demand into the future.

“A key component of the review will be to examine options to reduce avoidable hospital admissions and improved service delivery, which are key NSW State Plan targets.

“I’ve met with Ambulance Officers and Health Services Union delegates and heard first-hand their experiences from the front line. I want to help to prepare the Service to meet the challenges for the next decade and beyond.

“The review will examine the operational and management systems of the Ambulance Service, including its clinical focus, the effectiveness of current work and management practices, and the career path options for ambulance officers.

“The review will then provide recommendations to Cabinet on how to improve the Ambulance Service’s capacity and ensure equitable and timely access by all members of the community to ambulance services.”

The Review will report back to Cabinet early next year. Further details of the review will be announced in coming weeks.

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