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MEAGHER ACKNOWLEDGES HARD WORK OF NSW AMBULANCE OFFICERS

The lemma Government recognises the hard work of frontline Ambulance officers amid increasing demand for Ambulance services, Minister for Health, Reba Meagher, said today.

Ms Meagher said a call is made to the Ambulance Service of NSW every 31 seconds across the state. 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.

“The lemma Government has recognised the pressures facing the Service, which is why we have allocated a record \$316 million budget to the Ambulance Service of NSW and funded an additional 688 operational positions since 2001,” Ms Meagher said.

“The turnover rate of 4.6 per cent for Ambulance Officers is amongst the lowest in the public sector but as our population ages and people live longer, the demand for ambulance services is only going to increase.”

Ms Meagher also highlighted a recent agreement to pay frontline Ambulance officers an extra four per cent work value wage increase ahead of the beginning of formal hearings at the Industrial Relations Commission.

“The lemma Government has reached agreement with the Ambulance Officers' union to pay an interim four per cent work value wage increase. This increase has been ratified by delegates and will be paid - subject to the IRC's formal consent in hearings in early October,” Ms Meagher said.

“The four per cent wage increase is a sign of good faith from the lemma Government and demonstrates our appreciation for the increasing workloads faced by frontline Ambulance officers every day.

“This follows the Government's recent decision to give Ambulance Officers a similar death and disability benefit enjoyed by other emergency service staff in the Fire Brigade and Police Force.”

Ms Meagher said that while workforce was an ongoing issue, it would be covered in a review of the Ambulance Service of NSW being conducted by director of the newly established Performance Review Unit in the Department of Premier and Cabinet, Graeme Head.

“We need a comprehensive review, so we can properly plan the allocation of resources to meet demand for Ambulance Services into the future,” Ms Meagher said.

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