



11 May 2009

Ambulance Research Institute to improve patient care

NSW Minister for Health, John Della Bosca, today announced the State Government will establish an Ambulance Research Institute to improve patient care across the State.

Mr Della Bosca said \$3 million in funding had been allocated to the Ambulance Service of NSW to make the Institute a reality.

“Despite the critical role our paramedics play in the community, research into ambulance practice is a largely unexplored area unlike other areas of medicine,” the Minister said.

“The first stage of the project will involve the appointment of expert staff to carry out much-needed research.

“Staff will be required to develop online educational training programs for paramedics in evidence-based best practice and research project design,” Mr Della Bosca said.

Research questions to be investigated at the Institute include:

- Community needs and expectations, to help Ambulance plan for the future;
- Ambulance clinical practice including the areas of cardiac care, paediatrics, serious trauma, chronic disease, stroke, falls and mental health;
- Medical retrieval, including the safe transfer of critical care, mental health and obese patients, and including vehicles and equipment;
- Systems research including Ambulance performance compared to other states and countries; and
- Workforce and educational research including professional development opportunities for paramedics and volunteer staff.

“The Institute will establish a network of researchers and associates built around established collaborations with academic and research units like The George Centre for International Health, the Centre for Injury Risk Management, University of New South Wales, the School of Public Health, University of Sydney, Charles Sturt University and many others,” Mr Della Bosca said.

“The funding has also been used to provide scholarships for nine paramedics to undertake an Honours program to equip them for a career in ambulance research.”

The scholarships, conducted through Charles Sturt University as part of their distance education programs, have been provided to paramedics in the following locations:

- Katoomba;
- Macksville;
- West Pennant Hills;
- Toormina, Mid North Coast;
- Tamworth;
- Modanville, Northern Rivers;
- Moruya;
- Northmead; and
- Fletcher, Newcastle

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“With Ambulance NSW experiencing over one million call-outs each year, our paramedics are extremely hard-working and play a vital role in supporting the health and well-being of our communities,” the Minister said.

“In the short time I have been Health Minister, I have visited a number of ambulance stations and met with many dedicated paramedics. I have been impressed with their professionalism and skills.

“But it is important we continue to improve our ambulance services where possible to ensure patients benefit from the best care possible.

“In 2007/08 an additional 233 trainee paramedics joined Ambulance NSW as part of the NSW Government’s \$340 million commitment to providing extra paramedics for frontline duty.

“It is these trainees and the rest of our paramedics who will benefit from the research – it will help them perform their jobs more effectively which in turn will improve patient care and safety,” Mr Della Bosca added.