



YEAR IN REVIEW

2019-2020

READY FOR ANYTHING SINCE 1895

YEAR IN REVIEW

2019-2020

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NSW Ambulance

JUL 2019

SWEP Program adds 208 paramedics and 12 control centre employees to the workforce

NOV 2019

Body Worn Camera Concept Trial starts

NOV 2019

40 Years of Women as Paramedics was celebrated throughout 2019 with an official luncheon in November

JAN 2020

Employee Connect launches to assist employees who need advice on any employment related matters

MAR 2020

Domestic Violence Referral Network is launched

AUG 2019

NSW Ambulance joined with the Aus-ROC consortium, the Australia and New Zealand-wide Epistry for cardiac arrest data

NOV 2019

Rollout of the Far West Radio Network upgrade begins delivering services to over 120,000 square kilometres of remote outback NSW

DEC 2019

A separate Bushfire State Incident Management team (IMT) is created in conjunction with the New Year's Eve State Event IMT

FEB 2020

NSW Ambulance partner with Pel-Air Aviation and secure a world-class fixed-wing future

MAR 2020

Medic Fit starts roll out with the aim to improve the health and fitness of our people

FOREWORD

THE PAST YEAR HAS BEEN LIKE FEW OTHERS IN OUR 125-YEAR HISTORY



Dr Dominic Morgan
ASM

Chief Executive,
NSW Ambulance

We've seen unprecedented drought, heatwaves, the worst bushfires in many years, floods, gales, hailstorms, and a worldwide pandemic. Throughout it all, NSW Ambulance has continued to provide high-quality mobile emergency care throughout NSW, with over 1.2 million responses and over 1 million Triple Zero (000) calls.

The impact of these challenges on our frontline employees and those who support them has been significant. The loss of life, destruction of property and the adverse health effects of air pollution caused by the Black Summer bushfires resulted in an increased demand for our services. In response, we established a State Ambulance Recovery Team that has worked continuously with fire-affected communities over six months to assist with rebuilding damaged infrastructure.

NSW Ambulance also responded comprehensively to the COVID-19 pandemic. Our contingency planning included bringing forward the training of 180 paramedics scheduled for Year 3 of the State-wide Workforce Enhancement Program and corresponding increases in our ambulance fleet, which helped ensure we were prepared for any potential increase in community demand for our services.

The safety of our frontline employees and our patients has been at the centre of our COVID-19 response. We implemented a number of new initiatives to provide our people with significant support throughout a challenging time, including increased clinical safety awareness campaigns and changes to clinical protocols. We also continued working to support the capacity and

resilience of all our employees, launching a Domestic Violence Referral Network and a Family Support Network, which provides information and resources to the families of our employees. We established Employee Connect, a centralised comprehensive model of customer service that connects employees and managers to the right services and ensures employees are provided one-on-one assistance with complex people-related matters.

This year, NSW Ambulance also secured the future of our fixed-wing aeromedical operations by establishing a new long-term contract with Pel-Air Aviation. Pel-Air will provide an initial fleet of five Beechcraft B350s entering service in 2021, and the potential for two Pilatus PC-24 jet aircraft to enter service in late 2023.

NSW Ambulance employees have responded with dedication and professionalism throughout all the challenges of the year and this ensured we could continue providing excellence in care to our patients and the people of NSW. Thank you to all our colleagues for always working together to provide care and support to the community.

Looking to the future, we will keep adapting to changes in society and technological developments by continuing our journey to be a modern and inclusive workplace. We will continue our work on reconciliation with our indigenous colleagues and communities. We will also continue to develop employee capability, enhance employee safety and wellness and ensure we provide the right care at the right time for the people of NSW.

MAR 2020

Public Health Unit (A-PHU) was established to ensure any public health risk for our employees was rapidly identified and addressed

MAR 2020

Review all clinical practice to ensure protection of clinicians and ensure positive patient outcomes as part of COVID-19 response

APR 2020

NSW Ambulance Cardiac Arrest Registry 2018 Report was published

APR 2020

NSW Ambulance had its 125th anniversary on 1 April. Celebrations were postponed due to COVID-19

MAY 2020

Family Support Network launches to provide support for the families of all our people

MAR 2020

NSW Ambulance partnered with NSW Health and My Emergency Doctor (MED) to introduce a Secondary Triage program for Residential Aged Care Facilities

MAR 2020

The COVID-19 State Incident Management team (IMT) is stood up

APR 2020

Employee Connect expands to include a 24/7 COVID-19 service

MAY 2020

Public Access Defibrillation (PAD) program is announced

JUN 2020

SWEP program rolls out 89 new ambulances including 35 intensive care ambulances as part of the COVID-19 response

ABOUT

NSW AMBULANCE

Since 1895, NSW Ambulance has provided ambulance services to the people of NSW. We are a multidisciplinary mobile health service providing safe, high quality, out of hospital clinical care with a state of the art fleet and well trained medical, paramedical and nursing staff with an impressive record of performance.

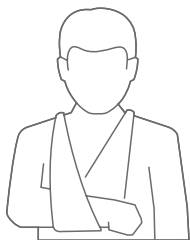
NSW Ambulance has more than 4,800 paramedics across more than 230 ambulance stations in NSW, providing the people of this state with essential health services and relieving suffering through out of hospital care. This includes traditional emergency response, providing assistance to patients with serious or life-threatening injuries or trauma as well as connecting patients who don't need an emergency responses, with the most appropriate health provider.

Across our five control centres, our people use sophisticated software to assess and prioritise all Triple Zero (000) calls and assign the most appropriate clinical resource.

The specialist multidisciplinary team in Aeromedical Operations provides coordination, response, treatment and transport for pre-hospital incidents, medical retrievals, long distance medical transports, search and rescue and major incidents.

Our Corporate employees support frontline employees in delivering healthcare to the NSW community by managing the day-to-day business operations and support of the organisation.

Together, we provide excellence in care to the community, ensuring patients get the right care, at the right time, in the right place.



Our patients

7.65 minutes Median response time to our most critical patients

1,217,659 Ambulance responses

736,379 Patients transported

10,453 Aeromedical responses

Our people

5,971 people work at NSW Ambulance

4,885 Paramedics

403 Control Centre staff

530 Corporate and Support staff

102 Doctors

51 Nurses

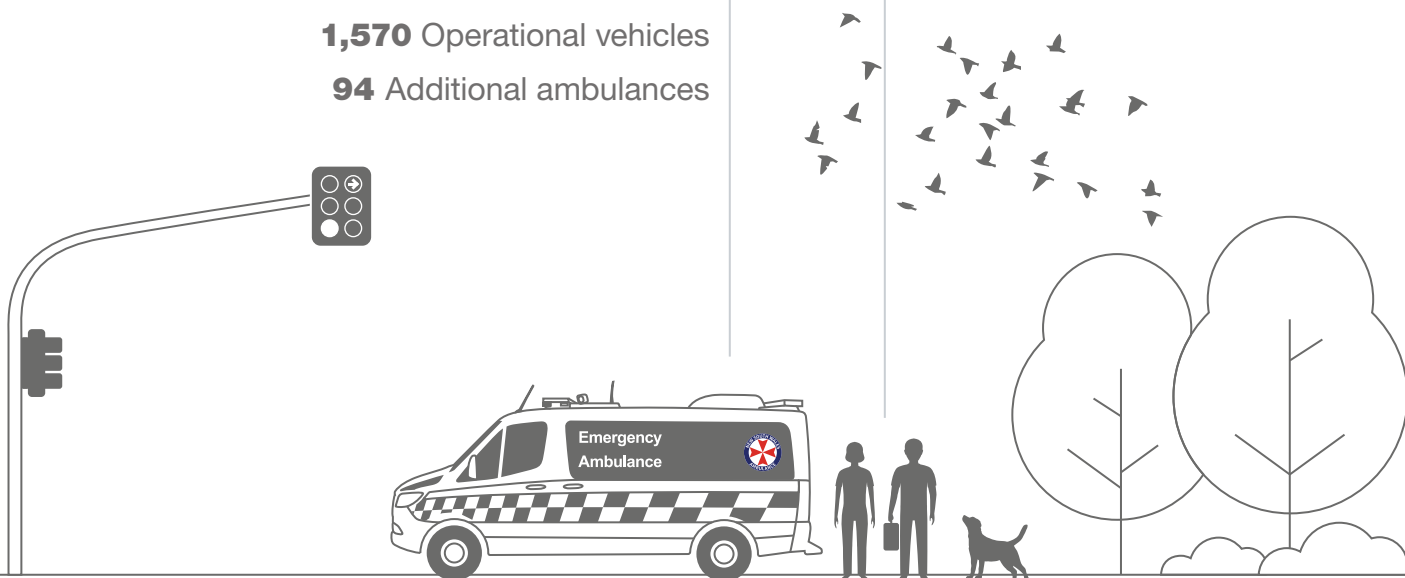
378 Clinical Volunteers

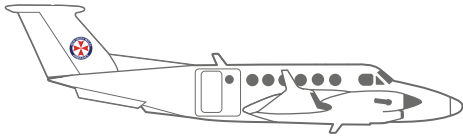
3 Therapy dogs

On road

1,570 Operational vehicles

94 Additional ambulances

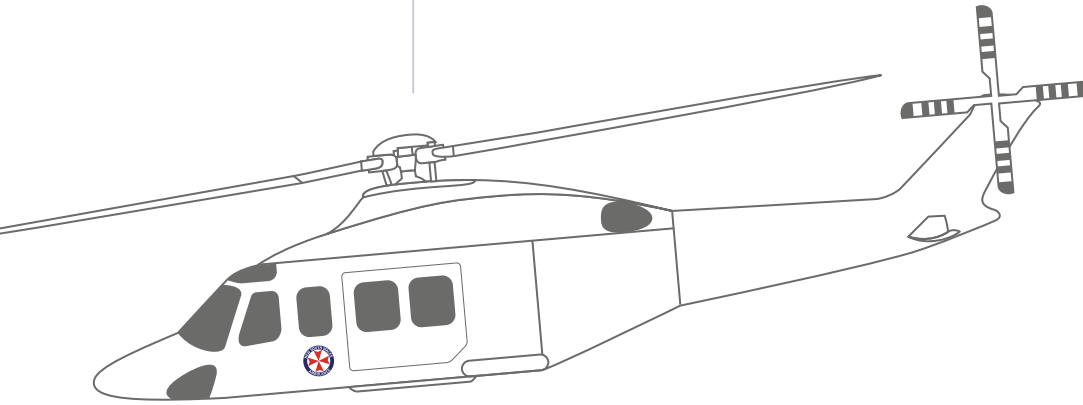




Aeromedical

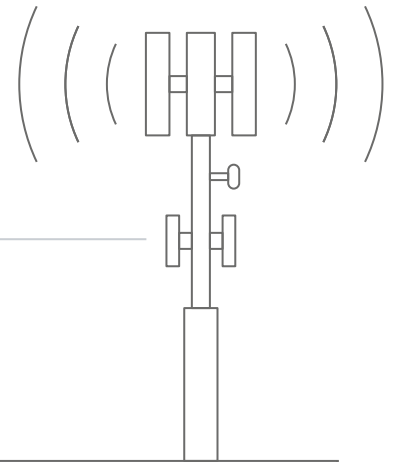
12 Helicopters

7 Fixed wing aircraft



Calls received

1,084,454 Triple Zero (000) and emergency service calls received



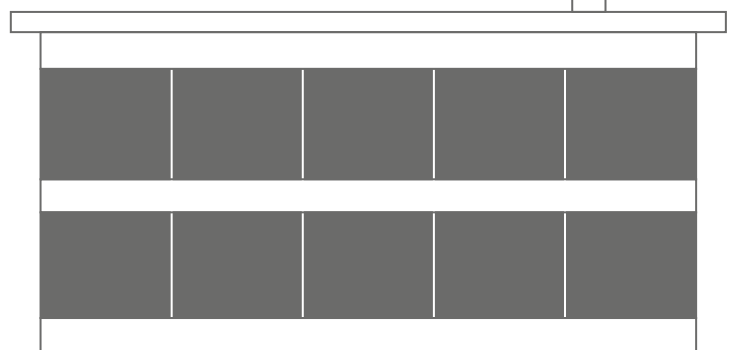
Stations

221 Operational ambulance stations

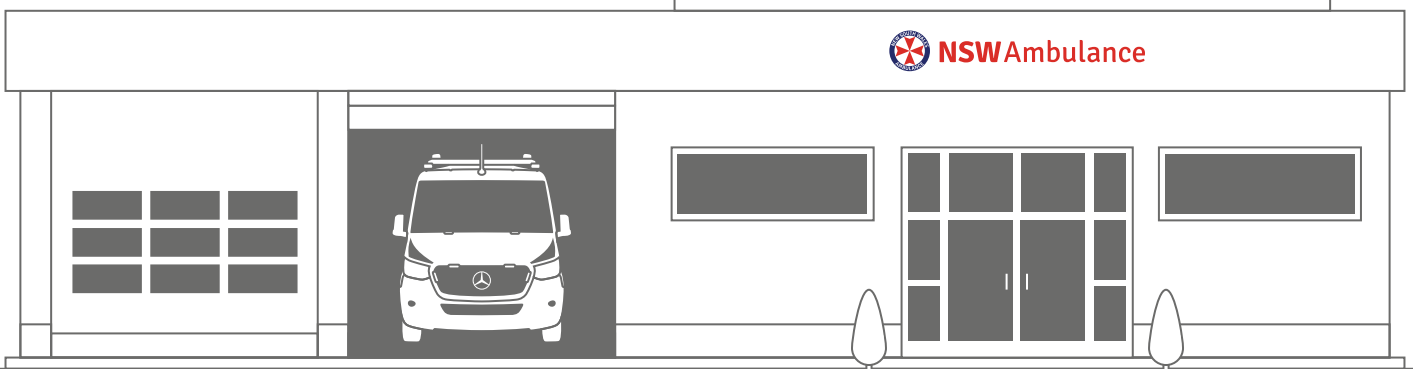
17 Paramedic Response Points

6 Ambulance stations were rebuilt

1 Additional ambulance station was built



NSW Ambulance



OUR PEOPLE

SUPPORTING OUR EMPLOYEES THROUGHOUT THEIR CAREER

At NSW Ambulance we are committed to supporting our employees throughout their career and recognise that our partnering in their health and wellbeing is a vital element of that support. Our goal is to be leaders in workplace health and trusted partners in the wellbeing of our people. This means supporting them both physically and psychologically in performing their role and giving them the tools to thrive outside of work.

The past year has provided a number of challenges for our people, particularly the bushfires and the onset of COVID-19. Now, more than ever, embedded support for our people is key in ensuring they continue to be able to be the best they can be in all aspects of their lives.



Chaplaincy Program

NSW Ambulance Chaplains are part of a multidisciplinary support team, available to our people to provide 24/7 post incident support and holistic care where needed. Chaplains are also available to support family members and bystanders at traumatic incidents.

In 2019-20, the NSW Ambulance Chaplaincy team was expanded to 8 Chaplain Team Leaders and 48 Chaplains across the state to allow this vital service to continue to provide support, particularly in light of the challenges our people and our communities have faced over the past year – bushfires, floods and the impact of COVID-19.

Throughout 2020, the cohort of NSW Ambulance Chaplains have volunteered on average almost 80 hours per week providing support.

From April to June 2020, Chaplains had 2,748 supportive conversations with employees and supported 159 community members. There were 115 workplace visits totalling over 1,000 total hours of support. The Chaplains were also critical in supporting the induction of the COVID-19 surge staff, providing 15 Chaplains over 20 days to support the incoming employees.

Between January and March 2020, our Chaplains had 1,866 supportive conversations with employees and supported 2,052 community members as a result of the bushfires. There were 141 station visits totalling 964 hours of service and we deployed 10 Chaplains to the bushfires over 11 days.

Family Support Network

In May 2020, NSW Ambulance launched the Family Support Network to provide information and guidance for the families of all our people regarding mental health and wellbeing. The launch included a Family Support Pack which was sent to the families of all our current employees. The Network provides information on where best to get advice if family members have any concerns. It provides them with important resources and tools which in turn helps them to better support their loved ones throughout their career at NSW Ambulance.

Employee Connect

In January 2020, NSW Ambulance launched Employee Connect to assist employees who need advice on employment related matters but aren't sure who to call. If one of our people feels that they aren't being heard or are falling through the cracks, they can contact Employee Connect for help.

In response to the need for current and consistent information related to COVID-19, in April 2020, Employee Connect expanded to provide a 24/7 service. There were 564 COVID-19 contacts in April 2020, 195 in May, 156 in June, 397 in July and 300 in August.

Since inception, over 2,000 calls have been fielded by the Employee Connect team including around 440 calls for non-COVID issues such as recruitment, leave entitlement, performance management and general advice.

State-wide Workforce Enhancement Program (SWEP)

In June 2018 the NSW Government's Budget included a record investment in NSW Ambulance of more than \$1 billion for 2018-19 and an unprecedented boost of 700 additional paramedics and 50 control centre employees over a four year period. The State-wide Workforce Enhancement Program (SWEP) has been bringing additional employees on board to help NSW Ambulance improve safety, reduce fatigue, and increase capacity to treat and transport patients in a timely manner.

Into its second year, SWEP has added 209 paramedics and 12 control centre employees to the workforce. Additionally, the training of 180 Year 3 SWEP recruits was brought forward as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Peer Support Program

The NSW Ambulance Peer Support Program is a state-wide support service available to all our people and volunteers. Peer Support Officers provide individual support following incidents and can refer employees to additional services including the Staff Psychology Service, the Employee Assistance and Psychological Services (EAPS) Program, Chaplaincy or other community based support.

In March 2020, NSW Ambulance inducted 21 Peer Support Officers from across the state, taking the total number to 226 with a further 28 Peer Support officers to be inducted later in 2020. In the 2019-20 recruitment round, 129 applications to join were received, showing just how popular the program is with our people.

Our goal is to be leaders in workplace health and trusted partners in the wellbeing of our people.

In March 2020, NSW Ambulance launched the Domestic Violence Referral Network.

Staff Psychology

First introduced in 2018 and developed in conjunction with the Black Dog Institute, the NSW Ambulance Staff Psychology Service has expanded to 10 senior psychologists based across the state. The in-house service provides evidence-based mental health and wellbeing counselling, post incident support and a range of mental wellbeing initiatives.

The service has delivered 10 Mental Health and Suicide Awareness Training Programs for managers and delivers the opt-in Well Check initiative (as part of the Wellbeing Workshops). During 2019-20, there were 177 Well Checks completed for staff.

Wellbeing Workshops

NSW Ambulance has introduced a three day workshop focussing on mental and physical wellbeing and occupational violence prevention which is available to all our people and is provided as part of the induction for new operational employees.

Each workshop is split into the themes of Well@Work, Safe@Work and Protected@Work. Prior to COVID-19, the face-to-face workshops were held weekly in Sydney and scheduled through regional NSW. New operational employees attended the workshops as part of their induction.

The workshops provide our people with effective strategies and skills that enhance health, safety, self-awareness and quality of life. They are evidence based and have been developed in consultation with employees, unions and industry specialists.

To date, over 3,600 employees have completed the workshop. This includes 1,811 employees who completed the workshop in 2019-20.

Domestic Violence Referral Network

In March 2020, NSW Ambulance launched the Domestic Violence Referral Network. Domestic and family violence resources and support have been developed and made available for all our people. Domestic Violence Referral Officers are being recruited, trained and supported to provide confidential advice and support for any employee who discloses domestic or family violence and a 24/7 specialist domestic violence service has also been established.



Medic Fit

The Medic Fit program aims to improve the health and fitness of our people. It has been designed to provide exercise equipment and expert professional guidance for employees to participate in targeted exercise in the workplace. Although delayed due to COVID-19 restrictions, NSW Ambulance has been able to successfully introduce the program which involves low-intensity, low-risk exercise sequences developed to help everyone make the most of the equipment. The program consists of a bespoke program guide, videos and telehealth capacities, which makes it unique in emergency services.

NSW Ambulance Legacy

Over the past 12 months over 60 new members joined NSW Ambulance Legacy, a program established to provide ongoing opportunities for retired employees to celebrate the strong bonds forged over the course of their careers and stay connected with each other. Legacy has a dedicated Coordinator and provides updated and relevant information to former employees, with member update emails and subscription to our employee magazine, Sirens. Legacy has a dedicated Facebook page for active engagement which further promotes social connections. Peer Support and Chaplaincy services are also extended to Legacy members and their families.



Body Worn Cameras

In November 2019, NSW Ambulance implemented the Body Worn Camera Concept Trial in a bid to address occupational violence and improve paramedic safety. An advertising campaign titled 'It's Never OK' was also launched to raise awareness of the issue within the community. The Body Worn Cameras were trialled on a voluntary basis with volunteers across three locations – Sydney Ambulance Centre in Eveleigh, Liverpool Superstation and Hamilton Station.

So far, body worn cameras have captured and categorised 145 incidents with 10% assaults, 17% occupational violence and 73% potential threats. Paramedics have also reported that the activation of body worn cameras is contributing to the de-escalation of potential threats.

Body worn camera footage has been utilised in the successful prosecution of a person from the Hunter New England region who intimidated paramedics and interfered with an ambulance vehicle.



OUR INFRASTRUCTURE

METRO, RURAL AND REGIONAL RESOURCES FOR NSW

NSW Ambulance has more than 230 stations across metro, rural and regional NSW and has been working with NSW Health Infrastructure to provide upgraded or new, purpose-built ambulance stations. We have also upgraded our communication systems and ambulance fleet to ensure we can provide the best possible care to the community.

Rural Ambulance Infrastructure Reconfiguration (RAIR) program

The RAIR program is the single largest investment in regional infrastructure in NSW Ambulance's 125-year history, with 24 locations across the state benefiting from an upgraded, rebuilt or entirely new ambulance station.

In 2019-20, eight stations became operational including Pottsville, Bungendore, Yass, Rutherford, Grenfell, Cowra, Goulburn and Birmingham Gardens. Construction also commenced for Cootamundra and Sawtell sites and planning has commenced for the final site at Iluka.

Sydney Ambulance Metropolitan Infrastructure Strategy (SAMIS)

The SAMIS program is reshaping NSW Ambulance's operations in metropolitan Sydney, transforming the majority of the 43 existing metropolitan ambulance stations into a network of NSW Ambulance superstations, supported by smaller, standby stations called Paramedic Response Points.

This new operational model, called the Paramedic Response Network, is designed to ensure NSW Ambulance's highly-trained paramedics deliver the right care to the right patient in the right way at the right time, every time.

In 2019-20, construction commenced on a superstation at Randwick and a traditional station at Mona Vale, and planning commenced for Central Sydney Ambulance Station, and Holroyd Paramedic Response Point. These sites, once operational, will enhance the nine superstations; Artarmon, Bankstown, Blacktown, Caringbah, Haberfield, Kogarah, Liverpool, Northmead and Penrith, and six Paramedic Response Points; Cecil Hills, Kellyville, Quakers Hill, Roselands, Leppington and Mordial, already operational under the program.





Altogether, an extraordinary 89 new ambulances were rolled out by the end of June 2020.

Ambulance fleet

NSW Ambulance brought forward the build of 49 additional ambulances under the State-wide Workforce Enhancement Program (SWEP) which were planned for years 3 and 4 of the program. Another 40 ambulances were also built specifically to increase our capacity under COVID-19, including 35 intensive care ambulances. Altogether, an extraordinary 89 additional ambulances were rolled out by the end of June 2020.

Throughout the year NSW Ambulance has continued to invest in providing its people with the best tools and work environment possible to enable them to deliver the highest level of service to the communities in which they operate. During drought, bushfires, floods and the COVID-19 pandemic we have seen unprecedented demand for our services and our infrastructure has allowed us to respond effectively.

Far West Radio network

The Far West Radio Network represents the largest NSW Ambulance private radio network upgrade in almost 20 years. The Network supports our people in delivering services to over 120,000 square kilometres of remote outback NSW.

The project replaces the ageing analogue Broken Hill VHF network which has served NSW Ambulance well in the Far West of NSW, to a modern digital UHF radio network, funded by NSW Health at a cost of \$2.5 million. While it is not a direct replacement of the old network, it enhances existing functions to provide seamless coverage with better quality communications and safety features.



CLINICAL INNOVATIONS

LEADING IN CHANGE AND EXCELLENCE

NSW Ambulance is increasingly a leader in change and innovation. Throughout 2019-20, we have remained committed to improving the survival rate of Out of Hospital Cardiac Arrest (OHCA) through the implementation of a number of innovative programs.

While COVID-19 has brought unprecedented challenges to NSW Ambulance, it has also provided an extraordinary opportunity to review and improve our model of care and decrease avoidable hospital transfers from Residential Aged Care Facilities (RACFs).

Public Access Defibrillation (PAD) Program

In May 2020, NSW Ambulance announced the Public Access Defibrillation (PAD) program in partnership with other emergency service organisations to give all members of the community the best possible opportunity of surviving an OHCA. In a cardiac arrest, the time taken to commence CPR or receive a shock from an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) significantly impacts the chances of survival.

This PAD program aims to utilise the AEDs and trained first aid personnel available through partner emergency services where they are the closest available AED resource. NSW Ambulance will always send paramedics first.

A NSW Ambulance Emergency Service Organisations PAD Advisory Group has been established under the NSW Board of Commissioners to support a collaborative approach, implementing early initiation of CPR and use of an AED.



Cardiac Arrest Registry

The NSW Ambulance Cardiac Arrest Registry measures the incidence and survival rates of OHCA in NSW and enables NSW Ambulance to monitor the appropriateness and effectiveness of treatments, identify opportunities for improving survival rates and evaluate newly adopted interventions.

In August 2019 NSW Ambulance joined with the Aus-ROC consortium, the Australia and New Zealand-wide Epistry for cardiac arrest data and received ethics approval to link the Registry to NSW admitted patient and death data. This allows benchmarking of performance against similar organisations in Australia and New Zealand to increase understanding of the intra-regional, ambulance service and treatment factors that are associated with improved OHCA outcomes.

In April 2020, the full NSW Ambulance Cardiac Arrest Registry 2018 Report was published.

Alternate care pathways

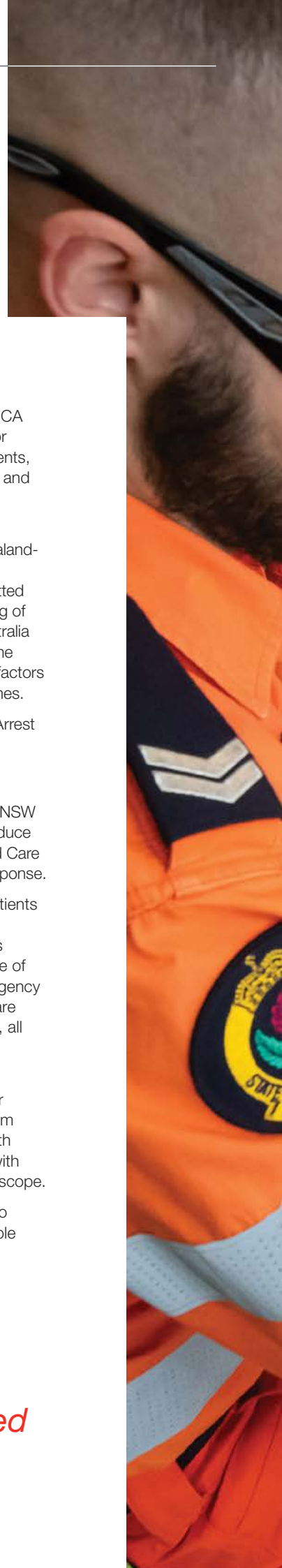
In March 2020, NSW Ambulance partnered with NSW Health and My Emergency Doctor (MED) to introduce a Secondary Triage program for Residential Aged Care Facilities (RACFs) who request an ambulance response.

The program focuses on enabling vulnerable patients who are residents of RACFs to receive safe and appropriate care in their place of residence. This model of secondary triage reduces the incidence of avoidable hospital admission by providing emergency medical care, assessment and management; care navigation and linkage with community services, all through telehealth.

This was initially implemented with a focus on COVID-19 and flu-like symptoms. However, after early evaluation and initial successes, the program was rapidly expanded to include a range of health complaints. The program continues to expand with increasing numbers and further development of scope.

NSW Ambulance will continue to look for ways to deliver new and innovative programs to the people of NSW to improve health outcomes across the communities in which we work.

While COVID-19 has brought unprecedented challenges to NSW Ambulance, it has also provided an extraordinary opportunity...





AEROMEDICAL OPERATIONS

CARE FROM THE AIR

NSW Ambulance has the largest aeromedical operation in the southern hemisphere, with a fleet of 12 helicopters, seven fixed wing aircraft and eight retrieval ambulances operating out of 10 bases across the state (seven helicopter bases and three fixed wing bases). The State-wide Retrieval network is staffed by a multi-disciplinary team of critical care doctors, critical care paramedics and dual-qualified critical care nurse midwives.

Aeromedical Operations face unique challenges when providing critical care to patients across a range of scenarios; from pre-hospital incidents, major incidents, remote area access and search and rescue operations, to critical care retrievals and long distance medical transports. Missions can last anywhere up to 10 hours, working across road, helicopter, fixed wing and marine environments, in difficult circumstances and in challenging weather.

Aeromedical Operations places specific focus on our culture of continuous learning and development; learning everything possible from every mission, and applying these lessons to the training environment and to the next mission.

Pandemic response

COVID-19 required a rapid and ongoing review across Aeromedical Operations, with the development of retrieval specific protocols and systems of providing critical care for suspected or confirmed COVID-19 infected patients. This included the activation of an Aeromedical Incident Management Team, reporting into the State Incident Management Team; regular videoconference sessions to discuss and disseminate

our approach; the introduction of personal protective equipment specific to aeromedical needs; extra donning and doffing training; assessing high-risk procedures, developing new checklists and team-based simulation training, all designed to help us be better prepared to meet the challenge.

A world-class fixed-wing future

Fixed-wing aeromedical services in NSW support our emergency and non-emergency operations. They deliver critical care to patients wherever they are in the state and transport patients to specialist care from regional and remote hospitals.

Following a highly competitive tender process, we are partnering with Pel-Air Aviation (Pel-Air) to deliver world-class fixed-wing aeromedical services from January 2022. The Pel-Air partnership is for 10 years.

From 1 January 2022, Pel-Air will provide five new Beechcraft B350 heavyweight twin propeller aircraft.

Pel-Air and NSW Ambulance are currently undertaking a programme of work to develop and test a fit-for-purpose aeromedical fitout for the Pilatus PC-24 twin jet aircraft with the intention of introducing two new PC-24 jets into the fleet from late 2023.

The proposed introduction of jet aircraft able to meet NSW Ambulance scope of operations will bring a significant enhancement to aeromedical services across NSW. It will improve access to our regional and remote patients, substantially reducing transport times to longer range destinations such as Broken Hill and Lord Howe Island.



Artists impression of the Pilatus PC-24 twin jet aircraft due to join the fleet from late 2023



International Recognition

In 2019, NSW Ambulance was announced as the winner of the Helicopter Association International's (HAI) Salute to Excellence Golden Hour Award. The award recognises the efforts of the work NSW Ambulance has done in the aeromedicine space. HAI's Salute to Excellence Award was presented at a luncheon at HAI HELI-EXPO 2020 in Anaheim, California, in the U.S. The then Acting Executive Director of Aeromedical, Dr Sarah Coombes, attended the event on behalf of NSW Ambulance.

The NSW Ambulance Aeromedical team are a highly motivated and capable group of people who provide an exceptional level of care to the people of NSW. The rapid adjustments adapted by the team during COVID-19 and the delivery of the new aircraft will enable them to take patient care to a new level, making sure they are well placed to face all the challenges that may come their way in the future.

Aeromedical Operations places specific focus on learning everything possible from every mission, and applying these lessons going forward.

READY FOR ANYTHING

NSW AMBULANCE IS ONE OF THE BUSIEST SERVICES IN THE WORLD



We respond to a call for help every 26 seconds, across an area of more than 800,000 square kilometres. This translates to medical services for around one in six people in NSW, or over 1.2 million responses annually. Over the past 12 months, we have continued to provide excellence in care to the community throughout unprecedented challenges including the worst bushfire season on record and a global pandemic.

Our bushfire response

The NSW Black Summer fires of 2019-20 are remembered as the most damaging bushfire season in Australian history. The catastrophic intensity of fires burning from one end of the state to the other, killed 26 people including six firefighters and more than one billion animals. The fires destroyed 2,476 homes and 5.5 million hectares of land, 37% of which was national parkland. The bushfire crisis was officially over on 2 March 2020 with no fires in NSW for the first time since 1 July 2019.

NSW Ambulance responded to three State of Emergencies during this time. The loss of life, destruction of property and the adverse health

effects of air pollution significantly affected our people on the frontline and resulted in an increased demand for our services.

With power outages, community evacuations and road closures, our Control Centre employees experienced significant logistical challenges in getting resources to fire-affected communities while also ensuring the safety of our paramedics on the ground.

State Ambulance Recovery Team

In January, NSW Ambulance established a State Ambulance Recovery Team, led by Executive Director Kalena Smitham, to work continuously with fire-affected communities to assist with rebuilding damaged infrastructure, gather and analyse lessons learned.

The goal of this team was to proactively manage recovery for NSW Ambulance across the state. The team met weekly throughout January and continued to meet as the bushfire threat reduced and a greater focus on recovery efforts began.

As an adjunct to recovery efforts, feedback was actively sought from employees and regional areas were visited by Peer Support Officers, Chaplains and Executive Management.

The bushfire crisis was officially over on 2 March 2020 with no fires in NSW for the first time since 1 July 2019.





The first Australian COVID-19 death was recorded in NSW in the same week the bushfire crisis was declared over.

Our COVID-19 response

While Australian health authorities had been closely watching the emergence of a highly contagious new virus in many parts of the world for almost two months, the first Australian COVID-19 death was recorded in NSW in the same week the bushfire crisis was declared over.

Along with many other organisations, NSW Ambulance felt the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and implemented a number of concurrent strategies to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our employees, volunteers and patients remained a priority throughout our pandemic response.

Public Health Unit established

The Ambulance Public Health Unit (A-PHU) was established in March 2020 to ensure that any public health risk for our employees was rapidly identified and addressed.

This included ensuring that all clinical contact with any potential COVID-19 positive patient was identified and employees were provided with early support and advice.

The A-PHU is responsible for:

- Contacting impacted employees who have treated a positive COVID-19 patient to offer support, advice and direction
- Liaising with the Employee Connect team to ensure ongoing welfare support and care for our employees
- Assisting the State Incident Management Team to respond to COVID-19 Public Health enquiries
- Developing documentation to assist with understanding the COVID-19 pandemic and its potential impacts
- Offering advice to employees requiring information about COVID-19
- Liaising with Local Health District Public Health Units and surveillance teams to discuss potential risks and issues around the state

The A-PHU has been in contact with over 1,000 employees regarding queries about COVID-19.



Workforce surge

NSW Ambulance maintained a high level of preparedness and response to the evolving COVID-19 pandemic event. This preparedness extended to ensuring the ability of NSW Ambulance to surge its response capacity in the event of a significant increase in community demand.

- There were 70 permanent appointments completing graduate internship via the Ambulance Education Centre as part of the 2019-20 schedule.
- The Ambulance Education Centre normally inducts 30-35 graduate trainees at a time but in April 2020, the induction program was modified to support a large intake and 180 permanent appointments from the 2020-21 State-wide Workforce Enhancement Program (SWEP) were brought forward.
- A short term casual workforce was established, with the intention to only be deployed if necessary if NSW Ambulance experienced a major surge in demand due the COVID-19 pandemic. 250 third year paramedic students were recruited into an induction program as Casual Trainees.
- Over 30 casual call-takers joined the frontline to ensure we could respond to any increase in Triple Zero (000) calls.
- In May 2020, a record-breaking 426 new recruits graduated – the largest NSW Ambulance intake in Australian history.

In May 2020, a record-breaking 426 new recruits graduated – the largest Ambulance intake in Australian history.



IN THE COMMUNITY

PROMOTING HEALTH AND WELLBEING FOR THE PEOPLE OF NSW

NSW Ambulance works with community groups to develop partnerships and deliver relevant programs to promote health and wellbeing in our community. Through the development of strong relationships, we work with our partners to offer support and education where it is needed.

Our 'Heart Yarns' program utilises our strong relationship with Aboriginal communities and organisations to help Indigenous Australians with appropriate healthcare advice and education using the cultural tradition of storytelling. We are also proud to be part of Restart a Heart Day, a global initiative to raise awareness and provide education on the importance of CPR in sudden cardiac arrest.

Appreciation Day is another opportunity we use to recognise and express our gratitude for community members who have helped us serve the people of NSW.

Throughout regional, rural and remote NSW, we train and educate a number of Clinical Volunteers to help build the resilience of small communities and ensure the delay between a person calling for help and receiving initial care is minimised.

In the past year, NSW Ambulance celebrated two significant milestones. We acknowledged 40 years of the contribution made by women as paramedics and we reached our 125th anniversary of providing high-quality and compassionate medical care across NSW.





Clinical Volunteers

NSW Ambulance operates a number of Clinical Volunteer responder models across metropolitan, regional, rural and remote NSW in areas of identified need. These programs are an important part of building the resilience of small communities and ensuring the delay between a person calling for help and receiving initial care from clinically skilled responders until paramedics arrive is minimised. This leads to improved patient outcomes.

2020 has been an unprecedented year for our people, including our Clinical Volunteers. Challenges were shared with a focused importance on engagement and using education as a driving force for instilling clinical confidence and ensuring safety across the state for Clinical Volunteers. The Clinical Volunteer Induction program and regular Maintenance of Skills training were contextualised to ensure that our clinicians and patients were safe during the COVID-19 pandemic. Our Paramedic Facilitation team and host stations have been providing an added layer of support to the Clinical Volunteers and the community during this time which has been invaluable.

The work achieved in a dynamic and short timeframe has ensured our continued response of 380 clinically trained volunteer responders, dispersed across the state at 62 established unit locations.

Appreciation Day

Appreciation Day is a special day where NSW Ambulance expresses our gratitude to all our people and members of the community who have helped our employees serve the people of NSW. In October 2019 at Artarmon Superstation, NSW Ambulance said 'thank you' for the care our people provide to the community every day.

The day covers everyone: frontline paramedics to Triple Zero (000) call takers, dispatchers to doctors and nurses, plus corporate and administration employees. Each one makes a vital contribution to the care and wellbeing of patients and the community.

On the day, the NSW Health Minister's Bursary for Excellence Award was announced. This award acknowledges the professionalism, dedication and clinical skills of operational employees who tirelessly provide the highest quality of out-of-hospital emergency care to the community. There were six finalists and the winner was Inspector Jenny Potter, Zone Manager, Western Sydney.

2020 has been an unprecedented year for our people, including our Clinical Volunteers.



Improving Aboriginal Cardiac Health

NSW is home to 33 percent of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Indigenous Australians lag behind the rest of the Australian population in cardiovascular outcomes which is something that NSW Ambulance is trying to help address.

In 2019-20, building partnerships with a range of groups, including Aboriginal Medical Services and local elders from Aboriginal communities across NSW has been key to the growth of NSW Ambulance's Aboriginal Cardiac Education Program and the development of culturally safe healthcare advice and education for these communities.

The implementation of our 'Heart Yarns' program has been designed to educate and empower Indigenous communities in cardiac care and the importance of calling Triple Zero (000). The program is delivered by Mark Trebley, Community Educator and provides education on the key areas impacting the cardiac health of Indigenous communities including heart attack, stroke, diabetes, asthma and rheumatic heart disease. Mark uses the cultural tradition of storytelling or "yarns" to deliver an educational message.

In November 2019, Mark received the Providing High Quality Education Award at the 2019 NSW Premier's Awards in recognition of his work on the Aboriginal Cardiac Education Program.

Restart a Heart Day

Restart a Heart Day is held internationally every year in October, a global initiative to raise awareness and provide education on the importance of CPR in sudden cardiac arrest. Restart a Heart Day also celebrates the incredible efforts of bystanders and professional responders in the community and highlights the amazing outcomes that can be achieved. Restart a Heart Day is coordinated in Australia and New Zealand by the Council of Ambulance Authorities.

In 2019, NSW Ambulance participated in a number of activities across the state including teaching school students on the importance of CPR in sudden cardiac arrest and also how to perform basic life support skills. NSW Ambulance employees delivered a back-to-back event and media campaign that reached over 1 million people across NSW. Over three days, NSW Ambulance paramedics delivered a CPR focused education program to 25,000 high school children. Worldwide, Restart a Heart Day events in 2019 resulted in over 800,000 people being trained in CPR.

Safety Summit

Nearly 400 people from across NSW Ambulance and other emergency services attended our Safety Summit in July 2019. Attendees heard from a range of speakers about safety in the workforce. An important part of the day was the input provided by attendees to shape our Safety & Recovery Strategy.





125 Year Anniversary of NSW Ambulance

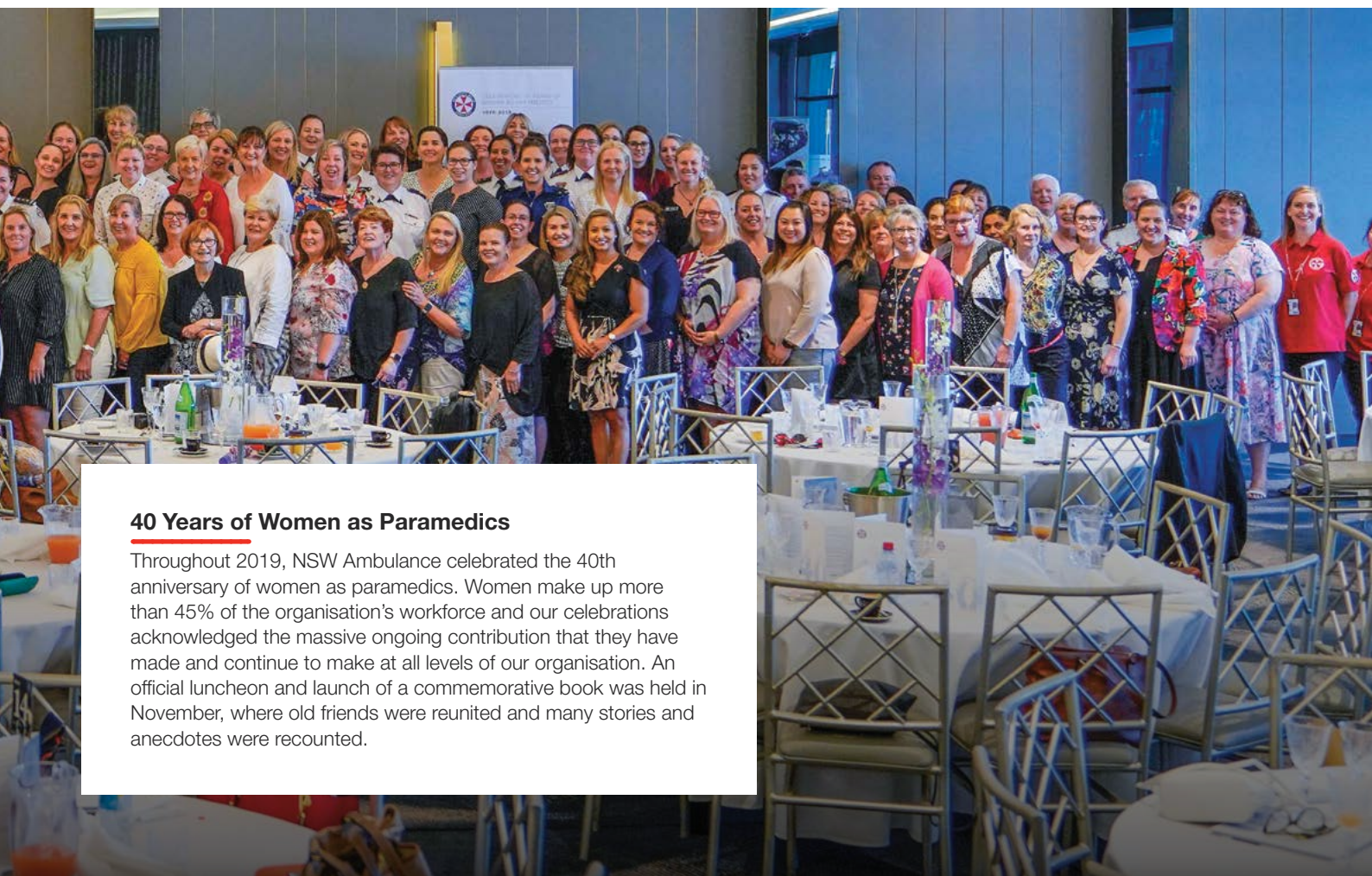
While formal celebrations were postponed due to COVID-19 restrictions, NSW Ambulance had its 125th anniversary in April 2020.

For 125 years, the exceptional men and women of NSW Ambulance have provided high-quality and compassionate emergency medical care to patients throughout the state. The courage and compassion shown by our first-responders and those who support them has been the backbone of our organisation throughout the years.

To celebrate this extraordinary milestone, a commemorative book will be launched at a special 125-year-themed graduation ceremony to be held in November 2020.

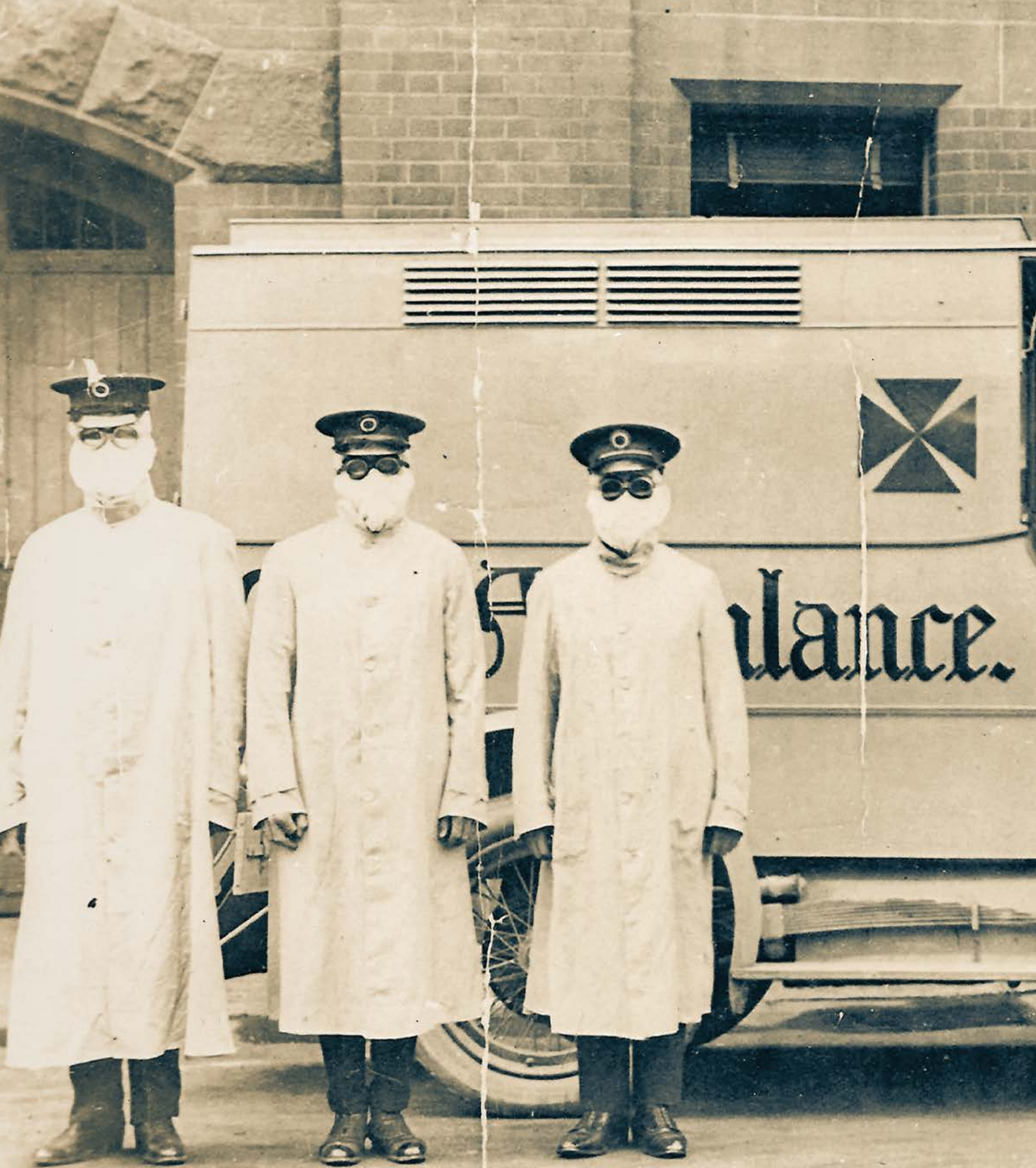
Graduation Day

On 13 December 2019 we held one of the highlights of the year, the NSW Ambulance Graduation and Awards Ceremony. At the City Recital Hall in Sydney's CBD, a record-breaking 548 paramedics, Triple Zero (000) call-takers, dispatchers, intensive care or extended care paramedics, flight nurses and others were welcomed into NSW Ambulance as they received their qualifications, watched on by proud families, loved ones and colleagues.



40 Years of Women as Paramedics

Throughout 2019, NSW Ambulance celebrated the 40th anniversary of women as paramedics. Women make up more than 45% of the organisation's workforce and our celebrations acknowledged the massive ongoing contribution that they have made and continue to make at all levels of our organisation. An official luncheon and launch of a commemorative book was held in November, where old friends were reunited and many stories and anecdotes were recounted.



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