



2022-2023 Year in Review



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Acknowledgement of Country

NSW Ambulance acknowledge the First Nations people of the lands where we work and live. We celebrate the diversity of First Nations people and their ongoing cultures and connections to the lands and waters of NSW.

Foreword

Stories of compassion and courage mark a year of supporting our communities and building a better future

As we reflect on our past year's achievements and challenges it becomes clear that our dedicated team of clinicians and support staff at NSW Ambulance have worked tirelessly to provide exceptional care to our communities.

In the pages that follow, you will discover stories of compassion and courage, and some remarkable efforts of dedication and resilience. You will learn a little more about some of the innovative advancements in our services, such as cardiac arrest pre-care and remotely piloted aerial systems, as we continue to push the boundaries of what is possible in emergency health care.

Boosting our resources and capabilities

An uplift in our capabilities and resources has been key. We have welcomed more than 573 staff, along with retaining 338 additional paramedics originally funded as COVID surge.

Coming together in challenging times

This year has been one of much success, peppered with some extreme sadness and challenging situations. In the face of the Greta bus tragedy, we witnessed the strength, depth, and unwavering professionalism of our first responders. Ninety-five people from NSW Ambulance rushed to the scene to carry out their duties, in the darkest of hours, for those in urgent need of their compassionate care.

Severe weather events dominated the news once again. Widespread flooding saw our workforce collaborating for impact, as we worked alongside other agencies to carry out challenging rescues in flood-affected areas across the state.

The devastating loss of one of our own, Paramedic Steven Tougher, who exemplified our mission of excellence in care. We cherish all that he stood for; his courage and kindness, his commitment to duty, his ability to connect with people.



A positive and supportive workplace

The wellbeing of our staff is, and will remain, a priority. We completed our Wellbeing Workshop program to enhance the physical, mental, and emotional health of our workforce, with 94 per cent of eligible employees attending.

In line with our culture of continuous improvement, our training and self-directed learning programs remain popular.

As we reflect on a year filled with great results, I hope you enjoy this report and I look forward to what the future holds in making a difference in the lives of those we serve.

Dr Dominic Morgan ASM
Chief Executive, NSW Ambulance





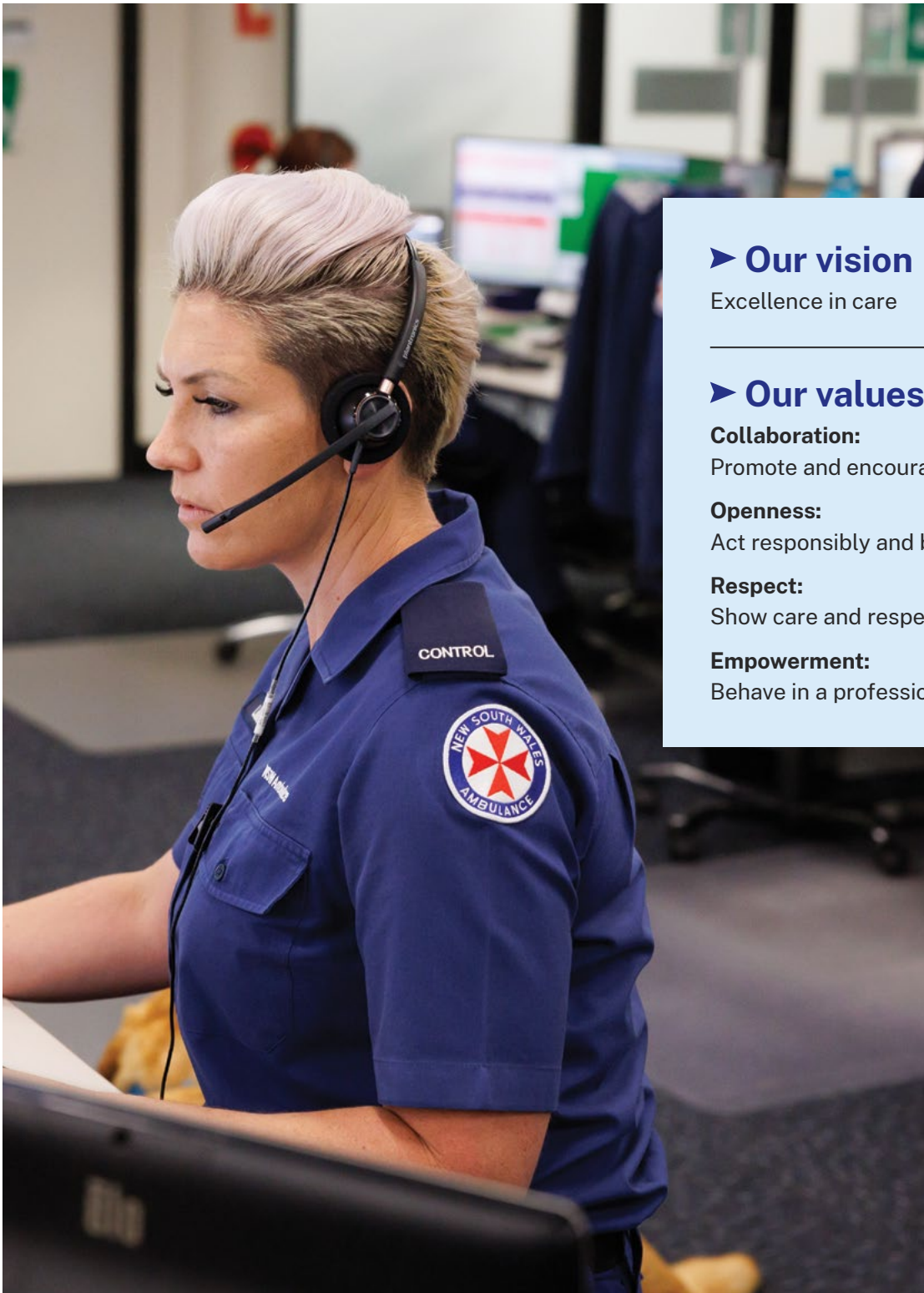
EXTENDED
CARE
PARAMEDIC



About NSW Ambulance

NSW Ambulance provides essential emergency and mobile health services to the people of New South Wales.

We ensure patients get the right care, at the right time, at the right place.



► **Our vision**

Excellence in care

► **Our values**

Collaboration:

Promote and encourage teamwork

Openness:

Act responsibly and be accountable

Respect:

Show care and respect

Empowerment:

Behave in a professional manner

NSW Ambulance at a glance



1,175,090

Triple Zero (000) calls received



1,382,550

responses, with a daily average of one response every 22.8 seconds



1,068,861

calls answered within 10 seconds



8.42

minute median response times to our most critical patients



91%

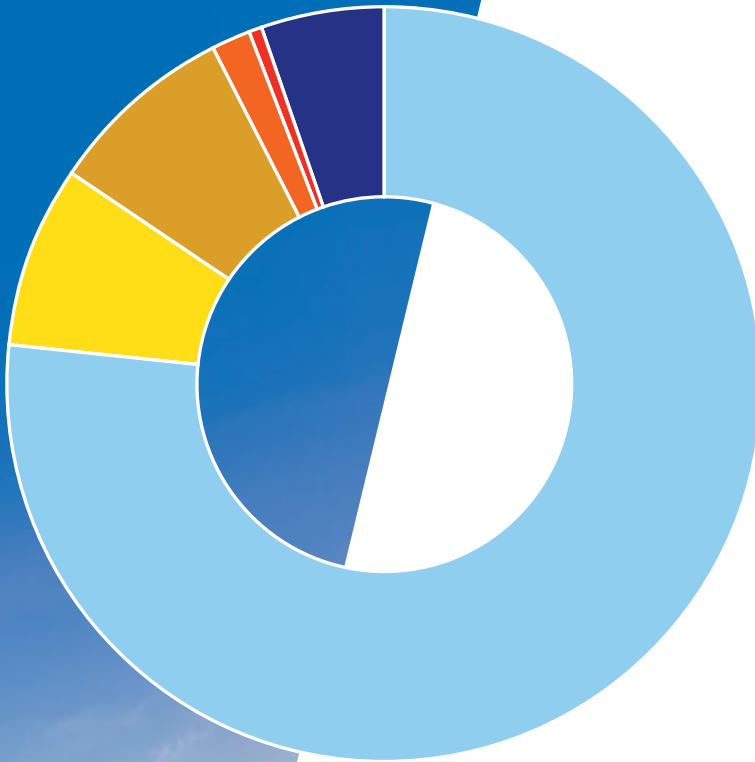
Grade of Service score – up 4% on previous year



774,264

patients transported





7,137

Employees

- 5,765 Paramedics
 - 601 Control staff
 - 592 Corporate and support staff
 - 119 Doctors
 - 60 Nurses
-
- Plus 378 clinical volunteers and 45 chaplains



239

Ambulance stations

- 2 new stations at Forster and Medowie
- 3 rebuilt stations at Casino, Tumut and Tamworth
- 25 major and eight minor refurbishments completed
- 9 Paramedic Response Points



1,241

Vehicles

- 1,023 standard ambulances
- 104 intensive care unit ambulances
- 43 extended care paramedic vehicles
- 71 other operational vehicles
- 46,689,527 km travelled



Resources and capabilities

The \$1.76 billion Strategic Workforce InFrastructure Team (SWIFT) is a four-year, once-in-a-generation program boosting and transforming NSW Ambulance frontline services. The program is delivering more than 1,800 new paramedics, 30 new ambulance stations and hundreds more ambulances to help save lives and provide critical emergency care across NSW.

Control Centre reform

Due to an expected increase in demand for NSW Ambulance services, this program commits to transforming control centre capabilities to ensure the delivery of safe and high-quality response performance. Extensive consultation and engagement with our people has been conducted to inform the design of solutions, including nine workshops with over 200 attendees.

Frontline Leadership Model

Our organisation is dedicated to reshaping how we lead and support our clinicians through the implementation of new roles and structures. We received over 800 feedback responses, which have played a crucial role in helping us shape and inform our new model.

Virtual Clinical Care Centre

The VCCC is a multi-disciplinary healthcare team consisting of paramedics, nurses, and doctors, dedicated to efficiently triaging non-emergency cases to alleviate pressure on paramedics, control centres, and hospitals. The VCCC is working to improve patient outcomes and experiences as we connect them with the most appropriate healthcare provider. This will improve the availability of emergency ambulance resources and emergency departments for the patients who need them most.

Fleet enhancement

Further reinforcing our commitment to providing efficient and high-quality emergency medical services, we added 90 new ambulances to our fleet.



Optimise emergency response times



Create long-term value, and improve patient experiences



Enhance growth, wellbeing and safety of staff

Recruitment

An uplift in our capabilities and resources has been key. We have welcomed more than 573 staff, along with retaining 338 additional paramedics originally funded as COVID surge.

Infrastructure expansion

As part of our ongoing efforts to enhance accessibility and coverage, we announced 30 locations for new infrastructure. Land for the development of a North Sydney Station has been successfully acquired, further bolstering our infrastructure to better serve the community.



Our operations

At the forefront of operations, NSW Ambulance received 1,175,090 Triple Zero (000) calls in 2022-2023, with 1,068,861 calls answered within 10 seconds. Ninety-one per cent of calls were answered within our key performance indicator (KPI) timeframe.

The Virtual Clinical Care Centre (VCCC) is a tailored approach to connect patients with the most appropriate care provider to meet their immediate needs.

In addition to strengthening the VCCC with 40 new permanent positions, including 15 nurses, we continue to adopt virtual care models with a focus on aged care and mental health, and have commenced procurement for an integrated software solution for secondary triage.

NSW Ambulance responded to 1,382,550 incidents, representing an average of one response every 22.8 seconds, with a median response time of 8.42 minutes to our most critical patients.

Of these incidents, NSW Ambulance clinicians transported 774,264 patients to hospital.

We continued to collaborate closely with the NSW Ministry of Health and local health districts to optimise patient flow and distribution through state-wide oversight, and on local initiatives to support the referral of 87,764 patients to appropriate alternative care pathways.



Above: Virtual Clinical Care Centre (VCCC)

The NSW Ambulance Aeromedical and Special Operations team can face unique challenges with lengthy operations (of up to 10 hours) working across road, helicopter, fixed wing, remote area, and marine environments.

During the year the unit completed 14,136 missions, with a fleet of 12 helicopters, eight fixed wing aircraft and eight retrieval ambulances operating from nine bases. They also:

- coordinated 297,933 calls facilitating the triage, treatment and transfer of patients by the right resource, to the right location, in the right time frame and at the right risk level
- treated 9,690 patients, totalling 19,279 flying hours.

Our operations

Clinical volunteers

The state-wide clinical volunteers conference took place in Sydney in November 2022 – the first since 2018 due to bushfires, COVID-19 and other emergencies. Conference highlights included:

- the presentation of the Community Emergency Response Team vehicle to the Manildra crew
- five Commissioners' Citations for Service
- an impressive keynote presentation on teamwork by Dr Tom Evens.

We also completed a new set of clinical protocols and started a new induction training program for clinical volunteers. The NEXTGEN induction course allows participants to practice under supervision, with a gradual increase in their clinical scope of practice.

Control Centres

Grade of Service score

91%

↑ 4% on previous year

Grade of Service (GoS) is a key performance indicator for NSW Ambulance. It represents our commitment to patient safety. This year we have exceeded our target to answer all Triple Zero (000) calls within 10 seconds, 90 per cent of the time.

Our 2022-2023 GoS result of 91 per cent was a four per cent improvement on the previous financial year period.

We received 1,175,090 unique Triple Zero (000) calls for the financial year 2022-2023. This was a 2.17 per cent decrease on the previous year.

Our people have worked tirelessly to achieve this outstanding result. It's not just about those who answer calls. We also recognise the staff who are responsible for the processes and policies that ensure the next caller can

be answered as quickly as possible, even during periods of high demand.

This year we welcomed 194 new students into emergency medical call-taking induction classes.

Regional commitment to intensive care paramedics

This year a total of 45 intensive care paramedics completed their training and began service at regional locations. A further 158 paramedic positions will be converted to intensive care paramedic positions.

These specialist paramedics are senior clinical members of the on-road paramedic team, offering a significant boost to regional communities.

System-wide response to the Greta bus incident

The Greta bus incident in June 2023 was a tragic event that made national headlines, with multiple deaths and serious injuries. The crash prompted one of the largest incident responses by NSW Ambulance in recent years. In total:

- The NSW Ambulance response included four supervisors, five helicopters, 16 crews, two heavy ambulance rescue units, and a chaplain
- 36 patients were involved, including 10 who passed away and 26 who were transported to John Hunter, Maitland, Calvary Mater and Royal Prince Alfred Hospitals.

"The care we've coordinated in these extreme circumstances in collaboration with other services has been a lifeline for these communities, from the first response phase to the recovery phase. It has been a testament to the diligence and commitment of our clinicians and staff."

**State Operations Controller Assistant Commissioner
Wayne McKenna**





Severe weather events

NSW experienced several severe weather events, most notably widespread flooding, throughout the year. By November 2022 every inland river catchment was either full or flooded. Our people across the state worked hard to keep staff, patients and communities safe. This included:

- collaborating with other agencies to carry out challenging extrications
- working in incident management teams (IMTs) and emergency operations centres
- deploying additional paramedics and extended care paramedics to flood-affected areas across the state
- clinicians in the VCCC providing clinical assessment, care advice and on-going monitoring of patients who were inaccessible or experienced access related delays
- providing multiple surged helicopter deployments to support threatened or cut-off communities.

Many townships were impacted and some staff had to be flown in and out for their shifts to maintain service delivery in isolated communities. Forbes was cut off by flooding twice in a three-week period. Staff were provided on each side of the town to maintain service delivery and help with patient transport.

Eugowra flood response

In November 2022 there was an extraordinary flash flood in Eugowra in central western NSW. Phone towers were affected, making communications difficult. Five NSW Ambulance rescue helicopters were sent to support Western Division as part of a multi-agency response. It was coordinated via the Aeromedical Control Centre (ACC) and the Aeromedical Interagency Coordination Cell (AICC) in the NSW State Emergency Operations Centre (SEOC).

Our aircraft rescued numerous people from floodwater and rooftops and we provided one of our senior doctors to fill the role of medical commander at the Eugowra showgrounds staging area.

In a single day, NSW Ambulance rescue helicopters from Sydney, Wollongong, Orange and Canberra undertook 23 winch rescues of 35 patients.

COVID-19 Incident Management Team

The NSW Ambulance COVID-19 Incident Management Team (IMT) was disbanded on 30 September 2022. After 929 days, it was the longest sustained response campaign in NSW Ambulance history. During this time, 31 state incident controllers and 270 staff across 44 teams worked in the IMT.

Our operations

CREWs/Veritas

Several enhancements were made to our CREWs and Veritas operational workforce administrative platforms, including:

- automating and aggregating time and attendance data
- providing dispatchers with real-time staffing data, improving their ability to record and manage staff entitlements throughout a shift (such as meal breaks, extension of shift and callouts).

CREWs and Veritas continue to boost efficiency and reduce administration for our frontline staff by reducing the burden of what has historically been a manual and time-consuming processes.

Aeromedical Operations

Fixed-wing operations

Missions flown in the past year

4,385

6,010 patients transported

These missions are made possible by our specialists at the Aeromedical Control Centre, which include:

- state retrieval consultants (critical care doctors) and clinical coordinators (critical care nurses), who oversee and manage the clinical needs across the state
- rapid launch trauma coordinators who plan the helicopter missions
- aeromedical control centre officers who plan the fixed-wing missions.

The year's highlights included:

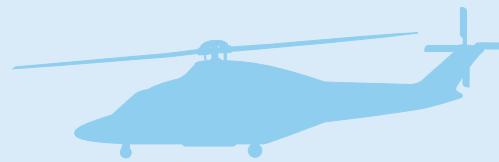
- starting to fit out two new Pilatus PC-24 jets due to begin operational service by mid-2024
- 97 ride alongs to support wider NSW Ambulance recruitment and training
- hosting student nurses on clinical placements
- welcoming four new flight nurses
- Fixed-wing and Aeromedical Control Centre staff completing mental health master classes to better support mental health patients.





Fixed-wing operations

11,544 flying hours
4,385 missions
6,010 patients
8 aircraft
3 bases
297,933 calls taken
20,413 bookings made



Helicopter operations

7,735 Toll and Westpac Rescue Helicopter flying hours
5,311 missions
3,680 patients
12 aircraft
6 bases
4,440 road retrieval missions
2,558 road retrieval patients
2 road retrieval ambulances at Bankstown base with dedicated road retrieval medical teams. One at each regional base

Left and below: One of the new Pilatus PC-24 jets undergoing internal medical fitout ahead of its service launch in 2024



Helicopter operations

Missions flown in the past year

5,311

3,680 patients transported

This year's highlights included:

- transporting nearly 4,000 patients from regional and remote areas, including from deep canyons and offshore ships to hospitals and specialty care providers
- involvement in a range of high-level transfers including intra-aortic balloon pump, Impella and ECMO (Extra-Corporeal Membrane Oxygenation) modalities
- completing nearly 200 intra-hospital transfers from remote referring centres across NSW
- commencing PRECARE – a world leading trial that brings a specialist doctor/paramedic team to provide pre-hospital ECMO to patients suffering an out-of-hospital cardiac arrest (OHCA)
- a continuing focus on a range of clinical governance and clinician-led on-shift training, including pre-hospital emergency anaesthesia, advanced airway management (flexible optical scopes), intra-aortic balloon pumps and vital in-situ simulations.

Our operations

Special Operations

The Special Operations Unit (SOU) is made up of 63 metropolitan trained special operations paramedics who are trained and equipped to safely access and treat patients in isolated, remote, or challenging environments outside the scope of regular ambulance operations.

In February, Türkiye suffered one of the most devastating earthquakes in its history. A 7.8 magnitude earthquake was recorded 15km off Elbistan. There were three large aftershocks (5.5 and 5.6 magnitude) within 85km of the epicentre. More than 100 smaller aftershocks were reported after that. The earthquake killed more than 55,000 people; another 6,000 people are believed to have been killed in neighbouring Syria.

Five of our SOU rescue paramedics and two aeromedical specialist doctors

volunteered to be part of an urban search-and-rescue mission. Our team spent 10 challenging days on the ground providing medical support to the AUS-2 Disaster Assistance Response Taskforce, as well as search and rescue who were involved in the recovery of both living and deceased people trapped in the rubble.

Further SOU deployments included:

- tactical medical support for NSW Police Tactical Operations Unit, Public Order and Riot Squad on specialist training courses and hallmark events
- guest of government medical support – NSW Police dignitary protection
- flood deployments to support SES in Singleton, Wagga, Forbes, Parkes
- fire deployments to support the Rural Fire Service in Dubbo, Hill End and Mudgee.



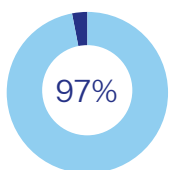


Patient experience

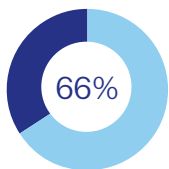
Two respected patient satisfaction surveys revealed that between 97 and 98 per cent of respondents had a positive patient care experience with NSW Ambulance in 2022-2023.

The Bureau of Health Information NSW Patient Survey Program and the Council of Ambulance Authorities (CAA) Patient Satisfaction Survey each showed an extremely high satisfaction rate among our patients.

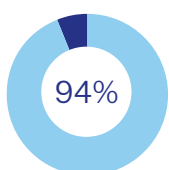
In the CAA survey, 3,000 questionnaires were sent to those who had interacted with NSW Ambulance over the past year. Respondents reported high levels of trust and confidence in our staff; said clear explanations of their condition and treatment were provided by paramedics; and that emergency call takers were helpful and reassuring, among other positive feedback.



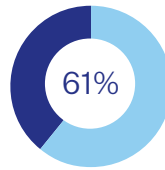
of respondents were satisfied with their most recent experience using NSW Ambulance



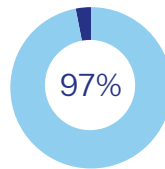
of respondents stated that they were connected to a call taker faster than they had expected



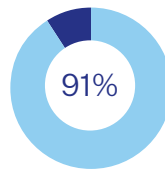
of respondents found the call taker to be helpful and reassuring



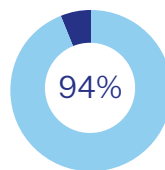
of respondents felt the length of time they waited for the ambulance to arrive was less than they thought it would be



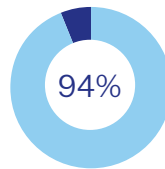
of respondents felt their overall experience of care was 'good' or 'very good'



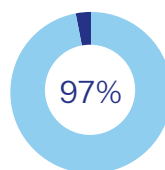
of respondents reported having high levels of trust and confidence in the ambulance staff



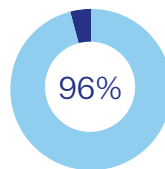
of patients said they experienced a 'very clear' or 'clear' explanation of their condition and reasons for treatment



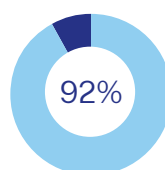
of respondents reported they were comfortable during their ambulance journey



of respondents felt they had enough time to discuss their concerns with the paramedics



of respondents were satisfied that the paramedics listened carefully to their views and concerns



of respondents reported effective management of their pain

Figures above from The Council of Ambulance Authorities (CAA) Patient Satisfaction Survey



Our people

Our innovative people and culture strategy supports an engaged, inclusive and high-performance workforce that is aligned with and supports NSW Ambulance’s strategic plans. Our people and culture directorate is focused on improving the employee experience across all areas of business.

Staff health

Movember sporting gala for men’s health

NSW Ambulance teamed up with NSW Police, Fire and Rescue NSW and the Australian Defence Force (ADF) to support Movember fundraising activities.

The Movember emergency services gala sporting day at Sydney’s Victoria Barracks highlighted the importance of mental health initiatives for first responder and defence personnel. This year we had a focus on mental health and suicide prevention.

Representatives from each agency shared their unique challenges, as well as their staff wellbeing initiatives. Fortem Australia and Fitness Passport also joined in to raise awareness around men’s health.

Stepping up for a challenge (or two)

Two organisation-wide step challenges were held in 2022-2023, with staff recording their steps and completing health checks on our Wellbeing Platform.

The 2022 Big Step Challenge saw 52 teams including 233 participants take part.

The 2023 Walk the Wonders step challenge attracted 75 teams, including 299 participants.

Each challenge provided a great opportunity to engage in a little friendly competition while improving our physical fitness.



Recruitment news

In line with feedback received in our People Matter employee survey, we commissioned a full and independent review of our recruitment practices to ensure we are consistent, transparent and fair. Our first step was to redesign the candidate assessment centre for a better user experience, with positive feedback so far.

Rostering and deployment

We have introduced two new initiatives as part of our state-wide rostering improvement project.

The NSW Ambulance Absence Coordination Line is a dedicated 24/7 service that takes short term absence calls. The team also co-ordinates the backfilling of shifts and staff movements to ensure we maintain service delivery.

A pilot program to centralise timesheet approvals, with additional system enhancements and improved processes, was introduced.

Our people

Wellbeing snapshot

Health and fitness	Total
Sessions with an injury prevention specialist	601
Sessions with the health coach	229
Vouchers for nicotine replacement therapy	20
Wellbeing Platform health checks	847
Staff Fitness Passport memberships	2,537
Family Fitness Passport memberships	4,426
Elder at risk sessions	80

Peer support program	Total
Instances of support provided to NSW staff and volunteers	1,639

Chaplains	Total
Staff and volunteers supported	1,854
Community members and other emergency service workers supported	169

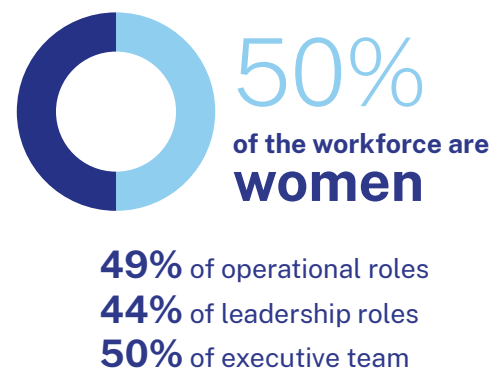
Staff psychology services	Total
Referrals for staff for psychology support	1,003
Referrals for staff for trauma support	1,065

Mental health and wellbeing	Total
Completion rate of online mental health literacy course on My Health Learning	83.6% average

External psychological services	Total
Referrals for staff	458
Referrals for family members	45
Trauma support for incidents	225



Diversity and inclusion



We strive to keep our workplace free from bullying and harassment through programs such as the Preventing and Managing Workplace Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination online program (completed by 92 per cent of staff) and Our Workplace Our Culture (completed by 73 per cent of staff).

NSW Ambulance remains committed to improving the diversity of the workforce. 2.9 per cent of staff identify as First Nations people. The Diversity and Inclusion team continue to promote NSW



Ambulance as the employer of choice for First Nations people and work to meet the Aboriginal employment strategy.

On top of this the team have been engaging with First Nations staff, building professional relationships and community connection. The first steps have been setting up Yarn Circles for our First Nations employees to have a safe space to share their questions and concerns, and to have open and honest conversations.

Women make up 50 per cent of the NSW Ambulance workforce, including 49 per cent of roles within the organisation's operational workforce. Women make up 44 per cent of all leadership roles (station officer and above, health service manager 1 and above). Of the six executive team members, three are women.

Celebrating WorldPride 2023

We were excited to be part of the colour, pride and diversity of the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras parade. It was also the very first WorldPride event in the southern hemisphere.

We were represented in the parade by 45 staff members, who did a fantastic job of displaying our accepting and positive culture.

Our paramedics and control centre staff from the State Planning Unit also carried out their operational responsibilities across the 17 days of the festival.

Diversity and inclusion in helicopter operations

We are working towards making our helicopter operations workforce more diverse and inclusive. Some highlights include:

- completing a full evidence-based review of our entry fitness assessment to ensure it is contemporary and gender neutral
- developing a flexible work practice framework
- updating our parental leave policy to be more inclusive of all staff groups.

Our people



NSW Ambulance Legacy

Legacy members

650

↑250 on previous year

NSW Ambulance Legacy offers social connection, information and support to more than 600 former staff and their families.

We had strong participation and engagement in our Legacy program this year with:

- 650 current members – 250 more than the previous year
- 500+ members of the Legacy Facebook group.

We returned to in-person activities for members, hosting 12 events across NSW, including visits to the Temora Ambulance Museum and the MV Coal Loader. We are still holding virtual meetings for members who live in remote locations or are unable to attend our in-person gatherings.

Learning and Development

>90%

accessed at least one learning and development resource

Our training and self-directed learning programs remain popular with staff, demonstrating our organisation-wide culture of continuous improvement. More than 90 per cent of our workforce accessed at least one learning and development resource this year. Nearly 500 people entered our Capable Leader Program, which offers development pathways for those aspiring to senior roles.

We also introduced the Ministry of Health's new Respecting the Difference training framework, part of the state-wide response to delivering clinically and culturally safe services for First Australians. So far, 863 staff have completed the training.

Above: Former Ambulance Riverina staff, family members and surviving relatives with certificates of service

Wellbeing Workshop

The Wellbeing Workshop is a development program designed to support the mental and physical health of NSW Ambulance staff. Participants learn simple yet powerful strategies and skills to use in daily life to enhance health, safety, self-awareness and wellbeing.

We rolled out our Wellbeing Workshop program over the course of 2022-2023, with some incredible feedback and outcomes:

- **6,520** staff completed workshops (94% of eligible employees)
- **211** workshops delivered across the state
- **77%** overall satisfaction rating
- **85%** reported significant/some change to wellbeing after the workshop
- **85%** were more confident using their professional judgement when it comes to being safe and well-protected at work
- **71%** are likely to engage with staff support services in the future
- **81%** are likely to report work health and safety issues.



Since launching the program:

- referrals to health coaching and injury prevention specialists have increased
- **2,408** staff are registered for the Fitness Passport program
- **1,907** family members enrolled in the Fitness Passport program – the most since launch
- **3,398** staff have completed health checks
- **2,388** staff are registered for the Wellbeing Platform
- **1,648** staff have completed a medic fit equipment induction.

New staff members are now completing the Wellbeing Workshop as part of their induction.





Education

This year we launched two new programs:

- The **Graduate Paramedic Internship** is a transition to practice program for new graduates commencing their career in paramedicine with NSW Ambulance. It ensures new graduates thrive as confident and capable clinicians
- The **Post-Employment Tertiary Program** is an employment-based pathway for entry into paramedicine. It provides a unique opportunity to people who always dreamed of becoming a paramedic but have not been able to complete the university qualification in the traditional way.

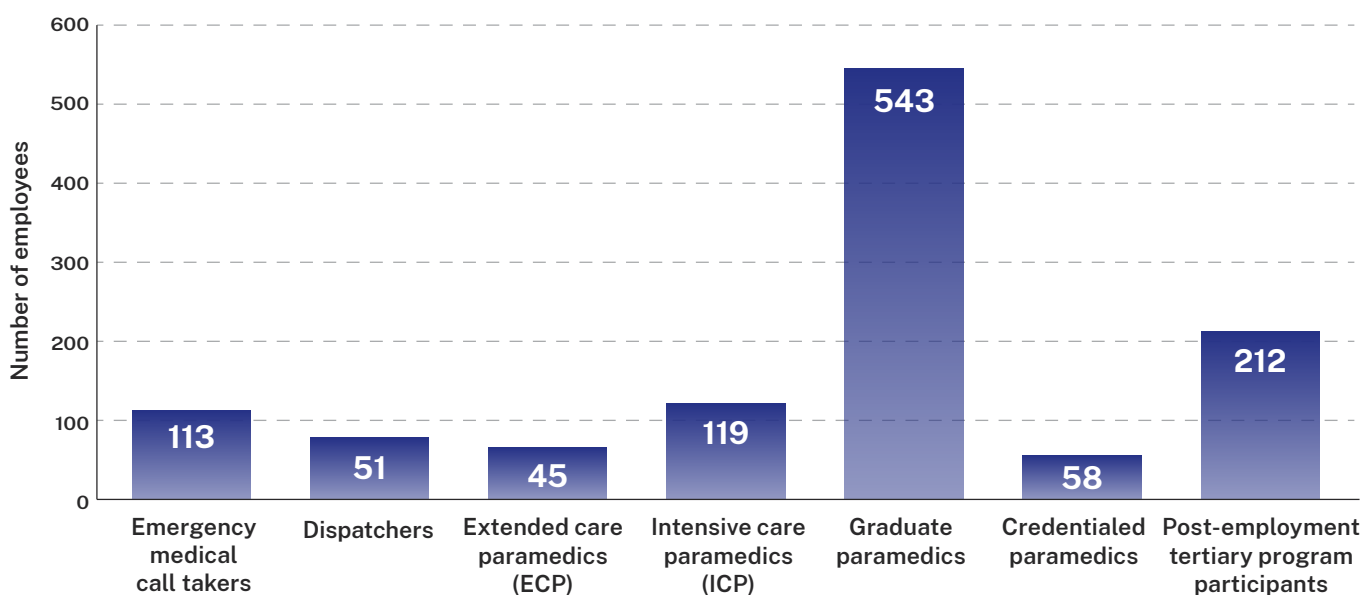
Specialist paramedics, extended care paramedics and intensive care paramedics make up an important part of our services, offering advanced clinical decision-making capabilities along with progressive clinical leadership.

The past year has seen the NSW Ambulance Specialist Paramedic training programs further consolidate a suite of rolling improvements designed to deliver a more modern and integrated education program for our paramedic specialists.

Highlights include:

- Moved operations into the refurbished SOC facility with improved amenities and clinical simulation facilities
- Modernised the specialist training curriculum with particular reference to:
 - Contemporary assessment processes
 - Clinical simulation and real-world experiences
 - CPG updates and enhanced scope-of-practice incorporated into curriculum
 - New equipment options and familiarisation
 - Increased interprofessional and learning (IPL) collaboration with NSW Health medical and nursing staff
- Embedded five weeks of allocated interprofessional training for specialist trainees in NSW hospitals, the community and the medical retrieval environments
- Established a further tranche of interprofessional training partnerships with NSW regional hospitals.

More than 1,100 staff successfully completed training for a qualification:





New employment pathway

We welcomed our first cohort of paramedic trainees under the new post employment tertiary pathway (PETP) program in a ceremony at Sydney Olympic Stadium.

It was a significant organisational milestone for NSW Ambulance – with the first cohort of PETP trainees making up 129 of the 153 students who celebrated their induction before hitting the road.

The PETP was established this year in collaboration with NSW universities and allows applicants with no prior health experience to be in paid employment with NSW Ambulance while completing an approved degree in paramedicine.

For many the pathway is a chance to fulfil a lifelong dream whatever their circumstances or stage of life.

Aeromedical training

DipPHRM

Several of our retrieval doctors have been part of a working group from Australia and New Zealand developing the Diploma Pre-Hospital and Retrieval Medicine (DipPHRM) educational standard.

The first ever in-person full objective structured practical examination was delivered in our Aeromedical Centre of Excellence (ACE) training centre in December 2022 with great success and feedback.

Other highlights

- Staff completed four cyclic training blocks (human factors, operational, clinical and new equipment introduction)
- Ten education days with more than 50 recorded talks on a diverse range of topics
- Remote area access course – multi-week training and assessment in the NSW Blue Mountains
- Prehospital ECMO training, including animal lab and human cadaver courses, part task trainers, and high fidelity simulations.

Special Operations Team (SOT) training

- We conducted one SOT/rescue course this year. Eleven people completed the course.
- Eight participants completed the additional rescue components to hold dual rescue and special operations accreditation.

Remote area access course

We delivered one remote area access course, which was completed by five participants.

Swift water (in water) courses

We delivered three swift water (in water) courses. This increases our in-water operator capacity by 31 people.

Remote area access teams working with vertical rescue.



Our people

Safety and recovery

Management system redesign

In February 2023 we began a significant three-year project to realign our safety management system to the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) 45001 and 45003 standards. The standards targets include:

- occupational health and safety management
- psychological frameworks.

In the first year we launched five procedures along with their associated work instructions, forms and tools:

- WHS Risk and Opportunity Management
- WHS Incident Management
- WHS Consultation and Participation
- WHS Action Management
- Emergency Preparedness.

Health and safety program expansion

The safety team increased the number of health and safety representatives within business units and sectors, and upskilled and trained future NSW Ambulance frontline safety leaders. Health and safety representatives are elected by their peers and work group and play an important role in advocating for improved health and safety outcomes. This year we trained:

- 56 new health and safety representatives, making 68 in total across the state.

The safety team also developed a health and safety representative (HSR) consultation channel on Microsoft Teams. The channel is a forum for health and safety representatives to be involved in changes to work health and safety programs and procedures. It includes all HSRs across the state and is a voice for positive change in the workplace.

Body-worn camera trial

NSW Ambulance's Body Worn Camera (BWC) project is our initiative aimed at mitigating incidents of occupational violence (OV) towards our staff. The trial commenced in 2019 at Hamilton and Liverpool stations, along with the Sydney Ambulance Centre and was expanded to include Artarmon, Northmead and Wagga Wagga stations.



Body-worn camera trial:

- ▶ **646** staff completed body-worn camera training
- ▶ **1,100** “check outs” each month on average across 6 locations
- ▶ **330** recordings since the commencement of phase 2

The aim of the project is to mitigate incidents of OV by:

- influencing behaviours of aggressive people through the presence, knowledge and use of BWCs
- enabling an improved review of OV incidents
- providing evidence to NSW Police to assist with their investigations into violent offences.

We are also working with Charles Sturt University (CSU) to conduct independent research into the efficacy of BWCs. This ground-breaking research will collect data to determine if the presence and use of BWCs reduces the risks and incidents of OV experienced by paramedics.

The expanded trial provides CSU with a greater number of NSW Ambulance staff to engage with the research team and share experiences and opinions of BWCs and OV.

Awards

Pandemic Service Medal

8,100

Pandemic Service medals awarded to staff

We introduced the Pandemic Service Medal to our honours and awards structure in July 2022 to recognise the efforts of our personnel during a time of unprecedented demand for NSW ambulance services. Our people demonstrated sustained effort, resilience, care for each other, adaptability and maintained high-quality patient care throughout this challenging period.

NSW Ambulance awards

- 459 staff and 62 community members recognised for acts of service or courage
- 620 Long Service and Good Conduct medals and clasps awarded
- 450 National medals and clasps awarded by the Governor-General in recognition of service to Australia.



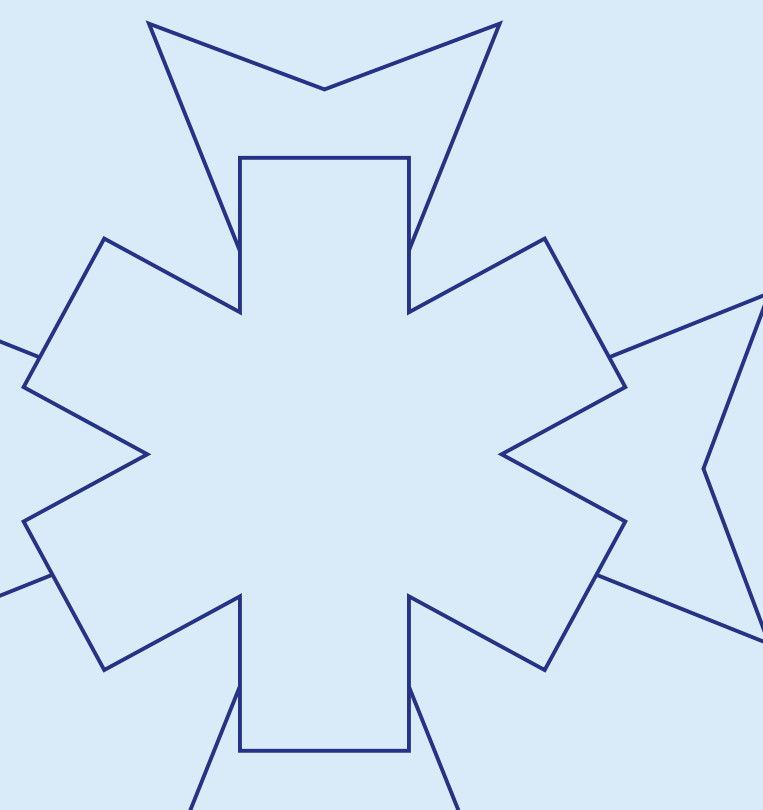
The Pandemic Service Medal has a nickel-silver antique finish and features the Maltese Cross and the Star of Life.

External awards

- 7 staff awarded Ambulance Service Medals by the Governor-General for distinguished service
- 3 staff recognised by the Royal Humane Society NSW for bravery
- 2 community members recognised by the Royal Humane Society for bravery, nominated by NSW Ambulance.

NSW Ambulance honours

- Winner of the Mental Health and Wellbeing category of the Council of Ambulance Authorities Awards for Excellence in 2022
- Overall winner of the Rotary Emergency Service Community Awards for the second year in a row.





Our clinical
research and
innovation

GoodSAM

NSW Ambulance staff registered

1,286

1 person was saved by a GoodSAM responder within just six weeks of the program starting

Only 11 per cent of patients who receive resuscitation following cardiac arrest survive to leave hospital. We are working to improve those outcomes through quality and innovation in pre-hospital cardiac arrest care.

Cardiac arrest is a disease of time. Every minute is vital to sustaining blood flow to the brain, heart and other organs—even while we work to treat the underlying cause of cardiac arrest. A patient's chance of survival drops by 10 per cent each minute they are in cardiac arrest and not receiving cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) or defibrillation.

To minimise the time between a person going into cardiac arrest and receiving chest compressions, we are crowdsourcing CPR through implementation of the GoodSAM program.

How it works

- GoodSAM is linked to our Triple Zero (000) control centres
- As soon as an ambulance is dispatched, GoodSAM notifies the closest volunteers to a patient needing CPR while paramedics are on the way
- GoodSAM will alert the next nearest volunteer if the first does not accept the request.

GoodSAM also allows automated external defibrillator (AED) owners to register their devices. This will enable NSW GoodSAM app users to identify and access the

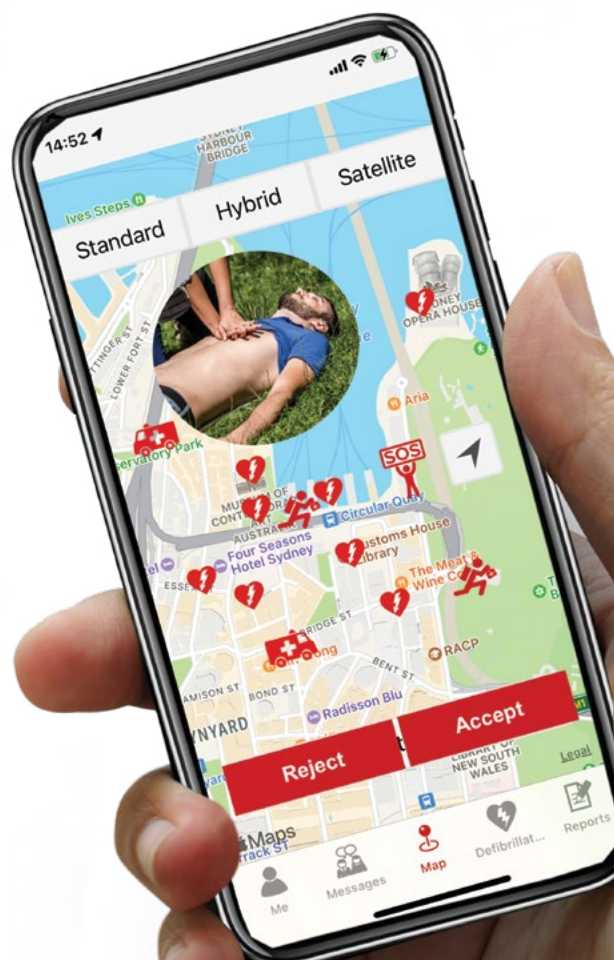
nearest AED when a patient is in cardiac arrest.

Following a successful pilot, GoodSAM has been integrated into the NSW Ambulance system:

- 1,286 NSW Ambulance staff are registered as volunteer GoodSAM responders
- 1 person was saved by a GoodSAM responder within just six weeks of the program starting.

The VCCC uses GoodSAM software to support clinical assessments for secondary triage and clinical advice line calls for clinicians across the state.

A stakeholder awareness campaign is planned for 2023-2024 to encourage members of the community to register as volunteers.



Our clinical research and innovation

Mechanical CPR rollout

We issued 569 LUCAS mechanical cardiopulmonary resuscitation (mCPR) devices in the past year. All general duties ambulances were equipped with a mCPR device, making NSW Ambulance the first ambulance service in Australia and New Zealand to roll out mCPR at this scale.

While high-performance CPR (HPCPR) and early defibrillation remain the basis of resuscitation, mCPR can be used to:

- facilitate extrication
- enhance paramedic safety during transportation
- enable innovative models of care that require resuscitation to continue while the patient is moved to hospital.

We also updated the cardiac arrest protocol to highlight that the 10-minute mark is the default decision point to consider if mCPR should be provided or not.

All our paramedics have completed mCPR training, with many also undertaking refresher training.

PRECARE study improves out-of-hospital cardiac arrest outcomes

Research and innovation is an important part of our out-of-hospital cardiac arrest survival strategy. PRECARE is a feasibility study of a NSW Ambulance dispatched and staffed Extra-Corporeal Membrane Oxygenation (ECMO) Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) resource. ECMO-CPR resources provide mechanical support to patients in refractory cardiac arrest – a condition with generally poor outcomes.

The trial will increase equity of access to this intervention, which is currently available only in tertiary ECMO centres. PRECARE is supported by:

- the cardiothoracic and ECMO services at Sydney's St Vincent's, Royal Prince Alfred and Westmead Hospitals
- international consultation with leading clinicians and academics in Melbourne, Paris and London.



mCPR rollout a 'game-changer'

Paramedics, patients and politicians came together at Haberfield Station on 21 May 2023 to mark the milestone rollout of LUCAS mCPR (mechanical CPR) devices to every frontline emergency ambulance.

The Minister for Health and Minister for Regional Health The Hon. Ryan Park and the Member for Summer Hill The Hon. Jo Haylen attended the launch with Minister Park, hailing the rollout as a "game-changer".

Mark Sackley, an out-of-hospital cardiac arrest patient who was resuscitated with a NSW Ambulance LUCAS device, gave his own compelling testimony.

"I was an hour without a heartbeat. This [machine] and the paramedics on scene were my heartbeat," Mr Sackley said.

Aeromedical research

Our research team published the following studies:

- The management of traumatic pneumothorax: Partyka C et al. *Clinical outcomes of traumatic pneumothoraces undergoing conservative management following detection by prehospital physicians.* *Injury* 2023 Jun 15:110886. Doi: 10.1016/j.injury.2023.110886. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 37330405
- The effect of induction drugs on haemodynamic parameters following intubation: Ferguson IMC, Miller MR, Partyka C, Bliss J, et al. *The effect of ketamine and fentanyl on haemodynamics during intubation in pre-hospital and retrieval medicine.* 2022 Dec. doi: 10.1111/aas.14177. Epub ahead of print
- Paediatric video-laryngoscopy: Miller M, Storey H, Andrew J, Hayes-Bradley Clare. *Out-of-hospital pediatric videolaryngoscopy with an adult device: A case series presented with contemporary group intubated with direct laryngoscopy.* *Pediatric Emergency Care*, Feb 16 2023. Epub ahead of print. DOI: 10.1097/PEC.00000000002909
- The use of prehospital nerve blocks for serious chest injury: Harrington C, Bliss J, Lam L, Partyka C. *Serratus Anterior Plane Block for Clinically Suspected Rib Fractures in Prehospital and Retrieval Medicine.* *Prehospital emergency care.* Dec 8 2022; (8): 1-6. Doi: 10.1080/10902127.2022.2150344
- PATCH-Trauma trial evaluating the long-term outcomes of trauma patients treated with tranexamic acid. This research is published in the *New England Journal of Medicine: The PATCH-Trauma Investigators and the ANZICS Clinical Trials Group. Prehospital tranexamic acid for severe trauma.* *NEJM*, July 13 2023. 389:127-136. DOI: 10.1056/NEJMoa2215457
- Description and prediction of outcome of drowning patients in New South Wales: Peden AE, Sarrami P, Dinh M, Lassen C, Hall B, Alkouri H, Daniel L, Burns B. *Description and prediction of outcome of drowning patients in New South Wales, Australia: protocol for a data linkage study.* *BMJ open* 2021:11
- Measured task load in directed observers versus active participants undergoing high-fidelity simulation education in a critical care setting *Academic Emergency Medicine: Jessica Devlin-Hegedus MBBS, Matthew Miller MSc, MBChB,*

Sean Cooke BHSc, Sandra Ware MSc, Clare Richmond MBBS. *Measured task load in directed observers versus active participants undergoing high-fidelity simulation education in a critical care setting.* *Academic Emergency Medicine* <https://doi.org/10.1002/aet.2.10894>.

Future research avenues include investigating approaches to the critically bleeding patient, including the use of whole blood and fibrinogen concentrates; as well as the PRECARE trial.

Clinical enhancements

With advancements in trauma care we can reduce deaths from blood loss. We have introduced new technologies and processes to achieve best patient outcomes. These include:

- wound packing, quick clot dressing and modular trauma dressing
- haemostatic gauze and the OLAES modular bandage that quickly controls severe haemorrhaging. Effective haemorrhage control at the earliest moment can be critical to survival, as it reduces negative downstream consequences associated with substantial blood loss, including shock, late mortality, and multiple organ failure
- life-saving needle decompression training to all paramedics to prevent deaths from tension pneumothorax.
- cardiac arrest – adrenaline in paediatric arrest
- pulmonary oedema – CPAP.



Our assets and
infrastructure



Major funding package enhances our flood rescue capabilities

NSW Ambulance received \$14.8 million in funding to enhance flood rescue capability. These funds will go towards providing specific training, capabilities and resources to meet the state’s current and future needs.

We are implementing the following initiatives:

- training for 150 in-water/swift water rescue operators
- eight hazardous area rescue ambulances
- eight inflatable rescue boats including trailers and tow vehicles
- eight aluminium (flat bottom) rescue boats
- additional extended care paramedic resources.

We have made rapid progress on each of these initiatives:

- three operational groups have completed their in-water training, with another three classes locked in over the next quarter
- some vehicles already delivered and undergoing fit-out. The remainder will be delivered in the months to come
- The build of four specialised extended care paramedic vehicles is close to completion.

New vehicles

We received endorsement for technical specification for our new rescue trucks and completed our four wheel drive replacement program. As of May 2023, we have 82 Toyota Landcruiser 200 series vehicles operational across the state.

We also established a multi-purpose vehicle (MPV) working group to identify the preferred vehicle and technical specification for the replacement of two MPV heavy vehicles.

Sydney Ambulance Metropolitan Infrastructure Strategy (SAMIS)

SAMIS is a \$184 million program to improve NSW Ambulance's operations in metropolitan Sydney. The program has delivered 11 new ambulance stations and seven purpose-built paramedic response points (PRP).

This year we started building a 12th station, Central Sydney Ambulance Station, with funding from SAMIS.



Rural Ambulance Infrastructure Reconfiguration (RAIR) – Stage 2

5 ambulance stations built

17 ambulance stations refurbished

RAIR is a \$232 million program to reorganise and enhance NSW Ambulance infrastructure to meet the future needs of communities across rural and regional NSW.

The two-stage program is the single largest investment in regional NSW Ambulance’s 127-year history. It will deliver 54 new, rebuilt or upgraded stations across regional NSW.

This year’s RAIR Stage 2 highlights included:

- completing construction of five new ambulance stations
- starting rebuilds of eight ambulance stations
- planning the rebuild of Jindabyne Ambulance Station
- completing the refurbishment of 17 ambulance stations.

Asset Refurbishment and Replacement Program (ARRP)

The Asset Refurbishment and Replacement Program (ARRP) is a \$500 million, 10-year initiative administered by Health Infrastructure. To date, we have received \$20 million from AARP for refurbishments, upgrades and critical infrastructure enhancements.

ARRP was used to fund refurbishment and minor works at 17 ambulance stations – 15 of them completed in 2022-2023.



A century of care continues at Casino station

The heritage-listed façade at the old Casino Ambulance Station has the date 1939 above its central driveway. That’s how long the station at 157 Centre Street has provided ambulance services to the Northern Rivers community.

NSW Ambulance Assistant Commissioner Peter Elliott, who oversaw the construction of the new station and worked there as a paramedic early in his career, said:

“I’m sure the paramedics working in Casino today will like the new modern facility, and no longer having to manoeuvre the ambulances in the tight drive-throughs and rear area of the building!”

Casino Paramedic Helen Atkins, said: “The job is so much easier here. There’s a nice ambience, great lighting, outdoor areas, meeting rooms and breakout spaces.”



Environmental sustainability initiatives

Our commitment to sustainability continued throughout 2022-2023. This year we:

- installed solar panels at six stations, bringing the total to 70 stations and the capacity to generate 2.1 gigawatt hours of electricity annually
- installed uninterrupted power supply (UPS) systems, connected to solar panels, at five ambulance stations. These can support communications and essential lighting and roller doors for up to 12 hours during a power failure.

State Operations Centre relocation update

Work is underway on our state-of-the-art NSW Ambulance State Operations Centre (SOC) at Sydney Olympic Park. Our new headquarters will improve the working environment for our staff, paramedics and Triple Zero (000) emergency medical call takers and emergency medical dispatchers, who can manage more than 1.2 million calls a year.

The new SOC will allow us to leverage technology and infrastructure to ensure our critical emergency operations facilities are integrated and have room for future growth. The SOC has new state-of-the-art facilities including an internal simulation house, simulation ambulance, wet labs and technology-equipped multipurpose rooms.

It will also be home to our Virtual Clinical Care Centre, Aeromedical Control Centre, and Sydney Control Centre.

This year we:

- completed detailed design of the SOC
- announced a parking strategy
- completed the majority of refurbishment works on level 1 and 2
- moved our education team into the building, with more teams to follow shortly
- began refurbishment works on ground and level 2 south east, level 3 north, level 5 and level 6.

The numbers:

- 88,000 working hours on refurbishment
- 1,200km of cable laid to support our critical ICT infrastructure.

Above: Solar PV panels at Lithgow Ambulance Station



88,000

working hours on the
SOC refurbishment

1,200km

cable laid to support our
critical ICT infrastructure



Our community

Media

NSW Ambulance was mentioned in almost 20,000 news articles across newspapers, radio, TV and online.

Online news stories provided the highest number of mentions, followed by radio news.

Our operational response to daily incidents continues to generate the greatest media interest. The Hunter Valley bus crash in June 2023 gained the most coverage for a single incident over the reporting period.

We also saw spikes in reporting during April 2023 following the death of Paramedic Steven Tougher and in December 2022 after a series of water-related incidents.

Media also covered major infrastructure milestones and new station openings, staff awards, graduation ceremonies and patient reunion stories. These heartfelt moments shine a light on the critical work of our emergency medical call takers, emergency medical dispatchers, paramedics, doctors and nurses. They also provide an opportunity for our staff to see their former patients doing well.



Ambulance Australia TV series

Season 5 of the documentary series *Ambulance Australia* was filmed across Sydney between March and May 2023.

The series provides viewers with a look behind the scenes of our ambulance service. Production crews joined teams of paramedics and staff at Sydney Control Centre.

Thank you to everyone who helped facilitate filming. The series is due to air on Channel 10 in February, 2024.

Social media followers

163,000

↑20% on previous year

Social media

We use social media to keep the public updated on day-to-day operations, training, achievements and milestones across the organisation.

High-performing posts included graduations, updates from our alpine and special operations teams, and special moments between paramedics and patients.

The post with the highest reach related to the Steven Tougher critical incident. There was an outpouring of support from followers across Australia and overseas. A post on the day of the incident reached more than 1.5 million people and attracted more than 313,000 comments.

Our community

Events and community

As we emerged from COVID-19 restrictions, we celebrated the return of in-person events, staff conferences and seminars, and had the opportunity to interact with our wider community, family, friends and supporters.

Paramedic shield and emergency medical call taker presentations

More than 980 new recruits took part in eight paramedic, post employment tertiary pathway (PETP) and emergency medical call taker presentation ceremonies.

The first cohort of 120 PETP recruits were inducted in November 2022 as part of the \$1.76 billion investment in NSW Ambulance by the NSW Government.

Official station openings

We celebrated the official opening of five new purpose-built stations at Iluka, Tumut, Casino, Forster and Medowie. This was part of the NSW Government's \$232 million Rural Ambulance Infrastructure Reconfiguration (RAIR) program.

The Next Normal Summit

Our first organisation-wide summit since 2019 was held in August 2022. During the event, we launched the NSW Ambulance Workforce Strategy 2022-2026 focusing on:

- developing workforce strategy to rebuild positive work environments
- reshaping learning and development
- reconnecting with our networks
- recalibrating our life balance post COVID-19.

We welcomed guests from leading national and international health and emergency service organisations, including NSW Health, Council of Ambulance Authorities and St John Ambulance Australia (NT).





BStreetsmart

We teamed up with other NSW emergency service agencies to support an important road safety initiative by the trauma service at Westmead Hospital – BStreetsmart. The three-day event in August 2022 taught more than 24,000 Year 10, 11 and 12 students about road safety to help reduce fatality and injury rates in NSW.

Restart a Heart Day

On Restart a Heart Day, our emergency services ask the public an important question: would you know what to do if someone near you suffered a cardiac arrest?

On 16 October 2022 NSW Ambulance, Fire and Rescue NSW and St John went to Bondi Beach for a Restart a Heart Day event, where members of the community met emergency service providers and watched and participated in life-saving cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) demonstrations in an informal setting.

Bear Cottage Children’s Hospice Christmas visit

Bear Cottage Children’s Hospice in Sydney is a very special place dedicated to caring for children with life-limiting conditions.

With Toll Ambulance Rescue Helicopter, we were proud to fly in Santa to deliver Christmas gifts donated by the helicopter base staff, family and friends.



Appreciation Day

Appreciation Day 2022 events across the state marked an important milestone, with community members returning to NSW Ambulance Stations:

- The main metropolitan event in Randwick was attended by over 200 people
- Local events took place at Bankstown Helicopter Base, Sydney Control Centre and in many other sectors
- More than 7,000 Appreciation Day ribbons were sent out to staff state-wide.

NSW Ambulance graduation and awards

More than 1,200 of our people were formally recognised at our Graduation and Awards ceremony 2022. We paid tribute to the commitment, compassion, and professionalism of everyone who attained or expanded their qualifications since the last graduation ceremony in 2020. It was also an opportunity to recognise those who had excelled in exceptional circumstances as recipients of special NSW Ambulance honours and awards.

Our community

Sponsorship

\$172,750 has been raised in sponsorship to support our 'over and above' events and initiatives for staff and the NSW community.

Thank you to the following organisations for their generous support.

Sponsor	Event	Total
Stryker	NSW Ambulance Senior Managers Conferences 2022 Sponsorship	100,000
G&C Mutual Bank	NSW Ambulance Employee of the Year and Month program 2023	27,000
Lease Plus	NSW Ambulance Summit 2022 sponsorship	15,000
Amtek	NSW Ambulance Summit 2022 sponsorship	15,000
QBE Insurance	NSW Ambulance Summit 2022 sponsorship	15,000
Smart Group	NSW Ambulance Summit 2022 sponsorship	5,000
G&C Mutual Bank	NSW Ambulance Summit 2022 sponsorship	2,500
		Total 179,500

Donations

Thank you to our generous supporters who collectively donated \$608,000 to NSW Ambulance. These donations enabled us to buy medical equipment, introduce ground-breaking new programs, help prepare children and young adults for emergency situations and deliver critical training for our paramedics.

Many of the highlights and achievements outlined in this report would not have been possible without your assistance and we are incredibly grateful for your ongoing support.



Celebrating the life of Steven Tougher

In early 2023 we sadly said goodbye to one of our own – Paramedic Steven Tougher.

Steven's tragic death was an incredibly challenging experience for everyone who knew him. However, our workforce was also honoured to come together to celebrate his life.

Nearly 2,000 of our people joined Steven's family and friends to celebrate his life. More than 5,000 people watched live online.

It was clear from the overwhelming response to Steven's death that he had an affect on many people throughout his life, and during his time with NSW Ambulance.

Fittingly, Steven was awarded the Governor-General's National Medal for Service, which is typically only awarded to uniformed emergency service personnel who have completed 15 years' service. Steven's family was presented with the National Medal; NSW Ambulance's Long Service and Good Conduct medal, and the Pandemic Service medal.

We thank our people for pulling together and supporting one another, as well as Steven's family, in the wake of this tragedy.



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February 2024



NSW Ambulance

excellence in care