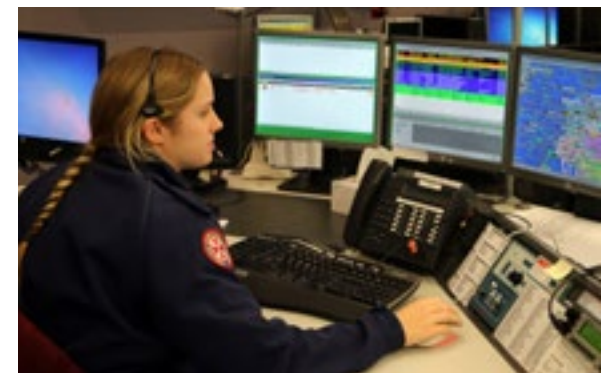




NSW Ambulance

excellence in care

NSW Ambulance Year in Review 2016/17





2016/2017 represented an extraordinary period of change, progress, opportunity and challenge for NSW Ambulance as an organisation.

NSW Ambulance has seen great results from staff, stakeholder and Union collaboration and hard work, which has helped us to set our focus through open and difficult conversations and the implementation of initiatives designed to better support the workforce.

The importance of the continuation of this work has been recognised by the NSW Government in 2017 with the NSW Premier Gladys Berejiklian and NSW Health Minister Brad Hazzard pledging an additional \$48-million in funding for mental health and wellbeing support to NSW Ambulance.

This significant investment will ensure that NSW Ambulance can continue to assist and support our staff from the first to the last day of their NSW Ambulance career, with a comprehensive range of

integrated physical and mental health and wellbeing strategies.

Building the future for NSW Ambulance also took great strides this year with the Sydney Ambulance Metropolitan Infrastructure Strategy (SAMIS) program enabling the carefully planned implementation of the Paramedic Response Network (PRN) to commence. The transition saw the delivery and opening of superstations at Bankstown, Kogarah, Blacktown and Liverpool with Penrith due to commence operations in late 2017.

Although this change is significant, it is already clear that NSW Ambulance staff and our patients will greatly benefit from this new way of doing our everyday core business – delivering timely, high quality emergency care to patients.

The \$122 million Rural Ambulance Infrastructure Reconfiguration (RAIR) has gone from strength to strength in 2017, bringing even more stations

into the RAIR program fold, with three new sites set to undergo complete refurbishment, upgrade or be replaced by a brand new facility.

On a clinical front, integrated care continues to be a strong focus for our organisation with alternative treatment and referral pathways forming a key part of an ongoing strategy.

A key highlight for the organisation was the launch of the first Staff Wellbeing and Resilience Summit in July 2016, introducing a range of other services to support staff.

These include the establishment of Wellness Wednesdays, the launch of the mental health literacy online and mindfulness program, establishment of NSW Ambulance Supporting our Families information sessions.

“ This year, we have set our focus through open and difficult conversations and the implementation of initiatives designed to better support the workforce.”

This year also saw the introduction of increased Chaplaincy support, First Contact Coordinators introduced, a Buddy program established and improved Recover at Work support.

A key framework which was introduced to provide a robust support network for staff was the Staff Support Activation and Significant Events Support Register and Worker Injury Screening and Early Intervention (WISE) program, which is supported by an increase in our number of Peer Support Officers.

As part of NSW Ambulance’s commitment to providing enduring support for existing and retired staff, NSW Ambulance Legacy was announced, designed to promote wellbeing and support during retirement for all NSW Ambulance staff.

Following on the conversations and actions of the Staff Wellbeing and Resilience Summit, NSW Ambulance began the planning and development of the 2017 Safety & Culture Summit.

Due to be held in the second half of 2017, The NSW Ambulance Safety & Culture Summit was built on the conversation started in 2016, focusing on providing a forum of discussion on workplace safety issues and empowering staff to make an immediate commitment to changing and improving our safety behaviours and culture.

All in all 2016/17 has been a highly productive and progressive year, with even more planned for the next twelve months ahead in order to position NSW Ambulance to be best placed to meet current and future patient demand.

Dominic Morgan ASM
Chief Executive

DELIVERING CARE THROUGHOUT THE STATE

NSW Ambulance has reached new heights in 2016 and 2017 with the official launch of aeromedical bases and helicopter fleets throughout the state as part of the implementation phase of the NSW Government’s \$151.2 million state-wide Helicopter Retrieval Network.

The network was developed and informed by the Aeromedical Reform Plan, which provided a new operational model for delivering high quality medical care to a wider variety of patients from a greater range of areas, incorporating the latest in aeromedical technology to improve response times, patient treatment and safety in transit.

The NSW Helicopter Retrieval Network is separated into the southern and northern zones, with the southern zone consisting of bases in Sydney-Bankstown, Wollongong and Orange which is serviced by the Toll & NSW Ambulance Rescue Helicopter fleet.

The northern zone, includes bases at Newcastle (Belmont), Tamworth and Lismore and commenced operations on

March 7, 2017 marking the continuation of the collaborative delivery of aeromedical services by NSW Ambulance and the Westpac Rescue team from the Hunter to the Queensland border.

NSW Ambulance’s aeromedical staff on board both the northern and southern zone aircraft, provide exemplary service to patients in all corners of the state, completing around 3000 patient missions state-wide each year.



NORTHERN ZONE

NSW Ambulance and the Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service partnered in 2017 to deliver rescue, retrieval and patient treatment from a fleet of brand new Agusta Westland 139 (AW139) aircraft.

For the first time in the history of the organisations partnership, the NSW Ambulance roundel, logo and checkered candy stripe are now emblazoned on the iconic Westpac Rescue Helicopter.

The NSW Ambulance and Rescue Helicopter fleet have a NSW Ambulance Critical Care Paramedic and a Local Health District (HNELHD) doctor on board every flight.

The fleet is made up of four bigger, safer and more clinically capable Agusta Westland 139 (AW139) helicopters, which will assist NSW Ambulance to reach patients even further away from NSW Ambulance bases, quicker than ever before.

These helicopters have the capability to fly to any area of the state from their home base effectively, allowing the continuum of critical care from the scene to the hospital, with the aircraft virtually Intensive Care Unit (ICU) capable.

To support the new fleet, new and refurbished helicopter bases were completed and officially opened by Commissioner Morgan and local staff at Newcastle (Belmont), Lismore and Tamworth.



SOUTHERN ZONE

The southern zone contract for NSW Ambulance aeromedical services, operated by Toll Group was officially launched on January 10.

Under the new contract, a NSW Ambulance doctor and critical care paramedic respond on every flight. Bases at Wollongong and Orange now operate 24/7 to deliver faster emergency care to the regions.

The Toll & NSW Ambulance Rescue Helicopter fleet is made up of eight Agusta Westland 139 (AW139) helicopters.

The medical fit-out on board these aircraft is second to none; virtually transforming

a helicopter into a flying ICU delivering critical care to patients. The new, larger fleet is white, with the NSW Ambulance roundel and Toll logo, not red and white as NSW Ambulance helicopters had been previously.

The southern zone's Sydney-Bankstown Base commenced operations in 2017 and all bases including Wollongong and Orange are due to be officially opened in early 2018.

This partnership enables NSW Ambulance's highly-qualified NSW Ambulance helicopter doctors and paramedics to continue to deliver exceptional out-of-hospital critical care to patients across the state.





50 YEARS OF EMERGENCY AIR CARE

March 2017 represented a significant milestone for NSW Ambulance, marking 50 years since the first Beechcraft Queen Air B80 took flight, beginning the organisations enduring legacy of providing critical emergency medical care throughout the state.

The delivery of emergency medical care across the entirety of NSW over the years has always presented a challenge for the organisation due to expanse of the state.

As far back as the 1920s, it was noted that ill and injured people in remote areas of NSW were dying because of their isolation from medical care.

On 29 March 1966, the Government approved the purchase of an aircraft, a twin-engine, multi-berth aircraft, a Beechcraft Queen Air B80, to be operated by East-West Airlines.

Described as an “intensive care ward with wings”, the US-built plane was fitted out with navigational aids to permit flying at night, together with piped oxygen, a maternity kit, humidicrib, blood transfusion and tracheotomy gear, drugs, intravenous therapy, burns and resuscitation equipment.

It carried four stretcher cases and two seated patients, while the operating crew, comprised of a pilot and flight nurse and three nursing sisters, were engaged.

“The NSW Air Ambulance Service has developed significantly over the years to keep pace with the ever changing demands in both aviation and patient care.”

The NSW Air Ambulance Service has developed significantly over the years to keep pace with the ever changing demands in both aviation and patient care. Medical equipment that was once only thought to be accessed in a hospital now routinely carried on flights

“Medical equipment that was once only thought to be accessed in a hospital is now routinely carried on flights.”

Today the fleet provides specialist critical care throughout the state.

- Includes five aircraft - three Beechcraft KingAir 200C and two 350C
- Flies an average 7021 hours a year
- Conducts more than 2800 missions a year
- Transported 5200 patients in 2016

On Board:

- 39 flight nurses
- 25 pilots
- 13 engineer
- Six ground handlers

IN A SNAPSHOT:

A legacy of care and skill

NSW Ambulance has a history of delivering a high standard of emergency medical care and November 2016 marked the 40th anniversary since Intensive Care Paramedics (ICP), or Advanced Life Support Officers as they were known, completed their first course and were introduced to NSW Ambulance.

The need for emergency service responders with specialised skills in the delivery of intensive medical care was first identified in 1975 by the Director of Intensive Care Services at St Vincent’s Hospital.

“To date there are currently 442 ICPs operating in the organisation with their skills constantly advancing and developing, benefiting members of the community on a daily basis.”

Following intense lobbying, support and collaboration, the first Intensive Care Paramedic course began and was initially met with nervousness by the medical community.



NSW Ambulance ICP’s were the first non-doctors in NSW to go into theatres, do intubations and cannulations. The first ICPs were launched in 1977 and regarded by many as ‘cowboys’ because they were delivering care that only doctors could do.

Graduating at a time of immense change, ICPs arrived when NSW Ambulance was being transferred from the NSW Ambulance Transport Service Board to the NSW Government under the Health Commission.

“The first ICPs were regarded as cowboys because they were delivering care that only doctors could do, were the first non-doctors in NSW to go into theatres, do intubations and cannulations.”

This came into effect on 1 January 1977 and the newly minted ICPs were held off from utilising their skills unsupervised until then.

Nevertheless, the change in practice was massive and ICPs progressed from a system of basically having no technology and being limited to what they could see and do to suddenly having access to sphygmomanometers, stethoscopes, defibrillators, morphine and adrenaline.

“Fast forward 40 years and NSW Ambulance taught its 79th ICP course in September 2016.”

Initially known as Advanced Life Support Officers, although the term “paramedic” was later adopted, this being more publicly identifiable due to a US television series, ‘Emergency’, which was popular at the time.





2CHEER TRIAL

In 2016/17 a new clinical trial commenced between NSW Ambulance, Royal Prince Alfred (RPA) Hospital and St Vincent’s Hospital which aimed to revolutionise how paramedics respond to cardiac arrest cases.

2CHEER is a clinical trial which is investigating how a mechanical External Cardiac Massage (ECM), hypothermia, ECMO (extracorporeal membrane oxygenation) and early cardiac reperfusion can improve survival rates of individuals who have suffered a cardiac arrest.

The mechanical device involved in this trial is the Lucas2 device, which produces a consistent, uninterrupted compression with good palpable output.

This means compressions are able to be continued effectively throughout extrication and transport even in a carry sheet or stokes litter.

The trial was conducted from six stations in close proximity to the CBD as patients must be transported to either RPA or St Vincent’s hospitals within a predefined time frame.

Intensive Care Paramedics (ICPs) have been trained to operate the machine and understand the 2CHEER trial benefits.

In order for a case to be suitable for use as part of the trial it must include the following factors:

- a patient aged between 12 – 70 years old
- a cardiac arrest must be witnessed
- patient must receive external cardiac compressions within 10 minutes
- patient must have one cardiac or respiratory cause
- initial rhythm should be VF or VT
- or they are hypothermic <32C
- or patient had an overdose with reversible cardiac depression
- or patient has other reversible causes (PE/asthma).

Exclusions include:

- cardiac arrest was due to trauma or active bleeding
- elected not for resuscitation (NFR)
- patient has known comorbidities or limitations

URGENCY OR EMERGENCY?

In November 2016 NSW Ambulance launched the second phase of the “Is Your Urgency an Emergency?” a public education campaign, building on the messaging delivered during the first campaign earlier in the year.

NSW Ambulance and Triple Zero (000) call takers answer a call for medical assistance every 28 seconds and only 10 per cent of these calls are to patients with life-threatening conditions.

The second phase of the campaign encouraged members of the community to

carefully consider whether they really need an ambulance, a paramedic or a stretcher before calling Triple Zero (000).

The campaign aimed to realign community expectations by showcasing the alternate treatment pathways available, empowering patients and their loved ones to make an informed decision about the right level of care they require instead of seeing an ambulance and hospital treatment as their first or only option.

The messaging #Rightcallrightcare demonstrated that just because a patient doesn’t receive a lights and siren response

doesn’t mean they will not receive an appropriate level of care through an alternate pathway.

The community was educated that NSW Ambulance paramedics attending non-urgent cases could mean a patient with a life threatening emergency may have to wait, potentially putting their life at risk.

A series of posters were developed to show how various conditions can be triaged and addressed via a range of appropriate treatment pathways.

The colourful campaign is made up of four posters which clearly show the range of

treatment pathways available to patients, before or after they make a Triple Zero (000) call.

It also includes an emergency gauge with common conditions listed in a sliding scale from non-urgent to emergency.

Right call, right care

- In 2016-17 NSW Ambulance provided 1,122,101 total responses (both emergency and non-emergency).
- The total number of emergency responses (P1-P2) for 2016-17 was 985,799 compared to 963, 562 for 2015-16. This reflects an annual increase of 2.3% in emergency responses.
- On average, there were a total of 3074 responses per day during 2016-17 which is the equivalent to an average of one response every 28.1 seconds





The clipboard poster, with a simple tick box process, showing the recommended pathway for the condition, providing support and guidance on what care was suitable.

Through green, red and yellow, both the clipboard and thermometer posters

provided a touch point so potential callers could stop and take stock of their condition and adjust their expectations.

This campaign educates patients with non life-threatening or non-urgent conditions not to expect a double crewed stretcher ambulance response.

Patients may be referred by NSW Ambulance Triple Zero (000) call takers or paramedics to healthdirect Australia, which is staffed by registered nurses, or to the After Hours Medical Deputising Service which will provide a doctor to the patient's home.

The scope for the campaign is unlimited and it is anticipated a reboot and third phase will be rolled out in 2018 in response to surge events and periods of high demand.

On average, each NSW Ambulance campaign element posted on Facebook has a reach of 1.4million people and Twitter around 980,000 people.

The campaign material was mainly distributed via social media and through stakeholders and prompted additional traffic and engagement with the content via the NSW Ambulance website, Twitter, Facebook and Instagram accounts.

It is important that NSW Ambulance help the community to understand that just as every patient attending an Emergency Department does not necessarily get admitted to hospital, not every patient who calls Triple Zero (000) will necessarily need or receive an ambulance or paramedic response.

“ NSW Ambulance paramedics attending medical emergencies could mean a patient with a life threatening emergency may have to wait, potentially putting their life at risk.

TRANSFER OF CARE

For the first time the Bureau of Health Information (BHI) included NSW Ambulance data in its Healthcare Quarterly report for the period of January to March 2017.

While NSW Ambulance's transfer of care performance has always been featured in BHI quarterly reports, this is the first time the report has provided such a detailed examination of our patient response performance and operations.

Assessing time of call to ambulance arrival time for all 18 ambulance zones in the January to March quarter, the report provided an important benchmark to monitor performance levels against other areas of the health system.

The BHI report found that there has been a continued increase in demand for emergency medical responses across NSW, with NSW Ambulance providing 277,218 individual ambulance responses from January to March this year. This reflects a 1.2 per cent increase on the same quarter in 2016.

Despite the continued increase in demand, response times remained stable for the two most urgent priority categories over the past three years.

Other findings in the report included:

- 145,801 patients were transported by paramedics to hospital in the quarter.
- 91.5 per cent of patients who arrived by ambulance had their care

transferred to hospital staff within 30 minutes, an increase of 0.8 percentage points.

- The number of calls to Triple Zero (000) rose to 281,668 (up 0.7 per cent on the same quarter last year).
- The NSW Priority 1A (most critical patients) median response time was 7.5 minutes for the January to March quarter.
- The Priority 1 (all 1A, 1B, 1C cases) median response time was 11.1 minutes in the January to March quarter. This ranged from 9.3 minutes in Sydney to 12.6 minutes in the Hunter which has a wider geographical response area.
- In the January to March 2017 quarter, the NSW median mobilisation time was 2.4 minutes for Priority 1 and 4.0 minutes for priority 2 responses.
- 62.5 per cent of Priority category 1 mobilisations were within the three-minutes.
- 43.7 per cent of Triple Zero (000) calls were Priority 1 (emergency – e.g. breathing problems/unconscious), 44.4 percent were priority 2 (urgent – e.g. abdominal pain).
- 94.7 per cent of priority category 1 patients (emergency cases) had a call to ambulance arrival time within 30 minutes. These are patients that, for example, experience breathing problems or were unconscious.




- 95.0 per cent of priority category 2 patients (urgent cases) had a call to ambulance arrival time within 60 minutes. These are patients that experience, for example, abdominal pain.
- All ambulance local response areas met the target of 90 per cent of priority 2 responses with a call to ambulance arrival time within 60 minutes.
- 163 of 200 stations reported on met the target of 90 per cent of priority one responses achieving a call to ambulance arrival time within 30 minutes. Of the 37 that did not, 28 of

these stations are on call overnight meaning activation time was one factor in response times, as was travel time.

- Eight stations improved their average call to ambulance arrival time within 30 minutes by greater than 5 per cent in the most urgent case category (priority 1).

As always, there is room for improvement and we will continue to strive to deliver appropriate timely care to our communities.



“ To be a paramedic or NSW Ambulance staff member comes with a core responsibility – and that is - to never lose sight of the privilege bestowed on you.... the ability to play a role – frontline or otherwise – in ensuring care gets to a patient who needs us.”

- Chief Executive Dominic Morgan



To assist us to continue to meet demand for emergency medical responses right across the state, NSW Ambulance is implementing a number of major initiatives aimed at enhancing our capabilities.

Among these initiatives:

- The implementation of the Paramedic Response Network (PRN) operational model which is being progressively rolled out across metropolitan Sydney. The PRN model is specifically designed to better distribute paramedics across metropolitan Sydney, allowing them to deliver high quality, mobile, emergency medical care to the community.
- In regional and rural NSW, we continued rolling out the Regional Ambulance Infrastructure Reconfiguration (RAIR) program, which is delivering the biggest transformation of regional and rural NSW Ambulance infrastructure in our history.
- In order to further improve response times, NSW Ambulance also regularly makes adjustments to paramedic deployments to better match our demand patterns and ensure we deliver clinical care to urgent patients as quickly as possible.
- Our ability to meet patient demand has also been aided through the delivery of significant NSW Government funding including \$12.8 million as part of the 2016 state budget for 85 frontline NSW Ambulance staff.
- NSW Ambulance also received



an additional \$7.5 million in the 2017 budget for 50 additional relief paramedics across rural and remote NSW which will assist with managing absence and fatigue.

- The introduction of the new Make Ready Model into superstations will support paramedics by employing non-clinical staff to clean and restock ambulances to make paramedics more available. Funding of \$4 million for this program was announced in the 2017 State Budget.
- To meet increasing local demand, NSW Ambulance began working to progressively implement 24 hour on-duty operations at a number of stations that have not traditionally operated under this model, to assist with managing staff fatigue and improving mobilisation times, enhancing our ability to deliver timely, high quality out-of-hospital care for the communities surrounding these stations. This year NSW Ambulance has increased staff numbers to support 24 hour on-duty operations at Merimbula, Laurieton, Oak Flats and Maclean Ambulance Stations.

- An expanded new suite of community education programs was developed to teach and promote the 'urgency or emergency', 'save Triple Zero (000) for saving lives and 'big accident/little accident' key messaging to all sectors of the community.



ALTERNATIVE TREATMENT PATHWAYS

To support the right care philosophy in 2016/17 NSW Ambulance rolled out a range of integrated care strategies, which provide patients with appropriate alternative treatment pathways, consequently contributing to a reduction in the volume of Emergency Department (ED) transports.

These strategies include Low Acuity Patient Referral to Alternate Destinations, Palliative and End of Life Care, Aged Care, Paramedic Connect, Frequent User Management and initiatives with Residential Aged Care Facilities.

Each strategy has been developed in order to strengthen and deliver integrated care and establish new low acuity pathways through Local Health Districts (LHD), social service providers, Primary Healthcare Networks and non-government organisations.

Low acuity patient care

In 2016 a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was established with a number of After Hours Medical Deputising Services, providing paramedics with a 'see and refer' pathway for low acuity patients who call Triple Zero (000) and whose condition does not warrant transport to an Emergency Department.

NSW Ambulance's See, Treat, Refer and Discharge integrated care pathways include assessment, treatment, and/or



referring patients to care providers other than hospitals.

These programs improve integration and patient connectedness and each pathway decision can reduce case cycle times and also assists in eliminating delays associated with transfer of care, ambulance vehicle availability and avoiding clinically unnecessary presentations.

Low acuity patient care including the assessment and referral to alternate destinations continues to be a growing challenge for NSW Ambulance paramedics.

Paramedics are now supported by a Treatment and Referral Decisions protocol and a strengthened Referral Decision protocol.

Palliative and end of life care

NSW Ambulance continues to work towards providing quality palliative and end of life care for patients with a life limiting illness, as supported by the Agency for Clinical Innovation's Blue Print Palliative Model of Care and the NSW Health Advance Planning for Quality End of Life Action Plan 2013-2018.

This continues to be achieved through paramedics responding to the wishes of palliative patients with Authorised Care Plans or NSW Health Resuscitation Plans.

A number of resources and tools have been developed to support paramedics in providing palliative and quality end of life care.

A protocol was developed and implemented across NSW to support qualified paramedics to formally undertake Verification of Death.

Verification of Death is a clinical assessment process to establish that a person has died. Using standard clinical assessment tools, a qualified paramedic can establish and document that death has occurred.

During 2015-16 paramedics undertook 29,373 patient referrals to an alternative care pathway."

This approach ensures that the decisions about care are jointly made and inclusive of the patient, the paramedic and as appropriate with the GP.

The successful implementation of this model of care means paramedics have improved operational capacity through a decreased case cycle time and availability to respond to emergencies, as well as freeing up hospital Emergency Department capacity

AGED CARE

The Aged Care Emergency (ACE) service is a partnership between Hunter New England Health and the Hunter New England Central Coast Primary Health Network.

It is dependent on collaborative relationships with Residential Aged Care Facilities (RACFs), NSW Ambulance, Primary Health Networks (PHNs) and general practitioners (GPs).

The service provides triage, consultancy, clinical support, and advice for RACF staff and GPs, so care for patients can be delivered in the facility where appropriate and transfers to hospital are avoided.

The ACE service provides information, and when necessary, assists with the coordination of outreach or outpatient services for clinical issues such as wound management, continence problems, behavioural issues, IV antibiotic therapy, and the management of some acute and chronic conditions.

If the patient needs to be transferred to hospital, the ACE clinicians can facilitate the process and provide information about the patient to hospital staff for a planned patient journey to the Emergency Department (ED), admission (if required) and discharge back to the RACF.



How does it work?

- Local registered nurses answer ACE calls within the ED Monday to Friday within business hours.
- After Hours nurses take ACE calls from RACFs, using triage algorithms to determine the best care for patients and also providing advice to assist RACF staff on care for their patients. These triage algorithms include utilising NSW Ambulance extended care paramedics to assist with care of patients within their facility via our 131233 Ambulance Booking line.
- ACE benefits residents who receive appropriate care, and also benefits local health services who have documented improved productivity and cost savings.

Recent data from the Hunter Medical Research Institute shows:

- When ACE is utilised, up to 86 per cent of ED transfers are avoided
- When ACE commenced in the Tomaree community in 2014, there was a 72 per cent reduction in patient transfers to Newcastle (110 km round trip)
- Risks to elderly patients, including delirium, falls, pressure injuries, medication error and unnecessary care, have been minimised and even avoided for many patients



IN A SNAPSHOT:

P5 Protocol

As part of NSW Ambulance's strategy to strengthen its integrated care framework and its robust network of alternate care pathways, the Clinical Services directorate introduced P5 Referral Forms in 2016/17.

Introducing P5 Referral Forms

NSW Ambulance has also introduced a referral/advice form, which works alongside the electronic Medical Record (eMR) and the P5 referral form.

The P5 referral form provides paramedics with the essential information in a clear and concise format and can be used by

This includes pathways such as:

- self-care with advice (P5)
- referral to an alternate health care provider (P5)
- emergency Department via alternative transport (P5)
- after-hours availability of general practitioner (GP) services

qualified paramedics to communicate relevant patient information when referring a patient to an alternative care pathway.

It is important to note that the P5 referral form does not negate the need to complete a comprehensive eMR following each patient assessment and/or referral. Any clinical evidence relating to the decision making process is also included in the eMR, such as:

- Presenting complaint
- History of presenting illness

- Competency and capacity
- Medications and allergies
- Relevant systems examination
- Patient's final disposition
- Patient medical history
- Social history
- Specific advice given to the patient, including any associated clinical risk
- Disposition decision by the paramedic
- Possible differentials.

The clinical information provided in a referral letter is vital for the receiving health care provider as this acts as a clinical handover.

P5 referral forms assist in facilitating the care management of a patient via an alternative care pathway, improving paramedic operational capacity and consequently ensure patients receive the right medical care according to their condition.

IN A SNAPSHOT:

Functional Review

Over recent years significant change and transformation has occurred within NSW Ambulance and as with any change, it is important that the organisation also adapts.

The purpose of the Functional Review was to achieve a structured and more detailed understanding of the functional activities undertaken within NSW Ambulance's 40 plus business units.

The Functional Review was undertaken in 2016/17 by independent consultants Ernst & Young (EY), which aimed to identify challenges and critical dependencies that may be limiting NSW Ambulance's ability to deliver services.

During the review, business unit managers and Executive Directors were consulted extensively to identify gaps, overlaps and dependencies in activities undertaken across the eight directorates.

The findings of the review were delivered in early 2016 which recommended the realignment of the current organisational

structure in order to achieve maximum functionality.

Using the findings of the Functional Review, a new proposed alignment of functions for the organisation across seven key groupings was developed and put forward for implementation.

A total of 116 separate issues were raised which largely focused on the proposed alignment of functions across the groupings.

A summary of the key points raised included the need for clarification on the emergency management function, leadership development, performance and monitoring and areas which could be strengthened.

Using the feedback provided through the consultation process, a revised version of the functional groupings is in development and is expected to place NSW Ambulance in a strong position to continue to meet existing and future demand.

The Functional Review will be finalised and implemented in late 2017/early 2018.



TRANSFORMING OUR METROPOLITAN SYDNEY INFRASTRUCTURE

In 2016/17 NSW Ambulance continued to progress towards the next generation of ambulance response across Sydney through the implementation and delivery of major infrastructure and change projects designed to support the Paramedic Response Network (PRN).

Enabling implementation of the PRN operational model, the \$150 million Sydney Ambulance Metropolitan Infrastructure Strategy (SAMIS) includes nine announced superstations which will replace aging and at capacity station infrastructure.

During 2016-17, operations commenced at the first of our superstations at Bankstown, Kogarah and Blacktown, ensuring the ongoing delivery of high quality mobile emergency care to patients in those areas and surrounding communities.

Further superstations at Liverpool, Penrith, Northmead, Caringbah, Artarmon and Haberfield will be delivered as part of the program, with Penrith to become operational in late 2017.

The SAMIS program will enhance NSW Ambulance station infrastructure across metropolitan Sydney and more evenly disperse paramedics improving their availability to respond.





A MODEL FOR THE FUTURE

Once fully operational the Paramedic Response Network (PRN) model will support a mobile paramedic workforce now and into the future, ensuring NSW Ambulance resources are strategically located in the right place at the right time.

While superstations sit at the heart of the PRN concept, these facilities will be supported by a mix of existing stations and new facilities functioning as Paramedic Response Points (PRPs), creating a mobile response network that improves our ability to evenly distribute our paramedic resources across metropolitan Sydney.

In addition to the nine superstations that are to be delivered over the five year transition towards the full realisation of the PRN program, a series of newly constructed PRPs will also be delivered to support the operational needs of on-road paramedics.

These facilities have been designed in close consultation with staff to develop a facility that operates in a different way to our traditional stations.

NSW Ambulance continues to work in close consultation with all stakeholders in the design and roll-out of additional infrastructure and deployment of resources needed to support the PRN.

The first PRP to be constructed is a brand new facility at Mortdale.

IN A SNAPSHOT:

Make Ready Model

Each of the superstations to commence operations has also seen the introduction of the Make Ready Model (MRM) operational concept from the first day of operations.

All superstations, when operational, will be supported by a Make Ready Logistics Team who work to maximise time available for paramedics to dedicate to

clinical duties, rather than cleaning and restocking emergency ambulances.

The introduction of the MRM comes after significant and ongoing development work since 2015 to ensure our frontline staff and operations are ready for this evolution in the way we prepare assets for patient response.

The NSW Government has backed the introduction of this model through the provision of \$4 million in funding as part of the 2017 State Budget.



ENHANCING RURAL AND REGIONAL AMBULANCE INFRASTRUCTURE

The Rural Ambulance Infrastructure Reconfiguration (RAIR) program is a state-wide initiative to ensure that future NSW Ambulance infrastructure and models of care are founded on evidence and centred on meeting the needs of patients in rural and regional locations.

RAIR is delivering new stations equipped with modern facilities and designed in close consultation with local paramedics.

These infrastructure improvements are enhancing the support for rural and regional paramedics in delivering high quality mobile emergency care by providing purpose built infrastructure that is located in the right place to deliver the right service.



“ The Rural Ambulance Infrastructure Reconfiguration (RAIR) program is a state-wide initiative to ensure that future NSW Ambulance infrastructure and models of care are founded on evidence and centred on meeting the needs of patients in rural and regional locations.”

MILESTONES

The RAIR program includes 22 rural and regional locations that will benefit from the delivery of upgraded, brand new or entirely rebuilt stations with the first station at Wagga Wagga becoming operational in January 2017.

During 2016-17, new stations have been announced for Coffs Harbour, Cootamundra, Cowra, Goulburn and Grenfell.

Construction work also progressed on a new NSW Ambulance station for Harden, Coolamon’s first ever ambulance station and a major upgrade to Ardlethan Ambulance Station.

Planning, design and site-sourcing continued on a number of additional RAIR projects including on new ambulance stations for Griffith, Berry, Kiama and Bay & Basin.

It follows the announcement that the 2017-18 Ambulance Budget will include a continued investment of \$35 million for RAIR to enable the completion of work at Harden, Griffith, Ardlethan and Coolamon and the beginning of construction on more ambulance stations at Berry, Molong, Bay and Basin.





PLANNING AHEAD

RAIR sites have been identified through a comprehensive review of the condition, capacity and location of regional and rural infrastructure.

In determining areas of priority Triple Zero (000) call data was analysed for the last five years, matched to corresponding existing population data to inform future service requirements.

The RAIR team used that information to develop an accurate predictive ratio for the number, acuity and location of Triple Zero (000) calls for each demographic section of the population.

This allows NSW Ambulance to not only project the number of future Triple Zero (000) calls, but also the severity and location and the corresponding number of workforce hours required to meet that demand.

Evidence based and fit for purpose infrastructure is being designed to meet patient demand while continuing to reduce the likelihood of lengthy responses to patients and deliver care as efficiently as possible.



ANNOUNCED RAIR AMBULANCE STATIONS

- Ardlethan
- Bathurst
- Bay & Basin (Jervis Bay)
- Berry
- Birmingham Gardens
- Coffs Harbour
- Coolamon
- Cootamundra
- Cowra
- Grenfell
- Griffith
- Goulburn
- Harden
- Kiama
- Molong
- Pottsville
- Maitland Region
- Toukley
- Wagga Wagga
- Wauchope
- Wyong
- Yas

SPOTLIGHT ON WAGGA WAGGA

It's been more than 90 years since the first 'ambulance men' responded to duty at Wagga Wagga.

Since then, an evolution of patient care has developed – with the paramedics stationed there still the heartbeat of their local community, and the brand new station placing them as leaders of the largest rural and regional transformation of NSW Ambulance infrastructure in our organisation's 122 year history.

LEADING THE STATE

Home to the first NSW Ambulance station to be built, Wagga Wagga is now leading the state yet again as part of the NSW Government's \$122 million Rural Ambulance Infrastructure Reconfiguration (RAIR) program.

The new \$4.4 million NSW Ambulance Wagga Wagga station recently commenced operations early in 2017 and is poised to boost efficiency and collaboration by accommodating a range of frontline and support services in one central location.

However to truly know how far NSW Ambulance has come on its journey in the evolution of patient care, we must first examine the history books.

A HISTORY OF OVERCOMING HURDLES

A sudden Spanish influenza pandemic in 1919 prompted the call for 'an efficient public ambulance under the control of an ambulance brigade.'

In the first six months of 1919 alone, more than 320 cases of the illness were reported and it was during this time of urgent medical need, that the Wagga District Ambulance Service stepped in to fill the void.

Little progress was made until 1923 when the NSW Government announced it would provide financial support to establish motor ambulance services in country districts and so, the Wagga District Ambulance service officially commenced service in May 1925.

Following the service's 1925 launch, NSW Inspector of Ambulances, Supt Thomas Henderson said functions would include the transport of both patient and convalescent cases, first aid, a casualty depot at the ambulance station, pre-maternity cases and cases in conjunction with "bush nursing".

The task of an early "ambulance man" in Wagga Wagga was not for the faint-hearted, with the journey to patients often requiring a trip of many miles, "dodging trees over unmade roads".

The service's first ambulance, a Hudson super six chassis, arrived in March 1926 and in its first three months the ambulance





travelled 1694 miles (2726km), attended 42 crashes and 98 transports.

It proved so invaluable, a second ambulance, a Buick “Big 6” convertible touring car, was bought within a month of the first.

The service operated out of a cottage at 29 Simmons St, with the Buick housed in a slab stable and the Hudson standing in the street.

Since the early days of country call-outs and service, the new Wagga Wagga Ambulance Station is now one of the most advanced NSW Ambulance facilities across regional and rural New South Wales.

The new Wagga Wagga station represents the first step in what is the biggest regional and rural transformation of infrastructure and service delivery models in the organisation’s history.

It is also the first of 20 sites earmarked for an upgraded, rebuilt or entirely new ambulance station across the state.

The Wagga Wagga facility includes a 14 bay plant room for ambulance vehicles, a zone meeting facility and an advanced training complex designed with the input of local staff for the delivery of paramedic education and training programs.

With a fleet maintenance workshop on site which is able to undertake servicing, major maintenance and minor repairs, the new station has also been designed to meet the needs of paramedic recertification and training.

The RAIR team worked closely with local Wagga Wagga staff to ensure the delivery of a modern and fit for purpose facility, with the fit out and commissioning process championed by local paramedic, Maggie Quirk.

IN A SNAPSHOT:

Kempsey Ambulance Station Officially Opens

The new \$3.3 million state-of-the-art facility Kempsey Ambulance Station was officially opened in 2017.

Located on Tozer St, the new station replaces the former station on Belgrave St which has been in service for almost 70 years.

The new premises, co-located with the recently redeveloped Kempsey District Hospital, have been purposely designed and built to cater for a growing Kempsey community and surrounds for many years to come.

A considerable improvement on the current facility, the new station supports NSW Ambulance managers, support, education and clinical staff with modernised equipment and better facilities.

The new Kempsey Station accommodates 20 staff and incorporates six ambulance vehicles, a fleet maintenance workshop and a separate manager’s office.

New education and training facilities have also been included to meet the needs of paramedic education and clinical practice. This will be of great assistance in the important professional development of our staff and will enable us to continue to deliver a high quality emergency mobile health service.

Kempsey crews attend approximately 4800 incidents per year, across to Crescent Head in the east and Bellbrook in the region’s west.

This number increases during large community events and holiday periods and patient cases are diverse and include medical episodes, trauma, motor vehicle crashes and inter-hospital transfers.



SENIOR MANAGERS CONFERENCE

The future of NSW Ambulance and its performance within the state health system was firmly in the spotlight at the 2017 NSW Ambulance Senior Managers Conference.

Bringing together more than 130 managers from across NSW Ambulance’s corporate and operational directorates, the conference invited our senior leaders to assess and discuss the opportunities and challenges facing the organisation now and into the future.

NSW Ambulance holds a Senior Managers Conference on a biannual basis to provide managers with the opportunity to come together to discuss challenges, opportunities and areas for improvement in the organisation.

It also provides the ideal forum for staff to strengthen their existing leadership and management skills, to further support the organisation in its journey into the future.

The conference, which was held at the Canada Bay Club, started with NSW Ambulance Chief Executive Dominic

Morgan placing responsibility for leading the organisation into the future into the hands of every manager in the room and their team of staff.

The NSW Ambulance’s Executive Leadership Team participated in two discussion panels designed to give conference attendees insight into the challenges and opportunities facing each directorate, while also offering the chance for questions from the floor.

Executive Director Service Delivery David Dutton, encouraged managers to dedicate resources to change, especially if they want to develop best practice standards.

Change is happening across all areas of operations, work practices and our organisational culture, so NSW Ambulance must adapt and dedicate resources to facilitate this.

A key theme of the day; that NSW Ambulance exists to meet the needs of patients and the organisation needs to break down the barriers to change to ensure NSW Ambulance continues to provide a whole of health solution for our patients.



IN A SNAPSHOT:

Head coach project

NSW Ambulance’s Healthy Workplace Strategies team launched a new HeadCoach project in 2017, aimed at improving mental health in the workplace.

The team are working closely with the University of NSW, University of Sydney and the Black Dog Institute on ways to keep staff healthy, productive and mentally fit in the workplace.

HeadCoach is a new online manager training program being developed for Duty Operations Managers (DOM) and Station Officers (SO) to help them better assist workplace mental health issues that arise within their team.

In order to build the most effective training for NSW Ambulance, the research team invited NSW Ambulance paramedics to complete two short 10 minute questionnaires over a six month period.

During this six month period DOMs and SOs will also have access to an online training program aimed at building awareness and skills in how to best manage mental health issues in the workplace.

The HeadCoach trial began in March 2017 month and different areas of NSW Ambulance will have the opportunity to participate throughout the year. The order which DOMs and SOs receive the program and surveys is varied and random.

SIGNIFICANT EVENTS
SUPPORT REGISTER

NSW Ambulance launched the Staff Support Activation and Significant Events Support Register in 2016/17.

The Register is part of NSW Ambulance’s commitment to developing a supportive framework, committed to enhancing staff wellbeing and resilience.

This innovative new tool is designed to assist managers in proactively identifying and providing additional support to staff involved in significant, sensitive or traumatic events in the course of their work for the organisation.

Its purpose is to create an improved reporting system for staff who, are exposed to events which have or

potentially could have a significant impact on their mental, physical or emotional health or wellbeing.

The Register aims to ensure that staff support services are activated for any event that has been assessed as potentially likely to have a significant risk of causing substantial or serious harm to the mental health and wellbeing of a staff member.

As its use grows, it will assist in monitoring the exposure of staff to repeated traumatic events over time in order to tailor support mechanisms for staff who may be at greater risk.

Events listed in the Register will be allocated a coloured classification, classified as either orange or red and must be documented and recorded in the Register.



WELLBEING INVESTMENT
PROGRAM

In 2017/18 the Wellbeing Investment Program will be overseen by the Wellbeing Interagency Oversight Committee.

Chaired by NSW Ambulance it includes membership from external agencies such as the NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet, NSW Treasury and NSW Health.

The Wellbeing Investment Program is further supported by a Wellbeing Advisory Group which includes representation from the Health Services Union, Australian Paramedics Association and NSW Health and is chaired by the Executive Director People & Culture, Kylee Wade.

Through evidence based design and following extensive consultation with staff, unions and industry specialists, the Wellbeing Interagency Oversight Committee will roll out a number of initiatives under three key areas.

“Initiatives like this are vitally important because exposure to traumatic incidents is part and parcel of being a first responder.



The delegated manager may decide to include information about individual yellow events, but this is not mandatory and will be decided on a case-by-case basis.

The Staff Support Activation and Significant Events Support Register collects information around an event that may include:

- Incidents involving the death or suicide of a staff member or volunteer
- Assault of a staff member
- paediatric death or serious injury to a child
- natural disasters, major or protracted incidents
- exposure to dangerous toxins or chemical agents

A LOCAL INITIATIVE

The Staff Support Activation and Significant Events Support Register was originally conceptualised by Hunter Sector Deputy Director Operations Jeff Hescott and his team as a proof of concept.

The local results indicated significant benefits to staff, which gave the Register the merit to be rolled out right across NSW Ambulance as part of a critical support mechanism for all staff.

Now managed within a framework by People & Culture, initiatives like this are vitally important because exposure to traumatic incidents is part and parcel of being a first responder.

It’s a reality that our staff members are at higher risk of being exposed to significant or traumatic events during the course of their duties.

Keeping a register of these events, and of affected employees, is the best way to identify need and to normalise the prompt and effective provision of support.”

LOCALLY MANAGED SUPPORT

Information for the Register will be provided by the manager who assists staff involved in the event, after the timely provision of support and welfare actions is enacted.

While early access to support reduces the impact of events and risk of mental health issues, all staff maintain the right to decline support and/or seek assistance outside of NSW Ambulance.

The Register will be maintained by a senior manager delegated for each of the areas and access to the document will be limited to the delegated manager.





INVESTING IN WELLBEING

In 2016/17, as an organisation NSW Ambulance has taken significant steps towards improving mental health, wellbeing and resilience support for staff.

NSW Ambulance has seen great results from staff, stakeholder and Union collaboration and hard work, which has helped us set our focus through open and difficult conversations and the implementation of initiatives designed to better support the workforce.

The importance of the continuation of this work has been recognised by the NSW Government, in 2017 with the NSW Premier Gladys Berejiklian and NSW Health Minister Brad Hazzard pledging an

additional \$48 million in funding for mental health and wellbeing support to NSW Ambulance.

This significant investment will ensure that NSW Ambulance can continue to develop and grow its complement of staff wellbeing and mental health support programs and initiatives.

It will also assist us to better support our staff from the first to the last day of their NSW Ambulance career, with a comprehensive range of integrated physical and mental health and wellbeing strategies.

The outcomes from this investment will see the implementation of the Wellbeing Investment Program throughout the second half of 2017 and early 2018.



1. WELL AT WORK

Enhancement of the current Chaplaincy and Peer Support Officer (PSO) programs, with an extra 17 Chaplains and 30 PSOs, based on a needs analysis undertaken by NSW Ambulance Healthy Workplace Strategies.



2. PROTECTED AT WORK

- Alignment of NSW Ambulance activities with the recommendations of the NSW Parliamentary Legislative Assembly Report of Violence Against Emergency Services Personnel.
- Additional training for all operational staff, including Control Division staff and trained and qualified volunteers.
- Employment of two full-time Occupational Violence Prevention Officers to manage this work, provide internal subject matter expertise, robust data collection, analysis and reporting, as well as working with staff to review and trial equipment.
- A state-wide community awareness campaign targeted at educating and minimising violence against staff.



3. SAFE AT WORK

- The engagement of a Physiotherapist and Occupational Therapists to provide internal subject matter expertise and manage our manual handling programs.
- Aligning manual handling activities with evidence-based best practice including the development of a robust manual handling framework.
- Providing new training to paramedics (both existing and new staff) in manual handling best practice.
- Increasing awareness of safe manual handling practices through an internal awareness campaign that builds on the success of the previous THINK campaign.
- Ongoing access to safety specialists to provide personalised pre and post injury support to paramedics and ensure best practice manual handling is maintained.

These programs represent \$9 million of investment over the next three years, with \$4.5 million this financial year.

In addition to these initiatives, the Wellbeing Interagency Oversight Committee will work with stakeholders on Phase two of the program, which will focus on significantly investing in our leadership capacity and the mental health and resilience of our staff.



Reduction in Workplace injuries

Workplace injury rates have declined overall, with mental stress injuries, decreasing by 25 per cent compared to 2015-16.

A focus on tailored treatment, early intervention and timely claims closures has meant a 14.8 per cent reduction in total claims costs.

OCCUPATIONAL VIOLENCE PREVENTION

In 2017, NSW Ambulance endorsed and published the Occupational Violence Prevention Strategic Advisory Committee final report following six months of collaborative work.

Building on the record wellbeing investment work, it is anticipated that the implementation phase will officially commence in late 2017, addressing the recommendations contained within the report.

NSW Ambulance has long held a zero tolerance stance to any violence or abuse against all NSW Ambulance staff regardless of who it is committing these acts.

As part of this stance, it is anticipated the Protected at Work initiative as part of the \$48 million Wellbeing Investment

will strengthen our position and improve outcomes for staff.

NSW Ambulance as an organisation is committed to ensuring implementation of Protected at Work and further organisational efforts to address occupational violence, aligns with the recommendations of the NSW Parliamentary Legislative Assembly Report of Violence Against Emergency Services Personnel.

This initiative forms part of a multi-faceted strategy which includes additional training for all operational staff and the employment of two full-time Occupational Violence Prevention Officers.

These officers will work with staff to review and trial equipment as well as collect and analyse data to determine best practice for ensuring our staff are protected at work.

The nature of the work we do can on occasions lead us to shrug off clearly unacceptable behaviour towards us. When it comes to occupational violence in particular, this has to stop.

A state-wide occupational violence prevention and awareness campaign will be launched by NSW Ambulance in 2017/2018 designed to educate the public on how their interactions with NSW Ambulance staff are key to ensuring patients receive the high quality care paramedics are trained to provide.

The campaign will build on the messages previously delivered as part of the previous 'No Excuse for Call Taker Abuse' and 'If You Hurt a Paramedic' campaigns and aims to encourage staff to report any cases immediately.



#NoCallTakerAbuse NSW Ambulance



There is no excuse for physically or verbally abusing paramedics. We respect the law. For more information visit nswambulance.com.au

IN A SNAPSHOT:

Wellbeing & Resilience Summit 2016

NSW Ambulance held the first Staff Wellbeing and Resilience Summit in July 2016, introducing a range of other services to support staff.

The Summit (live-streamed online) attracted 300 staff, special guests and speakers from throughout NSW, Australia and overseas attendees gathered to learn the latest in research and programs available.

The audience heard from brave staff members who shared their experiences with depression, anxiety, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and the impact of trauma; their presentations greeted with warm support from their peers.

The Summit led to further information being available to staff about mental health and ensured the organisation put mental health at the forefront of our organisational culture and priorities.

The event identified key areas for improvements including:

- Resilience training for all staff with frontline leaders skilled in mental health literacy and support

- Continued focus on workplace culture to build a supportive and positive workplace
- Enhanced staff support options
- Reduced stigma around mental health
- An improved workers compensation process
- Improved fatigue management and breaks for staff
- Education and support for families
- Support and care for retired staff



Supporting Staff Wellbeing

The NSW Ambulance Staff Wellbeing and Resilience Summit led to the planning, development and delivery of a range of mental health, wellbeing and resilience initiatives for NSW Ambulance staff, including:

- **Wellbeing Wednesdays** – A Weekly communique from the Chief Executive providing links, information and support to ensure staff remain proactively mindful of their own resilience and mental health.
- **Mental Health Literacy** – An online program was launched in 2017, featuring personal staff stories to help reduce stigma associated with mental health.
- **Mindfulness program** – A practical skills based program designed to assist in stress reduction due to be launched in 2017.
- **NSW Ambulance Supporting our Families information sessions** – Was designed to provide support tools to families with staff members starting at NSW Ambulance.
- **Chaplain support** - An additional 15 Chaplains recruited and commenced duty.
- **Recover at Work** - Implemented new policies and processes to support Recover at Work.
- **‘Buddy Program’** – A pilot program was launched in Western Sector designed to provide mentoring and support for new staff
- **First Contact Coordinators (FCCs)** - These roles provide advice on how to notify, lodge and manage workplace injury or incidents and also provide administrative support to the workers compensation team.
- **Staff Support Activation and Significant Events Support Register** - An improved reporting system for staff who are exposed to events which have or potentially could have a significant impact on their mental, physical or emotional health or wellbeing.



NSW AMBULANCE QUALIFIED VOLUNTEERS & COMMUNITY FIRST RESPONDERS CONFERENCE

Lessons learnt was the focus of the 2017 Coffs Harbour Xtreme Volunteer Conference, bringing together more than 60 NSW Ambulance staff and qualified volunteers from across the state.

The qualified Volunteer Ambulance Officers (VAOs) and Community First Responders (CFRs) along with educators, paramedic facilitators, managers and support personnel participated in an interactive and

insightful conference on the first day and under a series of marine extreme exercises on the Coffs Harbour waterfront on day two.

TESTING CONDITIONS AND SIMULATIONS

The Xtreme Conference, which is one of several Conferences held for qualified volunteers by NSW Ambulance across the state, is designed to give qualified Volunteer Ambulance Officers and Community First Responders an opportunity to both test and strengthen their critical care skills through mock, life-like scenarios.

Inter-agency collaboration was required as part of five challenging scenario, with other emergency service agencies such as NSW Police, NSW Water Police, Marine Rescue, State Emergency Services (SES), NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS) and Fire and Rescue NSW (FRNSW) as well as NSW Ambulance paramedics, senior managers, staff and educators.

Training exercises focused on five emergency scenarios, requiring participants to identify, respond, treat and assist patients in various marine based or marine co-located situations.

Scenario one challenged participants to provide clinical care to four patients involved in a multi-vehicle collision as well as coordinate with the RFS and SES.

A boat collision with a rock wall was the focus of the second scenario where participants were required to treat and rescue two patients in consultation with SES, NSW Police, Marine Police and RFS.

Rescuing a patient experiencing a heart attack on the beach was the setting for the third scenario, with participants required to treat and extricate the patient via a 4WD Ambulance as well as release flares for assistance from other agencies.

The fourth scenario involved a patient requiring rescue from the water due to chest pains.

Responders were then required to treat the patient for a cardiac arrest while aboard the boat, including the use of a defibrillator, before transferring patient to a stretcher and the waiting ambulance.

A kitchen fire involving multiple patients and external agencies such as the RFS, SES and Fire and Rescue NSW was the setting for scenario five, with many participants also getting involved in the management of a mock control room.





“Our staff do an extraordinary job, often in extraordinary circumstances and under immense pressure.” - Chief Executive Dominic Morgan



Scenario training is a basic tenant of all Ambulance Emergency Care (AEC) training; however the exercises which are conducted at the volunteer conferences are designed to relate to every day incidents which qualified VAO and CFRs may encounter in every day responses.

“ The 2017 Coffs Harbour Volunteer Conference provided the ideal setting for putting a range of skills into practice and one of the many advantages of the volunteer conferences and training exercises is that participants can really hone and improve their skills in a specific area.”

IN A SNAPSHOT:

Peer Support Program

NSW Ambulance’s Peer Support Program aims to provide all staff with someone to talk to who can relate to their experiences and link them in with professional support services when required.

Peer support officers (PSOs) provide confidential, practical, emotional support and assistance to colleagues.

In order to ensure that PSOs consistently provide the best standard of support available, it is essential that they refresh their skills and revise industry best practice.

NSW Ambulance Peer Support Team Coordinator, Vicky Gabriel, has now

delivered a total of 18 sessions of PSO refresher training throughout NSW, with a total of 115 PSOs having received the training.

The training reviews the role of peer support at NSW Ambulance and the importance of referring staff to professional supports when required for more specialised assistance.

It also includes a review of the risk of harm to self and others, as well as training around global best practice in post incident support

The training comprises a session entitled ‘role modelling self-care’, which focuses on the importance of PSOs looking after themselves to prevent burnout and compassion fatigue, as well as demonstrating what it looks like to look after yourself.



OPERATION SYDEX 2016

Simulation training forms a key part of ensuring our operational teams are prepared and ready to respond to any incident.

As part of strengthening skills in disaster response operations, NSW Ambulance participated in the multi-agency simulated Sydex 2016 disaster exercise in 2016/17.

More than 700 NSW Ambulance, NSW Police Force, Fire & Rescue NSW personnel and volunteers and other Government representatives participated, providing vital insights into response procedures for a critical event on a scale never before witnessed in NSW.

THE SCENARIO

The scenario centred around an incident in which a Boeing 777 aircraft crashes into a concert at Barangaroo, resulting in 500 patients requiring treatment.

20 vehicles with double paramedic crews and single responders were dispatched in real time with no prior warning about the scenario, other than being told at the start of shift that a major exercise would occur.

Sydney’s CBD erupted with the sound of sirens as multiple agencies descended, with aviation fuel, oil and carbon fibre covering the site, NSW Ambulance personnel awaited the all-clear from Fire & Rescue NSW.

A forward command post was established in the interim and once the site was safe, paramedics entered to begin rendering treatment.

Patients were triaged with SMART Triage tags (Priority 1 – red, Priority 2 – yellow, Priority 3 – green).

All aircraft and concert casualties were channelled to an emergency decontamination corridor where Special Operations Team (SOT) paramedics and Fire & Rescue NSW Hazmat firefighters decontaminated the patients.

The transport of patients using the ‘emerge’ train exercise methodology was conducted in real time, using available resources which included 50 ambulances and 15 Sydney Metropolitan hospitals.

OUTCOME

NSW Ambulance, paramedics, our first responder volunteers, the volunteers from different agencies like St John; University of Tasmania students as well as all specialty functions worked together as a cohesive team during the incident.

Despite challenges, responders adapted and overcame these by following a set of effective procedures.

NSW Ambulance’s responders and delivery of care to patients highlighted that the organisation has a strong planning and preparedness process in place.

The event demonstrated to existing staff and students how triage works in practice and the importance of cohesive teamwork.



IN A SNAPSHOT:

Special Ops training – An Insight

One of the most competitive training courses which prepares NSW Ambulance specialist paramedics to reach, treat and respond to patients in any environment kicked off during winter 2017.

The six-week, Special Operations Training (SOT) course trains our specialist paramedics to reach treat and respond to

patients in any environment, in fact entry to and course availability is highly restricted.

There are strict course suitability and fitness testing requirements for each course participant which involves a range of knowledge-based and practical skills.

The Fitness and Operational Suitability Testing was held at Baulkham Hills and not even lightning strikes and driving rain could keep participants away.



They completed a complex written, abstract, reasoning and knowledge exam, followed by an assessment on their ability to correctly construct a selection of knots and a safety line.

This comprised a simulated stair climb with 20 kg pack, two minutes of external cardiac compressions as well as carrying a fire extinguisher and water container followed by a 70kg dummy drag.

Participants were then required to complete swim testing and a gruelling 3km walk carrying a 20kg pack.

Each applicant was required to successfully pass each stage of the testing before being able to pass on to the next section.

The second half of the examination involved rigorous fitness testing and a comprehensive Fitness Assessment, which is designed to simulate the physical challenges of a SOT member role.

While these strict suitability testing measures appear extreme, they are just one way NSW Ambulance ensures paramedics are clinically equipped to save lives in any situation and environment.



KASSY DELIVERY

A significant operational highlight for 2017 was the completion and arrival of the NSW Ambulance Kassy Snow Vehicle in Perisher Valley.

The new, state-of-the-art vehicle further boosts NSW Ambulance's ability to respond to medical emergencies in a range of extreme weather conditions.

The patient cabin can accommodate the transport and treatment of two stretcher patients, serve as an extreme weather

protection capsule and a scene command as well as being able to withstand 100km/h winds.

Staff from the Fleet and Equipment team, along with representatives of the vehicle manufacturer, were on site to assist with the handover process including demonstrating the stretcher and loading platform system and the various functions within the vehicle.



IN A SNAPSHOT:

Mobile Workshop

In 2017 NSW Ambulance mechanical workshops began working on the delivery of a new style of mobile workshop vehicle.

These vehicles and the specific fit-out have been designed by mechanics and have incorporated feedback from NSW Ambulance mechanical technicians at workshops throughout the state.

These vehicles, which are based on an Isuzu light truck cab chassis with a purpose build body, can carry increased stock and tools, allowing mechanical technicians to perform more repairs and services away from a workshop before restocking is required.



Fitted with engine oil extraction systems, storage for old and new oils and fluids as well as central locking, the mobile workshop units provide convenience and versatility for operators.

Allowing for safe work at night or in off-site locations, these vehicles also carry lighting and markings to ensure maximum safety.

A four wheel drive version will also be located at the Queanbeyan workshop, which will provide assistance when snowfield work is required. The layout principle for these new vehicles is for tools to be fitted to the left or offside of the vehicle, with parts located on the right side.

The vehicles also include a crane boom located at the back, enabling the lifting of wheels, stretchers and heavy objects into the centre isle of the unit.

“I am proud to lead such an incredible group of staff who continue to deliver our exemplary and vital life-saving service every day in sometimes challenging and confronting situations.” - Chief Executive Dominic Morgan



COMMUNITY EDUCATION PROGRAMS

NSW Ambulance was involved in a range of activities in the community this year.

On top of all the community requests for visits to pre-schools, retirement villages and culturally diverse groups, NSW Ambulance have also seen an increased focus on a number of key programs in which NSW Ambulance played a significant part.

THE TRAFFIC OFFENDERS INTERVENTION PROGRAM

Educational pre-sentencing options for people who have committed a road offence, NSW Ambulance paramedics are involved in the program with the Police Citizens Youth Clubs NSW.

We have seen a 20 per cent increase in presentations delivered compared to the previous year. This has resulted in the recruitment of 30 new paramedic presenters.



U TURN THE WHEEL

Delivering outstanding messages to high schools in the Sutherland Shire, the program educates pre-licensed and recently licensed students on road safety and the consequences of their actions. Statistically, the Sutherland Shire is seeing a decrease in youth motor vehicle tragedies more than any other area in NSW.

PREVENTION OF ALCOHOL RELATED TRAUMA IN YOUTH (PARTY)

NSW Ambulance helps to deliver the pertinent message “Live Once, Think Twice” in a program run by the Royal North Shore and Liverpool Trauma Hospitals. This forward thinking youth education program delivers a full day of presentations, hands on experience in occupational health, physio and real life scenarios unfolding in both the ED and Intensive Care Unit. The program has now been expanded to regional areas, including Lismore, Bathurst and Tamworth.

BE AN AMBULANCE HERO (DIAL ZERO ZERO ZERO) AND EMERGENCY HELPERS PROGRAMS

This NSW Ambulance program educates preschool and primary school children on what to do in an emergency. Presentations are delivered by paramedics in their spare time.

IN A SNAPSHOT:

P.A.R.T.Y is a Winner

NSW Ambulance participates in a range of community education programs across the state.

In early 2017, the hard work of paramedics who deliver the Prevent Alcohol and Risk-Related Trauma in Youth (P.A.R.T.Y) Program was recognised with the Innovation Award at the 2017 Australian Road Safety Awards.

NSW Ambulance is a proud supporter and participant of the P.A.R.T.Y program, supporting the team at Royal North Shore Hospital to deliver it to dozens of teenagers every year.



MAJOR EVENTS

NSW Ambulance has strong relationships with a range of stakeholders and has a presence at a range of major events throughout the state.

This ranges from Anzac Day services, to local or state sporting events, carnivals, shows, community events or celebrations to ensure the delivery of high quality emergency care can be delivered to any participants in attendance.

In 2016/17 we attended or held dozens of events, including:

- NSW Ambulance Graduation
- Anniversary of the Thredbo Landslide Disaster
- Anniversary of the Granville Train Disaster
- Fair Day
- NRL State of Origin/Grand Final
- Remembrance Day
- ANZAC Day
- Moon Festival
- Northern Fleet Opening
- Sporting events
- Childcare centres visits
- Dignitory events
- Investitive Ceremony
- BStreet Smart



APPRECIATION DAY

Appreciation Day provides an annual day where the community are encouraged to pause and take stock of the service that is delivered each and every day by NSW Ambulance staff.

It is a day to stop, reflect and show gratitude for the entire collaborative NSW Ambulance team who each make a contribution to delivering care and support, day in, day out to people in need across NSW.

The 2016 Appreciation Day was held at the St Ives Ambulance Station and provided an opportunity for NSW Ambulance to acknowledge outstanding acts of bravery committed by members of the public with the support of NSW Ambulance paramedics, call takers and other staff members.

As reflected in the name change from Thank a Paramedic Day, to Appreciation Day, the event is focused on how highlighting the vital role which every single NSW Ambulance staff member

plays in the delivery of care to patients.

Some staff may not be doing CPR, defibrillating a patient or inserting the cannula, but without NSW Ambulance fleet staff, there would be no ambulance vehicles to respond to patients.

Without IT staff there would no technology to dispatch paramedics to patients and without the finance team the organisation would not be able to purchase the life-saving drugs patients rely on.

Without NSW Ambulance clinical staff paramedics would not have the training to deliver the high quality patient care that changes and saves lives.

To be a paramedic or NSW Ambulance staff member comes with a core responsibility – and that is - to never lose sight of the ability to play a role – frontline or otherwise – in ensuring care gets to a patient who needs emergency medical assistance.

NSW Ambulance staff never expect or ask for thanks, but when it comes - particularly on days like Appreciation Day– it means

so much more when that message comes from the very people our hardworking staff have dedicated their career and strive daily to assist and support.

The NSW Minister for Health and Research Jillian Skinner also delivered the annual Bursary Award for high quality out of hospital care at the event.

With more than 75 school children in attendance, a simulated paramedic rescue scenario was held in addition to a range of interactive stalls manned by our flight nurses, helicopter doctors, motorbike paramedics, paramedics, control centre call takers, volunteers, special operations paramedics, community educators and our corporate staff.

In concert with the theme of recognising the important work each and every NSW Ambulance staff member delivers, 13 call takers were also acknowledged for their involvement in our 'No Excuse for Triple Zero (000) Abuse' public awareness campaign which was rolled out in 2016.



This year NSW Ambulance continued to bolster its engagement with the community across all social media platforms including the roll out of the second phase of the Your Urgency or Emergency campaign.

SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT & FOLLOWERS

NSW Ambulance's followers increased during 2016/17, with overall followers across all platforms increasing by 18,000 in the last twelve months.

Facebook: 90, 438 followers- up 9441

Instagram: 11, 400 followers -up 3993

Twitter: 27,800 Followers – up 5276

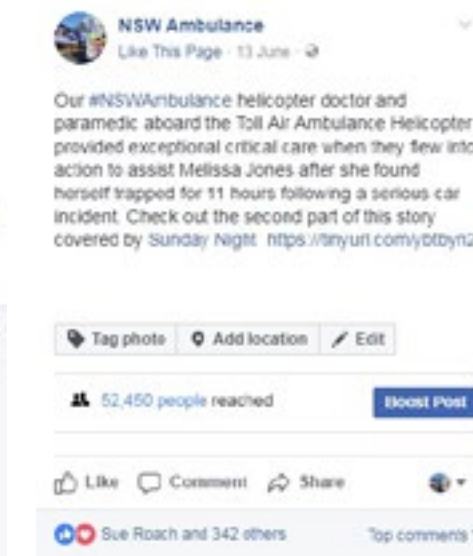
TEACHING THE NEXT TRIPLE ZERO (000) HEROES

A key focus for NSW Ambulance social media channels in 2016/17 was to highlight the work many of our paramedics do in the community, such as educating some of the smallest members of the community on safety and calling Triple Zero (000) in a medical emergency.



POSITIVE PATIENT OUTCOMES

Some positive patient stories are covered by media outlets and depending on the specific case, NSW Ambulance has leveraged this coverage and shared it with our followers to provide insight into positive patient outcomes due to the high standard of emergency care delivered by NSW Ambulance paramedics.



INTRODUCING THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE UNIFORM

NSW Ambulance paramedics are a unique bunch and social media provides the ideal forum to introduce some of the people who wear the uniform with pride.



In 2016/17 NSW Ambulance continued to grow its public reach, educating communities through campaigns and content shared daily on our official social media sites Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

The social strategy saw NSW Ambulance work and messages reach the millions, and ensured our followers gained an impressive insight into the work of our staff.

ALWAYS LEARNING AND TRAINING

Existing and new paramedic recruits are always learning and training to develop new skills to deliver exceptional emergency medical care.



INTERAGENCY TEAMWORK & SUPPORT

NSW Ambulance may be the first responders to incidents when it comes to delivering emergency medical care, but the organisation and our paramedics liaise very closely with a range of emergency services agencies and the strength of these relationships are often demonstrated on social media.



JOIN THE MOST TRUSTED PROFESSION

Social media has proven a highly effective forum for highlighting upcoming opportunities at the organisation and has contributed to an increase in applications during vacancy periods.



PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS:

NSW Ambulance has used social media to communicate a range of public awareness campaigns with great success, resulting in increased engagement, followers and responses to the posts.

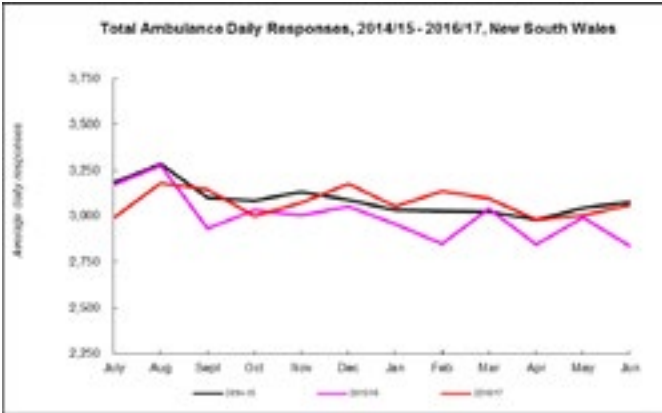


ALWAYS RESPONDING, IN ANY ENVIRONMENT

NSW Ambulance paramedics are always responding and ready to assist in delivering emergency medical care throughout the state and our social media channels provide the ideal setting to highlight the diverse environments NSW Ambulance paramedics work.



Ambulance Activity



TOTAL NSW AMBULANCE RESPONSES

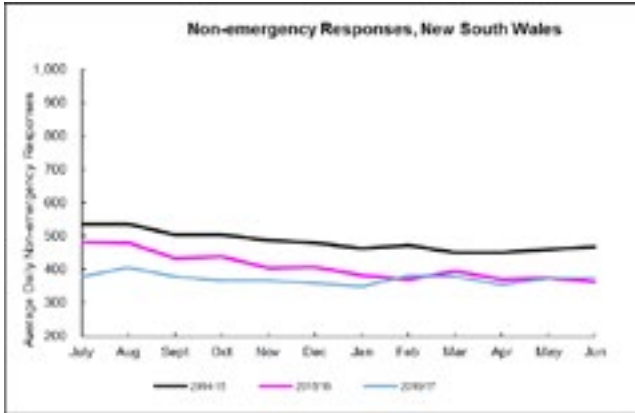
The average daily number of ambulance responses increased by 0.9 per cent over the past year.

In 2016/17, NSW Ambulance provided 1,122,101 total responses (both emergency and non-emergency) compared with 1,115,635 total responses in 2015/16. On average, there were 3,074 responses per day which is the equivalent to an average of one response every 28 seconds. The average daily ambulance responses by month are illustrated above.



NSW AMBULANCE EMERGENCY RESPONSES

In 2016/17, the total number of emergency responses was 985,799 compared with 963,562 in 2015/16. The average number of emergency responses per day increased 2.6 per cent from 2,633 in 2015/16 to 2,701 in 2016/17. Average daily emergency activity for the last three years is illustrated above.



NSW NON EMERGENCY RESPONSES

Across NSW during 2016/17, NSW Ambulance provided 136,302 non-emergency responses compared with 152,073 in 2015/16. In 2016/17 there were 373 non-emergency responses per day, compared with 416 in 2015/16, a decrease of -10.1 per cent. This decreased non-emergency activity is primarily due to the transfer of responsibility for a major part of the Non-Emergency (P5,6,7) activity to HealthShare NSW in May 2014. Average daily non-emergency response activity over the past three years is illustrated above.

“Always responding - every 28 seconds”

Glossary of Acronyms

ACE	Aged Care Emergency
CAD	Computer Aided Dispatch
CFR	Community First Responder
DOM	Duty Operations Manager
eMR	Electronic Medical Record
ED	Emergency Department
GP	General Practitioner
LHD	Local Health District
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
PRN	Paramedic Response Network
PSO	Peer Support Officer
RAIR	Rural Ambulance Infrastructure Reconfiguration Program
VAO	Qualified Volunteer Ambulance Officer



