Introduction

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 Premier Gladys Berejiklian and NSW Health Minister Brad Harwood pledging an additional $46-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 is too great a task for this year with the Sydney Ambulance Metropolitan Infrastructure Strategy (SAMIS) program enabling the carefully planned implementation of the Paramedic Response Network (PRN) to commence. This 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) program 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.

This year also saw the introduction of integrated care pathways designed to help reduce emergency presentations to hospital, with an additional $48-million in funding for the implementation of initiatives designed to better support the workforce.

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 workplace wellbeing program, establishment of the Staff Wellbeing and Support staff.

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 is designed to promote workplace safety and wellbeing and empower staff to make an immediate commitment to changing and improving our safety behaviours and culture.

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 Recovery 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 Officer program, which is supported by an increase in our number of Peer Support Officer and Worker Injury Screening and Early Intervention (WISE) program, which is supported by an increase in our number of Peer Support Officer program.

Chief Executive
Dominic Morgan ASM

Emergency Care

NSW Ambulance Year in Review 2016/17

Delivering Care Across the State

NSW Ambulance has reached new heights in 2016 and 2017 with the official launch of an aeromedical base and helicopter fleet 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 safety of patients from a greater range of areas, incorporating the latest clinical and research evidence, providing exemplary service to patients in all corners of the state, completing around 5000 patient missions statewide each year.

This network is comprised of the NSW Helicopter Retrieval Network, which consists of the Hunter-Lismore and commenced operations on March 7, 2017.

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.
The southern zone contract for NSW Ambulance aeromedical services, operated by Toll Group was officially launched on January 10. Under the new contract, a Toll Group rescue and retrieval service, with a NSW Ambulance Critical Care Paramedic and a Local Health District (HNELHD) doctor on board every flight, commenced operations in 2017.

For the first time in the history of the organisations partnership, the NSW Ambulance roundel, logo and checkered candy stripes 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.

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.
March 2017 represented a significant milestone for NSW Ambulance, marking 50 years since the first Beechcraft Queen Air B80 took flight, beginning the organisation’s 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 the 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. Medical equipment that was once only thought to be accessed in a hospital 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
- Transports 5200 patients in 2016

On Board:

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

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

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
- If patient suffers a cardiac arrest while under the influence of alcohol or drugs

Meeting Demand

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.

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 3,074 responses per day during 2016-17 which is the equivalent to an average of one response every 28.1 seconds.
The scope for the campaign is unlimited and it is anticipated a robust 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 million people and Twitter around 88,000 people.

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

It is important that NSW Ambulance help the community understand that as every patient attending an Emergency Department is not necessarily going to be admitted to hospital, not every patient who calls Triple Zero (000) will 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.

For example, experience breathing difficulties, for example, abdominal pain.

The Priority 1 (all 1A, 1B, 1C cases) median response time was 11.1 minutes in the January to March quarter. This ranged from 3 minutes in Sydney to 13.5 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.

In the period of January to March 2017, the fastest median response time was within the Hunter response area.

28 of these stations are on call overnight meaning activation time was one factor in response time, 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. This PRN model is a significant departure from the existing model of care in 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 significant NSW Government funding of $17.5 million as part of the 2016 state budget for 85 frontline NSW Ambulance staff.

• NSW Ambulance also received significant NSW Government funding of $17.5 million as part of the 2016 state budget for 85 frontline NSW Ambulance staff.

• An expanded new suite of community education programs was developed to teach and promote the ‘urgency of emergency’, ‘save Triple Zero (000) for saving lives and big accidents’ key messaging to all sectors of the community.

• To meet increasing local demand, NSW Ambulance began working to progressively implement 24 hour on-duty operations at a number of regional and rural stations that have not traditionally operated under this model, to assist with managing staff fatigue and improving mobilisation times, enhancing our ability to deliver high quality out-of-hospital care for the community surrounding these stations. This year NSW Ambulance has increased staff numbers to support 24 hour on-duty operations at Macquarie, Lismore, Coffs Harbour and Grafton Ambulance Stations.

• Among these initiatives:

  • NSW Ambulance also received additional $7.5 million in the 2017 budget for 53 additional relief paramedics across rural and remote NSW which will assist with managing staff fatigue.

  • The introduction of the new Make Ready Model into our operations 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.

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Integrated Care

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.

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.

This includes pathways such as:

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

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 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.

This 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.
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.

IN A SNAPSHOT:

Functional Review

Over recent years significant change and transformation has occurred within NSW Ambulance and 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.

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Rural Ambulance Infrastructure Reconfiguration

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.

A MODEL FOR THE FUTURE

Once fully operational the Paramedic Response Network (PRN) concept 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 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.

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MILESTONES

The PRN 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 PRP projects including 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 new ambulance stations at Berry, Molong, Bay and Basin.
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 300 cases of the disease were reported and it was during this time of urgent medical need, that the Wagga District Ambulance Service stepped in to fill the void.

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.

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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.

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

ANNOUNCED RAIR AMBULANCE STATIONS

• Ardlethan
• Bathurst
• Bay & Basin (Jervis Bay)
• Berry
• Birmingham Gardens
• Cootamundra
• Coolamon
• Coolamon
• Cowra
• Grenfell
• Griffith
• Goulburn
• Harden
• Kiama
• Molong
• Potts Hill
• Maitland Region
• Toukley
• Wagga Wagga
• Wauchope
• Wyong
• Yas

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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.”

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Infrastructure

The new 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 widened Kempsey District Hospital, have been purposefully 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.

It is also the first of 20 sites earmarked for an upgrade, rebuild or entirely new ambulance stations across the state.

Kempsey Ambulance Station accommodates 25 staff and incorporates six ambulance vehicles, a fleet maintenance workshop and a separate staff focused on the organisation’s history.

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

Since the early days of county calls out and service, the new Wagga Wagga Ambulance Station is one of the most advanced NSW Ambulance facilities in rural regional and rural New South Wales.

The new Wagga Wagga station represents the first step in what is the biggest change for NSW Ambulance in its history.

The new station has also been designed to meet the needs of paramedic recertification and training.

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

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

In a snapshot:

Kempsey Ambulance Station Officially Opens

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Infrastructural changes 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 vipers attend approximately 4200 incidents per year, across to Crescent Head in the east and Bellbrook in the region’s west.

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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 widened Kempsey District Hospital, have been purposefully 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.

It is also the first of 20 sites earmarked for an upgrade, rebuild or entirely new ambulance stations across the state.

Kempsey Ambulance Station accommodates 25 staff and incorporates six ambulance vehicles, a fleet maintenance workshop and a separate station has also been designed to meet the needs of paramedic recertification and training.

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

Since the early days of county calls out and service, the new Wagga Wagga Ambulance Station is one of the most advanced NSW Ambulance facilities in rural regional and rural New South Wales.

The new Wagga Wagga station represents the first step in what is the biggest change for NSW Ambulance in its history.

The new station has also been designed to meet the needs of paramedic recertification and training.

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.

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

In a snapshot:

Kempsey Ambulance Station Officially Opens

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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 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.

In 2017/18 the Wellbeing Investment Program will be overseen by the 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, Kylie Words.

Through evidence-based design and following extensive consultation with staff, unions and industry specialists, the Wellbeing Advisory Group will roll out a number of initiatives under three key areas:

- Supporting Staff Wellbeing & Resilience
- 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 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 Executive Director People & Culture, Kylie Words.

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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 $46 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 those with qualifications.
• 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.

Supporting Staff Wellbeing & Resilience

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 based 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 and Resilience Investment Program will focus on significantly investing in our leadership capacity and the mental health and resilience of our staff.

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

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 an 14.8 per cent reduction in total claims costs.
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

NSW Ambulance as an organisation is committed to ensuring implementation of Protected at Work and further organisational efforts to address occupational violence, align 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 in 2017 by two full-time Occupational Violence Prevention Officers. 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.

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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.

Training & Education

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 scenarios, with other emergency service agencies such as NSW Police, NSW Water Police, Marine Rescue, State Emergency Services (SES), NSW Rural Fire Service (FRS) 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. Scenarios one challenged participants to provide clinical care to four patients involved in a multi-vehicle collision as well as coordinate with the FRS 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 FRS. 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 the involving multiple patients and external agencies such as the FRS, 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.

Supporting Staff Wellbeing & Resilience  

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

Training & Education staff focused

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.

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 everyday incidents which qualified IAO and CFRs may encounter in everyday responses.

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’s essential that they refresh their skills and review industry best practice.

NSW Ambulance Peer Support Team Coordinator, Vicki Gabriel, has now delivered a total of 18 sessions of PSO refresher training throughout NSW, with a total of 110 PSOs having received the training. The training reviews the role of peer support at NSW Ambulance and the importance of referring staff to professional support 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-modeling 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.

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OUTCOME

NSW Ambulance, paramedics, our first responder volunteers, the volunteers from different agencies like St John University of Technology 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.
Fleet & Equipment

KASSY DELIVERY
A significant operational highlight for 2017 saw 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 built body, can carry increased stock and tools, allowing mechanical technicians to perform more repairs and services away from a workshop before restocking is required.

They are 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.

Training & Education

IN A SNAPSHOT:
Special Ops training – An Insight
One of the most competitive training courses which prepare NSW Ambulance 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 20kg 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 exams testing and a gruelling 10km 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.

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“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
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, 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
- ANZAC Day
- NRL State of Origin/Grand Final
- Remembrance Day
- Australia Day
- ANZAC Day
- Moon Festival
- Northern Fleet Opening
- Sporting events
- Children centre visits
- Digiroby events
- Investitive Ceremony
- BStree Smarr
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 9,441
Instagram: 11,400 followers – up 3,993
Twitter: 27,800 followers – up 5,276

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.

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.

In the Community

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.

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Social Media

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.

Social Media
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 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.

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
RAR ............................................... Rural Ambulance Infrastructure Reconfiguration Program
WAO ............................................... Qualified Volunteer Ambulance Officer