

YEAR 20/21 IN REVIEW



NSW Ambulance

excellence in care

TIME 20/21 LINE

OCT 2020

Anniversary of 40 years of Helicopter Operations

SEP 2020

State-wide roll out of 1,100 new Paediatric Airway Kits and Backpack Oxy Resuscitators

NOV 2020

NSW Ambulance 125-year Anniversary Book launched

NOV 2020

Elevate leadership program launched

NOV 2020

Launch of the NSW Ambulance ESO PAD Program with the NSW Volunteer Rescue Association (VRA) and NSW State Emergency Service (SES)

NOV 2020

Respirator Fit Testing program launched

JAN 2021

Associate Professor Jason Bendall appointed as Director Medical Services

FEB 2021

New fleet of state-of-the-art intensive care ambulances for regional communities roll out

MAR 2021

NSW Ambulance celebrates National Close the Gap Day

APR 2021

Vision and Strategic Plan 2021-2026 released

APR 2021

'Don't forget your flu shot' campaign launched

APR 2021

HealthRoster 11 Upgrade

MAY 2021

New refurbished Northern Control Centre opens

MAY 2020

Record-breaking number of recruits graduated for potential surge in demand

MAY 2021

NSW Ambulance and NSW Police join forces to launch 'Save Triple Zero (000) for Saving Lives' campaign

JUN 2021

Upskilling of 203 paramedics to intensive care paramedics for regional areas

FOREWORD

EXCELLENCE IN CARE, DURING ONE OF THE MOST CHALLENGING YEARS IN MODERN TIMES

“Resilience is overcoming adversity, whilst also potentially changing, or even dramatically transforming, (aspects of) that adversity.”
– Prof. Angie Hart

As emergency health service workers, responding to the unknown is a daily event. Facing new situations with professionalism and flexibility is one of our greatest skills. The year 2020-21, was one of the most unprecedented and challenging years in modern times, throughout which, we have demonstrated our ability to adapt to a new way of doing things, clinically and operationally.

Whilst our 2020-21 Year in Review highlights initiatives and progress throughout this most extraordinary year, I particularly want to make mention of our efforts to keep our staff safe, and opportunities where we were able to celebrate the care and dedication shown by NSW Ambulance to our community over many years.

To keep our staff safe and protected and guide our decision making, we established a full NSW Ambulance COVID-19 State Incident Management Team (IMT). We worked closely with our Health and Emergency Service Organisation partners and remained agile as the COVID pandemic evolved. We provided guidance and updates based on emerging evidence, experience and expert opinion to our staff working in a new and challenging healthcare environment. We responded quickly to build a range of support mechanisms and communications portals that ensured we delivered the most up-to-date information and advice to keep our staff, their families and our community safe.

Our book ‘Celebrating 125 years of NSW Ambulance’ features our people telling their stories

and providing a snapshot of the experiences of men and women who have spent their lives serving others. We also recognised the remarkable 40-year history of NSW Ambulance Rescue Helicopter Operations.

Throughout the year we remained focused on our vision of excellence in care for our patients and community. We laid the foundations for our research study in a world-first prospective randomised controlled trial, introduced an innovative Public Access Defibrillation (PAD) program, developed new clinical practice guidelines and invested in new technology.

And finally, to cap off a most extraordinary year, we launched the NSW Ambulance Vision and Strategic Plan 2021-2026, which sets our future direction and goals. A plan that, supported by unprecedented NSW Government investment, continues our commitment to our community in delivering excellence in care.



Dr Dominic Morgan ASM
Chief Executive, NSW Ambulance

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ABOUT

NSW AMBULANCE

More than eight million people, across NSW from metropolitan to remote rural communities, rely on NSW Ambulance to deliver excellence in care for their medical emergencies and a range of out of hospital unplanned care needs.

From our traditional emergency response of providing medical help to patients with serious life-threatening illnesses or trauma, to connecting patients who do not need an emergency response with the most appropriate health provider, NSW Ambulance provides excellence in care and ensures patients get the right care, at the right time, at the right place.

Despite increasing demand and the challenges posed by the COVID pandemic, NSW Ambulance continues to deliver significant improvements to the standard of clinical care and services for our patients. Our patients' experience of our care is consistently positive, having a high level of trust and confidence in our clinicians who attend them¹.

Our focus on delivering mobile integrated care and community paramedicine is transforming NSW Ambulance, from a strictly emergency care service, to a values-based mobile healthcare provider that is fully integrated with our healthcare partners. Our paramedics continue to develop from their historical role of delivering first aid and transportation to hospital, to an out of hospital care specialist, with an emphasis on decision-making, diagnosis, treatment and referral.

¹CAA Patient Experience Survey – 2020 Final Report



Our patients

58,140

Calls transferred to secondary triage, with 20,071 Triple Zero (000) calls (35%) referred to an alternate care pathway.

1,060,402

Triple Zero (000) calls received with 997,788 answered within 10 seconds

1,265,142

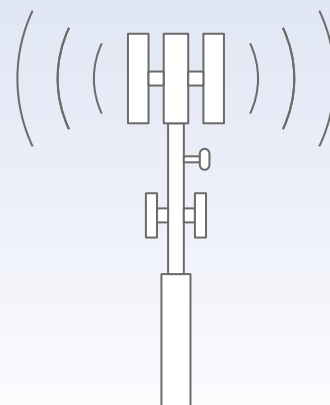
Ambulance responses representing an average of one (1) response every 24.9 seconds

8.18 minutes

Median response time to our most critical patients

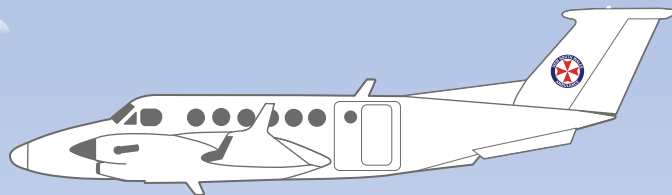
759,911

Patients transported



 **NSW Ambulance**





Aeromedical

4,529

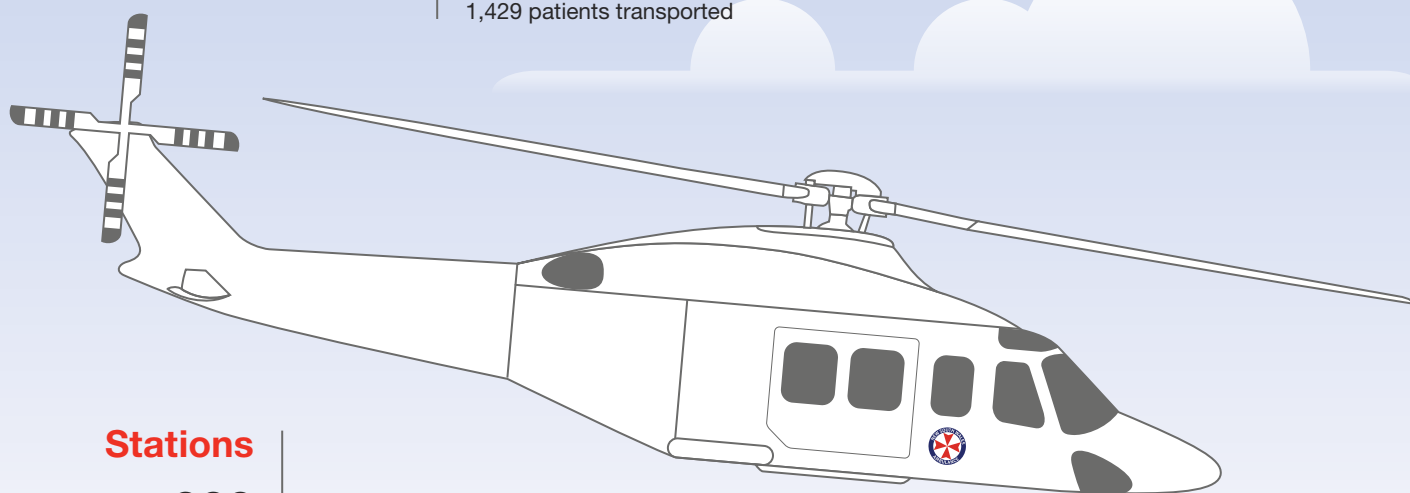
Helicopter Missions, with
3,323 patients transported

3,781

Fixed Wing Missions, with
5,987 patients transported

1,772

Road Retrieval Missions, with
1,429 patients transported



Stations

220

Operational
ambulance stations

18

Paramedic
Response Points

Our fleet

1,605

Operational vehicles

12

Helicopters

7

Fixed wing aircraft

Our people

106

Doctors

49

Nurses

365

Clinical Volunteers

3

Therapy dogs

6,128

People work at
NSW Ambulance

4,952

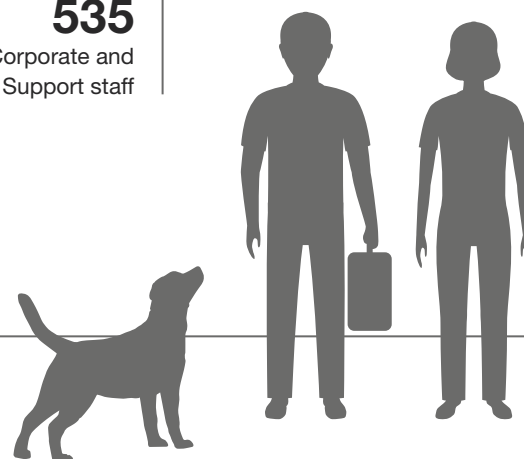
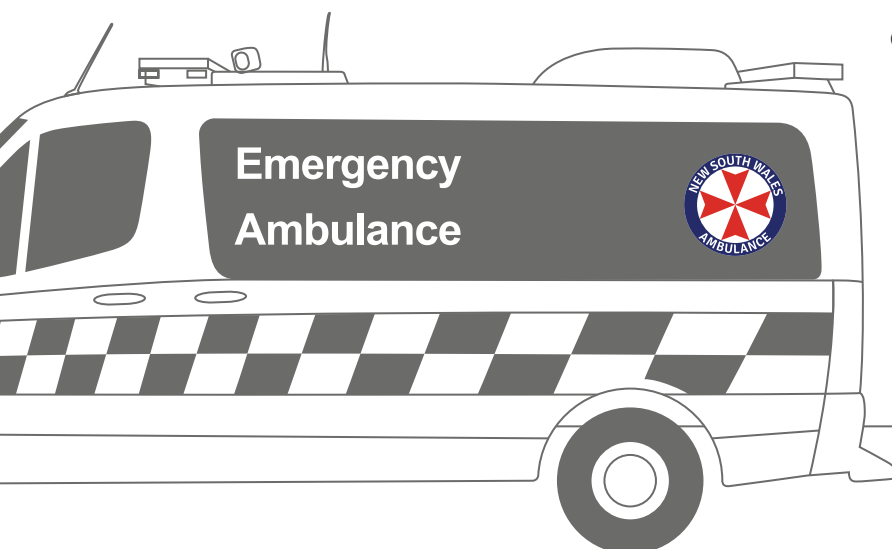
Paramedics

486

Control Centre staff

535

Corporate and
Support staff



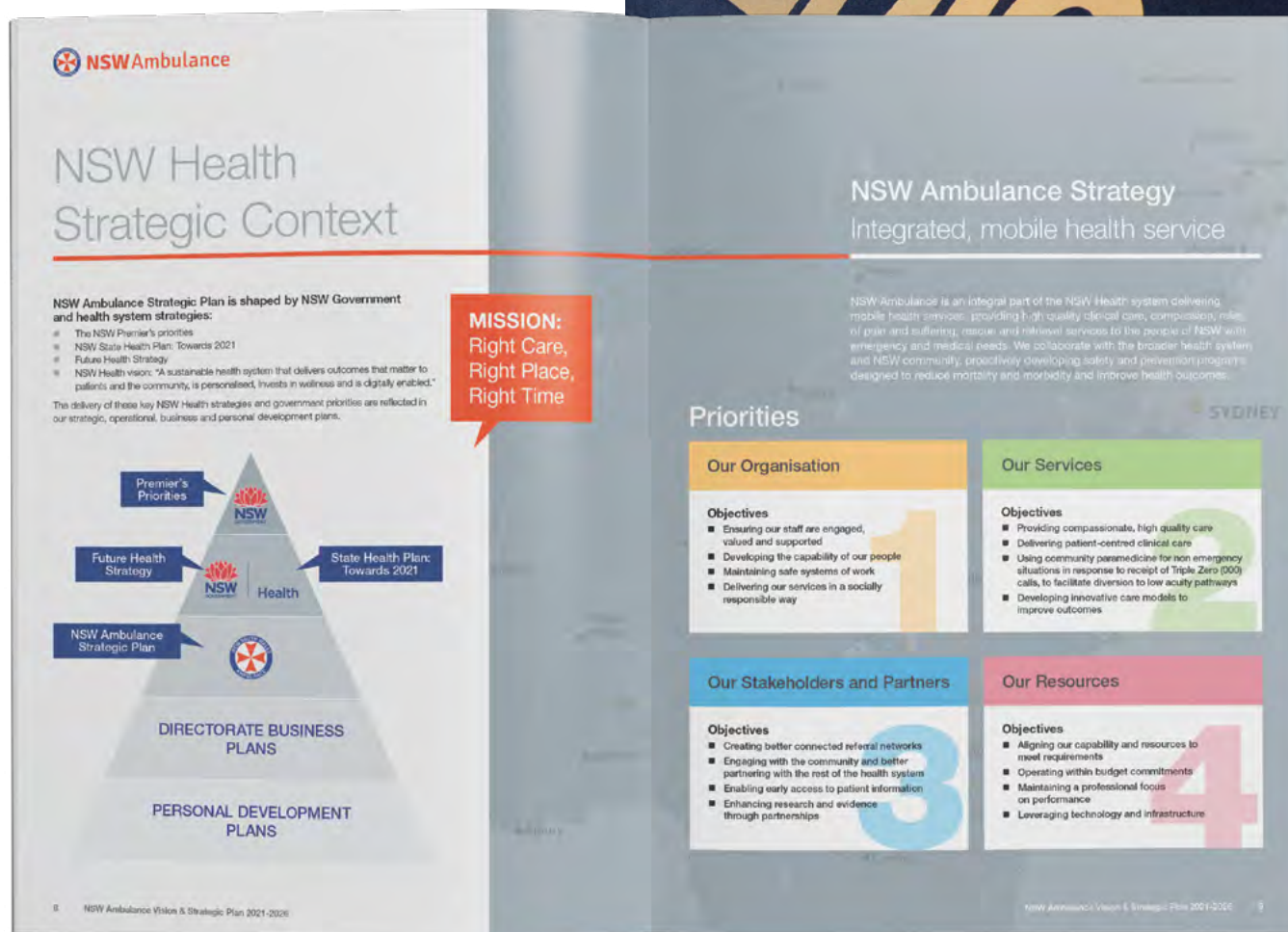
REDEFINING OUR FUTURE

NSW AMBULANCE VISION AND STRATEGIC PLAN 2021-2026

In April 2021, we launched our NSW Ambulance Vision and Strategic Plan 2021-2026, which continues our commitment of delivering excellence in care to our community.

We have a strong, clear vision of where we need to go, and our plan outlines how we will get there. It builds on what we do best, and modifies our services and structures to build better value care for our community, through a modern, innovative and integrated service, linked to the whole of the NSW Health system.

The NSW Ambulance Vision and Strategic Plan 2021-2026 sets our future goals and builds on past and current success in delivering out of hospital care to support the NSW community.





A MEASURE OF SUCCESS

CLINICAL KEY PERFORMANCES INDICATORS

Clinical Key Performances Indicators (KPIs) are objective measures of clinical processes and outcomes of patient care.

Our Clinical KPIs, which have been designed to align with the overall clinical strategy and objectives of similar organisations nationally and internationally, form an important part of the information required to determine and explain how NSW Ambulance progresses towards its clinical goals. They provide a basis, from which to achieve improvement in care and the processes in which care is provided.

Clinical Monitors	Target %	Result %
End-Tidal Waveform	85%	92.6%
12 Lead ECG	95%	96.5%
All Patient Observations	80%	82.1%
Pain Reduction	80%	83.5%
Acute Severe Behavioural Disturbance	80%	86.7%
Visual Observations	80%	81.3%
Elder at Risk	80%	49.2%

KPI Service Agreement KPIs	Target %	Result %
STEMI	95%	98.8%
Trauma T1	95%	99.1%
Stroke FAST Metro	90%	99.3%
Stroke FAST Regional	80%	94.2%
Mental Health	60%	74.4%
Complaints Management – 35 Days	80%	81.1%
Death Review	100%	100%

OUR PEOPLE

SUPPORTING OUR EMPLOYEES THROUGHOUT THEIR CAREER

NSW Ambulance achieves extraordinary things for our patients. The safety, health and wellbeing of our people is just as important. If we don't look after ourselves, and each other, we cannot deliver excellence in care.

NSW Ambulance, like the rest of the world, had an extraordinary year in 2020-21. The COVID pandemic presented challenges for us as well as improvement opportunities. We strove to keep our mission, staff and community, at the forefront of all we did in order to keep everyone safe.

A broad range of initiatives provided physical, psychological and social support for staff across our organisation and our communication strategies, formal and informal, played a key role in keeping staff informed, prepared and importantly, safe throughout a challenging year.

Debrief with the Chief

As part of our Chief Executive's commitment to communicate directly with staff, a new communications initiative commenced in June 2021.

Debrief with the Chief provides an opportunity to share what's happening across our organisation as well as answer questions about issues confronting us.

Staff were encouraged to contribute ideas for themes and specific topics to be addressed in episodes of Debrief with the Chief. The main focus is where we are going and what we are doing now, but also addresses some of the stickier issues.

In the first Debrief with the Chief, Chief Executive Dr Dominic Morgan discussed the new Strategic Plan with Executive Director Clinical Systems, Clare Beech.



NSW Ambulance Leadership Development Strategy

The Capable Leader Strategy defines and reinforces the leadership capabilities that all leaders need to develop or maintain in their roles, ensuring we have strong committed leaders across the organisation who can step into management and leadership roles confidently and seamlessly.

Leadership development is embedded in several strategies including recruitment assessment centres, Aboriginal, diversity and cultural initiatives. A major component of the Capable Leader Strategy at NSW Ambulance is the coordination of all leadership development into a continuum in which staff are able to see the leadership career pathway and the support available at each stage.

Many of the signature programs within the Capable Leader Strategy were impacted over the past 12 months by COVID-19 restrictions on the delivery of face-to-face training. However, the virtual, online and self-directed learning components were able to continue.

Supporting the wellbeing of our people...

Health and Fitness provided

- 519** Sessions with an Injury Prevention Specialist
- 280** Sessions with the Health Coach
- 41** Vouchers for Nicotine Replacement Therapy
- 580** Healthy Lifestyle Checks
- 1,849** Staff Fitness Passport memberships
- 3,972** Family Fitness Passport memberships

Peer Support Officers

- 1,556** Supported staff and volunteers
- 40%** PSOs were off duty when they provided support

Chaplains supported/engaged with

- 7,952** Staff and volunteers
- 1,486** Community members or other emergency service workers

Staff Psychology Service

- 1,000** New staff referred to the service for psychological support
- 942** Staff referred to the service for trauma support
- 616** Staff Psychologist visits across the state

Mental Health and Wellbeing

- 487** Staff participated in Wellbeing Workshops

Psychological Services

- 198** Referrals to employee assistance
- 40** Referrals for family members
- 92** Significant events trauma support provided

Family Support Network

- 3261** Views of the family support network webpage
- 13** Domestic and Family Violence Referral Officers were recruited

Capable Leader Signature Program

Participation July 2020 - June 2021

Management Development Program	184
Ambulance Management Qualification	37
Elevate online	179
Elevate webinars	770
Elevate Basecamp workshops (2-days)	191
Senior Leaders 360 Development Program	44
Leadership coaching sessions	372

Intensive Care Paramedic COVID-19 Update Program

As part of our COVID-19 pandemic preparedness and response, and in preparation for ongoing community impacts, Clinical Systems developed the Intensive Care Paramedic (ICP) COVID-19 Update. NSW Ambulance Education developed the program to provide enhanced technology that supports the safe use of the new equipment and its integration into clinical practice. The new procedures and associated education improved safety measures for clinicians when presented with an increased number of critically-ill patients and particularly when performing high-risk aerosol procedures.

The update included a range of clinical safety technology with a higher specification level than some previous ICP equipment. This enables ICPs to deliver authorised interventions and minimise close patient contact which is safer for paramedics and patients.

The ICP COVID-19 Update Program also provided an opportunity to safely introduce and educate ICPs in non-COVID-19-related scope of practice developments. The scope includes;

- Mechanical CPR devices
- Lifepak15 Monitor defibrillator with ETCO₂, SpO₂ and non-invasive blood pressure monitoring
- Transcutaneous cardiac pacing
- Semi-automated intraosseous device use (EZ-IO)
- Video laryngoscopes
- Disposable Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP)
- Syringe drivers
- Stretcher bridges
- Ferno 531 chair track attachment for carry chair

To ensure the course was evidence based, engaging, and high quality, the content was developed in consultation with subject matter experts from across the organisation and the broader health industry. The five day course was delivered by experienced ICP educators and critical care doctors from our Aeromedical Operations Directorate. An interactive online learning component prepared participants for the rigour of the intensive course. Case-based review, peer and assessor-led simulation, and principles from a range of learning styles were used to ensure a high standard of delivery and engagement.

More than 650 ICPs across NSW attended the COVID-19 Update Program and along with being introduced to new equipment and techniques, ICPs were educated on leadership growth, mentoring and crew resource management.

Clinicians will participate in an evaluation of the new procedures and equipment and will be offered the opportunity to participate in research in relation to the safety and efficacy of the new interventions.

The new equipment and vehicles, developed as part of this program, were deployed to areas where there were the highest community exposure rates.



NSW Ambulance Education developed the Intensive Care Paramedic COVID-19 Update Program to provide support in the safe use of the new equipment and its integration into clinical practice

Upskilling our regional workforce

In June 2021, as part of the NSW Government's investment in NSW Ambulance, we announced the upskilling of 203 paramedics to Intensive Care Paramedics in regional areas. This exciting investment is based on service planning methodology that matches our resources to patient needs and will be rolled out over the next four years.

EDGE webinars

Introduced in September 2020, the EDGE webinar series are monthly bite sized packages of learning around key topics aimed at all NSW Ambulance staff. The live webinars are interactive and participants are encouraged to share their experiences throughout. For staff who cannot attend the live event, each webinar is recorded and can be accessed on the intranet to watch at any time.

Topics to date have been:

- Working Across Generations
- Giving Supportive Feedback
- Transitioning Through Change
- 101 Ways to Develop a Skill
- Giving Peer Feedback That Works



- Working With LGBTIQ+ at NSW Ambulance
- Conflict Resolution
- Owning your Career Development
- Building Trust
- Having Difficult Conversations
- Using Emotional Intelligence in Your Role

Resources were provided around the topic being discussed for staff who attended to further their professional development.

125-year Anniversary Book

Released in November 2020, the book 'Celebrating 125 years of NSW Ambulance', which recounts a small number of the millions of experiences of service, is dedicated to all the men and women who have provided out-of-hospital care or who have been support staff backing up our frontline team to the community of NSW over the past 125 years.

"This book features our people telling their stories in their words. It provides a snapshot of the experiences of the tens of thousands of men and women who have spent their lives serving others," said Dr Dominic Morgan ASM, NSW Ambulance Commissioner and Chief Executive.

HealthRoster 11 Upgrade

The decommissioning of Adobe Flash saw changes to the look and feel of HealthRoster. The changes formed part of a platform upgrade by the vendor to HealthRoster 11. The new platform has key user benefits including a user interface that is touch-optimised for tablet usage, more vertical and horizontal screen space, provides enhanced support to view large rosters via browser zoom and high-resolution displays and improved accessibility for users.



“The goal of PARApodcast is to create a clinician community – to facilitate robust conversations about clinical decision making and provide a supportive environment for paramedics to discuss cases”
Founder Joshua Soondarum

PARApodcast

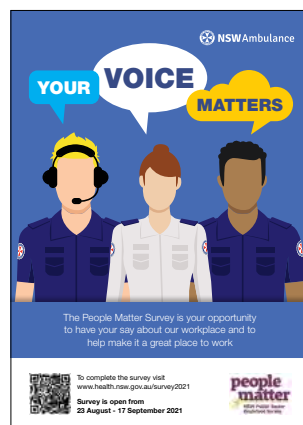
A new way for paramedics to share knowledge and experiences was launched in January 2021.

Using an audio platform for communication, a podcast is a cost-effective way of providing education that is relevant to paramedic practice, and provides the ability to reach our diverse and dispersed workforce using technology. Clinicians can listen on their way to work or even on shift using the mobile in the ambulance.

Since its launch in January, PARApodcast featured a broad range of topics including Asthmatic Airways, Emergency Maternity Case, 24hr Extrication, Complex Maternity Case, Holistic Trauma and Challenges with Ketamine. PARApodcast provides paramedics with an opportunity to share experiences leading to increasing confidence in clinical decision making and a dynamic and open culture.

2020 People Matter Employee Survey (PMES)

Our 2020 People Matter Employee Survey (PMES) results were delivered in December 2020. The response rate of 67% was an increase of 15% from the 2019 result. 75% of our people agreed with the statement: ‘My job gives me a feeling of personal accomplishment.’ This result clearly demonstrates our organisation is full of people who are passionate about doing their best to look after the community.



Staff endorsed our work in Wellbeing, Health and Safety, Customer Service and Inclusion and Diversity with each recording an increase in satisfaction on the 2019 results.

The Executive Leadership Team and managers actively listened to the suggestions provided in the 2020 PMES and implemented a variety of engagement initiatives including change management, transparent recruitment, staff safety, staff health and wellbeing and management of grievances and misconduct.

Paramedic Initiated Transfer Team

The Paramedic Initiated Transfer Team was formed to support the implementation of the NSW Ambulance Paramedic Initiated Transfer Operation Procedure. The team advertise, process, offer and place all internal and mutual transfers across NSW and importantly help support staff through the transfer process. The team also plays a crucial role in identifying vacancies for paramedic posting locations.

Assessment Centres

Now an integral part of NSW Ambulance recruitment processes, assessment centres allow applicants to demonstrate their capabilities via a wide range of methods including behavioural interviews, role plays, presentations and written tasks. Assessment centres are adding value to NSW Ambulance through identifying, upskilling and recruiting the best leaders across our organisation.

During 2020-21 there were 416 applicants and 245 attendees. Feedback from applicants and panel members, participating in the selection processes, reported high satisfaction with recruitment in terms of fairness and opportunity.



Southern Control Centre started off their International Control Room Week celebrations with loud shirt day!

International Control Room Week

In October 2020, Control Centre employees around the state celebrated International Control Room Week.

In its third consecutive year, 2020's International Control Room Week shone a light on the critical role Control Centre teams performed during the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Control Centre teams are essential workers and have worked tirelessly throughout the pandemic. Taking significantly more calls than usual, these staff continued to serve and protect the public and deal with serious and distressing incidents on a daily basis.

From Dubbo to Wollongong, Sydney to Newcastle, we celebrated the life-saving and life-changing work of our Control Centres across the state and acknowledged their strength and resilience during the most challenging year in living memory.

Elevate-ing leadership to new heights

Launched in November 2020, the Elevate leadership program is designed to help operational leaders not only survive but thrive in complex, and at times ambiguous and constantly changing environments.

The new program, part of NSW Ambulance's staged rollout of leadership development activities for different leadership cohorts, specifically targets Zone Managers, Assistant Control Centre Managers, Duty Operations Managers, Senior Control Centre Officers and other equivalent operational managers.

The program has three distinct stages:

- 1. Prepare to hike (required):** Consolidates your understanding of your leadership role and responsibilities (online self-directed);
- 2. Basecamp (required):** Encourages Adaptive Leadership practice in response to changing environments and complex challenges often without clear solutions (two-day virtual workshop); and
- 3. Summit Club (optional):** Formally embeds Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) as a powerful mechanism for continuous leadership development which recognises and shares the rich experience and knowledge, we know you already have (continuous, collective self-directed learning).

Elevate Stage	Component	Completed	% of target (225 leaders)	Overall completion
Stage 1	Online module	179	79%	60.5%
	Webinars x 8	770 viewings	42%	
Stage 2	2-day Basecamp workshop	191	84%	84%

Medic Fit rolled out state-wide

The Health and Fitness team, in partnership with Life Fitness Australia, delivered Medic Fit equipment to every NSW Ambulance worksite. The equipment consisted of a dual pulley system, exercise bike, dumbbells, kettlebells, foam rollers, TRX system, balance trainer, various exercise bands and gym flooring.

Between August and December, the Health & Fitness team travelled 28,031 kilometres by road to facilitate the roll out, which was met with gratitude and excitement from staff around the state.

To support staff and ensure their safety, a Medic Fit guide book, injury prevention exercise videos and the 'I AM Medic Fit' injury prevention program provides a range of exercises and programs targeted to each piece of equipment.

With about 1,513 staff members inducted into the Medic Fit program to date, it seems the equipment has been long awaited and well received by many.



The new State Operations Centre at Homebush will allow for facilities located in Eveleigh, including the Sydney Control Centre, Aeromedical Control Centre and Incident Management Team to be consolidated into a central location along with other units.



OUR INFRASTRUCTURE

METRO, RURAL AND REGIONAL RESOURCES FOR NSW

Our Infrastructure

In 2020-21, the NSW Government continued its record investment in NSW Ambulance infrastructure to ensure our paramedics have the very best equipment and support to deliver life-saving emergency care. The record investment in services and capital works future-proofs our emergency care across the state and boosts capacity in regional and rural areas.

The funding boost allows us to establish a new fit-for-purpose State Operations Centre at Sydney Olympic Park, including the first Virtual Clinical Care Centre co-located with an expanded Control Centre function.

The move to a State Operations Centre will allow us to leverage technology and infrastructure and ensure our critical emergency operations facilities including the Sydney Control Centre, Aeromedical Control Centre, dedicated Emergency Operations Centre and Virtual Clinical Care Centre are integrated, state-of-the-art and have room for future capacity growth. The Ambulance Education Centre will also fully relocate to state-of-the-art education facilities, including extensive clinical practice simulation laboratories.

Sydney Ambulance Metropolitan Infrastructure Strategy (SAMIS)

The Sydney Ambulance Metropolitan Infrastructure Strategy (SAMIS) is a NSW Government \$184M investment in the Sydney metropolitan ambulance infrastructure of superstations and paramedic response points (PRP). The SAMIS program in 2020/21 delivered:

- It was announced that Sydney Central Ambulance Station will be constructed on the former Glebe Coroners Court site as the 11th SAMIS station. The demolition of the building was completed in May 2021. Construction commenced in October 2021 and will be completed in late 2022.
- As part of the construction at Randwick Superstation, a trial of a 'rapid roller door' occurred. These rapid roller doors open in approximately two seconds and are part of the initiatives for assisting paramedics with improving response times. The NSW Ambulance Assets and Infrastructure team is reviewing the information to inform the inclusion of the rapid roller doors in future ambulance station specifications. The rapid roller doors will be installed at the new Central Sydney Ambulance Station.

Record investment

\$214m

The single largest investment in infrastructure in NSW Ambulance's 126-year history. Over four years, this will go towards establishing a new fit-for-purpose NSW Ambulance State

Operations Centre, and introducing jet aircraft for the first time within the fleet to move critical patients between remote areas and tertiary hospitals

1,291

New state-of-the-art monitor/defibrillator units

SAMIS Program 2020/21

Station	Operational Go Live
Holroyd PRP	11/11/2020
Randwick Superstation	24/02/2021
Mona Vale Station	30/04/2021

RAIR1 Program 2020/21

Station	Operational Go Live
Grenfell	14/02/20
Cowra	04/03/20
Goulburn	08/04/20
Birmingham Gardens	23/06/20
Cootamundra	18/12/20
Sawtell	13/04/21
Yass	31/10/19
Rutherford	14/12/19

Rural Ambulance Infrastructure Reconfiguration (RAIR)

Stage 1 (RAIR1): The Rural Ambulance Infrastructure Reconfiguration (RAIR) is a \$132M NSW Government investment in regional infrastructure, with 24 new sites comprising of 16 rebuilt stations and eight brand new stations. Using NSW Ambulance Service Planning data, the sites are strategically selected within the response areas to support improved response times to local communities.

The new station at Iluka is the 24th site in the RAIR Stage 1 program. The construction commenced on 15 June 2021 and is scheduled for completion in early 2022.

Stage 2 (RAIR2): Announced in November 2020 this \$100M program will deliver new stations at Forster, Old Bar, Lake Cathie and five regional stations to be rebuilt at Casino, Tamworth, Coffs Harbour, Tumut and Kingscliff, along with refurbishment of 19 announced sites in the New England, Hunter, Central West and Southern Sectors.

New fleet of state-of-the-art intensive care ambulances

In February 2021, the NSW Government announced that regional communities across NSW would benefit from a new fleet of state-of-the-art intensive care ambulances, thanks to an \$11.72 million funding boost.

This new fleet is in addition to the 35 intensive care ambulances rolled out across the state in 2020. The additional 69 intensive care ambulances were rolled out, with 50 going to rural and regional areas identified through a service planning process.

The new vehicles carry the most advanced equipment including upgraded monitor defibrillators, video laryngoscopes and mechanical CPR devices. This life-saving equipment allows paramedics to treat patients suffering trauma, cardiac arrest, stroke or breathing difficulties, in regional areas where the nearest trauma centre may be hundreds of kilometres away, as safely and efficiently as possible. The cutting-edge equipment also provides paramedics with greater protection when treating suspected or confirmed COVID-19 patients.

Major refurbishment for Northern Control

Since its construction in 1999, the Northern Control Centre has experienced significant growth in staff and also demand for the services it provides to the community. Right from the early planning stages of the refurbishment, a strong focus was to improve staff facilities alongside improving operational capabilities.

An extensive internal refurbishment of the Northern Control Centre at Charlestown was undertaken to produce modern fit-for-purpose infrastructure. This refurbishment installed newly upgraded information and communication technology, as well as additional amenities in order to improve staff wellbeing.

The renovation also strengthens education and quality assurance support to Control Centre staff with Communication Educators and Quality Support Coordinators in close proximity to the Control Centre.

Dark Fibre Ring

In December 2020, Control Centres prepared for and executed a planned state-wide outage to introduce additional redundancy and resilience to the fibre network that supports the function of mission-critical platforms like the Computer Aided Dispatch System including ProQa. The eHealth teams worked collaboratively with Control Centres to ensure technical and operational plans were aligned and executed in tandem with minimal impact to service delivery.

CLINICAL INNOVATIONS

RESEARCH, INITIATIVES AND INVESTMENT

We are proud to be a research-active organisation that develops and hosts research studies, along with developing a range of clinical initiatives, which improve clinical care. Research and new clinical initiatives, in collaboration with our health and emergency service partners, form the foundation of our strategies to meet the demands we face and improve our patients' experience and their health outcomes.

During 2020-21, our cardiac team worked with our partners and stakeholders to complete the extensive ground work required for the establishment of the EVIDENCE trial. We further developed our End of Life and Palliative Care programs, invested in clinical equipment to improve safety for our paediatric patients and worked with South West Sydney Local Health District to improve the clinical care, safety and outcomes for patients who suffered a fall.

EVIDENCE Trial

During 2020-21 we completed the extensive planning and groundwork needed to commence the EVIDENCE trial, a world-first prospective randomised control trial which examines whether expedited transfer to hospital for patients in cardiac arrest leads to better outcomes.

In collaboration with Sydney Local Health District and the National Health and Medical Research Council Clinical Trial Centre, this landmark trial brings together the last decade of out-of-hospital cardio pulmonary resuscitation research.

The trial looks at standard resuscitation care versus an expedited model to hospital where percutaneous coronary intervention in a catheter laboratory or extracorporeal membrane oxygenation will occur.

Fairfield Falls Collaborative Pilot Program

The Fairfield Falls Collaborative Pilot Program is an initiative between NSW Ambulance and the Fairfield Adult Allied Health Ambulatory Care Service based at Fairfield Hospital. The clinical pathway ensures patients aged 65 years or older, who live in the Fairfield Local Government Area and seek help from NSW Ambulance following a fall (but are not transported to hospital for ongoing care), have direct access to a multifactorial allied health assessment and appropriate falls prevention interventions.

Appointment of Director Medical Services

The Director Medical Services position was established to provide expert medical and clinical advice across the organisation, and critical advice to the Chief Executive and the Executive Director Clinical Systems. The role also provides leadership and guidance around whole-of-organisation clinical governance, patient safety and clinical practice strategies.

Following an extensive recruitment process, Associate Professor Jason Bendall was appointed to the position in January 2021. Dr Bendall brings a rare blend of formal paramedic experience with NSW Ambulance before his medical training



and subsequent specialist training in anaesthesia. Dr Bendall's most recent appointments are as a Staff Specialist Anaesthetist and Prehospital Retrieval Medicine Specialist as well as Clinical Dean at the University of Newcastle Department of Rural Health. Dr Bendall also has strong academic, teaching and research experience and has an intimate understanding of the broader NSW Health system.

SCOPE Project

Supported by a comprehensive evaluation and research plan led by the Health Behaviour Research Collaborative, University of Newcastle, SCOPE has an objective of improving out-of-hospital care outcomes for patients. The project provides station based clinical training resources across NSW Ambulance by enhancing the paramedic workforce's confidence and capability. Facilitating paramedic engagement in local peer-led simulated clinical practice, SCOPE supports the establishment of a professional, self-initiated and collegial clinical professional development culture that assists paramedics to further develop and maintain their clinical capability.

Supported by a multi-million-dollar philanthropic donation and in partnership with the Hunter Medical Research Institute, the program has delivered multiple face-to-face training sessions for station champions and the deployment of over 250 manikins to facilitate peer-led simulation training across the state.

Development of a state-of-the-art simulation centre at the Ambulance Education Centre in Rozelle, used for entry-level education and the development of educational materials for online distribution for paramedics, was also an important part of the project. Scenario packages, designed to assist paramedics in the development of their cardiac arrest and trauma management skills, were released during 2020-21.



Importantly, SCOPE also made available COVID-19 related scenarios enabling paramedics to develop familiarity and confidence with amendments to the NSW A1 - Pandemic Management protocol. Paramedics have reported high levels of satisfaction and engagement with the program. The program will become a central feature of skill development and maintenance for paramedics across the state.

Improving paediatric care

In September 2020, we announced the state roll out of 1100 new Paediatric Airway Kits and Backpack Oxy Resuscitators. The new kits represent a great step forward for NSW Ambulance from a clinician and patient-safety perspective. Access and layout of the kits have been substantially improved, meaning less likelihood of equipment damage, and site labelling means that every kit will be identical, a key factor in improved patient safety.

The weight reduction of the Backpack Oxy Resuscitator by almost a kilogram improves manual handling safety for our staff.

The value of good end-of-life care

Paramedics are playing a larger role in supporting patients in End-of-Life and Palliative Care by starting those difficult discussions around death and dying.

The shift from emergency intervention to one of support and advocacy including symptom management, holistic care, and considering legal documents to guide goals of care, are part of the new focus for paramedics as patients increasingly opt for palliative care at home. The creation of an End-of-Life and Palliative Coordinator role in 2017, a world first, brought new understanding about the role paramedics can take in end of life care, embedding many support methods in paramedic practice, and was instrumental in the introduction of morphine, midazolam and droperidol use in the paramedic-assisted palliative care setting.

Emergency Service Organisation Public Access Defibrillation (ESO PAD) program

November 2020 saw the launch of the NSW Ambulance ESO PAD Program with the NSW Volunteer Rescue Association (VRA) and NSW State Emergency Service (SES).

An exciting new program, it is anticipated ESO PAD will increase the chances of survival for patients in out of hospital cardiac arrest in NSW by decreasing the time to CPR and defibrillation. This has been the experience of other jurisdictions implementing similar programs. It will mobilise the thousands of Basic Life Support (BLS) trained people and Automated External Defibrillators (AED) already within emergency service organisations across the state. This program improves access to existing community capability and can be deployed to positively impact mortality and morbidity.

When a medical cardiac arrest occurs in the community, a NSW Ambulance resource will be dispatched first followed by an ESO PAD resource from VRA or SES, if they are identified as the closest AED resource. NSW Ambulance will always activate its own resources first to ensure consistency of response. This program will bring NSW in line with a number of other states and territories in Australia and New Zealand.



The 'Every Second Counts' Emergency Service Organisation Public Access Defibrillation (ESO PSD) program launched in November 2020

AEROMEDICAL OPERATIONS

CARE FROM THE AIR

Aeromedical Operations had a busy year with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic resulting in an increased complexity of mission planning and execution, with constant benchmarking against world-best practice and evolving evidence leading to regular updates of clinical practice and workflows. Business Continuity Plans were reviewed and updated and holistic team training was modified to be COVID-safe. Essential training continued to ensure critical clinical and aviation currencies were maintained and to mitigate risks to service delivery.

While Public Health Orders reduced population mobility and led to a temporary reduction in mission numbers, the clinical complexity and PPE requirements meant that mission duration increased. As each lockdown was lifted, we saw a resurgence of our prehospital workload, in some months exceeding our interhospital workload. Our helicopter contracts saw the busiest months since 2017.

With a small specialist workforce across Aeromedical Operations every member of the team has, without any hesitation or expectation of reward, performed above and beyond requirements ensuring the ongoing success of our operations in challenging times.

Delivering life-saving blood products

The geography of NSW means a large cohort of the population, in rural and regional areas, have lengthy travel times to trauma or critical care services. Providing blood products to facilitate haemostatic control can significantly reduce the risk of mortality. NSW Ambulance medical retrieval teams routinely carry blood products, but sometimes the amount carried is just not enough.

Developed by NSW Ambulance, the Retrieval Transfusion Protocol (RTP) is the first system of its kind in the world. Where a patient is critically bleeding and awaiting transport, RTP may be activated by NSW Ambulance teams at the scene, including the retrieval medical team or flight nurse, the Aeromedical Control Centre (ACC), or by referring hospitals. This year we celebrated the fifth year of the RTP, with 84 activations of RTP across the year.

The majority of RTP activations are for patients in rural and remote NSW. Coordinated by the ACC, RTP increases blood product availability by using already existing blood bank resources to source blood products for these patients, and develop a plan for delivering to the retrieval team in real time. Blood products may then be delivered to the scene, to a hospital or en-route to care. This enables large volume, mixed blood product transfusions to improve the haemodynamic state of the patient. Early haemostatic resuscitation and haemorrhage control is associated with improved outcomes and there is statistical evidence that patients who receive RTP are delivered to hospital with an improved cardiovascular condition and that patients who would not previously have survived now have good outcomes.

Celebrating 40 years of Helicopter Operations

This year we recognise the remarkable history of NSW Ambulance Rescue Helicopter Operations. Some 40 years ago, the earliest inclusion of medical personnel aboard rescue helicopters combined two distinct capabilities working in tandem — that of aviation rescue and high-end medical care.

From the initial concept in the late 70's until its start in 1980, much debate, among a broad spectrum of stakeholders, occurred about how to



Education and Training

4
New Critical
Care Paramedics

10
New NSW
Ambulance Registrars

14
CareFlight Registrars

6
Registrars for the
Aeromedical teams
based in Lismore

4
Registrars for the
Aeromedical teams
based in Canberra

6
Registrars for the
RFDS Dubbo/
Broken Hill

Aeromedical Education and Training has had a busy year. We have welcomed and trained new Critical Care Paramedics, NSW Ambulance Registrars and new CareFlight registrars, as well as registrars for the Aeromedical teams based in Lismore, Canberra and RFDS Dubbo/Broken Hill. The program continues to be inclusive of our flight nurses, road paramedics and student paramedics to allow our units to train together for improved patient outcomes.

The Diploma of Prehospital and Critical Care Medicine was launched for our Aeromedical registrars through the Combined Critical Care Colleges for Emergency Medicine, Anaesthesia and Intensive Care. Many of our consultants are faculty and examiners for this exciting program.

We also held an online trauma education evening where heavily engaged in the ICP Update program and have continued to develop the cyclic program for our team's ongoing education and training.



best to achieve a dependable and efficient service. Despite many hurdles, progress was made and broader support was garnered, culminating in the Wales Bank providing initial sponsorship for a 'proof of concept' trial of NSW Ambulance Paramedics providing care on rescue helicopters.

The initial trial in Newcastle was successful and a proliferation of Rescue Helicopter systems up and down the eastern seaboard followed. Whilst an overarching focus was on water rescue, the availability of the services continued to grow and expand to the west of the state, as the utility and capability of helicopters was recognised as life-saving assets.

Today, NSW Ambulance provides the largest medical rescue helicopter service in the Southern Hemisphere using state-of-the-art airframes and aviation crews coupled with dedicated medical teams trained in the delivery of cutting edge out-of-hospital medical care which brings the first 60 minutes of Emergency Department care to the sick and injured wherever they may be.

In one sense, Helicopter Operations remains the same as it did in 1980; continuing to bear witness to committed paramedics and doctors who work under difficult circumstances to treat and transport the sickest patients in NSW. Whilst today's Helicopter Operations may look unrecognisable to our predecessors, this shared legacy continues to connect us to our past, present and future.

Enhanced operational governance through a collaborative safety lessons forum

In 2020 we re-invigorated the multi-stakeholder monthly Helicopter Mission Review Group, a non-judgmental, peer review group operating under the principle of 'Just Culture' and with the sole aim of learning operational lessons to enhance safety. The group

includes Local Health District and aviation representatives and has enhanced collaborative operational and safety governance. The inclusion of aircraft camera footage as a key component of reviews enables a detailed and continuous learning environment. Each review leverages the aeromedical safety culture which focuses on the learning of lessons being at the forefront of everything we do, informing how we train, select equipment and conduct missions.

Preparations towards our world-class fixed-wing aeromedical services

A busy year was made even more so for our colleagues in Aeromedical Fixed Wing Operations, with preparations for Stage 1 of the PelAir Fixed Wing contract commencing on January 1 2022 out of the Mascot Base.

The five new King Air Beechcraft 350 aircraft have arrived in Australia and the medical fit out is progressing well. The Fixed Wing and Aeromedical Control Centre teams have worked closely throughout the year with PelAir in preparation for operational readiness on go-live day. Key work streams are Operational, Training, Safety and Aeromedical Control Centre. The work stream leads have worked closely with their counterparts in PelAir and RFDS to ensure transition runs smoothly and that expectations are clear for everyone to guarantee that operational activity continues seamlessly.

The hanger door at Mascot was also replaced during the year. This was a huge logistical task with detailed planning which saw transport of the new door, with a police escort, from Adelaide to Sydney, the maintenance of operations with limited access to the operational hangar during removal of the old door, and contingency planning should works not remain on schedule. Continuous communications and planning were the key to success, with the installation taking one week to complete whilst business as usual was maintained.



OUR COVID-19 RESPONSE

READY ALWAYS

Our COVID-19 Incident Management Team provided expert advice on every aspect of our organisation to keep our staff, their families and our patients safe. Much of our response has informed refinement of workplace activities, creating better strategies that are here to stay.

We produced education and training material, weekly Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) updates, new Clinical Practice Guidelines and Clinical Safety Alerts, Notices and Information bulletins to keep our staff properly informed and equipped to meet the challenges they faced whilst caring for their patients. Through our staff wellness, communication and education strategies, and COVID-19 specific initiatives, we provided a range and choice of programs to support our staff and their families at work and at home.

Wear your PPE for me

Launched in July 2020 our 'Wear your PPE for me' campaign sought to deliver a personal message. Wearing PPE correctly is the best strategy to keep our family members, loved ones and our patients safe from infection. During the year we produced 600 posters featuring a broad mix of our staff, their families and our most vulnerable patients.

Expert Reference Group (ERG) & Pandemic Management Protocol

As part of COVID-19 pandemic preparedness and response, Clinical Systems established the COVID-19 Clinical Practice Expert Reference Group (ERG) as the internal advice and recommendation group for NSW Ambulance on matters relating to paramedic clinical practice in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The ERG developed the Pandemic Management Protocol, which provides NSW Ambulance Clinicians with the authorisation to vary clinical practice during declared pandemics. The ERG brings together subject matter experts and clinicians, including operational paramedics, educators, academics, doctors and consultants, who meet monthly to ensure the Pandemic Management Protocol and Pharmacology remain current and advice is based on emerging evidence.

The aim of the ERG is to:

- Review and make recommendations on the suitability and 'fit for purpose' nature of NSW Ambulance Protocols, Pharmacology's and Skills in managing patients during the COVID-19 pandemic



- Liaise with relevant expert stakeholders as required
- Oversee the development and submission of relevant documents/procedures for approval
- Make recommendations on paramedic and paramedic specialist scope of practice during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The development of the Pandemic Management Protocol and Pharmacology enabled NSW Ambulance to remain dynamic, as the pandemic evolved, ensuring paramedic and patient safety remained a key focus in the provision of excellence in care. The ERG continues its work in the further development of the Pandemic Management Protocol NSW1 and associated Pharmacology.

The aims of the Pandemic Management Protocol and Pharmacology are:

- To modify patient assessment and the application of Clinical Protocols, Pharmacology and Procedures by paramedics during the COVID-19 pandemic
- To provide clinical care while maintaining a safe work environment in the presence of suspected or confirmed COVID-19 cases
- To minimise exposure of our staff and the community to COVID-19 to optimise staff/community health and safety

In 2020-21, the ERG completed a full review of the NSW Ambulance protocols and pharmacologies. Recommendations were made based on evidence and expert consultation, resulting in amendments to: medication management, airway management, cardiac arrest, patient assessment, maternal emergencies and child birth. Rationale for change was provided to clinicians to support the introduction of new clinical practices.

The NSW Ambulance Pandemic Management Protocol saw three revisions to June 2020. Additionally, to further support our clinicians, Clinical Services developed the COVID-19 Quick Reference Guide and Protocol NSW2 which focuses on the assessment and management of COVID-19 Delta Variant.



**COVID-19
HOTLINE**
(02) 6118 7888

Employee Connect returns to pre-COVID operating hours

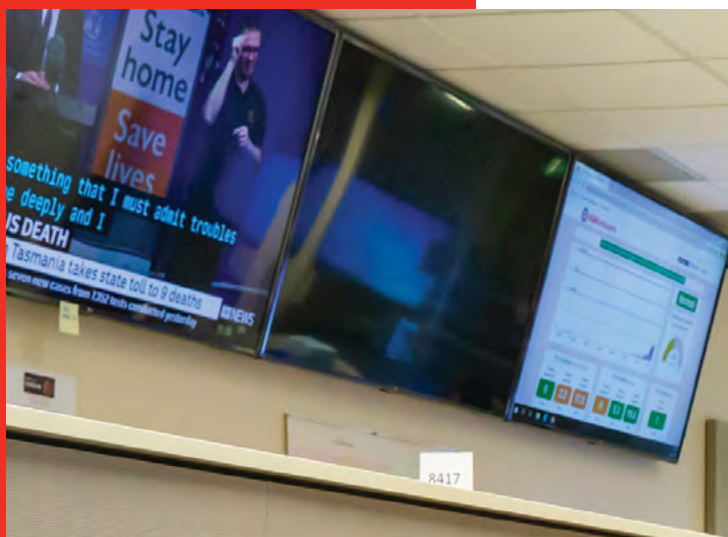
Employee Connect was established in January 2020 as a Monday to Friday service and commenced 24/7 operations to assist with the NSW response to the COVID-19 pandemic in April 2020. The team managed over 1500 requests for assistance with employment-related queries and over 2750 calls relating to the pandemic. The program was supported by 17 dedicated staff from clinical and corporate areas during the 15 months of intense activity.



**#Thankyou
#Staysafe**

 **NSW Ambulance**

excellence in care



COVID-19 Incident Management Team (IMT)

To ensure we protected the health of our staff and their families, which in turn assists in protecting our community and our vulnerable patients, the Chief Executive established the COVID-19 IMT in March 2020.

The IMT was established in accordance with the NSW Ambulance Pandemic Plan and Emergency Management Arrangements and remained operational throughout 2020-21. The IMT brought together experts in specific functional roles such as control, planning, logistics, operations, finance, public information, intelligence and investigation. The IMT concerned themselves with every aspect of our business, including advice about clinical practice, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and operational matters. Over 200 staff from all parts of the state have gained experience in the IMT.

In August 2020, a legal expert was added to advise the team about Health Orders as they relate to our operations across our northern and southern borders. A dedicated State Operations Controller was appointed in August 2020 to oversee operations.

Respirator Fit Testing

NSW Ambulance committed to implementing Respirator Fit Testing (RFT) in alignment with Clinical Excellence Commission (CEC) guidance 'Respiratory Protection in Healthcare'.

RFT is a validated method that determines the best fit respirator to achieve an adequate seal on a person's face, thereby providing a level of protection required against airborne infectious particles.

Our RFT program, which includes all patient-facing roles, commenced with an aeromedical pilot in November 2020 and then rolled out to the rest of the organisation in March 2021. The program continued throughout the year with a total of 2,562 frontline staff being fit tested by the end of June 2021.



**DON'T FORGET
YOUR
FLU SHOT**



COVID-19 Vaccination Program

COVID-19 vaccination helps protect ourselves, our families and the wider community. On 22 February 2021, the first NSW Ambulance clinicians began receiving their COVID-19 vaccinations at Liverpool, Westmead and RPA Hospitals. By the end of June, close to 80% of staff, who had requested to be vaccinated, had received their first dose.

Call for back-up

In preparation for a potential surge in Triple Zero (000) calls, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we trained 18 additional casual call-takers at a new purpose-built education facility in Gladesville.

The casual call-takers, who were ex-Qantas and Virgin staff, who had been stood down from flying due to the impact of the pandemic on the airline industry. They have years of customer service skills, an ability to effectively communicate with the general public, and a background in a structured procedure driven workplace.

Some trainees have over 20 years of experience in roles such as Cabin Service Managers (international and domestic), while others have had over 30 years of experience with aircraft logistics, planning, crewing, and handling delays while working in the operations centre at Sydney Airport. All of the call-takers are

now MPDS certified, fully trained in CAD and ProQA and are able to take Triple Zero (000) calls, hospital to hospital bookings, handle Inter-CAD Electronic Messaging System (ICEMS), and are fully trained in the manual, paper-based system.

Don't forget your flu shot

In light of COVID and low numbers of influenza cases last year our "Don't forget your Flu Shot" initiative was launched as part of our 2021 Influenza Vaccination Program which officially commenced at the end of May.

The initiative saw NSW Ambulance clinicians identified as Category A (high risk for Flu Vaccination). Under this classification it became mandatory to be vaccinated for influenza unless a valid medical reason allowed for an exemption. This change recognised the frontline role of all our clinicians, alongside our colleagues in the health system, in providing safe, high-quality healthcare to the community.

To support the collection of data, and to meet the requirements of new legislation, the VaxLink data system, which ensures that all flu vaccinations are reported to the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) was introduced. The system also allows staff to access their own record of vaccination through myGov.



COVID-19 Guidance Resources

To assist in keeping our staff informed and safe we produced four audio-visual resources' several information posters, weekly PPE updates and established the COVID-19 Clinical Resources Page.

The Pandemic Management Protocol, Clinical Procedures and Working Inductions were maintained to ensure our staff had the latest clinical and epidemiological information to keep them and their patients safe. As the pandemic situation changed weekly, we published 22 Clinical Safety Alerts, and 15 Clinical Safety Notices.

Project 180 and 250 Casual Trainee Staffing Strategy

A record-breaking number of recruits graduated in May 2021.

The significant single intake was the most extraordinary and historic training module for the organisation and for the students, who had to complete their training while adhering to social distancing guidelines. Intake rounds were moved forward in preparation for a potential surge in demand and to provide sustainability of ambulance services during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Two streams for workforce surge strategies were developed.

Project 180

NSW Ambulance brought forward staff enhancements which resulted in the on-boarding of 180 graduate inductees. The time critical execution of hiring, educating, inducting, and deploying 180 new graduate interns required extensive consultation and engagement across the organisation. NSW Ambulance Education played a significant role in contextualising the Graduate

Induction Course to be COVID-Safe, which included a re-write of course content, redevelopment of practical assessments and pre-recording of crucial information sessions. The course was conducted at St Dominic's College in Kingswood and, to reduce the likelihood of contracting COVID, students and staff were accommodated at Penrith Mercure.

On completion of the induction course graduate paramedic interns were deployed across the state at the following locations:

- Western Sydney/Nepean Blue Mountains
- Sydney/South East
- South West Sydney
- Hunter New England
- Central Coast/Northern Sydney
- Illawarra/Shoalhaven
- Southern Region
- Northern Region

Casual Trainee Induction

A second surge staffing strategy, which saw the on boarding of 250 Casual Trainees, was delivered in consultation with University of Tasmania, University of Western Sydney, and Charles Sturt University.

Students in their third year of study, were identified as a workforce that could be activated should the operational need arise. The program had an additional benefit of providing students with valuable work experience.



Between July 2020 and June 2021, the APHU:

- Identified 73 confirmed COVID-19 patients attended by NSW Ambulance paramedics
- Conducted 174 potential occupational exposure staff assessments
- Conducted 216 non-occupational staff support and screening

Control Centres prepare for COVID-19

Our Control Centres located at Eveleigh, Warilla (Wollongong), Dubbo and Charlestown (Newcastle), implemented COVID-19 specific initiatives in the key areas of staff safety and welfare, workforce surge, and demand preparedness. The planning included designing a risk-based system approach to the legislative and policy frameworks which guided our response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The process ensured Control Centres remained well placed to continue providing excellence in care from Triple Zero (000) calls to the paramedic response.

The Emerging Infectious Diseases Surveillance tool (EIDS) which operates as part of the Computer Aided Dispatch system, enabled control centre staff to provide timely advice about the requirement for and use of Personal Protective Equipment by paramedics and the community. The tool also contributed to our understanding of the volume and veracity of COVID-19 in specific geographical areas.

In October 2020 we re-launched the Emergency+ application. Supported by the National Emergency Communications Working group (NECWG), the Emergency+ application provides point specific information when callers contact Triple Zero (000) and are unsure of their location. The re-launch of the application, attended by Director Control Centres and the Minister Emergency Services, was an important step in reminding the community of the importance of having the correct information available when calling for an ambulance. What3Words is a system of words which give any 3m square location in the world an identity. This allows callers to give their location, using the Emergency+ application, for a small area using just three words. This allows paramedics and first responders to find the patient more easily.

In February 2021, in response to increasing demand, Control Centres designed and implemented a quality and safety framework to support the early identification of Triple Zero (000) calls which may require further risk management, review or audit. To ensure NSW Ambulance can understand where and if an emergency is occurring, and provide lifesaving advice if required, the time taken to answer Triple Zero (000) calls is minimised wherever possible. This metric is monitored in real time and used to support the day-to-day performance of NSW Ambulance. At times, as experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic and major incidents, the call volume is high and it gets very busy. The framework ensures that any call not answered quickly is reviewed to ensure the safety of the patient and the opportunity to improve service provision to the community.

A four-week induction program, using a blended format and drawing on the experience of university academics and NSW Ambulance Paramedic Educators was developed, pre-recorded, scheduled and delivered at Rozelle, Western Sydney, Bathurst, and Port Macquarie. The program, designed to further equip students with knowledge, skills, and confidence in paramedicine saw 250 participants ready to be teamed up with Qualified Paramedics.

NSW Ambulance Public Health Unit

The NSW Ambulance Public Health Unit (APHU) was established early in the COVID-19 pandemic with the aim of supporting staff through:

- Understanding the current public health orders as they relate to work place activities
- Supporting staff who were required to isolate due to exposure to COVID-19
- Identifying all COVID-19 patients and providing support to the attending paramedics
- Assessing staff for return to work on completion of isolation.
- Contact tracing where a staff member tested positive to COVID-19

The APHU was structured to enable flexibility in staffing numbers by utilising staff who have been redeployed from patient facing roles for a variety of reasons. This allowed the APHU to meet demand based on fluctuations in community transmission rates.



SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITY

PROMOTING HEALTH AND WELLBEING FOR THE PEOPLE OF NSW

NSW Ambulance is privileged to be one of the most trusted professions and we have a proud history of engaging with our community. Whether it be in the busiest metropolitan centres or the remote outback, our staff have a unique bond with their community.

Our face-to-face community events have been highly engaging and educational; however, the pandemic necessitated a change. Throughout 2020-21 we focused on creating accessible community resources for all age-groups on our public website.

In April 2021, after evaluating the risk of COVID-19 community transmission, we returned to our traditional methods of engagement. The calendar filled quickly with events including educational school visits, career and multi-cultural expos and rural community show days. Unfortunately, by June the pandemic had taken a new twist and we were, once again, forced to return to engaging using online forums.

Save 000 campaign

May 2021 saw the launch of our Save Triple Zero (000) for Saving Lives campaign. NSW Ambulance and NSW Police receive thousands of calls each week. At a time when emergency services have never been busier, the campaign is aimed at educating the public on other services they can use - such as their GP, pharmacist or Healthdirect - instead of tying up critical resources when not required.

In the 12 months to the end of March 2021, our paramedics responded to more than 200,000 cases where there was no patient taken to hospital. Many of the cases did not require ambulance attendance.

All the major television networks, together with Sydney and regional newspapers and radio, ran with the story, utilising real-life calls that were provided to them to highlight the types of jobs that should have been directed elsewhere.

Restart a Heart Day

Restart a Heart Day is a global initiative of the European Resuscitation Council, co-ordinated in Australia and New Zealand by the Council of Ambulance Authorities to raise awareness and educate the community about CPR and AEDs in the community.

On 16 October we celebrated Restart a Heart Day by raising community awareness through sharing stories, in local media, of cardiac arrest survivors that truly epitomise the factors that can mean the difference between life and death in a cardiac arrest. Advertisements were produced by our media team to increase community awareness of the Public Access Defibrillation (PAD) program in NSW. Messaging included 'Every Second Counts' and 'It Could Be Me' which highlights the different emergency services personnel who may be the first to arrive with a defibrillator, if you call Triple Zero (000) for a cardiac arrest.

Clinical Volunteers

Within the pre-hospital context the patient journey commences with the first call for assistance and the arrival of volunteer responders who care for the patient until the transfer of care to paramedics occurs. NSW Ambulance clinical volunteers in small communities ensure that the delay between calling for help and receiving care from paramedics belonging to neighbouring stations is minimised and this leads to improved patient outcomes. These groups are also integral to building the resilience of small communities in responding to and recovering from not only personal health emergencies, but also to significant events such as severe weather, natural disaster or man-made catastrophes.

This year, COVID-19 has presented ongoing challenges for all health care workers including our clinical volunteers who have had to adapt to changes in their clinical practice, changes in their PPE use and downsizing of their induction courses including restricting participants to geographic 'bubbles' in order to protect their community from the virus.

To further support our Clinical Volunteers, across metropolitan, regional, rural and remote locations, 2020-21 saw 58 of our Clinical Volunteer Facilitators, drawn from local paramedics, commence their studies in either the upgrade of their existing Certificate IV Training & Assessment TAE40116 or the full certificate course.

The Clinical Volunteer program continues to evolve and will see the first of our community units transition to the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) model in December 2021 at Nana Glen, on the Mid North Coast. This model will incorporate a purpose-built NSW Ambulance response vehicle, with mobile data terminal and the implementation of eMR use for this team and any subsequent CERTs.

The Clinical Volunteers program also added a MyShift Availability Tool which is linked to dispatch boards in Control Centres. The tool enables clinical volunteers to identify their periods of availability, enabling the dispatcher to quickly identify who is available to respond.

Work is also ongoing to improve IT access to our volunteer workforce who attended 4705 cases in 2020-21.



Women's rugby teams travelled from around the state to compete in the inaugural NSW Aboriginal Women's Rugby League Knockout

Game on for Aboriginal women's health

In March 2021, NSW Ambulance celebrated National Close the Gap Day. During the month beforehand, the Aboriginal Women's Rugby League knockout game was organised to support Aboriginal women's health and our paramedics were there, ready to play/support the cause.

Women's rugby league teams travelled from around the state to compete for the first time at the Kingsway in St Marys for the inaugural NSW Aboriginal Women's Rugby League Knockout. Station Officer Shireen Doyle and paramedics Matthew Wood, Jake La Ferla and Brad Wright were on hand to provide ambulance services during the event.

National NAIDOC Week 8-15 November

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people hold a deep spiritual connection to the land that goes back beyond European settlement for over 65,000 years. The lives, stories and histories of First Nations people are steeped in the land we stand on.

NAIDOC Week is an opportunity for all Australians to celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and recognise the rich history of our country, with the NAIDOC Week 2020 theme, 'Always Was, Always Will Be'. This recognises that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have lived and sustainably managed the land throughout Australia for thousands of generations, becoming the first to explore the country and navigate coastlines and also becoming our first scientists, astronomers, engineers, farmers, artists and healers.

'Country' for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people doesn't just mean the land, waterways and oceans. It includes people, plants and animals as well as the seasons, stories and creation spirits. Country is also used to describe family and community and an association with particular locations in Australia.

NSW Ambulance had planned to be involved with the Fairfield Engaging Families of Aboriginal Heritage group to celebrate NAIDOC Week. Unfortunately, with last minute cancellations of community events due to COVID-19 we were not able to participate as planned.



NSW Ambulance

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