



YEAR 21/22 IN REVIEW.



NSW Ambulance



TIME 21/22 LINE.

JULY

Advanced Mobile Location (AML) technology implemented into NSW Ambulance Control Centres

EVIDENCE trial commenced

Updated COVID-19 resources to guide clinicians released

AUGUST

COVID-19 Intensive Care Paramedic equipment provided for Duty Operations Managers

SEPTEMBER

NSW Ambulance Virtual Clinical Care Centre (VCCC) established

OCTOBER

NSW Ambulance Wellbeing Platform launched

NOVEMBER

Construction commenced at Central Sydney Ambulance Station

DECEMBER

Clinical Credentialing Framework published

JANUARY

Five new fixed wing aircraft commenced operational duties

Property leased for the establishment of a new State Operations Centre (SOC) at Sydney Olympic Park

VCCC commenced 24-hour operations and onboarding of Clinical Support Assistants

MARCH

Stage 1, \$132 million of the \$230 million Rural Ambulance Infrastructure Reconfiguration (RAIR) investment program completed. A further \$100 million committed for Stage 2 works

MAY

New monitor defibrillator program announced

JUNE

NSW Government announced \$1.76 billion investment, over the next four years, into NSW Ambulance

CONTENTS

Foreword **3**

About **4**

Our Future **6**

A Measure of Success **6**

Our People **8**

Our Infrastructure **14**

Clinical Innovations **18**

Our COVID-19 Response **22**

In the Community **24**



FOREWORD

A future-facing clinical mobile health service



Dr Dominic Morgan ASM
Chief Executive,
NSW Ambulance

The 2021-22 financial year will be remembered as a year of incredible success and achievement in the face of adversity and unprecedented challenges.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, our response to support our staff and patients has been measured and proportionate. The first half of January 2022 proved to be the most challenging period of the pandemic, with unprecedented demand for Triple Zero (000) response. NSW Ambulance continued to play an important role in contributing to the management of the overall Health system demands and implemented a significant number of strategies designed to promote service accessibility and maintain patient safety. To keep our staff safe

and protected, we rolled out Rapid Antigen Testing across the state, launched additional Rapid Emergency Department Make Ready Services at hospitals throughout Sydney, and organised the placement of welfare amenities trailers at a number of hospital sites across NSW to provide a dedicated area to take a brief rest and sustenance.

We met key milestones in each of our strategic priorities. The launch of the Virtual Clinical Care Centre in September was the first step in our journey towards our transformation to a future-facing clinical mobile health service. The NSW Ambulance Wellbeing Platform was officially launched in October and for the first time, NSW Ambulance has more women than men employed in two generational brackets (Gen Y and Gen Z), with women making up 47.5 per cent of the NSW Ambulance workforce. The NSW Government continued its record investment in NSW Ambulance infrastructure to ensure our clinicians have the very best equipment to support the delivery of high-quality road and aeromedical services across NSW.

In December we recognised another facet of NSW Ambulance's long history of service to our community with the acknowledgement of 60 years of NSW Ambulance Rescue.

The major storms and flooding experienced during February to April 2022 saw our staff come together, yet again, to support their colleagues as well as the community. There were many tragic stories behind the severe weather events, but from this disaster there were also amazing examples within our organisation of support, resilience and hope.

As we reflect on a year that was filled with both challenges and great results, we look to the future with excitement and anticipation. The NSW Government's \$1.76 billion investment, over four years, in NSW Ambulance and the people that work here, will support the continued implementation of our 2021-2026 Strategic Plan and our vision of excellence in care for our community.

ABOUT

NSW Ambulance

NSW Ambulance is an integral part of the NSW Health system, delivering mobile health services, providing high quality clinical care, compassion, relief of pain and suffering, and rescue and retrieval services to the people of NSW with emergency and medical needs. We collaborate with the broader health system and NSW community to proactively develop safety and prevention programs designed to reduce mortality and morbidity, while also improving health outcomes.

The best health outcomes are achieved when we can provide the most appropriate care for patients at every point in their journey. We are revolutionising the way we respond to emergency calls in order to provide a health pathway that best meets patient needs in a clinically appropriate timeframe. NSW Ambulance manages demand proactively, while embracing the compassionate, high-quality care we are known for. We are committed to enhancing the patient and carer experience as we work with our diverse communities to design services that are appropriate for different community needs.

We have a motivated team who perform their jobs to the highest possible standards and go above and beyond to ensure we deliver excellent care. We are committed to delivering our services in a socially and environmentally sensitive way.

Our patients

1,201,210

Triple Zero (000) calls received with 1,041,456 answered within 10 seconds

1,295,481 NSW Ambulance responses representing an average of one response every 24.34 seconds

8.85 minutes median response time to our most critical patients

738,841 patients transported

67,923 calls transferred to secondary triage, with 34,124 Triple Zero (000) calls referred to an alternate care pathway

Our people

6,536

people work at NSW Ambulance

5,269 paramedics

544 control centre staff

558 corporate and support staff

115 doctors

50 nurses

370 clinical volunteers

2 therapy dogs

Aeromedical

13,282

Aeromedical Missions

5,783 Fixed Wing Missions

4,677 Helicopter Missions

2,822 Aeromedical Road Retrievals

59 flood rescues

169 winch missions

77 Retrieval Transfusion
Protocol activations

12 helicopters

8 fixed wing aircraft

1 Aeromedical Specialist
Education unit

Stations

231

Operational Ambulance Stations,
plus 9 Paramedic Response Points

7 Helicopter bases: Bankstown,
Wollongong, Orange, Tamworth,
Lismore, Newcastle and ACT
Ambulance Service

3 Fixed Wing Bases: Sydney Airport,
Royal Flying Doctors Service Dubbo,
Royal Flying Doctors Service Broken Hill

On road

1,605

operational vehicles with an
additional 50 frontline emergency
ambulances to support the COVID-19
surge workforce requirements



OUR FUTURE

NSW Ambulance Vision and Strategic Plan 2021-2026

The NSW Ambulance Vision and Strategic Plan 2021-2026 was launched in April 2021. Despite historically high demands on our service over the past twelve months due to COVID-19 and several severe weather events, remarkable progress was achieved against all four of our key strategic priorities:

1. Our Organisation

- For the first time, NSW Ambulance has more women than men employed in two generational brackets (Gen Y and Gen Z), with women making up 47.5% of the entire NSW Ambulance workforce
- Wellbeing Platform launched

2. Our Services

- Establishment of the Virtual Clinical Care Centre
- Mechanical Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation technology introduced

3. Our Stakeholders and Partners

- Bolstered relationships with tertiary education providers to provide a pipeline of new paramedic graduates for the next four years

4. Our Resources

- Responsible management of our financial resources, with the organisation returning 'on budget' results, despite COVID-19 challenges
- NSW Government's 2022-23 Budget announcement of \$1.76 billion, over 4 years, to recruit 2,128 new staff and open 30 more stations

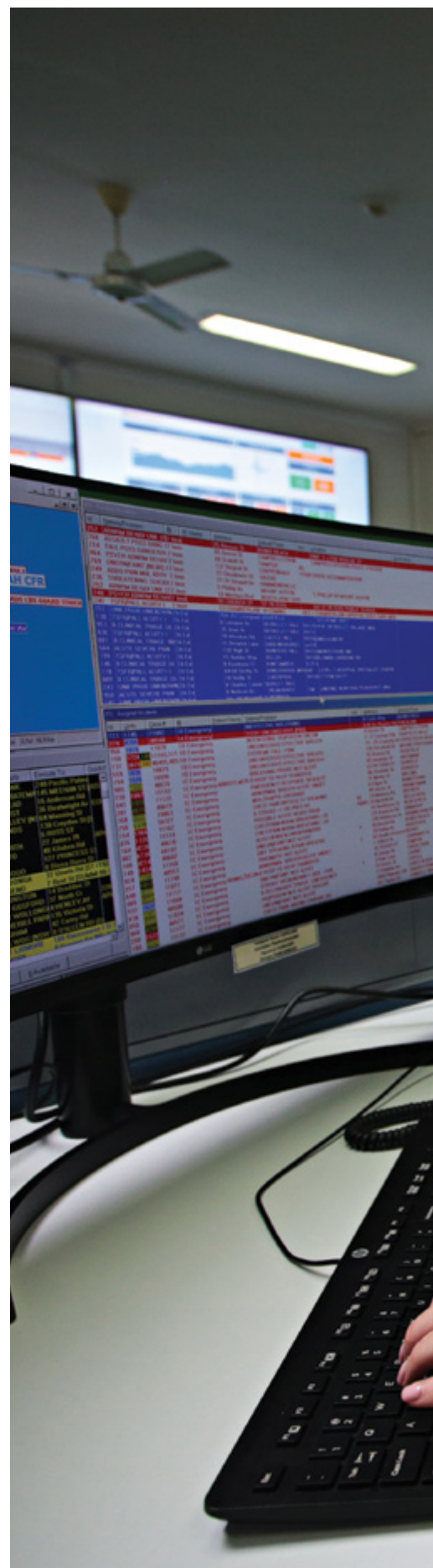
A MEASURE OF SUCCESS

Clinical Key Performances Indicators

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

Our 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. The KPIs also provide a basis for NSW Ambulance to achieve improvement in care.

Clinical Monitors	Target %	Result %	KPI Service Agreement KPIs	Target %	Result %
End-Tidal Waveform	85	88.8	STEMI	95	98.3
12 Lead ECG	95	96.4	Trauma T1	95	99.4
All Patient Observations	80	82.6	Stroke FAST Metro	90	97.8
Pain Reduction	80	83.2	Stroke FAST Regional	80	94
Acute Severe Behavioural Disturbance	80	87.3	Mental Health	60	72.5
Visual Observations	80	82.5	Complaints Management - 35 Days	80	79.1
Elder at Risk	80	55.2	Death Review	100	100







OUR PEOPLE

Supporting our employees throughout their career

The development and support of our people is a strategic priority for NSW Ambulance. Building a strong people-focused culture where staff wellbeing, resilience and safety is paramount, enables the achievement of our key people and culture objectives.

Throughout 2021-22, NSW Ambulance placed considered focus on staff health and wellbeing to deliver a number of organisational and employee benefits, which included promoting positive holistic health, strengthening relationships, improving workplace support, promoting employee engagement and productivity, reducing illness and injury, and supporting resilience and recovery in the workforce.

Debrief with the Chief

Our Chief Executive continued his commitment to communicate directly with staff through his “Debrief with the Chief” initiative this year. A wide range of subjects were covered including COVID-19, NSW Ambulance’s Future Clinical Strategy, Work Health and Safety, NSW Ambulance response to Omicron, Emergency Management, Clinical Professional Development Program and Clinical Research to name a few.

The forum continued to provide an opportunity to share what’s happening across our organisation, as well as answer questions about issues confronting us. Importantly, “Debrief with the Chief” provides an additional opportunity for staff to contribute ideas for themes and specific topics to be discussed and addressed.

Fatigue Management

NSW Ambulance is committed to providing a safe workplace. This means ensuring our culture places the safety of staff, as well as patients, at the centre of everything we do. Key to this is making sure staff are not suffering from fatigue. In October 2021 we released a new Fatigue Management Operating Procedure to support the implementation of our Fatigue Management Systems. The operating procedure has been developed to assist our managers and staff to identify the potential sources of work-related fatigue, as well as providing guidance on strategies to reduce the likelihood of work-related fatigue occurring and minimising its impact where it does occur.

Underpinning the operating procedure is the concept of pre-emptive fatigue management. This means staff and managers now have visibility of a worker’s fatigue profile throughout any given shift, which provides staff and managers with the ability to implement strategies that will reduce the risk of workplace fatigue.

In April we released our bespoke NSW Ambulance Fatigue Management eLearning module for completion in My Health Learning (MHL). The module was specifically designed for our staff who undertake safety-critical roles. The module explains how to recognise the signs of fatigue, outlines the responsibilities for managing fatigue and provides step-by-step instructions



Staff Health Snapshot

Health & Fitness

- 663** Sessions with an Injury Prevention Specialist
- 334** Sessions with the Health Coach
- 17** Vouchers for Nicotine Replacement Therapy
- 885** Healthy Lifestyle Checks
- 2,137** Staff Fitness Passport memberships
- 1,861** Family Fitness Passport memberships

Peer Support Officers

- 1,325** Supported staff and volunteers
- 39%** were off-duty when they provided support

Chaplains supported

- 4,948** Staff and volunteers
- 564** Community members or other emergency service workers

Staff Psychology Service

- 1,043** New staff referred to the service for psychological support
- 597** Staff referred to the service for trauma support

Mental Health and Wellbeing

- 914** Staff participated in Wellbeing Workshops

Psychological Services

- 232** Referrals to employee assistance
- 38** Referrals for family members
- 17** Significant event trauma support provided

Family Support Network

- 811** Views of the family support network webpage

on how and when to use our new Fatigue Calculator. The module also supports the June release of our updated Fatigue Management Policy Directive and Operating Procedure.

The NSW Ambulance Fatigue Management module was developed in consultation with Pindara Training Services, who were contracted under the Aboriginal Business Procurement Policy.

Finalists in CAA awards

NSW Ambulance is proud to have had finalists in the Australasian Ambulance Awards for Excellence. Run by the Council of Ambulance Authorities (CAA) for more than 10 years, the aim of these awards is to recognise the hard and innovative work of member ambulance services from Australia, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea. NSW Ambulance's Wellbeing Workshop Program was a finalist in the 'Excellence in Mental Health & Wellbeing' category of the awards and our Elevate Program was a finalist in the 'Excellence in Staff Development' category.

2021 People Matter Employee Survey

The 2021 People Matter Employee Survey (PMES) was completed in November 2021 and the results delivered to managers throughout December 2021 and January 2022. NSW Ambulance had a response rate of 47 per cent and an employee engagement rate of 54 per cent. The NSW Ambulance PMES Action Plan 2021-2022 was developed to address the seven key priority areas of focus for improvement: Recruitment, Communication, Recognition, Operational Middle Management, Professional Development, Change Management and

OUR PEOPLE

Grievance Management. The plan detailed specific actions in each priority area to improve employee engagement, along with regular progress reports to ensure key actions were delivered and within the approved timeframes.

Body Worn Cameras

The Body Worn Camera trial has been running since November 2019 in three locations: Sydney Ambulance Centre in Eveleigh, Liverpool Station and Hamilton Station. Paramedics at these locations have access to body worn cameras to attach to their uniforms, which they can activate if there is a risk of occupational violence. Participation in the trial has been entirely voluntary. The primary goal of this initiative is to provide an additional layer of protection against incidents of occupational violence. Phase 2 of the trial came to an end in November 2021. The most important trend we have seen is an increase in paramedics self-reporting that the activation of body worn cameras has contributed to the de-escalation of potential threats.

Amendments to the Surveillance Devices Regulations, allowing the use of Body Worn Cameras by paramedics, were extended to November 2023, allowing the trial to continue beyond its initial period.

Charles Sturt University will be undertaking empirical research to evaluate the effectiveness of body worn cameras as an occupational violence prevention measure.

Throughout the Body Worn Camera trial, paramedics have checked out the cameras over 13,000 times with an average of 94 check outs each week. As of 30 June 2022, paramedics have intentionally captured and categorised 245 incidents with 7 per cent of those being assaults, 15 per cent being other forms of occupational violence and 78 per cent being categorised as potential threats that did not escalate.

Wellbeing Programs

The NSW Ambulance Wellbeing Platform was officially launched in October. The NSW Ambulance Staff Health team partnered with Virgin Pulse to develop the NSW Ambulance Wellbeing Platform. The platform offers a personal health and



ABOVE: The Body Worn Camera trial has been running since November 2019

ABOVE RIGHT: The 360 Degree Feedback program is just one of the many opportunities for development and growth at NSW Ambulance leaders

BELOW: The 100th edition of the Wellbeing Workshop was held in May





wellbeing experience that includes NSW Ambulance Staff Health programs, tailored resources, fitness challenges, healthy habit trackers, mindfulness activities and much more to support our staff with their health and wellbeing.

Mindarma, our evidence-based eLearning program that complements our face-to-face wellbeing workshops, is resulting in significant increases (9.2 per cent) in adaptive resilience among the NSW Ambulance workforce. We know that Mindarma is having these results as the program has an inbuilt measure of 'adaptive resilience'-the ability to recover from adversity, adapt and thrive-which Mindarma measures pre and post taking the online course.

In May we celebrated the 100th edition of the Wellbeing Workshop. This significant milestone meant that more than 4,800 members of our workforce had completed the program. The workshop is a development program designed to support the mental and physical wellbeing of NSW Ambulance staff. Participants learn simple yet powerful strategies and skills to implement into daily life to enhance health, safety, self-awareness, wellbeing and quality of life.

New Safety Management System

When it comes to Work Health and Safety at NSW Ambulance, a fundamental part of the organisation's risk management strategy is to ensure there is a robust and effective Safety Management System (SMS) in place .

In February 2022, the Executive Leadership Team endorsed a proposal developed by the Safety & Recovery unit to redevelop NSW Ambulance's SMS to align to the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) 45001. The standard targets occupational health and safety management in an organisation and provides organisations with a framework in which to build a comprehensive management system that protects the health and safety of those working in an organisation, integrating safety into all business processes. In essence, adopting ISO 45001 will align our safety systems and culture to internationally recognised best practice.

The new SMS will be delivered in a three-year program of works and projects, equating to one new policy directive and 18 new or revised operating procedures. This will replace two existing policy directives and eight operating procedures. By aligning to the international standard, the future of our safety program will be built on contemporary models of safety management that integrates the safety of work into business-as-usual practice. NSW Ambulance will likely be the first organisation within NSW Health and other ambulance services in Australia to achieve this outcome.

Record number of students inducted

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, NSW Ambulance has been able to adapt and overcome significant challenges thanks to many hardworking behind-the-scenes teams.

Thanks to the hard work, dedication and adaptability of our Education Team, a record-breaking number of frontline paramedics, control centre staff and Virtual Clinical Care Centre (VCCC) staff were inducted to meet demand. In addition, several planned courses for the year were delivered, including Intensive Care Paramedic and Extended Care Paramedic training, as well as Clinical Volunteer inductions.

Leadership Development

Our workforce currently spans five generations. Leaders can be forgiven for thinking they need to adopt new leadership approaches for each generation, however research conducted at Harvard shows there are more similarities in workplace values and preferences between generations than there are differences. The same research shows that differences occur more within generations than across generations, depending on life stages and experiences. The key for our leaders is to recognise and consider the entire employee lifecycle; from university leavers looking for their first work experience, to people seeking return to work after raising children and managing family-work balance, to older workers wanting to transition to retirement and pass on knowledge.

Throughout the year, 44 of our leaders commenced our 360 Degree Feedback program, which is part of our Capable Leader suite of targeted development programs, designed to develop effective, engaging and compassionate leaders. Additionally, 70 of our leaders attended the Basecamp as part of the Elevate Leadership Program and 496 leaders attended one of the five programs as part of our Management Development Program (MDP), a HETI led virtual program designed to strengthen the foundational leadership capabilities of all managers.

Staying safe on the road

NSW Ambulance has a fleet of vehicles that travel approximately 50 million kilometres each year and we are committed to providing our staff with safe, reliable and roadworthy vehicles to ensure they continue providing excellence in care for the people of NSW. Road safety is a key risk for NSW Ambulance and vehicle incidents put our staff and the public at risk of harm. Due to the nature of our work, the majority of our employees are required to work in a range of dynamic environments.

Our emergency vehicles are equipped with the latest in safety features and equipment such as front, side and curtain airbags, electronic emergency braking, autonomous emergency braking, reversing cameras and sensors wherever this is available from the manufacturer. New and emerging technologies are continually being considered to ensure the safety of our staff, patients, and other road users.

OUR PEOPLE

2022 Senior Managers Conference

Following last year's launch of the Strategic Plan, our leaders reconvened at our Senior Managers Conference held in May, to reflect on what has been achieved over the past 12 months while also looking ahead to the future.

More than 100 of our senior managers came together in Sydney to listen to and discuss the progress of NSW Ambulance's Vision and Strategic Plan 2021-2026 (titled Redefining our Future), one year on from its launch. The conference – which was hosted by journalist Chris Bath – commenced proceedings with an address from Chief Executive, Dr Dominic Morgan. Dr Morgan spoke to the incredible achievements of our organisation over the past year, particularly given the ongoing challenges posed by COVID-19.

Women on the agenda

As of 1 May 2022, women make up 47.5 per cent of our workforce, with women making up 46.8 per cent of roles within our operational workforce. Women also make up 41 per cent of all leadership roles (Station Officer and up + Health Manager L1 and up) at NSW Ambulance.

	Female	Male	Total	Total %
Traditionalists (1928 - 1944)	1	3	4	0.06
Baby Boomers (1945 - 1964)	221	572	793	11.41
Gen X (1965 - 1979)	921	1374	2295	33.02
Gen Y (1980 - 1994)	1431	1350	2781	40.01
Gen Z (1995 - 2010)	664	414	1078	15.51
Total	3238	3713	6951	100

In 1979, NSW Ambulance made history when our first female Ambulance Officer, as paramedics were known at that time, joined the operational workforce. Since then, many more women have joined NSW Ambulance and faced challenges, such as the need to halt career progression while they took time away from work to raise a family, before returning to work part-time.

NSW Ambulance has a renewed energy in focusing on supporting women throughout all stages on their career lifecycle. In March 2022, NSW Ambulance commissioned Our Race Pty Ltd to conduct a review of NSW Ambulance's progress against the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WEGA) report and to identify key focus areas for improvement. The 2022 NSW Ambulance WEGA Action Plan includes three areas of focus:

1. Career Advancement for Women
2. Health and Wellbeing
3. Empowerment

The 19 action items will be implemented from August 2022 to June 2024.

As part of the Capable Leader suite, Learning & Development introduced a Women in Leadership program and funded nine women leaders to attend the NSW Public Sector Women in Leadership Summit on 15-16 June 2022 in Sydney. Applicants went through a merit-based selection process including a gender diverse panel assessment of their application. The applicants included two Duty Operations Managers, two Acting Duty Operations Managers, four Station Officers and one Health Relations Manager. Learning & Development is also rolling out different approaches to help build the capability and confidence of women in leadership roles. This includes creating support networks to share leadership experiences and current leadership practices, including the Women in Leadership Reading Circle.

Reconciliation Action Plan

In February, we were pleased to announce that NSW Ambulance's Reconciliation Action Plan was endorsed by Reconciliation Australia. Karen Mundine, Chief Executive Officer, Reconciliation Australia said the plan's strength is its framework of relationships, respect, and opportunities, which allows an

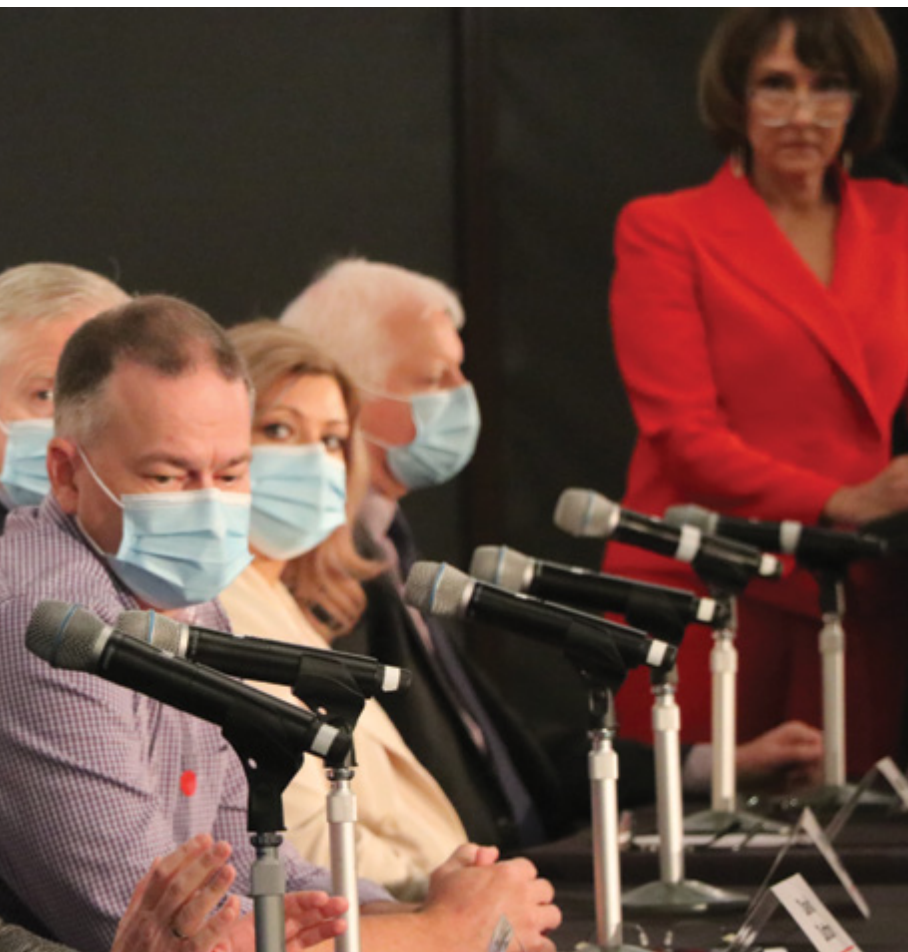


organisation to strategically set its reconciliation commitments in line with its own business objectives, for the most effective outcomes.

The action plan maps out the beginnings of our contribution to the reconciliation movement taking place between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the wider Australian community. At the heart of the plan is a pledge to make a positive contribution to the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The plan outlines how NSW Ambulance will ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have complete access to patient care which they feel is culturally safe and responsive, and jobs that offer secure employment in a workforce that recognises and values diversity and inclusion.

'Be Brave. Make Change' during National Reconciliation Week

In May, we celebrated National Reconciliation Week by hearing from two of our newest Aboriginal paramedic recruits. In NSW Ambulance's Sirens publication, they provided their thoughts on reconciliation and actions to take for change. National Reconciliation Week celebrates and builds on the respectful relationships shared by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous Australians. It is also an ideal



ABOVE: NSW Ambulance reconviend for Senior Managers Conference in May

opportunity for all Australians to explore the national reconciliation effort.

Important historical dates regarding reconciliation include 27 May and 3 June. 27 May marks the anniversary of the 1967 referendum when Australians voted to remove clauses from the Constitution that discriminated against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. 3 June marks the historic ‘Mabo’ decision in the High Court of Australia that recognised Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ rights over their lands. National Sorry Day, on 26 May, also takes place before Reconciliation Week and honours and commemorates the Stolen Generations. The reconciliation theme this year was “Be Brave. Make Change” – a challenge to all Australians to tackle the unfinished business of reconciliation, for the benefit of all Australians. However small, we can make change, beginning with our daily lives where we live, work, play and socialise.

Supporting Management Student Placements

In April, we announced a new university partnership that will help to develop NSW Ambulance’s leaders of the future. Our Learning & Development team partnered with Western Sydney University to host health science management students in their final

year of study for their Bachelor’s degree. NSW Ambulance has a long history of supporting clinical students, and now looks forward to also supporting health management students. Management student placements are part of the Capable Leader strategy which aims to build the capabilities of leaders at all levels. The first health science management student commenced their placement in People & Culture in April. This partnership adds to the existing Australian College of Health Service Management (ACHSM) Management Internships which have been in place for more than 10 years. The two-year ACHSM Management Internship is a paid position that rotates through roles in different directorates while being sponsored to complete a Masters in Health Science Management.

Development of Women in Aeromedical Working Group and Development of draft Helicopter Equity Diversity and Inclusivity Plan

In May, a working group consisting of female aeromedical critical care paramedics (CCPS) and doctors came together to discuss, identify and understand the work environment and needs of women in Helicopter Operations. This work forms a component of a broader equity, diversity and inclusivity project being undertaken within Helicopter Operations, in partnership with the Helicopter People and Culture business partner and NSW Ambulance diversity and inclusivity manager. Currently three work streams are well advanced: 1. Updating of the helicopter entry fitness assessment to ensure it is contemporary and gender neutral, 2. Development of a flexible work practice framework for CCPs, and 3. A review and update of the organisational maternity policy to ensure that it encompasses all clinician craft groups and provides good guidance for staff and managers regarding pregnant staff and flying operations.

BELOW: In February NSW Ambulance’s Reconciliation Action Plan was endorsed by Reconciliation Australia



OUR INFRASTRUCTURE

Metro, rural and regional resources for NSW

The NSW Government continued its record investment in NSW Ambulance infrastructure to ensure our paramedics have the very best equipment to support the delivery of high-quality road and aeromedical ambulance services across NSW. This year saw another record investment in services and capital works to expand the future-proofing of our emergency care across the state and boost capacity in regional and rural areas.

The funding boost allowed us to design and fit-out our new fit-for-purpose State Operations Centre at Sydney Olympic Park, including the first Virtual Clinical Care Centre (VCCC) 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 VCCC 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.

The investment saw a focus on supporting frontline paramedics to deliver care during very challenging COVID-19 pandemic times. It included the regional rollout of 69 Intensive Care ambulances and specialised equipment, completing the delivery of 104 new ICU ambulances. We also rolled out hybrid polo operational uniform shirts made of more breathable fabric to make it cooler while wearing full personal protection equipment.

Building for the future

In January, demolition works were completed and construction commenced on building the new Central Sydney Ambulance Station – the 11th ambulance station under the SAMIS (Sydney Ambulance Metropolitan Infrastructure Strategy) Program. The station construction is scheduled for completion in mid-2023.

In March, the opening of Iluka Ambulance Station represented a significant moment for the RAIR (Rural Ambulance Infrastructure Reconfiguration) Program. This brand-new service was the 24th and final station (either as



a new service or rebuild of an existing service) in Stage 1 of a \$132 million NSW Government investment for stations across regional and rural NSW. A further \$100 million is committed for Stage 2 works as part of RAIR's \$232 million investment program, which will see a further five brand-new services, seven rebuilds and 18 major refurbishments of existing ambulance stations by the end of the 2023.

Our Assets & Infrastructure team completed 70 refurbishment programs which included improvements such as the replacement of roller doors, electrical compliance safety, hazard material remediation, modernising building infrastructure and improving station amenities for paramedics. Ambulance stations at Colyton, Fairfield, Campsie and Concord received refurbishments to assist with accommodating the COVID-19 surge workforce paramedics.

With the June 2022, NSW Government announcement of \$1.76 billion investment into NSW Ambulance over the next four years, the Assets & Infrastructure team will be actively involved in supporting the delivery of the 30 new ambulance stations and additional vehicles and equipment.

New location is part of larger transformation of emergency response

In June 2021, the State Government announced a \$214 million funding boost for NSW Ambulance which included the establishment of a new State Operations Centre (SOC) at Sydney Olympic Park. Multiple user groups have since convened to assist in the development of intricate under-and-above the floor design specifications for the SOC as a state-of-the-art centre. The SOC will accommodate the co-location of Sydney Control Centre, Aeromedical Control Centre, the newly-created VCCC, paramedic education and corporate functions. In the second half of 2022, the SOC was scheduled for the start of the construction fit-out of the building which, as a modern corporate facility, will also house the largest control centre of its type in the southern hemisphere. This will future-proof NSW Ambulance's ability to coordinate and support our response to our patients and our workforce in the years ahead.

The creation of the SOC is also part of a broader body of work that NSW Ambulance has commenced called the Control Centre Re-Form Program (Re-Form). Over the next three years, Re-Form will coordinate a number of projects to support the implementation of our Vision and Strategic Plan.

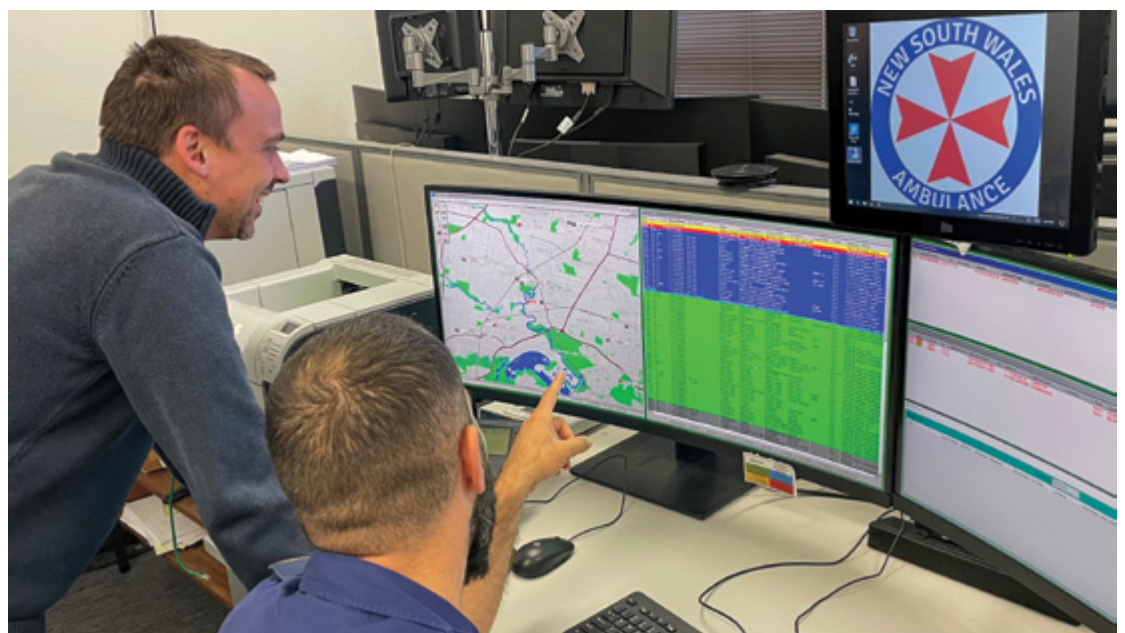
Game-changing location technology

In July, we implemented Advanced Mobile Location (AML) technology into NSW Ambulance's control centres. The project was the result of collaboration of our Information & Digital Services project teams, eHealth Frontline Applications Unit, State-wide Network Services, NSW Ambulance's Control Division and Business Engagement Team.

AML is the most recent technological enhancement. An AML-enabled smartphone recognises when a Triple Zero (000) call is made and, if not already activated, temporarily switches on the phone's location service functions. AML is not an App but is built in to the operating system. The smartphone calculates the caller's location using a device-dependent combination of GPS, Wi-Fi, mobile network information and other sensor inputs. Once the device's location is calculated, the smartphone automatically sends an SMS with the location to the Emergency Service Organisation. This SMS is sent in the background while the call is in progress, and the caller is not required to do anything for the information to be sent.

LEFT: Construction commenced on building the new Central Sydney Ambulance Station

BELOW: Advanced Mobile Location (AML) technology enables smartphones to temporarily switch on the phone location when a Triple Zero (000) call is made



OUR INFRASTRUCTURE

With around 78 per cent of calls to Triple Zero (000) originating from a mobile telephone, AML has the potential to assist a significant proportion of callers. It can provide a location within a five-metre radius outdoors and a 25-metre radius indoors. Based on deployments of AML in other countries, about 85 per cent of calls will provide location accuracy within 50 metres. This location technology will improve the services we provide and save lives.

Zeroing in on an ambitious goal

During the year we made great progress towards NSW Ambulance achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2040 with an additional 29 stations receiving solar PV panel installation.

But it's not just at stations where great strides are being made in emission reductions. NSW Ambulance's emergency vehicles are also being decked out with solar panels. During the year, solar panels have been installed on 260 emergency ambulances and 16 of the emergency support vehicles as part of the new vehicle design specification. In May 2022 a retro-fit program commenced at the NSW Ambulance fleet workshops to install the solar panels on the current emergency ambulance fleet. This retro-fit is scheduled for completion in 2022-2023, which will achieve solar panel installation on the service's 1,018 emergency ambulance fleet and a standard specification for new emergency ambulances. NSW Ambulance is developing a net zero carbon reduction plan, with a number of initiatives covering building, fleet, waste, and utilities.



Far West Radio Network project wins international award

In November, NSW Ambulance won a prestigious international award for the 'Best Use of Critical Communications in Public Safety' at the International Critical Communications Awards (ICCA). The NSW Ambulance Far West P25 Radio Network project was recognised at the prestigious annual event, which acknowledges the success of products, organisations and individuals that have pushed boundaries and capabilities within

ABOVE: An additional 29 stations received solar panels along with 260 ambulances

RIGHT: A retro-fit programme commenced in May for existing ambulances





ABOVE: 80 new Toyota Landcruiser 200 Series ambulances commenced rollout to replace the aging Toyota Landcruiser Troop Carrier fleet

the field. NSW Ambulance partnered with Vertel Telecommunications to design, construct and implement the P25 digital radio network in the Far West (Broken Hill) area. This was an innovative project that resulted in resolving the radio communications issues for paramedics and their patients in a large section of remote regional NSW.

New four-wheel drive retrieval vehicles

During the year we commenced the roll out of 80 new Toyota Landcruiser 200 Series ambulances as replacement for the aging Toyota Landcruiser Troop Carrier fleet. The L200s have innovative design and safety features for use on challenging terrain during patient transfers and rescues. The new vehicles have been built and fitted out for use in difficult terrain to access or egress areas such as beaches or the bush and have a number of features to benefit both paramedics and patients. The rollout will be completed in 2023.

The vehicle layout was the result of extensive stakeholder engagement including representatives from Metro and Rural operations, Management, Unions (APA, HSU), Health & Safety, Medical Equipment, Special Operations, Clinical Systems and the Manager Clinical Volunteers.

Inform CAD go-live

On 2 May 2022, NSW Ambulance in partnership with eHealth upgraded its Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) platform from VisiCAD to Inform CAD. The platform is housed in the NSW Government Data Centres (Gov DC).

The CAD platform is vital infrastructure for NSW Ambulance, enabling timely and appropriate responses to be coordinated, following requests for emergency medical care. Focusing on the needs of paramedics and Control Centre staff, the upgrade targeted clinical assessment, compliance, mapping, routing, prioritisation, and accuracy of ambulance dispatch.

Upgrade to the clinical question and answer pathways (ProQA), has ensured the assessment and triage of a patient's condition is as accurate as possible. While enhancements to mapping functionality has supported better routing of ambulances to incidents. This included improvements to patient geolocation, address points and points of interest.

The complex system upgrade comprised over 60 components in one data centre, involved almost 100 staff from both NSW Ambulance and eHealth, including a team of 14 separate vendors. The upgrade was overseen by a NSW Ambulance Level 3 State Incident Management Team (IMT) at Eveleigh, along with the Technical Command Centre located at eHealth NSW, in Chatswood. Over 1,300 test cases and seven separate rehearsals took place prior to the successful upgrade.

New fixed wing aircraft

NSW Ambulance launched into 2022 with five brand new fixed wing aircraft commencing operational duties on 1 January. Ahead of the launch, an event was held to celebrate the occasion.

It was a spectacular scene at Mascot air base on 30 December 2021, with all five new Beechcraft King Air 350C planes on display for media and dignitaries ahead of their official operational launch two days later. It was no small feat to ensure the five new aircraft were available for the launch at the same time – but certainly one that was worthwhile given what the new planes represent for NSW Ambulance. Replacing two older version King Air 350s and three smaller B200s, these five new aircraft are set to be of huge benefit to NSW Ambulance flight nurses, pilots and, of course, the patients. The Fixed Wing Operations clinicians who will benefit from the planes, transport more than 6,000 patients every year, often from some of the most remote parts of regional and rural NSW.

Likened to a 'hospital in the sky', these new fixed wing planes – capable of carrying two stretcher patients and three sitting patients at any given time – are also fitted with an updated loading arm, which ensures no manual lifting is required to get the patient in and out of the aircraft. The media event also marked the beginning of a new 10-year contract with Pel-Air, who will operate and maintain the aircraft.

Development of draft Aeromedical Operations Environmental Sustainability Plan

In August, we established a working group with representation from across Aeromedical business units and craft groups to develop a terms of reference that will guide the activities of the group towards ensuring that Aeromedical Operations is not only greener, but is able to provide a sustainable service within a changing climate.

Helicopter and Fixed Wing Operations have asked our contracted partners to provide their organisational climate sustainability plans to ensure that work is aligned. This working group is also leveraging the CAA climate sustainability plan and will partner with the NSW Ambulance Environment & Sustainability Manager to align with the organisational intent.



CLINICAL INNOVATIONS

Research, Initiatives and Investment

In keeping with our core values NSW Ambulance provides an environment that empowers our people to innovate and grow new solutions to the challenges of maintaining the provision of excellence in care to our community. 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 2021-22 we worked with our partners and stakeholders on clinical research and pilot programs including Out of Hospital Cardiac Arrest, stroke care and cervical collar evaluation. We focused on new palliative care initiatives and developed a new Mandatory Clinical Professional Development model. The establishment of the VCCC transforms the way we deliver clinical care and the newly formed Clinical Practice Committee ensures our practice remains contemporary and evidence based.

We developed and published our Helicopter Governance & Accountability Framework and Aeromedical staff maintained their significant involvement in contributing to the global evidence base with more than 28 journal publications throughout the year.

EVIDENCE trial

In July, NSW Ambulance in collaboration with Sydney Local Health District and the National Health and Medical Research Council Clinical Trial Centre, commenced the EVIDENCE trial. The trial brought together the last decade worth of Out of Hospital Cardiac Arrest (OHCA) mechanical CPR (mCPR) research in a world-first prospective randomised controlled trial. The EVIDENCE trial will consider whether expedited transfer of patients in OHCA, or our current High-Performance CPR with mCPR practices, leads to the best neurological outcomes for patients who suffer a cardiac arrest.

Paramedics on scene of a medical cardiac arrest (patient aged between 18-70 years), with an mCPR on scene, enrol patients into the study by opening the EVIDENCE app on the NSW Ambulance phone and completing the screening and enrolment process. Enrolment is due to finish in June 2023.

Alternate care pathways for patients in aged care facilities

NSW Ambulance has been providing an alternate care pathway for Residential Aged Care Facility (RACF) residents since the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pathway involves a secondary triage service provided in partnership with NSW Health and My Emergency Doctor Service (MED). NSW Ambulance Clinical Review Officers and Clinical Support Officers are the conduit between the RACF requesting assistance and specialist emergency doctors from MED, to assist patients in navigating the health system and receiving the right care. Calls received from a RACF triaged with a response category of 2A, 2B or R3s (with a response time 30 minutes or greater) are assessed by the team for clinical stability and suitability. Following clinical review, cases meeting criteria are transferred to the remote emergency



physician telemedicine service, with an aim of providing safe and appropriate care in place of residence. The team have completed successful referrals to MED in a wide variety of cases. NSW Ambulance will continue this work with the Ministry of Health to optimise alternate referral pathways for patients who access the health system through Triple Zero (000).

The Virtual Clinical Care Centre transforming patient care

In late 2021 NSW Ambulance took its first steps towards achieving one of its major strategic initiatives as described in our 2021-2026 Ambulance Vision and Strategic Plan 'Redefining our future' by opening a Virtual Clinical Care Centre (VCCC). Implementation was accelerated in response to the delta wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. Operations commenced initially with two (to four) specialist clinicians on duty 16 hours per day. Extended Care Paramedic Specialists were targeted, due to their training, experience and capability in assessment and management of clinical risk, managing uncertainty and in integrated care provision including referral to other care providers. VCCC clinicians were supported by a full-time clinical director. Favourable patient, clinician and system benefits of this proof-of-concept emerged rapidly aligning with NSW Health virtual care and value-based healthcare strategies. There was an obvious need to scale the model of care to achieve wider system benefits.

Within three months of VCCC operations commencing, NSW was severely impacted by the omicron wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. Triple zero (000) call volume increasing from approximately 3,000 calls per day, to more than 5,000 at the peak. NSW Ambulance demonstrated agility to manage this extreme demand and keep patients safe.

A rapid expansion of the VCCC occurred over the Christmas and New Year period requiring increased VCCC clinician numbers; recruitment and on-

boarding of 40 Clinical Support Assistants to support clinicians and make regular contact with triple zero callers experiencing delays; implementation of a validated secondary triage system (Manchester Triage System – Telephone Triage); extension of operating hours to 24-hours; and provision of a COVID-19 Clinical Assistance Line to support frontline clinicians managing COVID-19 cases. The VCCC out-grew its initial location requiring a rapid relocation to a larger site which required significant ICT upgrades to meet operational needs.

During the 2022 devastating floods, some Northern NSW residents found themselves completely isolated by flood waters.

VCCC clinicians provided ongoing virtual clinical care to patients who were totally isolated by flood waters. Patients needed continuous assessment, evaluation and monitoring while they were waiting to be rescued. Once rescued, the

VCCC assisted in ensuring patients received the care they needed within a reasonable timeframe.

VCCC paramedic specialists provided virtual care in challenging circumstances determining whether patients had immediate medical issues, their condition could be managed virtually or they simply needed rescue. They played a major role in supporting Extended Care Paramedics (ECPs) on the ground as they provided specialist paramedic care to flood-affected areas in Northern NSW.

The NSW Ambulance VCCC has been an effective strategy in managing demand, enhancing patient safety, supporting clinicians, reducing demand on emergency departments and integrating with the wider health system.

Success factors and lessons learnt during this period of unprecedented demand will be of interest to peer jurisdictions and other out-of-hospital care providers.



**EVIDENCE
Trial**

TOP: In late 2021 NSW Ambulance commenced the Virtual Clinical Care Centre (VCCC), later expanding the program in response to the omicron wave of the COVID-19 pandemic with the addition of 40 Clinical Support Assistants to support clinicians

ABOVE: The EVIDENCE program brings together from the last decade, Out of Hospital Cardiac Arrest (OHCA) mechanical CPR (mCPR) research in a world-first prospective randomised controlled trial

CLINICAL INNOVATIONS

SCOPE for improved CPR

The SCOPE (Simulated Curriculum for Out of hospital Paramedic Education) project successfully deployed 192 manikins to all regional stations in NSW giving regional paramedics access to technologically-advanced manikins aimed at enhancing CPR skills. The deployment of the manikins was facilitated by running multiple SCOPE forums across the state, with a SCOPE 'champion' from each regional station attending a forum.

The manikins, controlled via a tablet, can be used to replicate a number of scenarios including cardiac arrest, while also allowing paramedics to input their own scenarios based on previous real-life cases, they have taken part in. They also provide users with extensive performance-based data and can be used for defibrillation.



Palliative Care in Focus

Our paramedics play a changing and important role in palliative care with the expansion of paramedics' clinical scope of practice to provide initial symptom relief for end-of-life and palliative care patients. Paramedics now provide symptom management through the administration of subcutaneous morphine for breathlessness and pain, midazolam for agitation and droperidol for nausea and vomiting. In palliative care the focus is on managing patient symptoms, which is new way a thinking for a lot of paramedics. It's about managing pain, keeping patients as comfortable as

ABOVE: The SCOPE project successfully deployed 192 manikins to regional stations in NSW

BELOW: The new Corpuls 3T monitor/defibrillator

possible, and trying to align the care we provide with the patients' goals of care.

Clinical Systems has developed a Palliative Care Communications Toolkit to support paramedics to deliver high quality, compassionate out-of-hospital palliative care. These resources provide information to paramedics, health practitioners and community members to raise awareness and knowledge of the paramedic's role in providing palliative care.

Stroke care in the spotlight

There is an increasing international focus on implementing a range of initiatives to improve outcomes for stroke patients. Our initiatives



include the implementation of the NSW Telestroke Service, planning for the Stroke Ambulance Pilot and the implementation of a Stroke Protocol that incorporates a 24-hour clinical window.

Since the launch of the NSW Telestroke Service in March 2020, the service has treated more than 1,000 patients across regional NSW and it has continued to expand with an additional seven hospitals going live in the first half of 2022. The service connects regional hospitals to a centralised network of specialist stroke physicians through virtual telehealth technology to improve access to time-critical diagnosis and treatment.

In collaboration with the Ministry of Health, Agency for Clinical Innovation and Local Health Districts, the new Stroke Protocol has been introduced in selected areas of metropolitan Sydney. The Protocol, which facilitates the direct transfer of patients to a facility with stroke unit care, reflects current evidence that supports patients receiving reperfusion therapy up to 24 hours post-symptom onset. Reperfusion therapies that restore cerebral blood flow include thrombolysis (administration of clot busting medication) and endovascular clot retrieval (removal of the clot from a blood vessel).

New monitor defibrillator

In May we announced that the next generation monitor/defibrillator will be the Corpuls 3T (pictured previous page). The final decision was informed by paramedic feedback which included the trialling of multiple devices, including the Corpuls 3T device, in both metro and regional NSW in 2020-21. The Clinical Device and Notification Platform (CDNP) Project Team has been supported by subject matter experts to deliver this significant technological enhancement for NSW Ambulance. The \$62 million program will see more than 1,400 devices purchased to replace our current devices.

Pilot program to evaluate soft foam collars

An Evaluation of Soft Collar Applications by paramedics and Emergency departments (ESCAPE) was commenced in April. ESCAPE will analyse and record the application of soft-foam collars for patients who have or who may have sustained a cervical spine injury.

In 2018, the NSW Agency for Clinical Innovation (ACI), Institute of Trauma and Injury Management and Emergency Care Institute reviewed all the available evidence and concluded that the adverse event rate of rigid cervical collars significantly outweighed the potential benefits of rigid collar immobilisation. This resulted in a Position Statement from ACI advocating for the adoption of soft foam cervical collars for the initial pre-hospital and in-hospital management of children and adult trauma patients. The aim of ESCAPE is to evaluate prospectively, clinically important outcomes to ensure that the expected benefits are realised and that the potential introduction of soft foam collars is safe and effective.

Clinical Practice Committee

The establishment of the Clinical Practice Committee (CPC) in February, represents a significant step forward for clinical practice in NSW Ambulance.

The CPC is the peak decision-making committee on all clinical practice matters, ensuring NSW Ambulance clinical practices are contemporary, evidence-based, high quality, patient-centred and set up to deliver the best outcomes for patients. The CPC receives recommendations from relevant sub-committees and working groups and makes decisions relating to existing and future clinical practice and considers relevant advice issued by pillar agencies such as the Agency for Clinical Innovation and the Clinical Excellence Commission.

The key functionality of the committee is that it includes an inter-professional and multidisciplinary team of specialists, including paramedics, nurses, paramedic academics, psychologists, and doctors (critical care, palliative care, primary care, prehospital and retrieval medicine). There are also two community representative members rounding out the CPC membership.

Collaborative approach to patient flow

Collaboration is at the heart of the NSW Health System Flow Centre (SFC), which was re-activated virtually in late December 2021 to support the Omicron outbreak. The SFC was originally established in September 2021 to support the Local Health Districts and Specialty Health Networks with the coordination of whole of system patient flow during the Delta outbreak. It is a multi-agency system flow unit including NSW Ambulance, NSW Ministry of Health, NSW Healthshare Patient Transport Service (PTS), Intensive Care Unit Coordinator and Adult AeroMedical Retrieval Service. This collaborative approach allows for the close monitoring of emergency departments, acute hospital and intensive care unit capacity, in order to support the most appropriate distribution of patients across the entire system.

The SFC team's monitoring of intelligence and response related to system patient flow metrics operationally, has strengthened overall system data and resilience. NSW Ambulance worked closely with PTS and Local Health Districts during the COVID-19 Omicron response by identifying early pressure points which resulted in improved ambulance turnaround. The SFC was stood down in March 2022 and can be reactivated at short notice when required.

Helicopter Governance & Accountability Framework

In May, following a significant period of consultation, including with the Director of Corporate Governance and members of the Helicopter Leadership Team, the Helicopter Governance and Accountability Framework was developed and signed off by the Director Helicopter Operations and Executive Director Aeromedical Operations. The framework leverages the guidance provided by the State Health Plan, NSW Ambulance strategic plan and governance and procurement approaches to contextualise the delivery of helicopter services within NSW Ambulance. The framework has been familiarised with the Helicopter Leadership Team and is a key document guiding the responsibility and accountability of managers.

Mandatory Clinical Professional Development

In March, Clinical Systems commenced the Mandatory Clinical Professional Development (MCPD) program, formally known as Mandatory Clinical Training. The MCPD program gives our paramedics the opportunity to engage in training and education activities more frequently, over a 12-month period rather than the former 18-month period. The Education team designed and developed the initial MCPD program that supports clinician development and delivers several clinical and strategic initiatives. High-Performance CPR, mechanical CPR, End of Life Care and skills re-validation sessions are delivered with a core focus on individual critical reflection of capability to improve and remain current in key areas of clinical practice. The new MCPD program for clinicians is an exciting step forward as we continue to progress strategic initiatives to ensure we deliver safe and contemporary mobile integrated healthcare.

OUR COVID-19 RESPONSE

Ready always

The COVID-19 variant, Delta, placed all states and territories on high alert and the country into its most challenging situation of the pandemic. With its high transmissibility, the Delta variant brought new challenges to the health system, as teams from across NSW Ambulance rallied together to keep our operational workforce safe and supported so they could continue to provide care to the community of NSW. Our response was all hands-on deck, with all our people in every aspect of our business working in the front line and behind the scenes to support each other, our communities and our patients.

Rapid Emergency Department Make Ready Service

In July 2021, the NSW Ambulance COVID-19 State IMT re-established the Rapid Emergency Department Make Ready Service (RED MRS) at Liverpool and other primary metropolitan hospitals due to the escalating COVID-19 outbreak and community transmission across the Greater Sydney Area. HealthShare NSW provided a RED MRS at Liverpool, Nepean, Royal Prince Alfred, Westmead and Campbelltown Hospital Emergency Departments.

The RED MRS supported NSW Ambulance response efforts against the COVID-19 pandemic through enhanced compliance with infection



ABOVE: Following a spike in COVID-19 cases in Victoria, Aeromedical Operations sent our southern neighbours an additional road retrieval vehicle and medical team

BELOW: Rapid Emergency Department Make Ready Service

control practices, greater awareness of Make Ready Time (MRT) and establishing a clear framework for future applications of the traditional MRS at NSW Ambulance superstations into the emergency department setting.

Our 24/7 hotline

Our Employee Connect team operated 24/7 throughout the year, where a team of paramedics and corporate staff were available to answer questions and concerns relating to COVID-19, such as reporting requirements, access to leave entitlements, welfare support referrals to help manage stress as the COVID-19 pandemic continued to evolve. During the year the COVID-19 Hotline received 21,367 COVID-19 related and 2,500 non-COVID-19 related calls.

Keeping deliveries COVID-safe

Ensuring our staff receive their mail and deliveries is a priority for the Records Management team at Rozelle Headquarters. Managing our daily deliveries is a critical activity and it's a safety-first approach for the handling and contact of all incoming and outgoing mail and packages. During the year our team put in place a business continuity plan to ensure that contingencies were in place for deliveries to continue with lockdown measures in place and to take into account the many challenges that our logistics and distribution suppliers faced during the height of COVID-19. The team increased its COVID-19-safety measures, such as reduced operational hours, no entry to the office area until a Records Team officer can authorise it, an external drop-off station placed outdoors for deliveries to be left contact free, and all staff wearing PPE and practising social distancing.





ABOVE: COVID-19 Incident Management Team (IMT)

COVID-19 Incident Management Team

Established in March 2020, in accordance with the NSW Ambulance Pandemic Plan and Emergency Management Arrangements, our COVID-19 Incident Management Team remained operational throughout 2021-22. The IMT ensured a coordinated approach in response to the pandemic with all parts of NSW Ambulance working together. Its importance extended beyond our organisation, with the IMT connected to the broader health and emergency management structures as part of the whole-of-government response to the virus. The extended nature of this IMT allowed staff from all over the state to be involved from trainee paramedics through to very experienced operational managers. It provided an opportunity through cross-over in roster rotations for new members of the IMT to receive mentorship and guidance to assist in their learning. The IMT and its members played a critical role in the safety of our staff and patients during the pandemic.

NSW Ambulance Public Health Unit

The NSW Ambulance Public Health Unit (APHU) was established early in the COVID-19 pandemic to support staff through:

- understanding the current public health orders as they relate to workplace 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 for 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.

APHU has had 113 individual staff members comprised of nine staff on secondment, four external contractors as well as providing meaningful alternate duties to 98 staff who were unable to work in their ordinary roles due to workplace injury, pregnancy, or various other reasons.

Between July 2021 and June 2022, the APHU:

- provided support for staff 7 days a week
- identified more than 15,000 confirmed COVID-19 patients attended by NSW Ambulance paramedics (up to January 2022)
- conducted more than 31,400 potential occupational exposure staff assessments
- conducted over 3,500 non-occupational staff support and screenings.

Answering the call for help

From November 2021 to January 2022 following a spike in COVID-19 cases in Victoria—and a dip in cases for NSW—NSW Ambulance was able to support our southern neighbours by providing them with additional call takers to answer Triple Zero (000) calls. In an Australian-first, NSW Ambulance call takers were sent to Victoria to assist the state in managing a spike in Triple Zero (000) calls due to COVID-19.

For the group of 11 call takers who were trained and provided support on a rotating basis, it was a great opportunity to learn how things operate differently in a different state and to directly support the community in Victoria. The team were required to learn an entirely new system. The Emergency Services Telecommunications Authority, a separate agency to Ambulance Victoria, which manages their Triple Zero (000) control centre, provided support to our call takers during their stay and were very impressed by our staff. As the first ever interstate deployment of ambulance communications staff in the country, it represented a great learning opportunity for both organisations.

United we stand

Following a spike in COVID-19 cases in Victoria, NSW Ambulance's Aeromedical Operations were able to support the south-east Australian state by providing them with an additional road retrieval vehicle and medical team. In December a road retrieval vehicle, along with a rotation of teams which in total consisted of four critical care doctors and three critical care paramedics were sent to assist our colleagues in Victoria. The road retrieval team spent 14 days assisting with COVID-19 patient transfers, working closely with Ambulance Victoria's Adult Retrieval Victoria (ARV) division. Following the deployment of the road retrieval team, NSW Ambulance's Aeromedical Operations has further strengthened its ties with the ARV by inviting them to take part in Aeromedical's daily 'coffee and cases' job debriefings and by remotely attending one of our regular monthly Education Days.



IN THE COMMUNITY

Promoting health and wellbeing for the people of NSW

While our core business is the delivery of emergency out-of-hospital health care, we also recognise the value of engaging with our community.

From developing community safety and prevention programs to supporting our clinical volunteers and facilitating our staff's engagement with their local communities in unique ways, we strive to offer a range of information, programs and support to actively address issues that affect our community.

Paramedic-founded community project reaches milestone

Founded by Dubbo Paramedic Sophie Wills; the Community Defib Project has successfully installed 100 automated external defibrillators (AEDs) into communities across NSW. The Community Defib Project is a collaboration between Western Sydney University, the Defib shop and community members. With no ongoing Government funding or support, it relies on donations, sponsorship and profit from merchandise sales. The project initially installed 20 AEDs in the Wisemans Ferry area which led to a great deal of interest from surrounding communities.

Sophie chairs a Board of Directors made up of medical experts and passionate community volunteers to drive the fundraising for each AED unit. The project enjoys the support of NSW

ABOVE: NSW Ambulance made a festive visit to Bear Cottage in 2021. The cottage is a children's hospice in NSW dedicated to caring for children with life-limiting conditions

BELOW: Community Defib Project in Dubbo

Ambulance Executives and colleagues who have joined the Community Defib Project as directors and senior volunteers in support of the mission. The project provides each community the tools to fundraise, plan and install AEDs that are accessible 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The project has had over 150 volunteers across more than 20 communities who have come





BELOW: NSW Ambulance educators facilitating training during the Clinical First Responder induction course

together to raise more than \$200,000 towards community access defibrillators.

Clinical volunteers

Within the pre-hospital context the patient journey commences with the first call for assistance and the arrival of skilled 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 initial care from paramedics in 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.

The North Coast flood events presented significant challenges for our clinical volunteer teams particularly in Coraki, as they continued to provide patient care community members while being flood affected themselves.

The evolution of the program continues with a response vehicle ordered for Manildra to enable them to transition to a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) model and approval to establish a new CERT unit at Howlong, south west of Albury.

New Paramedic Facilitators have continued to be provided with the opportunity to enrol in the Certificate IV Training and Assessment via available Commonwealth and State funding. Recent graduates of last year's enrolment were included in the teaching staff tasked with delivering the new post-employment graduate pathway induction course. This natural extension of their Clinical Volunteer mentoring skills and experience into mainstream paramedic education has provided them with real career development and will further enhance the quality of the training they deliver to our Clinical Volunteers.

The mandatory Monthly Maintenance of Skills program included Workplace Health & Safety and Infection Control modules, which were operationally contextualised for the Clinical Volunteer workforce. These modules are required to be completed by all clinical volunteers to maintain their clinical accreditation.



IN THE COMMUNITY

Celebrating 60 years of Ambulance Rescue

From swift-water operations to large animal rescues, the NSW Ambulance Rescue unit has been a critical part of our organisation since its inception in 1961.

As 2021 came to a close, the Special Operations Unit reflected on an important year in its rescue capability. Along with significant capability development and increased rescue officer staffing, NSW Ambulance Rescue celebrated its 60th birthday. NSW Ambulance Rescue units are staffed by Rescue Operator-qualified Paramedics who provide technical rescue services in their respective areas of responsibility around the state. These skills include road crash rescue, vertical rescue, land search and rescue, tactical medicine, swift water operations and large animal rescue. In 1961 a public fundraising campaign resulted in Australia's first dedicated purpose-built rescue vehicle, the 'Q-Van', commissioned into service in a ceremony on 6 October 1961.



This tradition of service continues with the six Ambulance Rescue stations -located at Rutherford, Singleton, Tamworth, Cowra, Bomaderry and Wagga Wagga. As we've expanded our capabilities, including tactical medical response and large animal rescue, we're seeing an increase in rescue calls from the community and requests for inter-agency support.

Our continued commitment to Ambulance Rescue saw the establishment of the Rescue Truck Working Group in 2021 which has conducted an intensive consultation process over the past 12 months to discuss designs, requirements and the most suitable truck cab chassis for new Rescue Trucks. The consultation resulted in a working group endorsed design that will provide the efficient, safe and ergonomic storage of the current and future rescue equipment. The layout also incorporates a patient care and transport compartment, which is of a similar size to that currently available in frontline ambulances.

ABOVE: Australia's first dedicated purpose-built rescue vehicle, the Q-Van on display at the NSW Ambulance museum in Temora

A flood of support

There were plenty of tragic stories behind the severe weather event in March 2022. But from this disaster there have also been incredible examples within NSW Ambulance of support, resilience and hope.

Teamwork on a daily basis holds great significance in the pursuit of positive outcomes at NSW Ambulance. The torrential rain, severe winds and in particular flash flooding that tore through our great state caused unfathomable destruction. Western Sydney, Hunter-New England and especially the North Coast experienced the worst of it. But there was a silver lining with staff, from all different parts of the organisation, banding together to support our colleagues, their families and patients in flood affected communities.

In the North Coast there were NSW Ambulance staff isolated from their families, while some lost their homes. Others lost stations -considered by many a "second home" given the pride they have in their job. But despite those challenges, there was no shortage of people in our organisation putting their hand up to help in any way they could.

The deployment of Special Operations Teams, additional Aeromedical Operations assets and Extended Care Paramedics were part of the response to the North Coast. Both in and away from the North Coast, on-road paramedics and control staff right across the state showed incredible resilience and support for one another. And then there was, of course, the support services offered by Staff Health to all employees and their families who were affected, irrespective of where they are based in NSW.



LEFT: Hawkesbury River at Windsor Bridge

BELOW: NSW Ambulance deployed Swiftwater Special Operations Paramedics to Lismore as part of our flood response

visit the paramedics, Staff Health representatives and a chaplain staffing the stand. It was also great to have community members approach our operational staff to ask about basic CPR techniques and how to use a defibrillator. NSW Ambulance staff were alongside fellow emergency service workers, including NSW Police and State Emergency Service. This provided a great opportunity for the public to get an up-close look at their vehicles and chat to personnel in uniform.

The open day was a wonderful collaboration of all the emergency services in NSW and a great opportunity to connect with members of the community.

U Turn the Wheel

The U Turn the Wheel program is a one-day in-school road safety program that is delivered to Year 11 students. U Turn the Wheel is coordinated by local Rotary Clubs. Expert presenters talk to students about the issues facing young drivers, and discuss strategies to deal with them. The program reinforces the messages that parents are trying to get their young drivers to heed – that the decisions and actions made by drivers on the roads are their responsibility alone, and can often lead to unforeseen and tragic consequences. NSW Ambulance participated in delivering the program to 12 schools during 2021-22. Unfortunately, the program was impacted by COVID-19, limiting the number of schools partaking in the program.

Sponsorship

Sponsorship is highly valued by NSW Ambulance as the funds generated enable us to run community and workforce programs and events that might otherwise not be possible. These include initiatives that contribute to strengthening the education and culture that exists within our workforce, for the good of the NSW community.

Thanks to the following companies for supporting NSW Ambulance's 2021-22 initiatives:

- 3M
- Ambulance Provident Fund
- Amtek
- Bright Print Group
- G&C Mutual Bank
- LeasePLUS
- Maxxia
- Paull & Warner NSW
- QBE
- Salary Packaging PLUS
- Smartleasing
- Stryker Medical APAC
- Toll

The Special Operations Unit deployed Swiftwater Special Operations Paramedics throughout Metropolitan operations, Southern Sector, Hunter New England Sector and the North Coast Sector, as well as tactical advisors to the Northern & Southern Control Centres. NSW Ambulance also provided two specialist operators who formed part of a Urban Search & Rescue taskforce in an operation on the North Coast.

Severe Weather Event Incident Management Teams (IMT) led by Clinical Operations were stood up in February, March, April and June 2022 in response to severe weather and prolonged flooding across NSW. The IMTs have coordinated state-wide oversight and response functions, supporting local sector IMTs stood up to manage local operations. NSW Ambulance has worked closely with partner emergency service agencies, providing liaison officers in Emergency Operations Centres throughout this period.

Staff from across the organisation have been commended for how they have banded together to support our colleagues, families and patients in flood affected communities. At a local level, staff have reflected on the support provided by local management teams, with welfare checks, leave assistance, and support in organising accommodation, food and supplies.

Fuelling our support for the community

In May, NSW Ambulance featured at the Fire and Rescue NSW Open Day – which coincided with United Nations International Day of Families – to promote the good work undertaken by our staff.

The event saw thousands of people come through the gates and featured multiple Fire and Rescue NSW live displays showcasing the changes between old and new fire trucks and uniforms. The event also featured a live band, photo booth and of course, a sausage sizzle. The event also coincided with the United Nations International Day of Families, celebrated on Sunday, 15 May, 2022. This year's theme, Stronger Families, Stronger Communities, highlights the important role families play, in all their shapes and sizes, as a central building block of communities. When families thrive, communities thrive – and the vibrancy of the local community was reflected in the families present at the open day. NSW Ambulance had a stall at the event, which included interactive CPR mannequins, teddy bears needing first aid and an ambulance vehicle. It was great to see families of NSW Ambulance staff attend the open day and



NSW Ambulance

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