

Submission  
No 63

**THE MANAGEMENT AND OPERATIONS OF THE NSW  
AMBULANCE SERVICE**

**Name:** Suppressed

**Date received:** 24/06/2008

---

Partially Confidential

Tuesday, 24<sup>th</sup> 2008

**RE: Parliamentary Inquiry into the Management and Operations of the ASNSW**

To whom it may concern,

I have concerns about the recent/current and future management of the ASNSW. I now put this in writing in point form-

- Our station is severely under staffed. We complete 10 hour day shifts go home on call and I am averaging 3 to 4 call outs per night. There is no mandatory down time to reduce fatigue. Our Station is too small even if they gave us more staff. We could not fit more ambulances or people on our station.
- There is no future planning to cope with our increasing workload, staff numbers, infrastructure, and fatigue or staff development.
- There have been many damning cultural surveys. The ASNSW appears to have an inability to react to them. I even read in one report that the CEO making comments about the lack of Ambulance Officers responding to it. This is due t Ambulance Officers knowing that ASNSW management will not react to negative cultural surveys.
- The Professional Standards and Conduct Unit (PSCU) continually in my experience mishandle cases. Untrained and understaffed investigators often make misguided and vexatious findings.
- The ASNSW conducts local investigations with managers who do not follow ASNSW guidelines and do not have any training.
- There is no compulsory training for management when they are either are applying for or successfully obtaining leadership roles.
- Our local station management is incompetent. The upper management in this area seems incapable of managing their managers.
- The Southern Operations center bully junior staff. They hold cases and delay ambulance responses to save money. They continually tell lies to the public about why ambulances are late. This is evident when we turn up to cases that have been held and the patient comments you must be busy. When there are on call resources available.

- To the ASNSW credit the clinical treatment advances for officers has been one area where the ASNSW has been improving.
- In one meeting I was present at, the CEO was asked about millions of dollars in funding to provide more ambulance to compliment the extra 230 officers, had gone. He was either incapable or did not want to say where it had gone. I know in the Southern Division they purchased small sedan cars. Which are useless and not ambulances.
- The ASNSW does not manage problem staff members. Bullying and harassment is rife.
- The current upper and state level management has an entrenched culture of reactive not proactive management.
- One area where **the ASNSW management fails miserably** is after large scale or stressful incidents or cases. There is absolutely no room for down time to allow debriefing of officers. There is a severe lack of supervisors to recognize incidents that require debriefing. There is no structure process in place to identify when officers are in stress after incidents. There should be compulsory down time for debriefing after stressful incidents. There is no infrastructure in place to allow this to happen. Given the high rate of officer suicide this is one area that **needs to be address**. The old here is a phone number if you feel sad is totally inadequate. I know of incidences where officers have ringed and they haven't been able to speak to counseling staff until a later date. This is totally inadequate.
- There is a total lack of future planning or direction in the ASNSW.
- The ASNSW does not plan for maternity leave provisions. There are high female employee levels in the ASNSW. When female officers access maternity leave there are no plans or contingencies in place to fill the gaps. This is a major issue. As inevitably a reverse discrimination takes affect. Male officers end up spending more time away from their families to enable female officers to spend more time with theirs. This is a major stressor on relief officers.

These issues are just a small numbers of systemic problems with the management ASNSW. I am willing to appear or be involved with any inquiry into the mismanagement of the Ambulance Service of New South Wales.

Regards,

Ambulance Officer