

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

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SUBMISSION**GENERAL PURPOSE STANDING COMMITTEE NO 2 INQUIRY INTO THE
MANAGEMENT AND OPERATIONS OF THE NSW AMBULANCE SERVICE**

How does justice prevail when justice is administered by the ignorant? The burning of witches at the stake signified failed justice! It highlighted the system of ignorant mob rule! The New South Wales Ambulance Service has a **BOYS CLUB** which can be likened to the mob justice of yester year!

I am a 20 year member of the New South Wales Ambulance Service stationed at

To fix a problem we must first identify the problem. In the absence of emotion and bias, what is the problem? In an attempt to not over simplify the problem I lay the responsibility for the New South Wales Ambulance Services management and personnel problems at the feet of ignorance.

The New South Wales Ambulance Service has all the policies, acts, regulations, and directives to effectively manage and control bullying, harassment, intimidation, vexatious complaints, Occupational work place safety, Equal Employment Opportunities, inter-personal conflict, and the like.

Why is it then are we faced with a system so badly administered that employee's such as myself who has had only peripheral involvement in this system has a complete lack of confidence in a equitable outcome for any issue the New South Wales Ambulance Service is involved in.

I believe to look forward at this problem we must first look back at the evolution of the New South Wales Ambulance Service and understand that the origin of the Service spawned not from the intellect of today, but from the hardworking tradesman, farmers, towns people, and the like, who at first volunteered for service and then became paid employee's. These men and women who came from an era of stretcher bearers, and autocratic discipline are still in the New South Wales Ambulance Service.

These men and women now have the roles of Station Officers, District Officers, District and Divisional Managers, and although they have brought with them a wealth of experience, they have also brought with them a level of ignorance which to date has stood unchallenged.

Although in these types of enquires the heads of upper management are the one's to role in an attempt to put a clean broom through the organisation, I believe that as far as resolving the complexity of this issue that will not go far enough.

It must be remembered that the problem effectively is at grass roots level and the biggest effects of this ignorance supported system is felt at grass roots level. When a problem arises in the New South Wales Ambulance Service it is a problem which begins at Ambulance Officer Level and quickly escalates like a bushfire fanned by hot westerly winds into an inferno.

The escalation of the problem begins with the ignorance of the first line managers, through to and including the arrogance of the New South Wales Ambulance Chief Executive Officer. This ignorance of equitable management is endemic within the very structure of the Service from the restriction on clinical advancement to the members of the 'boys club', to the promotion of staff, especially union executive, to creation of elite squads such as SCAT to allow these already unfairly advantaged members of the 'boys club' to move further up the food chain.

The New South Wales Ambulance Service is a service still in its infancy; the Ambulance Service is attempting to play in the deep end of the pool without the required infrastructure to do so. The Ambulance Service has over the years made sweeping statements such as the "world's best" and attempted to ride this feel good concept into the current era without doing the hard work required to support such claims especially within the field of management.

The motto 'world's best' actual referred to the clinical improvements made at the time by the New South Wales Ambulance Service and at no time has quality assurance measures been implemented at the Ambulance Officer level for these clinical enhancements and changes made to clinical practice. We have an elite encapsulated system of paramedics who are beyond questioning by their peers, receiving hospitals, nursing staff, doctors, and even the Ambulance managers themselves. This dangerous self belief in our abilities has worked to support the overall ignorance which runs the New South Wales Ambulance Service.

The indictment for our failure to mature with the clinical enhancement rests firmly with the education system and the management of same. I gained my Advanced Life Support Level 4 Paramedic skill in four years after joining the New South Wales Ambulance Service in , I have been subjected to on average recertification examinations every 24 months and one major upgrade of clinical skill base on a one day course. I can state without reservation that my education since graduating as an ALS Officer in has been appallingly inadequate.

The only system which has kept me competitive and competent has been self assessment and self criticism of my clinical interventions. The failure of the education system is no more evident than is those practicing paramedics who have failed to self assess and are a danger not only to work with but to the community at large.

New South Wales Ambulance Service has evolved an encapsulated environment with self governed elite' mentality that has self served the culture of ignorance and mismanagement. The culture of the New South Wales Ambulance Service though it insular environment has failed to remain competitive with the world at large, and we the staff, have fallen that far behind in our knowledge base that we consider ourselves to be isolated and inadequate.

Without cultural change and the infrastructure to support such change the New South Wales Ambulance Service is doomed to eventual destruction from within it own rank and file.

Our current Professional Standards and Conduct Unit is corrupt, and has no support base amongst the rank and file.

I feel that some of the change required is the introduction of infrastructure for an external independent legal branch, which needs to be complimented by a disciplinary branch within the New South Wales Ambulance Service. The New South Wales Ambulance Service requires an effect investigation branch which has the skill to properly investigate staff and fine whether a charge is warranted or not. The New South Wales Ambulance Service then requires an effect disciplinary branch who can extol a penal phase which is consistent with the charge.

Until such time as we have effect discipline within the New South Wales Ambulance Service change will not be effective.

As far as our insular environment the New South Wales Ambulance Service either requires external administrator, with the legislated power to break the 'Boys Club' and see change through to the end, or to be amalgamated with another emergency service such as the New South Wales Fire Brigade, or the entire Australian Ambulance community needs to become a federal resource and administered as such, with a view to improving the Australian capacity for dealing with all pre-hospital emergencies including natural disasters.

Regards