

Submission  
No 114

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

**Name:** Suppressed

**Date received:** 1/07/2008

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Partially Confidential

I write in relation to the NSW Ambulance Service, which is not adhering to the OH & S Practices and not giving the dedicated Ambulance Officers a fair go.

Not only does training these newcomers carry a terrible lot of extra work, as the trainers have to write comprehensive reports on that trainee as well, but stress is the main issue, as the qualified officers have to be thinking and teaching the trainees and trying to save someone's life all at the same time. I might add here, how disgusting it is that patients are unaware that there is only the one qualified ambulance officer and the trainee attending. This is incredibly wrong, our society deserves better treatment than this also.

I find the treatment given to these "life savers" appalling as these men and women do a fantastic job, saving lives daily, putting up with drunken and drug affected abuse continually. They have to diagnose, then administer the appropriate treatment/drugs off their own bat, to patients. On the other hand nurses are told what drug and what dose to give patients, by doctors. At least they are looked after with meal breaks etc.

These officers work very long hours, sometimes working more than 10 hours without a meal break. **Their award does not even have a meal break in it!** Some officers sign off on sick leave as they cannot physically or mentally work their long shifts, as they are told they cannot have a break as there is another "job" to go to. If they have a certain amount of sick leave or it coincides with a rostered day off, they are given a "Sick Leave Record" and it has been told that this goes against them if they apply for another job in the service. This type of treatment is disgusting in this day and age. They work in poor conditions with an extremely high stress level,

which also impacts on their families and their normal life, apart from their own health, which suffers greatly due to these appalling working conditions. In fact, has been told frequently by different medical specialists that the work and shifts he does is a major factor in some medical conditions.

I would also like to know why some State Government Departments can be given letters demanding people to take their leave once it accrues past 30 days, when ambulance officers have a very difficult time getting any leave approved as they are told there is not enough staff! They are usually told they can't have the leave approved. has had to apply for leave **2 YEARS IN ADVANCE**. They should be allowed to take their leave when they want or need to more so than others, due to their stressful jobs.

I feel that the government needs to investigate the working conditions and treatment of these highly respected (by some) and qualified people. Where would we be without them? It is quite obvious that OH&S practices are not even remotely adhered to here and I believe it is time this all came out, so the public and Workcover are aware of the atrocities being undertaken here.

I would appreciate answers to my questions above and an undertaking that this OH&S mess will be looked into, at your earliest convenience. The whole health system is in a complete shambles.

Yours truly,