THE MANAGEMENT AND OPERATIONS OF THE NSW AMBULANCE SERVICE

Name: Suppressed

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Dear members of the Committee, Thank you for the opportunity to put forward my concerns. Firstly I am an ALS Paramedic based at a remote rural station and have been for the past years, in a town where we cover an area of about   sq klms. Our nearest back up is a minimum of 50 mins at emergency conditions. My issue is that on more and more occasions off duty officers are being asked if they are available to cover the town as the duty crew is away on either a long distance casualty case or a medical transfer. The nearest base hospital has a turn around time of 3.5 to 4 hours. I have covered, more than once, for 9 hours on a day off as the duty crew were required to do back to back transfers. Currently officers do this for no return unless they actually get a job, most times they don't. By officers doing this they are covering the short fall in staff numbers. Management have been approached about this and the feed back has been along the lines of "if their silly enough to do it for nothing let them". Can you imagine the distress a family would suffer waiting for an Ambulance to come from 50 minutes away if a loved one was seriously ill. The ASNSW would have a black eye, but not management, the local officers for not being there. We cover our communities because we have ties here, family and friends. We are known as the ambo as much as we are by our names.

There are times when you just can't cover as you have plans, after all you are entitled to days off. Management says it's an individuals choice to make themselves available, that may be true but when it is happening more and more maybe it's time something was given back by management instead of taking us for granted. I suggest an officer who covers on their days off should receive a call out automatically and if he gets a job he receives a call out for that as well. I know of guys who say they go out of town to have days off so they won't be disturbed. I hope I have explained my point sufficiently for your consideration.