

Supplementary  
Submission  
No 56a

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

**Name:** Suppressed  
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Partially Confidential

The ASNSW changed its fee structure a few years ago, including a fee for attendance at a patient. This was not widely advised to the public and remains a surprise to many patients. Previously, a charge was only incurred when transport was undertaken, giving people the option of deciding to take other means to hospital instead of incurring a charge. I was involved in the development of course for the ASNSW and had reason to contact the department of fair trading. The gentleman i spoke to advise me that as we now charged a fee for service, we were no different from a plumber, tv repair man etc who are required to state the cost of call out and the cost of service. On discovering this, I sent a number of Emails to the ASNSW outlining my concern and requesting a more widespread notification to the public. This was also more important as some health funds now do not cover ambulance attendance fees, only ambulance transport. I also requested in this email for the ASNSW to find out which funds offered which services at what cost. To this date despite a number of emails, nothing has been done to inform the public of this new cost, and determine which funds cover ambulance transport costs. In essence, we are breaking the trade practices act, and unless we have a section in the call taking advising of the cost of ambulance attendance, we cannot do so. Most of all, patients who have called an ambulance and then ring back to cancel and ambulance are advised that they will continue to send an ambulance to "check you out" despite the patient advising that an ambulance is not required. THE check out then costs the patient \$300 dollars which is no different to con scheme. THE public needs to be aware of the cost of an ambulance prior to our arrival, as these days \$300 dollars will break many struggling families.

I also fail to understand why a company such as vital call is not being charged for the work it gives the ASNSW. Vital call is a good service that charges its customers alot of money to monitor a system. If the elderly person falls, or needs help, vital call activates a set of pre determined numbers. If these are not available, it calls an ambulance for the patient. No cost is incurred to the company for that ambulance, and recently, when its system had a problem and created multiple hoax calls, no charge or cost was incurred to vital call at all despite the large use of resources. THis would not occur if the service was the fire brigade etc, but the ASNSW creates a nice profit for a company at no charge. I am surprised that the NSW government does not have a state run Vital Call system in place, which would provide elderly monitoring, ongoing care and much cheaper.