

Submission
No 51

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

Name: Suppressed
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Partially Confidential

The Director
 General Purpose Standing Committee No. 2
 Parliament House
 Macquarie Street
 Sydney
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As an ambulance paramedic with over 30 years experience this upper house inquiry is long overdue. The ASNSW is in crisis due to insufficient funding and managements lack of vision. The 2008 auditors generals report brings home the entrenched problems the service has. The workload is going up at 5% to 7% a year and you look at the workload over the past 30 years you would see this upward trend. If you look at ambulance station rosters they are not keeping pace with the increased workload. Take two stations in particular Nelson Bay and Raymond Terrace stations 30 years ago they only had one ambulance on night shift and in 2008 they still only have 1 ambulance on night shift.

Some years ago I was a professional retained fire fighter with the NSW Fire Brigade in Sydney and I was amazed at the resources the fire brigade had compared to the ASNSW. One of the main reasons was the fire brigades funding, they received funds from local government, state government and also the fire levy paid on home insurance policies. So as you can see the fire brigade was able to meet its demands due these three sources of funding.

Last year IPART did a review of ambulance charges but this review still didn't solve the problem of funding to meet increased public demand. Due to the lack of hospital beds in our public system this has been allowed to impact on the ASNSW tying ambulances up for hours. Also the lack of general practitioners in private practice, people use the ASNSW as an alternative means to address this problem. People call for an ambulance to take them to hospital thinking they will bypass everyone in the hospital waiting room. A public education program by the Department of Health could greatly reduce this problem.

Over the years I have seen issues that catch paramedics by surprise. If you are on an emergency run and you have to go on the other side of the road to get around the traffic and you have an accident and injure people and the police charge you, you will have to fund your own legal defense or go cap in hand to the union asking for assistance with no guarantee. This opens up another issue, ambulance management knows paramedics won't go on strike over issues and therefore can get away with pay and conditions that teachers, prison officers, train drivers etc wouldn't put up with. A lot of people ask me about joining the ambulance service but you have to be frank with them the training you will have to undertake, plus a very good chance of being sent to a small country with a long hard battle to get back to the cities for your children education. with an hourly rate of 23/25 dollars a hour.

Some years ago the service was part of the ORECON system which compared response times with other ambulance services around the world our times were embarrassing so we pulled out. I could go on for pages about the problems in the service I am willing to give verbal testimony to the the inquiry if need be.
 Regards